V!RUS

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THE DECOLONIAL DEBATE TERRITORIES

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THE DECOLONIAL DEBATE: TERRITORIES
O DEBATE DECOLONIAL: TERRITÓRIOS

PROJECT

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THE DECOLONIAL DEBATE: TERRITORIES
O DEBATE DECOLONIAL: TERRITÓRIOS

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Certainly, it is not by chance that a decolonial worldview has been gaining strength at a time when an increasing number of countries in the global South are standing up against centuries-old mechanisms of domination imposed by North Atlantic nations. We have chosen the theme of decoloniality for issues 26 and 27 of the V!RUS journal, recognizing that the current controversies expressed in the academic sphere, questioning the validity of this thinking in its theoretical-conceptual or methodological aspects, present an opportunity for research and debate within Architecture, Urbanism, and related fields. However, our motivation is equally driven by agreement with some of its assumptions. As an example, the entire argumentation of authors such as Aníbal Quijano, Catherine Walsh, Enrique Dussel, María Lugones, Ramón Grosfoguel, and Walter Mignolo regarding the foundational and tragic role of the colonization of the Americas in shaping the European idea of Modernity and its planetary imposition as a hegemonic perspective cannot be overlooked. It seems essential to examine the historical and socio-political origins of such a domination process, the impacts of its perpetuation on how societies are organized, and its implications for the modes of knowledge production and dissemination across various domains.

The numerous submissions we have received, along with the feedback and observations from dozens of external reviewers on the ideas and experiences shared in these writings, highlight several important issues. One of them is the recognition, within this body of work, of a genuine interest from various fields in the theme. This is particularly notable because many researchers had already been addressing related topics — such as identity struggles, socio-spatial inequalities in the cities of the continent, the limitations of educational programs directed at populations with non-Eurocentric cultural backgrounds, among others — even if not always directly linking them to the decolonial discourse. Furthermore, the submissions come from institutions across Brazil and various countries in Latin America, presenting diverse readings and applications of the ideas initially formulated by the Modernity/Coloniality group (M/C): Some focus and deepen reflections on very local and specific situations, while others seek to establish dialogues with classical authors in the fields of Art, Architecture, Urban Studies, Design, Education, Literature, among others. In doing so, they consistently enrich, nuance, and problematize issues initially addressed by M/C thinkers.

The works published in these two editions, carefully selected through a rigorous process of close collaboration among authors, reviewers, and the editorial committee of the journal, constitute two sets of sub-themes: reflections related to Territory, its conceptualization, analysis, production, and modes of intervention — gathered in V!26 — and works on Expressions, encompassing artistic, literary, gender, and intersectionality themes — compiled in V!27.

At the invitation of the Editorial Committee, the Architect and researcher Fernando Lara, from the University of Pennsylvania, United States, generously granted us an interview titled A Decolonial Perspective to Overcome Insufficiencies. In this interview, he reflects on decolonial issues in the built environment of the Americas, in the teaching and practice of Architecture, and on his own trajectory.

Ten texts approaching the concept of territory from different perspectives have been selected to compose the Agora section of this edition. *Leo Name* and *Tereza Spyer* problematize the **contemporaneity of decolonial formulations** in the work Sometimes it's ugly, but fashionable! Decolonial powers, additions, and limits. *Yasser Farrés* explores the **spatial dimension of coloniality** and **decolonial critique in Architecture** in The spatial dimension of coloniality: an interpretative proposal and other ignored voices.

The concept of "buen vivir" (good living) in conjunction with **ways of inhabiting and building the city of the peoples in the global South** is examined by *Pilar Marin, Aldo Alor*, and *Israel Orrego-Echeverría* in the article Toward a Political Ontology of Urban Buen Vivir, where they point out conflicts between the right to a dignified life in the city. *Lucas Bueno* and *Fábio Gonçalves* focus on São Paulo in the work The landscape in the construction of Good Living: The Nhandereko in Sao Paulo state capital.

Still addressing the urban dimension, *Carlos Henrique Magalhães de Lima* observes colonial urban planning ideas and practices, considering **identity, alterity, and segregation** in the article The poetics of Relation and cities: perspective for a decolonial urbanism.

Leonardo Novo and *Leonardo Souza*, in Experience on the Altiplano: Flávio de Carvalho and the South American naked civilization, observe how the discussion about **alternatives to hegemonic spatial organization in cities** was already taking place before the contemporary constitution of decolonial thought.

On the scale of **urban and regional planning**, a perspective on **colonial domination processes** is offered by the article [FOSS, Cartography, Colonialism and Sovereignty in Paraguay and the Global South,](#) where *Juan Cristaldo, Guillermo Britez, Silvia Arévalos,* and *Lissandry Rodriguez* highlight the implications of coloniality in the cartographic representation of territories. In the realm of research in urban planning, the decolonial perspective is explored by *Fabiana Silva, Cintia Alves*, and *Isabela Santos* in the text [Decolonial approaches to research in Urban Planning](#).

Paula Albuquerque proposes, in the article [1984: Colonialism and dystopia](#), a reading on the **violence of territorial domination and the coloniality** of bodies and minds through George Orwell's novel.

Design, and particularly the **possibilities of anticolonial education** in the field, is the focus of *Marco Mazzarotto, Frederick Van Amstel, Bibiana Serpa*, and *Sâmia Silva* in the article [Prospecting anti-colonial qualities in Design Education](#), reaffirming the need to rethink curricula.

Contributing to the debate on digital design processes, we present in the Project section the work [Towards a Latin-Based Urban Design: The role of CAAD in decolonial design practices in Brazil](#), in which *Carlos Costa* and *Carlos Nome* discuss the relevance of employing *computational algorithms for urban planning* developed in the Global North to the realities of Southern countries.

We hope that these two editions of V!RUS contribute to the decolonial debate, adding references that emerge from the thinking of Southern researchers and encouraging the strengthening of South-South dialogues.

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A DECOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE TO OVERCOME INSUFFICIENCIES
UMA PERSPECTIVA DECOLONIAL PARA SUPERAR INSUFICIÊNCIAS
UNA PERSPECTIVA DECOLONIAL PARA SUPERAR LAS INSUFICIENCIAS
FERNANDO LARA

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Marcelo Tramontano: The decolonial debate has gained momentum in numerous spheres, not only within academia at a historical moment when the idea of a multipolar world also seems more feasible. With regard to academia, this is still a controversial topic on which opinions vary across a wide spectrum. How do you perceive the interest in the decolonial debate at the current time?

Fernando Lara: I will speak briefly about my journey and how I got into this debate. Eighteen years ago, in 2005, I returned to the United States to teach at the University of Michigan. At that time, I was working on a book derived from my doctoral thesis. I was bothered by the geographical concentration in the North Atlantic of canonical examples of the modern architecture history of the 20th century. I drew a map (Fig. 1) based on the most prominent books for teaching modern architecture: Kenneth Frampton's book, Jean-Louis Cohen's book, which was published that same year, William Curtis' book, and Spiro Kostof's book, which is widely used in the United States. Spiro Kostof covers five thousand years of urbanization in the world, but I only used chapters about the 20th century.
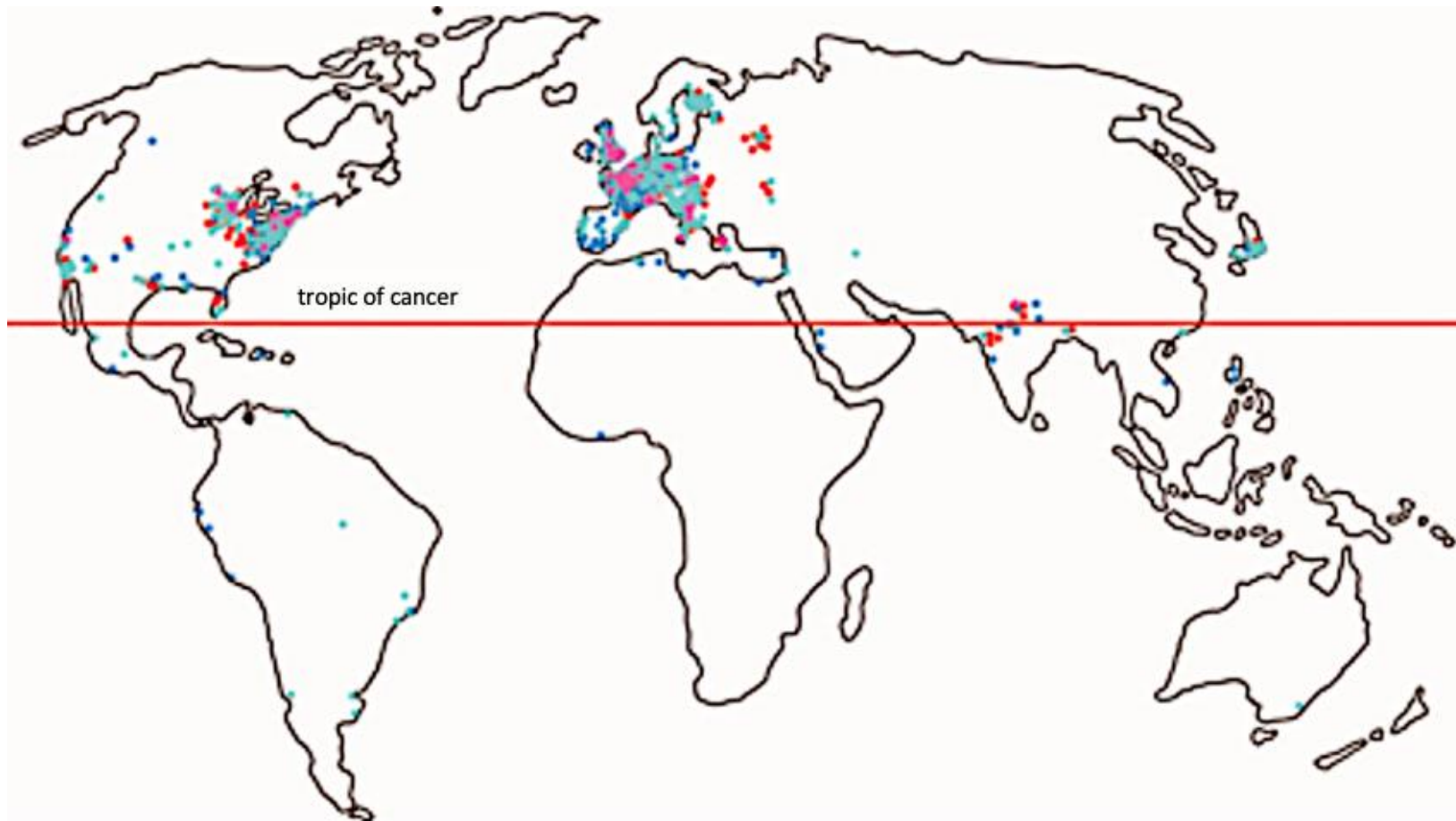
Fig. 1: Map mentioned by Fernando Lara. Source: F. Lara, 2005.

I marked each building mentioned in these books with a dot on the map. I saw that their concentration in the North Atlantic was gigantic. For example, concerning the Iron Curtain, there was clearly a concentration in Austria and Germany close to the Czechoslovakian border. However, those same books ignored demonstrations in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Russia as they laid on the other side of that geopolitical border established after World War II. Five years later, I started writing the book "Modern Architecture in Latin America" published in 2015 but written since 2010, having, as a background for my reflections, those findings from the map. I wondered how it would be possible to elaborate a discourse to understand the architecture of Latin America and what form that discourse should take.

In attempting to write the introduction and conclusion of the book, where we dealt with concepts somewhat external to architecture, I started reading authors who focused on Latin America. This choice led me to discover the Modernity/Coloniality group, consolidated in the United States at Duke University and the University of North Carolina, with intellectual figures like Walter Mignolo, Arturo

Escobar, and Enrique Dussel. This group was highly productive in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. In this literature, I found several crucial insights, especially in Aníbal Quijano's works, a Peruvian economist who worked at ECLAC [Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean]. In 1992, the year of the celebration of the 500th anniversary of Columbus' arrival to the Americas, Quijano wrote a fundamental text countering the idea that the Americas participated in the development of modern capitalism. According to Quijano, modern capitalism would not exist if there had not been European occupation of the Americas. This perspective is quite powerful.

The reading of Arturo Escobar's works was another revelation. Around 1995, Escobar wrote and published his doctoral thesis, which I read almost twenty years later, between 2013 and 2014. He skillfully ties together the idea that modernization and colonization are two sides of the same coin, thus inseparable: every modernity implies a coloniality. With these two axioms, I was compelled to reconsider our historiography, the way we understand Latin American architecture. I delved into this literature, which includes the works of Ramón Grosfoguel, Gloria Anzaldúa, Denise Ferreira da Silva, among others, to understand the relationship between modernity and coloniality.

That was a turning point for me as I had been trained in DOCOMOMO [International Working Party for Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites and Neighborhoods of the Modern Movement], in the celebration of the Modern, a national project that, in Brazil, was articulated with Lúcio Costa during the Vargas government, spanned the Kubitschek years and culminated in the years of Dilma Rousseff government. I suddenly started perceiving various degrees of coloniality present in this entire process. There is much literature on this, such as Lorraine Leu's book on the significance of the dismantling of Morro do Castelo in Rio de Janeiro at the beginning of the 20th century. The most important building in Brazilian modern architecture, the Ministry of Education and Health, was erected on the remains of a demolished hill in which an Afro-Brazilian community used to live before it was displaced. The very urban plan of my hometown, Belo Horizonte, is an expansionist colonial project commonly referred to as settler colonialism. I grew up with the idea that the history of Minas Gerais began in 1697, at the start of gold exploration. However, people had been living there for four thousand years. Where is that history? It disappeared. Through these inquiries and discoveries, I arrived at the decolonial debate.

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What captivates me in this debate and keeps my interest in reading more, writing more, and continuing the discussion is that the vast majority of its ideas and concepts originate in South America. Even though some Mexican and Puerto Rican intellectuals are involved, a South American perspective dominates. I have found in colleagues of an older generation educated in Marxist ideas, significant resistance to decolonial discourse. They argue that the issue of race is exaggerated, a North American trend, or, as Jorge Liernur told me last year at a seminar in Mexico, that the decolonial debate is an imposition from North American academia and, therefore, another form of intellectual colonization. My response is that this understanding may be correct to some extent, as North American academia does lead this debate, but such leadership is not exclusive to them. An African perspective is also emerging, as well as an Asian perspective we know little about. I have already met people from Singapore and China discussing ways to explain the world from an Asian point of view, which certainly is not the European perspective. Moreover, it is crucial to note that many of the essential scholars in this field are South American, such as Enrique Dussel, Arturo Escobar, Walter Mignolo, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Ramón Grosfoguel, who actually is Puerto Rican. I see something in this thought that stems from a spatial experience unique to South America.

In this process, I also decided to no longer talk about Latin American specificities and exceptionalities since I do not recognize the Rio Grande and Rio Bravo as a division between two Americas. The spatial history of the Americas, the European occupation of spaces, and the Amerindian holocaust are the same in the whole continent. We survived a pandemic with a lethality ranging between 1 and 2 percent. Imagine what the genocide of indigenous peoples was like in the 16th century, with a lethality rate of originary peoples that reached 90 percent in some groups in the Americas and the trauma it generated. The colonial idea of imprisoning people in Africa and forcibly bringing them here to replace the workforce that died in the 16th-century pandemics, is also very similar. The occupation and territorial exploitation are comparable from Chile to Canada. So, my interest is to think about the Americas, and this is another attitude that faces resistance. Yes, there are many Latin American and regional specificities: in the Andean countries, where the presence of indigenous populations is still strong, the countries of the La Plata Basin, like Paraguay, with the Guarani language, the

Caribbean, with its also peculiar history. Indeed, histories are local but at the same time, they share many similarities that have not been properly explored.

I am currently interested in thinking about American concepts to discuss these architectures. European concepts are fundamental but insufficient. And I want to work on such insufficiencies and the concepts we must develop to understand our own architecture. Overall, I see the decolonial debate in architecture as an opportunity to shuffle and deal the cards again. The cards have been dealt for three hundred years, but now we have the occasion to shuffle them. We have just edited an issue of the DeArq publication from Colombia, which we called Barajar el cánon, Shuffle the cards in English, a concept from my colleague Fernando Martínez Nespral from Buenos Aires, that refers to the idea of shuffling the cards and dealing them again, reacting to the rigged game we have been playing for so long.

> **Marcelo Tramontano**: In fact, the currentness of this debate, as you mentioned earlier, is transversely positioned in the world, due in particular to the rise of China, a Global South country, in the current dispute for various hegemonies with the great powers of the North: technological, scientific, cultural, political, and other kinds of hegemony. The debate, therefore, reaches all areas of knowledge and, in our case, the field of Architecture and Urbanism. We may encounter resistance and hesitancy, but issues like those you mentioned do need to be discussed and confronted.
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> You also mentioned the modern architecture model, formulated as a means of domination that clearly illustrates the spatialization of the notion of the coloniality of power through specific ways of conceiving space, select hegemonic construction systems, forms, and architectural programs. These elements have been presented, since Adolf Loos, as a sort of cultured and civilized opposition to the architectures considered barbaric in the rest of the world, including those of the peoples of the South. However, when universalized and imposed on a planetary scale, this model has also been seized, reworked, and adopted by different peoples as expressions of their own culture. How do you see this phenomenon?

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Fernando Lara: I see two sides to this question. The first is very positive. The beautiful side of Oscar Niemeyer's work is that he managed to incorporate Brazilian identity, especially that of Rio de Janeiro, into his architecture. Paulo Mendes da Rocha and Vilanova Artigas did the same thing in Sao Paulo. They all read the places where they were and produced exuberant, wonderful, innovative, and in some cases, genius architecture. The headquarters of the French Communist Party, designed by Niemeyer in Paris, is brilliant. The School of Architecture and Urbanism of the University of Sao Paulo, designed by Artigas, and Paulo Mendes da Rocha's buildings, especially the Paulistano Club, have ingenious architecture. But along with this Brazilian identity they interpreted, another Brazilian identity is at the core of this architecture. It involves the fact that it was produced with concrete molds made of deforestation wood, the fact that the metal framework and cement were carried on the shoulders of mulatto men who never had a chance to enjoy this modernity or very little. Another considerable Brazilian invention, the Unified Health System, which provides universal free access to all Brazilian residents, was created a few decades after the period between the 1940s and the 1970s when these great constructions were produced. Imagine the number of workers who became invalid, died, or suffered for the rest of their lives because they did not have access to a health system, medical treatment, and hospitals. There was no care for this significant portion that integrated and still integrates the construction process. Many workers died or lost body parts in a process linked to ecological issues related to deforestation and, in general, the exploitation of natural and human resources.

At the 12th International Architecture Biennale of São Paulo in 2019, I presented a project at the Centro Cultural São Paulo (CCSP) developed with my students (Fig. 2). I was already deeply affected by the Mariana disaster, but during the Biennial month, the Brumadinho disaster occurred, killing many more people. What we presented was part of a studio work we had developed at the University of Texas in Austin, where I was then a professor. I asked the students to build a 3D digital model of different paradigmatic buildings in Brazilian architecture and quantify the chemical and mineral elements in each of those constructions. They calculated the amount of iron, aluminum, calcium, and other elements. Then, we did the reverse work, computing the size of the impact those buildings caused in the natural environment. Each of the buildings generated a hole: in the iron mine, in the aluminum mine, in deforestation, in the limestone mine. Finally, we overlaid the size of the holes on the scale of the Mariana disaster for comparison. Unfortunately, architecture is like this. Any small domestic renovation generates an ecological impact and a socio-economic impact. It generates added value, appreciation, or depreciation of areas. Facing this problem is part of the responsibility of architecture.

Fig. 2: Panel presented at the XII Sao Paulo Architecture Biennial. Source: F. Lara, 2019.

Here in the United States, there is a vigorous movement to address the labor issue of architects, from the understanding that the architect is not a creative artist whose genius is recognized by sponsors. An architect is an employee who needs a union, a limitation of weekly working hours, a minimum wage, which is not the norm in the United States. Schools sell to students the illusion that everyone will be a famous architect and, one day, will have a huge office, based on the exploitation of other young people who will come later. This debate is very central here. I think in Brazil, there is a slightly better understanding of the socio-economic structure in which architecture is inserted. Architects, especially those trained in good public schools, understand the economic integration of architecture and what it means for the profession.

These contemporary issues lead us to reassess modern architectures. The racism of Lúcio Costa and Le Corbusier, as demonstrated by Fabiola López-Durán's book, the numerous stories of harassment attributed to Oscar Niemeyer, for example. How to measure this? Is it necessary to separate them from their work? Or not? Is it possible to keep viewing the work of Woody Allen in the same way after you know about his relationship with his adopted daughter? I do not think so. My colleague Christopher Long wrote a book about the rape case Adolf Loos went through, based on the architect's own testimony and the testimony of the girl who accused him. It is impossible to keep seeing his work in the same way after reading the book. You cannot separate the work from its creator. This also happens because the field of Architecture insists on not separating. When we look at a building, we say that "this is a Niemeyer," not that "this is a building designed by Niemeyer, detailed by his team, budgeted by the construction team, built by three hundred people, and paid by someone." We do not have the entire closing titles at the end of the movie. We only associate the work with its creator. And when the creator is overthrown, what do we do with the work? I think this is a central question to be discussed as a consequence of the decolonial movement and identity struggles. We have to find other ways to assess and discuss architecture because these ways of the 20th century are, again, insufficient.

> **Marcelo Tramontano**: This architecture you problematize so well corresponds to the model presented to students entering the first year of architecture courses in Brazil, Latin America, and perhaps worldwide as the ideal model, or the architecture that should be taken as a benchmark for quality and, in a way, pursued. In Brazil, many students enter university through racial, social, and indigenous quotas, as you know. They often belong to peripheral communities where descendants of groups and peoples that were most subalternized in the process of colonization predominate and have suffered –and still suffer– the effects of the perpetuation of coloniality. It means that the hegemonic nature of this architectural model and its presentation to students as a paradigm would lead to the erasure of the references that each one brings with them. How could we promote new readings of the architecture teaching and learning process from a decolonial perspective?

Fernando Lara: In my texts over the past three years, I have delved into a process I call spatial abstraction. Why have I dedicated myself to studying this process? Because it was systematized in the 16th century, at the same time that Europeans were consolidating

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their dominance over the Americas. Once again, following the guiding star –to use a Christian metaphor– of Arturo Escobar, Aníbal Quijano, and Enrique Dussel, there is no separation between the process of colonizing American territories and the process of systematizing architectural tools, which is a process of abstraction and distancing. In the time of Leon Battista Alberti or Filippo Brunelleschi, they were thinking about drawing tools based on all the knowledge of the time –Islamic knowledge, Italian antiquity and so on– and they created tools to accelerate or enhance architectural thinking. Architects of that time were constantly on the construction site. The distancing between architects and the construction site began in the 15th century Florence but was systematized in the 16th century by the great treatises starting with Sebastiano Serlio, passed through Andrea Palladio, and extended to Giacomo Vignola. It is a process of taking distance, separating the architect from the physical construction. It correlates with what René Descartes systematized in 1605: the separation between mind and space, between the mind and the rest. We have imposed this process of abstraction on architecture students since then. Since the 17th century, the imposition of this process generates precisely what you have just pointed out. It happened to me. In my family, there were no architects. I do not come from a family that had the social capital of the elite, so after graduating, I did not have clients who would allow me to carry out the works that, as a student, I imagined I should do.

Such a process of distancing is imposed on students already in their first year of graduation. They are told: "forget your previous spatial experience, forget where you lived your first 18 years of life and all your experience of space. We will teach you, from scratch, what a wall is, what a window is, what a sleeping place is, what a dining place is." It is a classic process of modernization, of colonizing students' minds from the premise of bringing them to modernity. How to break with this is the crux of the matter. How to reclaim knowledge that I call relational, not abstract? Emotions, stories... How to bring back to the drawing board or the computer the history of places, of those who lived and live in them? How to understand these spaces? Because the modern training is a process of distancing students from these affections, stories, and relationships in order to manipulate them, working at the whim of those who pay us. This issue is extremely clear to me, but I do not know how to rescue such knowledge. I keep trying to find ways in scholars who inhabit cities that have survived modernization, whether of African, Indigenous, Arab, or Asian matrix. In these references, there is knowledge we do not know how to bring to the architectural design, and I think this knowledge is the key to overcome the crisis we are experiencing, in which drawing no longer works. It does not work for social or climate crises. We must seek other tools and theoretical frameworks to advance in this matter.

I find the work of modern architects sensitive to this other knowledge much more interesting. I am thinking of the architect Lina Bo Bardi, who was enormously sensitive to construction issues and deliberately denied distancing herself from it. Lina did not draw, or drew very little but used to stay at the construction site, which was a brilliant move on her part. I also think of Lelé – the architect João Filgueiras Lima – who understood that architecture is made by the hundreds of workers on the construction site. He began to design with the process in mind, considering what two men can carry as prefabricated components, for example. I think architects who understood these things were more successful, and their work seems more interesting to me.

> **Marcelo Tramontano**: Listening to you, I remembered Lina's crucial contribution to the cultural sphere and not only to the architectural and constructive thought. I think of the Nordeste exhibition she organized at Solar do Unhão in Salvador, opening the local Museum of Popular Art, where she denounced the centuries of subalternization and erasure suffered by the Afro-descendant population in the region and rescued their artistic production. Lina, Lelé, Eládio Dieste, Severiano Porto are radical moderns whose work and thoughts must be permanently discussed with architecture students.
>
> In your dialogue with different schools and peers in Latin America, what place do you think is being given to decolonial thinking in the teaching of architecture and urbanism? In what way and to what extent has this debate – or not – taken place in the region's schools? Do you know of successful experiences, or places where these ideas have blossomed?

Fernando Lara: Argentina holds a significant position in this debate, starting with Marina Waisman in Córdoba in the 1980s and 1990s and nowadays with Fernando Martínez Nespral. Argentina is home to a discussion hub. I recall the exhibition Andrea Giunta and Agustín Pérez Rubio organized at Malba, the Museum of Latin American Art in Buenos Aires, the most important Latin American modern art museum. The curators reorganized the Malba's collection based on Latin American criteria in an exhibition called Verboamérica, which lasted a year and a half. Although Malba has since returned to exhibiting works according to European criteria,

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the artworks were displayed for a year and a half following Latin American criteria. Works by artists who had never been side by side were presented in the same room. For instance, works by León Ferrari and Di Cavalcanti were placed side by side to discuss religiosity. In Mexico, few people are working on these issues. Chile has a history of very rich and diverse architectural thought as well. The Catholic University of Chile focuses more on form and tectonics, the University of Chile has a more socialist approach, which resembles the teaching in Brazilian public universities, and the Catholic University of Valparaíso, a school closed on itself, with several fantastic experiences, but very isolated.

From Chile comes an experience that I am absolutely a fan of and continue to follow, seeing surprising results: the School of Talca. Juan Román, the school's director, founded it about fifteen years ago. It is a small public school in an equally small and poor agricultural town with vineyards and a tradition of logging for the furniture industry. Juan came from the School of Valparaíso bringing its methodology and various interesting innovations to create the School of Talca. The first two years of the course are very traditional, with basic seminars in design, construction, architectural history, systems, urban planning and the like. From the third year onwards, students take parallel seminars while joining a team in the studio. This team is led by a fifth-year student who is graduating, and brings together third-, fourth- and fifth-year students. The great innovation of the School of Talca is that fifth-year students have to build their graduation work, and if they do not do it, they do not receive their diploma. Of course, they do not design cultural centers or other large buildings, but rather a canopy in front of the city hospital to protect people waiting in line, a viewpoint on top of a hill where people often walk, an accessible platform for wheelchairs in the fruit market, and so on. The projects are small but beautiful and well executed. Furthermore, they prioritize teamwork from the third year of the course. The student entering the third year becomes the intern who will create the basic drawings, try to find out the price of something, help with the budget and carry the materials to the site. Overtime, he rises in rank on the team –constantly recomposed– and when he reaches the fifth year, he will lead a team of five students who will help him build his project. I think this methodology is sensational, and the works are beautiful.

Something that frequently bothers me in the Global South is that university extension projects developed for poor areas are themselves poor. They use tires to make retaining walls or to renovate a small square. The materials are usually quite basic, the very idea of composition and placement of materials is excessively primary, and the projects are as cheap as possible. The Talca School manages to pervert this. The works are deeply embedded in the community, which is part of the school's success. The city hall donates materials, the owner of the sawmill provides some wood, the owner of the building materials store donates the stones, and so they create works that constitute small *follies*, to use an idea from Bernard Tschumi. The city is dotted with these little *follies*, little architectures.

A crucial difference in relation to the Valparaíso school is that the work remains in the city, as in Valparaíso the work is abandoned. The school of Valparaíso does not believe in the architectural object, let's put it this way, but it does believe in the act of building. There, they cannibalize their own creation. From one year to the next, students go to Ritoque –the area of the school dedicated to constructive experimentation– and collect materials. Ritoque is full of ruins. And Ritoque is not inhabited, looking like an architects' amusement park. Talca has the advantage of being a city with very low density, a rural and small town where work is integrated into residents' daily lives. However, this project is very recent, and I don't know what the school will be like in ten years or when Juan Román retires, since his leadership is decisive. Several questions concern the future, but today, I find it the most interesting school in the Americas.

> **Marcelo Tramontano**: Fernando, to conclude our conversation, we want to ask you a question that we pose to all V!RUS interviewees. Based on everything we have discussed here, does the future seem promising to you?

Fernando Lara: I believe that one can see the glass as half empty or half full, in a proportion of 50/50. That is my response to your question. With the glass half-empty, it's easy to explain. We live in a time of resurgence of the extreme right, censorship and the emptying of university issues. The issue of censorship is central here in the United States. Brazil went through four years under Bolsonaro, Argentina will have years under Milei, the United States went through four years under Trump, and there is a significant chance he will return. We have to live in a reactionary time. In this sense, the glass is half empty. I do not see architecture prepared to be propositional to lead the necessary debates. I see architecture very much in tow all these issues. On the glass-half-full side, I remark the expansion of the idea of architecture beyond the elite. A profession and a disciplinary field that have always been very elitist are finally discussing their own elitism. Some nations and societies are working against this elitism, bringing a more diverse

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community into architecture, even if it is still challenging in other places. In the European case or in the case of prestigious North American universities, at least we are discussing and denouncing this elitism. In this regard, I see the glass as half-full.

I also perceive that another digital revolution is coming to shake up the foundations of Architecture, which is the issue of image production through Artificial Intelligence. Incredibly powerful images are already being produced through Artificial Intelligence. From image production to the design of entire buildings it is a tiny step. I think such developments will force the field of architecture to rethink itself. What will be our contribution in this new scenario? Designing buildings that comply with building regulations will be a task performed by ChatGPT in ten years, not by someone with an architecture degree. For those, what contribution will we propose? There is a small hope that architecture will become purposeful again because we have this power and responsibility. Better than many other areas, we are able to design the future. Cinema can present an idea of the future, but we translate the idea of the future into implementable projects. We anchor images of the future to real issues. I have hope that Architecture will really start designing cities without cars, inclusive cities that can reduce carbon emissions, that can encompass various ways of living, distinct from modern design, which demolishes self-built areas to implement housing complexes that aim to teach people how to live.

I hope that digital tools help empower people in general and that they can achieve better living spaces. But there is also a strong chance that the use of these tools will promote more elitism and gentrification. I cannot see an advantage on either side and I find myself quite pessimistic. Like all elections worldwide in recent years, which are resolved with 51% for one side and 49% for the other, I think, in this case, capital and big tech companies are at 51%, and empowering social movements are at 49%. How to turn this game around is a fundamental question we need to face.

THE SPATIAL DIMENSION OF COLONIALITY:
AN INTERPRETATIVE PROPOSAL AND OTHER IGNORED VOICES
LA DIMENSIÓN ESPACIAL DE LA COLONIALIDAD:
UNA PROPUESTA INTERPRETATIVA Y OTRAS VOCES IGNORADAS
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Abstract

This essay addresses the growing interest in the spatial dimension of coloniality. It argues that such an interest is out of step with other fields of Social Science not only because of the coloniality of knowledge that still operates in the disciplines responsible for designing human environment — Architecture, Urban Design and Spatial Planning —, but also the absence of a voice representing these areas inside the first generation of decolonial thinkers. In that sense, the essay vindicates young voices that had studied different manifestations of coloniality in the last ten years based on the concept of "territorial coloniality". To reach those goals, a self-reflexive analysis is used on personal experience linked to decolonial criticism in Architecture, as well as a review of the writings of some other invisible authors. Additionally, the concept of "architectural coloniality" is proposed as a category that describes the systemic nature of the spatial dimension of coloniality.

Keywords: Architectural praxis, Design, Coloniality, Modernity, Academy

1 Introduction

The modernity-coloniality perspective has finally emerged as a necessary discussion of, without any absolute pretentions, what I usually define as "disciplines responsible for designing human environment", which means Architecture, Urban Design and Spatial Planning. An evidence of this shift are the recent papers about the subject published in the Chilean journal *INVI* (38(107), 2023) and the Colombian journal *Dearq* (36, 2023), as well as the appearance of the concept of decolonization in the Venice Architecture Biennale 2023 curated by Lesley Lokko. Another evidence, prior to this account, are the Brazilian journal *Redobra* (15, 2020), the Chilean journal ARQ (110, 2022), and so it will be the latest call of the *V!RUS Journal*.

We are talking about a logical intellectual event because the general architectonic, urban and terrestrial models continue to achieve the materialization of a civilizing project — of European modernity — whose final crisis is clear. However, it is contradictory that the *boom* of this concern occurs with a noticeable discrepancy with respect to other areas of Social Science. In this assertion resides the motivation to write this essay, which I pretend to, on one hand, argue that this discrepancy is due to the coloniality of the knowledge that operates in the disciplines responsible for the design of human environments — Architecture, Urban Design and Spatial Planning — and also because of the absence of a voice that represents these areas within the first generation of thinkers and decolonial thinkers. On the other hand, I aim to contribute with some concepts that might be assumed as directions for a decolonial way of looking at the architectural praxis.

To develop these ideas, previously I will present a conceptualization of the professional scope of the design and an approximation to the modernity-coloniality perspective. Then, I will dedicate the article to a self-reflexive analysis on my own personal experience linked to the critics of decolonial architecture. I will assume a narrative writing style as a research method (see Vargas, 2010) to contrast a chronological revision of personal events with commentary on texts published about the spatial dimension of coloniality during the last decades. For that, I will use my own texts and the texts from young authors.

2 A necessary historical and conceptual revision

To achieve the aims of this essay, it is appropriate to use two conceptual explanations about the professional scope of architecture. The first one refers to the disciplines responsible for the design of human environments. This is a disciplinary delimitation I propose following the lessons of Roberto Segre and Eliana Cardenas, of the Faculty of Architecture of the José Antonio Echeverría Higher Polytechnic Institute (currently Technological University of Havana "José Antonio Echeverría"), who were marked by the Marxist critique about the city, the structuralist influence on the architectonic theory and also the Latin-American cultural studies. This definition

assumes that the design is a creative activity of multiple scales and historically conditioned by factors that, broadly, I sum up as physical-environmental, socio-cultural and technical-economic[1].

2.1   Conceptual explanations about the architectural praxis

In this way, it is understood that all product from the design activity, all designed object, regardless of the scale in which it is framed, must value with a vocation. In other words, the object must be valued beyond its compositional, functional, or economical aspects, to which the disciplinary knowledge of the design is usually limited to, including in this valuation social, environmental, and cultural implications linked to the specific contexts and users. This position might seem a truth of Pedro Grullo, but it has mostly been ignored in the design practice under the pretext of universality of the user, the objectivity of the process, the rationality, the innovation, and a continuous list of reasons associated with the hegemonic discourse of the development, as mentioned by Quijano-Valencia (2002), that makes sense to the commercial production of the modern world-system.

The second explanation is related to the notion of "architectural praxis", which is useful, at least, for the Latino and Latina Critical Theory. As a result of the first explanation, I propose the adjective "architectural" to make generalizations about the "architectonic", "the urban" and "the territorial". In this sense, the adjective "architectonic" is dedicated to refer to one of three major scales of the activity of design (architectonic, urban, and territorial). while "architectural" encompasses them but, most importantly, emphasizes the necessity of repairing the incision that the modern academy — meaning the institutions that promote occidental knowledge — made in the understanding of the systematic character of the human environment (as shown in Figure 1). This incision, related to the "disillusion of the world", was translated in the objectual management of the territory and the parcellation of the knowledge that each new discipline reclaims authority (Farrés, 2013a). This can be explained from the epistemological assumptions of modern science (dualism, rationalism, empiricism, positivism, reductionism...) at same same time this also responds to the administrative questionings related to the commercialization of knowledge that has thrown the representativeness of the university as institution into crisis (Lander, 2008).

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[1] Regarding this discussion, see Segre and Cárdenas (1982); Segre (1985), Cárdenas (1998), Farrés & Segre (2013), and Farrés (2021).
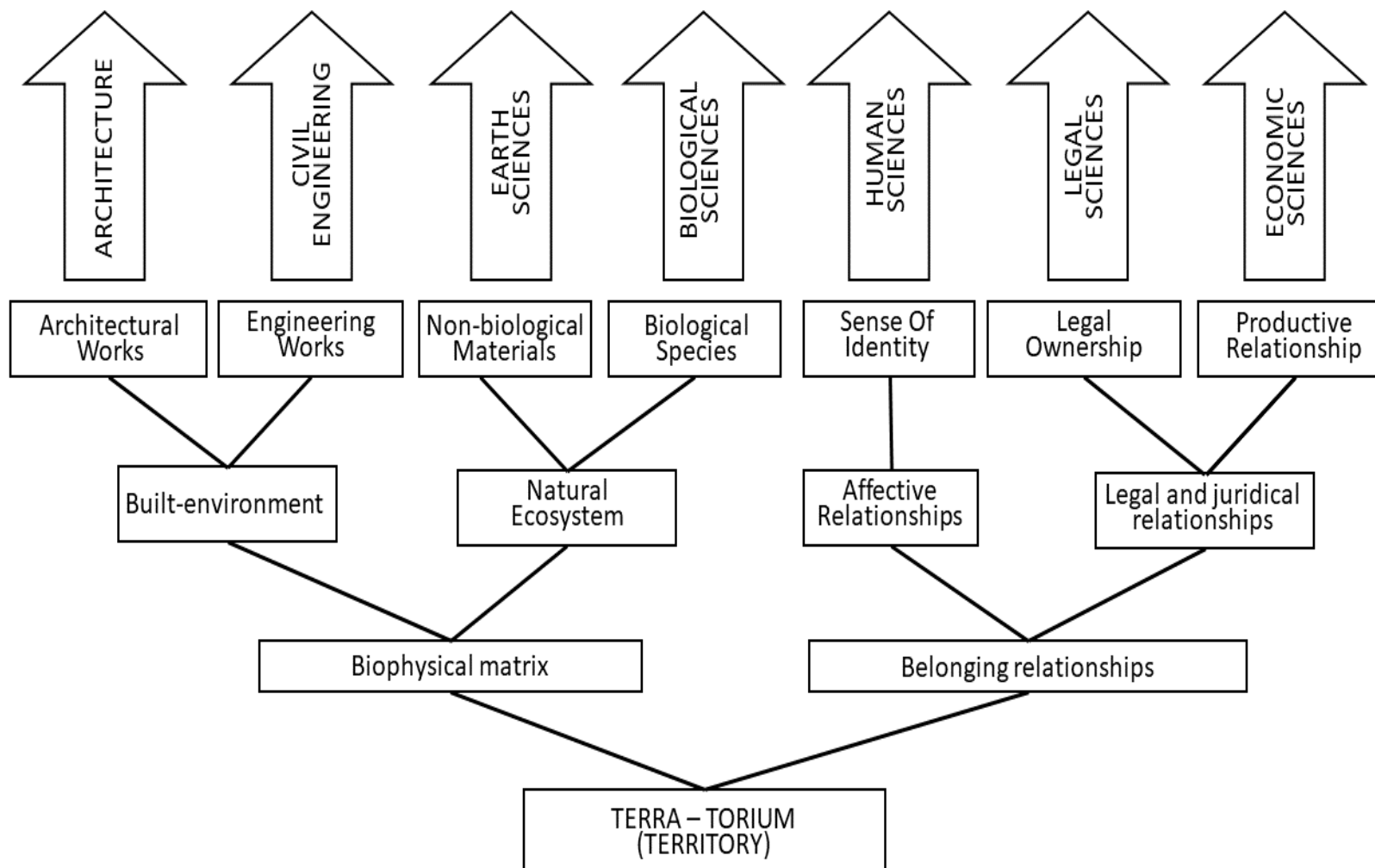
Fig.1: An approximation to a general classification of the components of the territory and its relationship with an approach from the disciplines. Source: Farrés, 2013a. Available at: http://hdl.handle.net/10481/29967. Access on: 07/07/2023.

By understanding these concepts ("disciplines responsible for designing human environment" and "architectural praxis"), the question I am going to deal with in the final considerations starts to make sense: regarding the emergence of the decolonial approach, why did the minor scales of the designer's (graphic design and industrial design) scope had place a couple of years ago, while for the major scales (architecture design, urban design and territorial design) a *boom* is only happening now?

2.2   Historiographic and conceptual explanations about coloniality and the modernity-coloniality perspective

Another necessary explanation relates to the history and meaning of the term of coloniality, but also to the what is often interchangeably called "colonial power perspective", "modernity-coloniality theory", "colonial power theory", "decolonial turn", "decolonial inflexion", or "decolonial perspective". These terms allude to an approach on the conformation of the modern world-system that encompasses diverse critics based on the category "coloniality". In my opinion, these terms have not been totally understood. An evidence of this misunderstanding is the variety of recent texts that use "decolonization" to allude to this approach even though the first authors of this approach never used this term. This is confusing because it seems to suggest a unified trend of thought similar to the European suffixes "-isms" of the XX century, and this never happened. In fact, the Puerto Rican sociologist Ramón Grosfoguel, one the pioneers, has mentioned several occasions that it had never been a "modernity/coloniality group" but a network of thinkers

with different nodes, geographically situated, that has extended beyond the context of the Americas in which it appeared. A network that coincides with interests and points of view, but also has confrontations regarding interpretations[2].

It could be stated that this perception of a group may have expanded due to the article *Worlds and knowledges otherwise* written by the Colombian anthropologist Arturo Escobar (2003), which has more than 1400 citations on Google Scholar to this day. The author alludes to a "research group in Latin America and in the United States that is elaborating an original interpretation of modernity, globality, and difference" (Escobar, 2003, p. 51, our translation). He proposes to refer to it as the Research Program of Modernity/Coloniality following a free interpretation of the notion of Lakatos (1978). The author mentions the existence of a group of researchers with an emergent perspective, directly connected with the texts of the Peruvian sociologist and theoretical politician Aníbal Quijano. He also insists that the group is a program of research linked to diverse genealogies of thought, Latin-American or not, among which includes the Liberation theology, philosophy of liberation, autonomous social science, dependency theory, Latin-American debates about modernity and postmodernity, discussions about hybridity, postcolonialism, subordination studies, cultural studies, and others.

In a paper published later — the introduction of the book *The decolonial turn. Reflections for an epistemic diversity beyond global capitalism* (2007) — written by the Colombian philosopher Santiago Castro-Gómez in collaboration with Ramón Grosfoguel, the term "Modernity/Coloniality group" is applied in a way that it has the same meaning that Escobar (2003) used. Yet, they narrate a story of encounters of research labs where "new and critic generations are being formed of the modernity/coloniality" (Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel, 2005, p. 13, our translation). In other words, this is the place where the modernity/coloniality network originated, which, back then, had "a good number of young researchers that have already incorporated the decolonial perspective in their studies" (Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 12, our translation). This idea is also presented by another Colombian of the first generation, the anthropologist Eduardo Restrepo, in *The decolonial inflection: sources, concepts and questions*, written with Axel Rojas, a book that is very didactic to understand modernity/coloniality (Restrepo & Rojas, 2010).

As usually happens in historical sciences, the distance in time could contribute to explanations about historical facts. As two decades have passed since the publication of the paper by Arturo Escobar, one should get rid of any vision of the Modernity/Coloniality Network group as monolithic. This position, which, by the way, usually is taken by those who seek to discredit the decolonial perspective by branding it as intellectual fashion. It happens either to vindicate fair recognition — as it is the case of the Bolivian sociologist and activist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui — or to insist on defending eurocentrism and, apparently, the unfinished project of modernity.

To avoid wrong interpretations, it is convenient to insist on the difference between "colonialism" and "coloniality" as world phenomena. Anibal Quijano, the author of the second term, outlined the differences in *Coloniality and modernity/rationality* (1992)[3] in which he defined colonialism as a "relationship of direct, political, social and cultural domination of the European over the conquered people of all continents." (Quijano, 1992, p. 11). Its political aspect, formally and explicitly, was defeated in most countries but not in other dimensions. In that essay, the author argues that coloniality "is still the most general form of domination in the world today, once colonialism as an explicit political order was destroyed." (Quijano, 1992, p. 11). In that same book, Quijano let the reader foresee that it begins with the European colonialism in America, but it transcends to become a "cornerstone of any global power and main framework of the modes of exploitation and domination in the last 500 years" (Quijano, 1992, p. 11). He also states that the structure of power installed during the colonial period imposed certain intersubjective and discriminatory constructions that continue after the national independences as categories with "scientific" and "objective" pretensions of ahistorical meaning. It is equally treated as a natural phenomena not related to the history of power; these categories are coded as racial, ethnic, anthropological or national, according to the moment, agents and implicated populations (Quijano, 1992).

Indeed, if we observe the main lines of exploitation and social domination on a global scale, the matrix lines of the current world power, their distribution of resources, and the work of the world's population, it becomes impossible not to see that most of the exploited

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[2] As his doctoral student, I heard this argument around 2010, at University of Granada.

[3] The text had two publications: see Quijano (1992a) and Quijano (1992b) in the references list. I will use citations that correspond to the first publication.

people, the dominated people and the discriminated people, are exactly the members of the "races", "ethnic groups" or "nations" that were categorized as colonized peoples during the formation of that world power since the conquest of the American (Quijano, 1992, p. 12).

In this way, Quijano, whose thought aligns with the Marxist perspective until then, assumes a theoretical inflexion about the explanation of the world-system where the notion of "race" displaces the category "class" of the centrality awarded by Immanuel Wallerstein (1974, 1979). The same Wallerstein confirms this perspective when he published in collaboration with Quijano that same year *Americanity as a concept, or the Americas in the modern world-system* (see Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992). This argument on the role of organizer of the racism and ethnicism in the social and epistemic structure of the modern world-system will remain more explicit in *Race, ethnic group and nation in Mariátegui: open questions*, when he expresses:

> Racism and ethnicism were initially produced in America and then reproduced in the rest of the colonized world as foundations of the specificity of the power relations between Europe and the population around the world (…). Since then, all other decisions and guidelines of social classification of the world's population and their location in the power relations act out in interrelation with racism and ethnicism, specifically, but not only, between Europeans and non-Europeans (Quijano, 1995, p. 4, our translation).

However, as I mentioned in a previous paper (Farrés, 2019), it will be necessary to recognize that Quijano (1992) did not give a clear definition of the concept of coloniality back then. Therefore, his essay generates questions about the concept, specifically when it is used as an adjective. In this way, when the use of "cultural coloniality" (Quijano, 1992, p. 19), leaves the door open for thinking about the existence of other kinds of colonialities, and idea that is emphasized when we read "coloniality of power" (Quijano, 1992, p. 19). This also occurs when he uses "political colonialism" (Quijano, 1992, p. 19), because it pays attention to the other two dimensions of colonialism that he highlighted (the social and the cultural). Then, it would make sense to also talk about "social colonialism" and "cultural colonialism". Another indeterminacy lies in not explaining what he means by 'power', although his discourse undoubtedly and implicitly recognizes that it is exercised in the most dissimilar areas of human existence. In the same way, the indifferent use of the terms "coloniality" and "coloniality of power" is confusing because he does not give an explicit definition of the latter. For instance, if the indifferent use of all terms is possible, what sense does it make to use the term "coloniality"? Would it not be enough to overflow the less known economic meaning of the concept "neocolonialism" and then to talk about "cultural neocolonialism" or "political neocolonialism"? Why would it be necessary to use a new word?

Such questions have been afterwards clarified by Quijano and other authors, but there was something already clear in his 1992 text: the concept refers to racialized power relations. This means that "marked by a hierarchy ethnic/racial in which the European colonizer self-defined as superior to the rest of the world's populations, and in this way, presents its rationalities as superior to the rest of rationalities." (Farrés, 2019, p. 33, our translation). Therefore, talking about coloniality implies the recognition of the original global character of the processes as well as its foundations and its consequences.

Considering all the above mentioned, it is important to provide two other clarifications already presented by Ramón Grosfoguel. The first one is that idea contained in the word coloniality — "the race is an organizing principle of the capitalist accumulation, the political economy, and the international division of labor of the global capitalist system of the Sixteen century" (Grosfoguel as cited in Martínez, 2013, p. 43, our translation) —, which was already present in the Chicana Feminist Thought before that Quijano coined the term and, before that, in the African thought and the Black thought of the Americas. But the novelty of Quijano exists on, when using the concept of "coloniality of power", offering an original way to designate the links between the notions of "race" and other power relations that help to distinguish "colonialism" and "coloniality" (Martínez, 2013, pp. 43-44, our translation). The second annotation reaffirms the first one: the idea of racism as a foundational element of the modernity/coloniality has been reinforced by several sources today, highlighting the notion of the construction of epistemic racism/sexism (see Grosfoguel, 2011, 2013).

Beyond these imprecisions, the text written by Quijano (1992) will be a foundational element to many interpretations about the historical reality of the Research Program of Latin-American modernity/coloniality. Henceforth, a global network of thought has appeared. The originality and pertinence of the term coloniality has been reaffirmed over time with subsequent contributions of Quijano himself and

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other authors. This line will have a fundamental role in the notions of "coloniality of knowledge" and "coloniality of being", which are theorized respectively by the Venezuelan Edgardo Langer (2000) and the Argentinian Walter Mignolo (2000). They were created in a context of meaningful discussions between thinkers of different geographical origins, disciplines, and world views.

The concept "coloniality of knowledge" by Edgardo Lander appeared because of the incapacity of the academic and political debates in multiple fields of the social sciences to suggest theoretical and practical options as alternatives of the current neoliberal system, the total preponderance of the market, and the globalized lifestyle. In this way, his thesis about neoliberalism appears as a hegemonic discourse of the civilizing model imposed by the West. It is a synthesis of the "basic assumptions and values of the modern liberal society around the human being, the wealth, the nature, the history, the progress, the knowledge, and the good life" (Lander, 2000a, p. 11, our translation). In this manner, his argument is elaborated on the necessity of looking for alternatives of models or theories outside the liberal cosmovision that marks the economy as a discipline. In this way, his proposal relates the colonial hierarchy of the modern/colonial paradigms with the role of the university as promoter of such civilizing models.

> (…) the professional development (that the university offers), the research, the texts that circulated, the journals that are received, the places where the graduation programs are made, the standards of the assessment and the recognition of the academic staff. It all points to the systematic reproduction of a view of the world since the hegemonic perspectives of the North (Lander, 2000b, p. 65 as cited in Castro-Gómez, 2007, our translation).

Lander explains that the colonial organization of the world begins hand in hand with the colonial constitution "of the knowledge, the languages, the memory and the imaginary" (Lander, 2000a, p. 16, our translation) — which is he alludes to the "colonial knowledge" and the "coloniality of being" — and that, by the 19th Century, the great universal narrative that subdues the "totality of space and time – all cultures, populations, and territories of the planet present and past" (Lander, 2000a, p. 16, our translation) will be formed. Regarding the concept of "coloniality of being", Puerto Rican philosopher Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2007a) recognizes the ownership to Walter Mignolo and explains it as a consequence of the book *The darker side of the Renaissance* (1995). In this regard he explains:

> (…) The idea was that, in addition to the coloniality of power, there will also be the coloniality of knowledge, hence there could be a specific coloniality of being. And because the coloniality of power refers to the interrelation between modern ways of exploitation and domination, then the coloniality of knowledge must deal with the role of the epistemology and the general tasks of the production of knowledge in the reproduction of regimes of colonial thinking. The coloniality of being refers to the vivid experience of colonization and its impact in the language (Maldonado-Torres, 2007a, p. 129-130, our translation).

Nevertheless, in such book there is not a direct reference to the concept of coloniality, even though its demarcation on the differences between the locus of enunciation of the postmodernity and the locus of enunciation of the postcoloniality have a total affinity with what Quijano (1992) has written. The concepts of "colonial difference", "colonial matrix of power" or "coloniality of being" were explained by Mignolo a while after in *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledge and Border Thinking* (2000). In fact, Mignolo (2009) recognizes that he did not know about Quijano (1992) when he wrote *The darker side*, but reading him was like an epiphany and motivation to write *Local Histories/Global Designs*.

Texts published later by Quijano are clearer in many of the points aforementioned. For example, Quijano (2001) makes explicit the difference between colonialism and coloniality: while the former refers to a political and economic relationship where the sovereignty of a nation or people rests on the power of another nation, which converts the last one on an empire, the second one, for instance, alludes to patterns of power that emerged with the colonialism, but were extended beyond it because they define the cultural, intersubjective relationships, of distribution of the labor and the production of knowledge in the context of the now Nation States. In the same way, he makes more explicit his definition of "coloniality of power":

> The coloniality of power is one of the constitutive elements of the global pattern of capitalist power. It is founded on the imposition of a racial/ethnic classification of the world's population, serving as the cornerstone of such a pattern of power. It operates in every material and subjective plane, sphere, and dimension of everyday   social   existence,   doing   so   at   a societal level. (Quijano, 2007, p. 73, our translation).

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Other authors have also insisted on that difference. For example, Grosfoguel specifies that colonialism is not new in the history of civilizations — as regional phenomenon (not global), it might be found in different moments and geographical latitudes before of the conquest of the New World —, but it is the coloniality and its racial discourse:

> Colonialism is older than coloniality (…). What is new in the modern/colonial world is the justification of such domination and the colonial exploitation crosses over the articulation of the racial discourse about the inferiority of the conquered people and the superiority of the conqueror. (Grosfoguel as cited in Montes & Busso, 2007, our translation).

In this context, Restrepo and Rojas (2010) emphasize that colonialism implies a political and military control deploy over the colonized territory to "guarantee the exploitation of labor and the wealth of the colonies for the benefit of the colonizer" (Restrepo & Rojas, 2010, p. 15, our translation). Its scopes are more punctual and reduced than of the coloniality because it is a historical phenomenon more complex that it reaches us today:

> (…) a pattern of power that operates through the naturalization of territorial, racial, cultural, and epistemic hierarchies that enables the reproduction of relations of domination. This pattern not only guarantees the exploitation of the capital of some human beings by others on a global scale, but also the subalternation and obliteration of the knowledge, experiences, and lifestyles of those who are dominated and exploited. (Restrepo & Rojas, 2010, p. 15, our translation).

As Maldonado-Torres explains, coloniality "maintains alive in books, in the criteria for the academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience" that as modern subjects "we breath coloniality all the time and every day." (Maldonado-Torres, 2007b, p. 243). It is a vision that confirms Restrepo and Rojas' perspective when they express that the modern world-system is structured by a pattern or matrix of power where "work, subjectivities, knowledge, places and, human beings of the planet are organized hierarchically and governed through the racialization in the operation framework of a certain way of production and distribution of wealth." (Restrepo & Rojas, 2010, p. 16, our translation).

All definitions are integrated by Santiago Castro-Goméz in an analysis about the role of the universities in the persistence of coloniality. He proposes to understand coloniality as a triangular structure between the coloniality of being, the coloniality of power and the coloniality of knowledge; a structure eternalized by a colonial view of the world that professes the modern science that obeys "an epistemic model deployed by the western modernity" (Castro-Gómez, 2007, p. 79, our translation) and is characterized by the hubris of the starting point: "to make a point of view about all other points of view, but without that point of view to have another point of view" (Castro-Gómez, 2007, p. 83, our translation). In this sense, the author offers a very pedagogical explanation about coloniality in the relationship between being-power-know.

3   Towards an understanding of the spatial dimension of coloniality

3.1   Contextualization of an experience

In 2008, after the publication of *A decolonial turn*, I started my studies in the doctoral program City, Territory and Sustainable Planning at University of Granada (Spain) thanks to a scholarship of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) I have postulated with a project called *Towards an architecture of liberation*. The research project aimed to argue on the necessity to liberate the professional scope of architecture in Cuba of certain homogenized and unsustainable dogmas that — I used to think — were the result of a bureaucratic form to manage the production of the habitat and the acrylic implementation of the principles of modernity. For me, that would explain the reproduction of certain urban, architectonic and international models in Cuba.

The concept "dogma" as a category of analysis came into play through a recent text that arrived in my hands as student and disciple of Eliana Cárdenas: *Architecture dogmas and unlearning: reflecting about the practice and practicing the reflection*, written by the Mexican Enrique Urzaiz (2005). The author debates the dogmas of pedagogy of architecture in modernity, among other issues. Since this reference, the questioning about modernity remained implicit, but in line with what I learned from Segre and Cárdenas. I believed faithfully in the idea that an "appropriated modernity" suggested from a "critic regionalism" of a very strong environmental and cultural

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source could be the alternative to the anonymous production of the global esthetics that was installed in the country since the 1990s as a result of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the forced opening to international tourism. On one hand, the concepts of "dogma" and "unlearning" led to the fortuitously emergence of the idea of "liberation" without any influence of Enrique Dussel's thought, who I had not heard when I drafted my research proposal. A little after I left Cuba, I read something about his work and, of course, he became one of my first interests to enter the University of Granada.

In Granada, having as tutor the environmental scientist and urban planner Alberto Matarán — he was already working in the Italian Territorial School and in Alberto Magnaghi, nearly to be the translator to Spanish of his most important book, *Il progetto locale* (see Magnaghi, 2011) — the category of "homogenization" led to "deterritorialization of the metropolis". Additionally, the broad access to the Internet facilitated me to start reading Enrique Dussel. By serendipity, the mention of this Latino philosopher in the bibliography of a course promoted by the Institute for Migration Research (UGR) during the first months of 2009 made me know about Ramón Grosfoguel and through him, the modernity/coloniality perspective.

In this manner, I gave a "decolonial turn" to the explanation of my problem: I understood that the deterritorialization of the metropolis presented in capitalist countries and as well as in Cuba, a socialist country, could be explained because of the western epistemological hegemony of the modern and colonial world-system. Around this idea, I wrote the text *Decolonize the territory: epistemological considerations for Habana* presented for the obtainment of my Advanced Studies Diploma (DEA) in September 2010, in which Alberto Matarán would use it as reference in his introduction to the Magnaghi"s book when he mentions the possibility that represents the territorial perspective to negotiate with the Global South. With some modifications, that text was presented afterwards as my doctoral dissertation (n.d. Farrés, 2013a). During that process, I participated in lectures, I wrote chapters of books and papers (see Farrés & Matarán, 2012a, 2012b) and subsequently, other additional texts (see Farrés, 2013b, 2015, 2016, 2019; Farrés & Toro, 2014; Farrés, Matarán & Avello, 2015). Some of them have been translated into Portuguese (see Farrés & Matarán, 2021).

3.2   Understanding the spatial dimensions of coloniality: from a territorial coloniality to an architectural coloniality

The unifying thread of those works has been the notion "territorial coloniality" gathered in Farrés and Matarán (2012) as the "combination of patterns of power thar serve in the territorial praxis to establish hegemonically a conception of territory over others that result inferiorized" (Farrés & Matarán, 2012, p. 152, our translation). As Castro-Gómez (2007), we argue the peculiarity of the triangular structure between the "coloniality of the territorial being", the "coloniality of the territorial power" and the "coloniality of the territorial knowledge". In this sense, the colonial debate was territorialized, unveiling a spatial dimension of coloniality that had not been treated in that way previously, maybe because of the absence of professionals in architecture, urbanism, or territorial statutes as part of the first generation of decolonial thinkers

(territorial)
coloniality of
knowledge

(territorial)
coloniality of
power

(territorial)
coloniality of
being
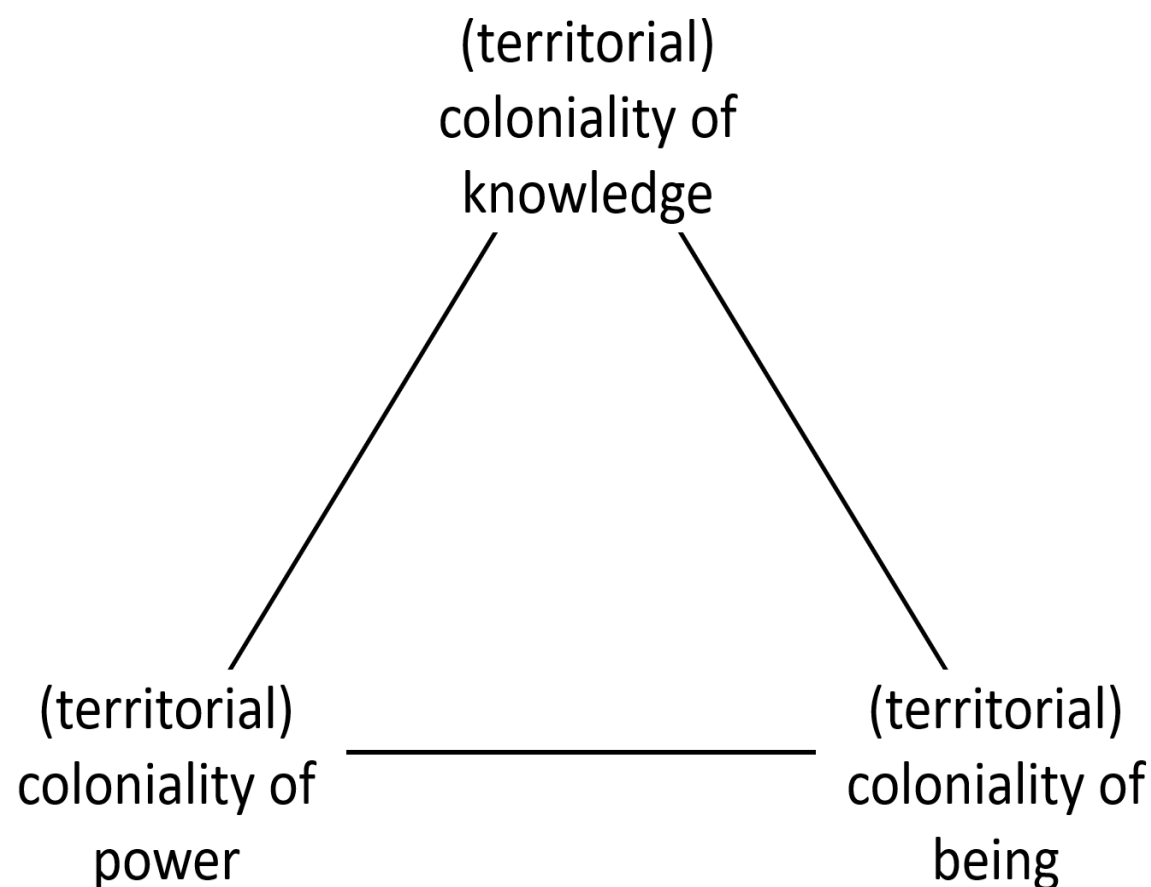
Fig.2: The territorial coloniality triangle. Source: Farrés & Matarán, 2012b. Available at: https://revistas.unicolmayor.edu.co/index.php/tabularasa/article/view/1371. Access on 07/07/2023.

If we consider the conceptual explanations that I presented in the first part of this essay, it is easy to understand that all the time I was conscious that I could talk in an equivalent way about the "urban coloniality" and the "architectonic coloniality", which is mentioned in various of the aforementioned texts. Now, I chose to reduce the explanation just to one of the scales because of a simple operational reason: I should hold a doctoral dissertation in an urban program in which my discourse was questioned by certain academic authorities that, rejecting the pertinence as disciplinary work in urbanism and territorial planning, classified it as part of the areas of sociology, political sciences, or philosophy. Fortunately, it was not the opinion of the dissertation committee.

I also found such position clinging to a reductionist academic concept that grants a privilege to the parcellation of the knowledge in the vicissitudes to publish an index paper that the UGR asked me as a requirement to defend my doctoral dissertation: when I sent my paper to a journal related to the urban field, the peer reviewers said that it treated very little the urban theory or it was from architecture. When I sent my paper to journals of architecture, it was not considered as part of that field of knowledge. Nevertheless, the truth was that, in general, these were European or American journals written in English. Along with the same lines there was the response of rejection I received of the text *Decolonizing Architecture and Urban Planning. A Theoretical Approach starting in Havana* that I sent to the *Journal of Arch'l & Planning Research* in the beginning of 2013. The feedback of one of the peer reviewers was to direct my paper "to a journal that accepts work incorporating broad, arbitrary theoretical claims like those presented here" and they proposed *Antipode* or *Space and Society*. I could not send my paper to the latter because of time constraints but the editor of Antipode considered that the article "does not fit well with what we publish". It is certainly true that every journal had a division of opinions between who evaluated it because some of them rejected my paper and others approved it, but the editors took the final decision of not accepting it.

Fortunately, a journal of humanities accepted my paper — the Colombian *Tabula Rasa* — and it was accepted by the school of doctorates of the UGR to allow me to defend my dissertation. In that way, I got my doctoral degree and the ability to write and publish without any institutional commitments. I centered my late works on making explicit the idea of "architectural coloniality". Two texts that are part of a more philosophical research that I am soon going to present (see Farrés, 2016a, 2016b) certify that. In this sense, considering the architecture, the city, and the territory as manifestations of different scales of a most general category (the built environment) and in line with the conceptualization of the architectural praxis that I presented before, I propose to think the *architectural coloniality* as a tetrahedral structure between the coloniality of being, power ,and knowledge in different architectural scales as it is presented in the following diagram in the Figure 3.
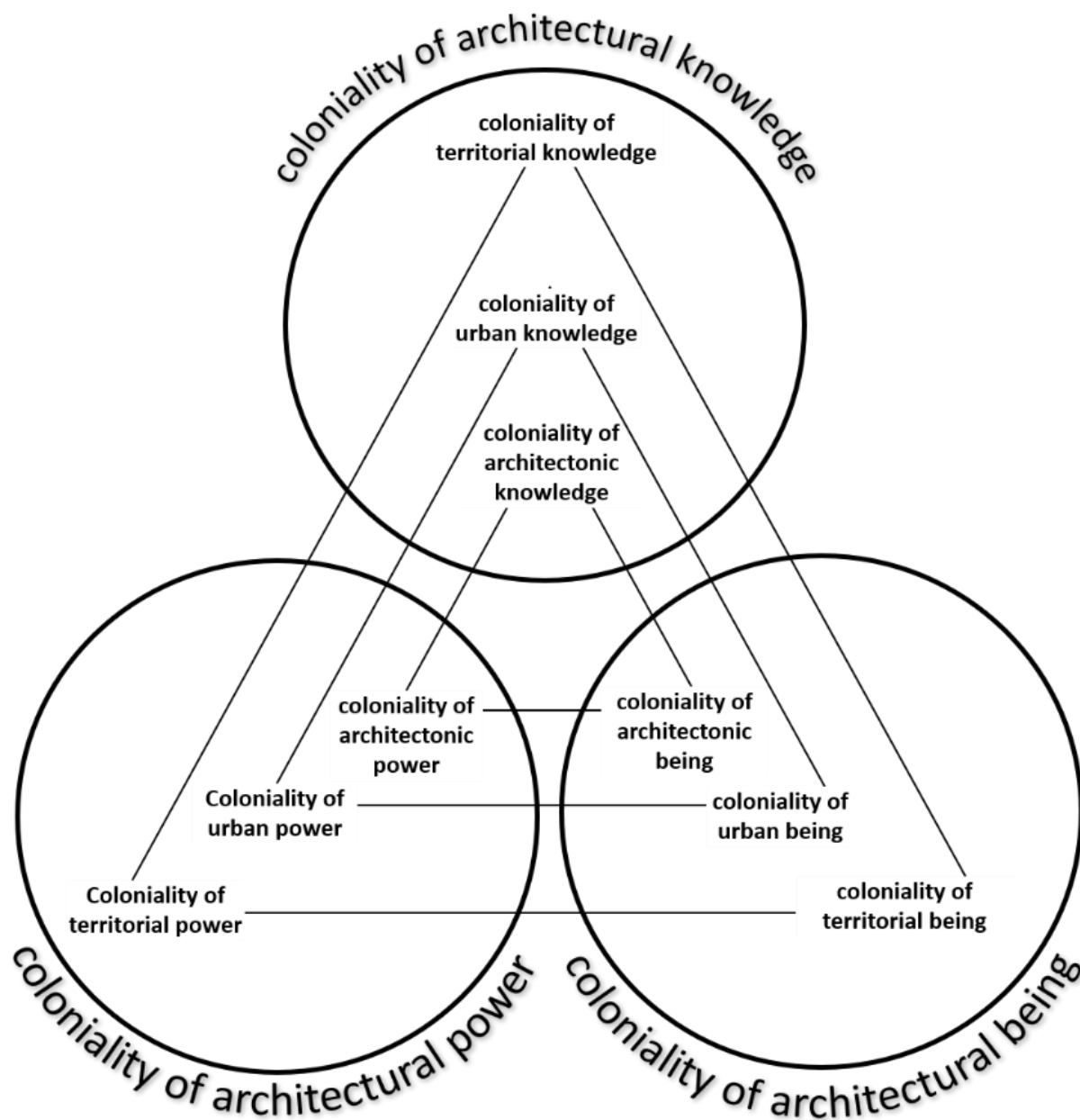
Fig. 3: The tetrahedral structure of the architectural coloniality. Source: The Author, 2023.

Therefore, we could talk about the "urban coloniality" and the "architectonic coloniality" as an analogy to the "territorial coloniality". Then, we would talk about the hegemony of a conception architectonic/urban about others articulated from the coloniality of the architectonic/urban knowledge. Or simply, we could define "architectural coloniality" in a multiple scale sense as awarded at the beginning of this essay, in a way each scale constitutes a particular manifestation. Consequently, we could affirm *coloniality of the architectural knowledge* as a empirical fact verified in two types of epistemic hierarchies different from each other but very relatable.:

1) *the hierarchy towards the exterior of architecture as a discipline*, given by the hegemony of the western architectural knowledge about the non-western architectural knowledge, and 2) *the hierarchy towards the interior of architecture as a discipline*, given by the hegemony of certain sub-disciplines about others (Figure 4). Such hierarchies are manifested in multiple forms, both inside and outside the walls of the academy. For example, in the sustained global deployment of the western notions of territory, city and architecture, or in the struggles between the archetypes of architects that I mentioned at the beginning, or also, in the disdain of architectural teaching that has assumed the ancestral, the traditional, the vernacular, and the popular relegated to a condition of patrimony or treated them as sources for the innovation, in the best scenario, without assuming that by themselves represent an alternative to the demands of the habitable spaces for the people.

EPISTEMIC HIERARCHIES THAT SHOW THE COLONIALITY OF TERRITORIAL KNOWLEDGE

(Toward the exterior of architecture as discipline)

(Toward the interior of the architecture as discipline)

WESTERN ARCHITECTURAL KNOWLEDGE

NON-WESTERN ARCHITECTURAL KNOWLEDGE

ARCHICTECTURAL SUB-DISCIPLINES

OTHER ARCHITECTURAL SUB-DISCIPLINES
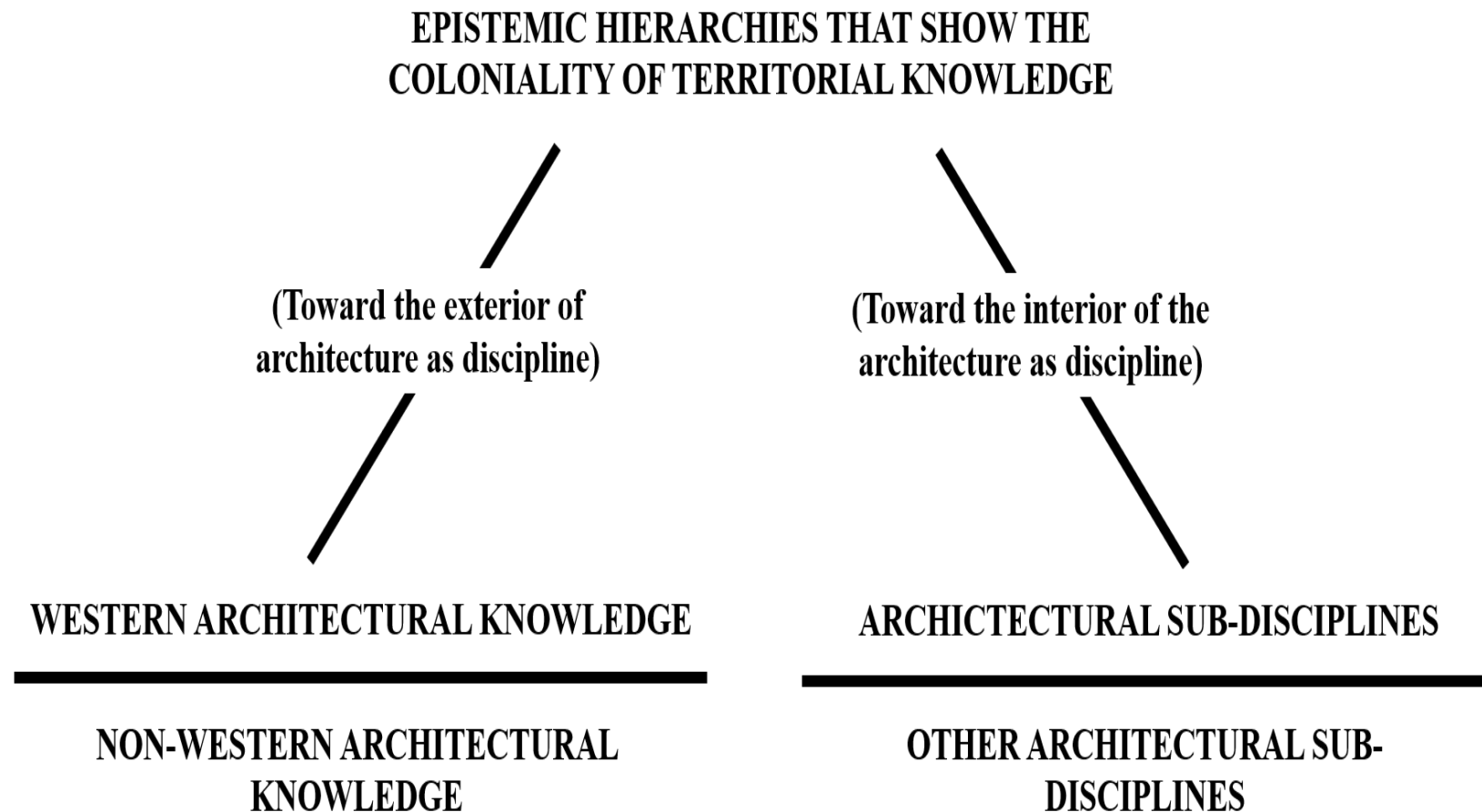
Fig. 4: Epistemic hierarchies that show the coloniality of territorial knowledge. Source: The Author, 2023 (original).

3.3 Early voices in the apprehension of the spatial dimension of the coloniality

Starting from the works mentioned before, in the last decades in Latin America, young researchers have appeared and formulated original interpretations in dialogue with the notion of "territorial coloniality". They are authors that address problems related to any of the design scales mentioned above. In the Hispanic context, Contreras (2016) stands out as an author that recognizes the epistemic value and its contributions to professional development, which he takes to direct the formulation of a research line in the Catholic University of Cuenca (see Sánchez, 2018). In the same manner, García-Chueca (2017) whose doctoral dissertation does a colonial critic to the concept "right to the city" proposes to delegalize and decolonize it while giving values to the non-normative expressions that emanate from the artistic-cultural decolonial field. Besides, Isasi (2018), whose master's thesis assumes the pertinences of the concept "coloniality of the territorial knowledge" and explains the recovery of the technologies of traditional construction (soil) as a possibility to develop decolonial aptitudes. On one hand, Mattioli (2018), whose doctoral dissertation directed by Ana María Falú, sees the communitarian practices and the cooperatives of social production of the habitats of social groups in the mountain range of Córdoba, Argentina, as an example of decolonization. From the Brazilian context, I would insist on the texts of Freire-Medeiros &

Name (2019), whose notion "epistemology of the favela rooftop" offers an inflexion in a way to understand urban informality beyond a certain idealization covered by postcolonial approaches, and Cunha (2019), who discusses the coloniality of knowledge in technical assistance for the construction of urban low-incoming houses.

4   Final considerations

For what it is worth, the self-reflection and mentions I have just presented evidence that the field of knowledge related to the design of human environments are not exempt from the operation of the coloniality of knowledge. In this sense, it is easy to recognize from the cited bibliography that none of the publications prior to 2020 correspond to specific prestigious architecture and urban planning magazines for scientometrics purposes. This is not casual; these are texts written by master or doctoral students or by young professors, subordinated in their academic contexts, without a trajectory nor major relevance for the cognitive capitalism of the journals of high impact. People as visible as me in 2013, when I had to emigrate again, back then from Spain to Colombia, looking for any opportunity to facilitate me to continue my career as professor. People without a real ability to perform roles of importance in the academic networks of high impact were already established, and so, distant to homologate the big figures of the "the first generation of decolonial thinkers" in their respective fields.

In other words, to return to the question about why the *boom* that is happening now: in Architecture, Urban Design and Spatial Planning there was not a visible figure that played a similar role as of the first generation of decolonial thinkers in the last decade. This constitutes an opportunity for the voices of major academic relations to emerge as paladins of the territorial decoloniality, showing a questionable ignorance of the precedent works, an unjustified attitude today, because most of the texts mentioned here were published in open access journals or in institutional repositories with free access since Google Scholar. Such an attitude reminds the epistemic extractivism sometimes reported that is an inherent condition of the intellectual phallocracy institutionalized in the neoliberal university. And this is how the late *boom* in the inquiry about the spatial dimensions of coloniality, or similarly, the modern/colonial aspects of design in its major scales (architectonic, urban, and territorial). We are attending an intellectual occurrence that later or earlier had to happen in relation to the study of the spatial dimension of coloniality. However, we might take the risk that the academy might become another fashion.

Finally, it is worth insisting the decolonization of the architectural praxis demands the breakdown of the western epistemic hierarchy installed by modernity that take specific forms in the imposition of patterns to inhabit the different scales of human environments. Such rupture will require to lay out again the theoretical-conceptual relationships, methodological and administrative of the current conception of the disciplines responsible for the design of the human environments — this means to remove the structures of the academy — but also the relationships between these disciplines and the non-institutional knowledge. For instance, the ancestral knowledge, the peasants, and other emergent forms linked to the forms to conceive the inhabit, the being-in-the-world. In other words, it is required a systematic questioning about how the multi scale link has been conceived between the architecture, the city and the territory; and at the same time a bet to construct models to inhabit in accordance with the ecological limits, having as horizon of sense the spatial/environmental, social and epistemic justice.

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SOMETIMES IT'S UGLY, BUT FASHIONABLE! DECOLONIAL POWERS, ADDITIONS, AND LIMITS

ÀS VEZES É FEIO, MAS TÁ NA MODA! POTÊNCIAS, ADIÇÕES E LIMITES DECOLONIAIS

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Abstract

Starting from a problematization of the interests at stake in recent uses of the decolonial repertoire, we seek to expose the powers of the first decolonial formulations, describe the contributions that were later added to them and present their weaknesses. For this, we present its two main bases: the critique of Eurocentrism, particularly aimed at the diffusion of knowledge, and the debate on "race" as a structuring aspect of political-economic-cultural dimensions, theorized in the concept of coloniality of power. Then, we highlight some of the perspectives that add new understandings to the concept of coloniality and point out contradictions of the decolonial turn. We conclude by supporting the reclaim of the power of this approach from the exposure of its limits, with a view to its translation to Brazil and beyond fads.

Keywords: Decolonial Turn, Eurocentrism, Race, Coloniality, Epistemology

1   Introduction

Scene 1. An Afro-Venezuelan student attends a presentation on the decolonial turn of one of the authors of this text. Facing the screen showing images of the faces of the two female authors and the eleven male authors usually pointed out as precursors of this perspective,[1] he comments: "I understood why you identify so much with the decolonials, since they are a bunch of white men talking about indigenous and black people!".

Scene 2. The two white people writing this article enroll in an online course on *decolonial thinking and the arts* at an important museum in Brazil, led by an admittedly competent researcher. In the first class, she shows the only one of more than fifty slides in which she quotes the Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano and coloniality, warning that she is not guided by that author or concept, but by a broader idea of *decolonization*. We soon realize that the course is about black male and female artists from Brazil, and from different periods — in fact, almost all of which were influenced by European and US "canons" that have long colonized us.

Scene 3. One of us watches the interview of a Brazilian actor saying that the play by a Canadian author, a big hit among both the public and critics, is now very successful in France. "We staged the play in our language and the posters on the streets display the title of the show in Portuguese", he says. And he concludes: "this is *decolonialism*!".

Scene 4. The other one of us is given a pamphlet about a course of *dekolonial yoga* (with a "k"), which, among other wonders, promises to combine movements, pauses, and breathing exercises for the *rekovery* (also with a "k") of bodies and the dissolution of westernities, Brazilianities, binarities and other borders. Wow!

In Brazil, the decolonial turn has been getting attention very recently, but the first writings about it date back to the nineties, when Quijano conceptualized the idea of coloniality. However, the four scenes indicate that the decolonial lexicon has quickly established itself here, in the academic world and beyond, with disputes over its meanings. At best, discourses positivize, strain, or criticize such an approach. At worst, private interests of academic validation, identity valuation, or economic gains co-opt it. Sometimes, paraphrasing the Brazilian Funk, the decolonial turn is "ugly, but fashionable"![2]

Not by chance, anti-decolonial works produced by haters have been circulated by groups linked to Latin American and Caribbean universities, who claim to be facing a "decolonial outbreak" (Makaran & Gaussens, 2020). We lead a research group dedicated to the decolonial turn and its scientific dissemination[3], but we consider ourselves more like a moderate fanbase. Therefore, our objectives

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[1] Aníbal Quijano, Arturo Escobar, Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Catherine Walsh, Edgardo Lander, Enrique Dussel, Fernando Coronil, Immanuel Wallerstein, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Ramón Grosfoguel, Santiago Castro-Gómez, Walter Mignolo and Zulma Palermo. Cf. Ballestrin (2013, p. 98).

[2] *"Sou feia, mas tô na moda" ['I'm ugly, but I'm fashionable']* is a song by Tati Quebra Barraco, Brazilian funk singer, in which she states that she is not beautiful, but has fame and Money.

[3] ¡DALE! — Decolonizing Latin America and its Spaces, registered in the CNPq research groups directory since 2016, has been dedicated to the production of dossiers in journals, events, and courses on decoloniality and related topics. This paper is also based on the teaching material prepared for a mini course

are different: we want to expose the powers of the first decolonial formulations and describe the contributions that were later added to them, but also present their weaknesses.

With regard to the powers, in the next two sections, we present a discussion focused on the two of the cornerstones that support the building of decoloniality. The first is the critique of Eurocentrism, with the participation of decolonial intellectuals anchored in the discussion about the relationship between the modern European-centered world-system and the diffusion of knowledge. The other is the idea of "race", which geo-historically influences political-economic-cultural dimensions of the social world, theorized in the key concept of coloniality of power. Then, with no intention to delve into deeper discussions, we highlight some of the analyses on the modes of subjectivation permeated by racist and patriarchal tropes, which result in an addition of perspectives — and adjectives — to coloniality. Lastly, and before we proceed to our final comments, we correlate the initial scenes described in this text with the contradictions that we have perceived in the decolonial approach to highlight its limits.

2   The cogency of the critique of Eurocentrism

Numerous criticisms regarding the decolonial turn question its denunciation of Eurocentrism for allegedly denying or reducing the epistemological contributions of Europe, or more broadly the West. Jeff Browitt (2014), Australian literature scholar, and Daniel Inclán (2020), Mexican historian, agree with the idea that criticism is exaggerated, and discussions are binary, reductionist and self-referential. However, what some of the debates seek to demonstrate, which later align with decoloniality — such as those of the Argentinean philosopher Enrique Dussel, based in Mexico, and the North American sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein —, is the operability of a specific ethnocentrism: which shamelessly attests that the European imperialist domination simply stemmed from European superiorities and good achievements throughout History.

Therefore, Dussel (1994, 2000, 2005) suggests four strategies for historical reimagination. First: to challenge Western parameters such as those that naturalize the stepwise progress of the ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary ages. Second: to transpose the fallacious idea of a European individual originating from a Hellenistic-Roman-Christian linearity that lacks support in facts. Third: consequently, to overcome the conception of modernity as an event exclusively of European origin, resulting from a Greek civilization without Egyptian or Semitic influences, succeeded by a Christian civilization without Islamic influence, followed by a purely European Renaissance that culminates in civilization of the highest degree in sciences, arts, and humanities. Fourth: to reposition the beginning of modernity in the invasion of America in 1492, which gives Europe a central role in world history. The latter is supported by Wallerstein's world-system formulation.

Drawing on long-term Braudelian logic, Wallerstein (2002, 2011) argues that the modern world-system emerges from the Conquest, due both to geographical expansion and increase in commercial circuits and to progressively solid methods of labor control and state apparatuses. Throughout the sixteenth century, America established itself as a geosocial entity, which resulted in the "deprovincialization" of Europe, shifted from its peripheral condition to the center in the global division of flows of people, inputs, goods and all kinds of wealth. According to the author, the modern-capitalist world has been shaped by a literally Eurocentric power geometry that is reflected in the domain of knowledge, especially in the social sciences: Europe also takes center stage in linear historiography, universalism, orientalism, and conceptions of civilization and progress.

Dussel and Wallerstein present formulations that are indeed anti-Eurocentric, but the critique of Eurocentrism is not restricted to their contributions nor is it a decolonial invention. We find it in writings contemporary with these two authors. A first example is the argument of the North American geographer James Blaut (1993), who compares Eurocentrism to a "time tunnel", whose walls enclose only the achievements of Europe, leaving out its own failures and the achievements of other peoples and cultures. A second example is the work of the historian Alfred Crosby (1999), also from the United States, who emphasizes the role of measurement, quantification, and representation technologies in consolidating Eurocentrism as a hegemonic vision. A third example is the Turkish historian Arif Dirlik's (1999) discussion of overcoming Eurocentrism from both the reaffirmation of History and historicity and the self-conscious

offered in 2019 at three Brazilian universities: UFBA, UFMG and UNILA. For details on our way of doing geopolitics of knowledge, see: Name, Spyer & Cunha (2019); Name & Spyer (2022).

confrontation with the structures of modernity. It is noteworthy, however, that said literature adheres to the macro-scale of the geo-historical relations between regions of the globe. It is not always clear that "Eurocentrism" is not a term related only to a geographical location, but also to an ethnic identity based on whiteness (both as phenotype and behavior), which affects the conception and conduction of modernity. In other words, such texts tend to cover up the "race".

3   The cogency of the debate about "race" and the coloniality of power

Following the path opened by the debate on the Western Self and the Eastern Other, promoted in the late seventies by the Palestinian literary critic Edward Said (2007), *postcolonial* studies are fundamental to the opposition to the naturalization of European history as universal and to the idea that modern white-bourgeois science can answer for all humanity. The Indian philosopher Homi Bhabha (2013), years later, defends non-essentialist notions of identity, by which colonized people claim agency and destabilize dominant narratives. At the same time, another Indian group of intellectuals — among many, Ranajit Guha (1983), Gayatri Spivak (2010) and Dipesh Chakrabarty (1992) — emphasizes the unfulfilled promises of European modernity, applies the Gramscian notion of "subaltern" to groups oppressed by ethnicity, class, gender, place, or religion and highlights the relationship between colonialism, imperialism, and the field of humanities.

In the nineties, part of the intellectuality that later adhered to decoloniality strived to translate post-colonial contributions to Latin America and the Caribbean. The Latin American Subaltern Studies Group included, for example, the Argentinean semiologist Walter Mignolo and Venezuelan anthropologist Fernando Coronil, both based in the United States; and the Colombian sociologist Santiago Castro-Gómez (cf. Verdesio, 2005). However, the subsequent attacks on the subaltern approach made by Mignolo himself (2000, pp. 183-186; 2000, pp. 213-214) and Ramón Grosfoguel (2008, p. 116-117), a Puerto Rican sociologist residing in the United States, are known: they betrayed their objectives of detaching themselves from the causal assumptions of dominant models by remaining backed by European intellectuals (the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci and the French post-structuralists Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida, mostly), with Europe as the starting point of theorization.

The complaint results in searches for other references. Important findings are the writings, produced between the fifties and sixties, of the essayist Aimé Césaire (2020) and the psychiatrist and political philosopher Frantz Fanon (2005, 2008), both Martinican and *anti-colonial*. Césaire challenges colonization as a civilizing or evangelization project, defining it as barbarism through which racism empowers the white colonizer to be cruel. Fanon describes the psychic "zone of non-being," in which people of color internalize dehumanizing attributes and yearn to assimilate the white cultural code. He also argues that decolonization can only emerge from the mass of "the wretched of the Earth", surrounded by a violent atmosphere and capable of responding with another violence, necessary, and more intense than that of the colonizer.

Another finding is the *coloniality of power*, as conceptualized by Quijano (1992, 1999, 2005): a hierarchical differential order based on the idea of "race" and forged in asymmetric relations after the invasion of America. Since then, he says, "race" establishes a logic that is both binary and evolutionist, which attributes superiorities to the white colonizing Self and inferiorities to the non-white colonized Other, both considered natural (as they come from "biological"). If coloniality does not disappear with the end of colonialism and such racial constructs still objectively, subjectively, and intersubjectively permeate politics, economy and culture, liberal society is then considered both the most advanced and the horizon for what in, each time or place, is distinct from whiteness — and, therefore, said to be inferior. According to the author, Eurocentric epistemologies of justification lead to such domination.

Quijano unites the debates of the world-system and Eurocentrism with that of "race" — implicit in postcolonial writings and expounded by Césaire and Fanon — and thus inaugurates the decolonial approach. His radical critique, in a dialogue with Wallerstein, points out that constructions of the colonial matrix of power are adopted as categories of meaning (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992). Given the dominance of the Eurocentric episteme, phenomena resulting from specific histories and geographies of power are scientifically distorted, as if they were ethnic, anthropological, or national data. However, it is crucial to highlight that the coloniality of power reveals that racism, persistent as a mechanism of oppression, is based on a contextually and socially activated *invention*: "race" — which, as Quijano warns, even intellectuals from anti-racist perspectives can inadvertently reify. That is why the author almost always uses quotation marks to refer to "race", a strategy we have also adopted in this text.

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4   Additions to coloniality

As of the 2000s, the decolonial turn increasingly gains adherence from a broader set of intellectuals, which expands the thematic horizons of Dussel, Wallerstein and Quijano's theorizations. In this section, as a mere example of the developments of the approach, we list some of the many layers that have added to the idea of coloniality.

The Venezuelan sociologist Edgardo Lander (2005) and the Argentinean semiologist Zulma Palermo (2010), for example, define the *coloniality of knowledge*. The concept demonstrates that knowledge situated outside the centers of power, or of non-modern rationalities and non-European matrices, is marginalized, expropriated, subjugated, or silenced. Thus, Western thought is unique, albeit with limited and limiting parameters. These reflections are complemented by others, such as those by Mignolo (2020), Castro-Gómez (2005) and Grosfoguel (2015). The first sees the notion of *geopolitics of knowledge* as the translation of the power geometry of the world-system into the scope of the exchange of knowledge, including in the academic world. The second and third introduce the terms *epistemic violence* and *epistemic extractivism*, respectively, to describe some of the asymmetries of this interaction.

Coloniality of being is the notion used by Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2007), a Puerto Rican philosopher based in the United States, and Mignolo (2003), to analyze subjective and intersubjective dimensions. As the coloniality of power seeks to dominate via racialization, while the coloniality of knowledge pretends to universalize a way for wisdom, both with some success, a way to conceive the perceptions of the Self and the Other change, reinforcing binaries. Thus, it affects the way individuals and groups interact and how they see, describe, and evaluate themselves and each other. Particularly through language, the coloniality of being establishes and amplifies markers of subalternity supported by situated understandings of "race".

María Lugones (2014, 2020) offers another contribution to the debate. The Argentinean sociologist, based in the United States, problematizes Quijano's (2005) indication of "feminine" and "masculine" as sexual categories subordinate to "race". In addition, inspired by the work done by Nigerian sociologist Oyèrónkë Oyěwùmí (2021), she says that there are no categories and hierarchies of gender of modern-European origin in pre-Conquest America: instead, they would have been inserted after colonization. Rita Segato (2012), an Argentine anthropologist residing in Brazil, disputes this approach as she identifies in tribal societies a *low-intensity patriarchy* in which less forceful gender asymmetries participate and are radicalized by the intrusion of colonial-modern-Eurocentric temporality. Both agree, however, that *coloniality of gender*, manifested in intersectionality with sex, class and "race", situates colonized, non-white women beyond otherness: in the zone of non-being.

From the 2010s, the decolonial perspective is taken to visual and audiovisual studies and then to the field of architecture. Joaquín Barriendos (2019), for example, links image production to epistemic racism, introducing the *coloniality of seeing*. In his analysis of colonial cartography depicting cannibalism in the Americas, the Mexican historian highlights the predilection for reductionist, stereotypical and degrading images. Such representation of the "savage" persists to this day in other images, widely reproduced, reinforcing binaries between civilization and barbarism through what may merely be visually apprehended.

Alex Schlenker (2019), a German visual arts researcher based in Ecuador, and Christian León (2019), an Ecuadorian sociologist, enrich the discussion. Schlenker questions the *colonial gaze* that frames images, imageries, and memory with a type of representation that necessarily classifies and hierarchizes. León argues that the coloniality of seeing is updated as *tele-coloniality* in contemporary audiovisual devices that play a fundamental role in the global circulation of images: they perpetuate the dichotomous imagery of the racialized Other for the geopolitical control of otherness.

In a close direction, researcher Mayra Estévez Trujillo (2015), also Ecuadorian, defines the *sonic coloniality* based on the relationship of the Western conception of art with classifications and hierarchies about "ethnic" and "racial" that come from the colonial matrix of power. Thus, she realizes that a local set of sonorities of European and white-bourgeois matrix is considered the "erudite" and the "universal" one, while other forms of sound expression are "exotic" or "folkloric". She also notes that colonization introduced violence manifested in sounds that evoke death, torture, rape, war, and extermination, narrated in songs or oral traditions in the colonized regions and updated by the racial violence of the present time.

Yasser Farrés Delgado (2015), a Cuban architect living in Colombia, takes another approach to coloniality, exploring the connections of forms of power, knowledge and being. His conceptualization of *territorial coloniality* exposes the patterns of power that establish hegemonic visions of the territory, privileging the modern-white-bourgeouis cities and architectures and belittling other modes of existence, territorial arrangements, building techniques and aesthetics. Andréia Moassab, Brazilian, investigates more specifically the role of architecture in the production of colonialities (2016, 2019, 2020). She discusses the inclusion of indigenous, African, and Afro-Latin matrices in architectural education, the whitewashing of architectural heritage and racial segregation between design and construction site. Two other Brazilian architects with research in the decolonial subject are Leo Name (2016, 2021, 2023) and Gabriel Rodrigues da Cunha (2019). The first reflects on architectless architectures and edible, medicinal and ritualistic landscapes of African and indigenous matrices. The second inserts the term *techno-scientific coloniality* to analyze the standardization of modern materials that makes the tectonics of other ethno-racial matrices invisible and unfeasible.

5   Problems to solve and limits to set

The actor in *Scene 3* cannot be blamed for the inaccurate use of "decolonialism". Decolonial intellectuals also have difficulties when it comes to nomenclature. Other statements compete with Castro-Gómez and Grosfoguel's "decolonial turn" (2007): for example, "modernity/coloniality research" by Arturo Escobar (2003) and "decolonial inflection" by Eduardo Restrepo and Axel Rojas (2010) — all Colombian anthropologists —, as well as "decolonial option" by Mignolo (2011). Furthermore, in writings in Spanish, for instance, there is a debate as to whether the approach should be called decolonial or *descolonial*. We recognize that we are accustomed to following the not so convincing argument of Catherine Walsh (2009, p. 14-15), an US linguist in Ecuador, about the suppression of the "s" not being an Anglicism, but the demarcation of the impossibility of undoing (*deshacer*) colonialism and coloniality. However, translation problems persist, while Grosfoguel (2020) has returned to using *descolonial* to emphasize his disagreements with the group and associate himself with the enormity of studies on descolonización.

But perhaps this is the least of the problems to solve. Two other problems are opened wide by the speech of the student in *Scene 1*. The male presence is dominant in the decolonial turn and if the ideas of "race" are the ones considered in Latin America and the Caribbean, its intellectuality is formed by a majority of white people (like ourselves, by the way) — a thorny theme honestly debated by Escobar (2003), but not so much by his peers. Our option to focus on women authoring decolonial studies whenever possible, as there are many more men in the bibliographic references of this paper, indicates how large the gender asymmetry is.

The other issue is more intricate. In the founding group of decoloniality, there are many intellectuals in universities in the United States. On the one hand, there are different understandings of "race" in this country and in Latin America, as informed by Segato (2007, p. 76). Thus, Mignolo, Grosfoguel, Escobar and Maldonado-Torres, for example, are never included in the "white" category — because they are necessarily "Latinos". As "race" is an invention that is always situated and fluid, there are or overlaps and two-way routes between *blanquitud desde Latinoamérica* and *latinness from* USA, and intellectual trajectories can move through many of their combinations. On the other hand, Palermo recalls, in an interview, that her adherence to the decolonial debate on "race" is largely due to her origin in the Argentine province of Misiones (Palermo et al., 2019): for someone from Buenos Aires, for example, she may not be exactly white. It is in this sense that Mignolo (2015) is right to link epistemological sites to geographical spaces.

However, to the extent that enunciation privileges tend to prevail, there are more limits to set. For example: it is commendable that decolonial intellectuals recognize the influence of Césaire and Fanon. Maldonado-Torres (2006) and Grosfoguel (2006) consider Césaire's thought to be the critical and Afro-Caribbean starting point for the crisis of European modernity and Eurocentric Marxism and, therefore, an influence on decolonial notions. Maldonado-Torres (2008, 2019), Grosfoguel (2012), Mignolo (2011, pp. 109-110, 126-127), Palermo (2019, p. 92) and Walsh (2017, pp. 37-56) emphasize the relevance of Fanon's sociogenesis in their formulations. However, if it is questionable that, in Scene 2, the art of different people is called decolonial just because they are black, it is also questionable to treat these intellectuals as decolonial *avant la lettre*, even attributing to them the anticipation of the concept of coloniality. Maldonado-Torres (2009) and Mignolo (2009) do this with respect to Fanon, while Grosfoguel (2009, 2020) does the same with respect to Fanon and Césaire, among other unfortunate situations.

There is nothing more colonial — and racist! — than giving black people names they did not choose. What a shame!

These authors are not decolonial and we cannot say that they are, even so as not to disregard — imagine that! — the epistemological sites indicated by Mignolo. After all, *post-colonial, anti-colonial* and *decolonial* are not neutral and interchangeable words. Post-colonialism, post-colonial, and post-coloniality refer, first, to a historical period after colonization: the United States, Canada, Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, Africa, and Oceania entered post-coloniality at different times and through various processes of decolonization. However, Said, Bhabha, and the Indian group of subalterns — who are *not* decolonial — represent the post-colonial as a theoretical, anglophone approach, centered on the conflicts of British imperialism, since the nineteenth century, in Africa and especially in Asia. The anti-colonial perspective, in turn, is francophone and in conflict with the legacies of French imperialism, situated in the mid-twentieth century, at the beginning of the still inconclusive process of decolonization of its territories, such as the Caribbean of Césaire and Fanon.

Decolonial and decoloniality, finally, are part of the vocabulary of a Latin American and Caribbean approach, especially Hispanophone — by Mignolo & company —, which emerged in the 1990s having as its first theoretical framework the displacement from the beginning of modernity to 1492, when the planet submits to the particular history and geography of European expansion. In addition, as the second, the delineation of the subordination of the world population to a racial classification. This results, in the first place, in an epistemic repositioning that gives centrality to America in the institution of the contemporary world. Secondly, the questioning of intra-European and diffusionist conceptions of modernity. And, thirdly, the identification of both overlaps and coetaneous aspects of transatlantic and intercontinental processes and of the transversality of the idea of "race", from the scale of the globe to the scale of the body.

Then, it is necessary to be careful with terminological exchanges or misleading classifications of intellectuals, which divert analytical operators and, therefore, what to observe and how to evaluate the objects. No wonder, there are accusations of methodological problems in the decolonial approach (Puentes, 2014; Malheiros & Spyer, 2021): theories are addressed, but methodologies are neglected, ignoring that the field and fieldwork, for example, are also linked to the epistemological site.

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6   Final considerations

The sequence of power, knowledge/being, gender, visuality/sonority, and territory/architecture, described in the section on the different concepts of coloniality, has as a positive aspect the adherence to themes in different phases of the decolonial debate. Each of them, to some extent, was guided by a generation of intellectuals committed to exposing the permanence and multidimensionality of racial structures and hierarchies. In addition, and we try to demonstrate this in this text, the geo-historical transversality of the idea of "race" and the understanding of Eurocentrism as a diffusionist project of imposition of knowledge and subjectivations are certainly the greatest contributions of the decolonial turn.

However, if we cross the walls of the university and move away only a little from the writings and intellectuals that we quote here, and that we appreciate so much, we may come across the *dekolonial yoga* of *Scene 4* at the beginning of this article. The proposition is indeed odd, but it infers that there is an exaggeration of supposedly decolonial statements and repertoires, in a way additive to a fashion initiated and stimulated by the Academy itself — and, in some cases, by intellectuals of the "turn". It is from this scenario that emerges the danger of the conversion of coloniality to the wild concept, which, when explaining anything and everything, explains nothing else. To minimize such risks of exhaustion and rescue the power of the decolonial turn, one must both celebrate its qualities and especially point out its limits, which we also try to do here.

We agree with the Brazilian legal theorist David Gomes (2021), when he assertively states that not everything is a colonial problem and not all criticism of the colonial is decolonial. In this sense, on the one hand, at the end of the previous section we can conclude that the more distinct the local histories and geographies, the more varied the epistemological sites. Thus, on the other hand, it is necessary to take very seriously that knowledge is enhanced when it is situated and, therefore, more appropriately translate decolonial theorization to Brazil (Pires, 2017; Baldi, 2019; Name, 2022; Name & Spyer, 2022). As much as this set of writings undeniably redefines and reorients the debate on racism and the circulation of knowledge, many of them generalize processes of Spanish colonialism as occurrences of the entire American continent, focusing on conflicts of Andean indigenous groups and, misusing Césaire and Fanon, dedicating little attention to Afro-Diasporic legacies and problems of minoritized Afro-Latin American collectivities.

If all fashion goes by when the season's items are excessively consumed, perhaps the decolonial turn can be redesigned, by a good "pretuguese"[4], with the clothes of "amefricanity", "quilombism", and the ancestral future (Gonzalez, 2020; Nascimento, 2019; Krenak, 2022). And if it is sad for concepts to lose power before they are truly understood, which is an eminent risk for the approach, it is sadder to waste the experience of parading through catwalks of knowledge about what constitutes us.

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[4] "Pretuguese" is an adaptation of the word "pretuguês", which is the combination, by Afro-Brazilian anthropologist Lélia Gonzalez, of the words "preto" (black) and "português" (Portuguese).

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TOWARD A POLITICAL ONTOLOGY OF URBAN *BUEN VIVIR*
HACIA UNA ONTOLOGÍA POLÍTICA DEL BUEN VIVIR URBANO

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Abstract

Having *buen vivir* as a theoretical horizon developed on the Global South, this article explores the possibilities it would have for understanding the contemporary city in Abya Yala. Here, political ontologies of a relational nature are positioned as possibilities for substantiating a new type of inhabiting the city, based on the communal sense. For that, we take into consideration the tensional elements of the new social movements that have emerged in recent decades, which are the same ones that demand the right to a dignified life in cities marked by the conflictive coexistence between gentrification and urban extractivism. In this sense, in this article we propose to establish a theoretical dialogue with *buen vivir* as a philosophy from the Global South and a fundamental component of decolonial thought. We do so by having the city as the place where we situate our thinking, having in mind the profound changes it has had in recent decades. To this end, we review the fundamental principles of the philosophy of *buen vivir*, while approaching a first review of the new social movements that uphold these principles and their reach in the plurinational states that have emerged in the region.

Keywords: Urban *buen vivir*, Abya Yala, Political ontology, Urban extractivism, Communality

1   Introduction

Buen vivir, as an alternative model of a full life, is being assumed as an ethical-political horizon in different places in Latin America/Abya Yala, especially rural ones, but also in a multiplicity of coexisting social nuclei in cities. As a philosophy from the Global South that has been established as an important element in the formation of decolonial thought in Abya Yala, *buen vivir* is a creative and (re)creative power of other political horizons and a unifier of diversities in (re)existence. It is manifested in the multiple alliances built between the members of the different urban social groups, campesino organizations, movements of native, indigenous, and Afro-descendant peoples. Together, these groups have shaped a set of relationships based on solidarity, reciprocity, and trust, both in rural areas and in cities.

Therefore, just as it fuels new forms of coexistence in cities and contributes to deconstructing the dominant models present in Abya Yala since colonial times, *buen vivir* confronts the mechanisms of exclusion predominant there. The very hierarchical scheme of the colonial city — with its historical centers and extramurals neighborhoods or peripheries, and with its continuity in design and organization during capitalist modernity both in its liberal and globalized phase — is now confronted by alternative community and communal expressions. These expressions, from their places of enunciation and in the horizon of relational political ontologies, have been building other ways of being and inhabiting the city.

In the midst of a new dispute over territory, the leaders of the modern city propose a policy of urban renewal based on extractivism, gentrification, and the displacement of urban-popular residents (Garcia, 2019). In response to this, the organized popular sectors transgress hegemonic forms through territory and life economies, relational ontologies, liberating spiritualities, and politics expressed in new corporalities.

This article written by several hands is part of this horizon, where we engage in dialogue with *buen vivir* from the place where we are located: urban Abya Yala. By virtue of the above, we first approach the category of *buen vivir* as a philosophy from the Global South in the terms established by the Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2009), taking part in decolonial thought. Then, we approach the continuities between the colonial and the contemporary cities, noting the conflicts that have arisen around a process in which hierarchization, gentrification, and urban extractivism converge as constitutive elements of the colonial urban dynamics. Finally, we take up the epistemological potential of urban *buen vivir* from the perspective of relational political ontologies with consideration of the new sense of community and the communal, and we allude to trajectories of social movements and organizations rooted in other ways of being and inhabit the city (Rodríguez & Orrego, 2021, p. 124). In this case, we refer to political ontologies as the entanglements of discourses, practices, and absences that originate and occur in the territories, which become situated by "the relationality of the whole that is concretized in forms of being-becoming (or in Spanish, estar-siendo), forms that otherwise express

the integrality that shapes the continent's own thinking" (Idrobo & Orrego, 2021, p. 17, our translation). In summary, and by means of conclusion, we propose some ideas that can be worked on more extensively in future research.

2   *Buen vivir* as a philosophy from the Global South and the decolonial thought

We understand *buen vivir* as a decolonial philosophy from the Global South with which we seek to shape possible new ways of life in harmony between human and non-human beings, with their corresponding cultures, knowledge, and care of nature. Consequently, we see it as a historical project that questions contemporary capitalism in its notion of progress as the foundation of modernity (Prada, 2011) and its dark side, coloniality, with all those components that have shaped it: ecocidal reason, racism, and genocide.

As Juan Giusiano (2011, p. 3) explains, there are three principles of *buen vivir* that originate in the cosmovision and ontologies of the people who inhabit Abya Yala. The principles that he considers relevant, for its constitution as a philosophy from the Global South, would be: first, that of relationality, understood as the interconnection and interdependence of all "the elements that make up the universe." In correspondence to this same argument, we have the position of Ramiro Ávila, who considers that the existential foundation of relationality is supported by the very fact that the beings that inhabit nature could not live without it (Ávila, 2011, p. 211). In our case, it would be the city as the place where we live, where those visions that give meaning to community life are born.

Secondly, there is the principle of complementarity, which is the link that explains that "the opposite of a thing is not its negation but its complement and its corresponding necessity" (Giusiano, 2011, p. 3, our translation). Complementarity works with the logic of complementary opposites, one contains the other and therefore avoids confrontation. Inhabiting Abya Yala, we read the uni-multi-pluri-verse forms of life known and yet to be known. Therefore, the importance of the complementarity of opposites that, acting together, enhance each other, since they are dynamically united in the circularity of their movements (Ávila, 2011, p. 212).

Thirdly, we have the principle of reciprocity, understood as the double bond that is established "with the natural environment and the community as a whole, and the double attribute of divinity and creative mother with which people consecrate to the earth" (Giusiano, 2011, p. 3, our translation). Finally, in the philosophy of *buen vivir* there is the principle of correspondence, which involves the previous ones and manifests itself in all aspects of life, involving, above all, respect for nature (Ávila, 2011, p. 213).

Taking into account the principles we have pointed out, we recognize that the emergence of *buen vivir* could be located in a historical and intellectual trajectory that begins with the emergence of indigenous and campesino movements, their knowledge, praxis, and principles of life. In the same way, *buen vivir* is a product of the struggles and resistance carried out in the cities by organizations and social movements of various types, all of which nourish decolonial reflection in the region. Thus, *buen vivir* is constituted as a political project with local ontological support and, due to the principles that support it, it is always contingent on the diversity of special-temporalities and the historical-cultural and ecological contexts of the forms of life to inhabit, to be and exist in the territory. That is the importance of considering the ontological relational entanglements in which it is situated. The potential of *buen vivir* and its decolonial character are at play in this debate. Unlike developmental projects, which imposed a single model of life administration, the understandings and emphasis of *buen vivir* (the territories, their relationships and meanings, the plurality of origin) do not allow the application of a single model to all contexts (Gudynas & Acosta, 2011, p. 81).

Therefore, it is important to situate *buen vivir* as a proposal that encompasses elements of an epistemic, ontological, political, and economic order. Therefore, *buen vivir* questions the unilinear and hegemonic aesthetic narratives of the political, positioning an understanding of the world in which the interactions and relationships between humans and non-humans, between the rural and the city, between ethics and economy are constitutive and constituent of reality (Estermann, 2006; Orrego, 2018). Thus, *buen vivir* not only describes and qualifies certain practices and thoughts — current and active —, but also constitutes an open space in and from territories whose purpose is to rearticulate various forms and aesthetics for the care of life. Therefore, if the philosophy of *buen vivir* and relational ontologies contribute to anything, particularly urban *buen vivir*, it is precisely to the possibility of articulating diverse ontological registers (De la Cadena, 2020, p. 293), social demands, and totalities absent as well as the needs of the social realm.

If we take into account its emergence in a global/international and regional/local context, the latter seems constitutive of *buen vivir*, as Adrian Beling and Julien Vanhulst point out in their proposal for a glocal genealogy of *buen vivir*:

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These contextual elements provide, in themselves, a solid basis to support the thesis that *buen vivir* results from a vector sum of converging forces at a global and local levels, with indigenous struggles being a necessary but not sufficient condition. (Beling and Vanhulst, 2016, p. 13, our translation)

In this perspective, urban *buen vivir* has its own challenges and conflicts in which its ontological force could be located to create and recreate ways of thinking about the city that would be accompanied by the vindication of territorial struggles. Ultimately, it is a different understanding of the territory that would require new actions on the urban space and its interrelationships.

3   The contemporary city: realities and conflicts

The proposal and organization of the modern city make us see a systematic process of fragmentation of both the urban space and the people who inhabit it, marked by the logic of consumerism and accumulation imposed by capitalism. In this sense, accumulation would be the foundation of a philosophy on which a segregationist system of important sectors of citizenry is based since it hinders them to access rights that are simply a product of living in the city (García, 2019).

We could say that segregationist logic and accumulation is part of an urban history that begins with the configuration of the colonial city through the emergence and consolidation of the city as we know and live in, the globalized city. In this process, the primacy has been the logic of occupation based both on the search for an income, which in many cases has been lifelong and transmitted from generation to generation, and on the logic more oriented by the accumulation and reproduction of capital in forms based on the occupation of urban territory for industrial or financial purposes. At the same time, we have also had large and highly stratified housing projects, whose implementation has been strongly conditioned by their formal-legal nature, which ignores and segregates popular urban and self-construction while considering it illegal, contributing to the formation and sustainment of a type of city based on inequality.

Currently, we are able to verify the continuity of these processes of segregation and inequality. This has tended to increase due to the displacement of campesino families in a context marked by the lack of protection of the agricultural sector of the economy, where economic openness together with extractivism, a combination considered irreplaceable, act jointly. Megaprojects for the extraction of raw materials have increased in the last three decades on the same time there is much talk about the millennium goals and sustainable development, with environmental and natural resources governance as ideological and institutional supports in this new phase of liberal globality (Olano, 2021).

The consequence of this unbridled action against nature has brought with it undeniable environmental deterioration. Climate change manifests itself in the loss of water sources, through the retreat of glaciers or the drying up of rivers and lagoons, along with the degradation of rural environments due to mining and illegal logging. Also, we must consider the unresolved social and political conflicts associated with land ownership and use. All these events should not be seen as distant from urban problems since, from a holistic and relational perspective, they are articulated. For these reasons, space is opening up for the hierarchical imaginaries of the city with its particular form of urban growth to the detriment of spaces marked by the predominance of earthly goods, that is, nature.

At the same time, taking into account the same vision with which the urban has been stratified since colonial times, this dynamic has led to certain sectors being able to enjoy the benefits that cities offer in their modern sense, while enormous population groups — majorities, being understood as inhabitants without rights — occupy the so-called neighborhood *callampas*, ranches, young towns, subnormal neighborhoods, invasive neighborhoods, or *favelas*. Here, the spaces created are, in contrast to the previously mentioned urbanization practices, in this permanent dispute for a decent place to live within the cities. During this dispute over the meaning given to the use of territories within cities, gentrification emerges as a new threat to popular urban areas and to the social fabric built for decades within neighborhoods. As it has been occurring, gentrification is a process associated with a renewed form of capital accumulation in cities, which has also come to be known as urban extractivism. For these reasons, gentrification or urban extractivism can be considered relevant aspects of this process of renewal of capitalism, which began in the mid-1970s, and which David Harvey (2005) called "accumulation by dispossession".

Indeed, in Latin America, it is possible to find struggles for the right to decent housing in the city since the 1950s. Such struggles show us, quite early on, an appropriation and connection with urban territories in somewhat different ways in comparison to what the state was doing at that same time with its great infrastructure projects. It was also the time when the private sector dedicated itself to building housing for middle- and high-income sectors, while allocating large amounts of urban land for the construction of factories and infrastructure with the aim of adapting the city for industrial production in the era of modernizing-developmental apogee.

Unlike the proposal advocated by the planners and designers of the capitalist city, we observe a process of popular appropriation of urban territories. Popular urbanization is the result of migratory and displacement processes, plus organizational practices based on demands that not only included housing, but also public services such as drinking water, sewage, education, health, and public spaces for culture and recreation. For this reason, those within the popular neighborhoods have acquired the importance of organizational processes as well as dynamics of meeting in assemblies and the *minguera* tradition of mutual aid and reciprocity that accompany the residents from rural areas that are now installed in the city (Torres, 2007). Under the principles of urban *buen vivir*, being based on long duration, this reading allows us to understand the radically different ways in the process of inhabiting the city, since here we seek to restore the relationship between subjects, cultures, and territories, all based on the sense of place of those who inhabit the popular city.

4   The city from *buen vivir*

By virtue of the above, after having established the principles with which we have defined *buen vivir* as a decolonial philosophy from the Global South and approximated to the predominant characteristics and conflicts in the current city, we consider it important to move towards other interpretations of the city with the concept of relational political ontologies. It should be pointed out that several of these interpretations take shape from the struggles and demands of urban residents for a dignified life, which have been grouped into horizons and agendas that range from the recognition of diverse subjectivities and corporeality to environmentalist demands. In the same way that they have claimed the achievement of food sovereignty, they have also claimed the organization of economies for solidarity and life, combined with organizational practices based on care and co-care (Cuevas & Bautista, 2020), as well as the most recent experiences of liberating spiritualities.

What is in question, from the perspective of urban *buen vivir*, is not the integration of the majority into privileged urban spaces, or participation in that fragmentary logic of the territory, but rather the restoration and decolonization in the use of territorial space and their interrelationships (Delgado, 2015, p. 53). These interrelations, that translate into senses of immanence and unicity of the territory and the living beings that inhabit it, have shaped relational political ontologies that seek to be incorporated into all spheres of life. It is a constellation that cracks the hegemonic and is situated in a decolonial horizon, putting into relation other discourses, theories, and practices with which urban *buen vivir* is organized. In this regard, we must note the appropriations of institutional spaces that have occurred within the framework of social mobilizations in recent months in Colombia: demolished colonial monuments, police stations transformed into community libraries, popular neighborhood political, and academic formative spaces, such as the "University to the Neighborhood" experience in the city of Cali. Likewise, places of creation for critical memory through murals in the streets of various cities, all of which announce the emergence, not only of indignation and the fight for dignified citizen conditions, but in some way anticipate new decolonial representations and imaginaries of popular urban spaces, of collective memory, and its importance for autonomous community construction and life in urban territorial spaces.

New popular urban art of the streets among other things has led to a situated variant of the global culture of hip hop that shows peoples and bodies in resistance. These are in addition to: new muralism, rap, graffiti, dance groups, along with seed guardians[1], members of the *batukadas*[2], popular feminist collectives, front line protesters[3], neighborhood assembly attendees, and the support

[1] The seed guardian is "who recovers, produces, conserves, researches, selects, and improves seeds in an agroecological context and shares the seeds in a supportive, responsible manner and helps to streamline the seed flow process." (Corporación Grupo Semillas, 2016, our translation)

[2] *Batukadas* are part of multiple artistic interventions generally developed by feminist collectives in the midst of social mobilizations.

[3] They have been formed "by young people from the most vulnerable popular sectors and whose existences are made invisible and expelled from this capitalist, racist, colonial, and heteropatriarchal system." (Villarreal & Hernández, 2021).

for rebel puppeteer interventions[4], This is urban *buen vivir*. In a structure less centered on material symbols and in a process of decommodification, new communities are organized in association with an ancestry present since the founding and the first organization of urban territories seventy years ago. It is a process in which we can observe ways of knowing in a coalition of heterarchical procedures, given that we know that different proposed logics and reasons are recognized from their place in the city regarding *buen vivir* (Olano, 2023). Some of them live in a non-linear time, which is the basis of a different relationship with space (Orrego, 2018); they put aside accumulation aspiration and manage their territory with the principles of becoming-being (in Spanish, *ser-estando*) and doing-being (in Spanish, *hacer-siendo*). This is a relationship that invites us to return to the notion of cycles and rhythms of life that differ from those established by Western thought, especially in those moments when modernity was built in Europe having colonialism and coloniality as its most relevant aspects. As decolonial thought in Abya Yala has very well explained, the world system of global economics and markets ended up being constituted with colonialism and coloniality, which today is lived in the phase known as neoliberal globality.

Urban *buen vivir* reconsiders the use of time and space, since living fully means leaving aside (or at least separating from) incessant productivism as an ideology that moves the ways of existing and being in the city, in order to make way for a series of new and ancient practices that do not have a predatory horizon of nature nor insatiable consumption as a form of living well. Related to the latter, the search for moderation in the way of life and social relationships based on care and co-care become principles and actions that are like those that originate in solidarity and reciprocity as seen in philosophy from the Global South. To this must be added a multiplicity of collectivized initiatives in community and neighborhood organizations that for decades have organized heterarchical dialogue with academics and critical intellectuals. This relates to an entire epistemic richness that originates in the production of meaning: the organization of alternative-changing life practices and the implementation of community exercises that feed critical memory. To a large extent, all of these are the urban antecedent of the search for systemic alternatives, which as anti-capitalist paradigms, not only seek to rethink the social relations of economic, symbolic, and spatial production, but also the relations between human beings and nature.

In this sense, it is worth specifying the transformative ontological potential that is articulated in some of the practices of the aforementioned groups, which must be added to the various systemic anti-capitalist struggles that are taking place at a global level. While urban *buen vivir* does not simply seek to make the city more livable, it proposes a complete rethinking of its function from the interactions with other living spaces, such as rural and subalternized ones. Besides it, there are the dimensions of life in community, spiritual and intercultural, which in some way expand the understanding of life imposed by the aesthetics and policies of capitalist development. An element that should be highlighted is the articulation of many practices and meanings of community action in a dimension of liberating spirituality, which is not limited to a specific religious institution or theological structure, something that is functional to the modern and liberal city model. We mention the latter because it is not enough to talk about religious tolerance as an unquestionable principle without referring to the legitimizing institutions of the uninational and monocultural order with which the liberal state has been organized in our countries. Therefore, we propose a profound and militant understanding of life in close connection with the territory and corporalities.

This dimension of spirituality should not be confused with the spiritualization of reality, but with a deep and, if you will, mystical understanding of community relations that transcend the order of the merely strategic-political and social consensus as a unifier of individualities. Animated by a variety of practices that range from inter-neighborhood community experiences around home gardening or urban gardens, where the private spaces of homes are intervened to encourage selfless association around bartering, the exchange of memories, and the search for collective healing. At the same time, the construction of new narratives of memory in which ways of knowing are related to flavors and bodies to emotions, plus the multiple forms of rituality that freely mix expressions and cosmovisions of Afro and indigenous experiences, give rise to the new urban popular. This is why these spaces are just examples of expressions that are emerging thus giving shape to another rationality of the common in the city.

In this context, spirituality can fulfill a re-binding and relational function for the collective and egalitarian imagination of urban *buen vivir*, especially if we understand that the rationality contained in the notion of modern citizenship and supported by a dualistic ontology,

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[4] The expression of "rebel puppeteers" is used to account for one of the artistic and cultural groups that, through scenic expression, was part of the mobilizations carried out in Bogotá in 2021.

is characterized for its promotion of inequality, fragmentation, and individualism. It is the same one in which it is not possible to reconcile the poles given in the duality of nature-culture, rural-urban, ethics-economics, planning-agency. Religion and relationality are evident in the understanding of territory and territoriality which has been emerging in Latin America since the 1980s. It is the same one that, enriched by a multiplicity of struggles, makes territory a theoretical-political category of special importance, where "what is relevant about the emergence of the territory is that it arises within the struggles of Afro-descendants, indigenous people, feminists, and the social movements, and precisely not exclusively from academic spaces" (Machuca & Orrego, 2020, p. 25, our translation).

In relation to the above, and in clear contrast to the perspectives of Western citizenship that seems to turn against the community, many of the meanings of the practices of urban *buen vivir* are supported by a deep understanding of communality and community. On the one hand, the idea of communality, or communal systems, disputes the interpretative space of citizenship and tends to displace the capitalist economy and liberal democracy as the only forms of social and political organization (Rodríguez and Orrego, 2021). In this sense, it leans towards communal forms of economy and agency, promoting the conditions so that cultural plurality brings with it true intercultural spaces and scenarios. Hence, the community is seen by the Colombian anthropologist Arturo Escobar as "a deeply historical, heterogeneous entity permeated by power" (Escobar, 2017, p. 51, our translation).

In this horizon, and as Raquel Gutiérrez (2012) reminds us, there is an antagonism between the "community entanglements" and the "coalitions of transnational corporations." It is interesting to note how the understanding of the community entanglements contain many of the elements of relational ontological order, emancipatory spirituality, and the understandings of territoriality that animate the practices and thoughts of urban *buen vivir*. Ultimately, the communal, spirituality, and territory become articulating axes of the political ontology of urban *buen vivir*, and they stage various types of struggles that do not aspire to the seizure of power but to the reconfiguration and search for other logics and forms of power, now in a decolonial way. In fact, they constitute new forms of non-state power since they advocate the reorganization of the urban territory and society based on local, regional, and global autonomies.

6   Conclusions

Reflecting on the city from the decolonial horizon of the political ontologies of urban *buen vivir* meant a prior diagnosis of the accumulation and segregationist logic, the same one that, through the processes of gentrification and extractivism, has been promoted as a unique model of organization of life in the urban centers. In this horizon, the colonial, extractivist, and gentrified model of the city, with the dualist and fragmentary political ontology that sustains it, seeks to perpetuate itself today from a diversity of devices and imaginaries of hegemonic urban development. It seeks to organize life, space-times, and ways of being of urban inhabitants, confining an immense majority of the population to cultural, spatial-territorial segregation, and in general, to life without the right to enjoy the city.

In tension with these fragmentary and hierarchical logics of the city, we have postulated an ontological understanding that — inspired by the decolonial philosophy of *buen vivir* and manifested in the multiple practices of resistance and re-existence of indigenous, neighborhood and popular movements seen in recent social mobilizations — intervenes in narratives and aesthetics, and configures new ways of inhabiting urban space-times. Within this horizon, we have wanted to highlight the creative and re-creative potential, that is, the relational ontological potential of the philosophy of urban *buen vivir*, as a binding of practices, feelings, thoughts, and other corporalities that enables new ways of inhabiting the city: in short, decolonial expressions of being and existing in and from the urban spaces of Abya Yala.

In our case, we wanted to focus the attention of our research on what we have called three creative powers, from which we observe urban *buen vivir*: firstly, spirituality as a re-binding and relational dimension that gives mystique and depth to community relations; second, the communal and community framework itself, which weaves relationships beyond the interest of corporate coalitions and segregating urban designs; and thirdly, in the territory as a vital-world space that articulates the previous ones. With these creative powers, new links are affirmed, allowing us to recreate the ways of inhabiting space-time in the city. Also, they anticipate a political ontology of urban good living and its contributions to the strengthening of decolonial thought. This delimitation, or observation of three creative powers of urban *buen vivir*, has not been fortuitous. Instead, it obeys the critical and retrospective view of the recent mobilizations in Colombia, as well as the historical manifestations and practices of social, indigenous, popular, neighborhood

movements with whom we participate in various spaces as researchers, trying to imagine and recreate the possibilities of good urban living.

The final point is not a minor thing since most of the research on *buen vivir* tends to focus on indigenous and campesino dynamics and generally on rural spaces as exemplary centers of this philosophy, so the urban space-times of the city are forgotten or simply set as contrasting and generally negative against these dynamics. For this reason, we wanted to venture to think about the city from the ontologies of urban *buen vivir*, and that meant the valuation and recognition of rhythms and practices of life that transgress the logical hegemonies of contemporary capitalism. We have proposed to reconsider the use of time and space, which does not aim to include the majority in the city of consumption and accumulation to make it more livable, but rather to rethink its function from other links and practices in the lifeworlds which aim to be a contribution to decolonial thought in Latin America.

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THE POETICS OF RELATION AND CITIES:
PERSPECTIVE FOR A DECOLONIAL URBANISM
A POÉTICA DA RELAÇÃO E AS CIDADES:
PERSPECTIVA PARA UMA URBANÍSTICA DECOLONIAL

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Abstract

This essay is a theoretical-conceptual construction that problematizes the notions of modernity and coloniality in the urban context. It is a confrontation between elaborations regarding colonial and hegemonic ideas and urban practices, as well as the reflections of the Martinican thinker Édouard Glissant regarding blackness and Afro-diasporic culture, illustrated, above all, in notions such as Relation, creolization, and nomadism. The objective is to relate to the urban field concepts and references that lead to the problematization of the notions of modernity, coloniality and decoloniality; and the role of subjectivities before the phenomena of subordination. As a result, we realize that Glissant's ideas, which are dedicated to reflecting on the effects of colonization and the transformative possibilities that emerge from the relationships of an identity that is permanently displaced towards the Other, offer clues to tension the field of urbanism in a historical perspective and its effects on present dynamics in colonized cities.

Keywords: Édouard Glissant, Poetics of Relation, Colonialist Urbanism, Decolonization

1 Introduction

The field of urbanism gains body in Brazil with a markedly segregating character. What underpins its ideas and practices since the mid-19th century is the instrumental proposition of standards that reflect territorial power and hierarchies, resulting in distance between social groups and the dispossession of subordinated populations (Velloso, 2020, p.157). The actions of urbanism with a colonizing aspect found a particular condition in Rio de Janeiro, in southeastern Brazil, because the city was the overseas headquarters of the Portuguese metropolis. This led to an association between hegemonic powers with the purpose of promoting separation between the crown and the non-noble population, mostly black and enslaved. Brazilian urbanization is predominantly marked by a "tradition of oppression, in the name, yes, of a logic of race, in addition to discursive, theoretical, and practical operations" (Velloso, 2020, p. 156, our translation).

Quijano (2005) states that the Americas form the first space/time in which race emerges as a "mental category of modernity", that is, where the structures produced social relationships that legitimize a supposed superiority and inferiority, forging dominant and dominated peoples, thus establishing a pattern of control over their work and resources. Rio de Janeiro's port is an example of a synthetic territory in which this structure can be seen in operation even today. It is a place where the adversities that were imposed on the non-white population result from symbolic and material violence. During the 19th century, enslaved people, freed workers, Africans, Brazilians, and their descendants lived in a city that was full of restrictions and where the conflictual aspect prevailed. Some phenomena clearly highlight this dynamic: difficulties to access property and housing (Fridman, 2017), instability related to employment and income, work debts imposed after the manumission (Mamigomian, 2020), as well as the restrictions associated with circulation in public spaces, which culminated in laws that made the city a very controlled territory. For all of this, we can say that there were urban practices of colonialist nature (King, 2015) based on segregation.

However, if black spatialities in cities, on the one hand, are marked by restrictions that prevent their access to goods of different natures and basic public policies, "[...] on the other hand, they project recreated forms of life, unique experiences perceived as dissonant with other contexts" (Barone & Rios, 2018, p. 30, our translation). Colonialist urbanism in Rio de Janeiro and other Afro-diasporic territories was continually challenged through black associative movements. These are actions of an identity nature with a strong transformative potential that guaranteed the Afro-pindoramic collective (Bispo dos Santos, 2015) to subvert the place that was assigned to them in the social space. Faced with this colonial structure, a physical and existential space emerges, in which visions, meanings, and social practices that politicize the everyday life are articulated; where struggles for emancipation and freedom emerge from everyday situations (Chalhoub, 1990). The capoeira gangs, a collective and transitory way of occupying the streets, and the *zungú* houses, meeting places for the black population, played a considerable role in the construction of associations that emerged during the last decades of the slavery system (Soares, 1998). Therefore, a critical project of the modernity-coloniality binomial must,

on the one hand, observe the historical construction of inequality from a racial point of view and, on the other hand, consider black historical struggles as a fundamental element.

These struggles find a political and epistemological field of great relevance in the studies of decoloniality, which dedicates itself to confronting domination structures and knowledge models that are forged through policies and projects originated in the Euro-American conceptual matrices of knowledge and its many derivations. This work is an study, from an urban perspective, on central concepts in the work of the thinker Édouard Glissant (1928-2011), a fundamental name for the decolonial debate. In his essays related to the term, Glissant deals with the effects of deterritorialization to develop a hypothesis about the wandering condition of black populations in the Americas' physical and existential territory, the new world in formation. Faced with the abyss of the trauma of coloniality, a cosmological field of unforeseen hybrid cultural associations emerges, a complex of spatial relationships that is dynamic in its practices and strategies that was fundamental for confronting the urban practices of the hegemonic field, hence, the survival of black populations.

Methodologically, we propose that the combinations in this essay are based on the conception of the city as a "border object", that is, it does not belong to a specific disciplinary field, demanding cooperation between various areas of knowledge and aligned with local contingencies (Star & Griesemer, 1989, p. 387). In a similar way, thinking about the decolonization of urban practices requires carrying forward what Mignolo (2003) calls "border thinking", that is, conceptions that cannot ignore "the thought of modernity, but that cannot subjugate itself to it, even if such modern thinking is left-wing or progressive" (Mignolo, 2003, p. 52, our translation). Border thinking has an emancipatory character and produces new epistemological genealogies that do not refute the modernity that the European thought elaborates but induces the successive production of differences within it. "This is the option that fuels decolonial thinking by imagining a world in which many worlds can coexist" (Mignolo, 2008, p. 296, our translation). Based on these premises, we propose that the Relation can be a potentially transformative critical link in urban planning reading, both regarding its formation history and its dynamics in the present.

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The text is organized into three parts. First, it deals with colonialist urbanism in its varied approaches, but above all as a science that emerges in Europe, a modern North-Atlantic model that is used as a domination tool. This reflection will be accompanied by distinguished phenomena that underscored modern urbanization in Brazil. Next, we discuss the concept of Relation and related terms from Glissant's work while highlighting decolonization related issues. Finally, we suggest that the relational characteristics in Glissant's work have repercussions on the complex of meanings that form the Afro-Brazilian praxis in cities (Nascimento, A., 2019), particularly in the form of occupations and cultural spaces that are called urban *quilombos* (Batista, 2019). With this, we hope to reflexively contribute to the possibility of urban planning with a decolonial character. It is an attempt to tension the debate based on strategies and ways of doing things that resonate in a theoretical field, seeking alternative understandings about the formation of Brazilian urbanization.

2   Urbanization and coloniality: the construction of intra-urban inequalities

The idea that urbanism became a discipline between the 19th century's second half and the beginning of the 20th century with the purpose of promoting a functional transformation of the city through new programs and buildings is widely accepted in the historiographical field. Its programmatic characteristics are associated with the expansion of cities through technical installations in a network for the circulation of energy, goods, and people (Calabi, 2012). However, we should highlight that urbanism's objectives, discourses, and tools were adapted to intervene in colonized cities, resulting in a true open field for experimentation, where ethnic zoning, expropriations, and the division of territory proliferated to increase the exploitation of commodities.

Modernity associated with functionalism has made "control" a recurring term in the urban vocabulary. Not only spatial arrangements were carried out with the purpose of extracting profits and classifying the population, but habits were also imported from the metropolises, which resulted in programs and buildings whose tendency was to overlap the colonized centers' ways of life (Avermaete, 2010). King (2015) uses the term "colonialist urbanism" to refer to the varied ways in which European countries shaped the cities in their colonies, through public policies and direct actions in the territory. The author emphasizes the importance of transforming physical landscapes as a way to define social hierarchies in the built space.

Gwedolyn Wright (1991) argues that architects and planners appropriated the assumptions of functionalism and standardization to justify a type of intervention in space that intends to be universal and objective, but that repeatedly reinforces inequalities. Even though the results are varied and contrasting, colonizing urbanization amalgamates actions that transform the city into an "experimental terrain". For the author, the colonizing urbanism involves the creation of spatial divisions in cities: ghettos and exclusion zones where violence can be perpetrated. By establishing segregated neighborhoods, restricted areas, and exclusion policies, colonial authorities maintained social control and exploited resources to benefit the colonizers. These divisions were based on racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic factors, reinforcing inequalities and power imbalances (Wright, 1991).

Infrastructure plays a fundamental role in colonizing urban planning. Marvin and Graham (2001) state that, in former colonies of European countries, the design of infrastructure scrutinized the territory and still strongly influence urban agency today. The fragmentation and dispersion that characterizes many urban centers stem from a logic that created differentiated zones in cities, separating social groups, but which was not excessive, as it was necessary to guarantee to the exploited workforce access to the employment and consumption places. In this context, racial inequality is intentional, and creates "inaccessible zones" (Marvin & Graham, 2001), which are relatively separated from the productive activities and other public life's benefits, and are often characterized as dangerous, but still close enough for people to travel to employment places.

The Brazilian case offers a plethora of phenomena that can be associated with urbanism based on expropriation and control. The State played a preponderant role in this formation, associating itself with private agents to facilitate the massive and continually renewed production of enslaved labor. The slavery economy clearly influenced the access to resources and provision of public equipment and infrastructure and resulted in a space with significant asymmetries, to the detriment of the black population. Urban practices were strongly influenced in this arrangement, being decisive for interventions that became more widespread during the mid-19th century, and which maintain, to this day, some of its characteristics unchanged. Rio de Janeiro's port gradually underwent interventions that characterized the meaning of public life that was intended there: notable examples are the construction of the *Lazareto da Gamboa* (Gamboa's Lazareto) and the *Cemitérios dos Pretos Novos* (New Black People Cemetery), as well as the conversion of bonded warehouses to benefit slave traffickers, which show an urbanization that was clearly based on colonialism (Gonçalves & Costa, 2020).

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In Brazil, urban practices do not in pursuit of an ideal of collective emancipation and improvement of life for the working class akin to the European context. Instead, they constitute a series of actions that are developed based on what Malcon Ferdinand (2022) calls "colonial fracture". According to Ferdinand, the claim to universality, constructed through the historicity of the "global subject" is a fallacy. Consequently, it is necessary to consider the stark difference between the levels of disturbance and transformation of space the plantation system caused and the life models of Caribbean's indigenous peoples, for example. Brazilian cities were places of experimentation with concepts that originated in locations outside the dynamics of their territory. In terms of the fracture that Ferdinand conceptualized, Brazil was "a laboratory in which, contrary to the imperial metropolitan center, everything is permitted and morally admitted" (Ferdinand, 2022, pos.1958, our translation). Therefore, urban practices resulted in successive separations and fractures that crystallized intra-urban inequality circuits.

In addition to the concrete spatial dimension, several norms of conduct shaped the universe of relationships in the colonial city. We can find an example of this in Rio de Janeiro's municipal regulations that were published between 1830 and 1834. In general, these laws aimed to increase control over city-dwelling slaves and restrict the transit of captives in Rio de Janeiro. Even with the prohibition of the slave trade, the slave trade did not cease, on the contrary, the number of Africans who disembarked in the city's surroundings clearly grew. At the same time, the limits of the colonial nucleus expanded. "The farms in Botafogo, Flamengo, Glória, Catete, Laranjeiras, and Cosme Velho underwent subdivisions and were occupied by houses and farms" [...], and Cidade Nova became denser after tax exemptions and the prince's departure to São Cristóvão" (Fridman, 2015, pp. 109-110). The Gamboa and Alferes waterfront grew for new piers to be installed; and the land was subdivided and expanded with warehouses for coffee exportation. The result was a culturally rich and diverse space, where complex associations between popular groups developed.

In this context, diverse cultural expressions emerged, which resulted from the association between blacks, Jews, gypsies, and other migrant groups (Carvalho, 2019). The habits of these people are not present in monuments or inscriptions; they are their toponymic

traces, erased by successive modernization projects, but which persist in memory and resonate in present practices. Thus, "[...] from dance to music, from literature to history, from urban reforms to everyday life, 'writings' and 'erasures' abound in cities, interfering with each other, producing traces that can be as ubiquitous as they are opaque" (Carvalho, 2019, p. 36, our translation). The set of oppressions and adversities experienced in this diasporic space moved and produced underground understandings that emerge in modes of community organization that are responsible for a type of city-making. These are forms of hybrid association that induce a subversive and transformative urban culture. A type of "social technology" that expands "ancestral knowledge, cultures and histories" (Nascimento, A., 2019, p. 282, our translation).

Therefore, colonialist urbanism was not exercised in a unidirectional way. It was always weakened by the spatial practices of minority groups. On the one hand, the cities that served as experimental laboratories for colonizing urban planning are synthetic territories where regimes of dispossession intersect with control actions developed by dominant trends, and, on the other hand, black experiences intersect with manifestations, in their unstable and changing character. We propose that the concept of Relation that the decoloniality thinker Édouard Glissant developed is a reference for us to think about this arrangement and offers consistent routes for urban imagination from a decolonial perspective.

3   Édouard Glissant: thought of the Other

Édouard Glissant's work is as prolific as it is complex. His novels, essays, and poems result from the intertwining between his political life and his literary work. Glissant's ideas had a significant impact on decoloniality studies, in the wake of prominent authors such as Franz Fanon and Aimé Césaire, who worked on the false construction of European superiority, centered not only on material violence, but on narratives that portray non-white cultures as inferior. In 1990, he published his book Poetics of Relation (Poetics III), in which he deepened his reflections on the dilemmas of the enslaved and the troubled exile that is caused by slavery. Leupin (2016) observes that, in this work, Glissant does not remain tied to the denunciation of colonial violence, but always remains open to a prospective horizon formed by the inventive and unforeseen association of blackness in the Americas. Glissant's metaphors and concepts were not forged to remember the trauma, but to project a future in Relation (Theophilo, 2018). The poetic characteristic of his text moves him away from any fixation of identity boundaries, treating the social body as a permanent displacement towards the Other, a type of (re)imagination of the world with otherness as a guide.

The idea of Relation emerges as a notion related to the irreducible identities of colonized peoples. The Relation is "as long as the particulars, which constitute it in interdependence, have first emancipated themselves from any approximation of dependence" (Glissant, 2021, p. 172, our translation). Relation is linked to the observation of Totality-Earth, which opposes a unitary worldview. Glissant opposes the concreteness of the diversity of people that is present on the world scene today as what undoes the metaphysical assumptions that underlie the conception of abstract identity that can be generalized to all humans (Albergaria Rocha, 2020). With this, he proposes to undo the ideas of "being" and "essence" that define individuals and cultures. Instead, the Relation interferes with particulars and sets in permanent motion different forms of existence conception. Glissant emphasizes the importance of interconnectivity between people and the environment capable of producing a cosmology that is constructed in a dynamic and fluid way.

The Relation comes close to another term dear to Glissant's theoretical repertoire, which is "creolization". For the author, the Caribbean is a place where "where Relation presents itself most visibly, one of the explosive regions where it seems to be gathering strength" (Glissant, 2021, p. 33). What happened in this part of the world was not just an encounter, a shock, […] a '*métissage*' but a new and original dimension allowing each person to be there and elsewhere, rooted and open, lost in the mountains and free beneath the sea, in harmony and in errantry" (Glissant, 2021, p. 34). In effect, this process results in an "unlimited miscegenation, whose elements are multiple, and the results, unpredictable" (Glissant, 2021, p. 34). It is an adventure marked by the "unprecedented shattering of cultures", which does not mean their dispersion, nor their dilution, but a sharing that is, above all, continuously produced, not imposed.

For the author, unlike cultures that present themselves based on the supposed civilizational refinement that imposes ideal objects with a priori value and directed towards an ideal as a reality (Glissant, 2021, p. 163), "the other direction, which is not one, distances itself entirely from the thought of conquest; it is an experimental meditation (a follow-through) of the process of relation, at work in

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reality, among the elements (whether primary or not) that weave its combinations." (Glissant, 2021, p. 137). It is a dynamic that leads to the mediation of distances, trends, what is relational, "anything fluid and various and moreover uncertain (that is, ungraspable) yet fundamental in every instance and quite likely full of instances of invariance" (Glissant, 2021, p. 137). Relation makes it possible to think about diasporic peoples' culture and identity as a constant and persistent source of imagination. Thus, the plot of colonizing action is not reduced to a domination-reaction scheme. It is rather about thinking about the spaces of intersection, the convergent and divergent exchanges, all the powers and virtualities that are blocked by hegemonies.

The idea of Relation, of creolization, of culture in its multiple variations shows how the permeability of exchanges is a fundamental theme for thinking about the multivalence of Brazilian urban space under colonizing urbanization, where black and popular actions offered solutions capable of confronting the successive violence against their bodies. The Casas de *Zungú* (Zungú Houses) and batuques feature as a prominent case in this trajectory of struggles. Originating from quilombos that proliferated during the 19th century, these houses possibly served as a meeting place for escaped slaves. They brought together communities of Africans and Brazilians and had "multiple meanings and uses" (Santos, 2015, p. 33), for in addition to hosting, they enabled the permeability of languages, philosophical knowledge, sciences, and cultures. It is a place between the suffocating regulations of urban planning laws and the impossibility of accessing housing that results from the immense concentration of land in the city. Therefore, we suggest that there is some correspondence between this and what the Relation presents of identity produced during wandering and in the adverse conditions faced in exile. For Glissant (2021, p. 11) "[...] every identity is extended through a relationship with the Other".

Contrary to invasive nomadism which, according to Glissant, is over-determining and stabilizes conquests through erasures and impositions, we can say that *Zungú* houses were occupied by "circular nomads". Glissant describes them as subjects who were able to guarantee their survival through a type of movement devoid of any intention of invading, conquering or exterminating, but rather due to a mixed and diverse cultural composition. Therefore, the exiled and uprooted condition they suffered due to colonization could produce an identity that is not supported by the expansion of territory, but the search for otherness in a radical way. "That is very much the image of the rhizome, prompting the knowledge that identity is no longer completely within the root but also in Relation" (Glissant, 2021, p. 18). Facing successive adversities, the wandering that the Relation provides represents the refusal of any universal and generalizing claim. It is the recognition of the many memories and trajectories that were suppressed in the name of dominant historical accounts.Referring to the *Zungús*, although criminalized,

> The prohibition of houses that were, at the same time, a refuge for fugitive slaves and places for dancing and drumming, revealed very well the double action of the police vis-à-vis the slave segment: it was supposed to prevent captives from escaping, but also ensure that the captive population behaved appropriately (Santos, 2015, p. 33, our translation).

Although restricted, they undermined the centralizing pretensions of control and functioned as a distinct way of making the city, which is not restricted to the streets, since "the origin of these houses was also in *angu*, typical slave food and easily found in streets in Rio, which leads us to believe that such organization did not always happen in specific locations, but also on the streets, around black women with their *angu* trays" (Santos, 2015, p. 33, our translation). This way of being on the streets, occupying spaces and transforming them suggests that the displacement of black men and women imposed limits on the slavery projection that was emerging during the troubled 1830s in Brazil, marked by insurrectionary movements that broke out in different parts of the Empire.

The legal and normative persecution imposed on black people spanned decades, resonating in a pattern of urban action motivated by the search for a supposedly civilized city. City practices and the ways of being on the streets of the black population resonate with Glissant's ideas about decolonization, understood from the author's ideas as liberating arrangements between cultures to carry out communal political experiences. By pronouncing Relation as "refusal to any generalization of the absolute" (Glissant, 2021, p. 162) and recognizing each of the parts that form the archipelago of urban life, Glissant leads us to see strategies and ways of doing of everyday life that require renouncing centralizing totalities. If we consider urban practice as the result of a very varied and heterogeneous range of actors and procedures — and not just those elaborated by the State and institutions — we can say that the outline of these forms of action, this way of making cities for the black population that was implemented in the *Zungús* and other places, inspires dynamic organizational models, supported by ancestral ties and relationship forms that are always open to others.

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Currently, we identify popular spatial formals in urban space that remind us of the poetics of relation, opening space for urban imagination. This is the case of urban *quilombos*.

3.1   The poetic of Relation and the urban imagination

A new research agenda is being developed in studies on the city and issues of black populations. For Sean Anderson and Mabel Wilson (2021, p. 20) "blackness materializes spatial narratives as it catalyzes an affirmation of identities". For the authors, the problem of modernity can be addressed by architecture and urbanism so that the limits of their practices are expanded to be possible to reconstruct stories that speak of coloniality and "imperial misadventure, while also securing — with unlimited promise — the prospect to think about, design, and build spaces of resistance and refusal, imagination and liberation" (Anderson & Wilson, 2021, p. 21). Currently, black social and community spaces contribute for recompositing divided identities. If the colonizing agency operates through fracture and suppression, spatial organizations for the social visibility of black existence and their demand for recognition emerge as a tactical and strategic possibility (Nascimento, A., 2019).

We can also understand urban *quilombos* as places formed by an articulated set of experiences that result in alternative social systems in which mutuality is valued according to black aspirations and needs. Thus, the *quilombo* can be understood as an attitude of black people "to preserve themselves in the historical sense and group survival, and which presents itself as a social settlement and organization that creates a new internal and structural order" (Nascimento, B., 2021, p. 124, our translation). By disturbing the ideas the hegemonic field emanates, black people created a type of space that is marked by the incessant elaboration of ways of inhabiting the space. Urban *quilombos* such as *Pedra do Sal*, in Rio de Janeiro, *Aparelha Luiza*, in São Paulo, *Xica Manicongo*, in Niterói, southeastern Brazil, and the *Casa Akotirene*, in Brasília, midwestern Brazil, offers the urban imagination elements that can continually destabilize the course of life, through practices focused mainly on the conditions of connection between beings rather than statements and general assumptions of long-term planning.

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By renouncing the "universal edict" that configures the thought of modernity, Glissant's (2021) ideas reveal correspondences with these black spaces, conceived from an urban perspective that is supported by radical alterity. Decolonizing urban knowledge requires rethinking the forms of urban production created in the hegemonic pole, breaking perceptions based on racial constructions that predominated in the 20th century. The "Relation" contributes to an expanded perception of urban practices as it refers to ties constantly recombined in the black diaspora. Even today, this varied and errant combination produces the spaces of Brazilian cities while strongly contrasting with colonial expressions.

4   Final Considerations

Glissant's ideas inspire a broad reimagining of societies, cultures, and the world. It take us beyond the confines of colonial histories. By embracing diversity and recognizing the complexity of the human experience, his decolonial thinking offers a compelling perspective for us to understand and shape our urban future. The question here is where can radical policies emerge within the scope of urban science that are potentially capable of developing alternative relationships with the world and its beings? Glissant conceives knowledge as something not only to be taken advantage of, but as something populations produce in an attempt to transform ways of life and always move towards the Other. The places of black men and women, as well as the spaces of resistance and imagination that they created and practiced contribute to thinking about narratives composed of fragments, overlaps, repetitions, and displacements. Without diminishing the trauma of enslavement in the physical and existential territory of cities, we propose that Glissant's reading reminds us of inventive ways of dealing with urban space that challenged and stimulated the practices of urbanism. It is essential to know them so that we can reflect on the past and speculate about the formation of urbanism and its trajectories.

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FOSS, CARTOGRAPHY, COLONIALISM AND SOVEREIGNTY IN PARAGUAY AND THE GLOBAL SOUTH

FOSS, CARTOGRAFÍA, COLONIALISMO Y SOBERANÍA EN PARAGUAY Y EL SUR GLOBAL

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Abstract

This article contributes to the decolonial debate by means of a critical analysis of the historical evolution of Paraguay through its cartographic representations, discussing the connections between maps, colonialism, rights, and citizenship. Exploratory in scope, the article employs a qualitative methodology supported by a triangulation of data sources and methods. It proposes that in Paraguay and Latin America, cartography was linked to colonial processes of territorial domination, military control and exploitation of natural resources, influencing the dynamics of territorial conformation. Based on interviews with key actors and the analysis of contemporary cartographic pieces, we demonstrate that Paraguay has, even today, a low capacity to represent its territory, resulting in limited sovereignty. Finally, we propose that cartography developed from Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) allows for collective, collaborative and cumulative mapping. Such processes make it viable to produce cartographic data for civil multipurpose use with high accuracy and low cost, expanding the conditions of sovereignty. Lacking cost barriers, FOSS tools can empower communities. Consequently, they have an increased potential to subvert historical asymmetries: the more people can produce maps "from the inside", the less forced Paraguay will be to assume narratives and representations made "from the outside".

Keywords: Cartography, Colonialism, Sovereignty, FOSS

1   Introduction

This article proposes a contribution to the decolonial debate by means of a critical reflection on the relationship between data, cartography, the formation of national states, territorial management, dynamics of socio-economic exclusion and processes of wealth concentration. The text focuses, first, on the analysis of historical cartographies of Paraguay to reflect on how they have described and conditioned the territorial development of the country. The paper then moves on to a series of interviews with key actors to delve into the conditions and capacities related to cartography in the present. Finally, the article reflects on cartographic processes based on free software as ways to expand and enhance effective sovereignty.

On the historical matter, Cristaldo (2013) has described Paraguay as a late-articulated territory with boundaries that were defined after centuries of uncertainty and friction, which resulted in two international wars in the years 1864-1870 and 1932-1935. After these conflicts ended, relevant details of the border definition remained in dispute, being defined only in the second half of the 20th century in the context of the treaties related to the construction of the binational dams of Itaipú and Yacyretá (Costantini, 2007).

The imprecision in the boundaries of the Province of Paraguay and its neighboring provinces was related to the political tensions between Portugal and Spain and, in addition, to the complex colonial administrative structures whose religious and civil jurisdictions were often not harmonized (Caballero Campos, 2017). Historical vicissitudes such as the Iberian Union between 1580 and 1640 added even more complexity to these controversies (Costa, 2009).

The cartographies produced in this period failed to clarify these inaccuracies and contradictions. The "cartographies from outside" produced by European countries suffered from a lack of basic information, technical limitations and also a narrow conceptual view (Pensa, 2021). In general, they were oriented to claim political and military control of the territories, or to locate exploitable natural resources. It is emphasized that these representations ignored any territorial rights of native peoples (CELADE and ECLAC, 2014). This cartographic invisibilization is part of the first process of exclusion and dehumanization of native peoples, with consequences that extend to the present.

In terms of natural resources, Paraguay is a country that has historically lacked mineral wealth. Consequently, territories were mapped that contained products that could be exploited for extractive economic purposes, such as yerba mate. The native peoples were also mapped due to the interests of the colonial powers, such as the religious conversion to Catholicism in the framework of the Jesuit Reductions, or the brutal exploitation of their labor force in slavery or quasi-slavery regimes (Whigham, 1991; Pensa, 2021).

The independent period in Latin America began in the early 18th century after the debacle of the imperial powers under Napoleon's armies. In the period, Brazil was consolidated as the new seat of the Portuguese Empire and as a single state, while the Spanish colonies were disintegrated into national states whose boundaries were loosely related to the viceroyalties and provinces of the colonial period. In this regard Craib (2017) states "(...) while the boundaries of many of the fledgling republics of Latin America born of independence movements in the early nineteenth century would change over the course of that century, leaders of those movements initially applied the legal principle of uti possidetis juris (Latin for "as you possess under law")" (p. 17). Paraguay, as an independent nation from 1811 onwards, had permanent tensions regarding its boundaries and the navigability of the rivers that constituted its main logistical link with the world (Mendible-Zurita, 2010; Echeverría, 2013).

This period of Paraguay's formation as an independent nation meant the replacement of international elites by local criollo elites and the establishment of wealth accumulation processes, concentrated in the State, during the dictatorship of Dr. Francia and the government of Carlos Antonio López. A key moment in this process was the decree of 1848, which provided citizenship to indigenous peoples, while declaring "(...) properties of the State the goods, rights and interests of the (...) peoples of natives of the Republic" (Melià, 2011, our translation). Thus, the nascent Paraguayan state assumes, without compensation, the ownership of all the territories of native peoples, in a second structural moment of invisibilization and exclusion.

When, after the War of the Triple Alliance (1864-1870), Paraguay was reduced to a buffer state between Brazil and Argentina, the vastness of previously usurped properties of the Paraguayan State was sold under the new laws for the commercialization of public lands established in 1883, 1885 and 1886 (Flecha, 2011).

Based on these laws, the large latifundios of the Western and Eastern regions were formed. The latifundios of the western region were linked to the exploitation of tannin and quebracho, while those of the eastern region were linked to the extraction of yerba mate. The brutality of the working conditions in both types of enclaves has been recorded in the social sciences and in Paraguayan culture, being reflected, for example, in the literature of Roa Bastos (Roa Bastos, 1974).

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It should be noted, then, that the cartographies of the independent period continued to be instruments of extractivist exploitation and privatization of territories at the expense of native peoples and peasant criollo populations. This historical legacy had consequences on territorial management and on the very structure of society, through the systematic exclusion of ethnic and cultural groups and the invisibility of their rights. Paraguay is still today one of the countries with the highest levels of concentration of land ownership in the world. Studies indicate that the Gini Index of land distribution in Paraguay points to an almost perfect inequity. Guereña and Rojas Villagra (2016), indicate in a report by the NGO Oxfam, that the Gini index of land concentration was 0.93 based on data from 2008.

This legacy of "cartographies from the outside" is also materialized in a systemic weakness of the state and the current Paraguayan society to portray itself "from the inside". The analysis of contemporary cartographic pieces, and interviews with key actors of Paraguayan institutions working in the area of cartography, reveal a chronic lack of cartographic representation competencies at all levels of the State.

This lack of capacity to produce "cartography from within" affects all aspects of national life such as urban taxation, national defense, transparency and security of land tenure, the ability to implement infrastructure projects, or the recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples and landless peasant populations.

At the time of writing, the Direction of the National Cadastre Service (SNC) only has, in Paraguay, spatial information with nationwide coverage for the country's parcel system, and even this information is incomplete and inaccurate. There is no detailed cartography of the buildings constructed on the parcels, nor is there a characterization of their heights or uses. This gap in cartographic information prevents transparent and fair municipal taxation processes, and constitutes an obstacle to evidence-based urban planning in the vast majority of the country's cities.

Additionally, the lack of geospatial data and methodologies to produce "cartographies from within" affect local populations living in slums, and their possibility of urban consolidation or improvement. Only recently, through pioneering studies (DAPSAN, TECHO

Paraguay and CIDI FADA-UNA, 2023) has it been possible to have a more precise quantification and location of slums in the Metropolitan Area of Asunción (AMA).

In contrast, in contemporary Paraguay, there are socio-economic processes of transformation and management of the territories that are systematically and accurately mapped. For example, the planting and harvesting cycles of agro-industrial production, mostly related to oilseeds, are monitored with high precision (INBIO, 2019 and 2023 b). This indicates, then, that the issue is not determined by the absence of technology or economic resources, but by a prioritization of interests and policies. The evidence suggests that in contemporary Paraguay, as in colonial times, that which is of economic interest is known, described, mapped and registered, while that which is not, continues in general, as an invisible reality.

Given this historical picture, the article concludes by exploring how it is possible to contribute to the issue of mapping from academic institutions using FOSS tools. To this end, experiences of mapping "from within" developed from academia are presented, discussing their characteristics, products and methods, while advancing a reflection on the social and political implications of this type of tools.

2   Methods

This paper presents an exploratory, non-experimental and qualitative methodology whose main aspiration is to advance in new interpretations that allow us to re-discuss the relationships between cartography, colonialism and sovereignty in Paraguay, linking these notions to reflections on processes of exclusion and invisibilization and their correlate in processes of wealth accumulation.

Methodologically, this work is based on a triangulation (Denzin, 1970) characterized by the following aspects:

(i) Triangulation of data sources: In the first section, the paper relies on secondary data, such as historical (Rivarola, 2021; Rumsey & Cartography Associates, 2022) and contemporary (DISERGEMIL and US DOD, 1970; INBIO, 2019 and 2023 b) cartographies, in addition to academic texts discussing the historical evolution of contemporary Paraguay in the context of Latin America. In the second section, on the cartographic capacities of contemporary Paraguay, the text relies on primary data obtained through four semi-structured interviews with five key actors, belonging to academic and governmental spheres, conducted in 2020 and 2021. The third section includes cartographic practices and documents produced by the Center for Research, Development and Innovation (CIDi) of the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Art of the National University of Asuncion (FADA UNA).

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(ii) Methodological triangulation: In the first section, the materials studied are analyzed based on a critical review of the bibliography, in combination with the iconographic and iconological analysis of the cartographic pieces (Harley, 2005 as cited in Pensa, 2020). In the second section, we proceed to systematize the results of the interviews, extracting key concepts that provide clues about the challenges of contemporary cartography in Paraguay. The third section is based on a descriptive and qualitative analysis of the experiences with FOSS Geographic Information Systems (GIS) at CIDi FADA, together with a reflection on their social and political implications.

3   Results

This section will present the results obtained in the development of this work. They will be presented in three parts, the first one referring to the iconographic and iconological analysis of cartographic pieces, from a perspective of critical analysis of colonialism; while the second part focuses on the results of interviews with key actors, and serves to provide indications of cartographic and governance capacities in contemporary Paraguay. The third part will analyze the use of FOSS GIS tools in Paraguay and discuss their political and social implications.

3.1   Part One: Iconographic and iconological analysis of cartographic pieces

The maps[1] are organized according to four historical periods: (i) the Colonial Period (1524-1811), (ii) the Independent Period until the War of the Triple Alliance (1811-1870), (iii) the Independent Period after the War of the Triple Alliance (1870-1954) and (iv) the Contemporary Period (1954-2023) (see Table 1). A total of 7 maps are presented, illustrating the four defined historical periods.

Nº	Period	Title	Main Author	Year	Publicación
1	Colonial (1524 - 1811)	*Carte générale du Paraguay et de la province de Buenos-Ayres.*	Félix de Azara	1809	*Voyages dans l'Amerique meridonale, par Don Felix de Azara. Paris, Dentu, Imprimeur-Libraire, Rue du Pont-de-Lodi, No. 3.*
2	Independent Period Prior to the War of the Triple Alliance (1870-1954)	*Carte de la République du Paraguay (Cours du Parana et du Paraguay) (Amérique Méridionale)*	Ernest Mouchez	1862	*Dépôt des Cartes et Plans de la Marine*
3	Independent Period After the War of the Triple Alliance (1870-1954)	Siege of Humaitá	1st Lt. E. C. Jourdan	1871. 1893 (publication)	History of the Uruguay, Matto Grosso and Paraguay Campaigns. Rio de Janeiro, Imp. Nacional
4	Independent Period After the War of the Triple Alliance (1870-1954)	Sketch of the Paraguayan Chaco. Reproduced from the Fontana Map, drawn by order of the Superior Government of Paraguay.	Luis Jorge Fontana	1885. 1910 (publication)	Paraguay, Government: Property in the Paraguayan Chaco. Asunción. Graphic Workshop H. Krafuss.
5	Independent Period After the War of the Triple Alliance (1870-1954)	Yerbales de Domingo Barthe	Arsenio López Decoud	1868. 1911 (publication)	Published in Buenos Aires, *Talleres Gráficos de la Compañía General de Fósforos.* Included in the Graphic Album of the Republic of Paraguay.
6	Contemporary period - Stroessner Dictatorship and Democratic Period (1954-2023)	Map of Asunción	United States Department of Defense (US DOD)	1970	Published by the U.S. Army Topographic Command, Washington, D.C.
7	Contemporary period - Stroessner Dictatorship and Democratic Period (1954-2023)	Maps of Geospatial Distribution of Soybean Production in the years 2018 to 2019 and 2022 to 2023.	Instituto de Biotecnología Agrícola	2019, 2023	Instituto de Biotecnología Agrícola

Table 1: Analyzed cartographic pieces. Source: Authors, 2023.

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[1] A large part of the cartographic pieces analyzed here are related to the pioneering work of historian Milda Rivarola, who together with Carlo Spatuzza organized an exhibition of great relevance called "Cartographic Memory of Paraguay", in the context of the bicentennial celebrations of Paraguay's independence, in 2011. These and other pieces were later consolidated in a book of the same name (Rivarola and Spatuzza, 2011) and in a repository of enormous value for researchers called "Imagoteca Paraguay" https://imagoteca.com.py/. Historical maps were also obtained from the David Rumsey Historical Map Collection https://www.davidrumsey.com/. Contemporary official maps of Paraguay were obtained from the Dirección del Servicio Geográfico Militar (DISERGEMIL).

3.1.1   Colonial Period (1537-1811)

"Carte Générale du Paraguay et de la Province de Buenos-Ayres" by Félix de Azara (1809)

Felix de Azara, the first author of cartographies of Paraguay and much of the South American continent, was an important intellectual figure, later cited in Darwin's work (Beddall, 1975). He recorded territories acting as an envoy of the Spanish Crown to define the borders between the Spanish and Portuguese empires. The first cartographies of Paraguayan territory - including the first map of the capital, Asunción - are part of an attempt to settle territorial disputes that are nearly 300 years old at the time of the beginning of Azara's work in 1784 (Beddall, 1975). Azara did extensive mapping of physical geography, including the course of various rivers and the location of cities and towns, taking latitudinal measurements in Montevideo, Buenos Aires, Corrientes and Asunción. The map in Fig. 1 is characterized by the fact that, in general, the basic elements of the territory are defined, but with important distortions, especially in the Chaco territory.

The long years of work in America - 20 in total - weighed heavily on Azara's mind, who stated, "I have written overwhelmed by loneliness and melancholy, in despair of ever being able to tear myself away from these bleak solitudes and the society of animals" (Beddall, 1975, p. 20, our translation). That this solitude was more real than perceived has been discussed by Glick and Quinlan (1975), who state that: "Azara communicated intermittently but consistently with a group of two dozen naturalists and intellectuals" (p. 70). Azara's lines can be interpreted as the expressions of an isolated and depressed intellectual, but they can also be read as a bias in the gaze. It is postulated that Azara's statements underlie the concept that the absence of contact with western cultures is equal to the absence of contact with humans, providing indications of the existing bias in the valuations made from Europe towards the native peoples. In purely cartographic terms, the Eurocentrism of the piece is also evident in the sense that both the motivations (defining borders) and the geographical references themselves (the Paris meridian) obey European reasons and motives.
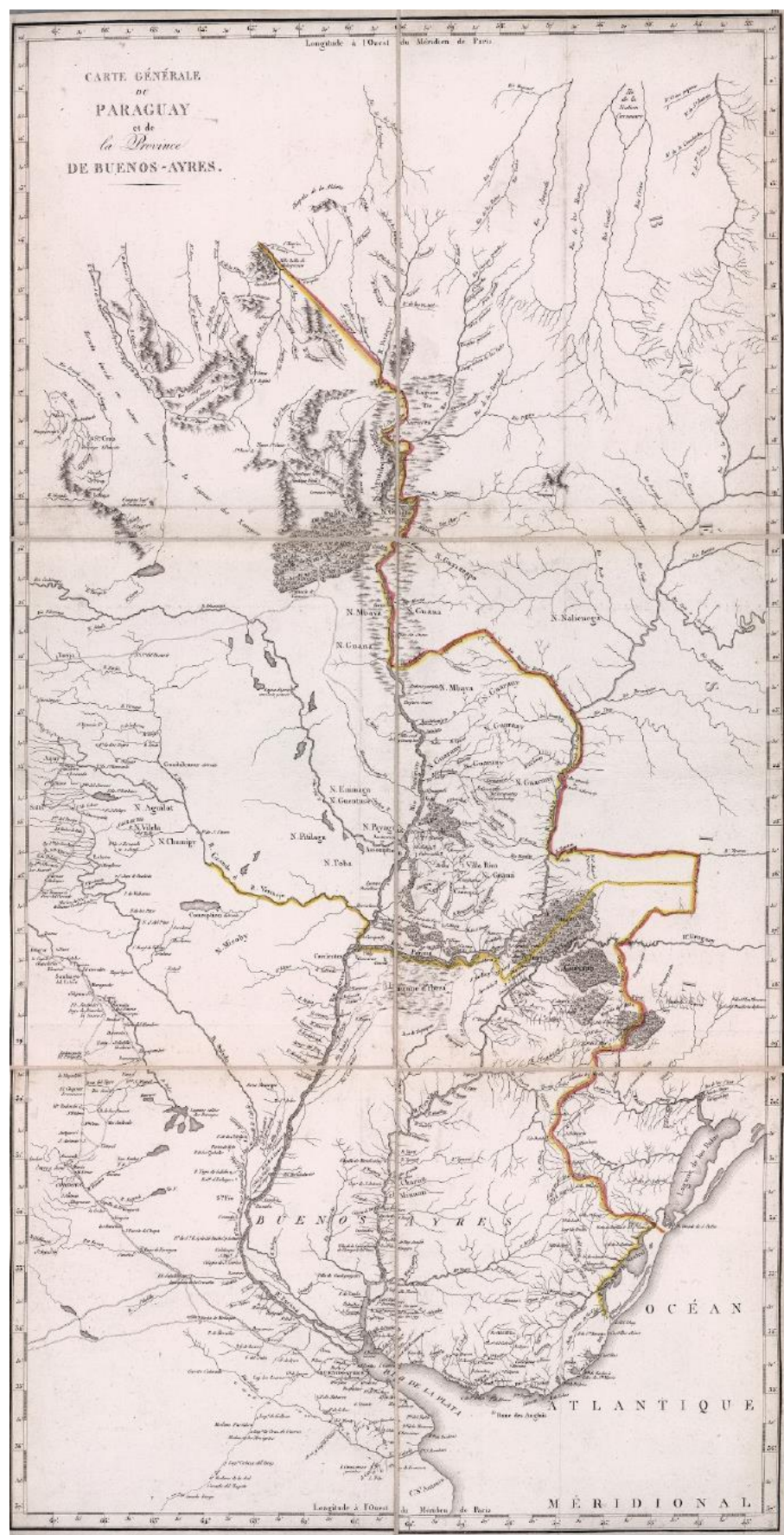
Fig. 1: *Carte Générale du Paraguay et de la Province de Buenos-Ayres*, by Félix de Azara (1809). Source: Rivarola, 2021. Available at: https://imagoteca.com.py/. Access on: 08/04/2023.

3.1.2   Independent Period Prior to the War of the Triple Alliance (1811-1870)

"Carte de la République du Paraguay: cours du Parana et du Paraguay", by Mouchez (1862)

Mouchez was a French naval officer who, in 1878, was appointed Director of the Paris Observatory (Ashworth, 2022). He explored the Uruguay, Paraguay and Paraná Rivers between 1857 and 1859. His voyage made possible a much more precise description of the territory than Azara's map: the main elements of the country's physical geography are perfectly recognizable and clearly defined (see Fig. 2). An implicit recognition of the rigor of his work is the fact that his map is cited in the treaty of "Limits between Argentina and Paraguay" of 1876 (Bobrik, 2007). The map in Fig. 2 records several possible border lines with Brazil, based on interpretations of the Treaty of San Ildefonso of 1777. The cartographic piece also provides statistical data on the country. It is important to note that the natural resources —with emphasis on the immense yerba mate plantations to the east of the Eastern Region— and the native peoples of the territory are meticulously recorded. The cartography allows to locate resources that will be intensely exploited at the end of the war of the Triple Alliance. Finally, the emptiness and lack of details that characterize the representation of the Chaco in contrast with the Eastern Region stand out. This situation of ignorance and emptiness in the representations in relation to the Chaco will not change until the 20th century.
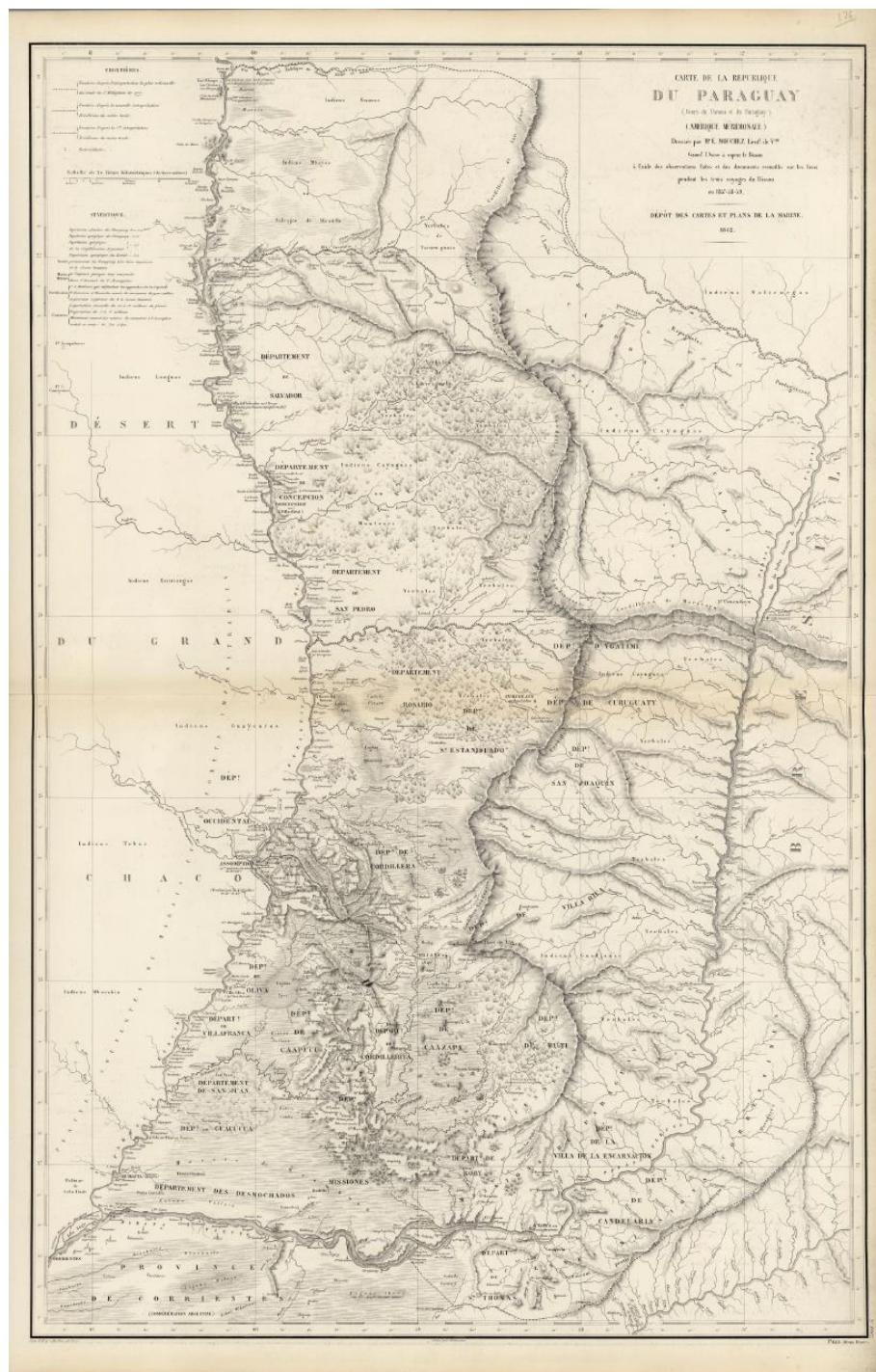
Fig. 2: *Carte de la République du Paraguay: cours du Parana et du Paraguay*, by Mouchez (1862). Source: Rivarola, 2021. Available at: https://imagoteca.com.py/ Access on: 08/04/2023.

3.1.3 Independent Period After the War of the Triple Alliance (1870-1954)

"Historical Atlas of the War of Paraguay - Siege of Humaitá", by Jourdan (1871)

The graphic pieces of the "Historical Atlas of the Paraguayan War" stand out for the detail of the information. The physical geography and the fortifications are described meticulously and with high aesthetic quality. At the same time, the map of Fig. 3, " Siege of Humaitá" and others that compose the Atlas (Rumsey, 2022), reaffirm that the fundamental motivations that guide the production of cartography in Paraguay are related —historically— to military and territorial control, as well as to economic extractivism. With rare

exceptions, such as the works of Cleto Romero, Moises Bertoni, De Gásperi and Bordón, there are no civilian maps of comparable quality in the history of Paraguayan cartography (Rivarola, 2021).

Fig. 3: *Siege of Humaitá - Historical Atlas of the War of Paraguay*, by Jourdan (1871). Source: Rumsey & Cartography Associates, 2021. Available at: https://www.davidrumsey.com/ Access on: 08/04/2023.

"Sketch of the Paraguayan Chaco" (Fontana, 1885)

The map in Fig. 4 illustrates the massive processes of sale and subsequent concentration of land ownership in the Paraguayan Chaco after the conclusion of the War of the Triple Alliance.

The prices of the plots change in relation to their economic exploitation potential, which is measured in relation to the distance to the Paraguay River and Asunción. The farther away from Asunción or the river, the lower the prices. The properties of tannin companies, such as the Carlos Casado Company, are formed from these instruments. They follow a cartographic matrix and a structure of parceling and ownership that is defined from Asunción, Buenos Aires and other centers of economic decision making.

The plots of groups I, II and III have 1 league of frontage by 10 in depth. Considering the Argentinian League of 1878, this is equivalent to 5 kilometers of river frontage by 50 kilometers of depth. Therefore, each plot has an area of 25,000 hectares. Group IV lots measure

10 leagues by 10 leagues, that is to say 2,500 km2 or 250,000 ha. As a reference of scale, it can be considered that only two plots constitute the entire territory reserved for the city of Villa Hayes.

As revealing as what the map shows is what it does not indicate. Except for some tributary rivers of the Paraguay on the right bank, the map is an almost perfect abstraction. The only references to the sovereignty of the National State are "the reserves of fiscal lots for roads, colonization, etc." .It does not present physical geography features, nor does it recognize the ecological distinction between the low Chaco and the boreal Chaco. Nor does it indicate the territories or the names of native peoples. It is a completely abstract map that reinforces the western notion that it is possible to exercise possession and establish legitimacy over a territory that one does not inhabit and one does not know.

In fact, the native peoples never had a seat at the political decision-making table where this land was parceled and sold. As a magical legal act of Western culture, the combination of mapping and property rights, together with the privately owned police coercive force of the tannin companies, suddenly transformed the native peoples into illegal occupants of their ancestral lands, or, in the best of cases, into a reserve of labor force in debt bondage, known as the Mensúes system.

The implications of this notion are far from being purely a matter of intellectual speculation. Unfortunately, they are not a matter of the past either. Native peoples and criollo populations have been "sold with their lands" on more than one occasion.These sale cycles, following Western society standards and processes, have led to the sale of Carlos Casado's tannin estates to the Unification Church, also known as the "Moon Sect", at the beginning of the 21st century (Dalla-Corte, 2012).
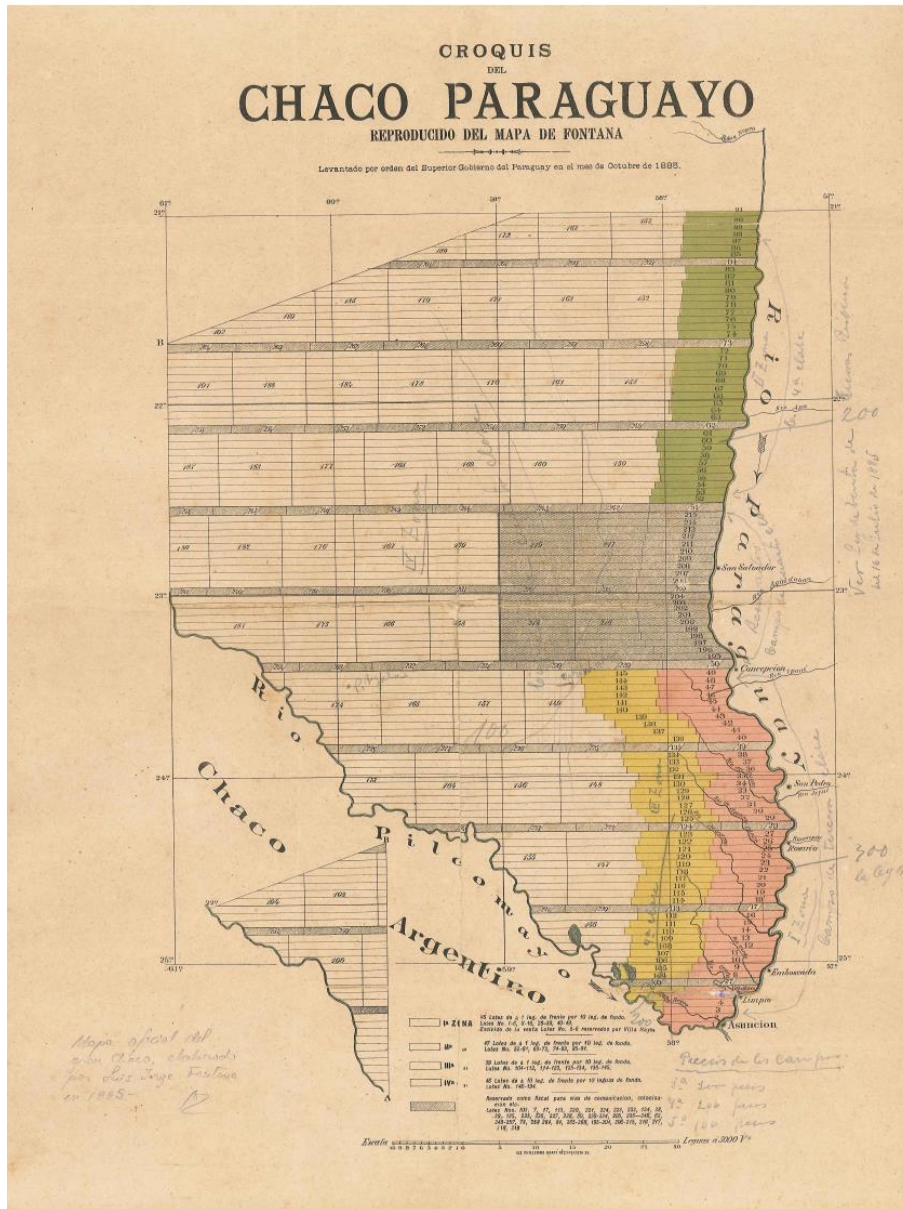
Fig. 4: Sketch of the Paraguayan Chaco, by Fontana (1885). Source: Rivarola, 2021. Available at: https://imagoteca.com.py/ Accessed on: 08/04/2023

"Yerbales of Domingo Barthe", by López Decoud (1911)

The map in Fig. 5 describes Domingo Barthe's properties in Paraguay. It is possible to appreciate that these are timber and yerba mate exploitations in territories of Itapúa, Paraguay. The text accompanying the map is part of the "Graphic Album" published by Decoud to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the Republic in 1911 (López Decoud, 1911). It emphasizes that Barthe owns 412 square leagues "in the area of Encarnación", which is equivalent to 1,030,000 ha, considering the Argentinian league of 1878. As a reference, with that surface, Barthe's lands were four times larger than the Central Department of Paraguay, whose extension reaches 246,500 ha (INE, 2012). Thus, Barthe is consolidated as one of the large landowners in the region, along with *La Industrial Paraguaya* and the *Compañía Matte Larangeira* (Alcaráz, 2019). The text accompanying the cartography is hyperbolically flattering, following the narrative lines of the romanticization of the European migrant who modernizes the void:

> Mr. Barthe also dedicates his powerful and intelligent activity to the exploitation of Paraguayan timber and yerba, and to the tobacco trade of the country (...) Mr. Domingo Barthe, so highly and advantageously known in the Paraguayan and Argentinean high commerce, is a native of Mauléon, France (López Decoud, 1911, p. 50, our translation).

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The image and the text reinforce each other by establishing his social legitimacy (by making Barthe's European ancestry visible), his economic power (by highlighting the extension and diversity of economic activities) and his role as an actor of Western progress (by making "the strength and intelligence of his work" visible). The native peoples and rural communities, in contrast, have been stripped of these three attributes: the value of their origin, their value as economic actors and their value as agents of history.

Fig. 5: Yerbales of the brands "La Florida", "Pirapitay" and "Guavirami" of the owner and importer Domingo Barthe. Source: López Decoud, 1911. Available at: https://archive.org/details/albumgraficodela00lope/page/n445/mode/2up Accessed on: 08/04/2023.

3.1.4   Contemporary Period. Stroessner Dictatorship and Democratic Period (1954-2023)

"Map of Asunción", prepared by the Direction of the Military Geographic Service of Paraguay (DISERGEMIL) and the United States Department of Defense (US DOD), 1970

The map of Asunción, available in Fig. 6, is a cartographic piece of high quality and accuracy, although it is outdated. It is still marketed on paper by the *Dirección del Servicio Geográfico Militar* (DISERGEMIL), the institution legally responsible for cartographic production in Paraguay. The interview with Acuña (Arévalos et al., 2020) revealed that, beyond the legal responsibility of DISERGEMIL, other institutions such as the National Institute of Statistics (INE), produce better and more updated geospatial data in the Paraguayan public sector.

It is important to note that DISERGEMIL was created in the context of the Chaco War between Paraguay and Bolivia (1932-1935) (DISERGEMIL, n.d.), reinforcing the historical link between cartography, extractivism and militarism in the Paraguayan context.

Perhaps the most revealing part of the map is the technical label indicating that the official cartography of Paraguay is produced in the United States.

It is implicit that DISERGEMIL, an institution created in the context of the Chaco War in order to help the army in combat to guarantee sovereignty, lacks, at the present historical moment, sufficient technical skills to describe the entire national territory in a way that serves the tasks of national defense, and that also results in useful inputs to multiple civilian processes of urban, territorial and environmental planning.
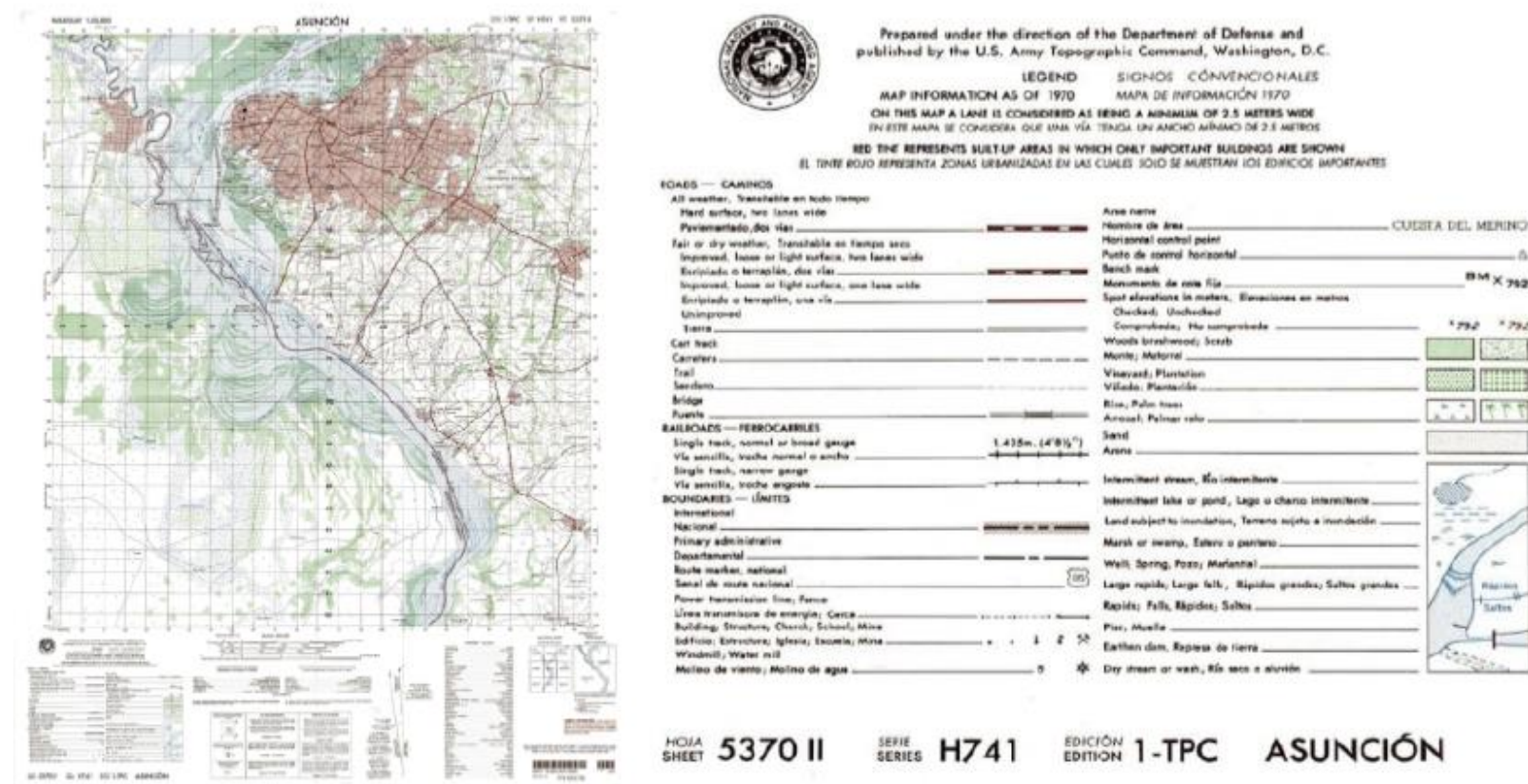
Fig. 6: Map of Asunción prepared under the Direction of the U.S. Department of Defense and Published by the U.S. Army Topographic Command, Washington, D.C. Source: DISERGEMIL and US DOD, 1970. Available at: https://www.disergemil.mil.py/index.php/productos Accessed on: 04/08/2023.

"Maps of Geospatial Distribution of Soybean Production in the Years 2018 to 2019 and 2022 to 2023" by the Institute of Agricultural Biotechnology (2019 and 2023)

The Instituto de Biotecnología Agrícola (INBIO) is a non-profit civil association formed by several guilds related to agricultural production (INBIO, 2023a). For several years, it has been systematically mapping key variables for agribusiness, among which the mapping of sown areas according to the main agribusiness items stands out.

Fig. 7 provides a comparison between two mapping pieces corresponding to the soybean planted area in the years 2018-2019 (INBIO, 2019) and 2022-2023 (INBIO, 2023b).

The large spatial overlap between the yerbales of the past and the soybean fields of the present is noted. The planting maps portray one of the drivers of contemporary Paraguayan productivity and, at the same time, indicate a dramatic change in land use that has resulted in the deforestation of vast portions of the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest.

In addition, the technical quality of the mapping demonstrates mastery and competence in the use of contemporary GIS software techniques. In the Paraguayan context, it is often argued that information gaps are due to lack of human or financial resources. Consequently, it is argued that Paraguay suffers from chronic deficiencies in its cadastral systems and in the mapping of key urban variables, such as service networks, risk sites or precarious settlements.

INBIO's mapping and cartographic products, made with technical rigor and quality, demonstrate, however, that in reality it is not a question of the country lacking resources or technical capabilities, it is a question of a definition of priorities.

This article has documented that one of the aspects of Paraguayan cartography has always been linked to the economic exploitation of the territory. The INBIO maps reaffirm that what is considered economically valuable is mapped and thoroughly recorded.

The technical merits of INBIO's cartography indirectly illustrate the systematic absence of a State that acts to represent the interests of all citizens. Only in the face of this systematic absence or weakness of the State can it be explained that the mapping of Paraguay continues even today, describing only certain economic variables, and ignoring many other aspects of social or environmental relevance, which are not analyzed because they do not produce economic benefits in the short term.
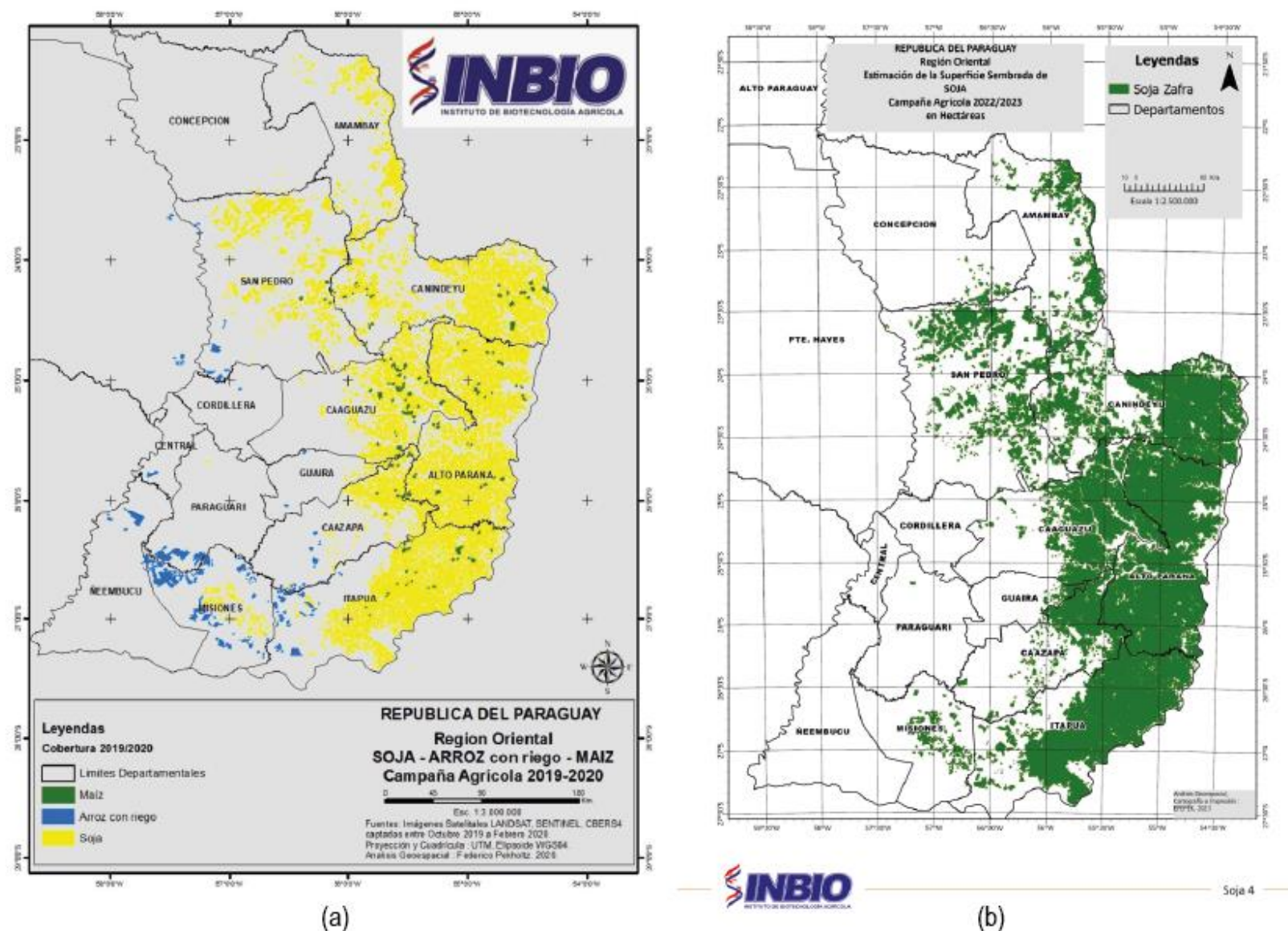
Fig. 7: Maps of Geospatial Distribution of Soybean Production in the years 2018 to 2019 (a) and 2022 to 2023 (b). Source: INBIO, 2019 and 2023. Available at: https://www.inbio.org.py Access on: 08/04/2023.

3.2   Part Two: Discussion of the contemporary situation of Paraguayan cartography based on interviews with key actors

Nº	Date	Interviewee	Institution
1	10/24/2020 10/31/2020	Jorge Acuña	Coordinator of the Geographic Information Innovation Center at *Parque Tecnológico Itaipú - Paraguay*
2	10/24/2020	Lucía Fariña	Specialist in Geographic Information Systems, Professor at UNIGIS and Universidad del Pacífico.
3	07/02/2021	Lorenzo Alfonso* and Fátima Giménez**	*Technical staff member of the *Servicio Nacional de Catastro* of Paraguay. **Lawyer, staff member of the *Servicio Nacional de Catastro* of Paraguay.
4	10/07/2021	Andrés Ramírez Insfrán	Director of Statistical Geoinformation and Data Infrastructure of the *Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas* of Paraguay.

Table 2: List of key actors interviewed. Source: Authors, 2023.

In this paper we analyze four interviews with key actors from the academic and governmental spheres (see Table 2). These interviews were originally carried out in the context of undergraduate final projects and research projects promoted at CIDi. Some of the fundamental aspects highlighted in the interviews are summarized below:

3.2.1   Deficiencies in the national geospatial data infrastructure

The interviewees agree that the geospatial data infrastructure currently faces major weaknesses that include: (i) the lack of an active geodetic network, (ii) the absence of a spatial data infrastructure and (iii) the lack of a national metadata standard.

(i) Paraguay has only a passive geodetic network, composed of physical landmarks in the territory. An active geodetic network is a set of reference points that allow triangulating the territory and are also linked to GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite System) satellites (INEGI, 2017). Thus, an active geodetic network makes it possible to provide high-precision data, even when there are ground movements, maintaining an effective description of the territory at all times. The lack of an active geodetic network that covers the entire national territory prevents having solid technical criteria to strengthen the SNC and settle conflicts over dimensions or location of disputed property titles. Acuña (Arévalos et al., 2020) mentioned that large-scale infrastructural works, which need to be implemented y with great precision, suffer from the lack of a primary framework of coordinate references in the national territory. The interviewee also mentioned that projects for an Active Geodetic Network have been developed in Paraguay but were not implemented.

(ii) The absence of a spatial data infrastructure (SDI) in Paraguay is related to the challenge of systematically accumulating and refining information about the territory and making it accessible for multiple purposes. A SDI is defined as "(...) the basic set of technologies, policies and institutional arrangements aimed at facilitating the availability and access to spatial information" (Capdevila Subirana, 2004, our translation). Accumulating information is a key aspect of the process of building "cartographies from within", since having an ecosystem rich in geospatial data can only be the result of articulated work processes that are sustained over time.

It is equally important to disseminate the information so that citizens, academics and civil society organizations can analyze the present reality, plan scenarios and discuss future alternatives. This process of socialization of information is also vitally necessary for the coordinated action of public institutions.

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(iii) The absence of a national metadata standard is linked to the previous issue. Paraguay faces the challenge of not having an approved national metadata standard. According to Fariña, this prevents the standardization of metadata assigned to geospatial data and constitutes an obstacle to the interoperability of information (Arévalos et al., 2020).

3.2.2   The lack of sufficiently trained human resources in public institutions

Interviewees Acuña, Fariña and Ramírez (Arévalos et al., 2020; Oporto, 2023) indicate that institutions such as DISERGEMIL still do not implement GIS technologies in their cartographic processes despite having received training on numerous occasions. In other interviews, Alfonso and Giménez (Cristaldo et al., 2021) also mentioned that institutions such as the SNC need more properly trained human resources.

3.2.3   Inter-institutional disarticulations

The Paraguayan Government Institutions that act in the areas of cadastre and cartography include DISERGEMIL, the SNC —depending on the Ministry of Finance—, the *Dirección Nacional de los Registros Públicos* —depending on the Judiciary and INE—. It is necessary to promote the articulated work between these institutions, and additionally link them to the municipalities considering that, within the terms of the Municipal Organic Law, local governments have the mandate to establish urban planning processes, being geospatial data and cadastres, a key input for this. In such context, the interviewees agree that inter-institutional articulation constitutes an enormous challenge that prevents progress in new projects or even disrupts the efforts implemented in the area of geospatial data (Arévalos et al., 2020; Cristaldo et al., 2021; Oporto, 2023).

3.3   Part Three: Experiences applying GIS - FOSS tools in Paraguay and their implications

3.3.1   Experiences with FOSS GIS at CIDi FADA

CIDi FADA UNA is the academic space from which the authors develop their daily work. One of the most important academic objectives of the institution is to explore how FOSS GIS tools can be applied to overcome the cartographic gaps of the Global South. This is a response to the historical and current limitations of Paraguayan cartography, described in this article.

In such context, CIDi develops —together with national and international partners— a repertoire of methodologies, academic research and training (see fig. 8) linked to the use of FOSS GIS tools, for the study of cities and territories of Paraguay and the Global South. Since 2017, these efforts have been developed within a research line called "Mapping with Free Software".

Fig. 8: Territorial Mapping Techniques with Free Software course. Source: prepared by the authors, 2023.

As a result, projects such as Mapping Paraguay with OpenStreetMap (Map Py OSM) and Urban Atlas of Paraguay (AUPy) have been developed (Cristaldo, 2022). The first one produces basic geospatial information on buildings, vegetation and artificial bodies of water for the whole of Paraguay (see Fig. 9). The second has developed analytical cartography of 15 cities in the country, in the Route No. 2 corridor, and in border cities between Paraguay and Brazil (see Fig. 10 and 11).

(a)
(b)

Fig. 9: Mapping of buildings in the Triple Frontier region, Map Py OSM Project (a) 2018, (b) 2019. Source: prepared by the authors, 2019.

(a)

(b)
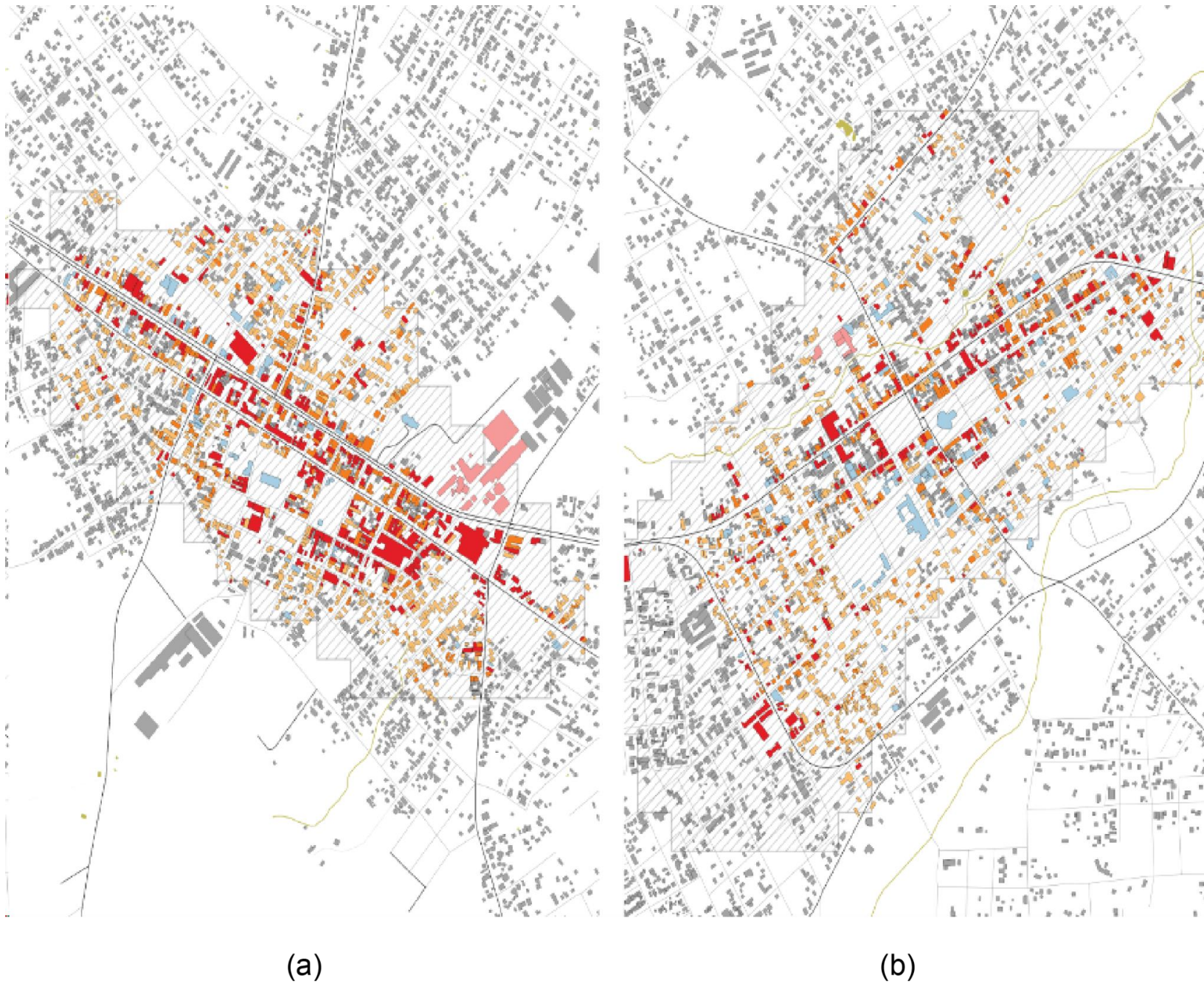
Fig. 10: Mapping of building uses in Itauguá (a) and Caacupé (b). Urban Atlas of Paraguay Project. Source: prepared by the authors, 2020.
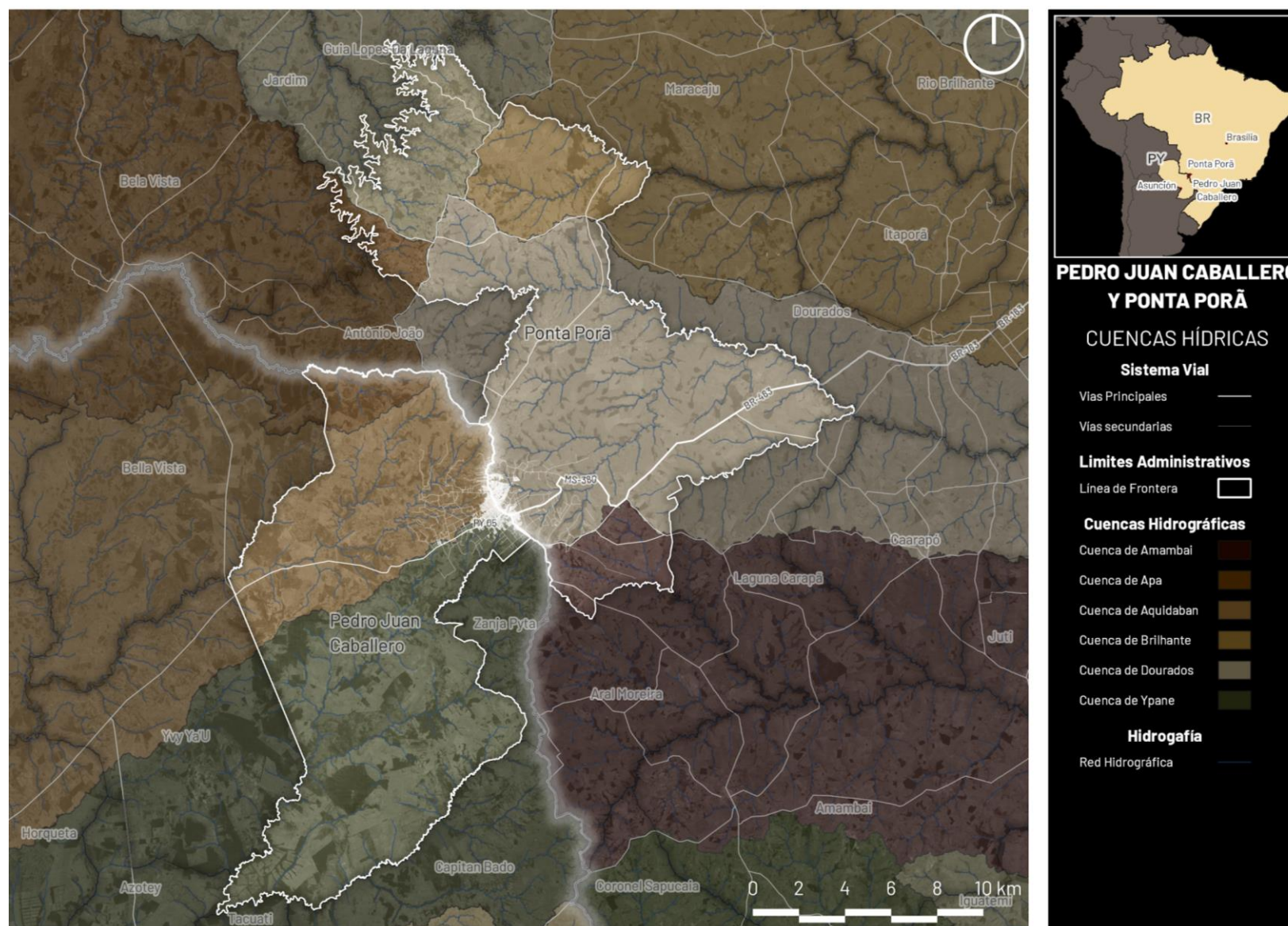
Fig. 11: Urban Atlas of Paraguay Project - Border cities. Map of watersheds in Pedro Juan Caballero (Py) and Ponta Pora (Br). Source: prepared by the authors, 2022.

These initiatives are conceptually grouped into two categories. On the one hand, basic science studies: these are descriptive urban-spatial analyses that involve the elaboration of an important contingent of new data through remote and field work. They provide inputs to communities, academic actors and local governments, helping to decode the "urban genome" of Paraguayan cities. On the other hand, there are applied science studies: usually commissioned by partner institutions, they focus on key aspects such as the detailed description of low-income communities, the study of metropolitan territories or urban risks, among others (see fig. 12).

In terms of tools, these works are based on the contribution to open projects such as OpenStreetMap, OpenAerialMap and Mapillary; the use of free software such as QGIS and of low-cost tools such as 360º cameras and drones for data capture in the field (see fig. 13). Acting in a context in which resources are chronically limited, these methodologies are based on the idea of promoting collective, collaborative and cumulative work. All data produced by CIDi are publicly available. In addition, the methods and sources used to produce data and analysis are also publicly accessible, allowing the empowerment of communities and transparent processes of continuous improvement

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556 ASENTAMIENTOS PRECARIOS
EN ASUNCIÓN Y SU ÁREA METROPOLITANA

00_Asunción — 77
02_Capiatá — 52
03_Fernando de la Mora — 12
07_Lambaré — 52
08_Limpio — 53
09_Luque — 88
10_Mariano Roque Alonso — 39
12_Ñemby — 44
13_San Antonio — 62
14_San Lorenzo — 40
15_Villa Elisa — 37

Actualización del universo de asentamientos en Asunción y su área metropolitana (2023).

Fig. 12: Consultancy for the diagnosis of the water, sanitation and hygiene situation in informal settlements in the metropolitan area of Asunción (2022). Source: DAPSAN, TECHO Paraguay and CIDI FADA-UNA, 2023.
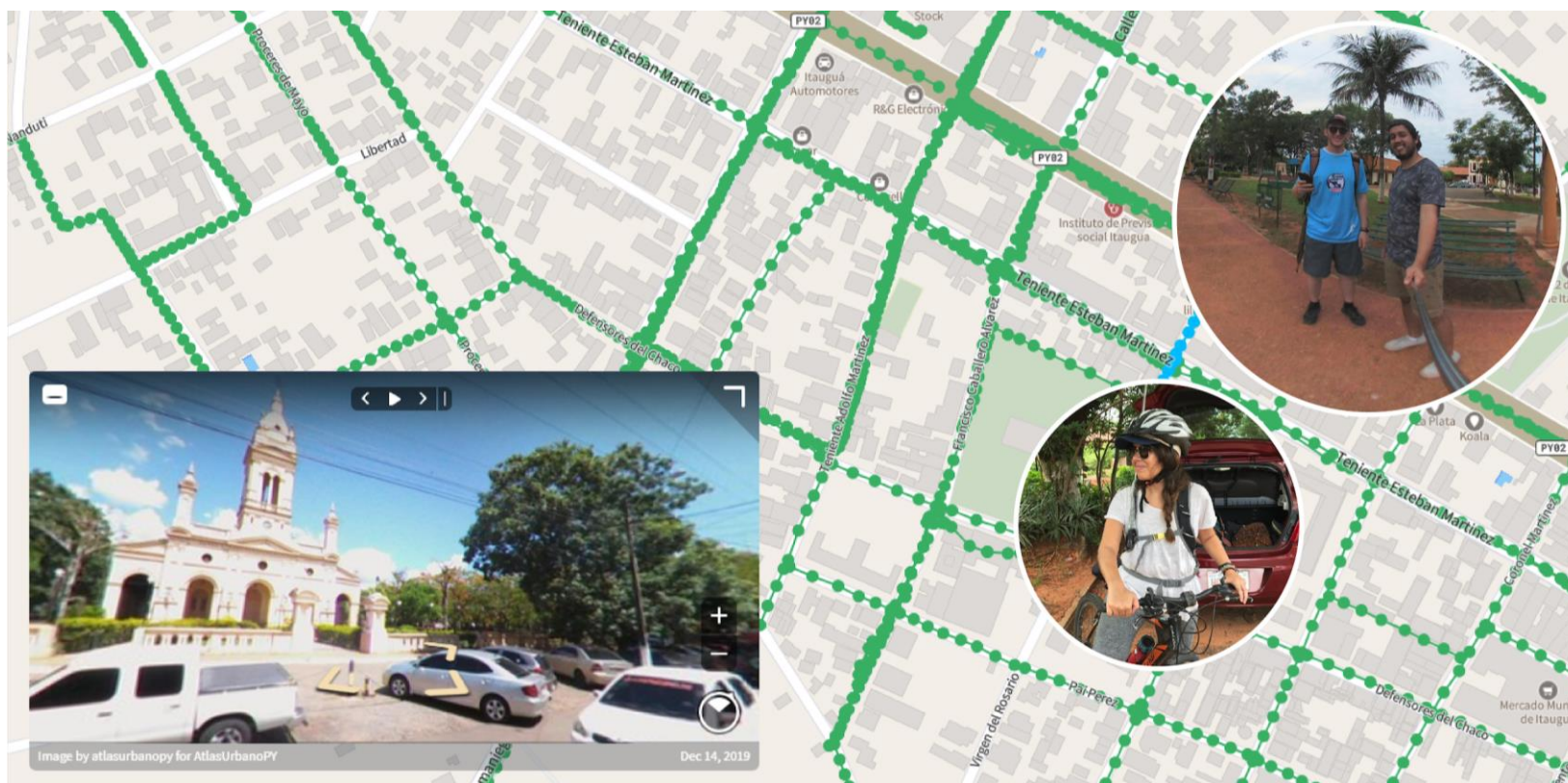
Fig. 13: Campaigns of photomapping for the survey of urban areas. Source: prepared by the authors, 2023.
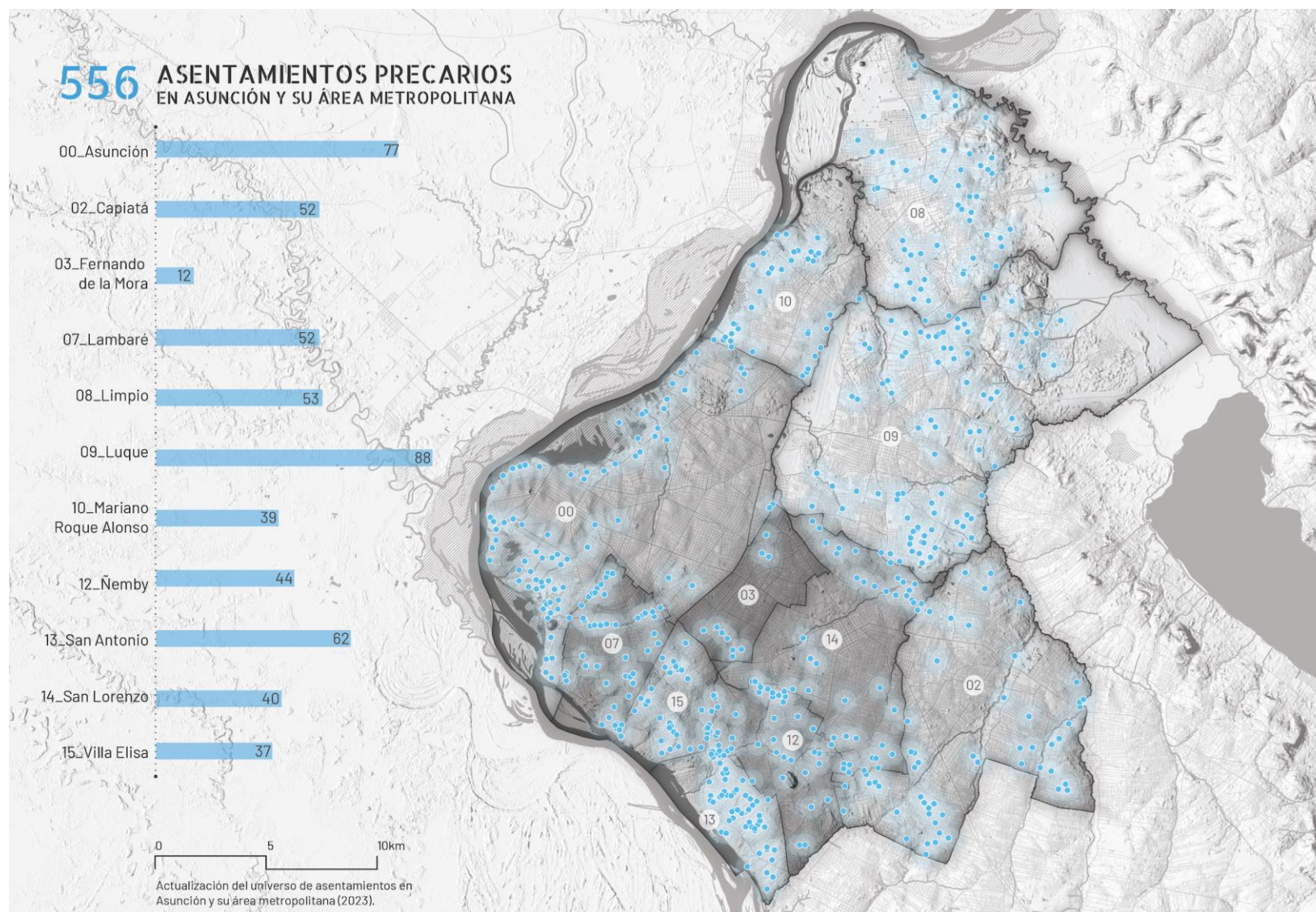
3.3.2   Implications

The social and political implications of mass-producing geospatial data through collaborative work and using FOSS tools are multiple:

(i) It transforms a radically opaque society into one that has a relatively richer information ecosystem, enabling greater transparency. This in turn provides the opportunity to reduce corruption and make rational, evidence-based decisions. The accumulation of data also makes it possible to move from processes of register and description to processes of analysis, critical reflection and prospective-projective studies.

(ii) Collaborative work and FOSS tools imply that mapping priorities are not defined from any single political-institutional panopticon, but rather that communities, academics and local governments have the capacity to promote their own mapping agendas and share their data and methods.

(iii) The use of FOSS tools makes it possible to reduce the digital and technological gap between the countries of the Global North and those of the Global South. In addition, by designing methodologies that are based exclusively on free software and open source tools, the cost barrier practically disappears, and is replaced by a technical capacity barrier that can be overcome with training processes.

(iv) Finally, there is the issue of building a society that progressively has more people with the capacity to produce and use data for their own purposes. Ultimately, this is the aspect that has the greatest potential to subvert historical asymmetries: the more people are able to produce maps "from the inside", the less obliged Paraguay will be to assume the narratives and descriptions that have been made "from the outside". A society that has the capacity to represent itself is exercising its capacity to imagine and understand itself in space, without depending on other actors.

4   Conclusions

This work has provided a contribution to the decolonial debate through (i) an analysis of the historical territorial evolution of Paraguay through its cartographies, (ii) the discussion of the contemporary cartographic capacities of the country and (iii) the reflection on cartographic practices developed by the authors in Paraguay, practices based on the use of FOSS GIS tools, discussing their political and social implications.

In this sense, the text seeks to establish a dialogue with the work of authors such as Maluly, Gil and Grava (2023) who state: " (...) we aspire to rescue the existing relationship between geography and history, not in the form of a regression, but of an enrichment in the use of techniques" (p. 62). In this sense, the present work provides a contribution to the scientific literature that discusses the links between cartography, colonialism and decolonization (Craib, 2017; Dym, 2017; Moraes et al., 2021; Maluly, Gil & Grava, 2023) by emphasizing the role of FOSS GIS tools, as a potential means of contributing positively to the inclusion of excluded social sectors and to the democratic management of the territory.

In the first section of the paper we have deepened our reflection on the historical evolution of the Paraguayan territory through the iconographic and iconological analysis of seven pieces produced between 1809 and 2023. This analysis has elucidated that the production of a relevant part of the cartography on Paraguay is related to the geopolitical-military control of the territories and economic extractivism, whilst favoring the exclusion of native peoples and peasant communities.

It has been documented that in the case of Paraguay, "cartographies from outside" historically predominate, conceived and executed by imperial powers, military forces or technicians acting at the service of external economic interests. It has also been determined that "cartographies from outside" do not only characterize the colonial period, but continued to be produced in the independent period. In fact, the maps that were used for the massive privatization of the Chaco territories and the yerbales of the Alto Paraná, after the end of the War of the Triple Alliance, were produced in the independent period of Paraguay as a Republic (i.e., after 1811). In spite of this, they were made as instruments that made possible the action of international interests, guiding ways of occupying the territory and exploiting natural resources. The social and economic implications of these cartographies continue to be felt by peasant and indigenous communities in contemporary Paraguay.

It is postulated that "cartographies from outside" share some characteristics: (i) they distort what is portrayed by the distance (geographical and cultural) between the map producer and the mapped territory and its inhabitants; and (ii) they produce abstractions of the territory that simplify, reduce or directly eliminate ecological-geographical features and the original inhabitants in order to make way for new rights and new occupants who derive their legitimacy from metanarratives such as imperial power, the Christian need to evangelize, the notion of private property, or the social value of modernizing the barbaric void of the jungle and nature.

The work has not stopped at historical reflection. In the second section, based on interviews with key actors, progress has been made in understanding the challenges faced by contemporary Paraguayan society in order to produce "cartographies from within". Cartographies from within" are defined in this work as those that help citizens and institutions that inhabit a territory to make rational, sustainable and democratic decisions about it.

The four key actors interviewed are technicians of institutions working in the area of geospatial data. Through their statements, we have obtained indications that Paraguay, even today, has a precarious capacity to represent itself in geospatial data. These limitations refer to the difficulty of producing data but, even more, to the inability to articulate efforts between institutions. The interviews also indicate that basic pillars of a contemporary and accurate cartographic infrastructure are absent (the active geodetic network, the SDI and the national metadata standard). Finally, the interviewees pointed out that more human resources trained in the use of GIS tools are needed in the public sector.

From the analysis of the cartographic pieces and the results of the interviews carried out in the first and second sections, another indirectly revealed absence can be glimpsed: that of a State that works systematically and in an organized manner to know its territory, with a view to increasing its management capacity.

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The third section discusses experiences on GIS - FOSS in Paraguay and their social and political implications. The intention is to reflect on cartographic practices promoted from CIDi, and to evaluate how they can contribute to bridge the historical gaps presented in the first two sections. It is postulated here that from the academy it is possible to promote new pedagogical, research and methodological development processes that make possible the production of "cartographies from within". It is proposed that these methods are to be based on FOSS tools, to enable a collective, collaborative and cumulative work of data production and cartography, suitable for contexts of limited resources.

It is proposed that under these parameters of free use of technological tools and collaborative work it is possible to produce high quality cartography at low cost, oriented to civil multipurpose use. These expanded capacities to represent the territory constitute a condition that, although not sufficient, is necessary to improve the sustainable and democratic governance of the territories.

Finally, the paper concludes that FOSS GIS tools result in potentially positive social and political implications, which are summarized here: (i) moving from a radically opaque society to a society that has a relatively richer information ecosystem and consequently, that allows for greater transparency (ii) the agenda of what is mapped, is not defined from any single political - institutional panopticon (iii) the use of FOSS tools, implies a strategic option of reducing the digital and technological gap between the countries of the Global North and those of the Global South (iv) to build a society that progressively, has more people with the ability to produce and use data for their own purposes.

Acknowledgments

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THE LANDSCAPE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF GOOD LIVING: THE NHANDEREKO IN SAO PAULO STATE CAPITAL

A PAISAGEM NA CONSTRUÇÃO DO BEM VIVER: O *NHANDEREKO* NA CAPITAL PAULISTA

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Abstract

This article is structured based on an ongoing master's research and seeks to articulate the theoretical-practical fields of the concept of Good Living, which is understood as a decolonial and landscape studies alternative, and Landscape, which is comprehended as as the totality of the nature-culture constituted in the reproduction of worlds. The article focuses on the Guarani resumption in the conquest by the Guarani Mbya people of their ancestral territory, the Tenondé Porã Indigenous Land (TITP in the Portuguese acronym), in the extreme south of the city of São Paulo, Brazil, and analyzes the transformations of the landscape both in its physical and symbolic aspects. The methodology involved a theoretical review of the decolonial (Quijano), ontological (Latour, Escobar, and Blaser), and Good Living (Hidalgo-Capitán, Cubillo-Guevara, Gudynas, Mamani) debates to explore their relationships with the field of Landscape (Santos, Nogué and Ingold) and to territorialize it in the TITP by dealing with territorial planning (APA Capivari-Monos), indigenous studies (Pierri, Krenak), and through empirical exercise, in addition to dialogue with local leaders from the Tekoa Kalipety indigenous land. The preliminary results of the research highlight the contribution of Landscape studies in the construction of Good Living through the political and identity strengthening of indigenous peoples based on key elements (autonomy, communality, relationality, and sustainability) identified in the concept of *Nhandereko*, or Good Living in the Guarani language. Considering that agriculture reflects the ontological and epistemological values of the Guarani way of life, the article calls for the mobilization of the landscape as a tool for social use.

Keywords: Landscape, Good Living, Political ontology, Nature-culture, Worlds

1   Introduction

The concept of Good Living (*Buen Vivir* in Spanish, and *Bem Viver* in Portuguese) has received significant interest in academia and politics, especially in Latin America, as an alternative to the capitalistic, colonial, and extractive development of neoliberal globalization. At the same time, the paradigms of the field of Landscape Studies are contested, with increasing ties to territorial politics, planning and management, involving the government and communities. Landscape, as a theoretical and practical field, can contribute to the decolonial debate, if a counter-hegemonic approach is taken. By shedding light on the immaterial and symbolic aspects of the geographic space, integrating nature and culture, landscape can benefit communities by reclaiming environmental and cultural qualities in the transformation of the territory.

This article is structured on an ongoing master's research, and presents preliminary findings on the relationship between Good Living and Landscape theories and practices, based on *Nhandereko* (Good Living in the Guarani language), the way of life of the Guarani Mbya living in the southernmost region of the municipality of São Paulo. The starting point is a theoretical review of the decolonial debate, by Aníbal Quijano; the Southern Epistemologies and the post-abyssal thinking by Boaventura de Souza Santos; the ontological debate by Bruno Latour, Arturo Escobar, and Mario Blaser; the Good Living platform, by Eduardo Gudynas, Fernando Huanacuni Mamani, Cubillo-Guevara, and Hidalgo Capitán; the Landscape conceptualization in the research, by Milton Santos, Joan Nogué, and Tim Ingold; and the understanding of the region through the Management Plan of the Capivari-Monos Environmental Protection Area (APA-CM, in the acronym in Portuguese). Afterwards, we sought to articulate this theoretical basis to the case study of the research, conducted on the Tenondé Porã Indigenous Land (TITP, in the acronym in Portuguese); the *Nhandereko*, through the orality of Jera Poty and the ethnographic research of Daniel Pierri; a bibliographic review of Indigenous authors including Ailton Krenak; and, finally, the empirical exercise in the Kalipety *Tekoa* (village), through individual and group field visits.

The TITP, belonging to the Guarani Mbya, is their ancestral territory of resistance in the southernmost portion of the municipality of São Paulo. In 2013, the Guarani Mbya launched the "Guarani resumption" movement, in an effort to retake their ancestral territory, and successfully expanded their territory from fifty-two hectares to sixteen thousand hectares in 2015. The reoccupation of the ancestral territory over the past ten years has caused significant transformations in the landscape, including physical aspects such as the environmental recovery of water recharge areas, as well as symbolic aspects associated with the Guarani identity itself. This study

seeks to understand the landscape transformations and its associated values, as perceived by the Guarani who inhabit the landscape, orienting the construction of landscape as a tool that can contribute to the construction of Good Living of the Indigenous, *quilombola*, traditional, and local communities. The article is structured in five sections that enlighten the research method and ends with the Conclusions section, providing the preliminary results of the ongoing master's research.

2   The Constitution of Modernity: separations from dualist ontology and abyssal thinking

For the approach used in this study and as a way to prepare the reader for the proposed decolonial and counter-hegemonic discussion, we define the term ontology. Canadian anthropologist Mario Blaser defines ontology as the way of making the 'world', determining "what types of things exist or can exist, what are the conditions of their existence, their dependent relationships," which establishes the "inventory of types of beings and the relationships among them." He further says that "ontology does not come before mundane practices, but rather shapes their forms through practices involving humans and non-humans." Finally, he defines that ontology "sets connections between myths and practices that evidence narratives about what types of things can exist, and what relationships they might possibly have" (Blaser, 2019, pp. 10-11, our translation).

Ontology is the first 'layer' of the realization of worlds. It conceives the relations between humans and non-humans, and sets the field of the socio-natural reproduction of a particular collective, its absences, its presences, its limits, and the epistemologies it derives. Epistemologies are understood as every type of knowledge that is recognized as valid, that represents the real world and the truth within a given ontology, therefore making knowledge intelligible (Santos, 2014). The dualist ontology of colonial modernity is built on the linearity of time and the concept of development, defining the period of modernity, and, by contrast, the past considered 'archaic' or 'backward', subjecting relationships between winners, the former, and losers, the latter (Latour, 2013).

Latour defines the total separation between humans and non-humans, transformed into Nature, as the 'Great Inner Division'. The Constitution of Modernity defines the human being as the only agent capable of agency over the universal world, constituting cultures, as long as they are inside the ontological framework of modernity. It further determines the existence of a unique Nature, common to all the cultures, characterizing it as the unquestionable reality and truth for the reproduction of the World, considered unique and universal (Latour, 2013, 2020). In this context, landscape is realized as the image of pristine nature, idealized as domesticated nature, as object-garden, subjected to the regimes of aestheticization and patrimonialization of frozen landscapes to serve the commodity fetish, negating ways of life, forms of appropriation and perception constituted in the landscapes (Domingues, 2009).

This construction is established based on Judeo-Christian rationality, or as defined by Escobar, by the 'dualist ontology' that determines the superiority of man over other beings, separates cultures (of humans) from Nature (of non-humans), and establishes hierarchical differentiations between man and woman, mind and body, science and belief, reason and emotion, individual and community, identifying subjects and objects (Escobar, 2017). These are hierarchical pairs, in which the latter is always subjugated, considered as an object for the appropriation and expropriation by the former, the dominant subject. These are pairs that establish "hierarchical classifications of differences" (Escobar, 2017, p. 182, our translation), which determine the superiority of the 'modern European man' over ethnicities, genders, religions, and regions, leading to the suppression, subordination, annulment, and destruction of different forms of knowledge and being, which do not adjust themselves to the dominant manners of the colonial modernity of European origin (Escobar, 2017). Quijano (2000) notes that the construction of race as a mental category is key to the material and immaterial domination and expropriation of peoples exerted by coloniality.

Santos (2014) further explores the concept of the abyssal thinking of modernity, which consists of a system of 'visible and invisible distinctions on the social reality', distributed in two universes: "the universe on this side of the line and the universe on the other side of the line". This division represents the disappearance of the 'other side of the line' as reality, making it non-existent, which means it is "radically excluded because it is beyond the universe and the accepted conception of inclusion", eliminating the possibility of co-presence of such universes. Beyond the line, there is space only for absence, invisibility, and nonexistence (Santos, 2014, pp. 21-22, our translation).

The abyssal division created around the capital of colonial modernity meant the concentration of global power in Europe, and the "control of all forms of control of the subjectivity, culture, and in particular of knowledge, the production of knowledge" (Quijano, 2000, p. 126, our translation). The primacy of Judeo-Christian thinking was defined in the fields of science, politics, philosophy and theology, and their representatives were considered the producers of the true knowledge, the observing subjects, while the ancestral and traditional knowledge of native, *quilombola* and other peoples were regarded as mere opinions and beliefs, treated as observed objects (Santos, 2014). Despite the intense processes of deterritorialization suffered by these communities placed in a subaltern position throughout history, the resistance of native and peasant communities struggling for their rights over territories and ways of life is pulsing in the Global South. The political emergence of these agents and their visions of the world, in line with the critical perspectives against the neoliberal capitalism, opened space for counter-hegemonic and decolonial alternatives (Santos, 2014).

Disputes over territory represent the fight for power and for the right to live outside of global capitalism, under rules collectively created by communities. These are disputes for the right to r-exist[1], including the territorialities and territorializations of marginalized communities (Porto-Gonçalves, 2012). Santos proposes post-abyssal thinking as the way to promote interactions between the communities' resistance practices and academia, through researches that have criticism regarding the modernity and logocentric science, in an attempt to strengthen the construction of alternative futures, allowing the coexistence of different worlds and the consolidation of the pluriverse (Santos, 2014).

3   Pathways to the pluriverse: post-abyssal thinking and struggles for territory

Post-abyssal thinking seeks to eliminate the line separating the two universes, to allow the contribution from the diversity of knowledge produced in the multiple existing worlds. In doing so, the intention is not to discredit scientific knowledge, but to counter it with other forms of knowledge produced in other ontologies, which allows the understanding of the existence of the possibility of multiple truths about the same subject-object, because understanding is built based on its own relational ontologies (Santos, 2014). The 'relational ontologies' of native peoples and traditional communities who understand the world based on the interdependence between the parties, is based on the comprehension "nothing preexists the relations that constitute it" (Escobar, 2016, p. 8, our translation). In other words, beings and things only exist in relation to one another. These are worlds constituted in an intertwined way, between the intra-world (the lower world), the world (of humans and non-humans), and the supra-world (the spiritual world) (Escobar, 2016). Therefore, the ecology of knowing seeks to create a counter-hegemonic construction of alternatives to capitalism, based on the interaction and coexistence between scientific and non-scientific knowledge, challenging the monoculture of modern science, through practices and knowledge of indigenous, traditional, and *quilombola* peoples, among other peoples historically placed in a subaltern position. Figure 1 shows a comparative scheme of comprehension between abyssal thinking and the ecology of knowledge.

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[1] Term used by the Brazilian geographer Porto-Gonçalves to refer to the right to re-exist, with the meaning of recuperating the existence that was expropriated.
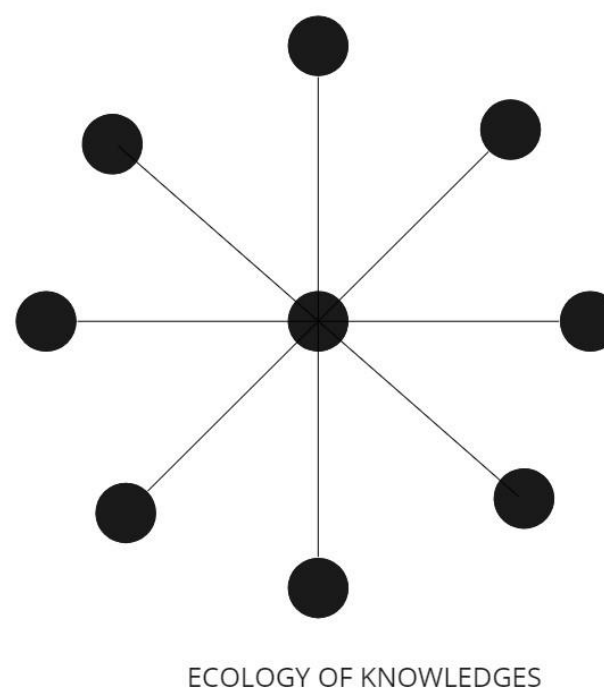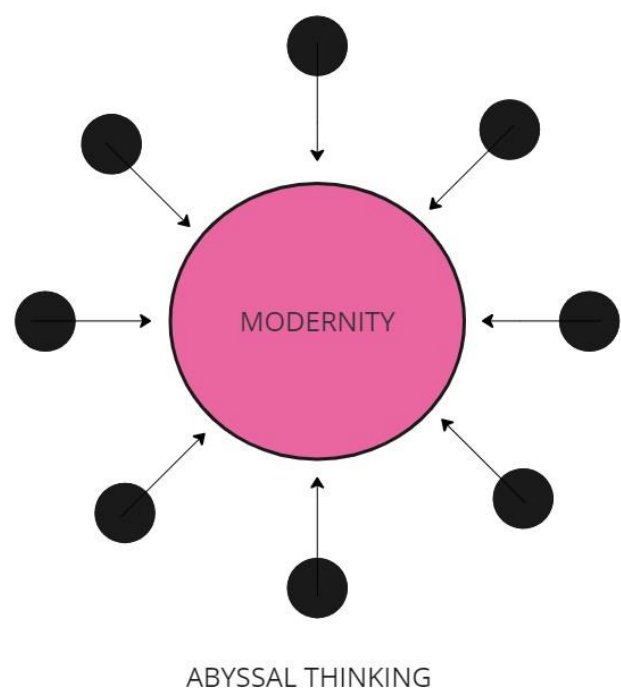
Fig.1: Scheme of knowledge: from modernity to the ecology of knowledge. The scheme demonstrates the hierarchy in the correlation of the forces of modernity and the balance between different fields of knowledge proposed in the ecology of knowledge. Source: Author, 2023.

This perspective is in opposition to the idea of the single Modernity of Nature appropriated by different cultures, with subjective representations. Latour notes that, in fact, "there are no universal cultures – whether different or universal - nor a universal nature. There are only natures-cultures, which are the only possible base for comparison" (Latour, 2013, p. 102, our translation). In this regard, the understanding of landscape through nature-culture constituted in the reproduction of the worlds, different in their ontologies and epistemologies, is vindicated. Landscape is simultaneously the physical and symbolic, constituted in the appropriations, in the perceptions, and in the production of affections. Therefore, the perception of landscape is not the result of an individual action, but is rather characterized by collective perceptions, because it is always a social construction (Nogué, 2007).

Landscape is the result of the space-time relation between human and non-human collectives in the reproduction of life, it is a palimpsest, a mosaic of relations, of forms, functions and senses, the overlapping of texts in the territory, or, then, the combination of nature and culture transformed by the work in different historical times, which represent the ontology and epistemology of human collectives that dwell a given place. (Nogué, 2007; Santos, 2014; Ingold, 2021). Therefore, it is fundamental to decentralize the dualist ontology, vindicating concepts such as post-abyssal thinking and pluriverse, to recover the importance of utopia in the construction of alternative futures to the global neoliberal capital. Good Living, as the epistemological horizon of the Global South, questions development, advocates for the rights of nature, and searches for alternative ways of life to colonial modernity. In this regard, we understand that landscape can serve as a tool to contribute to its construction. The next section presents the bases that structure Good Living.

4   From the theory of Good Living to the practices of the Guarani resumption: territorial dynamics and transformations

Good Living is an indigenist-based concept, still in process, that reached the political debate in the sphere of the constituent assemblies of Equator and Bolivia, in 2008 and 2009, respectively. Good Living is understood as the way of life of native Latin American communities, recognized in the diversity of peoples that comprise the region. The *Sumak Kawsay* (of the Kichwa people), *Suma Qamaña* (of the Aimará people), *Allin kawsay* (of the Quéchua people), *Kyme Mogen* (of the Mapuche people), *Nhandereko* and *Teko Kavi* (of the Guarani people), are the native ways of life of *Abya Yala*, created in their own relational ontologies with a common horizon:

rupture with the separation of nature-culture in the reproduction of the worlds and the community-based and ecologically-balanced organization of life (Gudynas, 2017).

Good Living is also mobilized as an alternative to the capitalistic development of modernity, decentralizing the economy within the sphere of life. It can be understood as the way of life in harmony with itself (identity) and with its social (equality) and natural (sustainability) surroundings (Hidalgo-Capitán & Cubillo-Guevara, 2017). It can be understood as the platform that gathers the set of indigenous and western theories and practices that deconstruct colonialist modernity and orient to the pluriverse. It encompasses sustainable dimensions (environmental, social, and economic) present in the ways of life of native peoples, traditional, and peasant communities. It is based on environmental rationality and on biocentric ethics, valuing nature-culture and ecology as socio-natural principles. Four central elements of Good Living orient the transition to the pluriverse: autonomy, relationality, communality, and sustainability, as represented in Figure 2.

Pluriverse

● **Good Living**

autonomy

relationality

communality

sustainability
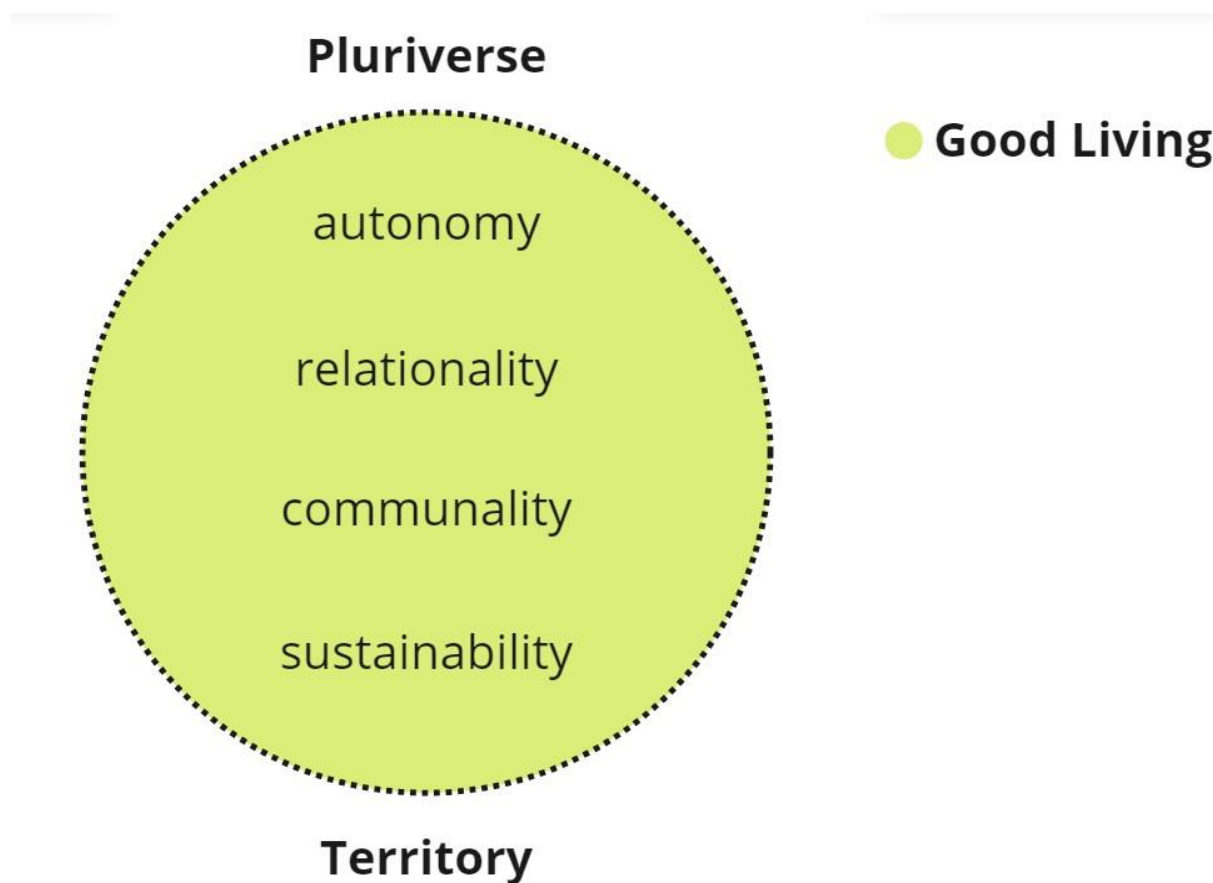
Territory

Fig. 2: Scheme of the fundamentals of the Good Living. Source: Author, 2023. The scheme identifies the fundamental principles represented in Good Living in the struggle for the territory with orientation towards the pluriverse.

The preliminary results of this study indicate some relations between the theoretical review of Good Living, *Nhandereko*, of the Guarani Mbya, and the empirical work in the *Tekoa Kalipety* (TK). They are presented below, distributed in the four central elements identified:
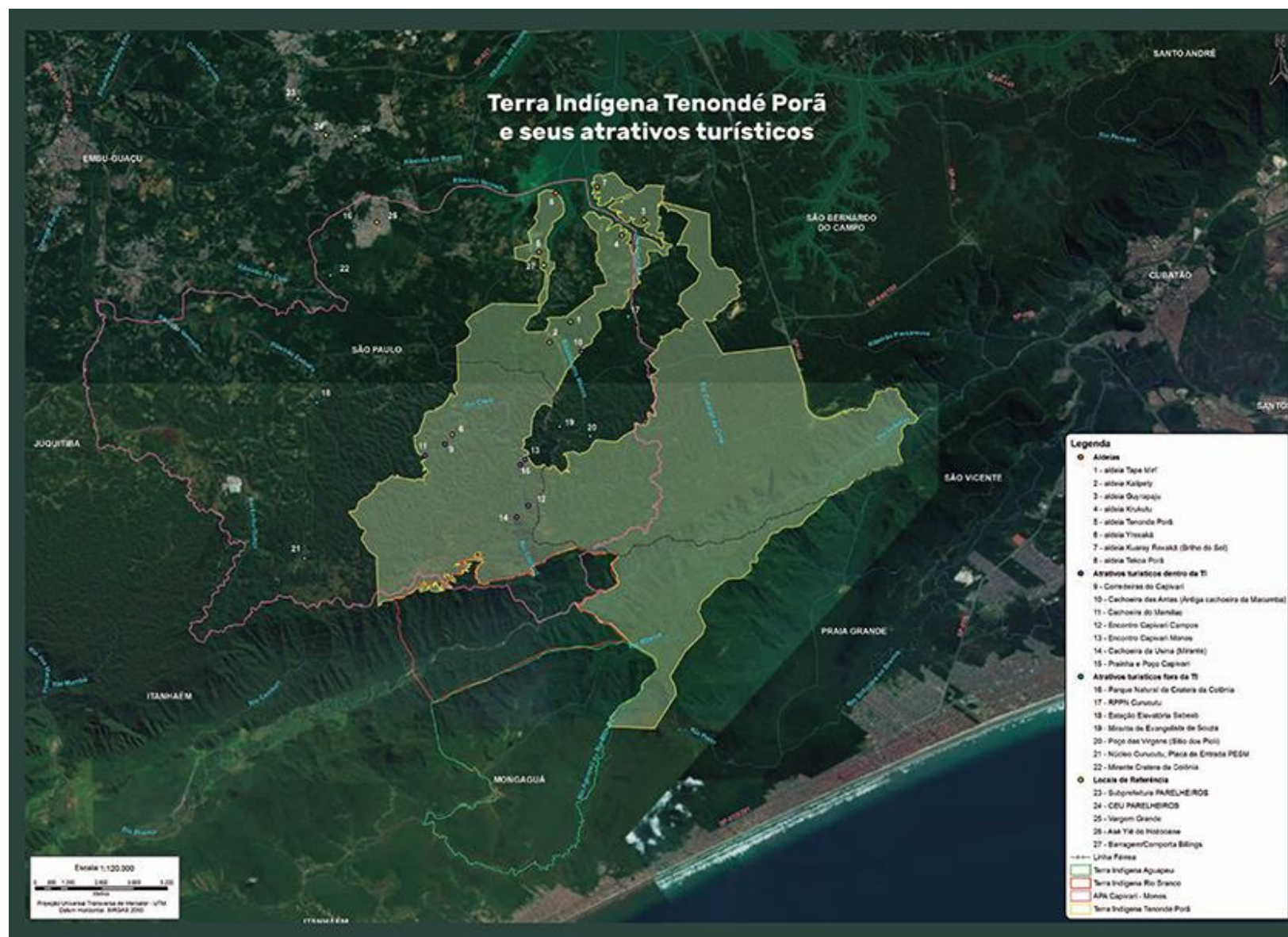
Fig. 3: Map of TITP Location. The map identifies the location of the villages and main tourist attractions of the TITP and shows its overlapping with APA Capivari-Monos. Source: Plan of Visitation of Tenondé Porã Indigenous Land, 2018.

a.   Autonomy: the construction of Good Living is, above all, the struggle for territory-territoriality-territorialization, which is only possible based on the autonomy for the reproduction of life, with self-determination on their territories. (Porto-Gonçalves, 2012). In the cosmology of the native peoples, Earth is the natural space of life, the sacred place of appropriation and interaction, it is the center of community life (Mamani, 2010). The autonomy of the territory is the dimension of power in the reproduction of the worlds. In 2012, the Guaranis lived agglomerated in fifty-two hectares, divided into two villages (Tenondé Porã and Krukutu), and since the Guarani resumption in the conquest by the Guarani Mbya people of their ancestral territory started in 2013, when TK was created, more than fourteen villages were recognized since 2016 in sixteen thousand hectares in the TITP (Zibechi, 2022). TK was born in 2013, the first new village of the 'Guarani resumption', the way they recognize the redemption of their ancestral Guarani territory, or *Yvy Rupa*. TITP is located in the southernmost region of São Paulo, distributed among the municipalities of São Paulo, São Bernardo do Campo, São Vicente and Mongaguá. Figure 3 shows its location.

b.   Relationality: Relationality refers to the condition of being relational, in which beings and things only exist in relation to one another, which includes the world, the intra-world, and the supra-world. They are multiple subjects in constant interrelation. In the Guarani cosmovision, the relations between the spiritual realm of deities and the earth realm take place in different ways, associated

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with the community practices of festivals, dances, rituals, to the ancestral knowledge of the *Xeramoi* (wise elders) that guide the youth, tied to the *Ija* (spiritual guardians) of beings other than the humans that coexist in the earth realm of Guarani nature-culture.

c.   Communality: The condition of being communal, which implies that the individual exists as part of the community. Gustavo Esteva points out that communality, as a word, was coined in the context of the struggle for territory (Esteva, 2015).

> [In a] very real sense, the idea of community is nothing but the re-cognition of the concrete form of existence of the human being, which tends to assume the form of an ideal because of the threat exerted over the territories, including violence, on this human possibility of existence. (Esteva, 2015, p. 12, our translation).

Since the Guarani resumption in the conquest of their ancestral territory of the TITP, most of the villages were reorganized, and the *Caciques* (chiefs) were replaced by community leaders, deconstructing the patriarchal and hierarchical culture inherited from the *jurua* (white and non-indigenous), as told by Jera Poty, leader of TK (Poty, 2023). In 2022, there were twenty-two leaders out of which twelve were women (Zibechi, 2022).

d.   Sustainability: Good Living gathers the set of theories and practices critical of modernity and incorporates sustainability as the basic condition for the social reproduction, always in harmony with the environment. It is created based on environmental rationality and, therefore, it has ecology at the center of territorial decision-making, so that decisions are truly sustainable and oriented by non-capitalistic principles. For the Guarani, *Nhandereko* only exists if there is sustainability, and this is reflected in the expanded community relations that are part of the Guarani relational ontology. Relationships of production and consumption are thought to meet the community needs, and not to accumulate capital.

The preliminary results are capable of articulating theory and empiricism through the study of the TITP, and more recently of the TK, as reference of Good Living in the most populous metropolis in South America. The investigation of landscape transformations and the form of mobilization for the re-conquest of territory allows for the identification of other values intrinsic to the landscape that were denied by the colonial universal modernity, which construct the landscape as a passive, observed, domesticated object. The new paradigm of landscape proposes the redemption of thinking through landscape, which was annulled by colonial modernity, and which comprises nature-culture as a totality, created in the reproduction of the several coexisting worlds, articulated to the ideas presented in the previous sessions.

Therefore, thinking through landscape can strengthen the ways of life, the practices and knowledge that are the resources of these communities, providing support for their physical and spiritual existence (Campos & Krenak, 2021). For the purposes of this article, we present some reflections formulated during the research to articulate the fields of Landscape and Good Living through the *Nhandereko*, supported by empirical observations made in TK. Two visits were carried out in five months. They allowed the reconnaissance of the local landscape through walks through TK and dialogues with Guarani interlocutors, which consequently expanded the scales of the landscape reconnaissance. Figure 4 shows the agroecological Guarani backyard in TK.

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Fig. 4: Agroecological backyard in the Tekoa Kalipety. Combination of maize and banana crops. Source: Author, 2023.

5   *Nhandereko* **and the practices of resistance in the transformation of landscape**

The reconquest of the *Yvy Rupa* represents the fundamental achievement in the consolidation of the *Nhandereko*, which strengthens the Guarani nature-culture in the borders of the most populous metropolis in South America and strains perspectives about the way of constructing landscape and perspectives about alternatives to the colonial capitalistic development of western modernity. The expropriation of their territory and nature undertaken by economic sectors and by the state throughout history led to the transformations of the region's landscapes, with the replacement of the native Atlantic Rainforest by exotic plants, predominantly pine and eucalyptus, in addition to its occupation by small farms and properties that occupied the region (Bellenzani, 2011).

In recent years, the Guarani transformed their territory and multiplied their *tekoa* to requalify the landscape, recover the soil, the waters, and strengthen their culture, with ancestral knowledge and practices. The reconquest of the *Yvy Rupa* through the implementation of new *tekoa* is the way of territorialization of the Guarani, so that they can consolidate sustainable communities while providing conditions for the reproduction of their ways of life by all families. Today, there are approximately twenty families (one hundred people) living per *tekoa*, according to my interlocutor. Figures 5 and 6 show the transformation of the TK landscape since its creation.

Fig. 5: Satellite image of the *Tekoa Kalipety* in August 2012. The satellite image shows the situation of the *Kalipety* months before its creation. The degradation of the area by the road, in the access to the village, is noteworthy. Source: Google Earth, 2023.

Fig. 6: Satellite image of the *Tekoa Kalipety* in July 2022. The satellite image shows the expansion of the *Kalipety* occupation, ten years after its creation. The previously degraded area is under the process of environmental recuperation, with native plants fundamental for the *Nhandereko*. Source: Google Earth, 2023.

The Guarani established the *Nhandereko* based on the nature-culture and on the constant relations with the *Ija*, which "are the beings that coexist with them", the "guardians of the forest, of the river, of the stone", as stated by my interlocutor (Wera, 2023, our translation)[2]. The *ija kuery*, are the "owners of the earth realms (such as the animal, vegetal, mineral species, the human affections etc.)" (Pierri, 2013, p. 98, our translation), who protect the earth-beings, river-beings, stone-beings, mountain-beings, forest-beings, and beings other than the humans that are part of their community. The *Nhandereko* evidences the Guarani relational perspective. These are expanded community relations, social and political inter- and intra-species relations, including the humans, and beings other than humans, the owner spirits (*-ja*), and the *Nhanderu Kuery*, deities of the Guarani cosmology. The Guarani have great respect for the forest and for the nature-culture constituted in their world.

> We have great respect for the forest. We don´t enter the forest for no reason, just to play. There is a preparation to enter the forest and to be in contact with the guardians. When you reach a waterfall, you will always say that it is a sacred space, worthy of respect. It is an internal connection with its guardian (Wera, 2023, interviewed on April 8, our translation).

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[2] Field visit interview on April 8, 2023. (L. Bueno, Interviewer).

Fig. 7: Diversity of the *avaxi ete*. The diversity of Guarani maize exhibited inside the *Opy* demonstrates the traditional wealth and knowledge that are being redeemed inside the TITP. Source: Author, 2023.

This ancestrality, which is still present in their culture, reflects their way of life, their practices, their rituals, and knowledge transmitted through generations. These are the resources mentioned by Krenak (Campos & Krenak, 2021). The landscape transformation undertaken by the Guaranis in the TITP aims to recover the resources, and the ancestral Guarani symbols and identities. The concentration of pine and eucalyptus in the region led to loss of soil moisture and soil impoverishment, not allowing the reproduction of traditional Guarani crops, such as *avaxi*, the Guarani maize. Launched ten years ago, the agroecological projects try to strengthen their identity through food and agriculture, as the central element of the Guarani nature-culture. The *avaxi ete*, the 'true maize', is sacred to them, and remained lost for a long time in the community. "The eucalyptus does not let our maize develop, it kills the forest and the soil" (Wera, 2023, our translation). With the territory reconquest and the environmental recuperation work (Fig. 8), through the replacement of the eucalyptus by flora native to the Atlantic Rainforest, the Guarani are reestablishing the maize crop, expanding its cultivation and the diversity of seeds, a work that they have developed for more than a decade. Figure 7 shows the diversity of the *avaxi ete* exhibited in the *Opy* (Prayer House).

Fig. 8: Guarani agroforestry. The Guarani reconquest of the territory through agriculture with the replacement of exotic crops, such as the eucalyptus, by native species combined in agroforestry. Source: Author, 2023.

In addition to the *avaxi*, they have planted other Guarani crops, such as the *jety* (sweet potato), *mandi* (cassava) and *tadjá* (yam), in addition to banana and fruit trees. In this way, water is coming back, and they are able to cultivate their traditional food that is part of the *Nhandereko*. "Now that plants are growing, the soil is already better. It is like adding yeast to the flour and now the dough starts to grow" (Wera, 2023, our translation).

These foods are key for their culture and identity. Cultivating them in their ancestral landscape is the strategy of Guarani territorialization, which characterizes the recent transformations of the TITP landscape. It is the autonomy project that mobilizes agriculture as a tool of landscape transformation, in relation to their physical and symbolic aspects. In this regard, agriculture, more than a productive activity for capital, shares affections, feelings, and sensations. Giraldo notes that "agriculture, in addition to the production for the reproduction of family and community life, is the origin of cultural representations, cognitive apprehensions, collective identities and meanings" (Giraldo, 2018, p. 79, our translation).

6   Conclusions

This article links the decolonial debate with the field of landscape studies through the perspective of Good Living, constructed as an alternative to hegemonic capitalistic colonial modernity. Good Living, understood as the platform that gathers Indigenous knowledge and several perspectives critical of modernity, is presented as the space for the ecology of knowledge, for the encounter and sharing of alternative proposals that orient to the pluriverse, which determines the necessity of learning from the trajectories of struggle of different Latin American native peoples, their different knowledge, and ways to walk in the world. In this context, landscapes represent the space of disputes and diversity of the constituted worlds.

The TITP case presented in the article evidences the multiple values of the Guarani landscape, and its mobilization as tool for the construction of the *Nhandereko*, which is present in the relationships between the earth and the spiritual worlds of the Guarani ontology, and through community practices, as evidenced by agriculture, which appears as the main form of landscape construction, as a practice that reveals the ontological and epistemological base of the world, constituted in the appropriations and perceptions of the communities. The *Nhandereko*, more than the horizon to be reached, is shared in the daily life of the Guarani in the reproduction of the community life they live, on the borders of the most populous metropolis in South America.

Good Living positions itself as a futurizing path because it redeems ancestral senses and mobilizes the territorial struggle comprising the territory-territoriality-territorialization triad. The dimension of power for their self-determination, the right to r-exist and to build community lives on sustainable bases, are key issues in the ideas of Good Living. Autonomy, communality, relationality, and sustainability are dimensions that cross time and constitute landscapes, which are conditioned by economic, social, cultural, and political dynamics. The landscape reveals the identity of communities, explains recognized shared values, and it is there where the power of politics in landscape is found. Its comprehension expands the meanings of the geographic space, and sheds light on futurizing possibilities and proposals, based on people where they live, on their ways of reproduction (Escobar, 2017).

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The Guarani reconquest of the *Yvy Rupa* highlights the relationships between the landscape and Good Living through its territoriality, fighting for the *Nhandereko* on a daily basis, through resistance and transformation of the landscape to strengthen its nature-culture, in the construction of their world. In dialogue with Ingold, the Guarani transform the landscape while the landscape transforms them, in a process of mutual affectation (Ingold, 2021). Cultivating the *avaxi ete* is the manner of appropriation that best explains the symbolic and identity values present in the Guarani landscape.

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DECOLONIAL APPROACHES TO RESEARCH IN URBAN PLANNING
ABORDAGENS DECOLONIAIS PARA PESQUISA EM PLANEJAMENTO URBANO
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Abstract

The paper highlights the relevance of decolonial epistemes in the debate on urban planning and social movements, valuing the protagonism of subjugated groups in the construction of new knowledge capable of adding tension to the current order. The decolonial key allows us to understand that the formation of segregation patterns is a social-racial-spatial event through which various mechanisms of oppression linked to race, gender, class, and regional backgrounds operate. The focus of the research is the dimension of the periphery as a sociopolitical territory, that is, the analysis of expressions, actions, and initiatives of movements and/or social groups that gain legitimacy by producing their own political, social, and cultural perspectives about and for the city. The methodology adopted values the epistemic protagonism of the bearers of the analyzed experiences, articulating categories of the decolonial debate with the process and results of two field experiences within the *Quilombo Abayomi* collective, based on the methodological perspective of Oscar Jara Holliday's systematization of experiences. As a result, it presents challenges to the field of urban planning by introducing decolonial theoretical and methodological approaches that value peripheral territorialities and promote a paradigmatic shift composed of other epistemes..

Keywords: Decolonial epistemes, Urban planning, Social movements, Systematization of experiences, Participatory methodologies

1   Introduction

Decolonial epistemes gained relevance in social science discussions in the late 1990s, being associated with the Modernity/Coloniality (M/C) Group (Ballestrin, 2013). This group was responsible for developing and systematizing categories and analyses that redefined history and political practice in Latin America, in addition to opening space for new theoretical-methodological propositions. According to the author, the decolonial perspective positioned Latin America as the founding continent of colonialism and, consequently, of modernity (Quijano, 2007), becoming the first testing laboratory for racism in the service of colonialism. Given this scenario, it is understood that the decolonial approach can provide new horizons for the construction of a thought focused on human liberation, through dialogue and articulation with knowledge production (Ballestrin, 2013).

In this paper, the focus is on the possibilities for the decolonial perspective to draw new horizons and, mainly, to reflect on **with whom** these articulations have been thought. This is perhaps the most significant shift caused by the decolonial perspective which, by placing the understanding of people's dynamics at the center of the process, opposes the prevalence of academia as the promoter of knowledge.

The paper's proposal points to the field of urban planning and social movements as a locus for reflections on "other" ways of doing research based on a decolonial perspective. This choice is highlighted considering the most diverse socio-territorial experiences of occupation and production in Brazilian and Latin American cities. Such experiences lead to a social reorganization, through which territories become spaces for survival and the construction of an alternative sociopolitical dimension.

Therefore, they are socio-territorial and peripheral experiences that address struggles against mechanisms of oppression linked to race, gender, class, and regional origins, as well as their intersectionalities. In this sense, they go beyond the traditional debate about access to resources and spaces, such as public equipment, health, housing, and culture, by questioning the roots of the processes of expropriation and exploitation they suffer. Through a decolonial approach, they incorporate the right to production and identity recognition, challenging the structures imposed by the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2007). Thus, groups gain legitimacy by producing their own political, social, and cultural perspectives on and to town.

Despite the existence of contributions concerning the analysis of the mentioned dimensions, many approaches still remain aligned with critical theories that treat the capitalist production of space in a way that is disjointed from the dimension of its coloniality. In this regard, two important aspects stand out. First, it is essential to understand the epistemic relationship between coloniality and the production of space, in which Eurocentrism acts as a driving and structuring element of territorial, urban, and architectural colonialities (Farrés Delgado, 2016). Second, inspired by the perspective of the autonomy of the design or project (Escobar, 2014; Freire-Medeiros & Name, 2019; Porto Gonçalves, 2001), new sociopolitical dimensions emerge aimed at popular control of territories and the space for new uses, which they challenge the classical order of space production.

The paper proposes to advance in observing "how" and "with whom" to think about social transformation, debating the methodology in the decolonial field to guarantee the epistemic protagonism of the bearers of the experiences analyzed. Holliday's (2006) methodological perspective offers paths for analytical readings with a propositional intention, which allows the creation of new horizons and ways of being in the world, that is, with the subjects themselves involved as protagonists in the transformation processes.

The text is divided into three sections, in addition to the introduction and final considerations. The first section addresses the contributions of the decolonial debate to urban planning. The second one broadens the focus to discuss dilemmas and advances in the field of urban planning, emphasizing the pedagogical role of the experiences of social movements as a space for tension and proposition. In the third section, reflections are presented on the methodological dimension of decolonial studies, as well as the results of two field experiments with the *Quilombo Abayomi* collective, developed based on the methodological perspective of the systematization of experiences by Oscar Jara Holliday (2006).

2   The territorial dimension of coloniality under debate

The concept of coloniality of power, elaborated by Quijano (2007), represents the lasting and systemic legacy of colonization in Latin America, which includes not only economic exploitation but also racial categorization and the hierarchization of social groups as an integral part of this system of power. The idea of race, developed to legitimize relations of dominance in the conquest of America, continues to structure power relations in contemporary times.

In this scenario, other categories such as "coloniality of knowledge" and "coloniality of being" emerge as developments of the coloniality of power. Lander (2000) addresses how colonialism impacted the construction of knowledge and forms of knowledge production, which revealed how Western knowledge imposed itself as universal and superior, thereby marginalizing and subordinating other forms of knowledge produced in colonial contexts. The coloniality of being, in turn, refers to the construction of identities and subjectivities under colonial logic and examines how notions of race, gender, and sexuality, among others, were forged and instrumentalized for the perpetuation of power relations and oppression (Maldonado Torres, 2007).

Although the decolonial debate has advanced on several fronts, the territorial dimension is still underexplored. The coloniality of power approach allows us to analyze the urban beyond class issues, incorporating other hierarchies present in Latin American experiences, such as the relationship between modernity and coloniality. Farrés Delgado contributes to the debate by shedding light on the epistemic relationship between coloniality and the production of space (Farrés Delgado, 2016).

The concept of "territorial coloniality", formulated by Farrés Delgado and Matarán (2012), describes a set of power patterns that hegemonically establish a conception of territory over other perceptions considered "inferiorized".

These patterns are structured in a triangular relationship between the "coloniality of territorial being" (the hegemony of the "urban being" over non-urban forms of human existence), the "coloniality of territorial knowledge" (as practices of designing and inhabiting the territory) and the "coloniality of territorial power" (as the unequal distribution of the power of enunciation and decision-making over the territory). These dimensions are interconnected. The "coloniality of territorial being" acts as the basis of the structure, establishing power relations that determine the other dimensions. The "coloniality of territorial

knowledge" is influenced by the hegemony of the "urban being" and, in turn, reinforces such hegemony. Meanwhile, the "coloniality of territorial power" is influenced by other dimensions, reinforcing the hegemony of the "urban being" and territorial occupation practices (Farrés Delgado, 2016).

The triangular structure of territorial coloniality feeds back and reinforces each other, revealing the complexity of power relations within the decolonial debate in Brazil and Latin America. In this way, we can better understand how territory is shaped and instrumentalized by colonial logic and how the struggle for decolonization must consider the interconnection between the different dimensions of coloniality (Farrés Delgado, 2016).

3   Dilemmas and advances in the decolonial debate in the field of urban planning: from urban insurgencies to the possibilities of the autonomy of *diseño*[1]

In the 21st century, especially in Brazil after the 2013 protests, the theoretical debate has focused on conflicting issues in the urban context. Among the several authors who have contributed to the discussion, Harvey (2014) stands out, whose argument on "Rebellious Cities" exposes the contradictions of urbanization from the perspective of movements critical of the capitalist management of the territory.

Insurgent planning approaches, emphasized by Holston (2016) and Miraftab (2009), gain relevance for understanding urban life and resistance to neoliberal management of territories, including the gentrification of urban centers and the expansion of peripheries. Miraftab highlights that insurgent practices strain the vision of professional planners and challenge the idea of their isolated action. These perspectives show the role of territory in the capitalist world system and resistance but often neglect the dimension of coloniality.

To deepen this debate, the understanding of the peripheral territory as a sociopolitical space of life is presented (Zibechi, 2015; D'Andrea, 2013; Silva & Oliveira, 2017; Haesbaert, 2020). Such an approach emphasizes the actions of movements and social groups that rework their existence and promote a new social organization through political, cultural, and social expressions. Such actions result in the reconfiguration of the territory, which becomes seen as a space for survival and the construction of a new sociopolitical dimension. In this context, the decolonial debate emerges as an interpretative key capable of expanding the understanding of the aforementioned transformations and contributing to rethinking the field of urban planning (Silva & Maciel, 2021). In this work, we will focus on analytical categories of design autonomy (Escobar, 2014; Escobar, 2016), and "r-existence" (Porto Gonçalves, 2001) for a debate that intertwines decolonial epistemologies and planning.

In his book *Autonomía y diseño* (2016), Arturo Escobar argues that the current crisis is the result of deeply rooted ways of being, doing, and knowing, and that recovering the *diseño* for the construction of other worlds requires a new and effective awareness of historicity of the *diseño* in a patriarchal, capitalist and modern onto-epistemic formation. The term *diseño* has a semantic richness that goes beyond its translation into Portuguese, as explained by Britto (2020) when analyzing the work of Arturo Escobar. In his book, *diseño* means the production of ontological representations of reality, ranging from simple drawings to projects, institutions, and conceptions of the world as a whole. In the paper, we chose to keep the word *diseño* to preserve the breadth of the debate proposed by the author.

Escobar proposes an ontological approach to *diseño* focused on the interaction between understanding and creation, underscoring that this approach can generate new ways of being and relating to the world and emphasizing the relevance of culture in this process. Furthermore, the author critically examines the dualistic ontology of separation, control, and appropriation, which has become dominant in Western capitalist patriarchal modernity. It therefore values cultural diversity, local worldviews, and ancestral knowledge as essential elements for building a fairer world in spatial and social terms.

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[1] The title highlights the debate on the autonomy of design or project within the scope of urban planning, emphasizing decolonial perspectives inspired by the ideas of Arturo Escobar.

In this sense, the idea of "*autonomía y diseño*", proposed by Arturo Escobar, refers to an approach in which communities and local actors assume a central role in defining and creating their spaces and territories.

Freire-Medeiros and Name (2019) enrich the debate by reflecting on the social and spatial dynamics of the Rocinha *favela* in Rio de Janeiro by indicating the occupation of slabs as a form of resistance, as it enables the creation of new spaces for sociability and leisure, in addition to offering opportunities for housing expansion and income generation.

Slabs, often seen as problems to be solved, can be understood as forms of territorial appropriation and social resistance, serving as points of observation and connection between scales, demanding an epistemic approach that rethinks traditional forms of analysis and intervention in the favela and the city.

Porto Gonçalves (2001) proposes the concept of "r-exist", which represents the ability to resist and reinvent oneself in asymmetrical contexts of power, thus transcending the simple act of fighting against something. In this sense, the letter "R" represents both resistance and reinvention, valuing the construction of new forms of life and social relationships amid adversity.

By boosting discussions in urban planning and promoting alternatives to the hegemonic development logic, these epistemic approaches point out the need to critically reflect on the influence of the Eurocentric episteme in this field. The practices and actions of social movements can be pedagogical elements to tension dominant logics by valuing the diversity of local knowledge, increasing the decolonial methodological debate as a way of challenging established paradigms.

4   The methodological dimension of decolonial studies: report on the systematization of experiences with the *Quilombo Abayomi* collective

The pedagogical approach to experiences, alongside the recognition of the protagonism of the subject, becomes a relevant theme in the academic and social sphere. In this sense, it is important to reevaluate the methodological dimension of knowledge production, considering a procedural perspective and valuing the protagonism of the subjects involved (Dulci & Malheiros, 2021; França, 2020; Sousa & Cavalcante, 2021).

Borsani (2021) addresses the topic of decolonial methodologies and emphasizes that they are not yet pre-established research procedures, but rather a subsequent reconstruction of the investigation. The author emphasizes that this is not a lack of consolidation due to the recentness of decolonial thinking, but rather a recognition that decolonial methodology cannot be applied in a standardized way in any research. On the contrary, the construction of a decolonial methodology must be sensitive and contextualized, in order to dialogue with the political and epistemological practices of the involved subjects.

Based on these initial considerations about the methodological scope in the decolonial field, we present the systematization of experiences, a proposal developed by Oscar Jara Holliday as a way to think about "how" and "with whom" to think about social transformation. Holliday (2006) underscores the importance of systematizing experiences as a perspective for social action and dialogical, critical reflection on the experiences of specific social groups. The proposal aims to answer questions such as: "What are we doing? How are we doing? Why are we doing it?" Holliday emphasizes that the process is participatory, involving the subjects themselves who have experienced the situations as the main protagonists. Furthermore, systematization is not limited to remembering what was experienced but also seeks to shed light on paths for the future.

Through his research with social movements and marginalized groups, Holliday observed that systematization allows for a retrospective and prospective analysis of lived experiences, characterizing it as a method of procedural evaluation of daily life.

Three important dimensions are included in this process, as shown in Table 1:

Elements of systematization of experiences

Objectify what is experienced: stop to distance ourselves from what we experience experientially and thus convert our own experience into an object of study and theoretical interpretation and, at the same time, into an object of transformation.

Putting disordered knowledge and diverse perceptions in order: by systematizing, people recover in an orderly way what they already know about their experience, discover what they don't yet know about it, but also reveal what they "didn't yet know they already knew".

Accept the interpretations of the subjects of the experiences: systematize not only what one pays attention to the events, their behavior and evolution, but also the interpretations that the subjects have about them. This creates a space for these interpretations to be discussed, shared and confronted.

Table 1: Elements of the systematization of experiences. Source: Holliday, 2006, our translation.

Holliday proposes a methodology for systematizing experiences, consisting of five distinct stages, emphasizing the guiding nature of this method and accentuating the importance of considering the particularities and dynamics of the groups involved in the systematization process. According to Table 2, the steps are as follows:

The five stages of systematizing experiences

1st stage: corresponds to gathering the authors and records of the experiences;
2nd stage: it is the time to present and define what you want to systematize and what experiences you want to systematize;
3rd stage: proposes the reconstruction of history, the ordering and classification of information and moments experienced;
4th stage: aims to analyze, systematize and critically interpret the process;
5th stage: it is time to communicate learning.

Table 2: Diagram of the five stages of systematizing experiences. Source: Holliday, 2006, our translation.

4.1   *Quilombo Abayomi*: House of Culture and Resistance of the Black People

Quilombo Abayomi[2], a representative collective of black and peripheral people created in January 2022, in the city of São José dos Campos, São Paulo, is a non-profit House of Culture supported by collaborative fundraising, whose name, of *Yorubá* origin, reinforces African culture and means "precious encounter" (Quilombo Abayomi, 2022a).

The expression "urban *quilombo*" designates a form of political, cultural, economic, and social organization that combats racism, promotes black culture, and allows everyone to participate as "creators of culture". These urban spaces are places

[2] For more information about Quilombo Abayomi visit: https://www.instagram.com/quilombo.abayomi/

of struggle and resistance against oppression and exclusion, promoting the exchange of knowledge between marginalized groups and affirming cultural and ethnic identities. The active participation of those involved is valued, encouraging the collective construction of knowledge and promoting Afro-Brazilian culture (Batista,2019).

Quilombo Abayomi is located on the outskirts of São José dos Campos, the largest city in the Paraíba Valley and North Coast of São Paulo, as recorded by the 2022 Demographic Census (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics [IBGE], 2023), with a population of 697,428 inhabitants. São José dos Campos was recognized as the first smart city in Brazil by ABNT, following international urban management standards. However, the implementation of certifications is linked to consolidating neoliberal management of territories, which uses urban marketing strategies (Forti, 2020; Araújo, 2022). This hides the existing socio-spatial inequality in the city, which faces problems such as dispersed urbanization, real estate speculation, inequalities in the use and occupation of space, and criminalization of urban social movements.

The Campo dos Alemães neighborhood, where the quilombo is located, is characterized by a high demographic density and is home to a significant portion of the population in the city's[3] southern zone. The neighborhood faces challenges related to infrastructure and public services, such as the lack of urban equipment, poor public transport, and a lack of leisure and cultural spaces. City Hall data indicates that the average income in the region is half the average of the city, and the illiteracy rate is the highest in the municipality. Residents report difficulties in accessing other regions of the city and the lack of health, cultural, educational, and leisure services (São José dos Campos, 2018; São José dos Campos, 2017). Figure 1 locates the neighborhood in relation to the central region of the city.

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[3] According to IBGE (2010), the South Zone is a densely populated region, with 233,536 people. In the specific neighborhood, there are 19,153 residents, according to the census.

Fig. 1: Location of the neighborhood in relation to the central region of the city. Source: Google Maps, 2023. Available at: https://bityli.cc/zfs. Accessed: 01/23/2023.

Thus, its peripheral position with regard to the urban center and the presence of distinct socioeconomic characteristics give it a peculiar reality marked by the marginalization and criminalization of poverty (Telles, 2001). The neighborhood and its population are stigmatized by the criminalization of poverty, a phenomenon in which vulnerable individuals are subjected to criminal treatment, especially through institutional and police violence. In the Brazilian reality, the criminalization of poverty is intrinsically related to racism, a system that mainly affects ethnic minority communities, such as people of African descent, perpetuating injustices and social inequalities. This complex interconnection sustains a continuous cycle of discrimination and violence.

However, there are actions and experiences of resistance and struggle that promote new peripheral meanings linked to a territoriality that allows other ways of communicating and creating a new perception of the peripheral being and the periphery (D'Andrea, 2013). It is in this context that *Quilombo Abayomi* has promoted spaces for reflection on the periphery, intending to demystify the neighborhood's association with violence and marginalization. Furthermore, these spaces highlight the fight against racism by strengthening local identity and, thus, seeking significant social changes (Quilombo Abayomi, 2022b). The collective's headquarters is a rented house maintained through donations. In 2022, the collective promoted several activities and actions focusing on culture, education, and art. Below, Table 3 exemplifies the main proposals made during that period.

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Activities promoted by the Quilombo Abayomi Collective in 2022

Art expression collective: with a free theme, people painted the walls of the quilombo, in order to express what the place represented to them
Pre-university course: with the support of volunteers, it offered classes to the community and interested parties with the aim of providing access to the university
Legal assistance for women: with the support of volunteers, it maintained a listening space to assist women victims of violence
Cultural events: promoted monthly cultural events that valued racial debate and peripheral culture. One of the examples was *Virada Preta* held in November, which featured a three-day event that promoted shows, conversation circles and debates
Musical project: project proposed by one of the residents, which, around the debate on musical instruments of indigenous origin, promoted practical teaching on how to play and produce *Pife*
Distribution of basic food baskets: the collective has an active support and solidarity project that supports some vulnerable families with basic food baskets.

Table 3: Quilombo Abayomi activities that worked on new territorialities in the communities. Source: Prepared by the authors.

4.2   Reports, processes, and reflections of two systematizations of experiences with *Quilombo Abayomi*

This paper presents the process and results of two experiences of applying the experience systematization method carried out by the authors, represented in Figure 2. The first experience was carried out during an undergraduate study that mapped the debate on community planning, linked to the final work entitled "Proposal for Territorial Socio-Cultural Action Based on the Analysis of Peripheral Cultural Manifestations" (Santos, 2022)[4]. The objective was to deepen the debate on community demands and their implications for territorial planning. The second experience resulted from a master's degree research entitled "Community Libraries as Socio-Political Territories: Case Study in Two Peripheral Neighborhoods of São José dos Campos and Jacareí – SP" (2023)[5] which provided joint reflections on the impact of community libraries and cultural collectives in the life of peripheral communities (Alves, 2023).

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[4] Final undergraduate course work (known as TCC in Brazil) in Architecture and Urbanism carried out by Isabela Reis Santos, with guidance from Fabiana Felix do Amaral e Silva.

[5] Master's thesis carried out by Cintia Fabiola Mota Alves, supervised by Fabiana Felix do Amaral e Silva. The fieldwork was approved by the Ethics Committee of the responsible institution (CAAE 58133922.7 000005503) in 2022.

Fig. 2: Images of the systematization of experiments I and II. Source: Photos from the research collection.

The presentation of the steps of the processes in the two systematizations depicted in Table 4 and Table 5 facilitates the understanding of the procedures and their interconnections, making the content more accessible and informative.

Experience Systematization Stages	Systematization I – **Proposal for sociocultural and territorial action based on the analysis of peripheral cultural manifestations.**
First step Gather authors and records of experiments	The researcher contacted the leaders and presented the research proposal. Then, using the group's social networks, records of the historicity of the actions were organized. A field visit was carried out to learn about the space and dynamics of the neighborhood.
Second stage Present and define what you want to systematize for and what experiences you want to systematize	The researcher shared the TCC analysis proposal with the group, with the aim of evaluating the problems of conventional urban planning and the possibilities of use and occupation proposed by the community. Next, together with the collective, the systematization of experiences was defined through cartography. The proposed cartography presented the relationship between social and cultural actions present in the community and interactions with public space and existing cultural/educational/leisure facilities.
Third Stage Reconstruction of history, ordering and classification of information and moments experienced	Participants were shown a map of the neighborhood with the location of public spaces and equipment. The workshop began with a debate on weaknesses and potential and ended with the presentation of proposals for the use and occupation of public space. The dynamics of systematization consisted of a conversation circle that aimed to highlight the weaknesses, potentialities and propositions and which, at the same time, was specialized in the map of the neighborhood. The activity took place on May 19, 2022, and it was attended by fifteen people from the community.
Fourth Stage Analyze, systematize and critically interpret the process	The weaknesses, potentialities and propositions were systematized and critically interpreted and resulted in referrals at different scales of scope, that is, from public policy to the process of occupation and use of public spaces in the neighborhood.
Fifth Stage Communicate learning	This information was organized by the researcher based on the concepts of community planning and, by correlating community knowledge with technical knowledge, resulted in a proposal for sociocultural and territorial community action. In October 2023, the researchers returned to the neighborhood and presented the TCC results for a second community assessment.

Table 4: Systematization I - Proposal for sociocultural and territorial action based on the analysis of peripheral cultural manifestations. Source: Prepared by the authors.

Experience Systematization Stages	Systematization II - Community libraries as socio-political territories: case study of two peripheral neighborhoods in the cities of São José dos Campos and Jacarei – SP
First step Gather authors and records of experiments	The researcher contacted the leaders and presented the research proposal. Then, using the group's social networks, records of the historicity of the actions were organized.
Second stage Present and define what you want to systematize for and what experiences you want to systematize	The researcher shared the key question of her research with the group. "How can the actions of community libraries, by raising the sociocultural-spatial dimensions, counteract aspects of the actions of public policies presented separately from the dynamics and social demands of the cities under study?" It was then defined together with the collective to systematize the actions and projects they carried out in their territory in 2022 to assess their reach and how they impact the life of the community.
Third Stage Reconstruction of history, ordering and classification of information and moments experienced.	The group dynamic took place on December 12th and was attended by 12 people from the community. The proposed systematization included two mappings. The first was the **Mapping of the collective's actions over time.** A table was created with six important moments of the experiences lived The second was the **Mapping of actions and relationships with the territory.** Two maps were presented. The first was a map of São José dos Campos and the second was a map of the Campo dos Alemães neighborhood. Participants identified their actions and practices in the regional and local territory, as well as direct capital actions with the aim of evaluating the resistance relationship and its scope.
Fourth Stage Analyze, systematize and critically interpret the process	After organizing the mapping, participants presented their analyzes and it was possible to critically reflect on the process by reliving the six most relevant moments they experienced, their impacts and lessons learned.
Fifth Stage Communicate learning	This information was systematized and organized by the researcher and contributed to the debate on the importance of community libraries as socio-political spaces. In 2023, the Dissertation document was delivered to the community during a subsequent field visit.

Table 5: Systematization II - Community libraries as socio-political territories: a case study of two peripheral neighborhoods in São José dos Campos and Jacareí – SP. Source: Prepared by the authors.

The systematization of experiences carried out confirmed the logic of territorial exclusion linked to the practice of criminalizing poverty and controlling peripheral territories. This logic is supported by the planned absence of investments in basic equipment and structures, such as education, leisure, health, and culture. The systematizations mapped territorial weaknesses, mainly those related to the poor management of public facilities, such as the multi-sports gym, which is not accessible to the public, and squares with broken street furniture and a lack of benches. Furthermore, a lack of adequate lighting was observed in the open fields of the region which creates insecurity, especially for women, favors episodes of police violence, and thus reinforces vulnerability and fear among residents. The absence of bus stops with adequate lighting at night for public transport users was also identified.

The comment of one of the participants in the systematization depicts the situation of abandonment of a square, police violence, and the occupation and use of the street by the community:

> "It's a huge square with a broken swing, no benches, poor lighting. The football pitch that exists was built by the population.
>
> Here it is as if we were in a war zone. Violence is daily, there are operations in the neighborhood in the morning and everyone is afraid and everyone on the street is suspicious and is approached brutally during the day and imagine here that there are dark spaces in these squares where the police can go over the limit.
>
> We have a culture of staying more on the streets... they are small houses. Many families, so our leisure ends up on the street, it's a barbecue that goes to the sidewalk or a table that goes to the square, and the city hall doesn't see that." ("Participant", 28 years old, University student)[6].

However, the systematizations showed that the actions of the collective pressure the conventional urban planning by demonstrating new forms of occupation and use of space. Through art collectives, pre-university courses, legal assistance for women, and other actions, the collective promotes significant social transformations in the community, providing access to education, culture, and social assistance. Furthermore, the distribution of basic food baskets helps to support families in vulnerable situations, which accentuates active participation and leadership in the territory. These potentialities show how the collective stands out in providing active participation and social transformation in the territory, in addition to demonstrating significant alternatives for the occupation and use of urban space.

The systematization of experiences raised three categories that summarize the sociopolitical role of the collective: community bond; r-existence strategies in the face of the absence of the State; and space for sociopolitical formation. It is worth highlighting that *Quilombo Abayomi* plays an essential role in rebuilding community ties by strengthening bonds that challenge historical stigmas. This is achieved through cultural events that value Afro-Brazilian culture and question narratives of domination and exploitation in the region.

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In the peripheries, "r-existence" strategies (Gonçalves, 2001) involve the fight against hostility in the region through the promotion of social, cultural, and educational actions that value peripheral identities and expressions. Therefore, the actions of the community library, the pre-university course, music classes, events, and conversation circles play a central role in the socio-political formation of the community by enhancing Afro-descendant culture and emphasizing the need to combat systemic racism.

5   Final considerations

The objectives of this paper were to emphasize the relevance of decolonial epistemes in urban planning and social movements to value the protagonism of subjugated groups and tension the established order.

The experiences of *Quilombo Abayomi* demonstrate popular control of the territory that challenges the traditional, Eurocentric approach to urban planning, as they explore new uses and occupations based on local culture and the needs of communities. These cultural and educational spaces on the outskirts have gained a significant sociopolitical dimension, becoming active places of resistance and social transformation, which value self-determination and the participation of individuals in decisions that affect their lives.

The application of the method of systematizing experiences in studies of architecture and urbanism and urban planning underscores local experiences and knowledge, leading to a more committed and contextualized understanding of the challenges faced by marginalized communities.

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[6] Information taken from the research.

The actions of the *Quilombo Abayomi* play a prominent role in contesting the hegemony of knowledge and territorial power, in light of the concept of "territorial coloniality" (Farrés Delgado & Matarán, 2012). These actions focus on opposing the predominance of the "urban being" over other forms of existence by promoting the appreciation of peripheral cultural identities and manifestations. Within the scope of the "coloniality of territorial knowledge", the collective's initiatives strengthen their beliefs and racial understanding, providing resistance to the structures of Western knowledge that have historically marginalized other expressions of knowledge originating in contexts of coloniality. Additionally, the "coloniality of territorial power" is addressed through actions that cover the social, cultural, and educational domains that denounce the structures of supremacy in the scope of knowledge and territorial power, which, throughout history, have placed on the margins and oppressed communities in peripheral regions.

In this sense, decolonial methods encourage a reflective and critical stance on the part of researchers, who can recognize the asymmetries of power present in research relationships and seek ways to overcome them. In this way, the dialogue in question brings to light challenges for the sphere of knowledge in urban planning and introduces theoretical and methodological perspectives that emphasize the authorship of the actors involved and that strengthen a decolonial theory aligned with social transformation.

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ÁGORA

EXPERIENCE ON THE ALTIPLANO:
FLÁVIO DE CARVALHO AND THE SOUTH AMERICAN NAKED CIVILIZATION
EXPERIÊNCIA NO ALTIPLANO:
FLÁVIO DE CARVALHO E A CIVILIZAÇÃO NUA DA AMÉRICA DO SUL
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Abstract

This article revisits some investigative experiences of the Brazilian Architect and Artist Flávio de Carvalho concerning man and the city in America, to recover his critical perspective on the canons of modern urbanism. By articulating anthropophagic assumptions within the field of urbanism, Flávio de Carvalho questioned the universalistic nature of technique in order to subvert notions of progress and civilization serving colonial and colonialist projects. The analysis of a trajectory of reflections, highlighted by the texts *A Cidade do Homem Nu* [The City of the Naked Man] (1930); *A Casa do Homem Americano* [The House of the American Man] (1947) and *Meditações na Cordilheira* [Meditations on the Cordillera], (1947), allows emphasizing the operation of displacing narratives and histories considered marginal to the forefront of the modern debate on cities. The reading of these urban proposals and political projects is supported by recent studies that link the decolonial debate to the disciplinary field of urbanism from a Latin American perspective. The argument is made about how the anthropophagic project for an urban-laboratory based on unconditional urban freedom developed by Flávio de Carvalho is grounded in studies of the history, social, and urban organization of pre-Columbian societies in the Andean Altiplano. Thus, the aim is to highlight other developments and legacies of modern urbanism and their potential to decentralize narratives of urban history.

Keywords: Flávio de Carvalho, Urbanisms, Americas, Professional Congresses

1   Introduction: the Americas between the old and the new worlds

Disputes over the identities in and of America constitute a theme almost as old as the history of invasions and colonization of the continent itself. From the voyages of Columbus and the paradigmatic year of 1492 onwards, the countless reports written by European chroniclers during the colonial period, to the decolonial debates that advanced into the twenty-first century contemplating and contesting the landmarks of origin, the cultural characteristics that would define American societies and the projects for the future created through these themes form a political exercise structuring the history of the American continent.

In the midst of these storylines, the cities and the urban areas take on a significant dimension. Whether in their geopolitical developments or through their cultural characteristics, the cities founded in America have become the articulators of different temporalities and nodes of tension in the disputes between the elites with regard to their transformations, reforms and architectural and urban projects. As Richard Morse (1990) postulated, cities may be envisaged as a synthesis of a dialectical process between the idea of a city in Europe and the conditions of life in this New World and have been intimately related to different interpretations of the modern and the civilization throughout the colonization process.

From the end of the fifteenth century, American territories were already being described by Europeans as a tabula rasa, a notion that navigates different temporalities and is configured as a fundamental modernist proposition in the twentieth century: a basic condition for implementing changes in the future and updating the colonial signs of conquest through urban transformations. This diagnosis brought support to the power of decision-making in terms of what to destroy, to tear down, and what to maintain and preserve, as well as what to introduce as *new* into a given territory. Accordingly, this implies a challenging condition of creative power in the face of history, reiterating the demiurgical attitude of the modern urban architect. The Athens Charter proposed by European architects at the IV International Congress of Modern Architecture (Athens, 1933) reinforced the notion of a tabula rasa as both a possibility and the conviction for building a new, supposedly universal and neutral, modern world.

What are the implications of this repeated image of a tabula rasa America? What are the temporalities evoked by this notion and who is served by this project of domination, perpetuated ever since the first colonial ventures into these territories? Would it be possible to identify *other* legacies of this modernity on the American continent translated into its urban dimensions? These are the questions that have guided the present investigation toward the trajectory and some specific projects of Flávio de Carvalho. Through several different means, this engineer-architect-urbanist-artist-archaeologist went on to formulate modern proposals that problematized the

characterization of absence, which had been imposed upon the continent[1]. Flávio de Carvalho outlined new imaginative possibilities for constructing another social and political order for American cities and societies based on their history. Rather than conferring some supposed pioneering characteristics onto his projects, the aim of this exercise is to identify how the problematizations and questions elaborated from within the field of architecture and urbanism at the beginning of the twentieth century related modernity to colonialism, and indicated the effects of this articulation in future projections for the cities and societies of the continent, as well as highlighting modern North-Atlantic models as instruments of domination.

The critical interpretations that problematize the places of America in international geopolitics have constituted a current political and intellectual concern, even if endowed with historicity. Since the 1990s, at least, with the founding of the Modernity/Coloniality Group (M/C), decolonial perspectives associated with subaltern studies have highlighted the epistemic, theoretical and political effects of the coloniality of power, knowledge and being, which continue to violate the continent's former colonies. This group is made up of Latin American intellectuals located in various universities across the Americas, particularly in the United States, and is responsible for introducing an epistemological movement for a critical, utopian renewal of social sciences in Latin America. Its proposals have radicalized the post-colonial argument to denounce, understand and act in a world marked by the permanence of global coloniality at different levels of personal and collective life. Among others, the most notable members are Aníbal Quijano, Ramón Grosfoguel, Walter Mignolo, Zulma Palermo, Catherine Walsh, Arturo Escobar, Enrique Dussel, Santiago Castro-Gómez, María Lugones and Nelson Maldonado-Torres. However, based on the objectives and historical analysis of this text, we cannot fail to notice the absence of historians and architect-urbanists affiliated with the M/C group. The so-called "decolonial turn in Latin America" (Ballestrin, 2013) gave rise to a series of initiatives both inside and outside academia that reexamined the effects of the colonization process and of naturally assimilating the hierarchical positions among American countries and their "others", such as the United States and Europe.

The naturalizing effect of these hierarchies, in turn, shaped a Eurocentric canon taken as the basis for structuring a series of disciplines and of ways to interpret the world. More than a selection of celebrated works and authors, the canon represented a system of power and valorization relations that determine which authors and works deserve to be recognized and which do not, as defined by Fernando Lara, Fernando Martínez Nespral and Indrig Quintana-Guerrero (2023). In the editorial of a special edition of the journal *Dearq* covering the decolonial debate, the authors denounced how, in the field of architecture and urbanism, the Eurocentric canon dictated the way in which history has been narrated in this game of power relations and exclusions and that there was a need to expand research in order to link the narrative categories specific to the history of modern architecture and urbanism with broader processes, such as the colonial system and the British empire. Thus, projects and work come to be understood as products of a complex transregional and global network of connections, causes and consequences that exceed and indicate the limits of the European framework.

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However, as Martínez Nespral (2019) stated, attempts to overcome the canon by adding specific names that act as exceptions and continue to affirm that the system and its hierarchies are insufficient. Instead of reaffirming the logic of "others" through exceptions that confirm the rule, it is necessary to seek alternatives and other legacies on which we may rely, in the exercise of indicating the limits and epistemological violence practiced through historical narratives. Hence, this is where we situate Flávio de Carvalho in his anthropophagic provocations during the first decades of the twentieth century when he became involved in the debate on "awareness for the singularity of the American continent and the formation of the imagery of *Americanness*". (Topalov, Bresciani, Coudroy de Lille & Rivière D'Arc, 2014, p. 14-15, our translation). By examining some of the urban proposals by Flávio Carvalho it is possible to expand the panorama of meanings attributed to cities on the continent through its history. The ensemble of reflections and projects formed by *A Cidade do Homem Nu* [The City of the Naked Man], from 1930, *A Casa do Homem Americano* [The House of the American Man], from 1938 and *Meditações na Cordilheira* [Meditations on the Cordillera], from 1947, indicates how Flávio de Carvalho decentralized the Eurocentric matrices of the colonizing modern project and established another destiny for the American continent based on pre-Columbian traditions. His experience in the Altiplano has been revisited based on the critical potential of denouncing the modern

[1] The hyphenated presentation of the different professions and disciplinary fields associated with Flávio de Carvalho is an option entirely decided upon by the authors. He had defined himself as a civil engineer for "calculations and projects of metallic structures and reinforced concrete structures – modern architecture – topography for railway – internal decoration of modern gardens – furniture projects – decorative panels – design and execution of theater and cinema sets – advertisements", as written on his business card deposited in the Flávio de Carvalho Fund of the Alexandre Eulálio Cultural Documentation Center (CEDAE-UNICAMP).

canons of architecture and urbanism in order to subvert their universalist pretensions. This path of reflections, experiments and provocations was based on a dialogue established between anthropophagy and the field of architecture and urbanism.

As Paola Jacques emphasized, Flávio, from this modernist repertoire, established the milestones for an anti-colonialist political project in which "Amerindians would be the future and not the past, advancement and not backwardness, nomadism and not nationalism" (Jacques, 2021, p. 371, our translation). Jaques recollects the interpretations consolidated by historiography and criticism throughout the second half of the twentieth century (Dahler, 1982; Sangirardi Junior, 1985; Toledo, 1994) to highlight the dialogue between Flávio de Carvalho and the modernists of São Paulo, with particular interest and attention regarding his relationship with Oswald de Andrade and his *Manifesto Antropófago* [Anthropophagic Manifesto]. In addition to Jacques, Rui Moreira Leite (2008) also indicated the importance of Flávio de Carvalho's inclusion in this modernist milieu for understanding his propositions from the time of his emblematic project for the Government Palace – called Eficácia – at the end of the 1920s, interpreted as one of the first material manifestations of modernism. The positive reception that the project was given by intellectuals and artists from this strand, such as Mário de Andrade, helped to consolidate Flávio de Carvalho as a "total artist", as described in the words of Leite (2008, p. 14), going on to be invited to participate in a series of salons, exhibitions, events and congresses over the following decades. This is to say, the prominent position he assumed in relation to those of the avant-garde of the period enabled him to formulate a scathing critique not only of Eurocentric perspectives and canons, but of the very idea of center and its derivatives – periphery, frontier, fixed territorialities, etc

2   Eros and Ananke in the New World

The ocean liner SS *George Washington*, the third largest steamship in the world when it was built, made its maiden voyage in January 1909 sailing from Bremen (Germany) to New York via Southampton (United Kingdom) and Cherbourg-en-Cotentin (France). Initially intended for passenger service, it took on board a chimpanzee called Consul, billed as "his Darwinian Highness" and the "Almost Monkey-Man", who was leaving for North America as an attraction for the *William Morris Vaudeville* circuit (*The New York Times*, June 21, 1909, p. 7). Months later, in August, the neurologist and founder of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud boarded the liner bound for the New World in the company of his then collaborators Sándor Ferenczi and Carl Gustav Jung. Some reports, confirmed decades later by Jacques Lacan, attest that, upon seeing the Statue of Liberty in New York, Freud said: "They don't realize we're bringing them the plague!" The phrase would become famous when associated with the subversive spirit of psychoanalysis, but it was taken up by Lacan to highlight a misunderstanding: "he had believed that psychoanalysis would be a revolution for [North] America, and, in reality, [the] America[s] had devoured his doctrine" (Chinalli, 2010, p. 3, our translation).

The notion of progress was linked to the technological development brought about by the advancement of the emerging industry, the evolution of techniques and by changes in the construction methods. With this, it not only became possible, but desirable for urban professionals – public health professionals, engineers, urban planners – to intervene in the development and transformation of rapidly growing cities. The new man thus emerged as a concern for many of the thinkers and intellectuals of the time. A common unrest regarding the subjectivity of modern man and the human unconscious was an equally modern question that was raised in the experience of civilization in modernity. Questions such as "should man submit to the forces of nature, or should he research new problems, create new environments?" and "should the city be fed into collectively or not?" (Carvalho, 1929, p. 2, our translation) became forceful at that moment. The machine, time, social organizations, the human soul of modern man and how modern cities are transformed were themes that gained prominence within the reflections of the period.

Totem and Taboo: Some Points of Agreement between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics was written by Freud between 1912 and 1913 based on a comparison between neurotic thought and that of the so-called primitives in order to narrate the modern myth in a dialogue with the ethnography of their time. In this work, the myth is reenacted through a totem meal: a group gathers, eats, ingests (and therefore identifies itself) and incorporates itself into an element that is part of the symbolic and determines them as subject to the same law (or, to the father *Urvater*). This gesture established the rule of prohibiting incest and exogamy. That is to say, the representation of castration, of the limitation of our possible kinships that establishes the notion of family, identity ties and, above all, identification with primary social rules inserted into a system of circulation and prohibitions related to taboo.

Reviewing his own work in *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930), Freud, starting from the primordial crime of parricide and the totem meal, characterized the cultural process that unfolds in humanity based on the modifications that peoples, tribes, clans or groups experience under the influence of a "task set (…) by Eros and stimulated by Ananke, (...) uniting single human beings into a larger unity with libidinal attachments between them" (Freud, 1930, p. 133). Both figures come from Greek mythology, Ananke, mother of fate and circumstance, was the personification of the inevitable, of necessity, of destiny, while Eros, of passion, love and eroticism. This process was related to the very act of becoming civilized, understood as an operation of suppression, the repression of habits and behaviors, control of the body and mediation with objects, norms, rules, restraints, interdictions, i.e., repressions that cause discontentment.

3   The city-laboratory: The city of the naked man

> The American continent, due to its privileged historical situation, is more capable than any other to contemplate the problem of the naked man. The American continent did not inherit the tragic suppression of scholastic philosophy from the past; it has its own elements to create a naked civilization, a new mechanism stripped of the taboos of old Europe, a scientific and aesthetic renewal that will place it at the forefront of human organization. I invite the representatives of America to remove their civilized masks and expose their anthropophagous tendencies, which were repressed by the colonial conquest, but which today would be our pride as sincere men, of walking without god towards a logical solution for the problem of city life, the problem of life efficiency (Carvalho, 1930, p. 6, our translation).

Throughout his trajectory, Flávio de Carvalho developed several psychic schemata based on the relationship between totem and taboo, totemism and fetishism. In a kind of fetishistic theory of life, he proposed an anthropophagic reading of Freud's ideas to develop his erotic psycho-ethnography, in which the field of the unconscious became part of the aesthetic problem formulated through his studies on the city. Man is, thus, understood based on the path along which, like God, he loses his animal dimensions and leaves the virgin forest (Carvalho, [1933] 1939) to become civilized among neurotics (Freud, [1930] 2010) and become constituted as a subject in the relationship with others through language, desire and erotica. The inversion proposed by anthropophagy, the transformation of the taboo into a totem, for him, became a motto for the proposal to incorporate a multiplicity of differences, of the various "others", of a devouring, and, therefore, of information/identification, impure of the most different cultures without seeking unification or integration.

The implications of these assumptions necessarily led to a series of disarticulations and denaturalization, among which we highlight that which was operated between the urban and the nationalist matrices that shaped the debate on cities in the period. *A cidade do homen nu* was the manifesto-thesis project presented by Flávio de Carvalho at the IV Pan-American Congress of Architects (CPA) held in Rio de Janeiro in 1930. It was an anthropophagic manifesto-city project for unconditional urban freedom developed from the theme of "regionalism and internationalism in contemporary architecture — the spiritual orientation of architecture in America" and which mixed modern Corbusian concepts with the ideas of the anthropophagic movement to create a general plan for a modern, tropical and American city. Flávio de Carvalho, in order to confront the technical elite attending the congress, proposed the stripping away of urbanism itself as a functionalist practical discipline, repressing or disciplining human desires.

> Our cities today have become veritable pandemonia and exist within a constant imbalance. The man of today spends his energy uselessly due to the city's sickly organism. The city tires man, destroying his vital energy. The man of today's city takes no advantage of his capacity to produce, he cannot take advantage of it, because the disorganized bourgeois organism does everything to annihilate man's taste for life, the enthusiasm for producing things, the desire to change. The city of the naked man will be the metropolis of opportunity, a center for the natural sublimation of man's desires, a center to reanimate exhausted desires; a huge center for the production of organic life, for the selection and distribution of this life in forms of energy useful to man (Carvalho, 1930, p. 6, our translation).

The "viscerally anthropophagic" opinion (*Relatório dos sucessos*... [The success report…], 1930, p. 36), as termed by other delegates attending the IV CPA, caused discomfort and outrage among those who heard the engineer speak about the city of the naked man. One of the narratives was prepared by engineer Jayme Cunha da Gama e Abreu, a representative from the state of Bahia at the IV CPA and author of a report in which he commented in detail on aspects considered most relevant to the event. Gama e Abreu

commented that, during the congress, José Marianno Filho and Flávio de Carvalho were the protagonists of controversies and disputes over defining what architecture and urbanism would be in America. Flávio de Carvalho's project critically took up some ideas from Le Corbusier, the French-Swiss architect, to create a manifesto for urban freedom in the Americas and for alterity in the tropical city of the future. "The American city is no longer the fortress city of conquest. It will be the geographical and climacteric city, the city of the naked man, of the man with free reasoning and eminently anthropophagous" (Carvalho, 1930, p. 6, our translation). As such, it required a completely resized urban mechanism: a gigantic moving engine capable of transforming "the energy of ideas into needs for the individual, fulfilling collective desire, producing happiness, i.e., the understanding of life and movement" (Carvalho, 1930, p. 6, our translation).

> The naked man will select his forms of erotica himself; no restrictions will require this or that sacrifice from him; his brain energy will be enough to control and select his desires. The erotic zone is truly an immense laboratory where the most diverse desires are stirred, where the naked man may find his ancient soul, may project his free desire, his energy released in any direction, without repression; (...) he imposes on himself a rigorous and efficient selection, forms his new "ego", guides his libido and destroys the illogical, thus approaching the symbol god, the sublime anguish of the unknown, of mutating the non-metric (Carvalho, 1930, p. 6, our translation).

A city zoned and divided into laboratories located in concentric circles grouped by investigations into the most varied desires for the knowledge and eroticism of man, who would then be a naked man, free from god, devoid of prejudices. The city of the naked man was the project of a city, "where [man] would find his ancient soul, where he would project his loose energy into any direction, without repression; where he would fulfill his desires, discover new desires" (Carvalho, 1930, p. 6, our translation) to research and progress in a way that used his greatest revenue to increase the efficiency of life and the community. The "anthropophagous delegate", as characterized by Antonio Crispim in the article published in the newspaper *Diário de Minas* (Crispim, 1930, p. 11), defended erotica as a way of acting and thinking anthropophagically in the American city, a libertarian urban production, stripped of the constraints imposed by the Western rationalism of the European colonial regime. The free man, "stripped of vanquished taboos, will produce wonderful things, (...) primitive man, free from Western taboos (...), man as he appears in nature, with all his desires, all his curiosity intact and unrepressed" (Carvalho, 1930, p. 6, our translation). In short, the naked man, based on this libidinal investment, will design his laboratory city: free, desirous, erotic, and American.

4   "Diving into a sea of clouds …": Experience on the Altiplano

In another edition of the Pan-American Congresses of Architects, this time held in Peru in 1947, Flávio de Carvalho seemed to have advanced in his ethnographic endeavors and in his analysis of the American man and his way of inhabiting and living in the city, with special interest in pre-Columbian traditions. The organization of this congress itself highlighted the importance of this tradition by choosing not just one, but two Peruvian cities to host the event: the capital, Lima, and Cuzco, where delegates visited the ruins of Machu-Picchu and Sacsayhuaman. This was the motivation for Flávio de Carvalho's trip to the Andean Altiplano, in the central-west region of South America. On that occasion, he presented the work *A casa do homem americano* as part of the theme "American architecture in its diverse and successive artistic expressions and their projections in guiding the current architecture on the continent" (Actas, 1953, p. 52, our translation).[2]

The work, in some sense, continued the provocations made in 1930 based on the city of the naked man and also resumed another conference that he gave on Rádio Cultura in São Paulo in 1938 on the house of the twentieth-century man.[3] This set, formed of the three reflections, traversed by different times and motivations, indicated the engineer's journey based on the question regarding human nature: who would this man be? How does he live? What does he eat? Where is he going? A pathway, in the sense of being a route

[2] The minutes of this edition of the Pan-American Congress of Architects were only published six years after the event took place, in 1953.
[3] We will not delve into the content of this 1938 lecture due to the formal limits of the article. Nonetheless, it is important to point out that Flávio de Carvalho argued about the split between the nineteenth century house, built as a fortress to protect man and separate him from the city, and the modern house, an accessory to help man's life and integrate into public and community life. According to him, the relationship between home and city had radically transformed in the twentieth century, from the point of view that "the city is entirely man's home" (Carvalho, [1938] 2003, p. 54, our translation).

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or research path, but also a displacement. His trip to the Altiplano played an important role in deepening these issues and in articulating the anthropophagic and urban dimensions of his thought.

His interest in *A casa do homem americano* was to understand the effects of landscape on man and his social structure. To do this, he analyzed the telluric expression involved in the housing of different peoples and their temporalities and established the Incas and Lake Titicaca as the origins and, at the same time, the ends to be pursued by evolution. The contraposition of "us", American people born outside the traditions of scholastic philosophy, to the "other", European civilization and the place of repetition for the old movements taught by the Christian cycle, sought to convince his peers of the potential to be explored in forming a new type of man and city. Non-canonical and even marginalized histories, therefore, became the plot for this intellectual project of formulating other chronologies, seeking other inheritances to compose the idea of a modernity formulated from America. The American man, naked and free, in contrast to the European man, civilized and no longer understood as a final destination, but as an antithesis.

In addition to presenting this thesis at the VI CPA, the trip to Peru and, later, to Bolivia, also yielded a set of articles entitled "*Meditações na Cordilheira*", published months later in the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*, and were important vestiges of the impact of these landscapes on the thought of Flávio de Carvalho.[4] The Andean landscape introduced him to a "fairytale world" occupied by sorceresses and flesh-and-blood dolls who lived in "dream cities, impossible castles" (Carvalho, 1947a, para. 1, our translation). The "faerie palaces", sumptuous and suspended in the clouds of the mountain range, "set in the tone of the landscape", made him ask: "What would have induced these eminently practical men to settle on the solitude of the Continent?" (Carvalho, 1947a, para. 9, our translation). He sought explanations in history to understand the social organization of these societies and to operate their displacement from the margins to the center of a modern, utopian and revolutionary project. Only through its "Bolshevik" organization would the Inca empire have been able to resist the aggressiveness of the landscape and the forces of the Altiplano nature, causing the Amerindian to become a part of the land and landscape. This would be the objective of the city of the naked man and his urban projects developed from that time: to go against the evolutionary direction traditionally assumed by progress and the Eurocentric civilization and to redefine the dualism between nature and culture.

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This study on the social organization of the Incas and the formation of the American man located in the Altiplano was the content of this series of articles through which Flávio de Carvalho mobilized his theoretical references, especially Freud and psychoanalysis. The resistant nature of these populations from the Altiplano, to be persecuted by all American civilizations, came precisely from the eroticism of their habits, an expression of a political will to resist the oppression of the colonizers. In one of the articles, the engineer explores the eating habits of Altiplano men, seen as a consequence of their state of mind:

> The stomach becomes the end point of passive resistance. Men, women, children, old people... they don't eat. By not eating, they will not have to hand over to the white man the little they earn from their labor as beasts of burden exerted from dawn to dusk. 'Buy nothing from white people' is the slogan of the ancestral hatred of the defeated race. By chewing coca, they anesthetize the sensation of hunger across the entire surface of the hunger organ. Dispelling the eroticism of hunger in the fumes of hatred, anything bulky, ingested at a distance, serves to deceive the digestive organs (...). By anesthetizing the eroticism of hunger, it makes it possible to continue passive resistance (...) (Carvalho, 1947b, para. 4, our translation).

This investigative process on the man from the Altiplano broadens some of the reflections already questioned in *A cidade do homem nu* regarding the American continent. America was understood as being free from the legacies of the European scholastic past and possessed its own elements to create a naked civilization, "a new mechanism stripped of the taboos of old Europe, a scientific, aesthetic renewal that will place it at the forefront of human organization" (Carvalho, 1930, p. 6, our translation). If in 1930 he invited South American architects to remove the masks of civilization and expose their anthropophagic tendencies, in 1947 the move to the Cordillera gave him concrete elements to resist the continuous colonial conquest perpetuated by technical urban practices.

[4] This article used the typed originals of this set of texts that are safeguarded by CEDAE-UNICAMP and, therefore, there is no indication of page numbers.

5   Final considerations

Revisiting Flávio de Carvalho's provocations and exploring his investigative path into the man, landscape and cities of the Altiplano enables us to highlight his engagement in a counter-colonial political project. A number of authors have argued how the occupation and conquest of the American continent played a central role in the general development of Western culture (Dussel, Krauel & Tuma, 2000). In this process, cities, their growth, their transformations and, above all, the projects, plans and predictions for their future were placed at the center of the debate and thus became articulating phenomena of these colonial statements. Fernando Lara proposes an inversion in terms of this logic by arguing that the encounter and conquest were the cause – and not the consequence – of European modernization (Lara, 2020). In other words, it was in the Americas that the triggers for this modernity could be tested and explored in their possibilities of violence, resistance and reinvention. Even though Flávio de Carvalho distances himself temporally from the epistemological bases formulated in recent decades on the decolonial, these experiences and reflections certainly seek other legacies to formulate a modern city project based on the experience of pre-Columbian societies displaced from the margins to the center of the debate. It is our belief that it will thus be possible, as Flávio de Carvalho already realized, to continue in the pursuit of other ways to exist and inhabit the modern world on a continent, whose history did not begin with conquest and colonization.

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1984: COLONIALISM AND DYSTOPIA
1984: COLONIALISMO E DISTOPIA
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Abstract

The aim of this study is to analyze the dystopian narrative of George Orwell's novel 1984 as a symbolic source for understanding colonial violence. The author was born in a British colony, served as an enforcer for the British Empire in a colony, and witnessed the mechanisms of such repression. One of the practices is the control of self-perception through mass media action. bell hooks (2019) argues that media contributes to alienation through violence and perpetuates the deeply rooted distorted notion that common sense holds on black communities. Colonialism distorted the perception of the "other" to dominate and keep them subjugated, a practice so forceful that it ruins the ability to think and articulate feelings. Through the Newspeak mechanism, we observe an analogy to colonial oppression, where concepts, familial memories, and forms of communication were lost. Thus, the qualitative methodology allowed us to combine the fictional notion of dystopia with decolonial studies and their socio-political and historical intricacies inscribed in the text nuances. The result of applying this method allowed us to develop an interpretation that encompasses the experiences of the book's characters with the events affecting the indigenous peoples of the Americas, enslaved African populations, or the contemporary occupation of Palestine.

Keywords: Dystopia, 1984, George Orwell, Decolonial Studies

1   Introduction

The dystopian fictional universe of George Orwell's *1984*, published in 1949, distresses us due to a total lack of freedom. The control exercised over citizens promotes a continuous erasure of identities. The aim is to create a homogeneous society in which there are no dissensions. Individual freedoms are erased, small fulfilled desires are erased, daily doses of love, affection, happiness and hope are erased. The peace of the inhabitants rests on the stability of the system: well-being is provided by the Party, because it is that which manages the balance of the regime. Control, discipline and maximum adherence to ideology are unquestionable. If it is for everyone's happiness, it is not a crime to erase History. As we can note of Oceania subjects, the geographic block in which the narrative is outlined, their lives are cogs in the functioning structure, and the strenuous work and even theTwo Minutes Hate break constituted a way of being both controlled and controlling.

In "1984: a distopia do sujeito sob controle", Evanir Pavloski provides us with some biographical passages about the author that may have encompassed a possible influence when composing the novel. Eric Arthur Blair, George Orwell's given name, grew up in coercive and disciplinary environments. He was born in 1903, in the city of Motihari, in the Bengal province of British India. He was then sent to a preparatory school in England, where he lived until he was 14. He obtained a scholarship at Eton College and later became a police officer for the British Empire in Burma, which made him experience colonization violence as a coercion agent. According to the professor, the then Eric Arthur Blair "feels in a frighteningly consistent way the mute hatred of the colonized who, worn down by misery and fear, suffocate their revolt and withdraw into their own thoughts" (Pavloski, 2014, p. 20, our translation). After this experience as a police officer, the writer moved to Paris, where he worked as a journalist. He volunteered in the Spanish Civil War and later, in World War II.

In 2020, in Brazil, in the midst of the pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus, the Literature & Utopia research group completed twenty years of prolific academic work around the utopia/dystopia theme. In order to trace the group's creative path over its two decades of research, professors Ildney Cavalcanti and Alfredo Cordiviola published the article "Literatura & Utopia, 20 ANOS: criação, resistência e reinvenção" in *Alĕre* Magazine. The authors indicate that the group created a collection of studies in 2018 that represented "a possible mapping of the movements of this recurring sign, utopia/dystopia, and its multiple manifestations in texts, visual representations and cinema" (Cavalcanti & Cordiviola, 2021, our translation). The perspective of the sign movement allowed us to develop the concept of dystopia-colonialism from *1984* onwards. We continue to be in tune with the group's actions, which seeks "connection points" between Literature and the historical and social Latin American conditions and with critical perspectives concerning Queer, Feminist and Decolonial productions. Therefore, we interpret colonialism in this essay as a totalitarian regime. In Discourse

on colonialism, the Martinican poet Aimé Césaire elaborates a comprehensive and incisive narrative on the colonial issue, by interweaving different historical moments:

> And then, one fine day, the bourgeoisie is awakened by a tremendous shock, like a boomerang: the gestapos are busy, the prisons are full, the torturers invent, refine, argue amidst their work instruments.

> Surprise and indignation, and people say, "How strange! But, oh! It's Nazism, it will pass! And they wait and wait; and they remain silent in the face of the truth: that it is barbarism, but the supreme barbarism, that which crowns, that which sums up the everyday character of barbarities; that it is Nazism, yes, but before being its victims, they were accomplices; that they tolerated this Nazism, before suffering it; they acquitted it, closed their eyes and legitimized it, because, until then, it had only been applied to non-European peoples (Césaire, 2020, pp. 17-18).

Dystopia is a fictional category used to create pictures of an absolutely arbitrary society, with actions that border on the ineffable. Therefore, the analogy with colonization is appropriate, as it is possible to establish convergence points. In the book, a helicopter pretends to be a drone and approaches one of the windows of the Victory Mansions apartments. Dystopia is inserted in a universe that brings together ideology, technology, arms race and psychological warfare. The dystopian universe is surrounded by machines. In the article published at the VIII Meeting of Multidisciplinary Studies in Culture (ENECULT), professor Lucas Souza analyzes filmic language through the genesis of dystopia. The films analyzed by this professor present characteristics similar to those of Literature, namely a social nightmare, a high-tech paradise fed by the poorest classes, the protagonist's resistance and a lack of affective interaction.

When researching the film "Metropolis" by director Fritz Lang, the professor points to the cause of the workers and the protagonist's encouragement to create a rebellion against the machines. A similarity between the dictatorship of machines in the dystopian film and the dystopian novel is noted. And yet, according to the author, many dystopian cinema directors combine "fiction with Karl Marx's intellectual perception regarding the chain of alienations to which human beings are subject in capitalist society" (Souza, 2012, p. 4, our translation). Débora Reis Tavares' master's thesis on *1984* begins with a Karl Marx quote: "It is not man's consciousness that determines his being, but, on the contrary, his social being determines his consciousness" (Contribution to Critique of Political Economy). We believe the analogy between the Brazilian colonial experience and the fictional narrative is pertinent, considering that "absolute unrealism is still linked to a Platonic tradition of artistic interpretation" (Pavloski, 2014, p. 46, our translation).

Achille Mbembe (2018) compares a type of contemporary colonialism, like that in Palestine, for example, with that which has its origins in the plantation. The disciplinary notion, devaluation of body and necropolitic sovereignty are notions that permeate these colonialisms. Mbembe observes a detail in this economic system that he returns to when he mentions contemporary occupations, which is a "state of insult" and continues his argument pointing out that such a form of enterprise is possible "in a spectral world of intense horrors, cruelty and profanity" (Mbembe, 2018, p. 28). The author correlates Palestine's occupation with slavery, in which "death and freedom are irrevocably intertwined" (Mbembe, 2018, p. 68), and the issue of living in pain and injury, which is a constant. The author continues: "children blinded by rubber bullets; parents humiliated and beaten in front of their families; soldiers urinating on fences, shooting at water tanks from rooftops just for fun" (Mbembe, 2018, p. 69). In fiction, the population is also subjected to living in pain, and at the beginning of the novel we understand that the population lives in a state of injury, their electricity and food is rationed, not to mention health problems. Workers do not receive return for their tiring activities.

The Party is a war machine and makes every individual surrounded by death. The atmosphere of the described places displays an aspect of devastation, as do individuals, used exhaustively for resource extraction. In colonialism and in *1984*, the body and their strength were values. In the book, the Proles and members of the Outer Party worked their hardest for the good of common security. Symbolically, mining the lands of the Yanomami indigenous people would be a dystopian branch of the colonialist legacy, in a dynamic that combines strenuous work, social and material exclusion, alienation and violence. This situation can be understood through the notion of epistemicide, which the philosopher, activist and Geledés creator, Sueli Carneiro (2005), revisits in her doctoral thesis, defended by the University of São Paulo:

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The concept of epistemicide allows us to identify these spheres, in which the negative attributed to the Other, is this, especially with regard to his/her inability to elevate him/herself to the condition of a subject of knowledge in terms validated by the West, or to be a bearer of relevant knowledge from the point of view of this same tradition. This negative identity impacts him/her in such a way through the internalization of the socially attributed negative image, which pushes him/her to the self-fulfilling prophecy that endorses the terms of stigmatization, or leads him/her to self-denial or adherence and submission to the values of the dominant culture (Carneiro, 2005, page 277, our translation).

O'Brien demonstrates to Winston that whoever has power controls knowledge: two plus two can equal five. Faced with the force of the epistemicide practiced in Oceania, knowledge of the world, which also forms subjectivity, no longer makes sense. Orwell builds dystopia with ironic elements. The following excerpt demonstrates the population's contentment after Oceania broke all production records and the standard of living rose another twenty percent compared to last year. The population was on the streets to show gratitude to Big Brother. However, consumer items remained in short supply.

The expression "new and happy life" was repeated several times. Lately this expression was in fashion at the Ministry of Strength. Parsons, alert since the trumpet blast, listened, sitting silently in a kind of open-mouthed gravity, in a kind of edified boredom. He was unable to follow the numbers, but realized that they somehow justified a state of satisfaction. He held a large, dirty pipe, half filled with charred tobacco. With tobacco rationed to one hundred grams per week, it was rarely possible to fill a pipe completely. Winston was smoking a Victory cigarette which he kept carefully horizontal. The new ration would only be distributed the following day and he only had four cigarettes left. At that moment he had his ears closed to distant noises and was listening to what the telescreen transmitted. He was informed that there had even been expressions of gratitude to Big Brother for raising the chocolate ration to twenty grams per week. Just yesterday, he reflected, a ration reduction to twenty grams per week had been announced (Orwell, 2009, pp. 75-76).

This point in the narrative highlights the thought crime practiced by Winston, who begins to hide his self in the depths of his observations and daydreams. Due to his insistence on preserving remnants of experiences and news that confronted the truths propagated by the Party in memory, Winston was unorthodox regarding Doublethink, a psychological violence that makes the subject have the capacity to harbor two contradictory situations in their consciousness and believe in both, even if their eyes are witnesses to countless changes in the speeches given by the dominant system.

2   Big brother watches you

Winston is amazed at his colleague who doesn't notice the change in reality in a short space of twenty-four hours. Propaganda is an indispensable mechanism for maintaining a domination system. In Black Looks: Race and Representation, bell hooks argues that one of the pillars of colonial power is image manipulation, which negatively influences the self-perception of men and women: "From slavery onwards, white supremacists recognized that controlling images is central to the maintenance of any racial domination system" (hooks, 2019, p. 33). Undeterred by any objection, Winston's colleague simply celebrated the "increased" chocolate ration. In dystopia, propaganda and image control are important in alienating the population. In a similar way, bell hooks appears worried in front of a mostly black audience who were amused by scenes of violence between young black people, in the film "The Street Owners" (1991), by director John Singleton. According to hooks,

This reaction is a powerful testimony, revealing the forms of representation in white supremacist society that teach people of color to internalize racism so deeply into our collective consciousness that we can take pleasure in images of our death and destruction (hooks, 2019, p. 40).

Doublethink can be interpreted as a remnant of coloniality effects. In a cinema session, the writer observed the internalization of violence that affects black bodies. On the one hand, this violence is part of an atrocious daily routine and, on the other hand, also a source of humor. Most of the audience, hooks reports, was black. A colonial narrative is reinforced by the media in attributing "crimes" to indigenous people, and one way is to label them as unproductive. Doing nothing is a crime against capitalism. Or in the case of the Orwellian dystopia, a crime against the Party. Professor Evanir Pavloski clarifies this dynamic: "In *1984*, all environments in which

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Winston is included in are rigidly organized and controlled in order to extract obedience, time and work from individuals" (Pavloski, 2014, p. 80, our translation).

We, therefore, obtain an argument very conducive to the elaboration of the plastic artist Jaider Esbell, from the Makuxi ethnic group, reenchanted in 2021, on the indigenous crime of laziness and unproductivity, from a neoliberal and fascist-leaning point of view: "The laziness and unproductivity attributed to the Indian — read and spoken as the term **indigenous** — has its negative weight reinforced with the minimal lack of knowledge of the *status quo* such as being born and living and working in the forest" (Esbell, 2018, p. 29, our translation, our emphasis). In an analogy between fiction and reality, indigenous lands constitute an utopia within the Brazilian colonial dystopia, in the same way that Winston and Julia sought an utopia immersed in a forest.

Pavloski points out that control can also be exercised through the production and conscious deprivation of resources, so that material scarcity guarantees a hungry population, whose purpose in life is to work: "the developed technical advances are deliberately directed towards arms production which ends up self-consuming and holding back any other progress that would bring about an improvement in the population's living conditions." (Pavloski, 2014, p. 70, our translation). Oceania society was subjected to an arms race and ideology directed technological use. The same analogy is possible concerning the daily abuses experienced by slum populations, when observation and monitoring with drones, helicopters and modified police vehicles (*caveirões*) clearly indicate the direction of this policy of death aimed at the poor.

Similarly, helicopters watched the windows in the Orwellian dystopia: "in the distance, a helicopter, flying low over the rooftops, hovered for a moment like a dragonfly and then moved away again with great speed" (Orwell, 2009, p. 12) . The current study seeks, to find ways to understand our time through a fictional narrative, and the application of a qualitative methodology was paramount to contextualize dystopian horror as a modality that "abolishes the distinction between fiction and reality at the moment it shows the real state in which things are found: subjects, the world and their particular world" (Souza, 2012, pp. 17-18, our translation). Thus, we develop overlaps between fiction and reality based on human experiences, as the experiences of dystopias and colonial systems use similar power mechanisms.

2.1   Selective omniscience or thought police

A claustrophobic living condition. Citizens compelled to the intense production and surveillance rhythm without any rest, much less solitude. The Party's mechanisms for controlling bodies and minds are even more effective when they combine these trainings with a new linguistic policy, Newspeak, which promises to put an end to heterodoxy, so that no different observations can compromise the system's solidity, simply because they cannot be thought of. Winston holds back a piece of his most disturbing thoughts. There is a recess in his room, a fork capable of leaving him free from Big Brother's uninterrupted sentry.

> For some reason, the telescreen in the living room occupied an unusual position. Instead of being installed, as usual, on the back wall, from where they could control the entire room, it was on the longest wall, opposite the window. On one of its sides there was a shallow recess in which Winston was now installed and which at the time of the construction of the apartments was probably intended to house a bookcase. By sitting in the recess and remaining far back, Winston was able to stay out of range of the telescreen, at least as far as vision was concerned. He could be heard, of course, but as long as he remained in that position he could not be seen. It was partly the unusual topography of the room that gave him the idea to do the thing he was about to do (Orwell, 2009, p. 16).

What he was about to do was compose his diary. Since the telescreen could still capture sounds and, apparently, Winston was not within sight of the device, there was nothing better than keeping the silence of his impressions in a diary. Winston was correct in seeking his memories. However, there was no history in that society; the narrative was controlled by the totalitarian state, which justified and maintained this power. There was no balance between coercion and consensus. In London, the main city of Air Strip I, the consensus is to accept absolute coercion in the name of the Party.

Winston worked at the Ministry of Truth, the body responsible for fabricating lies, a fake news center at any time, ready to fabricate the present. Winston is aware of this fact and knows that he lives with a network of lies and understands that his job, basically, is

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maintaining this system. What constitutes a crime in the behavior of 1984's protagonist is not thinking "with good eyes" that all this lying is for his safety; he does not conceive and refuses manipulation. While reading Goldstein's Book, which he had received from O'Brien, he believed he was reading a denunciation made by the Party traitor about how power was exercised in Oceania. We come across these parallel movements, with Doublethink and Goldstein's Book comprising exemplary cases. Winston won the work due to his subversive attitudes, however, he is unaware of the fact and believes he is on the eve of a revolution. The combination of one book within another highlights how metalanguage can be raised so that readers understand the world of Literature. In this way, readers become witnesses and understand the effect of mental control on each inhabitant.

According to Débora Tavares, in her master's thesis, the narrator has selective omniscience (Tavares, 2013) and has access to Winston's daydreams and thoughts, narrating his anguish, desires and pains in detail; his effort to rescue moments from his childhood and be able to outline a canvas on which his family and the now hover. Access to these particularities is something that a narrator with some omniscience could inform us about. He is not a character, he is a bifurcation of this consciousness, which can be analyzed as a stylistic resource that emphasizes the totalitarian system. Furthermore, we also observe the way in which "he", the narrator, describes material issues as if he were informing, lurking or denouncing, just like a thought policeman. We discover that Winston has a kind of hiding place in his house through this narrator, a diary, a pen; "he" knows how much bread the protagonist has at home. In this way, a structural aspect also that identifies what we will discover, when everything turns to ruin: that the Ministry of Truth employee had been monitored by the party for years: "'I'm wasting some time with you, Winston,' he said, 'because It's a worthwhile case. You know very well what your problem is. You've been aware of it for years, even though you've been trying to deny it'" (Orwell, 2009, pp. 288-289). The other part of the narrative may comprise the metonymic configuration of Big Brother itself: everyone is inspected at every moment of their lives.

On the one hand, Tavares and Pavloski point out that the narrator has selective omniscience, as the narrative focus is on Winston, which causes a kind of silence in relation to the other characters. On the other hand, the structural ambiguity of the composition indicates there are clues to be analyzed. One of them is that the uninterrupted surveillance system promoted by the Party leaves the population in an infinite state of alert, the silence of characters like Mr. Parsons doesn't mean he wasn't also under surveillance. Everyone is trained to be vigilant. Mr. Parsons, watched inside the house, was handed over to the Thought Police. Thus, all the silenced meet in the Ministry of Love. As there were no laws, just customs, nothing seemed to actually be a crime, although everyone was controlled and the effectiveness of this order was seen in how much citizens spied on each other.

> Of course, there was no way to know if you were being watched at a specific time. Trying to guess the system used by the Idea Police to connect to each individual device or how often it did so was nothing more than speculation. It was even possible for it to control everyone all the time. Whatever the case, one thing was certain: it had the means to connect to his device whenever he wanted. You were forced to live - and lived, as a result of habit turned into instinct - believing that every sound you made would be heard and, if the darkness was not complete, every movement meticulously scrutinized. (Orwell, 2009, p. 13).

Winston, Mr. Charrington, Mr. Parsons, and O'Brien are all parts of the same system. Their conduct serves as an example. Winston and Mr. Parsons committed a crime and are considered citizens who do not fit in. They practiced thought crime, which is the contravention of contradictory and questioning thoughts and feelings that remain silent in the most private corner of beings and that can be revealed at any time, like what happened to the protagonist's neighbor. He continued with his effort to protect his childhood and the memories of his parents, as if in this thought effort he could find a way out of a utopian life. In this way, the Ministry of Truth employee, Winston Smith, commits the crime repeatedly.

> It didn't make the slightest difference whether he carried the diary forward or not. In any case, the Idea Police would catch him. He had committed — and would have committed, even if he had never put pen to paper — the essential crime that encompassed all the others. The thoughtcrime, they called it. Thoughtcrime was not something that could be disguised forever. You could even dodge for a while, sometimes for years, but sooner or later, they would certainly catch you (Orwell, 2009, pp. 29-30).

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2.2   Thought criminals

One day, Mrs. Parsons asked Winston to help her with the leaking faucet, and while fixing the problem, the man was amazed by the children's ferocious behavior. He was called a traitor and a thought criminal, not to mention that the boy physically attacked him and said "Goldstein!" in anger. Upon returning to his apartment after helping his neighbor, he concluded: "With children like that," thought Winston, "that unfortunate woman must lead a life of terror. Another year or two, and they would begin to watch her night and day for the slightest symptom of unorthodoxy." (Orwell, 2009, p. 36).

Evanir Pavloski argues about the idealized idyll and the idyll later consummated with Júlia as utopian units within dystopia: "Dissatisfaction with the real world and/or with the regimes that regulate it encourages these thinkers to constantly reflect on a past in which evils of the present are not verifiable or a future in which social injustices would be suppressed" (Pavloski, 2014, p. 34, our translation). It is interesting to note that the title of the essay by Makuxi artist Jaider Esbell is called "Makunaima, my grandfather in me!". The notion of changing times is not just an artistic, ethical, ethnic and political nuance of the artist and a large part of indigenous peoples, it is intrinsic to the being of the Cosmos.

> We emerge alongside with art all the challenges of great existence and its clearest individual and collective urgencies. We emerged in apparent chaos, as described among the great Shamans of the world and a near consensus in science, in terms of the direction for humanity as it is. The mathematical foreshadowing of the end of the world is also a scenario for our appearance. As a product, also of that time, I have the idea that colonization was a process, although I know that it is a continuous act. So I looked everywhere and saw my grandfather on the horizon. On the horizon it is also clear that there will be no culture or life — and much less quality life — for anyone in anything being done. It is not possible, if we do not break some extra membrane of the now, to think about an idea of the future in matters of our spiritual connection with the earth and our waste (Esbell, 2018, p. 11, our translation).

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Memories comprise the effort to deposit a breath of life in places of the past. The memory, the diary, the bucolic village and even the room in the Proles neighborhood functioned as spaces of struggle. The fact that the couple consummates their love idyll in a place similar to an antique shop can be interpreted as an effort to search for their origins in their memories. Thus, many indigenous ethnicities ritualize the memory of their ancestors in the sacred space of their lands, which are also a space of struggle. The argument that indigenous lands are unproductive is a mechanism to confuse public opinion through the mass media. If the system is in a constant state of work, anything that goes against this standard is a crime against common sense, which is full of this ideology.

The lugubrious impression that Winston had of the land in which he lived in can be, in part, attributed to the prospector's way of extracting material and human resources, leaving only exposed ruins. This protagonist impression is not different from the impression of the Yanomami Shaman, Davi Kopenawa, about mining in his lands, a topic constantly in fashion: "If we let the miners dig everywhere, like wild pigs, the rivers in the forest will soon turn into muddy puddles full of engine oil and trash." (Kopenawa, 2015, as cited in Kopenawa & Albert, 2015, p. 336, our translation). Idyll is a crime because it is resistance. What is possible to note is that, in the entire narrative's structure, we are informed that there is a writing within another writing: in addition to Goldstein's Book, there is Winston's diary. The Party in Oceania is nothing more than a part of a power, the same as that configured in Eastasia and Eurasia. It doesn't matter if invasion and territory annexation on other continents take place; we remain immersed in this metalinguistic resource.

3   Conclusion

The analogy between the dystopian narrative of 1984 and decolonial studies allows us to put circumstances that correspond to each other into critical perspective. We note tactics of rewriting History, coercion, social and material exclusion, imposition of strenuous work and alienation in both situations. Ultimately, the apparatus of violence we encounter in a fictional narrative is similar to that used by colonial powers. The Party colonized the minds of its inhabitants and imposed a warmongering, police-like and propagandistic State. The machine of this immense control apparatus is responsible for constructing official narratives and persecuting dissident ones. Oceania characteristics reveal the intrinsic difficulties that women, children and men faced in building their subjectivities in

societies marked by colonialism. Decolonial research highlights the history of oppression, constituting a theoretical and critical source in the search for political, economic, aesthetic, intellectual and existential autonomy.

Therefore, we interconnect the notion of dystopia and colonialism in this study, strengthening the previous argument by professor Lucas de Souza about the subtle line of distinction between dystopia and reality. Even though the professor's article, published in VIII ENECULT, is related to dystopian cinema, we are guided by the professor's inquiry and also by the discoveries made by professors Ildney Cavalcanti and Alfredo Cordiviola, published in an article in *Alĕre* Magazine, in celebration of the twenty years existence of the Literature & Utopia Group. The discoveries of these teachers demonstrate the complex cultural relationship caused by something that would comprise the cohesion of these utopia/dystopia notions. Furthermore, they allow for a reevaluation of discussions considering Latin America particularities, for example.

In colonized societies, the policy of disciplining bodies finds a parallel in the Ministry of Love portrayed in the fiction. These comprise indoctrination systems of bodies and minds, whether within the fictional society or in a colonized country in the real world. We have evidence of how behavioral subjection is rewarded or punished according to dominant interests. This encompasses widespread surveillance, but also results in self-surveillance, in which individuals cannot or should not harbor any trace of resistance to the system, as this would somehow be subject to Party investigations.

> "Are you guilty?" asked Winston.
>
> "Of course I'm guilty!" exclaimed Parsons with a servile look at the telescreen. "Do you think the Party would arrest an innocent person?" The frog's face became calmer and even acquired an expression of sanctimony. "Thoughtcrime is a horrible thing, old man," he said sententiously. "It's hell, it can take over you without you even realizing it. Do you know how it dominated me? While I slept! True. I was there working, trying to do my part — I never imagined there was anything negative on my mind. And then I started talking in my sleep. Do you know what they heard me say?"
>
> He lowered his voice like someone forced by doctor's orders to utter an obscenity.
>
> "Down with Big Brother!"
>
> (...)
>
> "Who reported you?" asked Winston.
>
> "It was my little daughter," said Parsons with a kind of rueful pride (...) (Orwell, 2009, pp. 275-276).

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In these times of constant "nows", it is essential to master our consciences. Mining in indigenous lands to extract their natural resources is extremely important for the system; however, it is equally important to control public opinion about this need. Furthermore, it is crucial to control indigenous people, initially through illnesses and later through catechesis and various forms of conversion. In the Ministry of Love prison, Winston is informed by O'Brien that the Party's main project is to control the minds of the population.

> "We control matter because we control the mind. Reality is inside the skull. Little by little you will learn, Winston. There's nothing we can't do. Levitate, become invisible — anything. If I want, I can float like a soap bubble. But I don't want to, because the Party doesn't want to. You need to get rid of these 19th century ideas about the laws of nature. We are the ones who make the laws of nature." (Orwell, 2009, p. 309).

Thus, we come to the conclusion that mental control enhances obedience to the system, and coercion becomes an everyday aspect, as people follow government customs. "It's the small that makes big things", goes the saying. Thus, the party invests in the conversion of children, entire generations that grow up without having a comparative picture of the past in relation to the present. Even flat-earthism, a widespread religious perspective, equally reaffirmed by philosophers and scientists and recently propagated, finds its place in the 1984 dystopia: "What are the stars?" said O'Brien indifferently. Points of fire a few kilometers away from us. We could

play them if we wanted, or delete them. The Earth is the center of the universe. The Sun and stars revolve around it" (Orwell, 2009, p. 310).

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PROSPECTING ANTI-COLONIAL QUALITIES IN DESIGN EDUCATION
PROSPECTANDO QUALIDADES RELACIONAIS ANTICOLONIAIS NA EDUCAÇÃO EM DESIGN
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Abstract

The craft of formal and functional aesthetic qualities, overtly typical of dependent markets, characterizes Design Education in Brazil. In addition to reinforcing the cultural stereotypes conferred by colonizers on local people, such qualities contribute to maintaining the inequality that describes the historical colonial relationship. Critical Education in Design seeks to transform this reality through anticolonial praxis, even though little is known about its qualities. We conducted a prospective study on the relational qualities that emerged from the anticolonial praxis of the Design & Oppression network composed by university extension projects of associated laboratories in several Brazilian institutions. Weave this network several Brazilian educational initiatives dedicated to critical pedagogy, working with social movements. Following a practice of Latin American social movements, the choice for the term anticolonial indicates that explicit political action is associated with popular struggles in this praxis, from which six qualities emerge: freedom, criticality, solidarity, autonomy, dialogicity, and monstrosity.

Keywords: Design Education, Critical Pedagogy, Anticolonial Design, Paulo Freire, Relational Qualities

1   Introduction

Design has developed in Brazil as an avatar of the Anglo-European colonial discourse, primarily as a tool for maintaining production and consumption dependent on the former metropolises. Due to its historical origin, the field is directly linked to the maintenance of structures that undermine the possibilities of a sustainable and fair future for all (Escobar, 2018). The ecologically unsustainable, highly technocratic, economically unfair, racist, sexist, and violent reality in which we live in Brazil is also the result of design choices that built technologies that reinforce oppression while excluding possibilities for humanization (Cruz, 2021).

These choices also impact Design Education. As Lesley-Ann Noel (2020) points out, regardless of the country, Design Education is characterized by a colonial bias that prioritizes projects that serve the large capitalist industrial economies, which calls into question the validity of knowledge and practices outside this context. As a challenge to this imposed colonial paradigm, Noel reimagines and suggests curricula designed from other perspectives: curricula for vulnerable economies, pan-African, decolonial, pluriversal, among others. More than teaching projects ready to be replicated, Noel invites us to rethink Design Education from other structures of existence, seeking to distance ourselves from the colonial yoke.

This article is a response to that invitation. We start from the Freirean premise (2005) that education produces subjectivities through intersubjective dialogue, which takes place in short to long-term relationships. In addition to the quantitative approach to measuring results, it is also possible to measure the quality of education through empirical-theoretical constructs, such as autonomy and solidarity. These qualities serve to measure and guide the educational process if they are treated as pedagogical principles. Research on such qualities is incipient in Design Education, and there is no specific guidance on anticolonial pedagogies.

This research aims to prospect anticolonial qualities for Critical Education in Design based on the praxis of participants in the Design & Oppression network, formed by outreach projects and associated laboratories in several Brazilian institutions (Serpa et al., 2021). By adopting the concept of praxis (Freire, 2005), we seek to establish the cultivation of these relational qualities through theoretical reflection on the colonial condition and through concrete and continued social actions (Boal, 2009) of design outreach projects. The relational qualities we seek do not arise from the formal and functional properties of the objects created by design, such as effectiveness, usability, or aesthetic appeal, as these function primarily as market differentiators. Relational qualities shift our attention to the relationships between objects, worlds, and people (Cipolla & Manzini, 2009). These qualities shape the research object of Prospective Design (Van Amstel, Botter & Guimarães, 2022), the approach that guides this work in its objective of prospecting alternative presents based on past paths and future projects.

Following this approach, we recognize the path taken by critical pedagogy in Brazil, which, among others, denounced the complicity between formal education and colonial culture (Freire, 2005; Vieira Pinto, 2021a). We also recognize the potential to develop projects with the anticolonial bias that characterized this type of pedagogy. Unlike other research that uses the term decolonial to align itself

with the group of Latin American researchers Modernity/Coloniality (Escobar, 2018), we prefer to use the term anticolonial to characterize the paths and projects considered. This term expresses a more explicit character of struggle and political action than decolonial, the option made by popular social movements (Makaran & Gaussens, 2020). These movements prefer to align themselves with a tradition of militant research (Serpa, 2023), which dates back to the anticolonial praxis of Frantz Fanon (2005) and expands on the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire (2005) and Álvaro Vieira Pinto (2021a, 2021b).

2   Freirean critical pedagogy and Design praxis

Paulo Freire was a Brazilian educator and philosopher recognized for his contributions to the formation of critical pedagogy, defending an education engaged in the struggle for the liberation of oppressed groups, which cannot be done about or for these groups but only with them in a dialogical, supportive and relational way. With this defense, Freire (2005) wants to avoid the cultural invasion that occurs when ways considered inferior of being and knowing, such as those of Brazilian peripheral social groups and Latin America as a whole, are supplanted by external knowledge deemed superior. Inspired by the liberation movements in Africa described by Frantz Fanon (2005), Freirean pedagogy can also be considered an anticolonial pedagogy that aims at the autonomy and independence of colonized people. More than learning to read and write words, critical pedagogy encourages the oppressed to read the world critically and, in communion, write their history.

Critical pedagogy defends everyone's participation in reflecting on the world and building actions for its transformation (Freire, 2005). In this epistemological view, the leading role does not belong to the educator who conveys knowledge but to the student who produces new interpretations based on their reality. It is not from the oppressor, who returns the stolen freedom in a benevolent gesture, but from the oppressed, who fights for their liberation. In a related way, in Design, the leading role does not belong to designers trained by colonialism, even if they deny this origin; the protagonism belongs to all social groups that have had their agency in world projects denied.

Freire's participatory and dialogical proposal for Education had developments in several fields, including Design. His ideas influenced the more politicized branches of Participatory Design, which directly mention his work (Ehn, 1988). However, such references were systematically erased and co-opted by colonial logic, especially in the return of Participatory Design to Brazil as a method disconnected from its critical and peripheral origins (Amaral, Maynart & Mazzarotto, 2022). As an anticolonial response, the relationships between Freirean thought and the field of Design have been rescued in numerous works (Gonzatto, 2018; Noel, 2020; Van Amstel & Gonzatto, 2020; Cruz, 2021; Mazzarotto & Serpa, 2022; Silva, 2022, 2023; Serpa, 2022, 2023).

3   Prospective Design and relational qualities

Inspired by Freire's critical pedagogy, Prospective Design (Van Amstel, Botter, & Guimarães, 2022) is an approach that seeks to contribute both to the collective prospecting of alternative presents, and the transformation of current structures so that better futures are possible. Unlike other prospective approaches focused only on the long-term vision, the Latin American origin of Prospective Design requires recognizing the urgency of radical transformations in our oppressed and colonized reality that need to happen now. Instead of a time determined by the past, the present is seen as a space of possibilities in which different presents coexist, even if some are hidden by oppression. The Prospective Design turns to a relational aesthetic to perceive, identify, and express these alternative presents (Bourriaud, 1998).

Such aesthetics highlight the distinction between the intrinsic qualities of the artifacts that are part of the structures, and the relational qualities that emerge between the artifacts and the other actors involved. Realizing these relational qualities is perceived as fundamental to promoting structural transformations since altering the intrinsic qualities of isolated artifacts is not considered sufficient. Without this critical reflection, the cultivation of intrinsic qualities of artifacts contributes to the maintenance of colonialism, as it does not link artifacts to their geopolitical and cultural structures of production and consumption. Furthermore, relational aesthetics implies including the various actors who relate to and through these artifacts and the various artifacts linked in a network.

4   Research Context

The relational qualities defended in this work emerged inductively from the experiences, actions, and discussions shared among participants in the Design & Oppression network[1]. In this inductive process, they were identified, categorized, and contextualized by theoretical approaches from critical pedagogy and prospective Design. This network functions as a collaborative and multidisciplinary platform that seeks to discuss, analyze, and propose actions on issues related to oppression in Design (Serpa et al., 2021). It comprises designers, academics, activists, and other professionals interested in the social impact of Design and how we can give new meaning to its colonial origin and orient it in favor of the oppressed in liberation struggles. The activities of the Design & Oppression network cover a range of actions that include but are not limited to discussion forums, research and scientific publication, educational and critical training activities, organization of events, sharing of educational resources, and project actions in alliance with historically oppressed groups.

5   Relational qualities cultivated in the Design & Oppression network

5.1   Freedom

Freire (2005) states that freedom is essential to define our humanity. If freedom is a non-negotiable condition for humanization, its absence leads to dehumanization. Instead of being free for themselves, the oppressed-oppressor contradiction arises in which both are dehumanized: the former because their freedom is restricted, and the latter because they need to steal the freedom of others to establish their own. Freedom only gains its whole meaning in the active pursuit of liberation, because "freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift." (Freire, 2005, p. 47). As a relational quality, freedom cannot be understood as an isolated characteristic of an individual but as a collective practice through which individuals develop their potential (Dalaqua, 2020). Therefore, no one is free by themselves. Freedom only gains meaning within the collectivity of being free.

If freedom is our ontological vocation, unfortunately, it is not a historical reality since oppressive relationships, many of a colonial nature, limit freedom in countless social dimensions: sexual, economic, ethnic-racial, religious, territorial, and epistemic. Oppressions that, intentionally or not, are reinforced by Design, both through its results and through its processes (Mazzarotto & Serpa, 2022). Freedom, therefore, needs to be collectively projected as a relational quality and not as an intrinsic characteristic of an object, as is done in the development of Free Software, for example. To cultivate freedom as a relational quality, the Design & Oppression network uses the *Design Livre* ideology (Faber-Ludens, 2012; Van Amstel & Gonzatto, 2016), an anthropophagic mix of Freirean critical pedagogy with Free Software and Open Design practices. This perspective reflects cultural resistance concerning foreign appropriation, a theme raised by Brazilian modernism and its anthropophagy.

An example of *Design Livre* is the collaborative cultural producers that emerged as an offshoot of the Brazilian Digital Culture movement. These producers used a platform based on Free Software, the Corais Platform, to design an open and participatory methodology for cultural production. While designing, the producers participated in the platform's metaproject and developed a social currency module together with other users. The result was the expansion of not only their freedom but also the freedom of all platform users (Gonzatto, Van Amstel & Jatobá, 2021).

Prospecting freedom as a central relational quality in anticolonial teaching in Design drastically changes the 'whys' and 'hows' of Design praxis. Instead of a neutral vision, there is a political perception of how it aligns with either the maintenance of oppression or the liberation struggle.

5.2   Criticality

According to Freire (2005), based on observation and critical discussion about the world, we need to uncover reality, become aware, and denounce oppressive relationships. By cultivating criticality, we seek to identify the origins of oppression, distinguishing the oppressed and oppressor social groups to which we belong. Thus, we recognize the shadow of the oppressor in all of us Latin Americans as we understand the indelible mark of colonialism. Vieira Pinto (2021a, 2021b) and Freire (2018) argue that there are two

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[1] Audio, text and video materials are available on the network's website, as well as information about participation and actions:
https://www.designeopressao.org/

antagonistic forms of perceiving reality: the naïve consciousness and the critical consciousness. The collective consciousness of a people moves between these two poles, and it is up to liberating education to promote ways of getting ever closer to critical consciousness, as it is closer to reality and enables the perception of oppressive relationships. Critical consciousness recognizes that reality conditions itself and, therefore, needs to investigate how such conditioning occurs and how it can be transformed. Conversely, naïve consciousness considers itself independent of reality and not conditioned by it, so there is no reason to investigate contextual reality. Criticality, therefore, recognizes that the future may be different. Naivety, meanwhile, tends either to the fatalism of accepting that everything has always been and will always be the same, or to reactionism, of not understanding or accepting changes.

In the educational practices of the Design & Oppression network, mainly with students or designers working in the market, the fatalism of naive consciousness appears in some discourses. Many express a sense of discomfort with the role of Design in reproducing capitalism and colonialism. However, there is discouragement regarding any possibility of change, which seems impossible, something Freire (2005) refers to as limit situations. Our role in these moments has been to increasingly value criticality to seek to unveil how oppression operates and realize that other worlds are possible — understanding history as a possibility rather than a determination (Freire, 2000).

According to Serpa (2022), cultivating criticality involves first observing critically our educational background and actions, recognizing the potentialities and limitations of our approaches and tools to transform reality. In this critical approach, it is imperative to recognize, on the one hand, the ability of the oppressed to reflect and critically elaborate on their experiences and, on the other, the importance of exposing the oppressed to new themes and practices outside their daily lives, something that was denied to them by oppression. It is understood that from this supportive and dialogical encounter, new understandings and ways of acting on this reality are produced, no longer reflections of colonial imposition but an authentic creation that considers the subordinate reality and its struggles for emancipation.

Increasing our criticality is a process that takes time. It is a long, complex process that requires commitment. An example is the results of the Designs of the Oppressed course offered by the network in 2021 and 2022. Based on the reading and discussion of texts on critical pedagogy and counter-hegemonic forms of Design and the critical analysis of one's own design experiences, many participants expanded their understanding of when their actions reinforced or combatted oppression. In one case, for instance, an educator working in the Middle East managed to better identify the reproduction of colonialism in his practices by placing less value on local knowledge compared to hegemonic Design practices in educational actions with artisans (Mazzarotto & Serpa, 2022).

5.3   Autonomy

Freire (2000) denounces the incorporation of principles of the emancipatory struggle, such as autonomy, which in neoliberal practice stimulates individualism and competitiveness. For Souza (2021), the sense of autonomy corrupted by neoliberalism is found within Design education. Examples include the overvaluation of having a unique vision and authorial brand as a designer and being proactive in building one's knowledge. These meanings represent not autonomy but meritocratic individualism, where social relationships are springboards for one's benefit. When understood as a relational quality, autonomy is a collective elaboration of why the world works the way it does, including the recognition of structures as constructions that can be transformed. Autonomy is the constant search and exercise of freedom, and "it is only possible if it is intertwined with the collective because it is from the fluid dance between freedoms and responsibilities that the testimony of the here and now with others emerges" (Souza, 2021, our translation). Instead of autonomy as a reflection of the individualism imposed by the colonial condition, we defend autonomy permeated by the collective.

For example, Souza and Filho (2023) report the experience of Design students who autonomously and collectively plan and execute the Préocupe event at the Federal Institute of Pernambuco (IFPE). The event challenges the traditional logic of the teacher-student relationship by proposing an environment where people share experiences and learn together. Through the concepts of work and critical consciousness, the research reveals the proximity of the students' reality to that of the working classes, both working for others in their usual activities. In this context, autonomy emerges when students involved in the organization develop design skills and critical awareness. Thus, they challenge the proliferation of neoliberal education and contribute to cultivating their autonomous practices of critical pedagogy in Design Education.

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5.4   Solidarity

Solidarity, according to Freire (2005), is the principle of being with the people and never proposing solutions for them or about them but with them. Based on this, Serpa and Silva (2021) criticize the practice of empathy in design as restrictive and depoliticized, limiting users to the position of objects in creating goods. The authors defend solidarity as a guiding ethical principle and state that it is part of a dialogical design practice, where an alliance between subjects is possible in unveiling reality and confronting situations of oppression through collective projects. Unlike empathy, solidarity implies a shared agency between designers and users and enables an alliance in the fight against oppression.

In the solidarity relationship, power asymmetries are not ignored but made available to and for the benefit of oppressed groups. As Fanon (2005) argues, the role of the colonized bourgeoisie must be precisely to betray its vocation as oppressors and make available to the oppressed people all the knowledge and resources they obtained from their experience in the colonial system originating in the metropolis.

For example, Silva (2022) describes how the involvement of designers in popular struggles allows the emergence of solidarity as a central element, influencing significant transformations in participatory projects, in which, more than the result of the project, what matters is the growth and emancipation of those involved. Eleutério and Amstel (2023) report the designer's experience in solidarity with a network of women coffee producers, highlighting the importance of care as an aggregating element. Care that encompasses not just technical support but respectful consideration of each other's needs, challenges, and capabilities. Serpa (2022) presents a pedagogical experience in an intercultural context within international development, where the construction of solidarity is a critical factor for different subjects' appropriation of the design process. Solidarity, in this case, is driven by the extrapolation of relationships beyond the project space and by the recognition that communities have their forms of organization, participation, and particular methods to carry it out.

5.4   Dialogicality

For Freire (2005), our actions as designers or educators can be dialogical or anti-dialogical. Dialogical praxis occurs when reflection on the world and action to transform it are participatory, horizontal, considering everyone's voices and knowledge, trusting in their abilities, and recognizing the right to create the world they want to live in. On the opposite side, hierarchies and asymmetrical power relations are reinforced in anti-dialogical action. A group now has the authority to decide what knowledge is valid and what model of the world we should build, and it is up to the others to accept these plans.

By valuing the relational quality of dialogicality, we recognize that, among educators and students, designers and other subjects interested in a project, or external allies and oppressed social groups, everyone has something to teach and learn. Dialogue between different voices and experiences can produce new knowledge and fundamental actions in the struggle to overcome colonialism and other oppressions. This includes assuming that we can even draw on knowledge from colonial metropolises as long as they are critically discussed, reformulated and adapted based on our context and interests as oppressed people and Latin American designers. Freire (2005) names as cultural synthesis such anthropophagic process, a dialogical reconfiguration guided by our interests and context, and an anticolonial response to cultural invasion that seeks to impose knowledge and practices without dialogue and critical reflection.

To help promote dialogical design practices and avoid oppressive anti-dialogue, Mazzarotto and Serpa (2022) developed educational material composed of 16 reflection cards based on Freirean critical pedagogy. Divided into dialogic concepts and their opposites, the material aims to assist in critical reflection on design praxis and planning design actions that increasingly come closer to dialogicality. These letters helped analyze actions by the Latin American NGO TETO in conjunction with popular housing movements. In an action intended to improve the community but applied in an anti-dialogical way, the NGO sought to solve the water scarcity issue in a favela by installing rainwater harvesting systems in homes. From the designers' point of view, it was a low-cost solution and aligned with sustainability principles. However, a few months later, it was found that the systems had been dismantled because residents preferred to use the water tanks provided for other purposes, either to sell them or to store their water diverted from the public system. Making

use of rainwater was an idea foreign to the majority's culture without resonance with the local context. The solution failed because it was developed from the perspective of external designers imposing models that work in their original contexts without dialogue with the local culture.

In another project, however, the population and the NGO worked together to pave the community's clay streets, which became impassable during rainy seasons. Instead of bringing external solutions, the dialogue focused on leveraging the knowledge and skills of the community itself. The result was paving using stones piled on the pavement by the residents, a cheap solution with low technological use, designed by them, and capable of maintenance by the community itself. In this dialogue, the NGO helped sharing knowledge on how to write projects and seek financing, which was a request from the community itself.

5.5   Monstrosity

Since colonization, native peoples and Latin Americans, in general, have been conceptualized as monsters when considered different and savage by colonizers. The quality of monstrosity consists precisely in accepting and giving new meaning to this difference. It means assuming that we are monsters and we have a culture of hybridism and miscegenation that makes us different from others.

Based on this, Angelon and Van Amstel (2021) identified that, amid colonized territories where the canon of modern Design has preponderance over other forms of expression, an anticolonial quality of radical alterity emerges which can positively affirm monstrosity. By comparing design works produced in a series of democratic design experiments at a Brazilian university with works of art from the Neoconcrete movement, the authors discovered an expression named monstrous aesthetics. This aesthetic represents a positive affirmation of alterity and collectivity that challenges colonial standards of beauty imposed on the colonized. It broke all Graphic Design rules known to students in the project to produce the monstrosity's quality. It also showed this same monstrosity in a remote forum theater play when the character changed virtual costumes several times during the same scene, just like a shape-shifting monster (Saito et al., 2022).

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6   Concluding remarks

Lorde (2007) reminds us that the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may, at most, allow us to beat him at his game temporarily, but they will never allow us to achieve genuine change. From this perspective, Design Education must overcome the emphasis on purely aesthetic and functional qualities of objects, a legacy of colonial education. Considered in isolation and uncritically, such emphasis directs us exclusively towards creating artifacts for capitalist consumerism. In search of a Critical Education in Design, we present reflections and examples of actions to value relational qualities. Such qualities emerge from the interaction between the different subjects and social groups engaged in a project, dialectically considering the different voices, cultures, interests, and desires involved.

Thus, this research sought to identify the markedly anticolonial relational qualities that a Critical Education can cultivate in Design, an alternative present that already exists in the praxis of the Design & Oppression network but which had not yet been unveiled and documented. The relational qualities we expect from Design Education are linked to the collective practice of Design: freedom, criticality, solidarity, autonomy, dialogicality, and monstrosity. Through these qualities, we recognize that everyone has the agency to design themselves and the world (freedom). Such practice is based on criticality to overcome the oppressions that hinder and constrain projective capacity. This type of project aims at liberation in its approaches and methods and, therefore, must value the qualities of autonomy, solidarity, and dialogicality among all participants. Finally, we understand that aesthetic results can overcome the canonical vision of Design, accepting our differences and monstrosity as a radical affirmation of our otherness.

The relational qualities described by the present study are not intended to exclude others, but they emerged prospectively from our studies in anticolonial literature (Freire, 2000, 2005, 2018; Fanon, 2005, Vieira Pinto, 2021a, 2021b) and our collective praxis as designers and educators at the Design & Oppression Network. They seek to prospect an alternative anticolonial present for Design Education that fosters other possibilities beyond the capitalist dependent orientation. These relational qualities drive the formation of critical designers who support the genuine interests of oppressed social groups and are committed to the struggles to overcome oppression that arise from colonialism and other oppressive structures.

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TOWARDS A LATIN-BASED URBAN DESIGN
THE ROLE OF CAAD IN DECOLONIAL DESIGN PRACTICES IN BRAZIL
RUMO A UM DESENHO URBANO GENUINAMENTE LATINO
O PAPEL DO CAAD NAS PRÁTICAS DECOLONIAIS DE PROJETO NO BRASIL

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Abstract

This paper discusses the opportunities of parametric urban design associated with well-known urban design metrics to develop a Latin-based urban design model. The research argues that contemporary parametric tools can pave the way for design solutions rooted in a decolonial perspective. We present two case studies in João Pessoa (Brazil). The first case study, in the Varadouro neighborhood, considers the limitations of heritage conservation, exploring the opportunities for new densities and uses towards improving urban vitality. The second case study, in the Bancários neighborhood, presents comparative scenarios that raise straightforward questions about the impact of floor space index considerations on density and urban infrastructure. A parametric model developed in Grasshopper for Rhinoceros 3D simulates the scenarios and evaluates the urban metrics in each sample. This process provides valuable information for city planners, evidence-based estimates of impact on existing infrastructure, and a basis to identify and explore solutions that shift traditional governance models to more contemporary and responsive ones. In the discussions, the article explores how implementing such simulations in the urban planning process would clarify to all actors involved the potential outcomes of unquestioningly accepting the demands of construction companies and real estate developers' lobbyists.

Keywords: Parametric urban design, Urban design metrics, Decolonial urban design Latin-based urban design model

1   Introduction

Urbanization has intensely influenced the socioeconomic dynamics of Latin America over the centuries. Rapid urban expansion, characterized by uncontrolled city growth, population migration from rural to urban areas, and resulting spatial reconfiguration of human settlements has been the subject of extensive research highlighting the urbanization multifaceted nature and its countless implications on society, infrastructure, socioeconomic disparities, and environmental sustainability (Davis, 2006; Greenfield, 1994; Hardoy, Mitlin, & Satterthwaite, 2001; Gilbert, 1998; Martine & McGranahan, 2010; Portes & Roberts, 2005).

Given Latin America's context, marked by a history of colonial rule and the enduring effects of colonialism on its cities, a decolonial perspective becomes an essential approach to many subjects and research fields (Escobar, 2007; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Quijano, 2000). In the current context, decolonization involves much more than nations gaining independence from colonial rule: it consists of reassessing and dismantling colonial views and ideologies that persist across multiple fields of knowledge, including urban design. The act of decolonizing urban design, for example, represents a substantial paradigm shift. It requires an understanding of North American and European dominance, recognizing the diversity and value of other ways of knowing and fostering inclusivity and equity in the decision-making process and resulting urban spaces, compelling us to reconsider urbanization as a spatial reconfiguration process and an expressive tool to dismantle prevailing colonial paradigms (Mignolo, 2007, 2011; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018).

A decolonial perspective recognizes that the urbanization process in Latin America surpasses an economic or demographic phenomenon but is also profoundly interwoven with the historical structures of coloniality. This perspective questions the models and practices that have been imposed and seeks to acknowledge and integrate the diverse local realities (Escobar, 2007, 2011). The North American city model, predominantly car-centric, promotes urban sprawl and unsustainable low-density suburban areas due to their high energy and land consumption (Newman & Kenworthy, 2015). This model creates social and economic segregation, as areas are often divided into residential, commercial, and industrial zones, limiting opportunities for social interaction (Putnam, 2000). The European model, characterized by high-density urban cores and strict land-use regulations, can lead to affordability issues and displacement of local communities (Marcuse, 1985). Often, these models need more flexibility to accommodate informal economies and diverse housing needs prevalent in many previously colonized societies (Roy, 2005). Moreover, these models' architectural and spatial aesthetics may not resonate with local cultural values, resulting in places that feel strange to their inhabitants (Lefebvre, 1991).

This study questions the market-driven forces that shape cities for real estate capital and not for citizens, in addition to establishing a critique of the misapplications of urban laws. We argue for a reformulation of legal frameworks so that they are more adaptable and attuned to the specificities and cultural needs of the local population. Such a change would resist the commodification of Latin

American cities, ensuring urban planning serves as an agent of community empowerment and authentic representation rather than a mere facilitator of market interests or a perpetrator of outdated legal constraints (Grosfoguel, 2011; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013).

Decolonial approaches gain particular importance in contemporary Brazil as the country contends with severe urban challenges, including rapid urbanization, housing deficits, and socio-spatial segregation (Rolnik, 2015). Hence, integrating such lenses is critical for offering alternative approaches to the urbanization process while recognizing the deeply entrenched structures of coloniality that persist in modern urban environments. The questions guiding this investigation are: (1) How can we sidestep urban spatial quality discussions predominantly structured around North American and European city models? (2) How can Computer-Aided Architectural Design (CAAD) assist in adapting these discussions to the specificities of the Latin American context?

We argue that parametric tools can provide a crucial foundation for design solutions rooted in a decolonial perspective. These tools applied in urban design present an opportunity to reimagine our cities, analyze complex data sets, visualize urban spaces, and generate novel designs (Batty, 2013; Schumacher, 2009). Computer-Aided Architectural Design (CAAD) and its contemporary advances can be further enhanced by drawing upon the insights from studying urbanization in Latin America. By leveraging the critical perspectives provided by the literature, CAAD can be contextualized within the social, political, and economic dynamics associated with urbanization in the region, developing a Latin-based urban design model.

This study simulates scenarios in two João Pessoa's neighborhoods. We seek to establish a decolonial framework resonating with the local realities of the urban landscape by applying consolidated urban performance metrics to the specific research context, adapting parameters to match Brazilian reality. The research explores the potential of parametric urban design to evaluate existing urban models and to adapt and reinterpret metrics, supporting the incorporation of new perspectives and facilitating the design of urban environments that are reflective and responsive to the people they serve. Our analysis, grounded in local challenges and historical context, offers insights relevant to other Latin American cities with colonial pasts. We aspire to foster culturally contextualized urban design by actively engaging with the decolonial discourse through critical thought and dialogue about the role and potential of CAAD in such urban design solutions.

2   Materials and Methods

The study combines quantitative and qualitative approaches following Creswell's (2013) mixed-methods strategy. The discussions and procedures adopted on the Varadouro sample informed and shaped the subsequent study of the Bancários sample. The research provides a numerical representation of specific parameters (urban diversity, urban built density, population density) using key performance indicators and indexes. We then combine quantitative and qualitative data, producing a 3D model that provides the basis for discussing experiences and perceptions within the urban environment. By integrating these data types, the research maximizes the strengths of both approaches, and the outcome is a more comprehensive exploration of the urban space, offering insights and strengthening the validity of the findings.

Data is collected using GIS maps provided by the local municipality, enhanced with additional geometrical refinement using *GoogleMaps* and the *StreetView* tool. In-field surveys are also conducted to determine the total number of building floors and their usage. Subsequently, this data is structured within the R*hinoceros3D* software with the support of the *Grasshopper* plugin. This step was followed by the parametric evaluation to process the data and build a computational 3D model that helps visualize results for each sample. Lima, Costa, and Rosa (2020) described the methodological procedures adopted, having been improved in Costa, Nome, and Queiroz (2023).

We choose Parametric Urban Design as our primary technique, applying algorithmic thinking and computation to evaluate and design urban spaces. Parametric Urban Design allows for high adaptability and complexity in creating and understanding urban environments, which proves valuable in exploring urban configurations (Batty, 2013; Burry, 2011; Kolarevic, 2003; Menges & Ahlquist, 2011; Oxman & Oxman, 2014; Picon, 2010; Schumacher, 2009). By emphasizing continuous modification and adaptation, this technique aligns with the goals of decolonial urban design, promoting flexibility and context sensitivity.

The study applied three key indexes: (a) IUMTe index developed by Silva (2021) and refined by Costa et al. (2023); (b) *Mixed-use Index* (MXI) developed by Hoek (2008); and (c) *SpaceMatrix* indicators developed by Berghauser Pont & Haupt (2010), which includes the *Ground Space Index* (GSI), *Floor Space Index* (FSI), and *Open Space Ratio* (OSR) (Berghauser Pont & Haupt, 2010).

The IUMTe index establishes a mathematical relationship between residential and non-residential built areas in a sample. It aims to assess the diversity of uses and the impact of each street to understand the neighborhood's overall livability and walkability. Considering only the street level, the IUMTe index provides insights into the mix of use along the streets, a crucial aspect of urban design since the ground floor is often the most accessible and visible part of a building, contributing significantly to the character and functionality of a street and the surrounding area.

The MXI index establishes the relationship between the total residential and non-residential built areas within a sample considering the entire built area, including all floors above the ground level. It aims to verify the balance of different land uses in the area, considering the total floor number. Hoek (2008) states that when the ratio between the entire residential and non-residential areas approaches the balance, the urban diversity is close to the ideal, which means a higher diversity of uses in the area is desirable because it indicates a well-integrated and dynamic urban environment.

The *SpaceMatrix* density indicators support understanding the urban space's physical form and configuration and present a thorough picture of urban density, form, and land use, enabling an in-depth analysis of urban livability, sustainability, and the potential for densification. The indicators are the *Ground Space Index* (GSI), *Floor Space Index* (FSI), and the *Open Space Ratio* (OSR) (Berghauser Pont & Haupt, 2010). The GSI measures urban density at the ground level. It is calculated by establishing a ratio between the built and total areas. The FSI measures the total gross floor area relative to the total land area, providing an overview of the floor space used in an urban area and giving insights into the potential capacity for further development. Lastly, the OSR quantifies the proportion of open spaces relative to the total area, highlighting the availability and distribution of open space.

Figure 1 summarizes the methodological procedures, and Figure 2 shows the evaluation process on one of the samples.
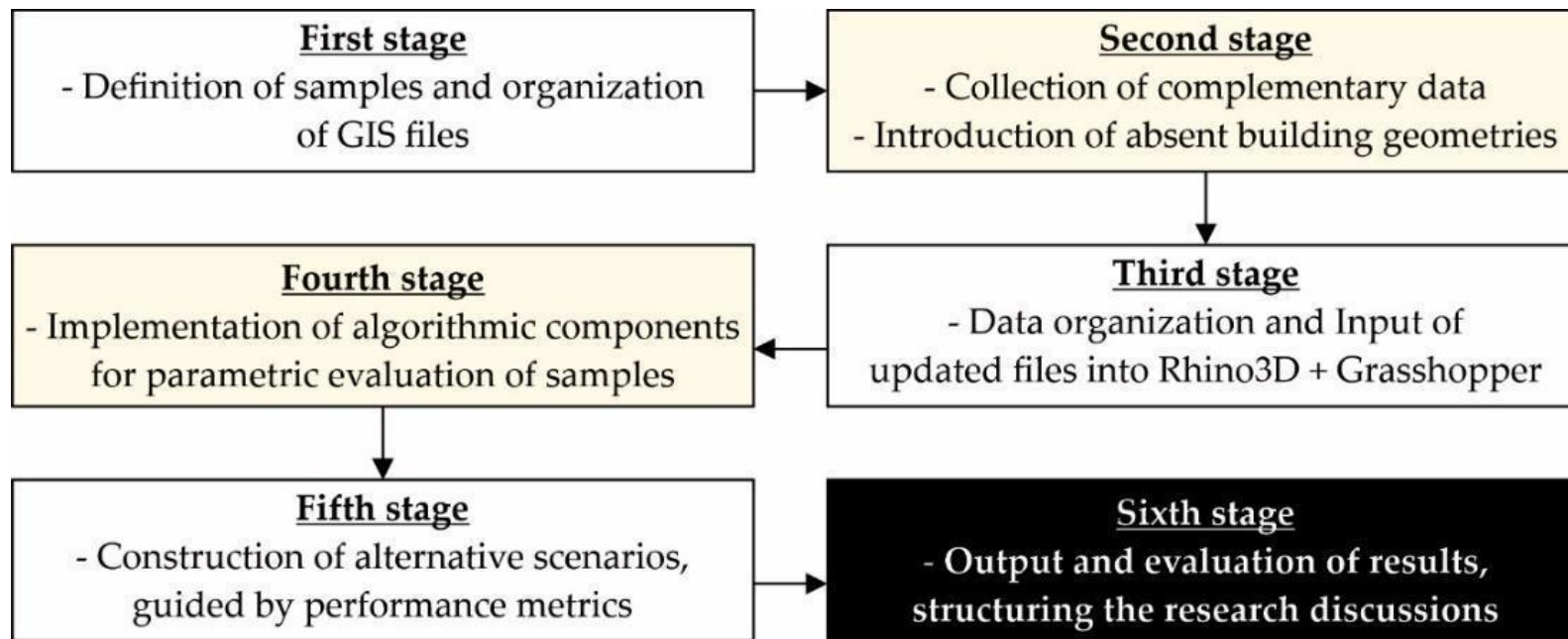
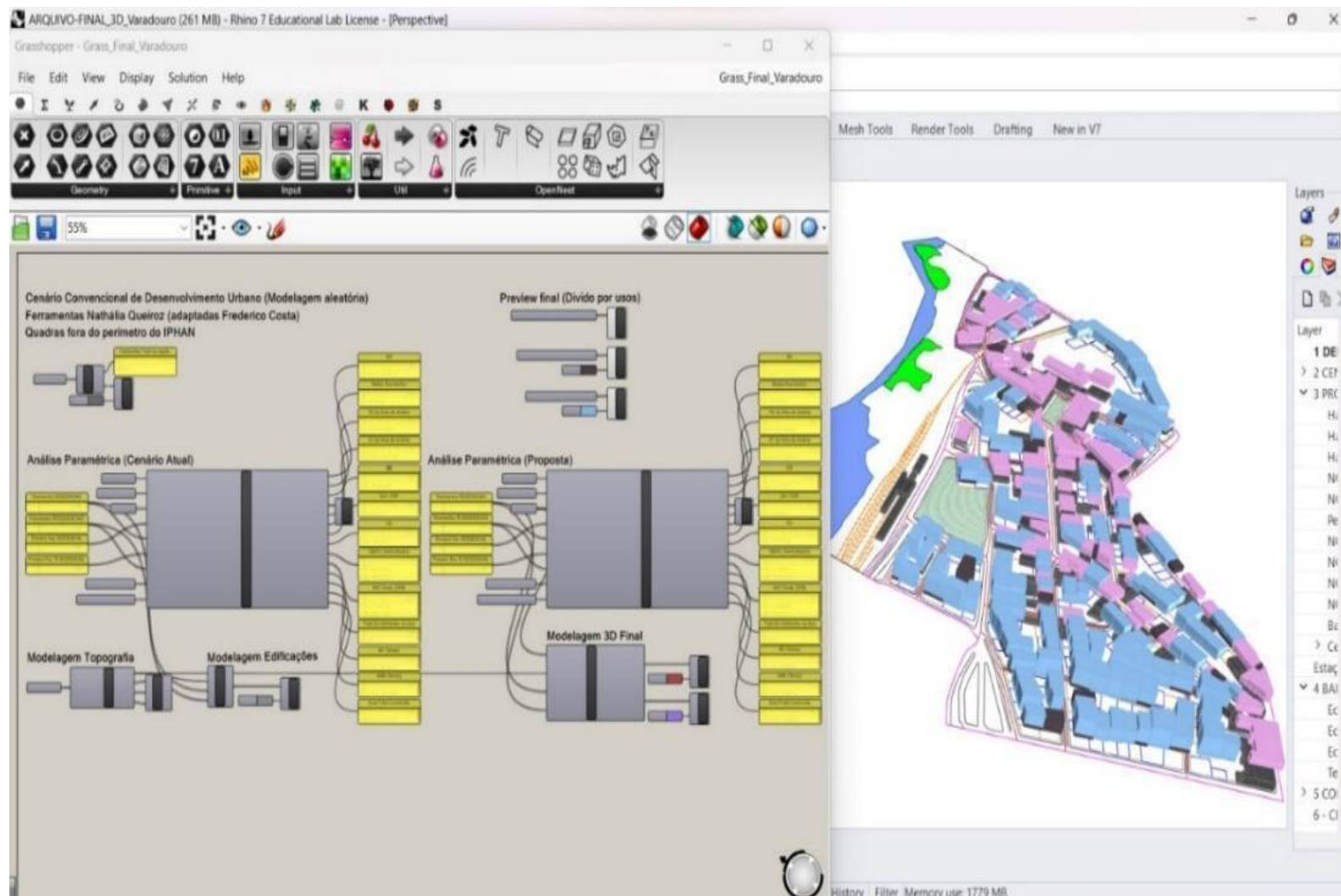**Fig.1**: Methodological procedures organized by stage. The authors, 2023.

Fig.2: Parametric evaluation (Rhino + Grass) in progress on one of the samples. The authors, 2023.

3   Decolonial urban design and the role of computational approaches: A Short review

Urbanization in Latin America has intensely influenced the socioeconomic dynamics of the region. Davis (2006) critically examines the growth of informal settlements and slums, highlighting urban populations' socioeconomic challenges and delving into the root causes and consequences of slum proliferation. The author emphasizes the interconnectedness of urbanization, poverty, and inequality, shedding light on the complex dynamics shaping these marginalized environments. Hardoy, Mitlin, and Satterthwaite (2001) explores the environmental challenges of rapid urbanization in Latin America, emphasizing the urgent need for integrating environmental considerations into urban design processes. Their study addresses urban growth's harmful impacts on natural resources, ecosystems, and climate change, underscoring the importance of sustainable urban development strategies.

Gilbert (1998) focuses on the historical, social, political, and economic factors that have shaped urban development across Latin America, examining critical trends and patterns in the region's urbanization. The author clarifies the complex dynamics of city growth, marked by migration from rural to urban areas, the emergence of informal settlements, and urban governance and planning challenges. Martine and McGranahan (2010) also focus on historical perspectives on urbanization in Latin American cities, providing insights into these cities' unique trajectories and urban dynamics examining migration patterns, economic development, and urban governance. Both works highlight the connections between urbanization and poverty, inequality, environmental sustainability, and social justice.

Portes and Roberts (2006) investigate neoliberal economic policies' role in shaping Latin American cities' urbanization patterns. By delving into the political and economic dynamics of the neoliberal era, the authors expose the relationships between market-oriented reforms, urban governance, and the spatial and social transformations that occurred in cities across the region. Rolnik (2015) delves into the specific urban policies and practices that have emerged in Brazil's urban context, exploring the dynamics between global finance and housing policies to illustrate how the colonization of land and housing has profoundly influenced urban landscapes. The author investigates the transformation of housing access, emphasizing how financial and speculative interests have taken precedence over the fundamental housing requirements of lower-income communities.

Shifting the urban focus towards inhabitants requires understanding urban design's social dimensions. Panerai, Castex, and Depaule (2004) highlight the importance of more flexible, user-centered design approaches. Gehl (2010) emphasizes human-scale urban design, supporting urban environments, prioritizing pedestrians and community interaction, and creating functional, engaging, and enjoyable spaces for those who inhabit and use them. Engaging and challenging the dominant urbanization models opens the door to more sustainable and socially equitable urban environments. The decolonial thought, anchored in the understanding that modernity and coloniality form an indivisible theoretical pair, critically examines and exposes the enduring structures of domination by the North American and European countries. Even following the colonial period's conclusion, these domination structures continue to impact former colonies today (Escobar, 2007; Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 2000).

Escobar (2007) questions the hegemony of these countries' notion of modernity in its various formulations, placing the decolonial discussion from different disciplinary fields at local, regional, national, and global scales. The author critically assesses the planetary diffusion and imposition of the North American and European conception of knowledge and its many derivatives and applications. The cultural imposition creates a biased idea of knowledge and its production, dissemination, circulation, and legitimation modes. This process discredits other forms of knowledge and critical voices, thus perpetuating the imperial and colonial ideas that govern the modern and colonial world system, as characterized by Quijano (2000) and Wallerstein (2004). These critiques represent essential shifts in understanding and addressing the persistence of colonial frameworks and their implications in our realities.

Rogers (1997) has long emphasized the role of compact cities in fostering sustainability, pointing to the efficiency and potential of dense urban spaces to promote more integrated, resource-efficient landscapes. Higher urban density can lead to more efficient use of resources, reduction in transportation emissions, and more significant social interaction (Newman & Kenworthy, 2015). This spatial configuration can drive economic growth, enhance public transportation, and create more liveable spaces (Glaeser & Kahn, 2018). Berghauser Pont and Haupt (2010) have explored the correlations between urban density, land use, and spatial form, supporting that thoughtful density strategies can significantly contribute to sustainable urban development. In compact cities, overlapping uses offer

suitable urban infrastructure, which is essential to achieving sustainable urban areas (Calthorpe, 2010; Jacobs, 1961). Jacobs (1961) pioneered the idea of mixed-use neighborhoods and human-scale design to foster a vibrant and sustainable neighborhood, providing a range of amenities and services for the residents while accommodating commercial, retail, and public spaces to cater to the population's needs (Calthorpe, 2010; Chakrabarti, 2013; Hoek, 2008).

Schumacher (2009) articulates parametricism as a global style, enabling designers to create more expressive and nuanced solutions. This approach synergizes well with Kolarevic's (2003) insights into integrating design and manufacturing, revolutionizing traditional construction processes. Burry (2011) emphasizes the critical role of scripting and programming in architectural design, aligning with Menges and Ahlquist's (2011) exploration of computational design thinking as a gateway to innovative methods and techniques. Oxman and Oxman (2014) provide a theoretical foundation by examining the profound impact of digital technology on architectural thought and practice, while Picon (2010) underscores the cultural transformation embedded within this digital shift.

4   Case Studies

The Varadouro neighborhood (Figure 3) was taken as a sample because it contains part of the historic center of João Pessoa. This region was essential in the consolidation of the city in the last century, concentrating businesses and residences, having lost prestige thanks to the advance of urbanization towards the city's waterfront. The historic center's emptying and loss of prestige, with several abandoned or underutilized historical buildings, can be justified by a lack of urban proposals with coherent spatial readjustment given its urban fabric, characteristic of the period of Portuguese colonization.

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Fig.3: Part of the Varadouro Neighborhood. Reprinted from "Iphaep suspende embargo a obras no Porto do Capim após recomendação de João Azevêdo" by Jornal da Paraíba (2023). Source Rizemberg Felipe, 2019.

The Bancários neighborhood (Figure 04) was chosen because it is essential for the urban structure of João Pessoa, with a central role in the southern part of the city. The neighborhood is experiencing rapid growth and increased pressure for more density, increasing the impact on its existing infrastructure. Thus, it is perceptible that the neighborhood was not structured to meet its current commercial demand, and the expansion process lacks coherent urban planning.

Fig.4: Part of the Bancários Neighborhood. Reprinted from "Prefeitura de João Pessoa lança projeto do Parque das Três Ruas nos Bancários" by Portal Correio (2023). Source: Sérgio Lucena/Secom-JP/Divulgação, 2022.

4.1   Case Study 1: The Varadouro neighborhood results

Varadouro is a neighborhood where the current legal framework prohibits major interventions due to several heritage laws. We explored the challenges in Varadouro and how legal constraints define urban forms and density patterns. The study's question was: What is needed to achieve better density and diversity in the neighborhood?

We evaluated the neighborhood configuration and then created a predictive scenario of how urbanization would advance, with a region immobilized by heritage laws and part of the neighborhood surrendering to a mix of North American and European city models. Scenario 01 (Figure 5, Scenario 01) has good results if we unthinkingly evaluate only the metrics, disregarding the spatial quality: the average of the performance metrics used was attractive, but this was not reflected in the spatial quality, as a more aggressive urbanization model influenced the numbers in part of the neighborhood. Finally, we designed a proposal to balance the indicators and achieve better spatial quality (Figure 5, Scenario 02). Table 1 shows the objective results found in each scenario.

Varadouro Neighborhood					Varadouro - Scenario 01					Varadouro - Scenario 02				
Urban Diversity		**Built Density**			**Urban Diversity**		**Built Density**			**Urban Diversity**		**Built Density**		
IUMTe	MXI	GSI	FSI	OSR	IUMTe	MXI	GSI	FSI	OSR	IUMTe	MXI	GSI	FSI	OSR
0.12	0.09	0.45	0.70	0.63	0.50	0.70	0.56	2.89	0.2	0.72	0.45	0.38	1.35	0.28
Populational Density					**Populational Density**					**Populational Density**				
Gross	Net	Inhabitants in the area			Gross	Net	Inhabitants in the area			Gross	Net	Inhabitants in the area		
21.21	24.24	752			437.55	500	15,510			407.68	585.92	14,451		

Tabela 1: Varadouro neighborhood results. Source: The authors, 2023.
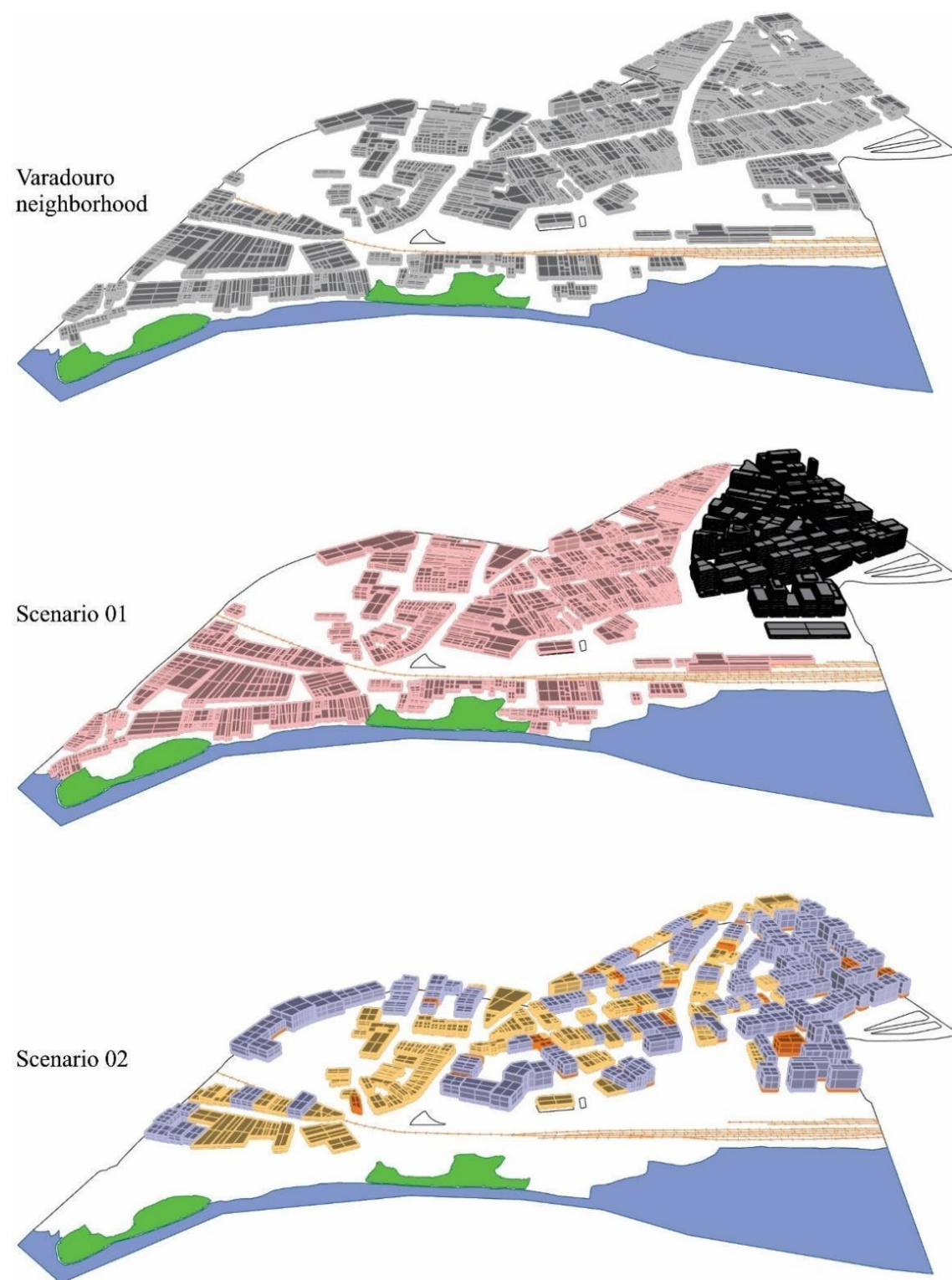
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Fig.5: 3D models of the Varadouro neighborhood. The first model presents the neighborhood in its current state. Scenario 01 simulates the advance of the traditional urban growth model, highlighting the difference between the historic zone (Pink buildings) and the royal state neo-liberal city model (Grey buildings). Scenario 02 is an alternative design solution proposed by the authors, emphasizing metrics and performance in the entire sample. Scenario 02 achieves better results by mixing historic and new buildings (yellow and purple). Source: The authors, 2023.

When evaluating the results, it is possible to notice that the neighborhood has 45% of the land occupied (GSI 0.45), with a low verticalization (FSI 0.70) and a high degree of open spaces in the region (OSR 0.63). Regarding the diversity of uses, only 9% of the total area of the Varadouro neighborhood is used as housing (MXI 0.09), representing 12% of all ground floors in the sample (IUMTe 0.12). Consequently, the neighborhood has only 752 inhabitants.

Scenario 01 shows that occupied ground space was improved (GSI 0.56) since it is a conventional urban growth scenario based on a high verticalization model (FSI 0.2.89). Regarding diversity, the numbers indicate a significant change in uses, with 70% of the total constructed area being now residential (MXI 0.70), representing half of all ground floors in the sample (IUMTe 0.50). As part of the neighborhood was excessively verticalized in this scenario, it is possible to notice an impact on the open spaces (OSR 0.2). We reach a total of 15510 inhabitants in the region. This result may seem optimistic, but the restricted number of verticalized blocks puts excessive pressure on the urban infrastructure, which can be problematic if the region does not support it.

Seeking to maintain the advances in metrics and improve spatial quality uniformly, Scenario 2 sought to moderately increase land use compared to the current state, raising it to 38% (GSI 0.38). The index of open spaces indicates a smaller number of voids, representing uniformity in density, even with a drop in FSI (FSI 1.35). The values for the diversity indexes were again adjusted (IUMTe 0.72 / MXI 0.45), representing an area with 45% of the total residential built area, representing 72% of the uses at street level. We reached 14,451 inhabitants distributed in the neighborhood, generating potential for social interaction in the sample and securing a relevant number of people to encourage local commerce.

4.2   Case Study 2: The Bancários neighborhood results

The Bancários neighborhood deals with a different context: a latent urban expansion movement, with intense pressure from the market for a more permissive set of laws aiming at forced densification. When evaluating this sample, the research found a need to recalibrate the adopted mixed-use indexes, given the building typologies often found in the region, with the ground floor often used as a garage. To sustain the discussion of decolonizing performance metrics, we developed the IUMTec and MXIc: adapted versions of the urban mixed-use indexes, which do not consider uninhabited floors in residential buildings (leisure areas or garages, for example). The study's question is: What would happen if we materialized the maximum constructive potential currently allowed?

We evaluated the neighborhood and then created a predictive scenario for its spontaneous growth (Figure 6, Scenario 01). Thus, we modeled the neighborhood at its current maximum potential (Figure 6, Scenario 02), and finally, we modeled the modification proposal imposed by the real estate market (Figure 6, Scenario 03).

Bancários Neighborhood

Urban Diversity				Built Density			Populational Density		
IUMTe	IUMTec	MXI	MXIc	GSI	FSI	OSR	Gross	Net	Inhabitants
0.83	0.69	0.90	0.81	0.24	0.47	1.30	124.12	224.86	27,180

Bancários Neighborhood – Scenario 01: predicted growth

Urban Diversity				Built Density			Populational Density		
IUMTe	IUMTec	MXI	MXIc	GSI	FSI	OSR	Gross	Net	Inhabitants
0.82	0.53	0.89	0.75	0.31	0.74	0.74	181.47	328.75	39,738

Bancários Neighborhood – Scenario 02: current max. densification potential

Urban Diversity				Built Density			Populational Density		
IUMTe	IUMTec	MXI	MXIc	GSI	FSI	OSR	Gross	Net	Inhabitants
0.85	0.16	0.92	0.72	0.36	1.28	0.38	327.43	593.16	71,700

Bancários Neighborhood – Scenario 03: market proposal for a new max. densification potential
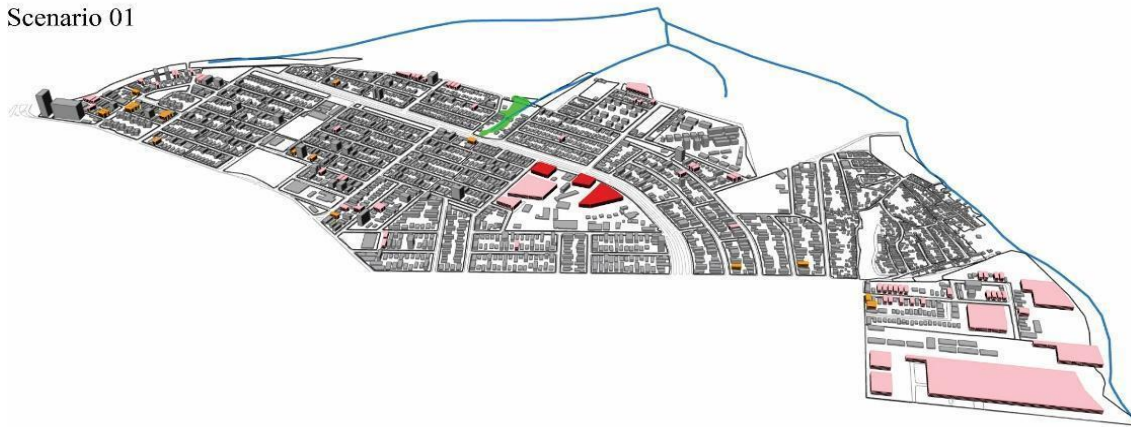
Urban Diversity				Built Density			Populational Density		
IUMTe	IUMTec	MXI	MXIc	GSI	FSI	OSR	Gross	Net	Inhabitants
0.85	0.16	0.94	0.86	0.36	3.12	0.16	1,042.77	1,889.04	228,342

Tabela 2: Bancários neighborhood results. Source: The authors, 2023.

Bancários
neighborhood
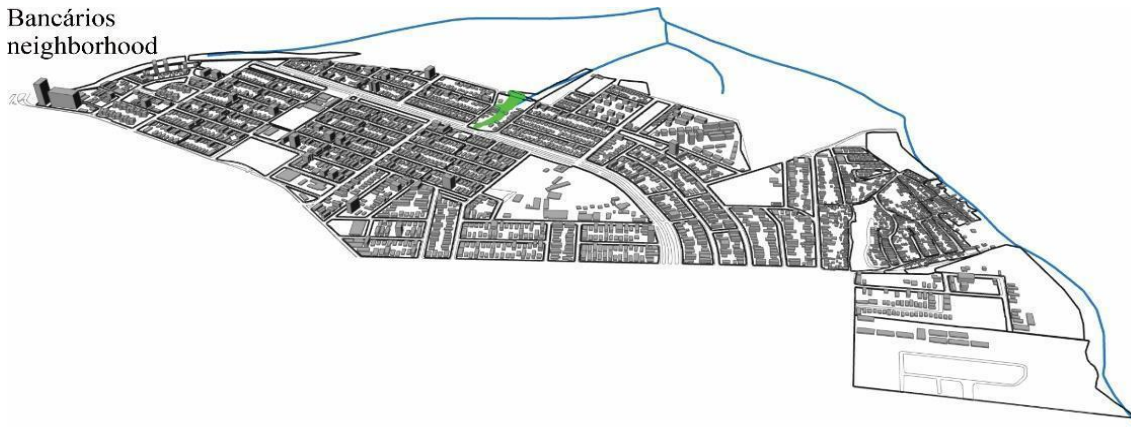
Scenario 01

Scenario 02

Scenario 03

Fig.6: 3D models of the Bancários neighborhood. Scenario 01: Predictive urban growth; Scenario 02: Maximum verticalization currently allowed; Scenario 03: Simulating the impacts of the maximum verticalization proposed by the royal estate and building companies. Source: The authors, 2023.

The neighborhood has 24% of the land occupied (GSI 0.24), with a low verticalization (FSI 0.47) and a high degree of open spaces (OSR 1.30). 90% of the total area of the Varadouro neighborhood is used as housing (MXI 0.90), representing 83% of all ground floors in the sample (IUMTe 0.83). Applying the adapted indices, which exclude uninhabited residential areas, the numbers change: only 72% of the total area of the neighborhood is used as housing (MXIc 0.90), occupying 16% of all ground floors in the sample (IUMTe 0.16). The neighborhood has 27,180 inhabitants.

Scenario 1 reveals that 31% of the land is occupied (GSI 0.31), with the emergence of some buildings with more than four floors (FSI 0.74), generating a drop in the index of open spaces (OSR 0.74). In this scenario, the neighborhood would remain predominantly residential, with 89% of the total area used as housing (MXI 0.89), representing 82% of all ground floors in the sample (IUMTe 0.82). With the adapted indexes, only 75% of the neighborhood's total area seems to be used as housing (MXIc 0.75), occupying 53% of all ground floors in the sample (IUMTec 0.53). In this scenario, the neighborhood would have 39,738 inhabitants.

Exploring the current maximum densification potential, Scenario 2 increased land use to 36% (GSI 0.36). The index of open spaces is significantly impacted in this scenario (OSR 0.38) due to filling all available plots with four-story buildings (FSI 1.28). Regarding diversity, the neighborhood would remain predominantly residential (MXI 0.92), significantly increasing the number of residences on the street level (IUMTe 0.85). The adapted indexes show a substantial drop in numbers, revealing that 72% of the neighborhood would be residential areas, with only 16% of the areas at street level. This result means that most residential buildings give up the ground floor to build garages, which means a considerable loss of urban vitality given the concept of active facades. In this maximum potential scenario, the neighborhood would have 71,700 inhabitants.

Finally, the study evaluated the proposal that the real estate market and some financial agents intend to approve for the sample. Scenario 3 has the same land occupation ratio as Scenario 2 (GSI 0.36). Thanks to an exaggerated verticalization, there is a high impact on the Open Spaces Index (OSR 0.16) and a substantial increase in the FSI (3.12). Diversity is also strongly impacted in this scenario, with the total use of residential areas equal to 94% (MXI 0.94), representing 85% of the built-up areas at street level (IUMTe 0.85). With the adapted indexes, it is possible to notice that only 86% of the areas are inhabited (MXIc 0.86), representing 16% of the occupied areas at street level (IUMTec 0.16), equal to Scenario 2. In this scenario, the neighborhood will accommodate a total of 228,342 inhabitants. That is nearly a sixfold increase in the total number of people currently living in the area, putting pressure on the same infrastructure. Scenario 3 has disturbing results regarding urban spatial quality, and the adaptation of the indicators adopted by this research allowed this data discrepancy to be visualized.

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5   Conclusions

The research evaluated two samples in Brazil, promoting discussions about the urbanization model adopted in João Pessoa as examples of recurrent scenarios in Brazilian cities. The Parametric Urban Design technique proved a powerful tool in urban design approaches, allowing a more contextual understanding of local conditions, thereby challenging conventional planning paradigms in a decolonial framework. In this sense, it is possible to discuss the impact of these changes by testing outcomes of typical legislation that construction companies and real estate developers lobbied using well-known urban design metrics. In the case of Bancários, the new FSI of 3.12, proposed by real estate developers, instead of the existing FSI of 1.28, would lead to a potential 840% population increase in the neighborhood. Without a clear understanding of the impact on infrastructure, mixed-use demands in terms of employment generation, and impact on mobility, giving in to such pressures is a recipe for disaster. Results are well known in cities such as São Paulo, Buenos Aires, and Santiago, as well as throughout Latin America.

Metrics such as the IUMTe and IUMTec account for distortions in the traditional mix-use metrics, considering building typologies where the ground floor is used as garage space, a standard solution in Brazil. The impact of such typologies in reducing street livelihood is an essential factor in urban design that needs to be considered in other urban design models. Since adjusting computational tools is a designer's task, adapting or creating metrics sensitive to Latin issues became accessible, enabling an inclusive and democratic planning process to empower local communities in shaping their surroundings. For us, this shift towards more human-centered and context-sensitive urban design aligned with decolonial thinking and promoting spatial justice, cultural recognition, and social equity.

We demonstrated the importance of structured approaches in representing simulated urban scenarios through parametric modeling. The Varadouro example questions the maintenance of the heritage-based limitations that result in an abandoned city center. The abandonment of such areas results from generational disinterest, given the lack of opportunities. Affective memories within cities are constructed in places that offer civic and social growth opportunities. Thus, increasing density and mix use could change the current preservation approach from a top-down, law-driven model to a bottom-up, citizen-led model. Although the results generated significant data and information related to urban spatialization in both samples, we identified a limitation in how this information is consumed in the real world. The absence of tools that convert data extracted through parametric evaluation into helpful information presented in a simple, well-structured, and easy-to-understand manner represents an obstacle to improving the discussions. This resource must be provided to support policymakers and designers in making informed and coherent decisions highlighted as a gap.

As a further study, this model can support a detachment from traditional top-down planning methodologies that often prioritize market and economic goals over human well-being and cultural identity, reinterpreting urban performance metrics and indicating how they can be adapted to develop Latin-based urban design. Understanding the existing and unrealized construction potentials creates an even playing field between city planners and traditional lobbyists for indiscriminate speculative demands. Developing an urban design model that shares its multifaceted outcomes with all actors involved in the city planning process can balance the power of decision and offset public and private investment in urban infrastructure. This model must simplify the visualization of the constructive potential differential, allowing a clearer understanding of any absence or excess of potential, leading to more effective and informed city planning decisions. Therefore, this work's contribution lies in suggesting a more efficient method of presenting objective information, aiming at facilitating its consumption and practical application. This conclusion paves the way for future investigations on methods and tools that can improve the representation and understanding of data in similar contexts.

Acknowledgements

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