Metropolises, Maps and Planning
Cartographic Tools for London Community-led Metropolitan Analysis, Design and Planning[1]

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Since the 15th century mapping has been a tool in the planners' toolkit[2]. However, in the last twenty years mapping tools have evolved considerably beyond the paper maps of early planners. Geographic Information System technology has matured and is able to capture and analyse evermore complex data[3], while Web 2.0 development has widely opened accessibility to mapping information[4]. However, the practice of these tools is still quite difficult for those who are not familiar with computer code or have not been specifically trained. Yet it is absolutely necessary for urban designers, planners and whoever wants to work on the metropolitan project to appropriate mapping tools developed by programmers. Beyond practitioners and professionals, efforts now must be made to involve every metropolitan citizens in spatial literacy as Roche put it, so that the smart city project in progress can be a tool for a renewed democracy and not just an instrument of corporate domination[5].

  These tools continue to progress offering, notably as a result of Web 2.0 development, possibilities for collaborative mapping. This is an exciting dynamic which is converging with two others. On one hand, an increasing part of civil society sees collaboration as a way to solve the economic, social, environmental and political crises that are having impact on European metropolises. Economically, the sharing economy is undoubtedly diffusing very quickly into numerous sectors thanks to the Internet. Socially, collaboration is now seen to strengthen social bonds, between community members for cooperative projects, and also between users and producers in the case of collaborative consumption. Many citizens see the concept of the ecosystem as a fundamental approach to solving environmental issues. This notion requires that cooperation should balance competition. Lastly, politically, growing abstention and the anti-system vote are of great political concern. Some see it as an exhaustion of partisan politics and as a demand for more collaboration between political groups. Others interpret it as the necessity for a more fundamental democratic renewal where citizen participation and expertise can largely contribute to metropolis governance[6].

  On the other hand, there is a historic movement of urban designers, planners and thinkers who wish to integrate greater participation, cooperation and inclusion in the city-making processes. They make this call for social justice and democratic reasons, but also insist that planning is much more efficient when based on citizen participation and concerned with everyday life practices and grass-roots data. This started in the early 60s with *advocacy planning*[7]. Jane Jacobs in particular condemned top-down planning decisions disconnected from residents' interests and ways of living. Then, in the context of Paris events of May 68, Lefebvre coined the phrase 'Right to the City', a claim for radical inclusion, emphasising the quality of every-day life[8]. During the 80's and 90's the communicative (or collaborative in the UK) approach insisted on the importance of participation and dialogue, and the recognition of micropractices within communities[9]. In the new millennium,

theories of bottom-up planning emerged, promoting collaborative processes at larger scales in work such as that of MassiveSmall and Just Space[10].

Collaborative Mapping as a Tool for Metropolitan Community-Led Planning

What then is the role for mapping in planning with regard to these dynamics of collaboration and to requests for more inclusion of citizen expertise in city-making processes? Collaborative mapping, through public workshops or surveys, is a very effective way to collect essential fine grain data about people, their everyday practices and places. Some experienced planners have promoted this process such as Kevin Lynch, Nabel Hamdi or the team Bernardo Secchi and Paola Vigano[11]. The resulting mapping can then be used as a shared diagnostic and a representation of collective place intelligence.

The mapping workshop, especially when it is organised during neighbourhood festivals or community events, is an essential way to address a wide, diverse, grass-root audience. To achieve this challenge, the workshop activities need to be attractive or even playful. If it is really inclusive, the workshop is then a means for community empowerment in map reading and analysis, essential to the 'spatial literacy' referred to in the introduction. To achieve the metropolitan scale, collaborative mapping for planning needs to operate in parallel through online platforms. Following the dynamics of the collaborative approach facilitated by Web 2.0 development, a few experiments have been done in recent years. For example, when a new master plan was being drawn up for Helsinki in 2013, citizens were asked to indicate on an online map the places that they thought could be densified or not. Public participation resulted in 30,000 places being identified on the map. However, a survey of respondents showed that the participants were not representative of the whole Helsinki population, with people with less formal education underrepresented. The researchers concluded that the data collected online could be completed with additional data collected through participative workshops and uploaded onto the platform. Workshops targeted in specific places would make possible the inclusion of under-represented areas and demographic groups[12].

There are numerous examples of collaborative mapping experiences for local planning but collaborative mapping platforms for metropolitan scale planning, such as the Helsinki example, are still quite rare. However, we can anticipate that similar projects will emerge shortly because of the dynamics discussed in the introduction. Such platforms, if they are completed by participative workshops, can be tools for metropolitan community-led planning in two important ways. First, the mapping can be a tool for community empowerment of different types and help to change the balance of power with developers and authorities. Indeed, mapping completed on an extended scale and through a larger, inclusive audience makes visible and connects minor or unheard aspirations. Also, the online platform is a place to share and diffuse knowledge (which we know is a form of power) as well as a tool to build up and support strategic alliances between different community groups locally and across the metropolis[13]. Secondly, the resulting map of unreleased spatial knowledge delivered through the unusual expertise of grass-root citizens makes visible potential unexpected positive interactions between places, groups and proposals. The map can then be a gameboard for imagining a series of small or ordinary projects, but which are tactical and cooperative[14]. The map is still not a master plan but at least an essential base map for a community-led plan. Through the process of mapping, raising awareness of small changes and potential cooperation's can also instigate deeper changes[15].

The mapping process is then not just reactive because the resulting map becomes a pro-active tool for community engagement and empowerment. In particular, it can be useful for those involved in the development of Local Neighbourhood Plans promoted by the Localism Act (2011), by connecting disparate or disenfranchised groups and involving them in a community-led London plan.

Justmap: A London Pilot Mapping Platform for Cooperative Planning

JustMap is a collective mapping project, which aims to create a mapping platform for community-led planning in London. Through public workshops organised at neighbourhood festivals or specific community events, the ongoing collaborative map collects city-users' place intelligence, using large aerial photographs and ludic colourful flags. Then, by making data visible online, its goal is to highlight community resources and projects, to connect actors campaigning for a fairer London and to identify strategic cooperations.

Since February 2016, eight workshops have been undertaken and almost 300 data points collected. Three have been organised on a London-wide scale during a number of conferences of coalitions for fairer planning in 2016 (Just Space in April, Reclaim Our Spaces in June, Land for What? in November and the Civic University very recently). Four have been organised during local neighbourhood festivals or community events (one in Old Oak / Willesden, two in Deptford and one in Millbank). As a result of collaboration with Mapping for Change, the map should, be editable online by the end of winter 2017, so that anyone wishing to participate will be able to log in and add content[16].

It is an ambitious collaborative project, some would say utopian. The project plan divides objectives between short, mid and long term:

> Short term: to set up an interactive mapping platform of London community spaces under threat with links towards bubbling campaigns, supporting groups and common tools.

> Mid-term: to produce a collaborative map through public workshops and an online platform to highlight community assets and projects, while connecting actors campaigning for a fairer London.

> Long term: to create a meta mapping platform to collect all kind of cartographic data useful for London community-led planning and in particular data produced by diverse London communities. To design a base map for a metropolitan cooperative master plan.
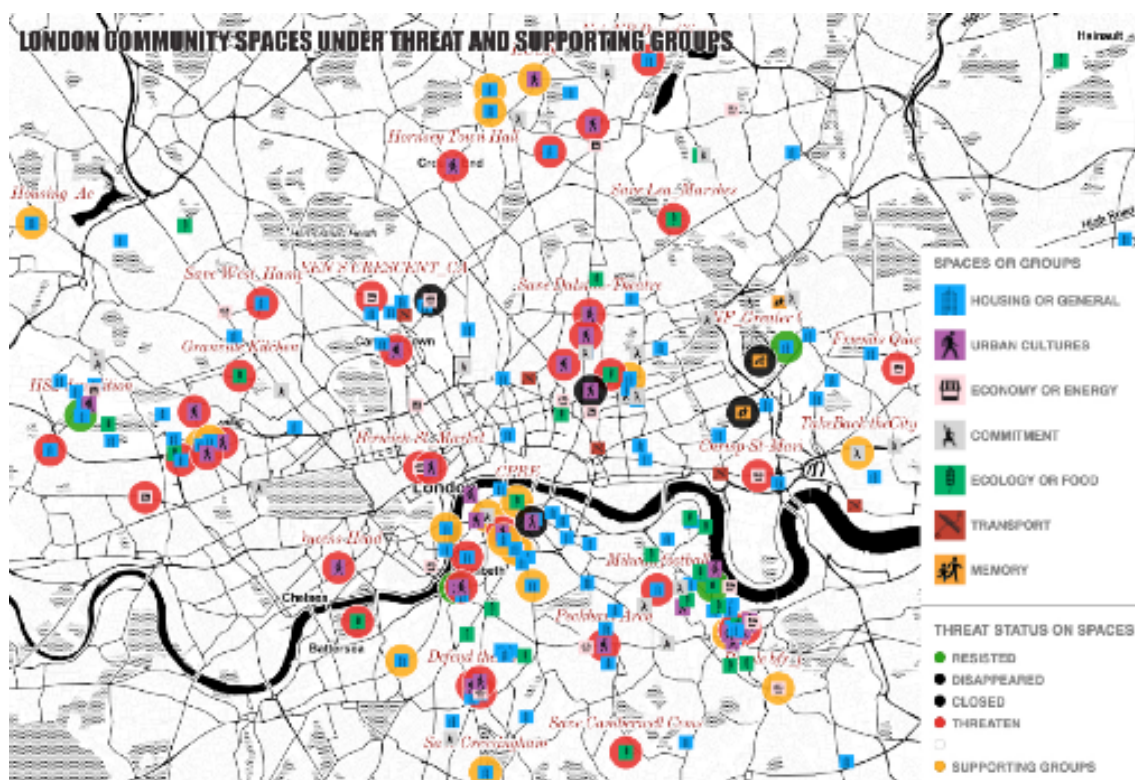

Figure 1. *A visualisation of the JustMap data related to the short-term objective. See also online map*

The most difficult challenge for this stimulating collective project is probably to create a sufficiently large community of users and mappers who are able to support, moderate, maintain and update the platform. This community must be multi-skilled because of the interdisciplinary dimension of metropolitan planning and design[17]. In order to attract a wide and diverse audience and build up a bigger community, the platform must also be largely inclusive, and open to London issues other than planning.

Fortunately, there are already numerous London professional and autodidact mappers interested in citizen data, metamapping platforms and community engagement (see the diagram on the JustMap website). First of all, there are the mappers involved in the London OpenStreetMap community which is obviously a very inspiring model in term of organisation and charter. Then there are groups directly involved in collaborative mapping platforms for community projects (CommonPlace, Mapping for Change). There are also communities interested by London areas in particular (OurTottenham, Deptford Neighbourhood Action), and others work on specific topics across London (Ubele Initiative, Food Growers Network). Finally, there are numerous planners, designers or researchers working on these issues.

Would it be possible to build up a community with these London mappers interested in citizen data and community engagement? This question underpins a series of others:

- Would it be then possible to integrate the numerous existing scattered mapping projects together on a unique platform?

- Would it be then possible for this platform to also aggregate other kinds of data for planning relat ed issues (a meta mapping platform)?

- Would these different DIY as well as professional mappers be interested in such a tool if it were possible to customise it according to their own projects?

JustMap, as a collaborative project, provides an opportunity to test these questions and to attempt cooperation with community groups, mappers and researchers interested in these issues[18]. Please join us to collaborate and let's try to build together this beautiful common, a collective and open tool to operate on our most basic commons, the metropolis and the land that supports it.

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1.   This paper is the result of independent research and will be very probably continued through a PhD research at the Bartlett School, Faculty of the Built Environment / University College of London.

2.   "Surprisingly, however, the strategic, constitutive and inventive capacities of mapping are not widely recognised in the urban design and planning arts, even though cartography and planning have enjoyed a long and mutually influential relationship since the fifteenth century". Corner, J. The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique and Invention (1999).

3.   A geographic information system (or GIS) is a system designed to capture, store, manipulate, analyze, manage, and present spatial or geographical data. (Wikipedia)

4.   Web 2.0, the second stage of development of the Internet, is characterized especially by the change from static web pages to user-generated content and the growth of social media.

5.   Roche, S. Geographic Information Science I: Why does a smart city need to be spatially enabled? (2014)

6.   See for example, Madrid and the Indignados

7.   Davidoff, P. 'Advocacy and pluralism in planning.' Journal of the American Institute of Planners, 1965. Arnstein, S. 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation.' Journal of the American Institute of Planners, 1969. Jacobs, J. The death and life of great American cities (1961).

8.   Lefebvre, H. 'The Right to the City', in Kofman, E. and Lebas, E. (eds) Writings on Cities (1996, first publication 1967])

9.   Healey, P. Communicative Planning (2012)

10.   http://www.massivesmall.com/declaration/; https://justspace.org.uk/about/

11.   Lynch, K. The image of the city (1960); Hamdi N. Action planning for cities: a guide to community practice (1997); Secchi, B. and Viganó, P. Habiter le Grand-Paris and Arc-en-Seine (2013)

12.   Kahila-Tani M., Anna Broberg, Marketta Kyttä & Taylor Tyger (2016) Let the Citizens Map. Public Participation GIS as a Planning Support System

13.   Local, metropolitan and global alliances see for example a very inspiring paper of Appadurai, a., 2002. Deep Democracy: Urban Governmentality and the Horizon of Politics.

14.   Tonkiss F., (2013) Cities by Design (2013); Hamdi N. The Spacemaker's Guide to Big Change (2014); Gadanho, P. Uneven Growth. Tactical Urbanism for Expanding Megacities (2014). Lynch, K. The Immature Arts of City Design (1984).

15.   Cambell, K. and Cowan, R. The Radical Incrementalist. (2016)

16.   More details on the website http://justplace-london.blogspot.co.uk/ or in this 4 pages PDF presentation.

17.   For urban design defined as a mongrel discipline, see Carmona, M. (Matthew) eds., Explorations in Urban Design: an Urban Design Research Primer (2014)

18.   Several direct collaborations have already started in London local communities – at Deptford, Millbank, Tottenham. Silvertown and Ilford- with mappers, designers, planners and researchers from The Bartlett School, LivingMaps, Mapping and CivicWise and with coalitions campaigning for community-led planning - Just Space Network, Reclaim Our Spaces and Land For What?