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Cultural Mapping as Cultural Inquiry

Review of the book: Cultural Mapping as Cultural Inquiry

Reviewed by Louise Ejgod Hansen

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Cultural Mapping as Cultural Inquiry

Edited by Nancy Duxbury, W.F. Garrett-Petts, David MacLennan

Published by Routledge, 2015

In the Routledge Advances in Research Methods Series, Duxbury, Garrett-Petts and MacLennan have edited a volume on the method of cultural mapping which can be regarded as a central book for cultural policy research. First, it is rare that methodology books are published in the area of cultural policy research. Second, it is a method that is not just used as an academic method for inquiry, but also (and perhaps even more so) as a practical planning tool for communities as well as local authorities. I'll get back to this dual usage since I think it is important in the discussion of the method. The volume contains contributions from a wide range of scholars, both those working directly with geography and those representing a broad range of disciplines. Remarkably enough, none are from the Nordic countries, which means that it might be relevant to use this publication as an occasion to reflect upon cultural mapping's potential and uses in the Nordic countries as well.

But what is cultural mapping then? Based on the book, it covers quite a variety of methods and practices, but with some commonalities. In the introduction to the volume, the editors define it as: 'new ways of describing, accounting for, and coming to terms with the cultural resources of communities and places.' The development of mapping as method is linked to two important more general theoretical developments within the last 10–20 years: The so-called spatial turn in social sciences and humanities and the increased focus on participation and participatory research and policy practices.

The two are linked together not just because both of them have been fueled by technological development but also in their link to a discussion of power, wherein the power of defining the values of culture is central.

Cultural mapping is thus not just linked to the tradition of cartography and thereby to a visual presentation of the spatial structures of a certain area and its resources, but also to the discussion of the power to define this. Based on these

discussions (linked with new technological possibilities for user-generated data) the volume sees the method of cultural mapping as a collaborative practice.

The book is divided into different sections, reflecting the variety of contributions. In the first section, focus is on a more systematic assessment of cultural mapping as a practice in cultural analysis and as a part of political planning processes. The most systematic methodological reflections over cultural mappings are found in this section. From the Canadian *Cultural Planning Toolkit*, Evans stresses that cultural mapping ‘does not draw on a single model (i.e. one size does not fit all) but that it is both socially (and politically) produced (Gray, 2006) and reflects national/regional planning and cultural policy systems and priorities (Guppy, 1997).’ (p. 48)

One of the ambitions of cultural mapping is to link culture more clearly to the general development of society via the planning approach: By providing analysis based on some of the same approaches as other policy areas, culture might be able to position itself more centrally in policy and planning discussions. This ambition of lifting culture out from its marginalization seems to be a shared ambition of the authors. In this way (as it is explicitly stated in many of the articles) the discussion of cultural mapping is directly linked to discussions of sustainability and the ways in which culture should be incorporated in sustainable developments (see e.g. Dessein, Soini, Fairclough and Horlings 2015).

Another ambition, directly linked to the participatory approach, is to use mapping as an empowering tool for communities that, through participatory mapping processes, are given the opportunity to define culture and values of culture and make this visible, also on a policy level. This is especially an area of focus in the second part of the book, *Platforms for Engagement and Knowledge Through Mapping*. The challenges here – and how they might be tackled – are demonstrated in Pillai’s article on the mapping of historic George Town in Malaysia, a highly segregated society in which the process of mapping included a process of seeing cultural values not linked to one’s own culture.

In the third section, the concept of mapping and the notion of knowledge created through mapping is challenged, discussed and broadened. Giddens and Jones link cultural mapping directly to artistic research in an attempt to try and change a situation in which ‘the roles played by artists and art practices in cultural mapping have not been critically examined’ (p. 304). This leads to an investigation of the mapping of the intangible, an ambition shared with, for example, Scherf in her mapping of a Canadian Ski Resort. Narratives, perspectives, the sensory and the emotional are key words in these approaches.

This widening of the methods of mapping is strongly linked to an ongoing area of interest in many of the contributions: That of the relationship between map-

ping as a process and the map as a result. Roberts and Cohen link mapping as a process leading directly to spatial anthropology and thus to a process of not just mapping official statistical data but also to mapping meanings, memories, myths and narratives. In their article they demonstrate the way in which such an approach can open up for many more stories about the cinematographic history of Liverpool than the ones given in present official tourists guides to Liverpool as a film city.

The book includes: 1) very practical descriptions of how the process of mapping can be planned and executed (e.g. Scherf), 2) more traditional cultural policy analysis of how it has been used as a tool for different political objectives (e.g. Redaelli), 3) theoretical reflections on maps and mapping (e.g. Roberts and Cohen) and 4) more methodological discussions also linked to technological possibilities (e.g. Sullivan and Wendrich). As such it is a rich book consisting of contributions from a wide range of academics, all of them engaged (in quite different ways) in mapping processes around the world. Consequently, the book is not just – and perhaps not even mostly – a publication on the methods of cultural mapping, but on the ways in which the methods underneath the umbrella concept of cultural mapping are, and can be, used for different purposes. If the intention of the reader is to develop an understanding of how to use cultural mapping as *a* research method, this might be slightly disappointing, but as an introduction to a rich area of cultural inquiry with clear implications for cultural policy and cultural policy research, the book is worthwhile exploring.

Seen from a Nordic research perspective, it is worth taking note of the level of engagement and intervention in the different mapping processes used by the academics. This research tradition seems less strong in the Nordic countries, at least within the field of cultural policy. Another aspect worth taking note of is the interdisciplinarity of the contributors: Architecture, heritage management, urban studies and social anthropology are among the disciplines that can benefit from cultural mapping. This demonstrates a strong link between culture and areas such as urban planning, community building, destination branding etc., a link that should be reflected in research methods, designs and processes as well.

Review by Kim Dunphy for *Journal of Arts in Communities*
Emailed 10 March 2016

Book review

Cultural Mapping as Cultural Inquiry,

Duxbury, N., Garrett-Petts, W. & MacLennan, D. Routledge 2015

This is a great book. Interesting, well written, diverse and comprehensive. A major benefit of such an edited collection is the multiplicity of perspectives across place, academic disciplines, intentions and aesthetics. When those contributions are all strong, as they are in this volume, the reader is enabled to feel confident in gaining an overview of the contemporary field by reading one book. I read it twice, and by the end of the second read I feel truly abreast of current cultural mapping practices. The book is divided into three sections, Mapping the Contours of an Emerging Field, Platforms for Engagement and Knowledge through Mapping, and Inquiry, Expression and Deepening Understanding of Place, enabling it to address the different interests of readers- those who want to understand the theoretical and philosophical challenges facing the field, those who want technical advice on what to do and how to do it, and those who might want to be inspired.

The introductory essay by editors Duxbury, Garrett-Petts and MacLennan offers the quality of analysis that might be expected from a team led by Duxbury. Her deep engagement and longstanding professional engagement with the field of local cultural development is evident in these pages. The reader feels assured of the book's authority by the comprehensive overview and thorough situating of cultural mapping field in theory and practice. This chapter introduces cultural mapping by explaining what it is from a range of perspectives; its origins, influences and pathways; how it is used, in academia, policy, municipal governance and by artists; as well as methodological influences. The great diversity of places discussed and authors' diverse cultural and professional backgrounds ensure a non-homogenous perspective. The more standard contributions from and about the Anglosphere are extended and enriched by examples from Estonia, Egypt, Italy, Malaysia, Malta, Palestine, Portugal, Singapore, Sweden, Syria, the United Arab Emirates and the Ukraine and indigenous Australia.

One very rewarding chapter was Collard and Revell's, 'Wedjemup Wangkiny Koora, Yeye and Mila Boorda (Wedjemup talking from the past, today and the future)'. These Australian indigenous authors offer a story of place of Wedjemup, (or Rottneest Island just off Perth in Western Australia) where they have worked for more than a decade and a half. The two bring impressively strong scholarship as well as a deep-rooted sense of place to their discussion of mapping of the culture of Wedjemup and the Noongar peoples, past, present and future. The chapter deals cleverly and usefully with the disjuncture and conciliation between 'conventional and limited ideas of non-Indigenous landscape' and the 'multidimensional concepts, beliefs and activities related to Indigenous country' (p. 119). While it had particular relevance to me, as an Anglo-Australian whose ancestors also considered Wedjemup as a special sacred place and second 'home', I am certain it would also offer much to others who are engaged with planning and mapping across cultures.

The easiest contribution to read and the most entertaining was the last- Scherf's account of deep mapping, denoted in her chapter as a kind of cultural geography for a lay audience, in the Canadian snow resort of Sun Peaks. This essay intertwines

Scherf's process of engaging students in deep mapping, with her own infectious enthusiasm for the place and the task, supported by interesting theory. For example, she cites McLucas's marvellous 'ten things to say about deep mapping' - that deep maps will be big; slow; sumptuous; genuinely multimedia; include graphic work, time-based media and a database that remains open; engage insider and outsiders: bring together diverse perspectives; and unstable, fragile and temporary (McLucas, 2005). Scherf also assists potential mappers in her reflection on the ethical and practical challenges in engaging with commercial businesses (both necessary and helpful for her process) sited on contested indigenous lands. And her solution- compromise! This chapter immediately inspired me with excitement to act in establishing a new deep mapping project - one good measure of a worthwhile piece of writing.

I recommend this text as an excellent reference for cultural development practitioners, policy makers, academics and students, and those engaging with culture in planning. Given the increasing recognition of culture as an essential dimension of policy and practice, that should be just about everyone planning for successful, livable, creative and sustainable communities.

Reference

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Cultural mapping as cultural inquiry

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BOOK REVIEW

Cultural mapping as cultural inquiry, edited by Nancy Duxbury, W. F. Garrett-Petts and David MacLennan, New York, Routledge, 2015, 378 pp., £90.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-138-82186-6

Cultural mapping has attracted increasing attention over the last decade. In their thoughtful and well-constructed introductory essay, the editors of this collection draw on a variety of definitions and conclude that it “may be seen both as a social practice and a methodological point of intersection informing academic research, local governance, and community empowerment and change” (p. 3). At its core is the exploration of the complexity of local meanings of place through engagement with people and artistic practices, often with other sources of data, and these are deployed with a variety of objectives.

In this book, cultural mapping is, therefore, from the outset a broad concept and it is one that becomes ever broader as this interesting collection unfolds. The editors identify five main trajectories that characterise cultural mapping. “Community empowerment/counter-mapping” is the first, tracing its origins to work by and with Indigenous peoples and then developing into a much larger practice of counter-mapping carried out with communities. The term “community” tends, however, to be treated as a given throughout the book, rather than as a contested formation that needs to be interrogated. “Cultural policy” follows, with the multiple methods of cultural mapping allowing academic, community, industry and government sectors to come together in search of more holistic and community-focused approaches to policy. “Cultural mapping and municipal governance” is the third trajectory, locating and mapping cultural assets as a resource for planning and decision-making. “Artistic approaches to cultural mapping” describes the engagement of artists not only in map-making but as agents for enhancing community self-knowledge. “Academic inquiry” is the final trajectory, moving from the cultural nature of maps to the use of maps as agents of cultural inquiry into a variety of subjects.

If cultural mapping is a very large field, the myriad objectives and associated methodologies produce an eclecticism that is both a strength and a weakness of the collection. The editors themselves confront this in an honest and very pertinent question, in which they wonder “whether what we have is an array of methodologies in search of a field or an emerging field in search of appropriate methodologies” (p. 16). The book appears in the *Routledge advances in research methods* series, and with the methodologies as eclectic as the trajectories this makes for attractive reading but raises questions about whether the field has been around long enough for us to expect, and certainly to need, more than eclecticism. The 16 substantive essays are organised into 3 sections. Each section embraces the interaction between formal knowledge and data on the one hand and empowerment/engagement on the other that is at the heart of the concept and the projects. The first section gathers essays that help define the contours of this interdisciplinary field, with Evans’s review of toolkits and case studies in the UK and Jeannotte’s analysis of cultural mapping projects in Canada proving particularly useful. The core of the book is the second section whose six essays explore ways in which cultural mapping has been used as a platform for engagement as well as inquiry. A study by Pillai of the use of activist-initiated mapping projects in multicultural George Town in Malaysia impressively demonstrates the potential for non-partisan intermediaries in the process, as well as a sense of the importance of history.

Two contrasting essays underline the different motivations behind cultural mapping initiatives. Collard and Revell describe its use in the indigenous landscape of Wedjemup in Western

Australian, in which mapping is embedded in a politically shaped vision of reconciliation and what that would mean, but with little sense of distance from the process. The essay by Knudsen McAusland and Kotska on external initiatives for cultural mapping in the Ukraine, on the other hand, describes in meticulous detail the practical processes and challenges of engaging communities in a post-Soviet society with little experience of seeing culture as anything other than derived from state institutions. Two essays on cultural mapping as a teaching tool, especially a thoughtful piece by Providencia on its use in Portugal in training for urban design practice, take us into very different territory.

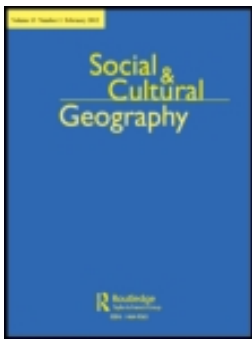
The book's final section on "inquiry, expression and deepening understanding of place" presents a range of new technologies and ethnographic techniques, each of interest but together underlining the challenges in pulling the field together. Of particular value in this respect are Sullivan and Wendrich's essay on the potential of two- and three-dimensional computer-generated maps and models as immersive environments, and Comunian and Alexiou's essay on the cognitive mapping of cultural practice, using complexity theory to uncover new understandings of creative practice and careers.

There are some striking essays in this uneven collection, with some of the more prosaic presentations of a project at times being the most relevant. As a contribution to our understanding of a potentially powerful set of research methodologies, however, one is left hungry to know about the results or outcomes of the work presented in the essays. Whether that be in community empowerment through the knowledge which it developed for itself, or planning and policy outcomes influenced by cultural mapping projects, or more precise academic understanding. Otherwise interesting essays, such as that by Suckle and Raghupathy using historical and new site-specific cultural maps in New York and Boston to engender an enhanced understanding of community and place, or Lowry, Levin and Tsang's essay on the use of the Maraya arts project in Vancouver and Dubai to create debate and reflection about urbanism and globalisation, leave one asking what came out of these engagements. With cultural mapping seen by the editors as "a form of social action designed to inform, preserve, plan, and persuade" (p. 34), one is intrigued enough to ask what emerged from the projects described in this volume.

Readers of this journal will be particularly interested in the implications for cultural policy of the field described in this collection of essays. They lie above all in its binding of social action into knowledge production and in its insistence on engagement, stories and relationships, on the intangible as much as the tangible manifestations of culture. Embedding research and practice together in this way does, however, call for a degree of methodological clarity and rigour that cultural mapping has not yet achieved. And rigour is to be found in arts and humanities as much as scientific methods. The editors acknowledge that academic rigour may for many in the field not be the current priority, noting an absence of self-reflection. They highlight the integration of cultural mapping processes "into mechanisms of planning, policy, and participatory governance", but even when these do appear in the books (as in the case of Canada) it appears to be with limited success. Empowerment of communities through cultural mapping may be one of its most persuasive objectives but communities, even when empowered, still face questions of power. Which is why I was left wanting to know a great deal more about the outcomes of these varied, and sometimes compelling, cultural mapping projects.

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Cultural mapping as cultural inquiry

Phil Birge-Liberman

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Cultural mapping as cultural inquiry, edited by Nancy Duxbury, W. F. Garrett-Petts, and David MacLennan, New York, NY, Routledge, 2015, v + 377 pp., US\$145.00 (hardback), ISBN: 978-1-13-882186-6

As a collection of 17 essays, *Cultural Mapping as Cultural Inquiry* presents an introduction to the emerging interdisciplinary field of cultural mapping. The contributors come from a variety of academic disciplines, including architecture, urban design, sociology, anthropology, public history, public policy, cultural studies, and the arts. In their introductory chapter, the editors define cultural mapping as an activity that 'promises new ways of describing, accounting for, and coming to terms with the cultural resources of communities and places' (p. 2). Recognizing the history of mapmaking and its association with exploration, colonialism, and political control, this volume sets out an agenda which emphasizes a bottom-up approach to mapping a community's cultural assets so that a community can define itself in relation to its cultural identity, vitality, sense of place, and quality of life. While each essay is locally situated, the collection is global in scope including case studies from Australia, Canada, Egypt, Estonia, Italy, Malaysia, Malta, Palestine, Portugal, Singapore, Sweden, Syria, the UAE, the UK, the US, and Ukraine. To demonstrate the variety of ways that communities have implemented cultural mapping practices, this volume is divided into three parts.

The four essays that comprise Part 1 trace the contours of cultural mapping practices. In the most readable essay in this section, Graeme Evans reviews cultural mapping methodologies, toolkits and case studies in the UK to place the practice of cultural mapping within the context of sustainable development. To engage communities, he advocates for the use of participatory GIS techniques to 'capture cultural assets and perceptions of place and the environment' (p. 45). This results in a form of cultural ecosystem mapping that maps, among other things, social relations, sense of place, recreational sites, inspirational sites, cultural heritage, neglected or unpleasant sites, dangerous sites, and sites that widen knowledge of local flora and fauna.

The six essays in Part 2 highlight the ways in which cultural mapping can be a tool for 'reading' the city, as well as valuable instruments for engaging with local communities and enhancing attachment to place. In his essay on reading the city, Stuart Burch presents a pedagogical narrative of helping students to read the landscape. While much of the theoretical ground Burch covers will be familiar to cultural, urban, or historical geographers, his discussion of students opening their eyes to the ways in which the myth of Robin Hood dominates Nottingham's 'proper' history is quite interesting. In examining the cultural and historical geographies of popular films and music in Liverpool, Les Roberts and Sara Cohen concentrate on 'official' maps that focus on 'sites of popular cultural memory within hegemonic discourses of consumption and identity' to address questions of agency and power to examine alternative cartographies of place and memory (p. 182). In perhaps the most engaging essay in the volume, Len Collard and Grant Revell weave a narrative of indigenous culture, colonial injustice, and of the Reconciliation Action Plan on Wedjemup (Rottnest Island), Western Australia. They tell a story about a century of imprisonment and death of indigenous peoples on 'an island where the past, present and future are no longer navigable, where *genii loci* or meaning are derived from a confused state of *terre-amnesia* and cultural disrespect' (p. 119). They show the ways through which shared storytelling, mapping, and design led to proposed series of island walkways that would allow visitors to both '*grieve* the Indigenous histories [and] encourage a *rebirth* of intercultural reconciliation' (p. 125).

The six essays in Part 3 introduce a variety of new technologies (i.e. digital tools) and techniques (i.e. three-dimensional mapping) as well as possibilities for creative expression and artistic modes of inquiry to gain a deeper understanding of place. Archeologists Elaine Sullivan and Willeke

Wendrich show how new rendering techniques can use the aggregation of data in various formats (e.g. measurements, descriptions, sketches, photographs) to create innovative two- and three-dimensional maps of cultural sites. Abby Suckle and Seetha Raghupathy move beyond paper maps and show how using a variety of digital tools, ranging from Google Earth and online GIS tools to smartphone apps, to create maps that act as 'empowering vehicles' for communities (p. 257). In the final essay, Kathleen Scherf reflects upon a 'deep mapping' project of the Sun Peaks ski resort in British Columbia to explore the richness and complexity of place meaning. In teaching a tourism studies seminar, she and her students used an 'interdisciplinary mashup' to compile a deep map of the resort community and convey its spirit of place (p. 341).

The quality of the writing in an edited volume can vary, but the essays in this collection are consistently good. The editors state that the goal of cultural mapping is to make visible the local stories, rituals, relationships, practices, meanings, and memories that shape the spirit of place. In that way the authors are successful, and academics or cultural workers seeking to gain a deeper understanding of place should find these case studies useful.

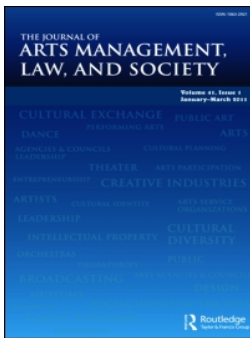
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Review of "Cultural Mapping as Cultural Inquiry," edited by Nancy Duxbury, W. F. Garrett-Petts, and David MacLennan

Andrew Zitcer

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BOOK REVIEWS

Cultural Mapping as Cultural Inquiry, edited by Nancy Duxbury, W. F. Garrett-Petts, and David MacLennan, New York, Routledge, 2015, 378 pp., \$145.00, ISBN: 978-1-138-82186-6

Cultural mapping is an increasingly widespread practice in cultural planning around the world. One foundational document, Creative City Network of Canada's *Cultural Mapping Toolkit*, defines cultural mapping as "a process of collecting, recording, analyzing and synthesizing information in order to describe the cultural resources, networks, links and patterns of usage of a given community or group" (Creative City Network of Canada and 2010 Legacies Now 2011, 8). Cultural mapping has been embraced by urban planners, arts leaders, funders, and community stakeholders seeking to broaden engagement with their cultural environment. The work of cultural mapping has been supported by entities including the National Endowment for the Arts, the Kresge Foundation, and Arizona's Tucson Pima Arts Council. Now, Routledge has published a new volume featuring international perspectives on cultural mapping as a form of inquiry. Edited by Nancy Duxbury, W. F. Garrett-Petts, and David MacLennan, *Cultural Mapping as Cultural Inquiry* provides a critical reading of asset mapping as a practice, as well as evocative case studies of mapping projects from around the world.

In their introductory framing chapter, the editors elaborate five trajectories of cultural mapping practice. These trajectories suggest the range and diversity of possible uses for cultural mapping. The first uses mapping for community empowerment and counter-mapping, which foreshadows a primary concern of the volume. Duxbury, Garrett-Petts, and MacLennan have worked to foreground mapping processes that seek to disrupt existing market-driven dynamics, while not discarding or ignoring the importance of mapping's potential to affect economic thinking. Counter-mapping is often undertaken by indigenous communities or other marginalized peoples with an aim of promoting an alternative sense of place and space and an eye towards reshaping community development. This sort of "cartographic counterculture" (79) was pioneered in the 1960s in the Canadian and Alaskan Arctic, but it remains relevant for urban and rural settings alike, as it surfaces and honors the claims of marginalized people.

In addition to supporting empowerment, cultural mapping can be a useful tool for cultural planning. In Philadelphia, the Mayor's Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy used funding from the NEA's Our Town program and ArtPlace America to produce CultureBlocks (Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy 2016), an online mapping tool that quantifies and visualizes cultural assets like resident artists, cultural organizations, and arts-related funding. Tools such as CultureBlocks can aid municipal decision making, which often relies on quantification of resources and analysis of gaps and disparities. However, these tools are best supported by robust data collection that relies on a combination of "resource mapping" of tangible assets but also "identity mapping" of intangible assets such as local history and traditions (100).

Cultural mapping is also undertaken by artists and academics. Artistic mapping grew out of the social practice art of the 1970s and new genre public art of the 1990s. Maps produced by artists can work in concert with conventional planning regimes or stand in opposition to them. In either case, socially engaged artists offer perspectives that challenge the way places are conventionally represented. Artists are sometimes joined in critical spatial inquiry

by scholars such as Edward Soja, Michel Foucault, and Henri Lefebvre. If critical scholars are embraced, even by extension, in conventional mapping projects, their work can provide both healthy caution and a dose of inspiration. Though these practices seemingly fall outside of the ambit of policymaking, it is possible to see how the expansiveness of artistic methods and the critical work of disciplines like geography can inform a robust cross-sectoral praxis.

Elsewhere, the volume sketches the contours of mapping as both a resolutely participatory method and rigorous approach to data collection. The case studies reflect both methodological range and geographic diversity. Leonardo Chiesi and Paolo Costa describe cultural mapping projects in Palestine, Syria, and Malta, using several cases of action research to illustrate a classification scheme for mapping along axes of time, space, and power (72). This sort of scheme can prove useful to advance classroom discussions of the goals and politics of mapping projects, as well as a guide to designing reflective mapping practice. Eleonora Redaelli analyzes cultural policy documents in the United States, Canada, the UK, and Australia and New Zealand, finding that mapping efforts fall into three broad categories: economic measurement, geographic visualization, and network analysis (87). These distinct but mutually reinforcing kinds of maps demonstrate the range of tools available to cultural planners, and make the point that not all mapping is strictly cartographic. Len Collard and Grant Revell depict a bicultural mapping project in Western Australia that seeks nothing short of cultural reconciliation (134). Other chapters take the reader inside projects from Ukraine, Egypt, and Malaysia.

Taken as a whole, *Cultural Mapping as Cultural Inquiry* explores a variety of mapping practices and logics to inform and inspire cultural planning. Mapping emerges as at once epistemological and deeply ontological (3), a mode of representation and a set of claims. The contributors take seriously the concern that mapping may reinforce existing power relations and systematic oppression. Only robust participation by a variety of empowered stakeholders, coupled with critical reflection, can protect mapping projects from cooptation for merely economic ends. In its range of case studies and frameworks for evaluating a diverse set of practices, *Cultural Mapping as Cultural Inquiry* will be useful for qualitative methods or GIS classes seeking a critical or international perspective. The editors' framing chapter as well as Paulo Providência's chapter on the city as "didactic instrument" (217) will have applications in courses examining urban design, creative placemaking, and cultural planning. Policymakers, too, ought to work through this volume to gain some critical tools before they reflexively engage in mapping exercises that may have damaging consequences. The chapters are not uniformly helpful, and their lack of cross-cutting dialogue with other chapters in the book means that sometimes key points are articulated multiple times, with only slight variations. Finally, the book is not a rough-and-ready handbook for cultural mapping—for that, seek out an applied document like the *Cultural Mapping Toolkit* or any of the numerous resources promoted by the NEA on its Our Town website. But alongside such handbooks, *Cultural Mapping as Cultural Inquiry* can provide history and critical context, as well as inspiration for practitioners who seek to advance cultural planning for the common good.

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The Politics of Museums, by Clive Gray, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, 186 pp., \$69.99, ISBN: 978-1-137-49341-5

The capability of museums to play a role in shaping politics and how they perform this role is a subject that has received scarce attention by cultural policy scholars to this point. In his new work, *The Politics of Museums*, Clive Gray seeks to analyze how and by whom in the museum sector political power is wielded, how this power is influenced by the ideology of the actors wielding it, and what capability this power has in legitimizing various politics. Gray explores these relationships within three geographic contexts: internationally, nationally, and locally. The result of Gray's analysis is that though museums have enjoyed a depoliticization in terms of exercising power in the world outside of the museum, as cultural policy is often a lower priority of national governments, they do play a subtler and understated role in promoting and legitimizing ideologies within the museum and its community, and these politics have a lasting and underlying effect on the politics outside of the museum.

Gray makes a good choice through his structuring of the book by geographic levels, as it is useful in demonstrating the differences in which certain politics or ideologies are expressed through museums. At the international level, there is an emphasis on the role the museum plays in preserving our larger "universal" humanity and how they can be used to perpetuate or dispute historical trends like globalization and colonization or hegemonic Western views towards indigenous peoples and their cultural material. At the national level, the discussion is more focused on the function of museums. Some nations trend toward use for symbolic functions, such as establishing a national identity, while others are more instrumental, using museums for educational and recreational purposes. At the local level, the emphasis is typically on telling that community's heritage narrative, while providing educational and recreational functions. Presenting each of these geographic levels in turn, Gray successfully illuminates the similarities and differences in the politics expressed between them, as well as opining on the ideologies that influence the actors involved in enacting these policies.

In his exploration of the actors involved in struggles for power in museums, Gray identifies museum professionals and technocrats as the group that has most consolidated the policy-shaping power within the sector. On this international level, through organizations such as the International Council of Museums, this group of people sets the standards or recommends the best practices for museum operation. At the national level, the playing field is more even, as national governments jockey with the professionals and technocrats to have some degree of influence in the cultural sector because of the role museums and other cultural institutions have in defining a national identity. At the local level, the professionals and technocrats again predominantly hold sway, but because of the small nature of these museums and their focus on community heritage and narrative, these professionals must contend with other groups, such as museum volunteers and community groups that have an emotional stake in the museum. Gray's identification of key actors, their predominant ideologies, and their resulting political