Deep Map and Short Residence as Crucial Elements for a Dialogic Research Method Investigating Places

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Deep mapping is a research method and working practice mainly developed by artists and scholars that promises to blur the boundaries between science and art as well as between experts and local populations. This article presents the methodological thoughts and results of a deep map project carried out in a rural municipality in the Alpine region of Valle d'Aosta, Italy. Following two years of preparation, in 2019 our research team, consisting of scientists and artists, took up residence in a house in the village for a week. Based on these deep mappers' experiences and the results of the residence, it is argued that deep map practices can benefit from being combined with a research residence in the area under investigation, as well as by using a dialogic research design to develop a clear ethical and methodological stance. The research experiences further suggest that the creation of multimedia products for deep map projects can help to animate local populations and initiate continuous dialogues between residents and deep mappers. Finally, critical moments of the investigation design are highlighted, and theoretical gaps are addressed with a view to improving the design of future deep map projects. **Key Words: art, cartography, deep map, dialogue, periphery.**

This article reports the findings of the first four years (2017–2020) of an ongoing deep map project in Jovençan, a small village of 727 inhabitants (ISTAT 2019) in the Alpine region of Valle d'Aosta, Italy, focusing, in particular, on the experiences of a research residence carried out in 2019. The project was started in 2017 by researchers who are also residents of the village, in response to other residents' dissatisfaction with the village's social life. To tackle this discontent, the initial approach of the project was to create a snapshot of the local community in its present form by collecting residents' personal stories and memories and linking those to local places. The research was conceived and designed to create a participatory narrative of the village that could help to strengthen community ties and thus ensure the preservation of present narratives into the future. The researchers were also aware, however, that their being—at least partially—insiders in the village could limit the project's development. Therefore, the researchers set out to find a methodology that could animate local discussions about the municipality's territorial, social, and political development. In this respect, they were mainly influenced by an Italian tradition of terrain research geography (Coppola 1977; Canigiani, Carazzi, and Grottanelli 1981; Dematteis 1995), as well as by their own backgrounds in documentary filmmaking. On encountering the "deep map" method, the researchers concluded that it could provide a creative technique for working together with

and empowering the local population to address the challenges facing their community.[1]

The deep map method is described in an influential article by Bailey and Biggs (2012) as "processes of engaging with and evoking 'place' in temporal depth by bringing together a multiplicity of voices, information, impressions, and perspectives in a multimedia representation of a particular environment" (318). Adding to this, in their recent book, Modeen and Biggs (2021) described the deep map as "an open-ended creative process deployed over an extended period. Each [deep map] project draws out highly specific responses to equally particular places …" (51). Consequently, the deep map cannot be considered as a single method; rather, it is a scientific and artistic practice of exploring places and communities using different research and engagement methods adapted to fit local needs. The principal aim is not to map the place in a cartographic manner but instead to examine and represent the place and local community from different perspectives by generating heterogeneous "products," such as documentary films, theater plays, and oral history archives. In addition, the deep map promises to blur the lines of separation between artists and scientists by bringing both together within a research team and minimizing the boundaries among them, as well as between the researchers and residents (Pearson and Shanks 2001; Springett 2015; Harris 2016; Cronin 2017).

Thanks to its methodological openness, the deep map method can be applied in a variety of academic areas and include nonacademic participants: Well-

known examples include joint projects between artists and scholars (Pearson and Shanks 2001; Bailey and Biggs 2012; Bissell and Overend 2015; Springett 2018; Modeen and Biggs 2021) and range from geohumanities research using mostly geographic information systems applications (Bodenhamer, Corrigan, and Harris 2015; Harris 2015, 2016; Warf 2015) to literary criticism (Maher 2014) and anthropological research (Roberts 2015, 2016; Spissu 2015). Although each project will follow its own specific procedures and theoretical perspectives, the many available examples show a strong tendency toward promoting methodological openness and viewing every project as part of a larger, continuous body of work aimed at triggering long-lasting processes of social transformation. Although there is already a strong theoretical basis underpinning the deep map method, so far only limited attention has been paid to the specifics of research design and ethical considerations. Accordingly, in this article we aim to open up a discussion of both of these issues by advancing the research design of deep map projects in a collaborative, dialogue-driven direction, with a view to establishing dialogues about places and community both within and across the participating groups. Nevertheless, we do not wish to propose any definitive solutions to them, not least because the localized conditions relevant to each project will affect how researchers chose to proceed.

The next section discusses existing studies that have incorporated the deep map method, focusing in particular on elements that provide the basis for a dialogic project design, these being mainly found in artistic, narrative, and geohumanistic versions of the deep map (Pearson and Shanks 2001; Harris 2015; Springett 2015, 2018; Warf 2015; Modeen and Biggs 2021). Additionally, the place-sensitive ethnographic approaches of multimodal (Powell 2016; Turunen et al. 2020) and sensory ethnography (Pink 2008, 2011) inform our discussion of the possibility of developing more collaborative deep map projects.[2] Subsequently, an outline of the Jovençan deep map project is given to demonstrate the importance to this kind of research of maintaining a continuous dialogue between the residents and deep mappers,[3] because this is essential for ensuring the research's sustainability and to address ethical concerns.

In 2019 our research team, composed of geographers, anthropologists, a filmmaker, a photographer, and two performing actresses, took up residence in a house in the village for a week to immerse themselves in the field and to record their experiences (Roberts 2016; Modeen and Biggs 2021). Reviewing the experiences reported by the researchers during the residence, it is argued here that the mixed composition of the deep map team helped to bring to the fore previously hidden social processes and narratives, as well as to encourage engagement from the residents. Additionally, the record of experiences

shows that during and after the research, a process of place-specific reflection emerged among both the residents and the deep mappers, and a dialogue started between them that is still ongoing. In the Conclusion, we reflect on the virtues and limitations of the deep map project as revealed by our research.

In Lieu of a Definition: The Practices of the Deep Map Method

Rather than providing a rigid definition of deep map projects, it might be more useful here to describe the practices of deep mapping that contribute to sustainable local development.[4] Accordingly, this section discusses the most valuable and practical examples of deep map practices, which have the potential to capture a localized sense of place and to open up a dialogic space for the local population and deep mappers. Following Buber ([1923] 2010), we understand dialogue as a form of communication characterized by openness, transparency, and mutual commitment. Scholars of communication studies (Dutta and Pal 2010; Ganesh and Zoller 2012) and collaborative ethnography (Lassiter 2005, 2021; Holmes and Marcus 2008; Koskinen-Koivisto, Lähdesmäki, and Čeginskas 2020) have pointed out that by allowing these elements to guide us in situations requiring communication and collaboration, we can facilitate the democratization of knowledge and avoid the emergence of strong power inequalities.

The term *deep map* was coined by the U.S. writer Heat-Moon (1991), who described his book, *PrairyErth*, as a deep map. Heat-Moon based the book on his research in Chase County, Kansas, where he spent several years doing surveys. In the book, he links quotes from writers, poets, and local celebrities to maps, as well as his own descriptions of local landscapes and conversations with residents. The geographer Harris (2015) contrasted Heat-Moon's deep map with "thin maps," which he described as being restricted by their following of strict cartographic conventions. Conversely, the plurality of representations in Heat-Moon's deep map reveal, for Harris (2015, 2016), a greater richness of social and emotional details and perspectives than classic cartographic representations. Furthermore, scholars such as Bailey and Biggs (2012) view deep maps as an adequate method for participatory research. Therefore, since its beginnings, the deep map method has been characterized by the plurality of representations it makes possible beyond traditional cartography, in many cases extending to multimedia forms of expression.

An example of the use of multimedia and artistic performances in a deep map to evoke and describe a localized sense of place can be seen in the work of the artistic-academic group Brith Gof, as organized by McLucas, Pearson, and Shanks (Pearson and

Shanks 2001). This group worked together on the Three Landscapes Project, which was dedicated to investigating three archaeological sites: Monte Polizzo in Sicily, the Hafod Estate in Wales, and the San Andreas Fault in California. They produced maps, site-specific theater performances, scientific essays, and taped discussions to describe these landscapes and their people in various ways (Shanks 2000; Pearson and Shanks 2001). Although this work shows great sensitivity toward the researched places, the researchers did not specifically intend to draw out the voices of the subject populations in their work (McLucas n.d.). Several years later, however, Bailey and Biggs (2012) set up a deep map project in rural North Cornwall that took an ethical attitude toward giving a voice to the elderly people of the area. Although the research team, composed of scientists, artists, and a technician specializing in interactive media, ultimately conceded that they were unable to obtain the desired multimedia representations, their work still indicates that the diversity of the research team helped to facilitate engagement with the residents and to inspire them to reflect on their community and the places they inhabit (Bailey and Biggs 2012).

More recently, a project designed by Springett (2015, 2018) showed how a more activist approach can be taken to deep mapping. The project, titled "Palimpsest of the Cook River," was initiated to collect people's views on the Cook River in Australia and to attract public attention to the river's social and ecological functions. Springett's (2015, 624) aim was to "democratize knowledge" by making public exhibitions and encouraging people to participate in the project. In her writings, she reminded the research community that it is their moral duty to share the body of knowledge they create with both participants and local populations. It is thus her view that deep maps should initiate a collaborative and, as far as possible, a nonhierarchical process between deep mappers and nonexperts. Adding to this viewpoint, in their recent book Modeen and Biggs (2021) also stressed the benefits of collective residences for deep map projects, both for the internal dynamics of research teams and to establish confident relationships with local inhabitants.

Although the projects just mentioned do not necessarily involve the creation of cartographic maps, they suggest that deep map projects, especially in the geohumanities, as described by Harris (2015, 2016), might be useful tools for developing new forms of maps because they are well suited to linking up a wide variety of different media types. In his reflections on ethnopoetics, Aitken (2015) showed that it is also possible to include emotional aspects in maps using recorded poetry and conversations. Another important contribution was provided by Warf (2015), who identified as a deep map a webspace and application set up in 2003 in the small

Spanish municipality of Brión by scholars at the nearby University of Santiago di Compostela. Warf pointed out that although the project was initiated by scholars at the university, it was soon appropriated by the local people and authorities who were in full charge of the project at the time his article was published. In this case, the online deep map seems to provide the peripheral municipality and its inhabitants with a space for debate and to present their needs to the regional and national authorities. The importance of sensory forms of placemaking, created and presented in a multimedia way, for evoking collaboration and dialogue is underlined, in particular, by two studies: first, a multimodal[5] mapmaking project conducted by Powell (2016) in El Chorrillo, Panama, and, second, a sensory ethnographic project by Pink (2008) based around a guided tour of the Welsh town of Mold. Both scholars demonstrated that collaborative activities with local people, using creative and sensory methods to elicit engagement with specific places, such as site-specific descriptions of sensory experiences, autoethnography, and collaborative film and map production or guided walks, can attune the people involved to each other and the place under study. Pink (2008, 190) aptly described this process in the phenomenological tradition as "becoming attuned to the town" and its people. This is especially true when the various experiences and multimedia products are brought into dialogue and considered as a multimodal set of sensory and cognitive experiences, rather than individual elements of the phenomenon under study (Dicks et al. 2011; Pink 2011; Powell 2016; Collins, Durington, and Gill 2017).

To summarize, rather than being a single research method, deep maps are practices of place-oriented research and social encouragement. A common thread connecting deep mappers is the combination of a constructivist epistemology with a flat ontology, as developed by social scientists such as Deleuze, Gualtieri, and Latour (Bissell and Overend 2015; Springett 2015), whereby they aim to overcome social and ontological hierarchies. Moreover, the interpretative aspect of deep map practices means that deep mappers tend to adopt a reflexive and collaborative attitude, which stands in line with the reflexive turn (Davies 2002; Holmes and Marcus 2008; Lassiter 2021) performed in ethnography (Geertz 1973; Howell 2018) that culminated in Clifford and Marcus's (1986) critical deconstruction of the poetics and politics of ethnography. The deep map projects just discussed indicate that deep mappers should be open to all kinds of events and particularities at the places they are researching and that they should try to avoid hierarchies inside their research teams while also adopting an inclusive and level approach toward the local people as part of the research process. In the following sections, we discuss how the experiences

recorded by our research team reveal the value and coherence of a dialogic research design, including elements such as the research residence and phases of reflection.

Dialogic Research Design: Communication, Research Residence, Team Composition, Exhibition, and Phases of Reflection

In this article, we propose enhancing the existing conversational (Bailey and Biggs 2012) and participative research approaches (Sletto 2015; Harris 2016) by adding dialogic elements, resting on the principles of openness, transparency, and mutual commitment, as discussed earlier (Buber [1923] 2010). Bailey and Biggs (2012) reported that they were disappointed with the capacity of their conversational research approach to solicit long-term commitment to their project from local residents and to level down power inequalities between the residents and researchers to establish a trusting relationship. Although conversational and participative approaches are certainly characterized by openness and their taking the perspectives of local residents seriously (Peluso 1995; Sletto 2015), in some cases residents are also seen as resources to be used to improve predefined results (Hohenthal, Minoia, and Pellikka 2017). For such an approach to work, it is critical that researchers establish an ongoing dialogue and collaboration with residents. By following these steps, deep mappers can develop partnerships with residents and municipal authorities and thereby gain access to a continuous flow of information from the local population. A number of crucial elements of dialogic research in this field can be identified here, including meticulous and persistent preparation of a research residence in the locality under study; careful consideration of the composition of research teams, which should include both insiders and outsiders relative to the local area; freedom for all deep mappers to design their own subprojects within a loose but overarching framework of the deep map; the creation of autoethnographic descriptions of places and their peoples as well as collaborative moments; short and long phases of reflection in the research design; and exhibition of the research results.

Dialogue is understood here as a mode of communication intended to democratize knowledge and level down power relations (Dutta and Pal 2010; Ganesh and Zoller 2012) as well as to bring multimodal material into dialogue (Dicks et al. 2011; Powell 2016; Panopoulos, Scaldaferri, and Feld 2020). The Jovençan deep map project was started by two research team members who are also residents of Jovençan, in cooperation with the municipal administration, by arranging an official project agreement. Hence, the municipality was from the start a fundamental partner in the project and provided economic, administrative, and especially operational support. Next, a public event was held in October 2017 at the municipal hall to inform the residents about the planned research activities. Subsequently, in the following years the project's initiators arranged interviews and discussions that were announced via the local press and bulletin boards. As collaborative ethnologists suggest (Lassiter 2005; Powell 2016), taking a cautious approach to contacting the residents helped both to facilitate their collaborations during the residence and to level down power hierarchies between the deep mappers and locals. Additionally, the residents were regularly informed about the project's progress and their feedback was integrated into the project.

Nevertheless, as they established a trusting relationship with the local residents, the project's two initiators also became aware that their position as insiders generated a certain homogenization in the answers they received from interviewees, who seemed to be standardizing their stories to fit in with common local political and social narratives. These factors pointed to the need for a change in the research design and thus led the researchers to invite other scholars and artists to participate in the fieldwork in Jovençan. Therefore, we can see that for the researcher, the status of being an insider is a double-edged sword: helpful for finding interviewees, maintaining close contact with the local population, and gaining valuable insider knowledge about the meanings of places, and political, economic, and social issues but also limiting in terms of the range of responses that can be gained. Hence, it is evident that externals, who are strangers to the area and community, are also needed on the research team to identify the "blind spots" of insiders and to stimulate more explicative and surprising responses from interlocutors. Theoretical support for this view can be found in the writings of the phenomenologist Schütz (1976), who explained how the "stranger," with his puzzled gaze, can uncover the apparently common horizons of meaning shared by members of the community.

The research residence was announced beforehand to the local community and finally took place between 3 and 7 September 2019. To provide a broad range of perspectives on the municipality, the research team based at the residence consisted of three geographers—two with training in documentary filmmaking—two cultural anthropologists, a filmmaker, a photographer, and two theater performers. Of these, one of the theater performers, the photographer, and two of the geographers were insiders, whereas the filmmaker, the other theater performer, the anthropologists, and one of the geographers were not familiar with the area.

In line with the openness of the deep map method, each deep mapper was free to develop an independent subproject. Thus, they could adopt a variety of different research methods, including, in this case, unstructured interviews, walks, research in private and public archives, photo documentary making, cartographic mapping, and making general observations. The researchers were asked not to come up with fixed plans beforehand but to instead develop their research ideas and subprojects in response to their immersion in the field during the residence. Some particularly helpful moments that contributed to the development of the subprojects came from collective activities, such as meetings with local people and group walks through the village. In this way, the team members could become attuned to each other and to the area (Pink 2008) and develop their research ideas in a collaborative manner. Several times, residents also joined in with the walks and along the way showed the deep mappers parts of the village they found crucial to understanding communal life in the area.

When it came to exhibiting the research team's work in public, the small central square in front of the municipality building was chosen as an exhibition space. In this way, the results of the research residence and working methods applied by the team were presented to local residents in the forms of a "physical map" and theater performance. The performance was dubbed an "opera" to underscore the artistic aspirations of the exhibition, and the physical map consisted of a simple wooden wall made of two joined-up panels on which a range of materials produced or found by the team were affixed in a rather unstructured way, including notes, diagrams, photographs and articles from private and official archives, cartographic representations, and a short video (displayed on a tablet attached to the panel). The presentation in the form of a collage of the preliminary results of the residence was intended to provide "non-linear narrations" (Powell 2016, 407), which, indeed, provoked spontaneous dialogues between residents and members of the research team.

In its final form, intended to bring into dialogue multimodal content (Panopoulos, Scaldaferri, and Feld 2020), the physical map gave the impression of a bulletin board plastered with varied information rather than a conventional map. The visitors slowly approached the panel, at first with an air of curiosity or perhaps skepticism, but each one soon found something that interested or amused them. From the deep mapper's perspective, the most interesting moments came when conversations started up between the participants and deep mappers that made it possible to refine premature impressions and reflections. In this sense, the presentation of the opera was not only a moment of restitution but an integral step of the field research from which new meanings and threads for further research emerged.

Furthermore, this open and rather informal presentation apparently stimulated the residents to reflect on their place of abode and community. In this way, the exhibition became a moment of collaboration and shared experience during which the residents and researchers could become attuned. They discovered each others' interests and a desire for increased collaboration and dialogue. After the exhibition, conversations very quickly developed about how the project could be continued; however, the implementation of follow-up ideas was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Given this situation, all of the deep mappers contributed to a book providing mostly autoethnographic, but in one case also collaborative, accounts of the project and its focal point, Jovençan; their writings discussed not just their findings during the research residence but also theoretical discussions and methodological reelaborations (Ietri and Mastropietro 2020b). The production of the book helped to keep the deep mappers engaged in exchanges and conversations with each other and the residents throughout the first six months of the pandemic, a time when personal contact was impossible. Furthermore, because two of the deep mappers live in Jovençan, contact has always been maintained with local residents during the pandemic. Many residents also confirmed via e-mails and in personal talks their desire to organize future events, and some of them attended an online presentation of the book. Despite delays caused by COVID-19 restrictions, in the autumn of 2020 the residents of Jovençan voted for the renewal of the major and local council, and even as the new administration was coming into office, conversations had already started about the continuation of the project. The physical part of the opera is still on open display in the small municipal library and also available for inclusion in future events, and in 2021 several joint efforts—both by the deep mappers and by the local administration—were made to get adequate funding for a solid continuation of the project in the coming years.

The preceding description indicates that there is an asynchronous aspect to the dialogic research design being proposed here (Ganesh and Zoller 2012); that is, actions do not always need to follow one another in synchronic order, because they can instead occur in phases of personal and collective reflection inside each group and be alternated with moments of communal engagement. Therefore, we propose a circular dialogic research design in which interventions following on from one another are interrupted by phases of preparation and reflection that circle back on themselves. Finally, the applied methods and research results should immediately be presented to the local residents to provide space for everyone involved to reflect on the course of events.

Research Results: Finding Connecting Lines between People and Places

In total, six subprojects emerged during the residence. While developing their own subprojects, the deep mappers also worked together by participating in activities such as conversations, group interviews, walks, and visits to a museum, all of which helped them to share their experiences. In these ways, the deep mappers tried to trace the social and spatial relationships binding the local residents to the places where they lived and thereby demonstrated that those places should be thought of in a relational manner; that is, to gain an understanding of localized meanings and senses of place, we should view places as spatial and temporal horizons for sociocultural configurations that spread out from the local to the global level (Massey 1994, 2005).

One of the most salient themes to emerge was family life. The photographer and one of the anthropologists researched, partly together, private family photo archives and produced family (hi)stories (Salvucci 2020; Zemoz 2020). To deepen trust and reliability, the anthropologist wrote her article in collaboration with a member of a Jovençan family. Through their work it became evident that many families are very closely connected to the village and especially their territorial family properties, which they have owned over many generations; hence, these family histories form an important part of the history of the area and its places and vice versa. During conversations with residents, certain family names were frequently equated with certain properties or places remembered as the sites of events, thus showing how speakers might "place" their subjects in the area (Salvucci 2020). Confirming this spatial intimacy, the two geographers (Ietri and Mastropietro 2020a) reported that some surnames correspond to toponyms of the area, and the third geographer (Boos 2020) showed that the territorial fractions of the village, called *hameaux*, are places of intimate social and spatial ties. Further, due to the residents' intimacy with their surroundings, one anthropologist (Salvucci 2020) suggested including not only people in family trees but also their animals and the places they feel or felt intimate with.

The observation of the second anthropologist (Zinn 2020) that many villagers use the word *passion* to describe the relationship they have with their property can also be closely linked to the findings previously discussed. This passion guides local economic and political affairs toward the preservation of family and community patrimony, which includes local agricultural and architectural traditions. Therefore, finding ways to combine new working practices with traditional ways of living is of great concern for the inhabitants. The preservation of rural life in the village, despite its proximity to the provincial capital of Aosta, is tightly bound to the

question of how far the village is "dormant" (Zinn 2020). Most families have at least one member who works in the city or commutes there for educational reasons, which inevitably causes a drain on the life of the village as many residents spend much of the day in the neighboring city or elsewhere; hence the concern of many residents about stimulating social life inside the municipality.

Most of the subprojects show that small spatial and social units, such as family and *hameaux*, are in many ways connected to other places, especially in the Valle d'Aosta but also more widely in Italy, France, and Switzerland. Many people from the municipality work or study, at least for a short period, not only in other parts of Italy but, because of the spatial proximity and close historical connections, also in Switzerland or France. The theater performers took up this theme in their play, which was presented in the local Franco-Provençal dialect (*patois*), by addressing the subject of how feelings linked to the notion of "home" change through periods of emigration and homecoming (Daynè and Zaramella 2020).

The filmmaker (Martelli 2020) and one anthropologist (Zinn 2020) reported feeling frustrated during the fieldwork about not being able in the short period of allotted time to come into contact with the kind of people they usually liked to meet. Indeed, one of the shortcomings of our deep map was that people not originating in the village, including national and international immigrants, were rarely available for conversations. In this sense the short period of the residence was a serious limiting factor, obstructing the researchers' critical reflections on power inequalities at the community level. On the other hand, however, the time pressure also triggered spontaneity and improvisation.

Consequently, during the residence the deep mappers became seekers of connecting lines between people and places. Taking up the ideas of Ingold (2015), as found his book *The Life of Lines*, municipalities like Jovençan can be thought of as nodes for the life paths of the people who live in them, as well as other living beings, and historical memories linked to those places, therefore binding them together into a local–global network of relationships. In the present age, the local and the global are closely linked (Massey 1994), even in rural areas.

Conclusions: Deep Maps as a Dialogic Research Method

The researchers' experiences indicate that the deep map method has the potential to systematically illuminate and provide multifaceted perspectives on the signification processes that connect places to human interactions. Furthermore, deep maps can help to animate dialogue between all parties with a stake in the research on multiple levels; that is, between the

deep mappers, including interdisciplinary and supra-disciplinary dialogue between artists, scholars, and other practitioners; between the deep mappers and the local population; and within the local population itself.

There was no intention to systematize the data collected for this project so that it would fit in with a single theoretical framework and thus result in the production of epistemologically one-sided knowledge. Instead, the deep map practices adopted by the research team appear to facilitate a form of knowledge production where the place under investigation, rather than a single theoretical framework, provides the reference point for the research. The various artistic and scientific methods applied by the researchers brought to the fore a multifaceted description and interpretation of the relations between the local people and the places they inhabit. The resulting deep map—as expressed by the panel display, theater performance, and book—describes and contextualizes the place under study as part of a

larger local-to-global web of social and spatial relations. A rather undogmatic epistemological basis for such projects can be found in phenomenological and flat ontologies (Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Casey 1997; Massey 2005; Ingold 2008, 2015).

A scheme for a possible dialogic research design is summarized in Figure 1. In addition, we can highlight the following elements that helped us to achieve good results by bringing to the foreground systems of spatial meanings and social and spatial connections, as well as stimulating dialogue among the residents and researchers and between both groups. First, the composition of the research team is a critical factor. In our case, a mixture of insiders and outsiders and of artists, academics, and practitioners triggered creativity and opened the way for multiple views on the municipality and facilitated the mutual flow of information between the deep mappers and residents, notwithstanding the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Second, the research residence was crucial to the formation of
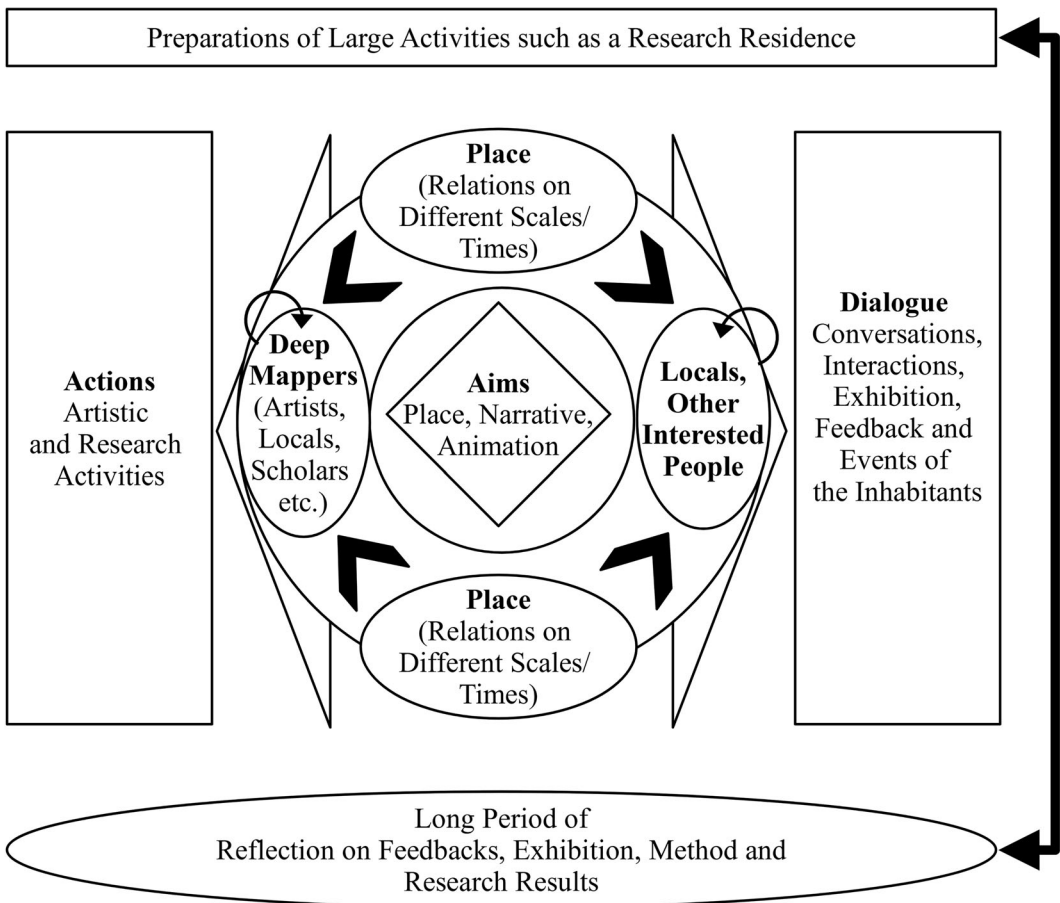

Figure 1 *A possible scheme for a dialogic and circular research design of deep map projects. Deep map projects can be designed as a series of large-scale activities, such as a research residence and academic art festivals, all requiring months of preparation. To minimize the hierarchies between deep mappers and residents, a dialogue on ways of inhabiting places of the area needs to be started between them.*

the subprojects and collaborations devised by the research team. The third important element, also advocated by academics working on sensory (Pink 2008; Powell 2016) and collaborative ethnography (Lassiter 2005, 2021; Holmes and Marcus 2008), is the creation of shared experiences and collaborative moments such as guided walks and the immediate exhibition of preliminary research results to residents, all of which aid the mappers' attunement to local residents and the place under study. In this case, the exhibition became a form of nonlinear storytelling and physical palimpsest, binding together the subprojects of the fieldwork and stimulating the emergence of collaborative knowledge. Indeed, the production of an artifact, the "physical map," in the form of a multimodal "collage" (Powell 2016, 407), which was displayed in public in the village square, proved especially effective in stimulating dialogue and further reflections among the researchers and residents. Only a few collaborative subprojects emerged over the course of the residence, however, the short time span of which was just long enough to allow for the formation of research ideas but not for the development of theoretical reflections. We have attempted to address this shortcoming by adding a long writing phase, following autoethnological and collaborative approaches to the elaboration of place-sensitive descriptions, to allow for both the reelaboration of the experiences realized during the fieldwork and subsequent theoretical reflections linked to the practices of deep mapping.

Figure 1 also provides a scheme to identify points where unequal power relations can exist that require an in-depth critique. In this project, the creation of collaborative moments and the deep mappers' attitude not to patronize fellow deep mappers helped to balance out the power hierarchies inside the team. Additionally, the unequal relationship between the researchers and residents in regard to who held greater authority for determining relevance and meaning leveled out noticeably over the course of the residency and could be observed through the locals' growing willingness to get involved with the project and even their solicitation of further events once it had finished. Nevertheless, the limited time available for the research residence also seems to have impeded a deeper analysis of the existing hierarchical differences within the community. That is, although Turunen et al.'s (2020) finding that allotting limited time for a residence can stimulate spontaneity and creativity among the researchers and residents is confirmed by our project, that same limit also hindered the researchers from delving more deeply into the hidden processes that underpin the local production of space and community. Perhaps the project's most troubling shortcoming was that it did not provide adequate space for marginalized people and residents lacking deep roots in the village to make their voices heard. Additionally,

the complex political and economic networks at play, as well as strategies of power accumulation, remained largely untouched by the deep mappers. Therefore, in general terms the power relations that produce the sense of place within the village remain obscure and in need of further research.

Since the writings of Harvey (1973, 1996) and Zukin (1991), investigating such power relations has been at the core of critical spatial analysis intended to accompany and initiate social change; however, as Dodge (2017) pointed out, neglect of this area of study is a common problem for deep map projects, hindering their engagement with the political and critical discussions needed to analyze processes of place and community building. Therefore, future deep map projects would benefit by examining in more detail the history and growth of local and global power constellations (Elias [1970] 2012; Foucault [1976] 1978); Gilroy 2004), as well as the deep mappers' politics of choosing their partners among the residents. Studies of sensory, multimodal, and collaborative ethnography (Pink 2008, 2011; Powell 2016; Lassiter 2021) suggest that the reflective and dialogical nature of deep map projects makes it necessary for us to think in more complex and critical ways, in particular, toward the spatial, multimedia, material, sensory, emotional, and social spheres and relations that bear out inside the involved group (deep mappers and residents). Such a turn to more complex forms of critique could give deep map projects a more sustainable ethical basis and better analytical tools for interpreting spatial and social relations. ∎

Acknowledgments

Notes

[1] Further information on this and other projects—similar initiatives are currently being undertaken in other

localities in Italy—as well as updates are available at our Web site, www.studisulqui.it.

[2] Anthropologist Zinn (2020) described the intriguing links connecting deep maps to ethnography and anthropology, and especially to techniques such Jackson's "thin description" and the team-based research led by the Italian anthropologist de Martino.

[3] We use the term *deep mappers* to refer to artists, practitioners, and academics with the explicit intention of overcoming, at least partly, the divisions between these groups.

[4] Most deep mappers recognize the need not to elaborate a clear definition of deep maps to preserve their epistemological and ontological openness (e.g., Pearson and Shanks 2001; Springett 2015; Roberts 2016).

[5] The term *multimodal* refers to the usage of different media types, such as film, online apps, audio recording, and photography, in combination to enrich the elaboration of ethnographies and maps and thus to make it possible for us to experience or understand the researched situation through a variety of sensory modalities, rather than just a written text.

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