

Then There is the Job of Gridding

A grid is a map-type model. That is, it is more directly concerned with space than with time, the location of things rather than the sequence of events. In the kinds of use we make of grid-maps, they are more important for telling us what is as opposed to what is needed.

Grids are both actual and symbolic. That is, a grid of a community represents the salient facts about who lives where, how, and how they are divided up. What salient facts are presented depends upon the purpose for which the grid is made and the insights of the grid-maker. A conventional zoning map is really a grid based upon types of housing available, and the separation between residential, commercial and industrial areas. A community planner will be more interested in the flow of traffic through the community; what places regularly attract people, what areas do they avoid, what streets and "short-cuts" do people use and why? When one has designed a grid, it should tell him roughly what his community looks like and where the things are located that are important to him for his purposes.

A grid which is intended to serve a primarily symbolic purpose is a kind of caricature of a map. Here the one who grids is after a general image of what the community looks like without attention to any notch and squiggle. Angles are sharpened, straight lines accentuate border lines.

In general, a grid is simply an elementary tool for presenting information about an area in a compact image before a group. It can be as elaborate as any elaborate map, or as simple as four lines in a rectangle, depending upon the desired purpose.

If grids can be as simple or as elaborate as anyone would wish, they can also represent as small or as large a scale as might be desired. The kind of thing shown above is useful for getting a grasp of the local community. But a "responsible" man of the 20th Century is concerned about his own local community only in the global context. If this be so, it will then be very useful to have a symbolic grid of the nation and the world, which is easily drawn and easily reproduced.

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