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Decoding the Port-City Interface

Mapping the spatio-functional relationship of port cities

Glasgow, United Kingdom

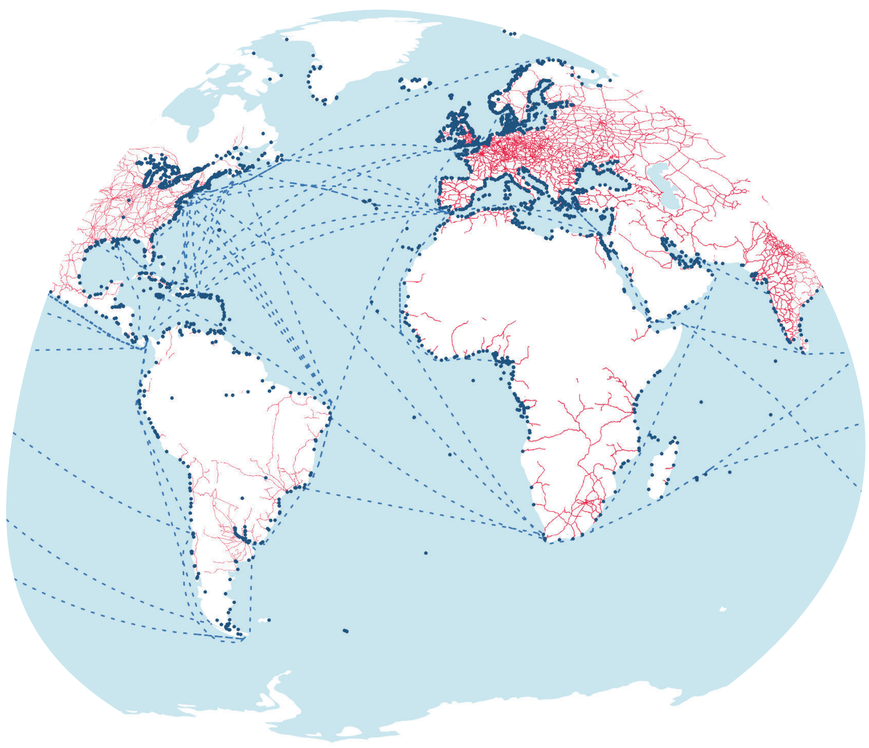
Regionalisation

As globalisation reshapes freight flows, ports increasingly extend their **influence beyond the shoreline**. Inland logistics hubs and distribution corridors now form **regional port systems** that integrate maritime functions with hinterland operations. This **regionalisation** intensifies the **spatial and functional interdependencies** between urban form, mobility infrastructure, and economic flows. It also raises urgent questions about **coordination and sustainability** at the regional scale, where planning frameworks often lag behind **infrastructural change**.

Interface

The **port-city interface** has long been a site of both synergy and tension. Expanding terminals and modern logistics infrastructure often **clash with adjacent urban neighbourhoods**, particularly where ports have outgrown their original footprints. Despite its centrality in **port governance discourse**, the interface remains poorly defined in spatial terms.

This project proposes a methodology-led approach to **interface mapping**, relying on open-source building footprint and street network data.

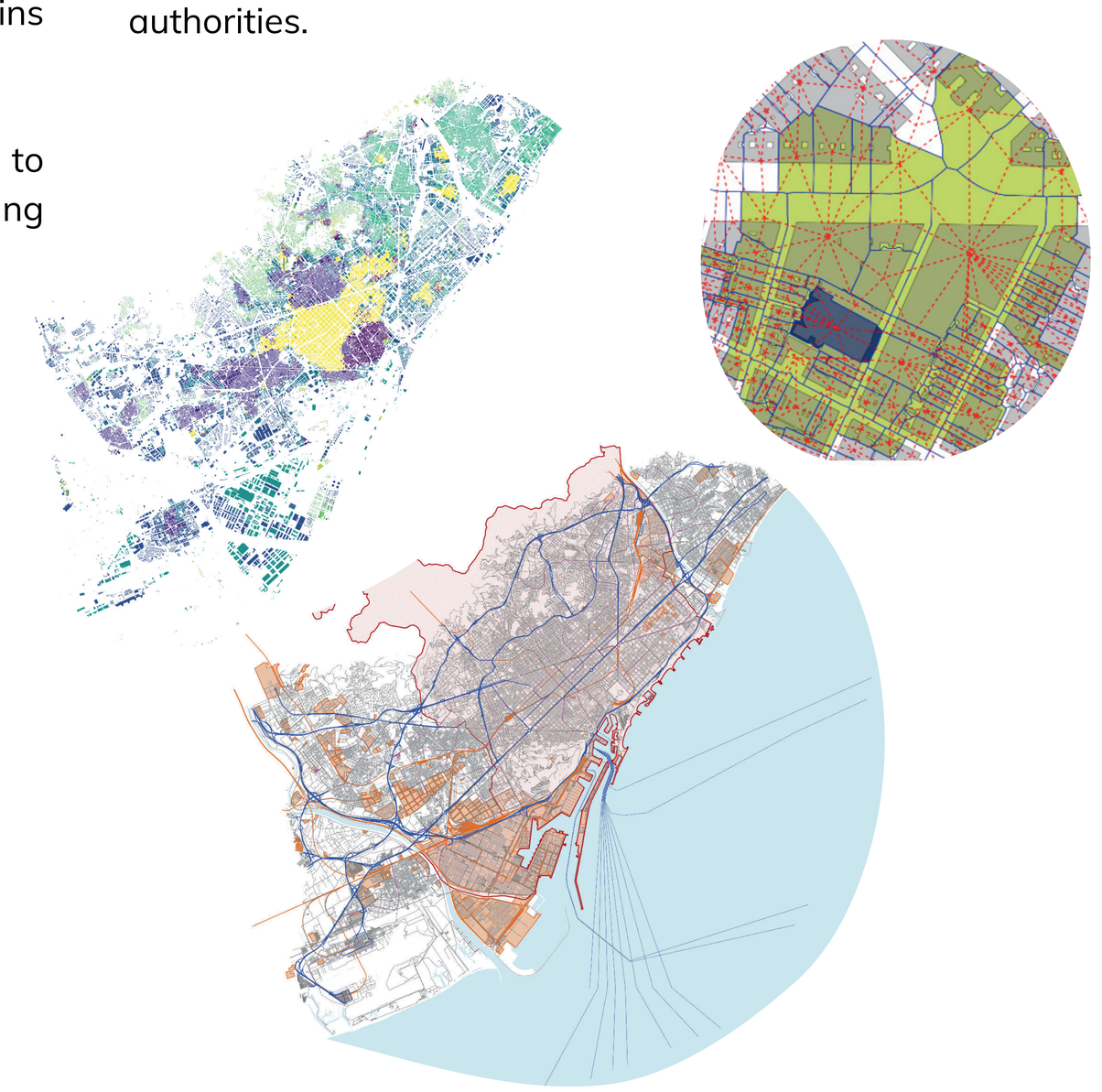


Threshold

At the fine urban scale, the threshold marks the **tangible boundary** between port and city. Often materialised through fences, highways, or **shifting land-use gradients**, this zone is where redevelopment, logistics, and residential or cultural **functions collide**.

While planning and port authority classifications vary widely across contexts, **built form data** reveals consistent **spatial signatures**. Urban **morphometrics** – measuring the dimension, shape, intensity, and connectivity of the built environment – can **expose patterns** invisible to traditional land-use maps. By **synthesising** these patterns through **clustering analysis**, this project seeks to **develop a spatio-functional taxonomy** of urban form specific to **port-city conditions**.

The outcome is a **replicable tool** for identifying and **comparing interface types**, designed to **support decision-making** for planners, researchers, and authorities.



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