June 21 2022, 5.00 pm | Online Talk

Beyond Representation:

Mapping as a Projective and Processual Medium

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Zoom Link: https://tu-berlin.zoom.us/j/63362922341?pwd=MEJ1KzN4QUZXWmxSbTBkNEdqcThCQT09

Maps are tools that help us understand how relationships unfold in space. We use them, intentionally or not, as a means to communicate a set of arguments on how we see and reify the world. In this sense, maps are social constructions that embed a set of norms. Beyond representation, however, in what ways have maps been used as instruments that propose and project social, economic, and environmental futures? Who makes and uses these maps and how does this affect their impact? How does the usage of maps change over time and what does this reveal about the "processual" (Kitchen and Dodge, 2007) nature of maps as continually emergent? This talk explores the actors, institutions, social networks, and ideologies that shaped the 1930s Home Owner's Loan Corporation's "redlining" maps in the United States, how these maps reflect a racialized notion of risk, and their problematic use in contemporary approaches to reparative justice.





WenfeiXu is Postdoctoral Fellow at the Mansueto Institute for Urban Innovation and the Center for Spatial Data Science at the University of Chicago, focusing on social-spatial stratification, segregation, race and ethnicity, quantitative methods, and neighborhood change in the United States. Her work ranges from an interest in the historical legacies of structural housing discrimination and its contemporary spatial-temporal manifestations to exploring the uses of big data in characterizing human activity for urban social science research.

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