FROM INSTITUTIONAL CARTOGRAPHY TO SENSITIVE CARTOGRAPHIES, BATTIR AS A MEETING POINT: AN EXPERIENCE OF PARTICIPATIVE DEMOCRACY

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Abstract
The collaborative Battiri Mapping experience is following today Las Travesías, annual trips developed by the School of Architecture and Design of the Catholic University of Valparaiso, which has a training tradition in involving students building projects through marathons of shared knowledge. Our last marathon took place within the Faculté d’Architecture de l’Université Libre de Bruxelles, in March 2017, where l’ESQUISE COMMUNE offers to students a culmination of their works by inviting them to become URBAN MA[r]KERS thinking together about the importance of the public environment, studying how to represent it in order to explore each layer of its dimensions, re-thinking it and by so doing being able to participate in its development side by side with its inhabitants. Measuring, track reporting to inform: we are inside the world of data that Battir offers to characterize through its topographic survey.

Keywords: Battir, Travesías, Esquisse Commune, Topography, Institutional Cartography, Sensitive Cartographies.

INTRODUCTION

The School of Architecture and Design of the Catholic University of Valparaíso (PUCV) has a tradition in radical pedagogies building collective projects calling upon the main competences for designers and architects. This training is experimented every year during trips called Traversía, in which both teachers and students take part and build up together a common work, “Thinking while doing”. Our meeting point is the Battirian topographic mapping civic experiment implemented within the Palestinian village, Battir, through an invitation received from l’Esquisse Commune in 2016.

‘L’Esquisse Commune’ is a special moment within the curriculum of the Faculty of Architecture of l’Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) gathering during a whole week between 150 and 200 students around a common question. Our program took place at the end of March 2017 within the framework of ‘URBAN MA[r]KERS’, a project proposed as a part of a district contract for the next 4 years: here ‘Athénée’ in Ixelles (Bruxelles’s neighbourhood).

The aim was to produce an urban analysis in order to seize, through each of its significant topics, the quality of life in the public spaces of ‘Athénée’s’ perimeter submitted to modifications in the coming years through the urban project of appeased area carried by the municipality and the region.

1 les Cafés-cartographiques, association ruled under the 1901 Law, created in Paris in March 2013. Founded in October 1999 by J. D. Salachas, ‘les Cafés-cartographiques’ offer to meet around the riches of cartography (Web Site under construction) Facebook pages presenting our activities are available and usage free https://www.facebook.com/CafesCartographiques/info/?tab=page_info
2 Travesías, Escuela de Arquitectura y Diseño de Valparaíso https://www.ead.pucv.cl/temas/travesia/
3 Esquisse Commune, Faculté d’Architecture La Cambre Horta (ULB) http://archi.ulb.ac.be/etudes/workshops/esquisse-commune
4 URBAN MA[r]KERS, by I. Ivelic, D. Salgado and A. Mercado (PUCV, Chile) http://archi.ulb.ac.be/node/1031
5 Escuela de de Arquitectura y Diseño de la Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso https://www.uev.cl/escaedu/
6 Battir Landscape Ecomuseum (BLE, Palestine) http://www.akimbo.fr/cafescarto/cafescarto/we-love-maps-mapping-battir/
7 In 2015, the municipality of Ixelles made a diagnosis concerning several northern districts of the town, defined by the Chaussée d’Ixelles, the Place Fernand Cocq, the gate of Namur, the Avenue de La Couronne, the Ixelles Museum. This diagnosis allowed the municipality to file a proposal for a district contract called ‘Athénée’.
‘URBAN MA[r]KERS’ aim to read and write the city differently from the usual tools of urban planning. Therefore, it was proposed to the students to become actors in opening new dialogues between the inhabitants of the neighbourhood and their elected representatives, in offering them an exhaustive mapping study representing the city’s public spaces and their characteristics in order to understand them, so as to intervene and finally to participate all together in its reconstruction.

Figure 1. Battir, meeting point. Between geodesy and art, the civilian cartography.

Between geodesy and art, our crossing point was to seize each step in the conception of a topographic map. Usually, topographic maps are implemented and handled by governmental institutions, without any access to data. This is what the battirian topographic civic survey has overturned, offering to all to seize institutional cartography through its available citizen space data and pedagogic deconstructed mapping, drawing its landscape and its human history from their measurements. Since 2012, Battir has become our crossing point to accurately explore the construction of a map following the rules-of-art of institutional cartography.

In Brussels, Ixelles-Athénée, beyond our usual professional practices in cartography and the process to teach it, the well known battirian cartographic ‘Laboratory of ideas’ became a training support to produce sensitive maps. The challenge was to produce a one week survey onto the sites of the concerned neighbourhood, in order to create a consistent mapping approach expressed in a series of layers per the format A0, prepared so as to be later enriched with the inhabitants. This sensitive mapping preparation was implemented by the students through the topographic reality understanding, following the rules of institutional cartographic process.

The mapping representations they produced aimed to be accurate tools to discuss during exchanges between the inhabitants, the local associations and with the youths of the local schools, together with several partners in the project, elected representatives and policymakers in charge of public developments of our living spaces, thus giving body to the participatory democracy.
CAPTURING REAL SPACE

The starting point to apprehend the space was first the sounds recording. Stéphane Marin, a French sound artist (phoNographist), seized the soundscapes. He recorded 25 soundtracks in the map within nine geolocated micro-districts with the aim of revealing the public spaces through a process of listening.

As being an actor in the development of sound art in open spaces and a composer who has guided his approach to soundscape creation in situ, Stéphane Marin is invested since 2003 in artistic work adventures that make up the city, the countryside, the "out of the walls". His concern is to invite to listen "better", in any case to listen "differently". His artistic proposals underline an art of listening conducive to non-discriminatory sound ecology, as well as — on the occasion of sound courses or naps—, of listening steps with bare ears and/or augmented or even radio productions.

Organised in nine groups of about 10 individuals, from the Athénée urban cartophony prepared by S. Marin, the students went back to the town to, in turn, listen to it in situ at their turn, first with eyes closed, then, step by step through their personal visual approach in order to rebuild its significance through its sounds.

The district contract aims to consider and reinforce the network of public spaces to the scale of the micro-districts, a coherent mesh to meet the needs of the different groups of users: green areas and breathing places for passersby — sheltered and welcoming for everyone—, spaces dedicated to students, to strollers, to people coming for shopping, with links between the micro-quarters.

The proposed Athénée perimeter includes a high density of schools. The priority objectives of the district contract "Athénée" start from the observation that the top of Ixelles, located in the centre of the city, is highly urbanised and is experiencing major pressures (road traffic, air pollution, low greemification, noise, etc...) heavily weighing on the neighbourhood life.

8 Stéphane Marin https://www.espace-sonores.com In 2008, he created the company Sound Spaces ‘Espaces Sonores’, whose work is based on a radical approach to the elaborate composition in close connection with the spaces where the work will be heard. He designs contextual sound for specific sites at the border between environmental listening and sound creation, between field recording and composition. His artistic, ecological and spiritual trajectory brings him a little closer to silence every day.
MAPS AS TOOLS TO FEDERATE THE COLLECTIVE IDEAS

The redevelopment of the site, achieved by the region, should appease certain parts of this neighbourhood and generate public spaces for pedestrians and in doing so, it should meet the needs of the inhabitants.

Civilian cartography doesn’t map without the people. There is no representation of the territory if the inhabitants who create it are left aside. Each individual sustains an intimate link to the territory, each one thus is and remains an integral part of the "inhabited place".

Addressing the concept of territory through this approach allows to partly answer the questions raised in the context of the sustainable neighbourhood contract. The diagnosis is established : an heterogeneous neighbourhood, consisting of a set of nine different "micro-districts", in which pedestrian movements are not fluid between the parts that make it up. The urban fabric is compact and dense, the "connecting" public spaces are lacking, as well as the possibilities of stopping and resting. How then can a link be created ?

The approach proposed in this exercise consisted in to adapting the mapping-specific steps to the question asked, as follow :

1. Analyzing a reality and data collection ;
2. Finding a way to represent this reality in creating a relevant legend for it ;
3. Producing the map : designing cartography.

The map created must therefore faithfully reflect the reality and allow to produce a diagnosis on the usage of the neighbourhood, in a manner visible and clearly comprehensible by all. The exercise took place following the three steps of this discipline : the survey, the language and its visualization.

The survey was carried out by walking, pacing and perceiving the space. Then from the data collected "in situ" in order to be able to draw each of its thematic, the purpose of the day was to represent the space in a way an architect would figure it out to detect its different uses, the lived-in city and the invisible city. The goal was to highlight the lines and areas already defined in the public space (such as streets and sidewalks) by diagnosing the actual uses of these spaces. Following the day by day collection of data, fingerprints or surveys, a collective reflection was initiated in order to think about how to analyze and use these "data" through a specific representation.
Figure 3, 4, 5. L’Esquisse Commune 2017. Preparation to map specific steps: an overview from the site to mapping sensitive mapping approaches.
The construction of an intuitive language

After the materialisation of the legend, the graphic reflection consisted in putting it on paper. That was the paramount stage of the drawing, which took a day. Drawing consists in an approach from reading the territory in its reality, to designing the map in order to describe the neighbourhood, its places, its people, its uses, “telling” the living space. The students focused on designing a sensitive cartography centered on the citizens and their uses of space and territory, through marks and traces, geolocated displacements.

The mapping produced by the students included the following elements:

- The perception of neighbourhood(s) and micro-neighbourhood(s)
- “in-between”, limits, obstacles and circulations, etc.
- The meeting points, the places of tension, friction, etc.
- The work of urban acupuncture
- The urban marker(s)

Figure 6. L’Esquisse Commune 2017, students at work. A meeting point between geodesy and art, the rules of institutional mapping as a support to sensitive cartographies.
Mapping induces many techniques and skills to express what needs to be said about a specific space and the issues that intermingle, where each detail must be measured, defined and prioritized. All ever starts with a research work where each path need to be staged as it exists in the reality.

Each plot shown on the map is considered in its drawing exactly as it is observed in the landscape, in its accurate place within its environment. To map is to think about the construction of a visual language, structured and spontaneously accessible, aiming to create a coherent and memorizable interpretation of the reality. The map must account for reality. Regardless of the scale used to reproduce it, mapping is not reinventing reality but proposing modes of representation to understand it.

Figure 7. L’Esquisse Commune 2017. The survey, the language and its visualization.

There are strict rules to carry out this long tedious work, rules that must be continually transgressed according to the scale, to the projection used, according to the characteristics of the type of site under study... whether it is a city centre, a mountain massif, a vast plain, a coast torn off by erosion or long beaches of fine sands : when mapping, each element represented is thought separately, according to its specific environment in the general frame of the map and its objectives. Cartography is “the art of probable cheating” embodying the representation of space in its reduced representation, thought to honestly provide the user of the map —who must be informed with rigor— with an information that remains as close as possible to reality. Cartographers never map for themselves.

Achieving the best objectives when designing maps requires cartographers to know beforehand their readers as well as the conditions of use of the maps that have to be produced.

The users themselves and what characterizes their use of maps, determine what needs to be mapped in order to provide them right information at appropriated scales and projection allowing the readability of data, defining which level of details should be offered. In each specific frame of their works, cartographers then orient their research in graphic semiology to develop the best visual expressive language according to the mode of editing of the final document they
have to produce. Throughout the process of making a map, it is necessary to define which information should remain a priority, which detail should be excluded, reduced or erased. The adaptation of reduced reality requires to eliminate what is too small or illegible. Mapping from a scale to another requests to generalize each data in order to find the most accurate ‘carto—graphic’ interpretation, the language best adapted to the subject according to the conditions of its reading, making sense at a glance.

All about our professional cartographic production processes has been re-invented by young palestinian citizens (urban-architects and one civil-engineer, BLE 2007-2011) within Battir, a village in occupied Palestine, where they collected sets of data to qualify 12 Km² of their territory, answering the needs of their anthropologic study. Since 2012, this data is spatialized⁹ and presents, step by step, the complete process in mapping a territory at topographic scales from its survey, in order to build its drawing through its geolocated database working in each of our geographic and cartographic system, from GIS to art mapping.

Thinking together and teaching by action, to let the social sciences acting.

Data was collected by the students to map the uses, sensations, lights, through sounds and images, flow of movements, linking each element to the territory based on the topography of the sites. Our institutional cartographic rules interwove sensitive eye to carry out the nine giant series of maps in A0 boxes, telling the identity of this territory and its people, drawing it in order to share it, to discuss, to engage another common eye for the future of its inhabitants and its users.

Figure 8. L’Esquisse Commune 2017. The survey, the language and its visualization : nine A0 series of maps are available to open new dialogues between the citizens and their elected representatives, a process within action in the frame of the district contract ‘Athénée’ (2017-2020, Ixelles —Brussels, Belgium).


L’Esquisse Commune 2017 was a knowledge-marathon where each of us, students as well as teachers, ran at every hour of the day from the town to the university workshop during this week of collective involvements in order to complete this common work. Encounters, interviews, exchanges with the people living in the place, from children to elderlies, the passersby as well as the shopkeepers, it was a week of huge civic enrichments. The students also surveyed the site every hour of the night, listening to its life at night, feeling the difference of the uses of the space from lights to shadows.

Through the human density, the social mix of agesages, genders, its nationalities and sounds, the noises inside and around, the colors, perfumes, movements, barriers and flows, through the study of its different trajectories, features, the space between constructions, from concrete to vegetal, towards the domesticity and the wild, through openings and closures, the contrasts of the town were mapped within 4 days.

**Accurate mapping representations as tools for civic expression**

The wide sensitive cartographic approach, based on the topography of the sites, offers an unusual visual wealth of evolutionary exchanges allowing to rethink together the future of inhabited space. This marathon week resulted in the creation of the nine mapping boxes now available to enter a new step of collective construction. Through any common reflections about the space, about one’s living territory, each one is invited to complete the boxes with his/her ideas. These maps are a visual alphabet where everyone can add one’s words in order to enrich their vocabulary, in order to listen as well as to be listened to.

Accurate maps can easily be a citizens’s tool for the civic expression of concerns about our common assets, their development and their management. The link to the institutional cartography, showing the field topography in any case, protects the quality as well as the credibility of the sensitive cartographies that any citizen may produce. Here, the sensitive mapping becomes a living current enlightenment making the map a living tool to share ideas aiming to be implemented in the interest of all, through collaborative interactions.

Giving the keys of cartography and its rules-of-art in order to rebuild the map together, actually helps to share the usage of the maps with citizens. Here, the topographic map is in fact a tool for civic expression and citizenship education. During each mapping workshop, the miracle operating simultaneously : each individual not only apprehends the space, but in addition he/she enriches his/her own perception to share it with others. Whatever the frame or the conditions, or the age of the participants, the map becomes a support to involve each individual in observing the surrounding environment differently, in order to seize every detail of it, to think the space as its common concern, to figure how to represent it in order to express a point of view with accuracy. From individual involvements in exploring to determine challenges, the outcome of questioning always become collective.

**CONCLUSION**

Maps drive eyes to their topics from their drawings to their accurate meanings. The creation of those drawings meant to share the right information as well as possible, spreading meanings to inform, most often receives the best response that the public may give back to the tedious cartographic work, from its preparation until its editing : its acceptance to open its mind to more knowledge. Most often, people enjoy studying a map : it drives each one of them, individually, from a place to another through an interpretation of their surroundings realities. Country side as each thematic interacting from scale to scale, social, political, always human challenges, maps tell the world as the cartographer draws it from accurate sources of information. A map is not an illustration nor an image: it is a complicated set of data collected, working together through a rigorous process which follows the rules of specific cartographic systems according the rules of graphic semiology.

Cartography is a vector discipline, a junction between all other disciplines. Indeed, a map, through the rigor of its conception, remains a federative tool around common concerns, giving the right distance to embody specific requests. Through its expressive charts and accessible readability, a map also fascinates eyes and minds, catching attention, sharing knowledge, connecting people to people, citizens to citizens. Here again, the exceptional cartographic patrimony represented by the civilian Battiri topographic mapping, through its universal amounts of applications, confirms it more and more day after day.
Figure 9. L’Esquisse Commune 2017: from Travesías to URBAN MA[r]KERS, the meeting point is the cultural civilian cartographic space patrimony of Battir, village of Palestine.

BIOGRAPHY

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Founder of ‘les Cafés-cartographiques/maps&talk’ in October 1999. Association ruled under the 1901 law, created in Paris in March 2013 ‘les Cafés-cartographiques’ offers informal events opened to students, professionals, researchers, amateurs, anyone interested in cartography.

Map publication collaborations – from map design to topographical production – all types of cartographic illustration, publication and digital distribution. Topographic map designer of the Mount Rainier National Park Centennial Edition, Stanley Maps Ed.

Since May 2012, design coordination and communication about the Palestinian Cartographic Patrimony of Battir followed in order to maintain it in waiting for skills on site to manage it — under the agreement of the Village Council, Mr Akram Bader (Former-Mayor of Battir), and Itidal Muammar (Battir Village Council).
Co-vice-president of the French Cartographic Committee (http://www.leefc.fr).
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