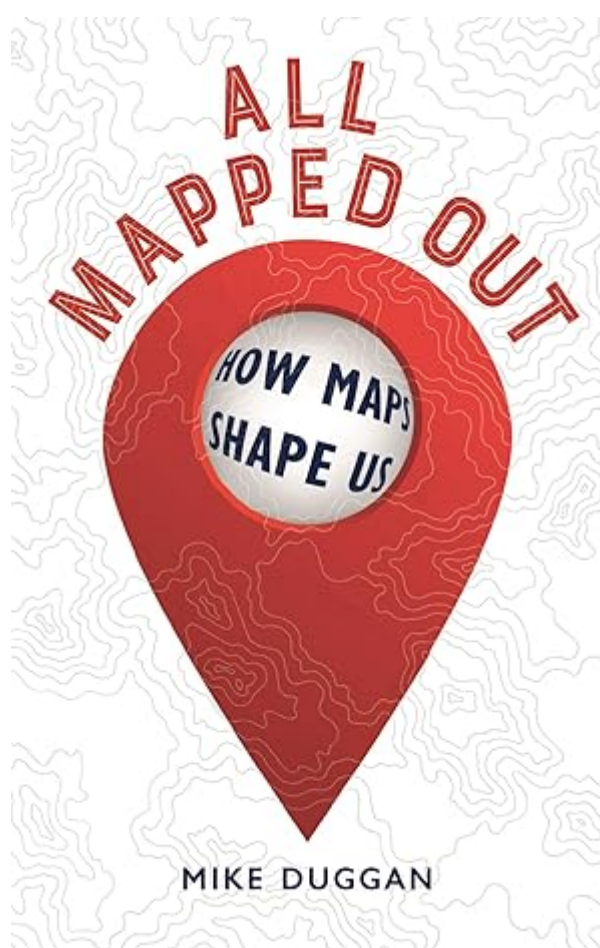




[< issue toc next >>](#)

Book review: All Mapped Out: How Maps Shape Us

reviewed by Sam Kim



Duggan, M. All Mapped Out: How Maps Shape Us. London, United Kingdom: Reaktion Books, 2024. 248p. \$22.50. ISBN: 978-1789148367.

Mike Duggan explores an ethnographic analysis of cartography in his book, *All Mapped Out: How Maps Shape Us*. As a cultural geographer, Duggan takes a unique approach to mapping across culture, media, and time by going beyond the science of cartography. The book is broken up into six analyses of maps, starting with maps



and navigation in chapter 1 to the social and cultural impact of maps (chapter 3 and 4) and ending with future avenues of work in cartography (chapter 6). In that vein, each chapter is its own story with its own set of largely chronological examples.

A central theme in the book is the interactivity of maps and users. This theme is split into two parts: the way maps may influence their users and the way users may influence their maps. The bi-directional shift of power is made evident in some of the examples that are featured starting in the first chapter on navigation. For instance, niche navigational techniques in motorsports can come off as casual. Improper navigation can cost a team the race just as much as a bad driver. However, the example also highlights there is more to this method as both driver and navigator's lives are at risk in the event of miscommunication or misinterpretation. Each chapter includes at least two examples that emphasize this constantly shifting power structure of maps influencing and being influenced. And, despite being based in the UK, Duggan travels across boundaries and cultures with his examples. Some worth mentioning without revealing too much include the culturally fluid national boundaries of Google Maps and the impact of a centralized digital map on Indonesian communities.

An aspect of Duggan's writing that stood out was the emphasis of culture and, by extension, ownership. Duggan cited several timeless practices of indigenous origin that predated cartography such as songlines and wayfinding. Instead of documenting and explaining these practices in great detail, effectively co-opting it to the scholarly community, Duggan was mindful of who laid claim to that knowledge and justified his intentional use of vague or generalized interpretations. This deferral of expertise is a recurring theme as marginalized communities are given a platform and a voice without having their authority taken from them.

All Mapped Out: How Maps Shape Us is not without cartographic flaws as several of the examples suffer from the common problem of converting maps, often full of color and detail, to the much smaller grayscale dimensions of a print book. While not all of Duggan's illustrations and maps were affected by this issue too heavily, the particularly older examples were more distracting than helpful due to details being lost from poor color clarity or small font.

In conclusion, Duggan's work is an excellent, thought-provoking read intended for all levels of readers with a particular focus on traditional and nontraditional cartographers. I would also recommend *All Mapped Out: How Maps Shape Us* in an academic library collection. The book's exploration of ethics in relation to



cartography lends itself well to illuminating discussion amongst scholars, seasoned and in-training.

Sam Kim
GIS & Geospatial Librarian
University at Buffalo
Buffalo, NY

[< issue toc next >>](#)