

Critical cartography as anarchist pedagogy? Ideas for praxis inspired by the 56a infoshop map archive

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Abstract

Critical cartography is a methodology and pedagogy that begins from the premise that maps are embodiments of power. It advocates utopian possibilities for other mapping practices, providing tools for communities to spatially illustrate their struggles whilst reconstituting social bonds through collective knowledge production. Whilst critical cartographers gesture towards activist initiatives, a lot of the literature focuses mainly on theory and is light on alternative practices, failing to explore their pedagogical and transformative value. Furthermore, those literatures that do study practice tend to focus on 'counter-mapping', for example enabling indigenous communities to make resource claims. Such practices undoubtedly have progressive uses but have also been criticized for investing in dominant spatial practice and for perpetuating exclusions and hierarchies. This paper argues for a critical cartographic practice based on an anarchist ethos of anti- rather than counter-hegemony, drawing ideas of cartographic pedagogy as affect, affinity and performativity. Furthermore it argues that such practices already exist and ought to be expanded. Using David Graeber's ethnographic methodology of 'utopian extrapolation' the paper will draw on material found in the 'map archive' of the 56a infoshop in London to begin to inspire and imagine an anarchist cartographic pedagogy.

Key Words: Anarchism, cartography, mapping, pedagogy, Infoshops, radical archives, London.

Introduction

Critical cartography as a methodology, and pedagogical methods involving alternative mapping practices, have become increasingly prominent over the last two decades, particularly in human geography literatures, but also intersecting with a range of fields including education (Kitchens 2009; Ruitenbergh 2007) and art theory (Cosgrove 2006; Kanarinka 2006). This interdisciplinary paper aims to explore the potential to use critical cartography as a participatory pedagogical method for working with anarchistic groups and autonomous social movements, defined as groups that organize anti-hierarchically, are independent from traditional political parties and trade unions, and are self-managed and oriented towards the transformation of everyday life, rather than appealing to reform from above (Katsiaficas 2007, 7-8; Counter Cartographies Collective, Dalton and Mason-Deese 2012, 444). They operate in and through utopian spaces such as direct action protests, occupied protest sites, autonomous social centres and squatted buildings. Examples

include the alter-globalization movement, urban social movements across Latin America and the Occupy movement, all of which draw on diverse ideas of anarchism and autonomy (ibid, 444) as well as more localized sites and spaces that follow these ethics, such as the 195 Mare Street squatted social centre in Hackney¹. Such groups have raised issues for methodologies and methods which have tended to recuperate and colonize their radical potential and transgressive otherness by reducing their activities to the terms of existing discourses and structures (Bevington and Dixon 2005; Motta 2011; Firth 2013). Anarchistic mapping practices might also be used to inspire non-hierarchical, non-vanguardist pedagogical spaces within existing institutions such as schools and universities.

The paper argues that critical cartography, as a methodology that has both pedagogical and utopian-performative aspects, has particular affinities with anarchist theory and organization. The primary question informing the paper is: What does cartography (as a pedagogical process) have to offer anarchism (as a movement)? This can be disaggregated into the following, smaller questions: what might an anarchist, anti-hegemonic cartography look like? How might we study this? How might we use it to effect social change? The aim is to critique and build on existing theories and practices to develop anarchist critical cartography as a methodology and method.

The paper begins with a brief review of existing research using participatory cartographic methodologies, which are critiqued and developed from the perspective of anarchist theory. The paper goes on to outline an approach for studying existing anarchist mapping practices based on David Graeber's procedure of 'utopian extrapolation' and a theoretical framework inspired by anarchist and post-structuralist concepts of 'affect', 'affinity' and 'the performative'. The paper then considers possibilities for praxis and method, undertaking an exercise in utopian extrapolation, inspired by maps in the map archive at the 56a infoshop in London, to formulate some suggestions for practical pedagogies inspired by but transgressing existing anarchist mapping practices. Map-making is a potentially useful pedagogy because it can facilitate learners to understand, in spatial terms, how power claims can be asserted as truth and the effects that this has on everyday lives, as well as empowering them to spatially illustrate their own struggles and desires. Furthermore, the process of map-making can be at least as important as the produced maps, building collectivity between participants (Counter Cartographies Collective, Dalton and Mason-Deese 2012, 441-44). The purpose of the present paper is to begin from an account of spontaneous mapping practices occurring in a local anarchist space, in dialogue with existing theory, and based on this exposition to offer practical pointers for those wishing to set up new utopian mapping spaces as part of a research or pedagogical praxis.

¹ During the writing of this paper, I facilitated a critical cartography workshop loosely based on principles outlined in this paper at 195 Mare Street, and would like to thank participants for their discussion and feedback.

Critical cartography

Critical cartography is a methodology that arises at the interstices of critical theory and human geography, proceeding from a critique of the alleged scientific status of the discipline of cartography and the value-neutrality of maps and map-making practices. As a methodology it encompasses negative critique and a positive, utopian method, defined by Crampton and Krygier (2006, 12) as “a one-two punch of new mapping practices and theoretical critique”. This definition implies affinities with both epistemological and political anarchism, insofar as the theoretical and practiced aspects of critique and change are mutually complementary and necessary: ‘if the map is a specific set of power-knowledge claims, then not only the state but others could make competing and equally powerful claims’ (ibid, 12). Instead of participating in the academic discipline of cartography’s search for ever-more authentic, factual or meticulous representations of pre-existing reality, ‘critical cartography assumes that maps *make* reality as much as they represent it’ (ibid, 15). Further, critical cartography pays attention not only to maps themselves, but the meta-practices and processes by which they are produced: ‘some maps, by their design, preclude empowerment because of the erasures, silences and gaps inherent to that design’ (Eades 2011), whilst ‘this conceptualization of maps necessitates an epistemology that concentrates on how maps emerge’ (Kitchin, Perkins and Dodge 2009, 21).

Thus critical cartography transgresses the ‘ontic knowledge’ of traditional cartography which consists of ‘the examination of how a topic should proceed from within its own framework where the ontological assumptions about how the world can be known and measured are securely beyond doubt’ (ibid, 11). This has much in common with human and social geographic approaches more generally, yet in critical cartography these examinations do not proceed only on the theoretical plane but also in the realm of praxis: ‘Mapping can then be conceptualised as a suite of cultural practices involving action and affects’ (ibid, 17). Critical cartography thus provides alternatives to disembodied, abstract practices of dominant geographic knowledge through the perspective of embodied experience: ‘Maps do not then emerge in the same way for all individuals. Rather they emerge in contexts and through a mix of creative, tactile, and habitual practices’ (ibid, 21). This assumes a multiplicity of valid perspectives and partial knowledges, and thus is potentially a non-vanguardist approach to knowledge production and social change, implying strong resonance with anarchism.

Despite the emphasis on alternative mappings, much of the literature (e.g. Crampton 2001 and 2010; Harley 1989; Pickles 2004; Wood 1992) is based mainly in theoretical critique and is light on alternative practices or practical guidance. Theoretical expositions highlight why it is important to contest dominant mapping practices. Maps mark out ownership and control of land, resources and commodities (Pickles 2004, 7) inscribe boundaries, identities and subjectivities (ibid, 12; Piper 2002), they contribute to the ideological formation

of communities, and they are deeply implicated in the colonial project and the rise of capitalism (Pickles 2004, 13; Huggan 1991).

Whilst critical cartography literatures are theory-heavy, a small collection of literatures recounting alternative practices has also arisen, the most prominent of which is a variety of participatory action research called 'counter-mapping' (e.g. Peluso 1995; Bennagen and Royo (eds.) 2000; Harris and Hazen 2006; Denniston 1994; Briosis, Tsing and Zerner (eds.) 2005; Sletto 2009). Counter-mapping has emerged as a participatory approach to international planning, development and conservation particularly in the Global South, and is argued to have progressive potential for subordinate and marginalised groups. In practice it is largely used by NGO and academic researchers as a method for working with indigenous communities to make land and resource claims.

Whilst such practices are undoubtedly indispensable in asserting local and indigenous rights against the encroachments and enclosures of state and capital, they should also be problematised for the risk of 'using the master's (blunt) tools to frame the infinite complexity of local places and peoples on the planet within a two-dimensional global grid of property rights and political authority' (Roucheleau 2005, 327). Counter-mapping, like dominant practices of mapping, can involve presenting a single representation of 'often divergent, imagined futures' (Sletto 2009, 444). This can be a necessary strategic act when attempting to make rights or resource claims to hierarchical entities such as states or trade organizations, yet also implies perpetuating and legitimating such structures, which is a particular problem when working and acting with anarchist groups and movements. This is not to say that alternative mapping practices do not have a place in anarchist movements and studies. Anarchist groups and social movements already use cartographies as ways of producing and communicating knowledge, yet these have rarely been accounted for in the academy (notable exceptions include Cobarrubias and Pickles 2009; Counter Cartographies Collective, Craig Dalton and Liz Mason-Deese 2012; Holmes 2002 and 2003).

Anarchist cartographic pedagogy

In trying to think through anarchist alternatives to counter-mapping, it is useful to examine the distinction between counter- and anti-hegemony. Counter-hegemony, as conceptualised by Richard Day, refers to the idea that social change can only be achieved either through simultaneous mass revolution, or through influencing state power through pluralistic processes of co-operation and conflict (Day 2005, 8). These strategies – Marxist and Liberal/postmarxist respectively, imply both an organizational form and an approach to knowledge production that rest on assumptions of unified voice or 'truth' that can speak *as* or *to* power, through vanguards or representatives. Anti-hegemony refers to processes of radical change that do not seek to take nor influence state power, but rather act autonomously by creating alternatives in the here-and-now (Day 2005: 8). A core strategy of anti-hegemonic organization and knowledge

production is through ‘utopias’ (Coté, Day and de Peuter 2007, 5) conceptualised not as totalising blueprints for a future perfect society, but rather as processes of creating ‘spaces for becoming – through resistance, hope, and reconstruction in the here-and-now’ (ibid, 3).

Creating utopias has always been an important aspect of anarchist organization, not least because it is a potentially non-hierarchical approach to social change that does not rely on vanguards or mass politics. Furthermore, an oft-neglected aspect of utopias is their pedagogical value – practicing new ways of living and relating can help us to ‘unlearn’ dominant knowledge practices. Utopias give us a glimpse of a ‘pedagogical *Other*’ (Burdick and Sandlin 2010: 349) which acts to de-essentialise, critique and transgress taken-for-granted educational and cultural assumptions, institutions, discourses and mores (Sargisson 2000). Utopian experiments are anti-hegemonic because they emphasise learning through practice and embodied experience rather than through abstract theory and fixed curricula handed down by ‘experts’ (Ellsworth 2005: 1). They create pedagogy at a micro-social, embodied level utilising functions that can be partially understood through concepts of affect, affinity and performativity.

‘Affect’ as a core aspect of my conceptualization of anarchist cartographic pedagogy is drawn from Deleuzian theory (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, 265 and *passim*). The term refers to an intensity of experience that exceeds individualised emotions and feelings, drawing attention to the ways in which desire flows through and changes multiplicities including peoples, groups and the spatial environment (de Acosta 2006, 28; Thrift 2004, 60). These theories suggest that *desire* should be a focus for pedagogic transformation because of the important role of emotional and affective factors such as need, desire, hope and love in mobilising social change against purely rationalistic and scientific theories (Routledge 2009, 87; Zembylas 2007). Such an approach treats the pedagogical moment as becoming-other (Kitchens 2009, 224; Motta 2013) rather than imbuing fixed knowledge within a fixed being, cultivating awareness of multiple perspectives on processes of alienation so as to open one’s own perception to the perspectives, traumas and oppressions of others (Boler 1999, 185; Zembylas 2006, 306). ‘Affinity’ is a term drawn from activist praxis that refers to a way of relating and organising in non-hierarchical and mutually supportive and nurturing relationships whilst refusing hegemonic or fixed identity categories (Day 2005, 181; Routledge 2009, 85).

Maps have the potential to create, visibilise, communicate, and enact local and decentralised knowledge (Turnbull 2000, 13), but this need not be an appeal to power as is the case with ‘counter-mapping’ practices. Rather, it can be a way of linking multiple spaces and practices through the network form (Cobarrubias and Pickles 2009, 53) using bonds of affinity, without positing overarching hegemony or commensurability (Goyens 2009, 445). ‘Performativity’ refers to the potential to construct or perform new realities or understandings through actions, language or indeed maps (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, 14). Producing and using maps in the mainstream sense already mobilises performativity rather than purely cognitive skill, yet there is a tendency to disguise this element

behind 'truth' claims and scientific status (Krygier 2006, 41). Anarchist mapping pedagogy parodies and transgresses the alleged scientific and purely representational status of mainstream maps, whilst seeking to surprise, provoke and propose alternatives (Crampton 2009, 841). Anti-hegemonic maps are utopian in this sense, that they do not simply reflect or represent the world – either in the dominant sense or by positing a counter-hegemony – but rather bring new worlds into being through transgression and active creation. This leads to possibilities for imagining critical cartography as pedagogy where 'pedagogy is politics by other means' (Castree et. al. 2008, 682). Understanding the performative aspects of alternative mapping practices links pedagogy to social change: the process of mapping has the potential to reconstitute subjectivities through affective learning, to reconstitute social bonds through affinity and to act as a basis for bringing new worlds into being.

This article itself also hopes to fulfil a utopian performative function, using an approach inspired by David Graeber's 'utopian extrapolation'. This involves 'teasing out the logic or principles underlying certain forms of radical practice, and then, not only offering the analysis back to those communities, but using them to formulate new visions' (Graeber 2009: 112). The approach is similar to that taken by other anarchist writers such as Colin Ward (1973) and earlier, Kropotkin (1987). This is based on the assumption that ethnographic research is useful: first, in creating movement-relevant research, whilst avoiding intellectual vanguardism (Graeber 2004: 12, Bevington and Dixon 2005; Motta 2011) and second, in visibilising and valourising marginal and hidden practices in the hope that they are taken up in other, new and different ways.

My hope in this paper is that by discussing, making visible and theorising anarchist mapping practices in a utopian space, I might be able to inspire others to undertake similar practices, opening up utopian spaces elsewhere. For this reason the paper uses a dialogue between existing theories and practices to formulate some practical pointers for critical educators and activist-scholars who may wish to develop their own cartographic workshops with social movements or within existing institutions. My interest in writing this paper arose from my own desire to facilitate cartographic workshops in the various critical spaces I sometimes inhabit, including radical social centres, occupied and protest sites, academic conferences, university seminars and lectures. Looking for inspiration in the literature I found there was a dearth of practical guidance, so I sought out other sources of inspiration. This led me to the 56a infoshop, where I found the map archive and conversations with activists a fruitful starting point for developing my own praxis.

56a map archive²

The 56a infoshop is on Crampton Street, near the Elephant and Castle underground station in South London. It is a Do-it-Yourself social centre run on anarchist principles. The building was originally squatted in 1988 and opened up as Fareshares Food Co-operative, and the 56a Infoshop was created in the backroom in June 1991. The two groups still share the space, which is now legally rented since 2003, with the food co-operative occupying the space at the front of the building and the infoshop using a room with tea-making and restroom facilities at the back of the space. A cycle workshop is held outside during opening hours. The infoshop hosts a large archive of radical books, pamphlets, posters, zines and other cultural materials. These are largely drawn from the anarchist tradition but also include feminist, queer, ecology movement, Marxist and libertarian texts.

Hidden on a bottom shelf in a dark corner is a large, old-fashioned case full of maps, referred to as the 'map archive'. The map archive arose out of the 'You Are Here but Why?' map festival held in June 2005. The festival was a free-form event held within and beyond the infoshop. A programme of events was organised by a small map festival collective with a lot of space for participants to also contribute what they wanted to see. This included hosting a 'map room' gallery of maps, collective mapping workshops, radical history walks, collective wandering, map-drawings and discussions. Prior to the festival there was a small collection of hand-drawn maps called 'The Map Room (is open)', which was about the size of a document wallet. These maps became the basis of the festival map exhibition. After the festival, any maps that were contributed from its duration were added to the archive. Other versions of the map festival, inspired and part-organised by 56a members took place worldwide, for example in Trento, Italy and Sao Paulo, Brazil, and maps from these events were added to the archive too. Since then, visitors and members of 56a have been encouraged to add maps to the archive that are found or created.

On top of the map archive box is a big yellow card that describes the map archive, lists some types of maps that it includes, the archive's history beginning with the festival and signals towards how the maps might be used: 'It functions to build a collection of different guides to towns, cities, and treasure islands that can be taken away for free by travellers. Not every map is as useful as a topological map but you might have some interesting adventures and meetings from some of our maps'. The map archive contains several hundred, perhaps up to a thousand, variously hand-drawn, printed and published maps³, booklets

² The following section is based on several afternoons spent at the 56a infoshop working on the map archive and holding informal conversations with volunteers, in particular Chris who maintains the map archive, and initiated the 2005 mapping festival that the archive grew from. Information has also been drawn from the 56a infoshop website at <http://www.56a.org.uk/> last accessed 26 June 2013.

³ I have attempted to supply reference information for professionally produced maps mentioned herein, although this was not always available.

containing maps, map posters and a small number of map-related books. Some of the maps are filed into folders with the following categories: 'Walks', 'pre-printed, personal etc.', 'radical maps/researches', 'self-location', 'hand-done maps (cities etc.)', 'you are here but why? Map festival UK, Malia, Brazil etc.', 'large-scale and artistic', 'diagrams' 'scientific/physical, etc.', and a couple of 'miscellaneous' and unlabelled folders. About the same number of maps remain loose in the box, un-filed and un-categorised. In discussion with 56a volunteers I was told that the filing categories are currently not felt to be very useful, and there are plans to re-order them, as well as to build a full online catalogue of maps.

The use of the map archive as the basis for an academic paper raises some specific ethical and methodological issues due to the unusual nature of the 'data' and of the knowledge produced. Traditional understandings and uses of research data tend to reflect individualised capitalistic modes of property ownership, with, for example, interviews requiring a consent form which hands over 'ownership' of the data from the participant to the researcher in a relation resembling the transference of property rights. Since the map archive contains contributions from multiple anonymous participants in different circumstances, for varied and ultimately unknown reasons over time, it is impossible to trace individual contributors and indeed contradictory to the purpose of the archive as a collective enterprise.

I engaged in conversations about the research with volunteers at the infoshop, and in particular with Chris, who initiated the festival of mapping and maintains the archive. Whilst volunteers expressed support, and helped me greatly by providing invaluable information about the archive, I was told that the archive was a 'public place' and that therefore it was not up to any particular individual to give permission. Even were official 'consent' to be obtained from anyone at the infoshop this would be almost meaningless considering the nature and ethos of the archive practice, created by multiple anonymous participants for public access, to which formal notions of individual ownership and control would not seem to apply. Nonetheless, the nature of academic knowledge means that this article might be partially recuperated into the capitalist domain. As the researcher I have been paid for my time in producing the article, and academic knowledge is frequently used for profit-making and hegemonic purposes.

However, there is an ethical basis for communicating the maps in this way. If, as would seem to be the case from materials about the archive on the 56a website and within the archive itself (discussed later), the maps are intended at least in part as disruptions and interventions in cartography and politics, then bringing them to the attention of a wider sympathetic audience might be partially justified. Yet in doing so practices of intellectual vanguardism ought to be avoided. Rather than attempting to colonize or objectify these practices, one might 'offer those ideas back, not as prescriptions, but as contributions, possibilities – as gifts' (Graeber 2004, 12), whilst also communicating these practices more widely in the hope of opening up possibilities for new, non-hierarchical utopian spaces (Graeber 2009, 112). This echoes arguments in

social movement research that research should be relevant to the movements themselves (Bevington and Dixon 2005; Motta 2011), whilst Routledge (2003) argues that research concerning the work of resisting others should be shared with those others prior to publication. This latter point has not been entirely possible since the 'resisting others' are untraceable, yet in solidarity, I have chosen to publish the article in this open access journal, with an intended readership including radical academics and activists, and will contribute a printed copy to the archive.

Thinking about how to describe or communicate the maps herein has been a difficult task, since representing them as fixed knowledge is somewhat in tension to the approach I wish to take. Furthermore, spending a lot of time with the maps gave me a strong feeling that maps communicate something that cannot be expressed in words, and that one could write a paper on each individual map and still not fully capture its essence – each map is in a 'category' of its own in this sense. Nonetheless, I think that it is a worthwhile and not entirely contradictory task to identify various loose categories of maps in terms of their pedagogic functions, in order to further explore the kinds of knowledge produced in the maps and the ways they might mobilise learning and change. My hope is that in writing this, others may be inspired to go and look at the maps in 56a themselves, and to create their own maps and ways of working with maps.

Whilst working through the maps in the archive, some of the functional categories that I identified reflect themes, ideas and concepts that already exist within various (sometimes unintegrated) literatures on mapping. Other maps seem to merit the creation of new mapping categories and concepts. Many other categories besides those I outline below are possible, and most of the maps overlap and exceed this categorization. Furthermore, some types of maps that existed in the archive, particularly those in the 'scientific/physical' folder and one miscellaneous folder have not been included. These functioned more as examples of dominant mapping practices than utopian alternatives, for example there were various topographic, Ordnance Survey and Automobile Association maps of various places⁴. Critiques of such maps already exist in the literature, yet their presence in the context perhaps functions as critique through absurdism, making the familiar seem strange by juxtaposing with transgressive maps, and mobilises the production of situated critical knowledge. For each category that I identify below, I describe some examples, signal to corresponding literatures, and attempt to interpret and highlight utopian pedagogical functions of affect, affinity and performativity. Nonetheless, these

⁴ The presence of these maps may also be explained by their use-value for navigation, coupled with the fact that the one of the archive's intended functions is as a kind of library for participants to borrow maps. The potential to create maps with high navigational use-value using anarchist methods could be the topic of another paper. Useful starting points might include Colin Ward's (1973, 59-66) studies of anarchist planning methods, David Turnbull's (2000, 163-164) study of non-centralised Pacific navigation techniques, Bruce Chatwin's (1998) account of Aboriginal oral mapping techniques, and studies into potentially participatory technologies such as GIS (e.g. Dunn 2007).

categories should be understood to be explorative rather than definitive; they are intended to open up existing ideas of mapping practice to difference and critique through illustrating alternatives rather than fixing or limiting other possibilities.

Geopolitical Maps

Several maps spoke to a category, identified by Cobarrubias and Pickles (2009, 36) as 'geopolitical mappings'. There were many such examples in the archive, most of which were professionally produced by radical activist research groupings. One example, produced by Preemptive Media (2006) was entitled 'Fossil Fuel map' showing supply routes of oil, coal and gas along with production and consumption statistics, lists of top producing countries for each resource, top consuming countries, top importers to the US, top CO2 emitters and other facts and figures. A map produced by Bureau d'études and Université Tangente (2003) called 'infospace, infowar' focuses on global information infrastructure and the governmentality of information. A further map with a more local focus, yet which signals to global influences and dynamics, is the 'Countermapping Queen Mary' campus map, with a board-game on the reverse that tracks border policy, labour conditions on campus and resistance movements. It purports to be "a visual representation of the ways in which the university functions as a knowledge factory but also as a border" (3Cs Counter Cartographies Collective 2013), and draws connections between the borders, institutions and regulatory systems that operate in and around the university. Aside from these three notable examples, there were several other published and professionally produced maps which shared the similar functions of representing and visibilising power/discourse networks or structures, with or without spatial ordering.

Such maps are produced by collectives including academics, activists, students, migrants and workers (Counter Cartographies Collective, Dalton and Mason-Deese 2012, 441-443). The process of collectively producing these maps is seen to be important (ibid, 443) yet they also have a wider function as "efforts to understand global processes and the constitution of power and empire" (Cobarrubias and Pickles 2009, 36; see also Holmes 2006; Holmes 2002). The maps can visibilise systemic oppression, giving people an understanding of the forces that shape their lives, and also offering a knowledge-base for actions of resistance. Jameson (1991, 54) sheds light on the affective pedagogic function of this cartographic aesthetic (which he terms 'cognitive mapping'), arguing that it 'seeks to endow the individual subject with some new heightened sense of its place in the global system' (ibid, 54). This embodied, affective function is a basis for a performative function, simultaneously representing the 'truth of postmodernism ... the world space of multinational capital' whilst reforming resistant individual and collective subjects who 'regain a capacity to act and struggle which is at present neutralised by our spatial as well as our social confusion' (ibid, 54).

There are some potential problematics revealed by Jameson's discourse of representing truth. It assumes a single vision and unified interpretation of truth, which might veer somewhat towards counter- rather than anti-hegemony, and furthermore in the assumption that highlighting oppressive structures might automatically read-off into social change. Discussions at the infoshop raised the issues that the sheer amount of information presented in such maps, as well as the use of technology to produce them, can seem alienating and confusing, and questions were raised over how the maps might be used (see also Holmes 2002). There is a danger that when the maps are moved from the situated context in which they are produced to a wider audience their pedagogical function might veer towards vanguardism, as they offer little opportunity for potential map-users to insert their own interpretations or transgressions. Nonetheless, the sheer variety of information produced by collectives such as Bureau d'études⁵ functions as a radical transgression of dominant mapping practices, highlighting exclusions and elisions in maps that claim to be fixed representations of spatial practice.

Collective walks and radical history trails

I did not find any maps in the archive that reflected the literatures on counter-mapping, which was perhaps to be expected due to the nature of the archive, which is not situated in a manner intended to make claims from powerful agencies. Nonetheless, several maps of specific areas and spaces existed, whilst their intended functions transgressed the marking out of territories, boundaries and resources. The published Manchester Free Social Foundations map (McCloskey, Sullivan and Yuill 2008) explores the current condition of spaces of free and open assembly in Manchester, comparing spaces created by the public themselves and those created for public use. The map links areas with stories from local residents and working class oral histories gained through interviews. This map seems to function as a protest against gentrification, countering discourses of enclosed, privatised, commercial 'public' space with grassroots practices of commoning (Midnight Notes Collective 1990). Conversations in the infoshop highlighted that such maps do not need to be published like this one, and indeed often a similar function is served without any paper map being produced at all through collective walking through landscapes that have taken place around the infoshop and elsewhere. These walks lead to conversations and mutual learning together in the territory. Themes for discussion can include spaces that have disappeared or are in danger of being lost due to regeneration, mapping contemporary life and how it is informed by what happened in the past and what may happen in the future⁶.

⁵ See Bureau d'études at <http://bureaudetudes.org/> accessed 26 June 2013

⁶ Several projects and events linking walking, art and politics in this way are documented on the Southwark Notes website: <http://southwarknotes.wordpress.com> accessed 26 June 2013.



Figure 1: Camberwell Hidden History map



Figure 2: Southwark Radical History map



Figure 3: Detail from Southwark Radical History map

The practice of critical learning through walking was also reflected in the archive through a large number of published and hand-drawn radical history trails and walks. Indeed, this was perhaps the most visible category in the archive. Examples included a London Sugar and Slavery map (London Docklands Museum 2005), produced by the Docklands museum and a Glasgow West-end women's heritage walk. There was also a series of hand-drawn or hand-printed maps including writing and picture collage showing radical histories of Camberwell, Southwark, Elephant and Castle and Hammersmith. Whilst these maps were hand-made originals they were very clear and detailed, produced as though for photocopying and distribution. These radical history trails, like counter-mappings, visibilise marginal histories and worldviews, yet unlike counter-maps they are not produced to make claims against powerful structures, but rather place emphasis on immanent performativity and utopian pedagogy. In this case, somewhat conversely to geopolitical mappings, the affective function follows rather than precedes the performative function: the maps are made to be followed whilst the user learns through direct affective experience within the architecture and landscape itself (Ellsworth 2005) about marginal voices, positionalities and histories. The affective potential of cartographic discourse and practice reflects concerns of the Situationists (Pinder 1996) who demanded that attention be paid to the embodied aspects of alienation (Vaneigem 2006, 34) and that resistance also begin at the scale of embodiment and everyday life, through practices such as the *dérive*: a

psychogeographical wandering alone or in groups through the urban environment seen to constitute a process of dis-alienation and resistance (Debord 1956). Members of the infoshop explicitly mentioned the influence of the Situationists as inspiration for mapping and walking practices.

Art Maps

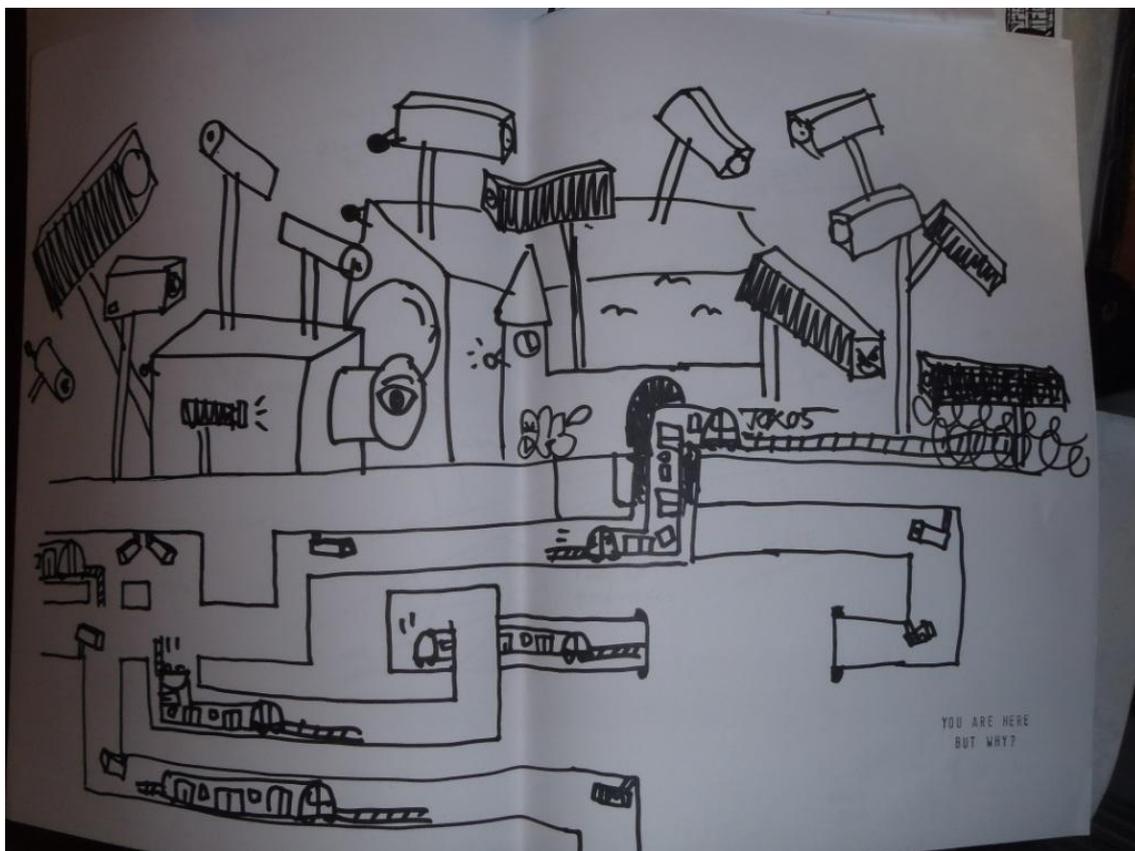


Figure 4: Artistic CCTV map

A whole folder was dedicated to ‘artistic’ maps, mostly containing images with no words or labels, often parodying traditional maps in humorous or unusual styles. An example included a series of photographs of stones, drift-wood, seaweed and other beach materials laid out on a sandy beach in streets and pathways, with bridges and buildings. Another map pictured above showed images of intertwined streets that were exaggeratedly twisty and overlapping, with over-sized CCTV cameras sprouting from the roadsides like trees. These maps raise issues of irony, using absurd or subversive mapping criteria, visibilising the arbitrariness and false authority of mapping conventions by mobilising affects such as humour, nostalgia and dissonance. The maps also potentially have a performative function of subverting dominant habits and opening routes for experimenting with new ways of seeing. They raise critical awareness and act as pedagogies showing the constructedness and

constructability of reality. Art maps again reflect themes in Situationist literatures, calling for a fusion of art, politics and life in a 'project of a liberated creativity' (Debord 1963), through techniques such as *détournement* which subverts and parodies mainstream representations by bringing them into new combinations and contexts, thereby devalourising them in order to begin to create new values (Jorn 1959).

Practical maps and immanent utopias

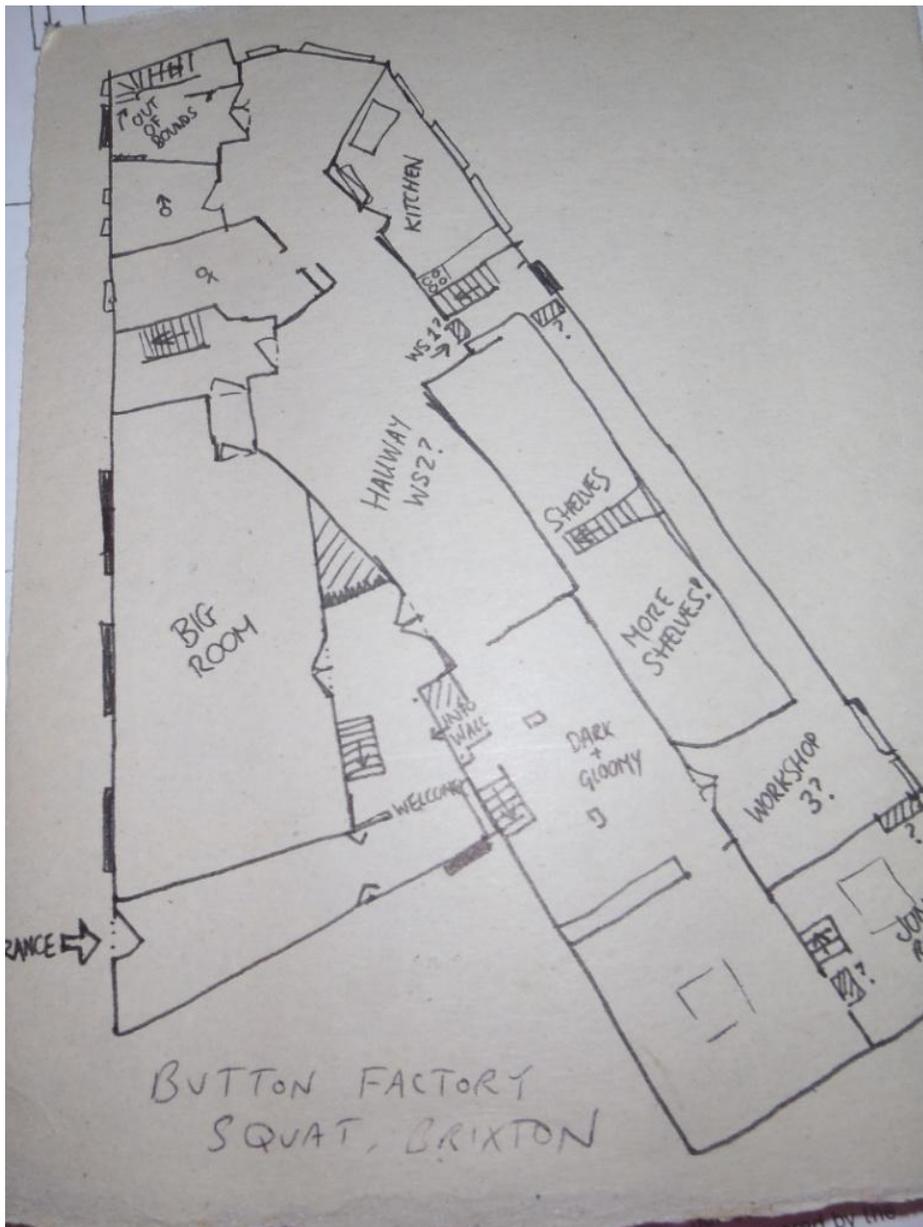


Figure 5: Button Factory Squat plan



Figure 6: Elephant and Castle Urban Forest map

Notable for their absence were explicitly utopian maps, or maps expressing future-oriented fantasies or articulations of revolutionary desires in spatial form. Nonetheless, there were several examples of maps expressing utopian desire for creating and/or visibilising alternative spaces. This category included a hand-drawn, photocopied 'local food map', showing the locations of edible plants in the local area and the times of year that they can be collected, sites for foraging, along with sites for viewing various types of wildlife. Similarly, pictured above was an 'urban forest' map, which also signalled to spaces of wildlife and food for foraging in the context of plans for regeneration. Another example was a hand-drawn map seemingly from memory of a section of the river Thames, showing various bridges labelled: 'Grosvenor train bridge', 'Chewed bridge', 'Albert bridge' and 'Battersea bridge'. Battersea power station is also marked. The map marks out stairs and access points to the Thames, signalling where these are locked and also where they are monitored by CCTV.

A folder entitled 'queer maps' contained hand-drawn maps of several cities, marked with venues and spaces, claiming on the front to offer 'party plans'. Another example was a photocopy of an architectural ground-plan of a large building, which was presumably squatted (or planned to be) as a social centre, which has been marked up with highlighter pens and ballpoint. Various areas have been highlighted and labelled with new functions, including café; back of



Figure 8: Buenos Aires points of interest map

Several maps in the archive had functions that emphasised highly personal aspects of knowledge production, and might be termed, following Iturroiz and Wachowicz (2010) ‘affective cartographies’, designating maps which ‘recognise and point out those places that bear subjective meaning for us’ (Iturroiz and Wachowicz 2010, 75). These included a map entitled “Rio downtown June 2010”. The map labels various road names along with areas and drawn buildings and signals to “prostitutes”, “cops with guns”, “tourist Boutiques”, “clubs”, “trash sellers”, “Salad Bar Gloria (falafel)”, “Cine Landia (beer falafel)”, “Art zone” and “supermarket”. A Buenos Aires ‘points of interest’ map, drawn on a napkin and pictured above, claims to show what happened when official tourist maps were abandoned and more spontaneous adventures & local knowledges were mapped. Another map entitled “How I survived the winter of 2004/5” indicates places of warmth, places where blankets and fleeces were found and houses where baths could be taken, which I was informed was drawn by someone living in a very cold squatted flat. Similarly ‘Hello London How do You Do’ is a zine-style colour-photocopied booklet of several hand-drawn maps, including various maps of experiences and areas of London, shading out places which are as yet unknown and highlighting places of personal significance, with cartoon-style pictures of key spaces and events.

These maps emphasise qualitative, personal experiences of space, visibilising a particular individual's psychological experience of lived, sensory and emotional aspects of the space whilst concealing the experience of actors other than the artist (Thrift 2004). The presence of these maps can partly be explained by one of the asserted functions of the archive – that maps can be taken and used by travellers, whilst simultaneously expressing a transgressive and communicative purpose, visibilising uncommon experiences. Many of these maps were individualised and preoccupied with laying out streets and borders in a similar manner to a conventional street-map.

This raises the issue of parodying dominant map-making practices, which was the basis of another discussion at 56a. Having facilitated several mapping workshops, Chris said that it is very difficult to get people to think beyond the traditional street-mapping style, and also that people often map individually rather than collectively, which is a problematic I have personally encountered when facilitating cartography workshops with both academics and activists. This issue is also identified in the counter-mapping literature: 'I can recall several instances where people tried to replicate the official maps they had already seen' (Rouchleau 2005, 342).

In an effort to think through and overcome this, Chris had facilitated a collective mapping workshop in Hackney, entitled 'Uncommon Places'. The result of this workshop is to be found in the mapping archive, on a huge piece of paper. After discussion with participants on how to map Hackney without following the usual street-map style, people lay down on the paper in various positions and the outline of their bodies was traced. Afterwards, the group considered what emotion each outline conveyed, for example excited, happy, despairing, fearful, and then discussed as a group the places in Hackney that aroused these emotions, with which the outlines were labelled.

Still other maps were highly personal or reflected on personal experience or emotion, yet without replicating the street-map style. An example included a personal timeline, with years numbered from the artist's birth to the present. Other lines were marked alongside this signalling to different houses the artist had lived in, different movements they had been part of, when they became an anarchist, times that they had lost people or missed them, and various other important life events. The purpose of such a map transgresses and denaturalises fixed knowledge by visibilising and expressing emotions and life events, yet it may also have a performative and political pedagogic function, highlighting ways in which systemic oppression can impact on individual lives opening up communicative pathways for forming solidarities and affinities for resistance (Amsler 2011). This function seems to have been the basis of the 'Precari-Punx' project⁷, the outcomes of which also resided in the archive as a folder containing photocopied posters of an outline of a body, which participants were asked to

⁷ Information on this project is available at <http://www.56a.org.uk/precari.html> Accessed 28 May 2013

mark up with the ways in which their precarious labour was affecting their minds and bodies.

Affinity Maps

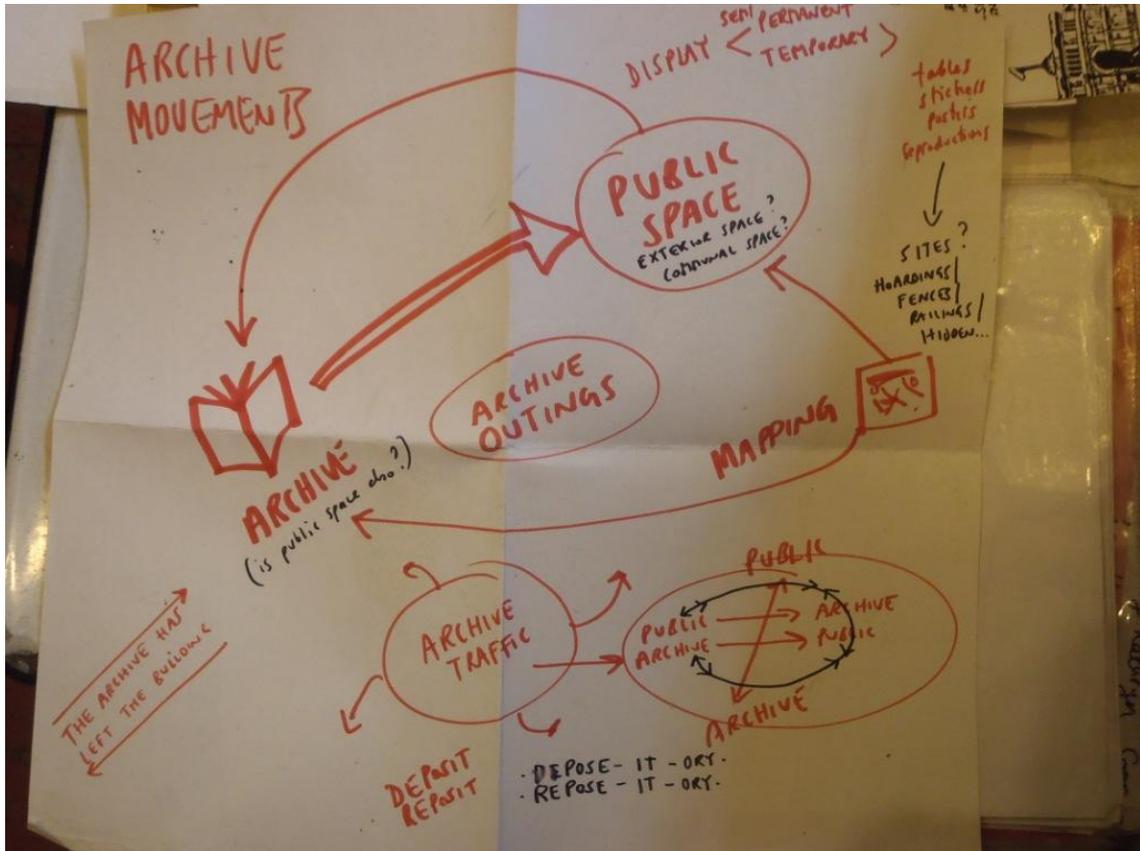


Figure 9: Archive travels map

Maps with an emphasis on relationships and organization were fairly sparse within the archive yet deserve a mention. One example was a hand-drawn map entitled ‘small world: A friendship network Zine map’. This map showed lines between people and descriptions of relationships and where or how they met. People with red lines under their names, they key tells us are ‘People I have never met / don’t know very well’ and a dotted line means people who know each-other but the author does not know where from. The map as a while looks rather like a spider-web or network. Possible functions of such maps might include valourisation of the network form of relationships, the examination of unintended hierarchies and exclusions, and the expression of reflexivity and social situatedness.

One of the most poignant of the maps is a very roughly drawn visualization on scrap paper that maps the travels and influence of the map archive itself, showing places that the archive has travelled, and also the different forms of

travel. It includes 'Archive (is public place also)' indicating that people who use the open-access archive leave with knowledge and experience gained from the archive; 'the archive has left the building' and 'archive outings' indicating that the whole archive itself has travelled to various places and events; a circle labelled 'archive traffic' with arrows pointing in and out, indicating that maps are taken out for use and new maps also come in. What is interesting about this map, and speaks to this present paper more than any of the other maps, is that this particular map appears to be signifying the ways in which the archive itself has acted as a pedagogical and utopian-performative device, by making local knowledge (developed in the festival and the archive project) mobile to wider spaces and movements through the network form and bonds and practices of affinity.

Possibilities for pedagogy

Rather than a conclusion, which signals closure and fixed knowledge, I would like to end this paper by opening up possibilities for further anarchist mapping practices. The purpose here is not to present a recipe or list of instructions for running specific workshops with clearly defined cases or groups. Mapping practices are as multiple as the individuals and groups that do, and have the potential to, make and use maps and my aim here is not to define or to limit practice. Nor, however, do I wish to remain trapped within circling critiques of theory, but rather draw together some of the foregoing themes to offer some concrete suggestions for opening up spaces and conditions from which anarchist cartographic pedagogies could begin. Following anarchist ethics, there should be no separation between the means and ends of utopian space: the process is as important as the outcome. The conditions for pedagogical spaces offered here roughly to correspond to previously theorised functions of anti-hegemonic, anarchist cartography: affinity, affect and performativity. The suggestions put forward arise from a dialogue between the theories and practices discussed herein but also transgress these, following Graeber's prerogative that the utopian research project 'would have two aspects, or two moments if you like: one ethnographic, one utopian, suspended in a constant dialogue' (Graeber 2004, 12). For example, following the practices at 56a infoshop I place emphasis on multi-layered practices of affinity, immanent affect and practical performative value, yet transgressing these practices I posit more emphasis on collective map-making.

Affinity and consensus

Affinity is a method of organising and relating that is non-hierarchical and which builds social bonds and solidarity across multiple differences without abstracting these to abstract or fixed identities or knowledges. Graeber argues that methodologies for working with and within anarchist spaces should attend to only two principles, the utopian principle that another world is possible, and the rejection of intellectual vanguardism (Graeber 2004, 10-11). An anarchist

pedagogy should therefore 'reflect a similar humility towards "Truths" in a fluidity of form that such an educational space can adapt to the needs and perspectives of those who create and participate in it' (Armaline 2009, 136). Furthermore, 'none of us can claim to define anarchism, or what an anarchist society *should* (or even worse, "will") look like and impose those views on others' (ibid, 137).

This latter point reflects the lack of future-oriented utopian maps in the archive, and also brings into focus the role of the facilitator in opening up utopian pedagogical spaces for critical cartographic map-making. The role of a facilitator of a critical cartographic workshop might begin by forming bonds of affinity with potential collaborators (Routledge 2009, 85), consisting of the creation of 'supportive, sympathetic spaces for its members to articulate, listen to one another, and share concerns, emotions or fears' (ibid, 84-85), leading to 'a politics of research based on consensus decision-making – which is non-hierarchical and participatory – embodying flexible, fluid modes of action' (ibid, 85). Creating such an environment involves attending to and problematising intersubjective power relationships between the researcher and participants, which involves openly discussing and critiquing one's own position of power whilst also 'being attentive to the power our collaborators bring to the research process' (ibid, 86).

Consensus is a process used most often for decision-making purposes in a wide range of anarchistic spaces that aim to organise non-hierarchically. Whilst imperfect in overcoming all hierarchies (Firth 2012, 100-105) it offers the best available conditions for the articulation of difference, since all participants have to agree on decision before a course of action is taken, and minorities have the power to veto so cannot be ignored. Consensus is arguably not just a practical method for organising decision-making, but is also an ethical approach and a pedagogical practice, which encourages the free articulation of ideas and desires of all participants, therefore fostering situations of epistemological pluralism. All must be willing to modify beliefs and desires in light of new perspectives and information brought to the space by others. Nonetheless consensus should not be viewed necessarily as the complete agreement of all participants with a transcendental goal or belief, but rather the process itself can be understood to initiate a kind of polyphonic dialogue that can prevent ideas from becoming stagnant, or fixed, at an epistemological level (Bakhtin 1984: 21), facilitating epistemological transgression and becoming-other. This enables the collective construction of new knowledges in processes that do not assume a predetermined or fixed outcome or conform to transcendental models of morality or truth, often leading to more creative results (Firth 2012: 92). Practical guides to consensus within activist literature (for example, The Seeds for Change Collective 2007) can be consulted for more detailed advice on working with consensus, yet many groups find their own informal procedures through practice.

Consensus combined with critical cartography would mean that collaborators in the process would spend some time discussing the mapping process, asking

such questions as: What will be mapped? What materials or technology will be used? What will be visibilised? What will be excluded? What will be drawn, in what style, what colours? How will the map continue its life outside this space? How might the map function as a tool? Who will be able to access it and how will it be used? What kind of knowledge is produced? How might the product of the mapping process trigger other cycles of pedagogy elsewhere? What are the political implications of these decisions? Such a process is about group self-reflection through dialogue and about action, re-constituting collectivity and building new knowledge to be communicated and used. Working with consensus also helps to overcome the issue discussed above that neoliberal subjects, often raised to view knowledge as an individual attribute or endeavour, can tend also to individualise critical map-making. Whilst there is no reason that the consensus procedure cannot result in individual outputs, if this is what is mutually decided, it is likely that introducing the moment of epistemological pluralism might raise and problematise this issue whilst immanently building social bonds and collectivity.

Attention to embodiment and affect

Affect refers to the ways in which desire flows through and connects subjectivities and spaces producing connections and transformations at a non-abstracted, embodied level. Consensus procedures often involve attending to the embodied aspects of discussion, for example hand-signals or coloured cards are often used in the place of vocal approval or disapproval, to avoid interrupting speakers. Attention to embodiment and affect should also extend to a consideration of exclusions and bodily needs within the space – will childcare be provided, or children included in the process? Is the space physically accessible to everyone who might attend? Questions of affect should also inform the map-making process. As has been previously argued, affect is a potentially subversive and critical force, drawing attention to oppressive silences and erasures in dominant map-making practices, which tend to take an abstracted and disembodied ‘God’s eye view’ (Pickles 2004, 80). Bringing attention to this in discussion, including expressions of affect in any maps that are produced as part of the process, and discussing the potential for mobilising affect in the ways the maps are intended to be used may help to overcome problems associated with the urge to replicate mainstream mapping practices.

Performativity: action and intersections with power

Performativity refers to the ways in which mapping produces and deploys new knowledges and operates these strategically, bringing new worlds into being. Anarchist cartography has the potential to operate performatively on a number of levels. Perhaps most importantly, the process of organising collectively under conditions of consensus is immanently performative, expressing a Do-it-Yourself political ethos, reclaiming space and time from capital, reconstituting social bonds and dis-alienating participants from each other and the spatial

environment. Furthermore, the maps operate as pedagogies if they continue their life outside the space. Any maps produced have the potential to intersect with and resist hierarchical power at a number of different levels, without positing a unified counter-hegemonic knowledge to make claims to powerful structures. The example of geopolitical maps shows that maps can expose hidden power relationships and structures, which can form a basis for acts of resistance. Maps can also be practical, offering tips for utopian living and immanent political change. Maps can mobilise affect, leading to subjective and social transformation and can visibilise and valourise alternative forms of relationships such as affinity and the network form as well as marginal spaces and histories.

A further, perhaps more controversial use of maps which has been suggested throughout this paper is as a rich form of qualitative data for academic research projects. This level of articulation is somewhat problematic, as the academy can be interpreted as a realm of power wherein the anarchistic ethos of maps might be recuperated into an alienated discourse. Nonetheless, it is also worth recognising that universities are also sites of struggle, resistance and possibility (Motta 2013; Neary 2012) whilst radical academics' identities are also fluid and multiple, often shifting between roles as activist, practitioner and academic (Minh-Ha 1991, 226; Routledge 2009, 89; Motta 2012). Rather than speaking counter-'truth' to power, then, any research drawn from collaborative mapping practices can work to prioritise 'grounded, embodied political action, the role of theory being to contribute to, be informed by, and grounded in such action, in order to create and nurture mutual solidarity and collective action – yielding in the end a liberatory politics of affinity' (Routledge 2009, 90-91).

What I hope to have done within the present paper, therefore, is to open up suggestions for future anarchist practices, rather than to offer fixed conclusions that speak a single truth. Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that the theoretical framework and concepts I develop a particular understanding of pedagogy and anarchism, which could potentially define and limit practice in powerful ways. It is for this reason that such concepts and the power relations that underlie them should be opened up for discussion in conditions of epistemological pluralism through local processes of consensus.

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