

Call for Papers, Maps & Ideas

CRITICAL ATLAS

"We map-makers must make a point of demolishing the illusion that there can be an official, universally accepted representation of the world's political divisions." (Philippe Rekacewicz)

We are a collective of critical cartographers and intent to put together a "critical atlas." On this behalf we invite cartographers, mappers, artists, activists, geographers and everyone who deals with critical maps, to contribute maps, texts, photographs and ideas. Beside printed and digital maps, we plan to integrate reports of mapping initiatives or exhibitions as well as interviews or articles about mappings. We look forward to contributions and suggestions from all parts of the world.

Why a critical atlas?

As dusty wall maps in school, city tour guides, thematic maps in newspapers or digital map extracts on the smartphone, maps accompany us constantly and in varying contexts. We use maps to navigate unknown places, to grasp geographic knowledge and we find them as arguments in political debates. Yet, maps are by no means neutral tools to present spatial information. Instead, they reproduce social systems and power relations, shaping both, our imaginations of spaces and our activities in spaces alike.

Since the 1980s, a growing number of actors confront traditional Western cartography through twofold efforts in theoretical critique and critical practice. These engagements are not limited to de-constructions or ideology criticisms of maps. In fact, critical cartographers create maps themselves to wield their power for constructive goals.

Simplified, we can distinguish between three interrelated directions: firstly, there is a great number of participative and collective mapping initiatives which open the process of map production and enable "lay cartographers" to raise their voices through maps.

Secondly, counter-mappings confront hegemonic ideas of space and society that are often shaped by commercial or governmental interests. Examples are mappings of social inequalities, resistances or visions that are excluded from mainstream discourses. A third form of applied critical cartography is artistic engagement with maps and their established conventions and rationalities.

These are plenty of motives to compose an atlas of critical cartographies. The format of this publication will be somewhere between a companion for critical mapping and a discussion of critical mapping projects. We seek for an unconventional atlas as a critical voice in cartographic discourses. It aims to display strengths and weaknesses of cartographic approaches, to discuss existing mapping initiatives critically and to encourage people to engage in mapping practices themselves. Thus, the atlas will be a compilation of critical mapping initiatives and practical experiences.

We hope for contributions to all these dimensions of critical mappings. We are especially interested in experiences with and critical reflections on practical mapping projects, participatory mappings, maps as instruments for development, maps as articulations of political demands and maps as counter narratives against dominant everyday realities

We call for contributions, abstracts and statements of interest until **September 20th 2015**. Emails should be sent to **kritische-karten@posteo.de**. Published maps will be printed in A3 format. This atlas is a non-profit enterprise

The editors collective (Boris Michel, Christian Bittner, Dirk Neumann, Silke Greth, Severin Halder, Matze Jung, kollektiv orangotango)