

## REDEFINING URBAN STRATEGIES

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Strategies to intervene in the urban fabric and its development are constantly being revised. The final section discusses ways of »Redefining Urban Strategies«.



# Mapping as a Performative Mode of Intervening

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**Abstract:** While architecture is a means of intervening in the world through the construction of physical structures, mapping is a means of intervening through the representation of those structures – and potentially of their social, political, and economic impact. This mode of representation could be described as a performative form of intervening in the sense that the map carries, communicates, and produces spatial knowledge that becomes part of the spatial production itself. In the map *Eigentum & Alltag - Eine Karte der Oranienstraße*, the laboriously investigated property relations in the street are shown as interrelating with the everyday spatial productions in the shops, restaurants, and art spaces along the street as an interdependent spatial system. Re-reading the map introduces a perspective on how mapping can help to collect, transfer, and perform spatial knowledge about the conditions that real-estate property produces for the everyday appropriation of space.

**Keywords:** Spatial Commons; Urban Commoning; Performative Mapping; Critical Cartography; Gentrification; Displacement; Artistic Research.

## Introduction

While architecture is a means of intervening in the world through the construction of physical structures, mapping can be regarded as a means for intervening through the representation of those structures – and potentially of their social, political, and economic impact. This mode of representation could be described as a performative form of intervening in the sense that the map carries, communicates, and produces spatial knowledge that becomes part of the spatial production itself. By re-reading the map *Eigentum & Alltag* [Property & Everyday Life]<sup>1</sup>, a discussion on how mapping can help to collect, transfer, and perform spatial knowledge on the conditions that real-estate property produces for the everyday appropriation of space will be opened up.

## Some General Notes on the Production of Space

What surrounds us can be read as the spatialization of the social conditions that determine the processes of urbanization we discovered through the writings of sociologists (Simmel 1903; Lefebvre 1974; Burckhardt 2017; Löw 2001). Likewise, the way that physical structures are produced through architecture, urban design, or planning influences, transforms, fosters, hinders or intervenes in those social conditions. In the interaction between the social production of space and the spatialization of the social, the built and urbanized space surrounding us emerges as a fabric of social relations embedded in physical-spatial structures. The entanglement between spatial structure and social practice is inextricable.

By affirming this entanglement, we acknowledge that space is produced anew every day through the joint use and appropriation of our physical-spatial resources. This reproduction of space takes place as a factual phenomenon that we can detect, measure, report and identify by registering the modes of usage and their traces within the physical surroundings. Since it is only through our perception that produced – or even better, reproduced – space, space becomes part of our individual as well as our collective memory (Lefebvre 1974; Löw 2001). Two ways of space production can be identified: first, through our own everyday experience of seeing, hearing, and

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<sup>1</sup> *Eigentum & Alltag* is a project by the neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst (nGbK) [New Society for Visual Arts] working group *In Dissent?* (Stefan Endewardt, Joerg Franzbecker, Anna Heilgemeir, Naomi Hennig, Ulrike Jordan and Dagmar Pelger).

remembering spatial surroundings and second, through reading, viewing, and processing reports, surveys or documents that describe and recall spatial surroundings.

Like Lefebvre we could argue that we accumulate spatial knowledge through a combination of perception and conception. He frames perceived space as production through social practice and conceived space as production through representation. In regard to the latter, he associates the means and tools that enable us to document, register, measure and describe but also to conceptualize, regulate, design or construct spatial structures. One of the means, next to plans or laws for example, is cartography, including cartographic tools, methods, processes, and products. This is what I would like to refer to here using the term »mapping«. Yet, the first dimension of space production refers to mapping, if we focus on the process of capturing spatial knowledge by surveying surroundings.

Lefebvre defines a third dimension of space production as lived space that comes into being through the imagination of a representational space. He associates that third dimension with »more or less coherent systems of non-verbal systems and signs«. Within this lies a third potential for mapping: to perform or transmit a sensual or mental knowledge about space that is hard or even impossible to transmit through verbal articulation alone. By highlighting the Lefebvrean dimensions of space production in the Löwian concept of relational space as an interplay of material ordering, synthesis performance of the mind, and symbols as social codes, the power of mapping becomes apparent as being a threefold practice of perceiving, conceiving, and being in space through map making.

But from where does mapping enter the discipline of spatial research and how can its interventionist mode be grasped?

### **Mapping as a Tool for Performing (Relational) Spatial Knowledge**

Through the interweaving of sociology, geography, ethnology, and anthropology with planning disciplines since the spatial turn, the areas of application for cartographic methods in urban research have grown from their role as purely descriptive toward analytical tools for design (Corner 1990). This means that the investigative view of urban research can be expanded to include visionary, projective, and future-speculative aspects of planning, while the way in which maps are produced, used, and applied also expanded.

The adoption of social science perspectives into urban research is relevant to this view as it expands cartography to include ethnographic methods of recording actions and relationships. The integration of the relational aspect of social sciences, together with the design aspects of architecture in cartographic applications, make the map a tool that is used very comprehensively in spatial research.

Cartographic documents have the potential to represent both concrete spatial structures (from surface textures to technical installations) as well as the processes and actions that happen within those structures (from the frequency of use to atmospheric qualities), even when overlaid with a third kind of information on organizational settings in which the actions in space are based (from opening hours to codes and conventions).

### **Critical Mapping as an Integrative Practice for Legitimizing Collective Knowledge Spaces**

Therefore, cartographic methods are very suitable for critically questioning the various power structures within the production of space. Mapping can bring together the local and situated spatial knowledge of civic actors captured in field research on one side with the abstract and institutionalized spatial knowledge of state or public actors on the other. And even a hidden, often shady and secret knowledge of so-called private market actors can be made operative and superposed with the other two.

In order to interlink the different knowledge spaces of state, civic society, and market, the disclosure of the respective sources of knowledge is necessary: First, the institutionalized knowledge spaces – from the national surveying department to commercial TomTom – must be made accessible and second, the collectivized knowledge spaces – from neighborhood to tenant initiative – must be authorized and legitimized. There is now a short digression into the two mapping approaches – institutional and collective – which makes their possibilities and conflicts in cartographic overlay more comprehensible.

Since the 1980s, geographic information systems (GIS), have become the most important tool for regional and urban planning. They are indispensable in making the complex collections of spatial data operational. These digitized map series in the form of GIS databases have experienced a shift in application from the regional to the urban scale (Moss 2012; Janssens 2013). Traditionally, this knowledge is kept in the hands of national institutions,

who record and manage the data in their surveying departments. This state-owned and juridically legitimized spatial knowledge of land surveying offices has been made accessible to civil society in a selective form via geoportals for around ten years, while the production of maps has been outsourced to market-based production. The notions of public and private in describing the form of ownership of this spatial knowledge are blurred and only of limited help in illuminating the complex relationship between the various institutional fields in which the abstract spatial knowledge of urban geography is distributed. This raises the question of who actually owns the data that is stored on national servers as soon as they are made accessible to Google, Apple, Bing or TomTom (Wood 2010).

On the local scale, web-based map services such as the aforementioned Google, Apple, and Bing, but also open-source platforms like Open Street Map are based on global positioning system (GPS) and have increasingly become an everyday navigation and information tool since the 2000s and as a mobile service since the 2010s. They have established the map as a well-known and familiar carrier of spatial knowledge and made it accessible to individual users. This development unintentionally opened up a toolbox of collective mapping methods for self-organized civil society, urban political initiatives, neighborhoods, and activists (kollektiv orangotango 2018). The widespread involvement of neighbors, residents, or other civic actors in the collection, interpretation, and dissemination of local spatial knowledge through open-access cartographic tools creates emancipatory working methods. Although carried out on private devices, they have the potential to collectivize the »privately owned information« on a Google server and turn the collected knowledge into a common good.

This is where the potential for mapping as a performative mode of intervention can have a great effect: in merging collective spatial knowledge in local mappings of perceived space (e.g. rent records, appropriations, displacements, interventions, oral history, memories) with the institutional spatial knowledge in abstract mappings of represented space (e.g. demographic data sets, survey results, ownership structures, development perimeters, topographical elevation data, aerial photo series, standard land price values) on an equal footing alongside and on top of each other and intermingled with each other.

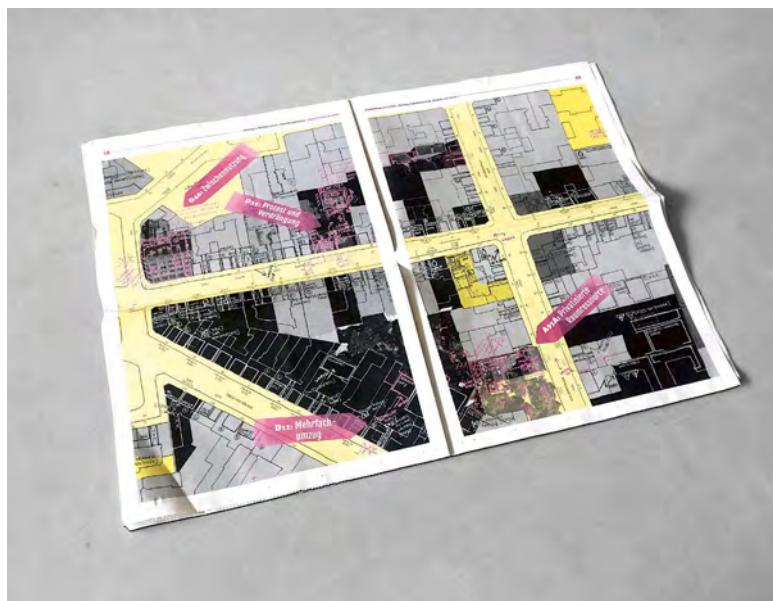
This merging of the different levels of scale, modes of production, and, above all, forms of organization of knowledge spaces calls for a further rearrangement of the hegemonies over spatial knowledge: that of institutionalized

administrative and scientific servers with a political mandate on the one hand and that of market-based mapping services to generate profits from data trading on the other, and finally, the mapping collectives of a sometimes more and sometimes less well-organized civic society on the third – as well as the fourth, individual knowledge of the single person, whose privacy is or should be protected regarding the other three spheres.

### Re-reading the Map, *Eigentum & Alltag*

To unfold the capacity of mapping as a means of performing spatial knowledge and therefore intervene in the production of space, an exemplary mapping will be discussed, where the visual integration of public-institutional knowledge with private-economic knowledge and the civic-collective knowledge of spatial production was explored.

The newspaper and the inserted map with the same name *Eigentum & Alltag* were created as part of the research project *In Dissent?* at the neue



1.

Map in the Newspaper *Eigentum & Alltag* in Oranienstraße. © nGbK working group *In Dissent?*

Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst [New Society for Visual Arts] in Berlin (nGbK 2019). During the project, discussions with commercial and cultural actors were held in and on Oranienstraße in Berlin-Kreuzberg and changes, displacement, and possibilities for joint solidary action in the neighborhood of nGbK were critically questioned.

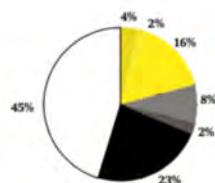
The increased presence of renowned art venues in Oranienstraße is making the traditionally resistant and combative neighborhood much more attractive to an affluent clientele, which goes hand in hand with increased rent prices, the forced displacement of tenants, and an extensive trade in real estate. However, that the myth of art as the cause of gentrification cannot be maintained in this way was one of the theses of the research. The much bigger factor in displacement and rising property values is the ownership structure and how property is pooled. What is causing rents to skyrocket is the increasing interest of well-funded investors in real estate as a financial asset and the long-term consequences of Berlin's failed real-estate policy.

To investigate that hypothesis, a multi-page mapping was elaborated upon to show how ownership was distributed on Oranienstraße in 2019 and how it has changed in the last decades. Accompanied by numerous texts and images contributed by neighborhood initiatives, urban actors, and researchers, the mapping results reflected questions of long-term and temporary use, capital and the commons, resistance and commercial tenancy law, as well as the relationship between the production of art and the neighborhood.

As one of the most important local business streets in Berlin-Kreuzberg, Oranienstraße carries a large part of Berlin's history within it. It was only in the middle of the 19th century that Oranienstraße emerged as part of an urban expansion zone on formerly agricultural land. At the beginning of the 20th century, the development of residential, factory, and commercial buildings was complemented by even larger commercial and retail buildings. A large part of the neighborhood was destroyed during the Second World War. From 1965 onward, the planning of a city highway along Oranienstraße initiated redevelopments containing large-scale housing estates. Protests in the 1980s prevented the highway's construction and the continuation of extensive demolition for redevelopments. A squatting movement established itself as »maintenance squats« and introduced a gentle urban renewal. The result was the restructuring of many unresolved property relationships by municipal companies and a public property share of 60 percent in Oranienstraße by 1990. In the aftermath of a public bank scandal in 2003, most of the

public-owned real estate was privatized. Meanwhile, Kreuzberg became caught up in a third major wave of gentrification since the late 1980s (Holm 2011). Oranienstraße is not only more central, busier, and more congested than ever, but around 25 percent of its commercial buildings, industrial yards, factory floors, and housing estates are owned by international real-estate groups, who are making high returns on the lively neighborhood. Although the neighbors remain resistant and oppose speculation,

Ownership structure 2019



Ownership structure 1993



2.

*Ownership Structure in Oranienstraße, 2019 and 1993. © nGbK working group In Dissent?*

local businesses were displaced while residential use is semi-safeguarded through protective planning laws.

The research project *In Dissent?* explored this relationship between neighborhood, gentrification, and artistic engagement. In order to understand what role the art and cultural places on Oranienstraße, in connection with the increasing displacement of local businesses, play, the question of ownership on the street came to the fore. Based on the assumption that the everyday uses of the city and the street can only be understood when superimposed on the inherently invisible forms of ownership, three different layers of information are brought together in the map: The level of property, the level of local everyday life in the shops along the street, and the level of art and cultural spaces, which often have a supra-local impact. Due to the changing atmosphere of everyday life – the displacement of shops, the disappearance of services of general interest, the vanishing of small bakeries or pubs, the standardized range of gastronomic offers, the politicizing program of the art and cultural spaces and institutions or the scarcity of affordable office floor or backyard studio rents – is not primarily caused by the operational mode of new businesses entering the street. Everyday life is primarily influenced by the new ownership structures.

The decisions, actions, and everyday practices of tenants – regardless of whether they were art, culture, commerce or social institution – in shops, storage floors, former department stores, factory or office floors, depend less on customers, neighbors or employees. Their rental conditions, contract terms, and rental prices depend mainly on the ownership structures – especially since there is no protective planning law for commercial rents in Berlin.

In order to examine the significance of property relations for everyday life on the street, the changes in ownership were traced through time. To make the change to today's status legible then, the mapping with data collected from 2019 was extended to include information from 1993, as well as numerous stories, memories, and newspaper articles about Oranienstraße.

### **Re-reading the Property-mapping Layer**

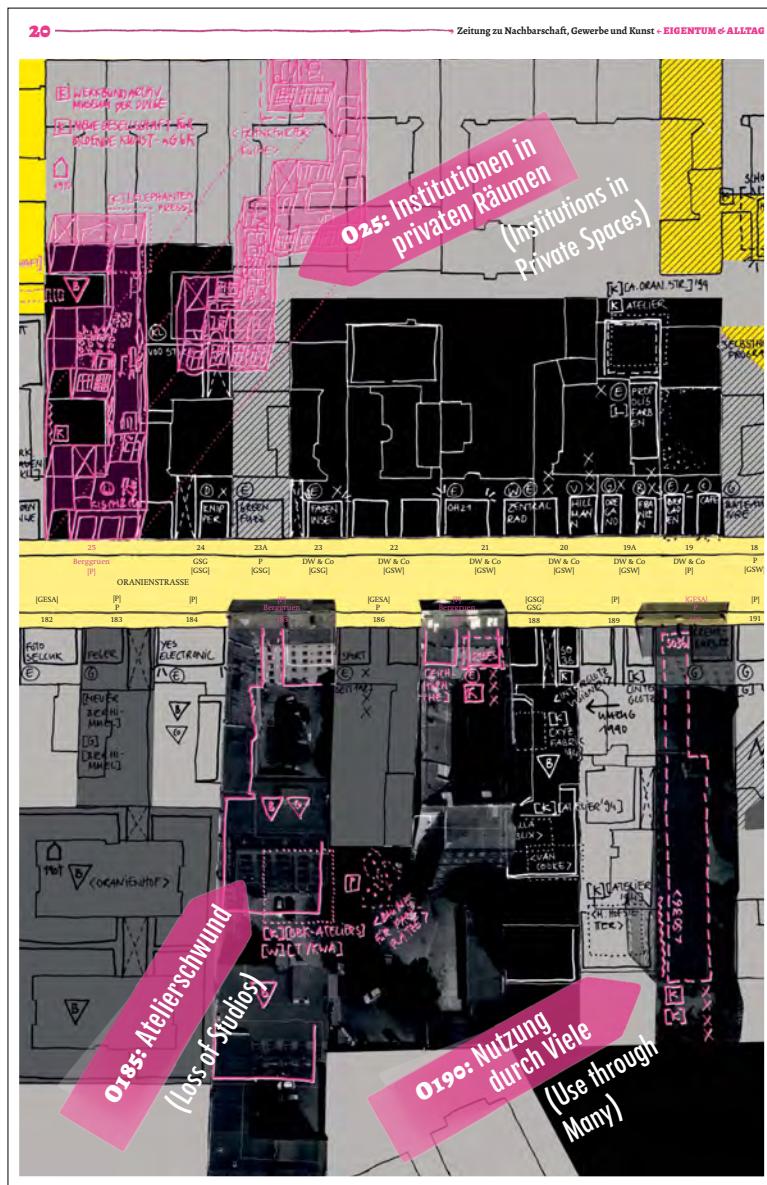
To make the changes of property structures between 1993 and 2019 visible, three colors were chosen to signify different forms of ownership. Black-colored sites indicate the property of financial investors, yellow sites that of public-municipal ownership, yellow-hatched ones mark common-collectivized ownership – e.g. 21 buildings of the Luisenstadt cooperative – and

gray-colored plots of land most possibly belong to private, mostly unknown owners. Based on that color code, the spaces along the street became readable as various economic goods: the yellow spaces as a »common good«, managed communally or collectivized, the black spaces as a »club good« exploited by the real-estate and finance market, and in between a mixture of gray-ish spaces as »private goods« that were commodified at varying levels of intensity.

### Re-reading the Everyday Mapping Layer

On top of the colored mapping layer of properties lies the everyday layer as a hand drawing. Here, one can find the stories that make the street and its adjacent commercial spaces readable as a socially constructed urban space that is produced and reproduced every day. All shops and businesses that were mentioned in questionnaires, conversations, and workshops during the research were registered with their names. Different icons indicate whether the properties are businesses, food outlets, services, suppliers, workshops, or social institutions. Sometimes the names of previous businesses are mentioned and sometimes even how long a business has been on-site, or whether a store is significant beyond the neighborhood, whether the rent is expensive or how often a store has had to move within the neighborhood itself.

Even if the complete information for the entire street is not gathered, enough knowledge is captured in the mapping to draw a comprehensive picture of the local spatial production around the ground-floor spaces along Oranienstraße. To further condense the picture and point to the constant process of negotiation through which the space is constantly being reproduced, a series of additional information was added to the everyday level. These included the protests of recent years, the squatting of recent decades, and the repeated loss of renovation funds in the 1990s due to the subsequent privatization of the 2000s, or the listed monuments on the street, which resulted in the loss of some valuable pieces of Berlin's architecture falling into the hands of financial investors.



3.

Zoom-ins O25: Institutions in private spaces (nGbK), O185: Atelier loss and O190: Use through many (SO36), Map Eigentum & Alltag. © nGbK working group In Dissent?

### **Re-reading the Art and Cultural Places Mapping Layer**

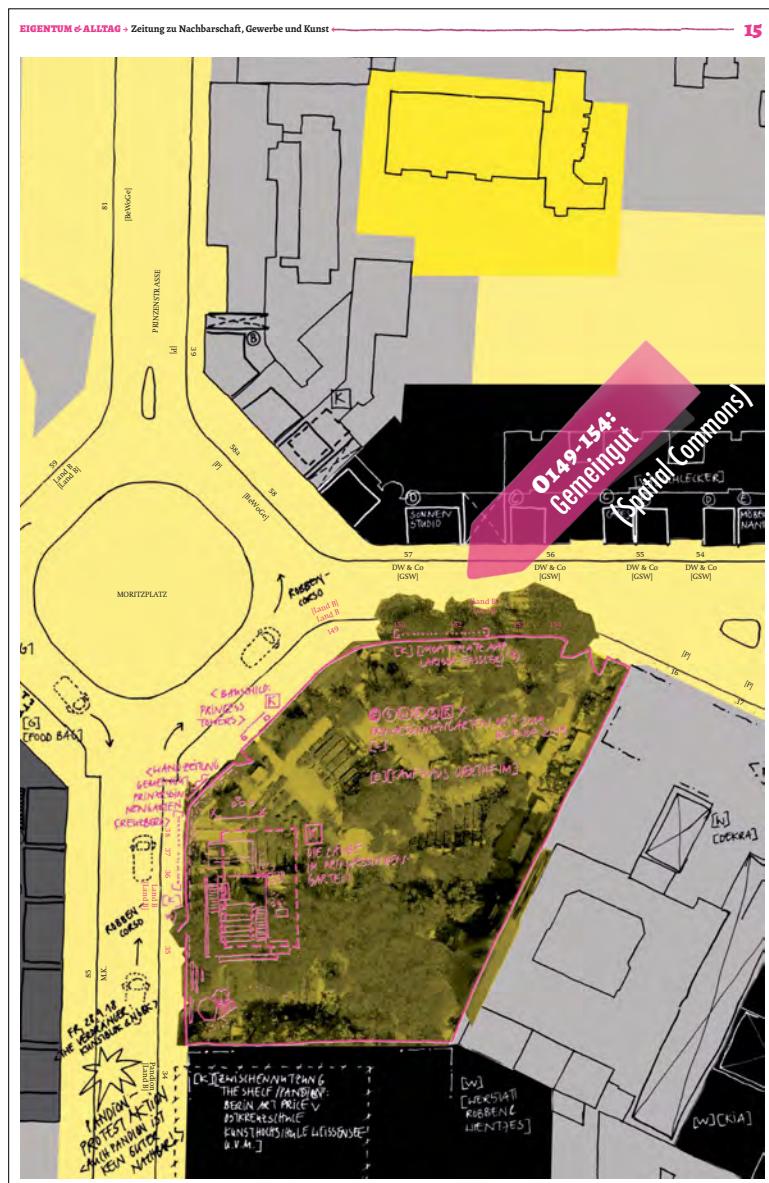
In the third layer of the mapping, spaces for art and culture are highlighted. It contains ateliers and galleries that still exist, but mainly those that have disappeared, as well as newly established cultural institutions or those constructed on a temporary basis for art biennials or real estate developers, which are also included in the mapping. They form a group of »particular« uses for commercial space that can have a supra-local impact, be exclusive sales spaces, or enable important socio-cultural community work and open up for self-determined work. Partly marked by anecdotal knowledge or references to local myths, the art and cultural spaces refer to an everyday life that sometimes produces a surplus of cultural and social acts that reach out beyond the local scale or beyond art production into the neighborhood. Art in public spaces played, and still plays, an important role in Kreuzberg and has been given its own coding on the map, so that it becomes directly readable.

### **Re-reading the Mapping Layer of Selected Spots**

Finally, a selection of twelve locations was highlighted in a pink color and drawn three-dimensionally by hand. The chosen places exemplify specific situations in which particularly meaningful stories about the connection between property and everyday life can be found.

The stories spatialized in the map report on lost places which have acquired a new function in the neighborhood, such as successful protests against the privatization of municipal land, spaces permanently secured through occupation and changed ownership, of temporary institutional use that has resulted in privatization, of multiple moves due to rent increases, of resistance practices against displacement and civic self-organized community work, of the enclosure of art and cultural institutions located in privately owned real estate, of ateliers being displaced by the digital economy, on the long-term survival of subcultural spaces that are highly important to the combative neighborhood, of operating models and concepts of using space to increase the income from rent, but also of operating models in self-management and successful struggles for affordable rents and much more.





5.

Zoom-in O149-154 Common Good, Map Eigentum & Alltag. © nGbK working group In Dissent?

## Bringing Together Spatial Knowledges

In order to collect and expand knowledge on property and everyday life, it was not only publically or commercially accessible sources such as reports or newspaper articles that were referenced. Above all, the neighborhood itself was surveyed, along with the tenants, shop owners, artists and bookkeepers who were included in the research process. In the mapping workshop, local knowledge was obtained and mapped together with those involved, and a questionnaire was developed collaboratively and distributed in the street.

By offering the cooperative process of mapping within the project, a method and a tool to support the demands and arguments for improved commercial rental protection was provided to the alliance of traders. For the nGbK, the map was also an aid to argue against another rent increase after the project ended. Like many other commercial tenants on the street, nGbK was faced with the question: Stay and fight or be pushed out? For this reason, the structure of both the map and the questionnaires was discussed in detail with the workshop participants: What should the map show and what should it not show? Also, the further whereabouts and expandability of the collected knowledge in the map and the newspaper were discussed with tradespeople, the nGbK, the civic initiatives fighting displacement, and the Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg museum near Oranienstraße. As a result, the total collected knowledge was simultaneously shared with public institutions and civic initiatives in the form of a large Excel spreadsheet and they are free to continue working with it.

Although the map *Eigentum & Alltag* can only provide partial insight into the consequences of privatization and extraction processes for the neighborhood and its commercial premises, it still delivers a deeper understanding of the spatial relationships between the production of local space by users and neighbors on the one hand, and the enclosure of spaces through the financialization strategies of institutional investors on the other. Through its narrative potential, the map as a communication tool and mapping as a process for transferring, exchanging, and performing knowledge about both spatial constructions – the abstract representative one and the locally embedded perceived one – provides a perspective on the production of lived space, which is how Lefebvre describes the third dimension of space production.

Mapping as a record of the various processes is therefore a means not only for the neighborhood, its traders, shop owners, art institutions and tenant

initiatives, but it could also be used in politics, planning departments, and administration to create an accessible spatial knowledge about the power of ownership on everyday life in the streets. For this, the collective mapping process, including conversations on the street and the workshop meetings at the nGbK, have shown that the self-determined acquisition of knowledge legitimizes the neighborhood as a cooperative partner in the spatial analysis as well as potential planning for a future urban realm. The availability and accessibility of affordable and permanently protected commercial, social, and cultural spaces can only be secured through participation by both sectors, the public and the civic or common, in both spatial knowledge accounts, the administrative and the everyday. Therefore, the state's institutionalized knowledge about property needs to be made accessible to civic society and the locally embedded users' knowledge of experienced space must become a legitimate layer of socio-geographic information that informs and qualifies the abstract databanks to move toward a cooperative planning approach that is negotiated between municipal and neighborhood actors.

### **Mapping as a Performative Mode of Intervening**

From the work in Oranienstraße we can derive a number of insights concerning the potential of mapping as a performative mode of intervening. This mode can be described as three shifting movements between the three dimensions of the production of space.

First, the black color of the property belonging to financial investors literally pulls this officially unknown information out from the darkness of its supposedly private sphere. By generating a technical representation of that formerly hidden knowledge, the focus in the realm of the production of space shifts from the representational space dimension (= lived space, understood as the private realm of hidden and exclusive spatial knowledge, in this case a database on property) and integrates it into the dimension of the representation of space (= conceived space, understood as the public realm of institutionalized abstract spatial knowledge, in this case a newspaper).

But it is only when mapping becomes a means of appropriating that space indicated on the map that the focus in the production of space shifts to the first dimension of space, the spatial practice (= perceived space, here understood as the common realm of collectivized and locally embedded spatial knowledge, in this case the appropriation and disclosure of information through mapping).

In these three consecutive movements through the three dimensions, mapping becomes readable as a performative act. The fact that the authors of the map, including the neighbors as mappers, collect the data and place it on the map, thereby becoming an active part of the mapped space, constitutes an interventionist act or an action of intervening in itself – since it causes a change in all three dimensions of the spatial production. This has three consequences for the role and function of maps and mappings as a means of performative intervention in the production of space:

- a. The origin of the map as a technical measurement tool lies in the representation of space. In this second dimension of spatial production, maps and mappings not only help us to measure and document, but also to conceptualize or conceive space – only if we have the power to give the map precedence as an officially legitimized representation and planning tool. It can only serve as a tool of representation for the ones in power, or the ones who empower themselves. For this reason, strategies of empowerment are deeply related to mapping processes.
- b. The origin of the map as a means of interpreting and positioning oneself in relation to the way we want to look at space, what meaning it has for us, and what values we associate with it, lies in the third Lefebvrian dimension of spatial production, that is the representational space. There, the map is a tool for articulating alternative readings of the world. It introduces a discursive sphere where we can negotiate the way we want to assign meaning to the world. Whether we read the everyday production of space as something emancipatory or enclosing: the map is a critical tool for those who are not in power and can be used as a means for fighting asymmetries of power.
- c. The origin of the map as a tool for appropriating, claiming, possessing, and commoning space through spatial practice lies in the first Lefebvrian dimension of space production, that is perceived space. There, it intervenes directly in the interrelationship between the physical and spatial surroundings – made of objects, topographies, and built structures – and the use and appropriation of them. By drawing the map, the space it represents is already claimed. This dimension of the map intervenes by moving through the daily reproduction of lived and experienced space. It introduces a rupture. After the map has been drawn, read, and integrated into spatial memory, the world is a different place than before. Let's map.

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