Title: **Mapping Occupy**
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Abstract

The following maps explore how participatory democratic spaces can be represented through their spatial and social organisation.

Key Words

Mapping, Occupy, democratic space

Biographical Details

Nishat Awan is a Lecturer at the University of Sheffield. Her research interests include the politics and representation of migratory spaces, geopolitics, and alternative architectural practice. She is co-author of *Spatial Agency* and co-editor of *Trans-Local-Act*.

(68 words)

Images

6 images:
Figure 1 to be smaller alongside text.
Figures 2-6 larger format as a sequence.

Mapping Occupy

The maps shown here were produced as part of a research-based design studio on the MA in Architectural Design at the Sheffield School of Architecture. The studio, "Representations of Civil Society", consisted of a mixture of MA and first year PhD by Design students.

The studio took representation as its theme in its dual sense, as political representation and participation as well as visualisation of the spatial through drawing and mapping. We aimed to discover links between political representation and political spatial practices of the city. The studio program mapped participatory democratic practice as a way of understanding counter hegemonic spaces. The mapping research was then used as a starting point for rethinking city governance in the studio projects. The maps produced here are part of a new tradition in mapping that has emerged in recent years. 'Counter mapping', 'counter cartography', 'radical cartography', 'mapping otherwise',[1] these practices all have the commonality of using maps to work against dominant power structures, to support marginal claims, or to simply reveal other ways of inhabiting space.

Students participated in an Action Mapping Day organised by Isabelle Koksal and Teresa Hoskyns of the Mapping and Public Space Working Group at Occupy LSX. The group was originally formed to investigate the increasingly blurred boundaries between public/private spaces in the City of London and aimed to explore these boundaries by testing spaces through action. The Mapping and Public Space group organised a number of events throughout the duration of the camp. The Action Mapping Day, consisted of a Counter Mapping Strategies workshop at Tent City University, live streamed over the internet, followed by a performative walk through the City of London (Our day at Occupy, Fengyan Zhu).

[Figure 1 here]

The studio mapped the occupy camp itself in order to understand through representation how participatory democratic structures produce public space.[2] Like other Occupy sites, Occupy LSX was organised as a village comprising of residential areas, an information tent, Tent City University, a kitchen tent and public toilet area and assembly area. Each of the students took one aspect of the camp and represented it through mapping. From tracing the wider global movement over time (Figure 2), to analysing the ways in which decision making occurred in the camp (Figure 3) to describing its spatial configuration and the various support structures that allowed hundreds of people to live outside St Pauls for months (Figure 4) to interrogating the reasons for being there in the first place (Figure 5).

Occupy LSX started on October the 15th 2011 as part of a global movement to protest about economic inequalities and political disenfranchisement. Protestors originally wanted to occupy the privatised Paternoster Square outside the London Stock Exchange, owned by the Mitsubishi Estate Company, but like many public spaces in the City of London, the square immediately closed to the general public who were denied access to the space for the duration of the camp. Instead the protestors occupied the adjacent space outside St Paul's Cathedral. The cobbled central part where the tents were erected was where the border between land owned by the Corporation of London and Church of England ran (Figure 6) The aim of the maps was to understand Occupy as a movement but also as spatial inhabitation and occupation. Our concern was to uncover the ways in which visual representation can help us to link the political with the spatial.

Bibliography

Captions

Figure 1 Our Day at Occupy.

(Map by Fengyan Zhu)

Figure 2 Occupy World Movement (map by Chen Guo)

Figure 3 Organisational Structure: Assemblies and decision making
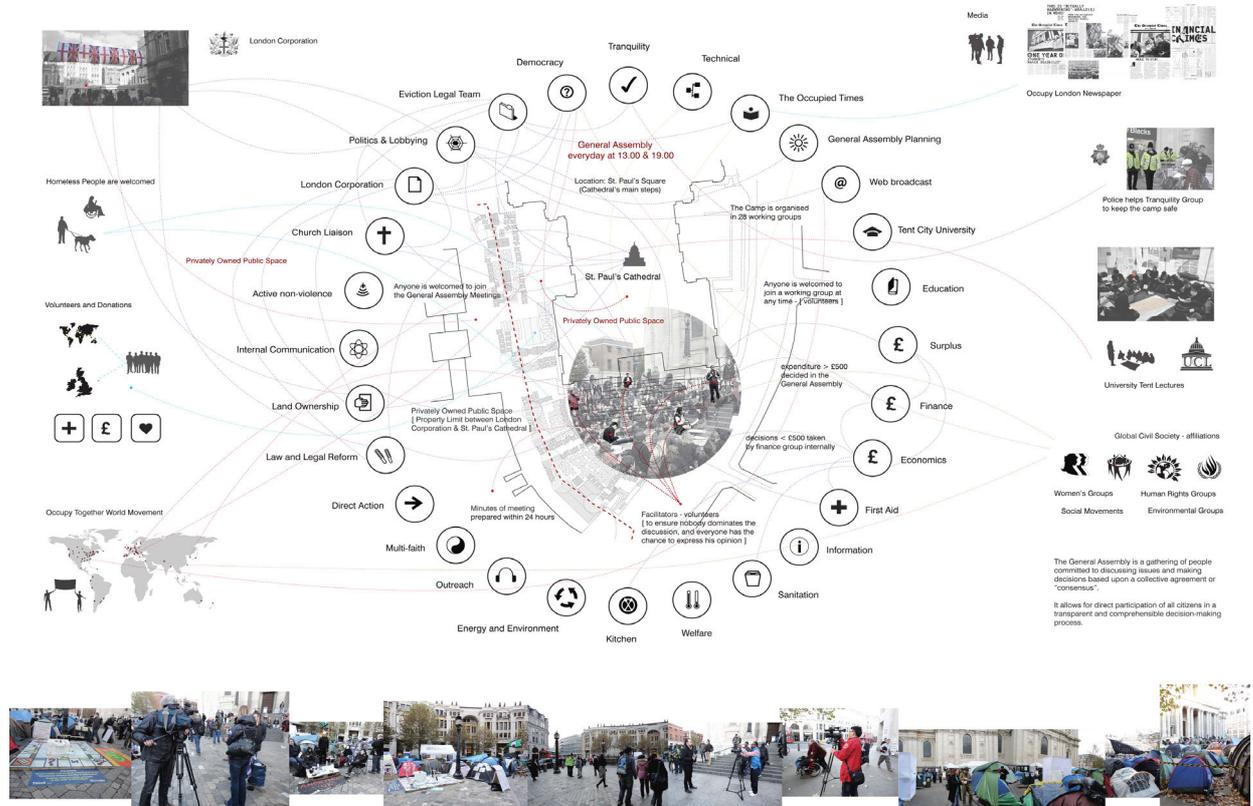(map by Marinela Petrina Pasca)

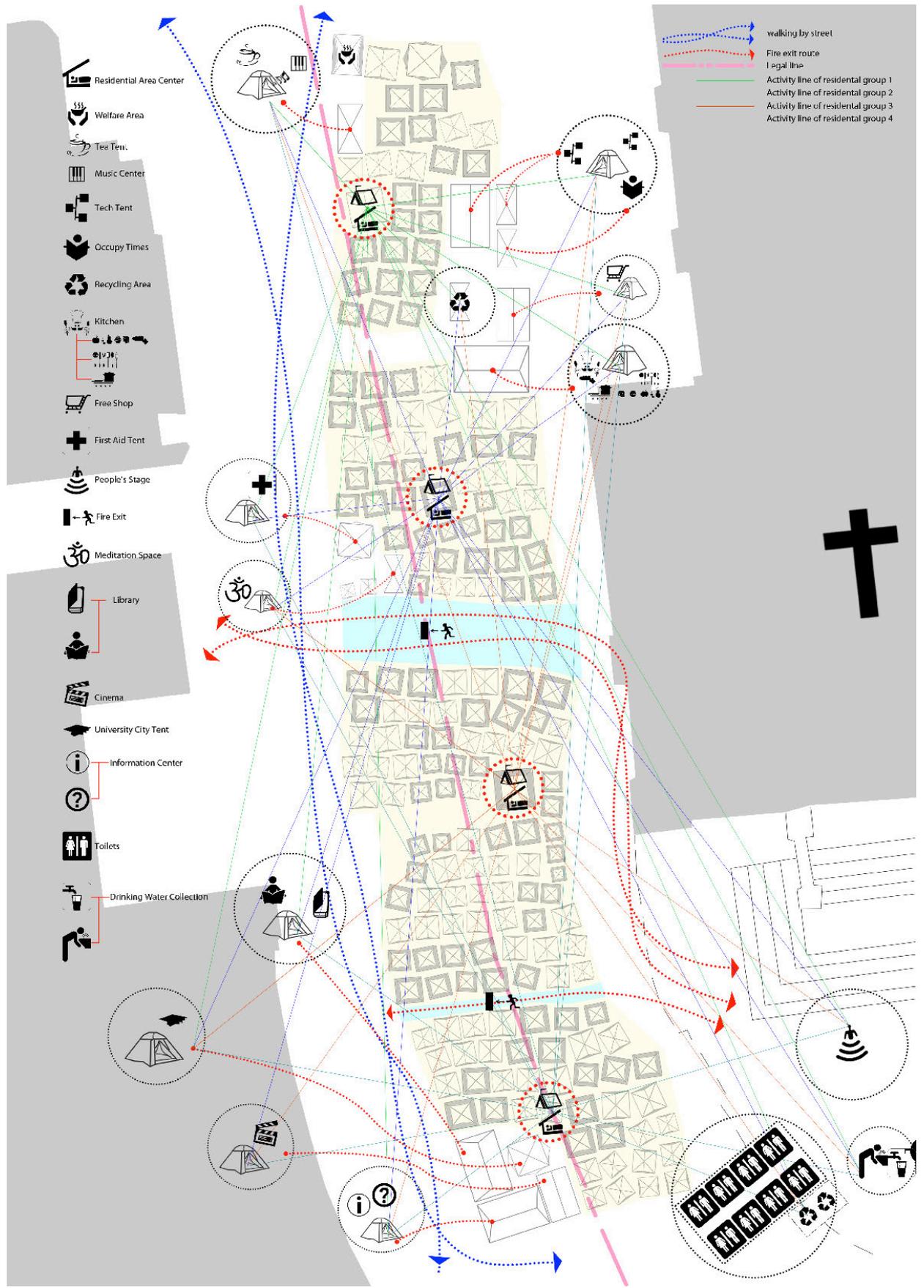Figure 4 Support Structure: What does it take to stay here? (map by Qian Wu)

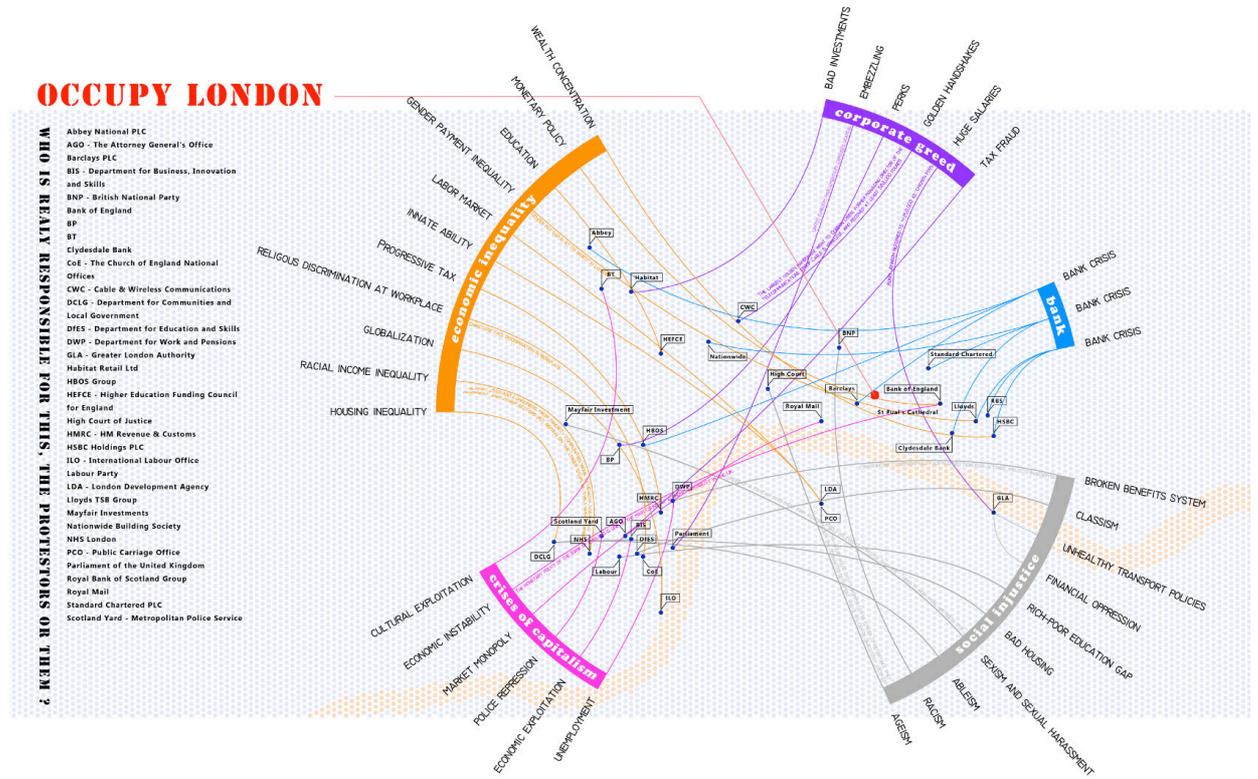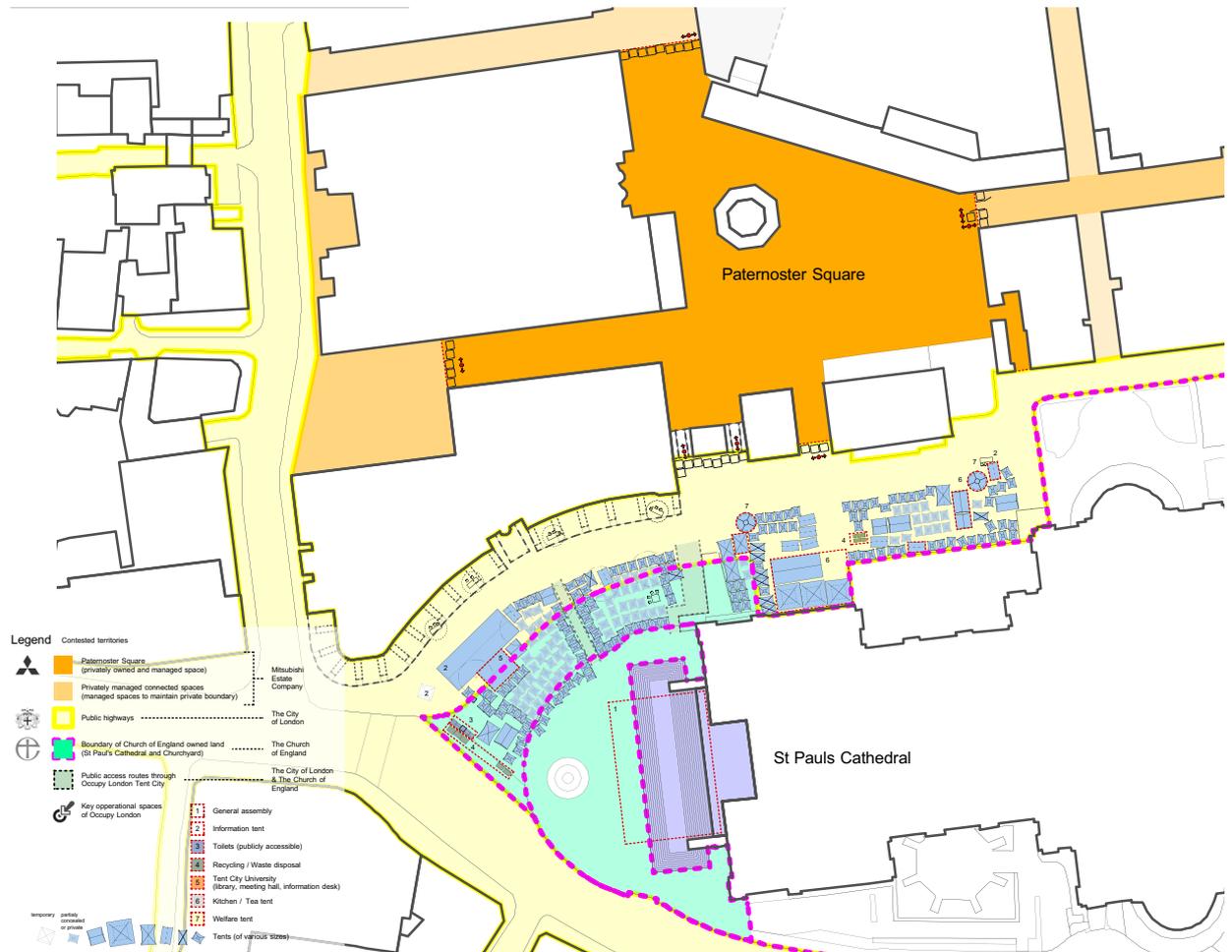Figure 5 Occupy London: Who is really responsible for this? (map by Ding Li).

Figure 6 Occupy LSX territories (map by Carl Fraser).

[1] Peluso, N. L. (1995). Whose Woods Are These? Counter-Mapping Forest Territories in Kalimantan, Indonesia. *Antipode*, *27*(4), 383–406; *3Cs: Counter-Cartographies Collective*, 2012, www.countercartographies.org; Mogel, Liz, and Alexis Bhagat, (eds.) *An Atlas of Radical Cartography*. LA: The Journal of Aesthetics and Protest Press, 2007; Awan, N. (2012). *Diasporic Urbanism: Concepts, Agencies and "Mapping Otherwise"* (PhD thesis). University of Sheffield, Sheffield.

[2] Hoskyns, T, *The Empty Place: Democracy and Public Space*, Taylor and Francis (forthcoming 2013)