

Post-Critical Cartography and Deviance: Overcoming Dysfunctional Aspects of Critical Cartography?!

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Keywords: Post-Critical Cartography, Critical Cartography, Deviance, Theoretical Cartography, Life Chances, Immersive Virtual Environments

Abstract:

In the history of cartography, the 1980s are considered the starting point of critical cartography. The merits of critical cartography lie in having emphasized the socially constructed nature of cartographic representations. In addition, its focus is on emphasizing power relations and the process-bound nature of map-making. It is critical of the established positivist perspective and practice of cartography (Crampton and Krygier 2005).

A recently developed approach of a post-critical cartography (Kühne 2021, Edler and Kühne 2022) supports the merits of critical cartography, but without the rejection attitude towards positivist cartography. Moreover, it refrains from the moral demarcation of the representable and the non-representable as well as from the subordination of theories under the 'critical' paradigm. The approach of a post-critical cartography considers the enhancement of life chances as the normative reference of map-making. In this respect, the prefix 'post' refers not only to a temporal 'after', but also to the perpetuation of central concerns of 'critical' cartography. It is however not bound to its limitations.

Based on the ideas of a post-critical cartography, this paper presents considerations on how developments in cartography can be interpreted functionally, dysfunctionally, afunctionally, and metafunctionally. The analytical basis of this interpretive approach is the concept of deviance established in sociology. Normatively, the considerations are based on Ralf Dahrendorf's (1979) concept of life chances. The development of the cartography is reflected using the terminology established here.

For example, the development and dissemination of digital cartography have proven to be functional (including 3D applications of immersive virtual environments available today). Cartographic representations that limit life chances due to disinformation and manipulation can be described as dysfunctional. Cartographic representations that do not resonate with the public or experts can be described as afunctional. Metafunctional representations are capable of highlighting the contingency of the world and its cartographic interpretation, especially by using the stylistic device of irony. Since critical cartography was certainly capable of being functional, but also had dysfunctional parts because of its moral rigorism, the approach presented here is understood as a contribution to preserving the functional influences and overcoming the dysfunctional ones.

References

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