## Mapping Society: The Spatial Dimensions of Social Cartography

Being a human geographer with a passion for cartography, my attention was immediately drawn to both the title and the cover of the book. The decision to use Charles Booth's *Descriptive Map of London Poverty, 1889* is a clever strategy that draws the attention of any individual interested in maps, and entices the reader to learn more about mapping society.

Before I comment on the format and structure of the book, I wish to thank Laura for including a preface that not only sets the scene for the rest of the book, but also provides an insight to the inter-disciplinary nature of cartography. I agree that maps are not restricted to functioning primarily as visual representations of places, they can also be catalytic and prompt further discussion and investigation based on the detail presented. Specifically, cartographic representations can be used to visualise social phenomena by associating a spatial quality, to further tease out and visualise patterns that emerge from the datasets.

The book is constructed well with seven clearly outlined chapters, each one successfully discussing the development of social cartography through various examples of historical maps. I particularly enjoyed how the book uses Charles Booth and his work on poverty mapping as a key contributor to social cartography; equally the background context that suggests he may have been influenced by the work of Reverend Abraham Hume. It was interesting to read about how social issues within London were soon recognised as also being spatial problems, whereby the environments that communities lived in were having a detrimental effect on their health, lifestyles and livelihoods. Additionally, as I read through the final chapters, Vaughan did well to then place social cartography within a more twenty-first century light. Whilst disease, poverty, housing issues and segregation are still key geographical issues evident in today's news, I agree that the common problem is the spatial layout of various environments; what better way to understand and investigate the distributions of phenomena is there than a map! We need to be able to recognise space as not just a physical object or layer that society moves upon and within, it is a 'spatial syntax' that requires us to acknowledge space as a unique form that too can persuade and influence various actions, reactions and behaviours.

My own research looks at designing new cartographic representations capable of presenting social geographical phenomena. It is through my own interests that I found reading about Booth's, Hull-House Residents', and Du Bois' methods for conducting research and creating their own maps, I felt a sudden appreciation for the sheer size and scale of the projects they carried out. The motivation to observe data in more creative ways not only allows for an aesthetical appreciation of the maps themselves, but are good examples of where there was a need to view information through a spatial lens. Today, students, teachers professionals, amateur map-makers and so on, have access to a wide variety of sources online, and yet have little knowledge of how complex and extensive the data collection can be to produce new maps. The map legend, plotting of data, colour and symbology all require due care and attention to create effective data representations, yet even more so when they were created by hand. In Vaughan's book, I feel that she subconsciously provides a degree of appreciation towards historical mapping, by highlighting the lengths to which cartographers went to produce various maps, demonstrating how historical maps can now provide insights of the lives of people from hundreds of years ago, and describe how the problems and issues were observed by significant individuals.

Finally, it is the careful presentation of images and historic maps that have helped to guide the reader throughout Vaughan's narrative. Often within my own academic research, I am less likely to come across research articles that use photographs, illustrations and data visualisations to support their work, and in this

case found it a refreshing experience. The images do not restrict the ability of the reader to navigate their way through the pages, more often I found myself pausing to observe a number of the figures in more detail. I therefore wish for upcoming textbooks, research articles, and papers to consider using more visual material within their work, to assist readers and provide supplementary stories for navigating material.

To conclude, I found that Vaughan's detailed account of social cartography is one that demonstrates not only the functionality of a map, but how cartographic representations can communicate more than just numbers and statistics. Maps can also serve to persuade opinion and perception derived from the spatial analysis of social data, whether these are historical or through more technological forms of representation.

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