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Helena Attenerer · Olaf Kühne · Timo Sedelmeier

Maps as Media Constructs

Exploring Theory, Practice,
Critique, and
Neopragmatism

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Preface

This book fills a gap in the textbook and handbook segment by taking an introductory look at cartographic representations as multimedia constructs, from theory to critique to neopragmatist perspectives and in practice. It offers an interdisciplinary analysis from the fields of media and communication studies as well as geography and cartography to examine how cartographic representations as constructions of multimedia shape our options for appropriating space and possessing space-generating qualities. Examples from current social discourses such as the COVID-19 pandemic, debates on climate change and sustainability plus the war in Ukraine show how multimedia cartographic representations are part of the communicative negotiation processes in public media spheres. The book offers insights into the theoretical foundations, historical developments, and practical applications of cartography, with a particular focus on the critical reflection of power structures and interests. It is aimed at students, researchers, and teachers, thereby inviting each to understand maps not only as technical artifacts but also as complex multimedia constructions.

Tübingen, Germany

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Contents

1	Introduction	1
	References	5
2	Cartographic Representations: As Complex Constructions of (Multi)Media	7
2.1	Interdisciplinary Interactions: Spaces, Places, Media, and Communication	8
2.2	Multimedia Cartography	13
	References	17
3	Cartographic Representation Overview: History and Theoretical Classification	21
3.1	Proto-Conventional Precursors of Cartography	22
3.2	‘Traditional’ Cartography	22
3.3	Critical Cartography	23
	References	24
4	Projections, Scales, and Coordinates: Three-Dimensional Bodies on Two-Dimensional Planes?	27
4.1	Introduction	27
4.2	Flattening the Sphere: Projections, What They Can—and Cannot—Achieve	29
4.3	The UTM System: Coordinates for Small-Scale Representations	34
	References	36
5	Cartographic Coding	37
5.1	Four Principles of Cartography	38
5.2	Depicting ‘Things’ and Making them Understandable: The Language of Symbolology	38
5.3	Selecting the ‘Relevant’ and Implementing Representation by Means of Generalization	41
5.4	Beyond the Classic Map: New Representation Options	44
	References	46

6	Power and Cartographic Representations	49
6.1	Power: Some Basic Considerations	50
6.2	Cartography and Political Systems	51
6.3	Critical Cartography: Power-Bound Nature of Maps as a Constitutive Element	53
6.4	Multidimensional Relationships of Power and Cartography: A Semiotic Model Approach	54
6.5	Case Studies: Cartography and Power	57
6.5.1	Cartographic Representations and Color Vision Impairment	57
6.5.2	‘Wheelmap’ as an Expression of Efforts to Be Inclusive	57
6.5.3	Cartographic Military Implementation: Soviet Maps of ‘Enemy States’	60
6.5.4	Representing Power and Manipulation in Cartography: Distribution of EU GDP	61
6.5.5	News Media and News Cartography: Representations of Migrations, Borders, and Wars?	63
	References	67
7	The Postcritical Critique of Critical Cartography and the Neopragmatist Redescription of Cartography	71
7.1	Neopragmatism as the Basis of the Critique of Critical Cartography	72
7.2	Neopragmatist Cartography as Redescription	73
	References	77
8	Conclusion	79
	Reference	82
	Appendix	83
	Bibliography	95

Chapter 1

Introduction



Abstract Cartographic representations are not merely instruments for navigation; rather, they are multifaceted media constructs that redefine space and place, shape perceptions, and serve as both the product and the producer of power structures. This book undertakes an analysis of cartography at the intersection of media studies, communication studies, and geography, examining historical developments and theoretical taxonomies, with a particular focus on the role of critical and post-critical cartography. The present volume employs a neopragmatist approach to encourage critical reflection as well as practical application and usefulness, thereby promoting a more profound comprehension of maps as intricate media constructs. The book is intended for students and researchers seeking to explore cartography from an interdisciplinary vantage point.

Keywords Cartography · Media geographies · Media studies · Communication studies · Geography · Critical cartography · Postcritical cartography · Social constructivism · Neopragmatism · Thematic cartography · Geomedia

Cartography can be understood as the translation of 'something' in (its) spatial arrangement into 'something else' which represents that 'something' in its spatial arrangement, especially in an abstracted form. In the past, the result of this translation consisted mainly of a two-dimensional form (paper maps), later three-dimensional forms (e.g., reliefs) were added, and today virtual and augmented realities are also gaining in importance. The translation is generally based on modifiable technical conventions. The development of cartography as a science can therefore be understood as an attempt to master the everyday challenge of being able to orientate oneself in a (physical) space.

However, cartographic representations are more than mere tools for navigation or a means of visualizing (geographical) data and basic relationships. They are (increasingly) multimedia constructions that shape our perception of spaces and places, influence processes of spatial appropriation and thus have space-generating qualities. Media as the 'go-between' or 'intermediary' are directly linked to the