

Urban Commoning in Barcelona

What

A constellation of elements that are part of urban commoning processes. That is, the production and reproduction of shared resources, political communities and modes of self-organisation. The elements represented are:

ACTORS gather civic organisations, social and public initiatives, public procedures and transversal political activists.

Organisations - social collectives and institutional agencies.

Initiatives - srojects initiated by social organisations or the city council.

Procedures - social and institutional regulations.

Activators - areas of public interest and action where social organisations and initiatives are able to define their own objectives and strategies, develop the tools to implement them and influence public policies

LINKS establish supporting, enabling and belonging relationships.

Supporting - when one element has contributed to another element.

Enabling - when one element would not have been possible without another.

Belonging - when an element is part of a secondary arrangement or framework.

FIELDS delineate the potential areas of intervention for the strategies, such as: *civic spaces, democratic economy, planning processes, urban projects, cultural production and housing rights.*

Why

Mapping allows unnoticed elements and connections to emerge. Maps are tools for finding things. In this case, to find the actors and connections involved in commoning processes in Barcelona, according to the stories of different urban activists interested in municipalism and commons. Mapping also has a tradition in Spanish activism; from the Strait Map of Indymedia Estrecho, to the MadMadrid cartography of the Observatorio Metropolitano, or the collective counter-cartography of the Culture Forum in Barcelona, social movements have used maps to know the territories they want to navigate.

How

This visualisation is a relational mapping based on interviews conducted for a doctoral research. The maps seeks to identify the connections and resonances between different aspects of the commoning processes taking place in Barcelona at the time. The relational aspect does not require the description of a spatial position, but the representation of forces and intensities along established effects, desires and power relations. Transcripts of the interviews are available in the Open Science Framework project documentation at <https://osf.io/nbp4r/>.

Who

Research by activist and architect Ana Méndez de Andés, based at Sheffield School of Architecture and funded by the Economic and Social Research Council White Rose Doctoral Training Partnership. .

When

Interviews took place between November-December 2021 about processes developed since 2015. The map was completed in February 2024.

Legend

ACTORS

Organisations

Initiatives

Procedures

Activators

LINKS

Contributes to

Is part of

Enables

FIELDS

Civic Spaces

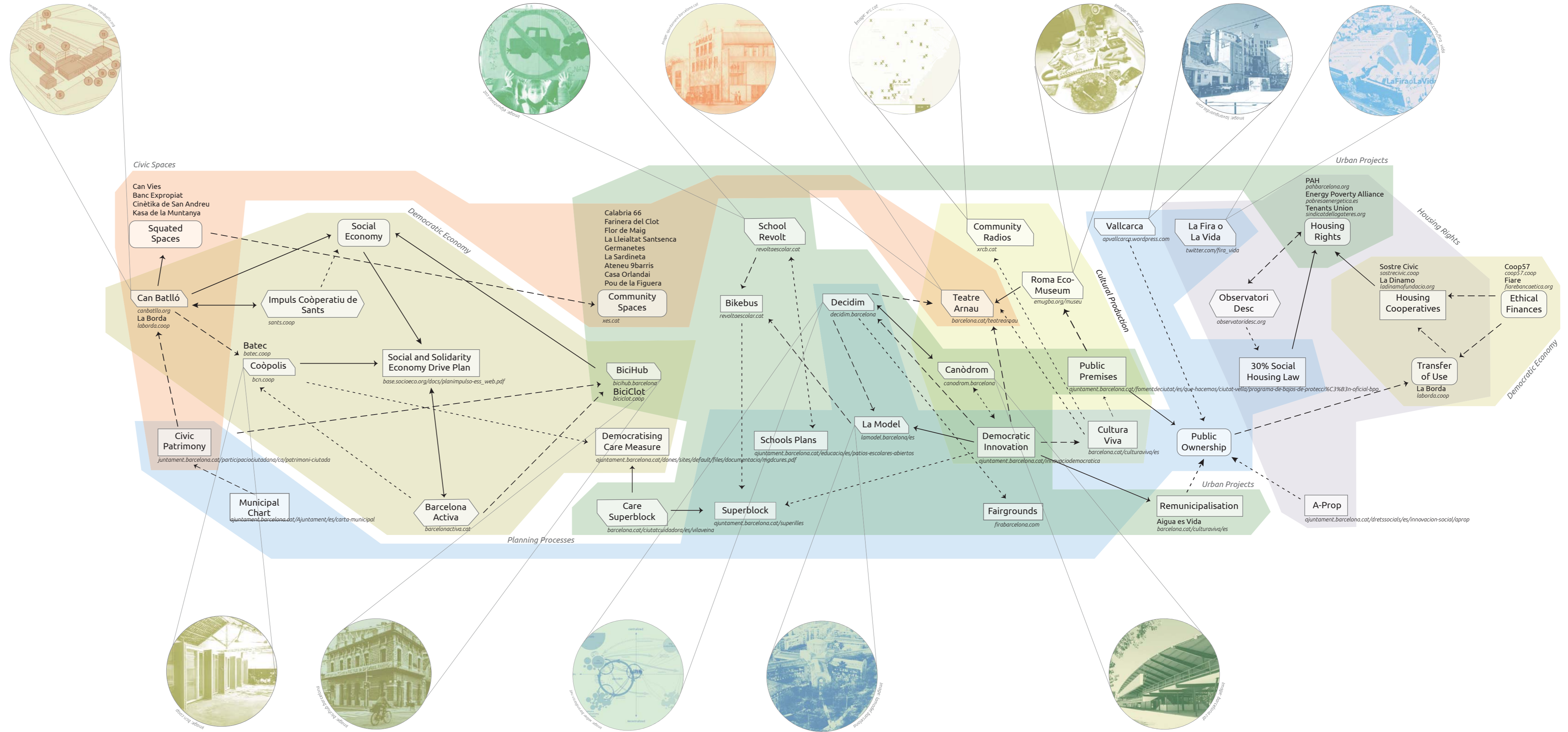
Social Economy

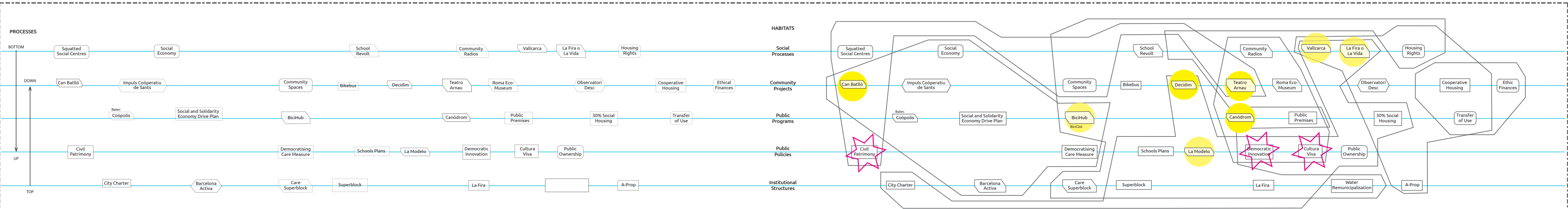
Planning Processes

Urban Projects

Cultural Production

Housing Rights



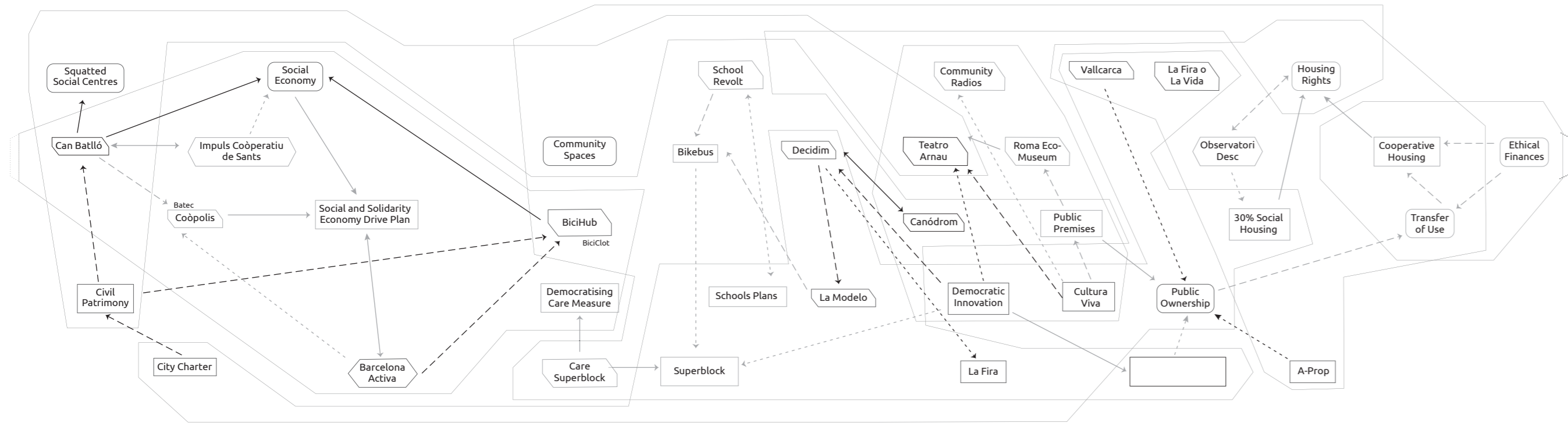


Habitats Upside-down

Habitats range from autonomous processes - of and for the social - to structures ascribed to the institutional sphere of the nation state, in a gradient from self-directed social mobilisations to community projects, co-produced public projects, public policies and municipal institutional structures. Mapping the habitats reveals a 'decalage' in the bottom-up/top-down processes: the two directions are not parallel: the 'up' movement never reaches the 'top', and the 'down' movement cannot touch the 'bottom'. Moreover, visually, the bottom and the top are turned upside down.

Links between actors define fields. This identification reflects the logic of the local administration, where areas of responsibility - social economy, housing, urbanism - correspond to different departments. Here, such a thematisation identifies where the fields overlap and the initiatives developed within. The concept of 'field' is based on French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's definition of the particular configuration of actors and relationships. While Bourdieu emphasises hierarchical positions of power, here 'field' refers to a relational aspect of agency and potential.

Overlapping Fields



Legend

<p>HABITATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Processes - belong to the civic sphere Community Projects - are social processes with institutional support Public Projects - have civic actors that participate or form part Public Policies - refer to municipalist actions Institutional Structures - belong to the state logic 	<p>ACTORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisations Procedures Initiatives Activators 	<p>LINKS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ---> Contributes to ---> is part of ---> Enables 	<p>FIELDS</p>	<p>TRANSMEDIATORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects (Yellow Circle) Procedures (Pink Star) 	<p>PROGRAMMES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civic Patrimony (Orange Dashed Box) Democratic Innovation (Blue Dashed Box) Cultura Viva (Yellow Dashed Box)
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Municipalist Trans-mediators

In the overlapping of fields, initiatives and procedures are characterised as trans-mediators: elements that "transform, translate, distort and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry", following to Bruno Latour concept of 'mediators'. Transmediation reframes public-common interactions by translating meanings between different spaces: institutional/social, academic/lay, citizen/politician, neighbourhood-district/city-metropolitan. Transmediators are key actors within programmatic constellations.

Commoning programmes connect municipalist public policies to existing processes. The programmatic constellations operationalise public support for collective forms of urban commoning by reprogramming institutional codes along three strategic lines: empowering social mobilisation and supporting autonomous projects; disrupting administrative public policies and procedures; and producing practice-based knowledge that is disseminated among practitioners through peer-to-peer exchanges and academic networks.

Commoning Programmes

