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Deny Anarchic Spaces and Places: An Anarchist
Critique of Mosaic-Statist Metageography
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times in a wide range (historically, geographically and anthropologically/sociologically). An anarchistic metageography has to accomplish two important goals: to visualize anarchic/ist space-time and places, and to criticize the geography of dominion. Both aims are inseparable.

In this direction, the works of Tarrius (2002) and Collins (2007) — to cite just two examples — are based on the same ideas: first, the state territory is not a tight space and second, the state is an invasive territorial actor that interrupts the heterogeneity to impose uniformity. Both of them analyse the "illegal" flows that cross state space and the "new nomads" of the informal economy. In another sense, Alba (2006) proposes to *subvert* as a way to produce new metageographical expressions and representations that were all conceivable but not imagined until then. Many proposals from radical cartography or subversive toponymy provide useful examples of this. Their aim is to highlight the dominion and power relations on geographic knowledge production and reproduction.

The next step is clear. It is necessary to define an anarchic/ist metageography that allows not only conceiving but understanding the anarchic/ist spaces and places. These territories have existed and exist everywhere. The work is to synthesise their territorial dimension and frameworks.

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Abstract

This article explores how anarchic/anarchist spaces/places are denied/rejected. This rejection is due to, first, an ideological rejection of anarchism and, second, a metageographical impossibility. With regards to this second rejection, it is shown that the current hegemonic conception of metageography, the so-called mosaic-statist metageography (whereby space is divided into territorial units; whereby territorial units are hierarchically ordered; etc.) is related to issues of power and domination. Metageography (which is a set of geographical structures and frameworks through which space is conceived) must be reconstructed according to anarchist principles that make anarchic space once again conceivable while simultaneously criticizing all spaces of domination.

Introduction

Anarchic/ist experiences and projects have always had a remarkable territorial dimension and this is beginning to be widely recognized (or conceived). The territorial dimension not only refers to geographical localization but also to the capacity and potential to construct "spaces" and "places", outside of dominion relations space (like statist space), based on egalitarian and anti-authoritarian relations, non-hierarchical social practices, collective and individual autonomy, cooperative structures, etc. So anarchic/ist spaces and places can be defined as the (constructed) territories based on and due to anarchist principles and peoples, much like stateless peoples spaces, libertarian communities, social centres, *municipios libres,* Spanish Revolution collectivizations, Temporary Autonomous Zones (TAZs), *situations construites,* parties, revolts, etc., everywhere and anytime. These are the "anarcho-territories" as *Anarco-Territoris* (a journal of anarchist territorial thought) has named them. In this sense, *anarchy* and *anarchism* have a broader vision than the more traditional, common and restricted sense, proposed by some anarchist scholars (Shukaitis, 2009; Rebollo et al., 2009).

For many people (perhaps excluding anarchists) anarchic/ist spaces and places do not fit within the current hegemonic geographical structures and frameworks (in a World ordered by States and capitalism), that we call the mosaic-statist metageography. As a result, anarchic/ist spaces and places are not understood, much less conceived. The mosaic-statist metageography (produced and imposed by States and their apparatuses and allies including government, school, mass media, etc.) has hindered the conception and visualization of anarchic places since XIXth. But today a new metageography is in development.

Despite the ideologies of geographical frameworks (used everyday from the most common conversations to political and scientific speeches and concepts), metageography has been paid little attention from within the distinctive anarchist perspective. Nevertheless some anarchists are concerned with this question. The Turkish post-anarchists Öğdül & Evren (2002) and Evren (2006) have argued that there is a relationship between mosaic-statist metageography, eurocentrism, capitalism and globalization.

Metageography: Making Space Conceivable

Before characterizing the mosaic-statist metageography it is necessary to define the very concept of "metageography". There are very few different meanings in academic literature. Here I adopt the definition provided by Lewis & Wigen (1997) and Taylor (2003), and Raffestin (1978, 1983). Metageography describes the internally consistent set of spatial structures or conceptual frameworks through which individuals and groups conceive, order, and interpret space and/or the spatial dimension of the world, the cosmos and/or the universe. Some examples of spatial structures or frameworks include the following concepts: "region," "country," "continent," "culture," "climate" or "eco-region"; the dualistic division between rural and urban spaces; the cardinal points (North, South, West and East). It is important to think these concepts through with all of the ideas and values that are often associated with them because they set political priorities which concern real and imaginary space. In this sense,

7	Neutral nomenclature	To avoid ideologically charged toponymy.
8	Historical specificity	To recognize that territorial units do not constitute timeless entities; to recognize historical contingency.
9	Contextual specificity	To avoid import territorial units into contexts where they do not apply; to construct units adequate to every context (crosscutting and overlapping).
10	Creative cartographic vision	To represent efficiently unconventional territorial units; instead of assuming contiguity, to visualize discontinuity.

Criteria for a Critical Metageography. Source: Adaptation from Lewis & Wigen (1997)

Paradoxically, reformers such as Lewis and Wigen (1997) adopt a mosaic-statist metageographical perspective to define the new territorial structure. They consider that the main problem with metageographical abandonment "is the danger of losing our ability to talk about the world effectively."

2. Construction of Antiauthoritarian Metageographies

The second action involves the construction and use of a new pattern (and content and meaning) which breaks up mosaic-statist metageography, and also includes some previous actions (critical criteria). From this position it is possible to define an antiauthoritarian metageography based on anarchistic principles (freedom, autonomy, solidarity, equality, etc) and make conceivable anarchic space and

Secondly, Lewis and Wigen (1997: 194) specify and define "ten criteria for a metageographical reform, aiming at the creation of more supple and sophisticated frameworks". The criteria (Table 1) are related to commensurability, geographical determinism, ethnocentrism, and historical and ideological biases, etc., of mosaic-statist metageography. Some criteria put attention on the very roots of statism, but in general they not strongly challenge its dominion.

	Criteria	**Description**
1	Combating cartographic ethocentrism	To assign the same rank in spatial hierarchy to comparable territorial units.
2	Combating geographical determinism	To remove the notion that cultural territorial units correspond to natural ones.
3	Typological honesty	To delimit territorial units on a basis of consistent criteria (justified topology) or, if not, acknowledging clearly (acknowledge topology).
4	Mastery of the metageographical canon	To use and understand geographical taxonomy adequately and clearly.
5	Sociospatial precision	To avoid inaccurate conflations of social, economic and cultural phenomena; to avoid generalizations.
6	Definitional integrity	To remove the notion of correspondence between cultural and political territorial units; to avoid the naturalization of geopolitical units.

Criteria for a Critical Metageography. Source: Adaptation from Lewis & Wigen (1997)

Toldrà (2010) has explained how Catholic Heaven and Hell were constructed in the Middle Ages: both of them were a perfect copy of feudal territorial and social organization.

Historically, the first metageographies were developed at the precise moment that Humans became conscious of the world around them and of themselves as beings within it. This was when the world became conceptualized and communicated through any kind of language (a set and system of signs and symbols). Concepts such as "space," "world," or "universe," among others, have been nothing more than metageographical frameworks through which *space* as a real object has been conceived. For instance, in the Modern European worldview "space" is understood as an unlimited, continuous and three-dimensional environment that contains physical objects.

Metageography allows us to think and talk about space and spatial relationships and, in turn, it allows us to produce advancements in geographical knowledge. However this possibility is limited. Metageography also fixes the conceptual and mental limits in which *the world* and the terms through which to think about it are possible. It "tells us" what spatial processes or elements we must observe, as well as the way in which these processes and elements must be observed and ordered. In short, metageographical structures impose an *in* and an *out* which it makes possible within established terms and disables anything which goes beyond its limits. In other words, it disables other possible metageographies.

In another sense metageography is both (a) an instrument (or a means) through which to develop goals and actions, and (b) an environment in which to develop them.

1. Metagragraphy (Instrument): Functions

As an instrument, the basic metageographical function is to conceive of the space and the spatial relationships that exist between humans and other elements contained in space. From this point of view other specific functions can be defined:

- To orient space: to place reference points, cardinal points, etc.
- To understand space: to explain spatial phenomena and elements (particularly physical, meteorological, seismic, forms of relief, vegetation, etc); to predict spatial phenomena.
- To order space: to classify and structure hierarchical spaces and places.
- To interpret space: to provide ethical, economic, symbolic, etc., values to space and/or to its elements.
- To communicate in and about space: to give place names (*toponyms*).
- To identify: to associate identities with places.
- To measure space: to count space and spatial elements.
- To dominate and control space: to manage space (human and physical elements), to exploit its resources.

2. Metageography (Environment): Components

As an environment, a metageography has three components:

- Pattern: corresponds to the territorial model through which space and spatial relationships (between actors and spatial elements) are ordered. To make an architectural simile, pattern is like a building.
- Content: corresponds to the characteristics that define space, events and spatial elements and actors. To make an architectural simile, content is what is put inside a building.
- Meaning: corresponds to the interests, ethical, aesthetic, emotion values, prejudices, etc., that are loaded into pattern and content components (or into the building and its content).

Metageography and Power & Dominion: The Mosaic-Statist Metageography

There is an important relationship between metageography and power (& dominion), as is demonstrated by metageographical functions (metageography as an instrument). A metageography is never

etc) — can be raised the possibility of constructing critical metageographies or, as Alba (2006) would say, *free* metageographies. The process of this construction (or, indeed, liberation) implies the removal of metageographical characteristics and the prevention of their reproduction. Some proposals have been made in academic literature. The scope of these differ from author to author, especially based on which component (pattern, content and meaning) and in which grade the proposed actions are performed. Two actions can be defined:

1. To reform mosaic-statist metageography through the application of critic criteria on content and meaning.
2. To construct new metageographies based on antiauthoritarian patterns (together with critic criteria on content and meaning).

1. (Critical) Reform of Mosaic-Statist Metageography

This action is operated especially, but not only, on content and meaning. Reform is based on *critical* criteria that lead to the resolution of some metageographical contradictions and to the improvement of other characteristics. However this process does not question the mosaic and statist patterns. In this regard, Raffestein (1983) and Lewis & Wigen (1997), among other scholars, have made some propositions.

Firstly, Raffestin's (1983) proposal is based on the following conclusion: since any metageographical construction is ideological by definition, there is, therefore, no sense to try to construct a non-ideological metageography. He is in favour of a critical metageography that recognizes the inherent ideology and the non-scientific nature of knowledge produced through metageographical constructions. Despite his critical analysis of the metageographical constructions, Raffestin puts all ideologies at the same level and does not take into account the differences among them. Paradoxically that position leads him into an indirect defence of the metageographical *status quo*.

and unknown spaces are underestimated. Eurocentrism denies the importance of non-European peoples (in geographical and historical terms) and qualifies them only pejoratively (*savage, primitive, uncivilized,* etc).

Classism operates similarly. The oppressed social groups are discriminated and qualified as *outcasts*, *pariahs,* etc.

3. Delimitation and Organization of Anarchic/ist Spaces and Places

Polygonism downplays or denies the spaces and places that can not be clearly delimited and organized territorially. It also rejects those that do not last in space and time. In this sense networks, nomadism, the temporary use of space, invisibility, etc., are despised.

4. The Domination of Anarchic/ist Spaces and Places

Finally, mosaic-statist metageographical arguments silence or distort the authoritarianism and the control, subjugation and domination actions exercised against anarchic/stic peoples and their spaces. Furthermore, those historical events and social and spatial phenomena are reinterpreted according to the hegemonic parameters. Thus anarchic/stic spaces and places are dominated: physically (material domination), metageographically, and metahistorically (the dominion of geographical and historical concepts and knowledge).

Some Conclusions: A Necessary Construction of Anarchic Metageographies

In opposition to the demonstrated metageographical consequences — those that lead to the production of spatial knowledge based on dominion relations (social, cultural, political, economic,

neutral, especially in a socio-spatial context of dominion relations. First of all, it is a social construction (not natural) developed by a particular social group. This group is socially, ideologically and geographically located and imposes its conceptions on other individuals and collectives. As a consequence, its production and reproduction reflects the interests and meanings of that specific territorial actor.

Paraphrasing George Orwell's "He who controls the past controls the future" (*1984*), it can be said that the group who controls metageography (and its construction) controls the territory (with a hegemonic desire and with imposed terms) (Figure 1). This is the case for metageographies constructed by groups that hold dominion of any kind (including political, economical, and religious, among others). These various constructions tend to converge into a single internally consistent metageography while legitimizing the power relationships established by associated groups. Groups are granted the appearance of naturalness, inevitability, ahistoricity, and/or scientism.

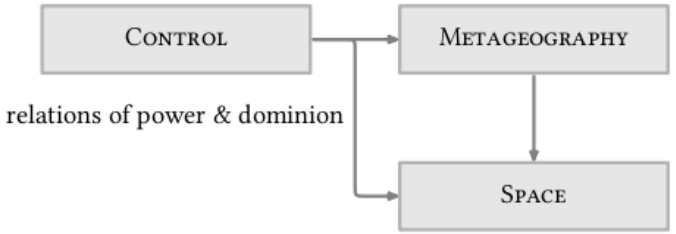

Figure 1: The Relationship between Control and Metageography. Source: Own Elaboration

The majority of pre-modern societies (prior to the fifteenth century) have built *states* (such as Aztec, Inca, Egyptian, Chinese, Greek, Roman, etc.), in this respect they have developed similar metageographical structures. Despite the cultural, social or environmental differences, all of these societies have in common their sedentariness (based on agriculture and urban development) and a clear hierarchical social division. The Neolithic and Urban revolutions had an

enormous impact on metageographical construction. In fact, their metageography covered all functions from spatial orientation to the dominion, control and exploitation of *their* territory and the spaces beyond. Similarly, almost every such society has had a "tendency [. . .] to situate themselves at the centre of their worlds, to exaggerate the extent of their territorial control, and at the same time to envisage one or more zones beyond" (Raaflaub and Talbert, 2010: 4). The metageographical similarities all revolve especially around the pattern component, and can be classified as a "mosaic metageography": ethnocentrism (creating an "us" located in the centre of the world and a "them" in the periphery) and polygonism (creating territorial units delimited, defined, and hierarchically ordered).

Although the current mosaic metageography is hegemonic in modern European society (inherited from Greek, Roman and Christian metageographical structures), there are some differences (in the content and meaning) (Lewis and Wigen, 1997). Recently, it has been exported and imposed globally through colonialism, imperialism and globalization (Evren and Öğdül, 2002). This type of metageography changed significantly since the sixteenth century and has been especially intense in the nineteenth century (that is, during the Modern world-system as Immanuel Wallerstein called it): it has been combined with statist and capitalist ideology, giving rise to what can be called the "mosaic-statist metageography" (Taylor, 2003). This is the hegemonic metageographical structure in the Europeanized world today.

Within the polygonal component, mosaic-statist metageography orders geographical space through parcels, as if it were a mosaic or a puzzle where every piece is an independent entity continuous to the others. Overlapping spaces, spaces without description, void spaces or intermediate spaces are aberrations.

Statist ideology conceives the "state" as the only sovereign entity over a delimited territory. The result is the rise of fractional divisions of the world into clearly demarcated and contiguous pieces, such as states, regions, languages, cultures, ecosystems, etc. Every piece is endowed with unique characteristics. The mosaic-statist metageography has also been combined with other ideas such as eurocentrism and European universalism (i.e., putting Europe, European society,

- Historical: distant in time (pre-modern); no determinant for the historical progressive development; reduction of the historical scope of anarchism.
- Geographical: distant in space; demographically weak; small surface; spatial dispersion; poor connection; ambiguous territorial delimitation; reduction of the geographical scope of anarchism.
- Durational: temporary and ephemeral.
- Anthropological/Sociological: savage, barbarous and uncivilized peoples; small groups; marginal groups.

More extensively:

1. Historical and Geographical Scope of Anarchic/ist Spaces and Places

The combination of the mosaic-statist metageography and the idea of historical progression results in a consideration of *Modernity* as relevant and valid idea/ideal. From this position anarchic experiences are reduced to "anarchism". The official history puts the development of anarchism in nineteenth century and in Europe and North America. So anarchic experiences dated prior to nineteenth century and situated outside Europe are rejected.

Nevertheless anarchic spaces and places have existed "forever" and are "everywhere". These experiences are in accordance with the principles and aspirations of freedom, autonomy and solidarity. This is not the place to review the evidence, but the work of some anarchist geographers, historians and anthropologists about stateless and governmentless peoples can be cited: Kropotkin (1902), Clastres (1972), Barclay (1982), Graeber (2004) or Scott (2009).

2. Relevance of Anarchic/ist Spaces and Places

The distance (geographical, cultural, in time, etc) between the centre and the rest of the world is of a decreasing value. The importance of close and known spaces is exaggerated, while distant

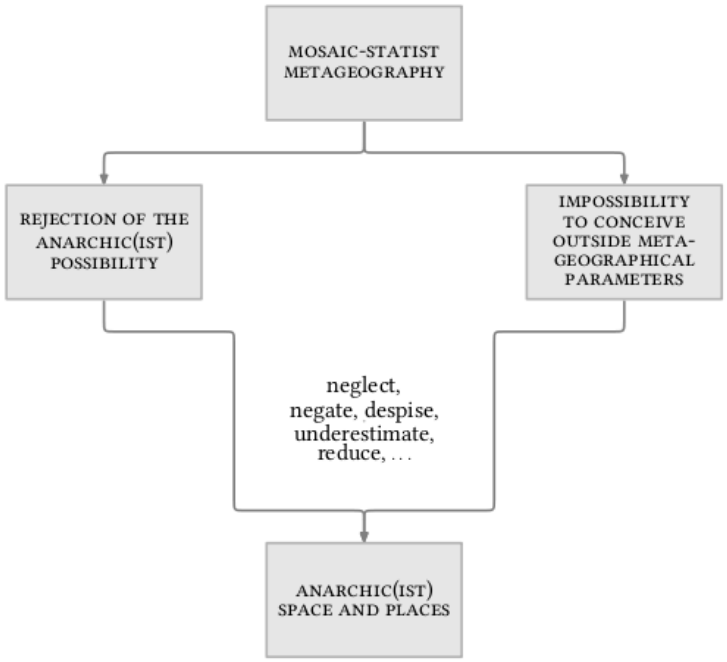

Figure 2: Metageographical Denying of Anarchic Spaces. Source: Own Elaboration

character is actually demanding an example of an "anarchist state": that is, a modern nation-state that, subtracted from the government, nonetheless remained a "harmonious" state like the "normal" states. Secondly, the example also shows the metageographical assumption that power relations are exercised and regulated predominantly by the state. So the *sceptical* character wants only "societies" that replace the state dominion relationship.

According to the internal logic of the mosaic-statist metageography, anarchic spaces and places are not possible because of the following reasons (grouped according to their nature):

and its values at the centre and on a higher hierarchical position), economism and capitalism (i.e., to assign primary importance to economic relations and the dominion of capitalist economy), scientism (i.e., the dominion of physical and biological sciences in the development of spatial metaphors), or the idea of historical progression (i.e., linear and rising evolution of History). As a result of the various combinations, mosaic-statist metageography can be characterized as follows:

a. Space is ordered as a mosaic (or a puzzle), where every piece is an independent entity continuous to others.
b. Territorial delimitation is essential.
c. Any place must be assigned to one territorial unit; therefore, empty spaces (of state power, capital, etc), multiple assignments, overlaps and crosscuts must be removed. Everything must be mapped, named and controlled.
d. There is a territorial sovereignty within an area, as well as a main characteristic, homogeneity or essence (like a State is the only sovereign entity over a territory).
e. Territorial units and phenomena are hierarchically ordered, according to the concentration of power and values associated with everyone.
f. All of the above considerations and their consequences are assumed and supposed to be normal or natural and, therefore, inevitable (whether created by Gods or Nature, and religiously or scientifically demonstrable).

Finally, the production and reproduction of that metageography is accompanied by two more processes (in fact, these are common in other metageographical constructions): naming and graphically representing the space. Through these actions space is provided with names (toponyms and taxons) and images (maps). Both are symbols. Vision and verbalization have a preponderant role (above other senses and forms of expression) in mosaic-statist metageography, unlike other possible metageographies. Their dominance is based on the presumption of an objectivity in which one believes oneself to be able to view and word. In this sense cartography and language

(the set formed with maps, place names, scales, orientations and projections) act as a mechanism and metaphor: to name and draw a space is to convert nothing into a metageographical structure. The paradigmatic example is undoubtedly the political map of the states (and their subdivisions).

Denying Anarchic/ist Space and Places

The geographical imaginary produced by mosaic-statist metageography renders other spatial realities unimaginable. For example, in official history the Hanseatic League or the Malay maritime empire are not considered as States, since its state space was a network of ports and cities (between which there were the sea and other territories) (Scott, 2009). These metageographies face a metahistorical impossibility: the idea of historical progression can enable us to conceive pre-modern states as "states". In a similar sense, Pierre Clastres (1974) showed how stateless societies were impossible to conceive in traditional Western anthropology: "society" was always associated with dominion power relations. Epistemologically, the obstacle faced was due to a Western cultural ethnocentrism and an *exotic* view of non-Western societies.

Anarchic/ist territoriality is neglected, negated, despised, underestimated, or reduced. Every anarchist could say as much from her/his own experience: the objections against anarchy are produced and reproduced in cultural texts and by everyday people. The metageographical positioning toward anarchic spaces is illustrated very clearly by David Graeber (2004: 38–9), who provides what could very well be a typical and plausible conversation between an anarchist and a sceptic:

> **Sceptic**: Well, I might take this whole anarchism idea more seriously if you could give me some reason to think it would work. Can you name me a single viable example of a society which has existed without a government?

> **Anarchist**: Sure. There have been thousands. I could name a dozen just off the top of my head: the bororo, the Baining, the Onondaga, the Wintu, the Ema, the Takkensi, the Vezo, etc.
>
> **Sceptic**: But those are all a bunch of primitives! I'm talking about anarchism in a modern, technological society.
>
> **Anarchist**: Okay, then. There have been all sorts of successful experiments: experiments with worker's self-management, like Mondragon; economic projects based on the idea of the gift economy, like Linux; all sorts of political organizations based on consensus and direct democracy, etc.
>
> **Sceptic**: Sure, sure, but these are small, isolated examples. I'm talking about whole socities.
>
> **Anarchist**: Well, it's not like people haven't tried. Look at the Paris Commune, the revolution in Republican Spain, etc.
>
> **Sceptic**: Yeah, and look what happened to those guys! They all got killed!

The above discussion shows the reasoning derived from mosaic-statist metageography. This is not a simple ideological rejection towards anarchism. The metageographical impossibility of anarchic spaces and places is not only reduced to a conscious ideological rejection, but also to a more profound and widespread rejection and inability to operate unconsciously through mosaic-statist metageography. This relation is schemed as follows (Figure 2).

In this way, metageographical structures act through two mechanisms. First, there is a conscious or unconscious rejection of the anarchic/ist possibility. And secondly, there is the inability or impossibility to conceive of an outside to the given, learned and internalized, metageographical parameters. Related to that, the character of the *sceptic* implies a need for the demonstration of real anarchic/ist practices according to scientist parameters and methods.

As David Graeber explains, the impossibility of conceiving anarchic/ist "societies" (and therefore its spaces and places) in the given example is due to the metageographical correspondence between "society" and "state" — or even "nation-state". So the *sceptical*