

ORANGOTANGO

MANUAL COLLECTIVE CRITICAL CARTOGRAPHY

collectively reflect and change our everyday
life territories in



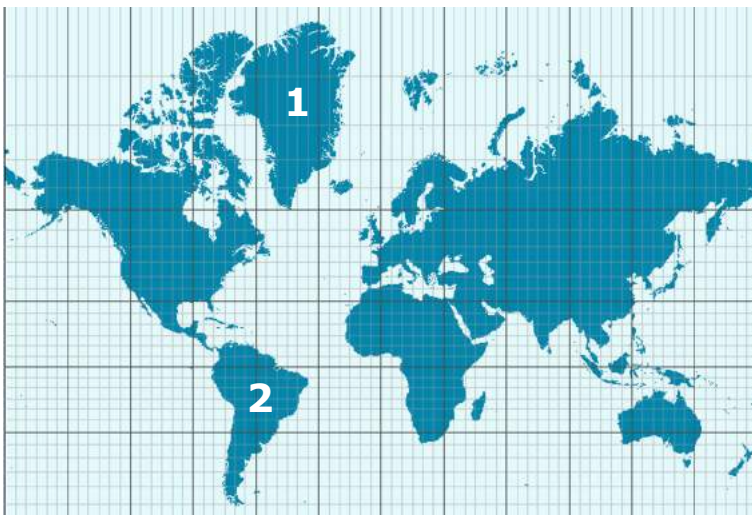
WHAT ARE

“Power is exerted on cartography. [...] Power is also exercised with cartography.” (Harley, John B., Deconstructing the map)

MAPS FOR?

Since their inception, maps can be seen as the graphic transposition of power relations. Often, they have been used in the service of powerful actors for whom maps were one of the tools to control and expand their spheres of influence.

Today, maps are almost globally available on the internet. Despite this, it is important to consider that most of the time they translate a one-dimensional view of space whose complexity – instead – cannot be reduced to a uniform perspective; and this is because no space is “natural”, one-dimensional, or non-dynamic but, rather, socially constructed, multidimensional, dynamic, and constantly evolving.



Classic Mercator projection (without Antarctica) representing Greenland (2,166,086 km²), as if it were a larger area than South America (17,843,000 km²) (Wikipedia).

Indeed, the social construction of space does not happen in a vacuum but reflects a given society's specific norms and dominant rules. Hegemonic discourses are driven by powerful interests and tend to produce both social and spatial hierarchies, easily identifiable in the most common maps (just observe the map in the figure).

Collective cartography can help understand, both, the power dynamics inherent to dominant maps, as well as social conditions, inequalities or conflicts of a particular territory. In this way, collective cartography enables us to cast a different look at our territories by building on the exchange of personal perceptions, experiences and emotions of those involved in the process. However, precisely when we use mapping as a "participatory" method, we should take great care and reflect on which power relations we reproduce and how different positionalities of the participants influence the process.

Through collective cartography, we engage in understanding our everyday living spaces through awareness processes that facilitate the exchange of experiences and opinions on our socio-spatial realities and relations.

"Critical" maps that we aim to create, should function as alternative representations of emancipatory spaces, in order to encourage and facilitate autonomous, resistant and subcultural action.



"America Invertida" (Torres Garcia, 1973).

À QUOI PEUVENT SERVIR LES CARTES?

Critical maps, as graphic representations of political and social processes, present a rich and diversified content aimed at giving voice to groups and social movements, effectively excluded from decision-making processes. In this sense, they can serve as a tool to foster political actions and support popular education.

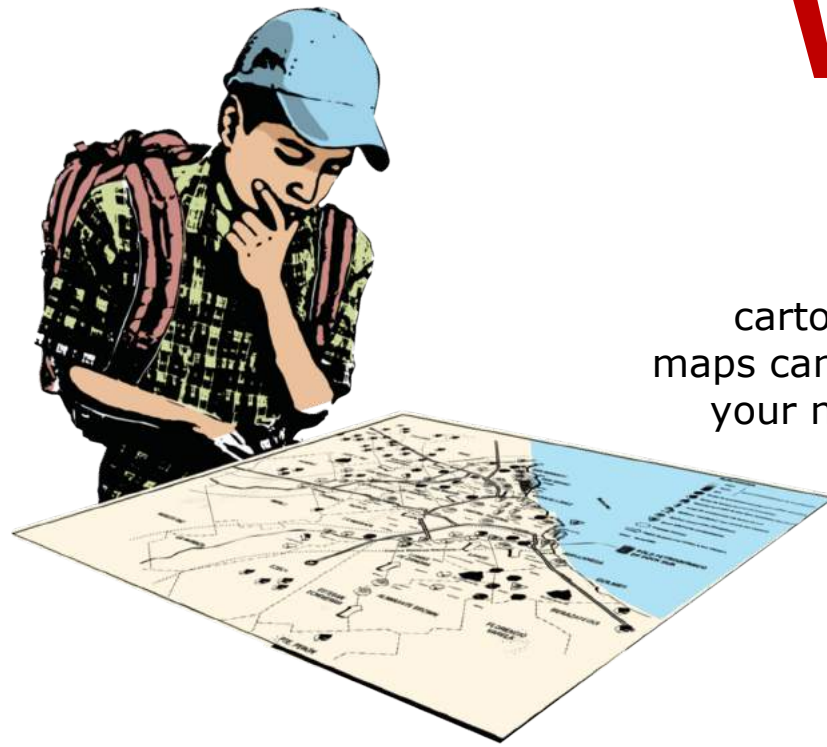
Since the 1970s, various critical approaches to cartography have emerged, particularly in Latin America. The Argentinian militant artist collective "Iconoclastas" has used "mapeo Colectivo" in workshops with social movements. In Brazil, "New Social Cartography of the Amazon" has accompanied traditional communities in the Amazon region in their struggles to reclaim their territories as well as to territorialize their collective identity. These and other critical cartographic practices have inspired many more, of which some can be seen at our Not-an-Atlas platform (www.notanatlas.org).



Fuller projection, in which the world is not divided hierarchically and the land areas land areas (e.g. Greenland (1) and South America (2)) are shown in accurate size. (www.commonswikimedia.org, Author: Eric Gaba)

WHO CAN MAP ?

Everyone can create their own cartographic representations! Indeed, maps can cover many scales and themes: your neighbourhood, your village, your social networks, your fears and expectations, but also what you lack for a better life, what... The possibilities are endless!



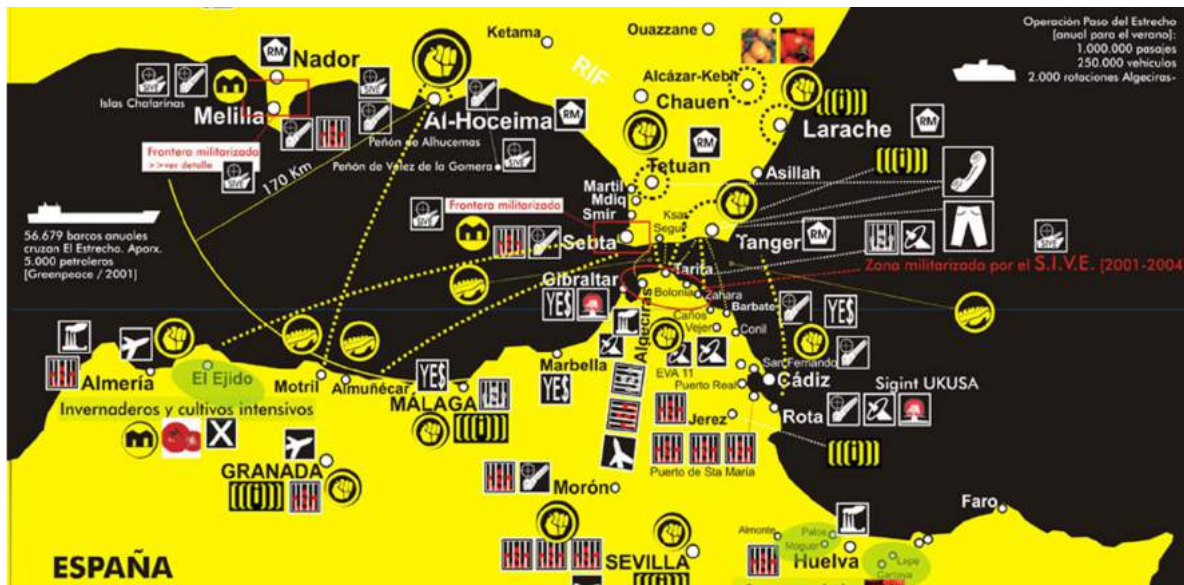
WHAT IS COLLECTIVE CARTOGRAPHY?

It is a practical tool that helps us develop a shared understanding of a defined space thanks to a non-hierarchical exchange of ideas. The information resulting from this encounter is visually represented on a support that becomes an expression of sharing experience: the map. It illustrates diverse perspectives stemming from each participant's unique perception of the space. Anyone is an expert!

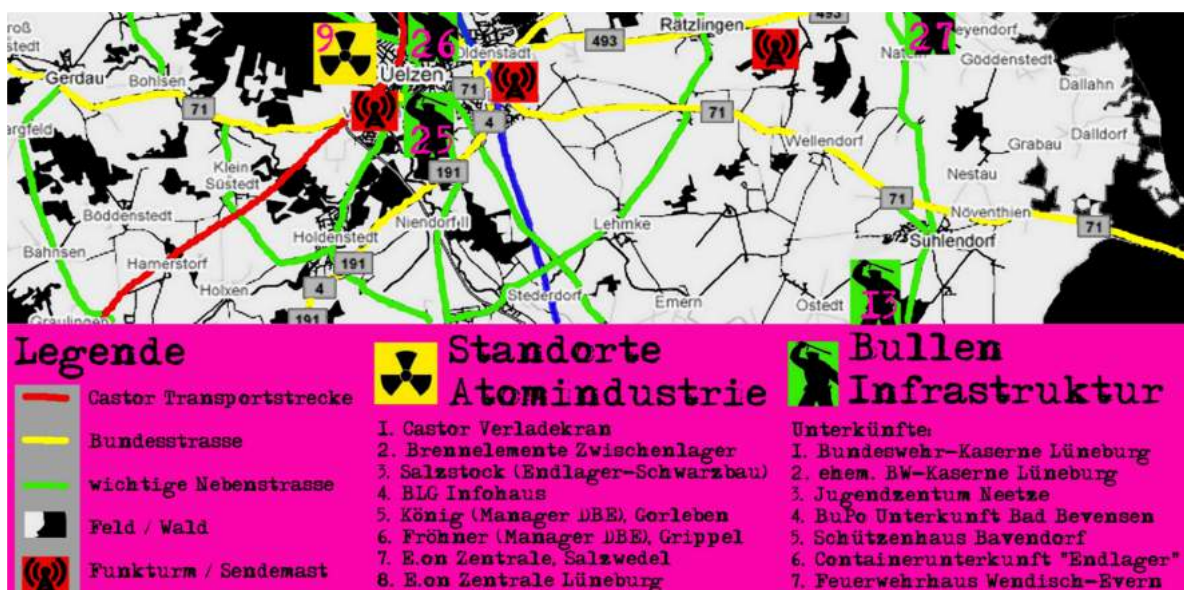
Collective cartography works particularly well when exercised in an already established group. The time investment required for planning as well as for the realization and revision of the map can vary greatly: the primary focus of collaborative mapping isn't the final map but rather a careful reflective mapping process.

WHAT IS CRITICAL CARTOGRAPHY?

Critical cartography challenges conventional mapmaking practices and offers an alternative to dominant representations: it can be used, both, to convey political messages or as a tool for concrete political actions.



Critical map of the geopolitical situation between Morocco and Spain (www.hackitectura.net).



Detail of the "Castor 2011 Action Map" used for protest against the transportation of nuclear waste (www.castor2011.org).

HOW TO ORGANIZE A WORKSHOP ON COLLECTIVE CRITICAL CARTOGRAPHY

We will now present some steps to help you get the mapping process started. If it is a defined issue and delimited in a pre-existing working group, a single day of the workshop may be enough. However, in other situations, more time may be needed. It can also be an ongoing process that continues in future meetings or that is accessible in a specific place so folks can contribute any time.



It all depends on what use you want the mapping process to have in your struggle and on the designated group you'll map with!

« We stay all! », Berlin

HOW TO ORGANIZE A COLLECTIVE CRITICAL CARTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP?

1 The workshop starts way before the workshop. Inform yourself, talk to participants, build relations of trust, learn about different positions and interests within the group. Shut up and listen.

To start, ensure participants receive an invitation addressing everybody's expectations and the different roles within the group. Consent regarding the schedule and deadlines is crucial. For the workshop to function well, participants must be considered (and consider themselves) as decision-makers in the process. Therefore, it is important that the topic and workshop setup aligns with the group's interests.



Boîte à outils pour les ateliers.

Furthermore, it is necessary to agree on the central issue to be represented on the map. Yet, **2** accentuate that the topic can, and should, be viewed from different perspectives applying diverse foci. Equally important is defining the scale of analysis: your street, neighbourhood, city, or indeed the planetary scale. Finally, the users and recipients of the map should be determined. In which practical activities will the map be used? What benefits will users derive from the map?

3 If the group of participants is large, it can be divided into subgroups.

- 4 If possible, organize an excursion to the chosen territory. Take fotos, talk to people, stop to reflect on your impressions, collect some objects, register sounds...



5 Finally, as the “core” of the workshop, all relevant information should be shared and drawn on a large sheet. A simplified map of the defined area can serve as a base. It is worth collecting comments, jokes, exchanges, stories, newspaper articles, flyers, etc., with the aim of integrating them into the map.

Existing cartographic symbols or icons can be used for the legend or new ones can be invented.

- Preparing icons beforehand allows to go fast and stay focused on the topic while making the represented information identifiable. On the other hand, creating new icons collectively offers more freedom in design and encourages participation by opening up the discussion to unexpected contents and perspectives. The actors might identify themselves better with the icons chosen collectively and thus with the map. A combination of pre-existed icons with newly created ones might be the perfect solution for a dynamic participatory process.



Participative map with a plan on top and symbols on the bottom

When working with small groups, debates and information from the groups can subsequently be presented in a joint session and then **6** displayed on the common map.



Atelier Cartografia Social common property operators, South of Brazil, 2010.

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Starting from raw information, anecdotes, and sketches, attempt to group all these elements into thematic categories to be represented visually by icons – see the examples at the end of this manual.

In case visualizing certain information as icons seems just impossible, you can write it on the map within small text boxes. Additionally, graphic elements – arrows, lines, symbols – make the map intuitively graspable. Once you've represented all relevant data on the map, prepare the map key, and potentially enrich it with quotes, photos, drawings, etc.



Cartographie des jardins partagés à Berlin, 2011.

If you have sufficient time, present intermediate versions of the map to everyone, discuss and, if necessary, rework them. Don't be afraid to completely discard an intermediate map. It will be worth starting again. In the process, nothing is in vain!






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Finally, it is up to you to decide collectively whether the process was an end in itself or if the resulting map should be elaborated further or even be laid out to published as a print, digital or online map. In any case, we would be grateful if you could send us a copy or provide us with the link!



Map "solidarity economy", Tübingen 2011.



| Key: | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---|---|
|  | 1. Project |  | 3. Exploitation |
|  | Electricity plant |  | Hydroelectric plants (grey= under construction) |
|  | Unreclaimed mine site |  | Contaminated water basins |
|  | Expulsions and dispossessions |  | Evictions |
|  | Kolla and Diaguita resistance |  | Uprisings and protests |
|  | Self-organized assemblies |  | Meetings of the Union of Citizens' Assemblies (UAC) |
| | |  | Glaciers |
| | |  | Leaks and toxic dust |
| | |  | Criminalization of protest |

Detail from the mapping of opposition to large mining projects in Argentina (www.iconoclasistas.net).

Even though printing or publishing the map digitally is a gratifying moment. Yet, publication is often accompanied by significant risks regarding the data or even the physical safety of the subjects and struggles depicted. A consent decision on publication must be reached within the group. Consider seeing the map as an internal by-product of a shared learning process, which is valuable in itself.

Ikollektiv orangotango has been developing since the 2000s as a network of friends, critical geographers, artists, and activists. Besides co-conducting collective mapping processes, collaborative art-interventions in public space and emancipatory educational processes, we create Not-an-Atlas (notanatlas.org), a global platform of critical cartography. Following the tradition of militant research, we strive to combine theoretical reflections and practical interventions. In line with Paulo Freire's popular education, we facilitate dialogical learning processes. We offer our support to processes of resistance – in youth centers, community gardens, schools, social centers, park benches, favelas, small rural communities, neighborhood initiatives, lecture halls, and elsewhere. For more information and links regarding collective and critical cartography, please visit: **www.orangotango.info**. For critique or further questions: **info@orangotango.info**.

This is a revisited edition of the manual "Kollektives Kritisches Kartieren." We thank both the Iconoclasistas (www.iconoclasistas.net) for the inspiration and preliminary work offered by their "Mapeo collective" and Carlos Julio Sanchez for the drawings on the first and sixth pages (www.facebook.com/carlosjulio.sanchez.5). We also thank Mariasole Pepa for her work on this translation.

Inspiration came as well from workshops« Nova Cartografia Social » of the UniversityUNI Curitiba (Brésil), La Casita (Mendoza, Argentine), from project America Latina Cooperativa / MoveMente (Amérique Latine) and l'Asociación Campesina de Antioquia (Colombie).

Abrazos y saludos para nuestrxs compañerxs! Que sigamos tejiendo lazos de fraternidad y solidaridad en la construcción por un nuevo amanecer!

The writing of the first edition has been supported by « Jugendbildungsnetzwerk der Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung ».

We thank Marie Beggiato for her precious help for translating this manual from german to french !

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So, use this manual, modify it, educate yourselves and others, organize yourselves, and let's start mapping!

FOR THE LEGEND : SYMBOLS & Co.



« Welcome! »

What can not be easily presented with symbols, finds its place on a sign. Why a map could not be bilingual ?

In these pages, we present a set of icons that could inspire you or even be used in your mapping process. These symbols come from the urban community gardens cartography workshop in Berlin (p. 8-9). The map created on this occasion is on the back of this page.



Compost



Seed multiplication



Resistant urban gardens



Beekeeping



Waste-related issues



Water access point
Self-production instead of supermarkets



Cooperation with other gardens

With arrows or thought bubbles, exchanges, relationships, or opinions can be represented.



Kitchens



Public accesses



Problem



«Point of sale»

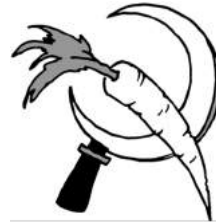
These symbols have been used in our book "Solidarity Spaces and Cooperative Perspectives" ("Solidarische Räume und kooperative Perspektiven", AG Spak, 2010)



discussion



Creative protest



Solidarity agriculture



Self-managed social center



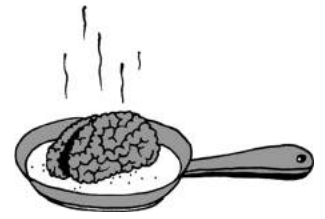
Media activism



coopération



Solidarity economy



Critical reflection

The following icons are the result of a cartography workshop done with representatives of different collectives (Oase, Fusion 2012).



Borderless cooperation



Party collective



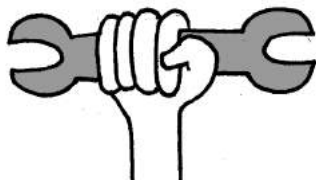
Anti-capitalism



LGBTQI community



Alternative housing



Cooperative workshops



Community kitchen



Student demonstrations