Maps and Apps: Mobile media and the reconfigurations of knowledge

10-11 November 2016, University of Marburg (Germany)

"Mapping" has recently become a buzzword in many discourses, among them those in the fields of art, social sciences and the humanities. Digital cartography uses conventional cartography, on which it is conceptually based, and combines it with forms of digital communication practices. Web spaces such as Google Earth combine conventional cartography with the communication structures of social networks and the archival functions of computer hard drives. These new hybrid forms of cartographic communication and digital spaces merge with mobile communication networks such as Twitter and Skype; networks which provide instantaneous visual and oral communication and create new communities without geographic or political limitations. New communication practices undermine/defy/blur state-centered notions of territory as well as notions of nation and political communities based on territorially fixed states.

At the same time, digital and especially mobile media have triggered reconfigurations of the production and circulation of knowledge. Performances of knowing in the art world, in social science and in the humanities, for example, are shaped increasingly through communication in new virtual spaces. Regarding the study of societies in the Middle East and North Africa and diaspora spaces, more and more researchers organize interviews and the collection of material and data through virtual spaces. Virtual spaces are convenient for researchers with limited time who may be restricting from traveling to areas of study due to violent conflict and war. Social transformations and changing economies of representation in societies can be analyzed in virtual spaces in addition to on the ground.

The Maps and Apps International Workshop deals with the myriad ways in which digital and mobile media shape the dynamics of state-society relations and the insights we can extrapolate from this relatively new phenomenon. The workshop takes a closer look at the spatial dimensions of change that reimagine "the political", the community, and identity. More specifically, the workshop seeks to discuss the aesthetic representations of these processes and these changing modes of knowledge production.

We welcome papers that address the overarching theme of the workshop, including those that consider, but are not limited to, the following topics and questions:

A) <u>Mobile media as devices for knowledge</u>

Who can produce/access knowledge via mobile devices? What kind of knowledge is produced? What changes occur in the circulation of knowledge? What role do these kinds of knowledge play in times of protest and resistance?

B) <u>Mapping marginality and independence</u>

How do digital cartography and mobile media shape identity formation of and within communities at the political margins of internationally recognized nation states (e.g. the Kurds, Amazigh, Copts, Sothern Yemenis)? How are these means used to impose and maintain spatial control of marginalized communities?

C) <u>Maps of violent conflict and war</u>

How does digital cartography contribute to conflict and war, how to conflict resolution? How does digital cartography change perceptions and knowledge of conflict and war?

D) <u>Aesthetic interventions and everyday life practices</u>

How do artists reflect new spatial and temporal modes introduced through digital cartography and mobile media? How do urban communities interact with mobile media structures and how is urban culture integrated into mobile media communication? Is there a way to connect to heritage cultures? And how does mobile media blur the urban-rural dichotomy?

E) <u>Space, Time, and ways of knowing</u>

How have the new modes of spatial and temporal communication changed academic knowledge production? How does "mapping of …" alter our knowledge about the world? What does research in virtual space mean for encounters between researchers and those whose practice is investigated in terms of distortions, transference and counter-transference?

Even though the workshop's focus is on the Middle East and North Africa, we expressly welcome case studies from different cultural and historical contexts, in order to pursue a more transregional perspective and discussion.

Please address abstracts (max. 200 words) along with institutional affiliation and a short bio (max. 150 words) to: alena.strohmaier@staff.uni-marburg.de. **Deadline is 31 March 2016.** Notifications will follow shortly after. If selected, participants will have to hand in full papers (approximately 3000 words) prior to the workshop. All costs will be covered.

This international workshop forms part of the activities of the research network "Re-Configurations. History, Remembrance and Transformation Processes in the Middle East and North Africa", founded by the Philipps-Universität Marburg in spring 2013 with funding from the Federal Ministry for Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF). Its founding was triggered by the developments in the MENA-region commonly subsumed under the term "Arab Spring", which highlighted the need for a partial re-assessment of scholarship on MENA countries, for a development of new perspectives, and for a deepening of our understanding of the events unfolding in the region: their underlying reasons, historic roots, and future perspectives.

Organizers: Andrea Fischer-Tahir, Angela Krewani, Alena Strohmaier

Program: International Workshop

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11. November 2016, University of Marburg (Germany)

09:00 **Welcome and Introduction**
Angela Krewani, Andrea Fischer-Tahir, Alena Strohmaier

09:30 – 10:30 **Who maps Middle Eastern Geographies in the Digital Age?**
Presentation: Christian Bittner and Georg Glasze
Respondent: Angela Krewani

10:30 Coffee Break

10:45 – 11:45 **Memory Politics and Historical Cartography: Issues and Cases**
Presentation: Kurt Franz
Respondent: Ines Braune

11:50 –12:50 **Mapping Genocide? Giving Visual Memory to Oral Culture**
Presentation: Sebastian Maisel
Respondent: Andrea Fischer-Tahir

13:00 Lunch Break

14:00 – 15:00 **From Amateur Video to Documentary: Found Footage Film and Reconfiguring of Historical Knowledge**
Presentation: Katarzyna Ruchel-Stockmans
Respondent: Yvonne Zimmermann

15:10 – 16:10 **From 73 Easting to Digitized Exercises: Mapping Playable Battlefields from Terrain to Screen in Preparation for Middle Eastern Conflicts**
Presentation: Janina Schupp
Respondent: Ann-Marie Letourneur

16:10 Coffee Break

16:30   **Wrap-Up Session: Overall Commentary**
                   Astrid Schwarz

17:30   **Closing Remarks**
                   Angela Krewani, Andrea Fischer-Tahir, Alena Strohmaier

Chair: Alena Strohmaier

The **Welcome Dinner** for all presenters, respondents and organizers will take place on **November 10th** at 7pm (Restaurant Zur Sonne).