

Information and consent form

Perceptions of Cartographic Styles in Spatial Planning

Place and time:

3 September – 18 December 2026
Zentralbibliothek Zürich, Turicensia Lounge,
Zähringerplatz 6, 8001 Zürich

The study can also be accessed online through a study link during the same period.

Contact person if you have any questions:

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Data Protection Officer ETH Zurich:

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What is investigated and how?

This study investigates how different cartographic styles influence the way people perceive ideas in spatial planning maps. In informal spatial planning, maps are often used to communicate possible future developments. The project examines whether certain visual styles make such ideas appear more open to discussion, imagination, and further development.

You will be shown one or more maps (depending on how many maps you wish to rate) and asked to answer short rating questions about your perception of the map.

Who can participate?

You can participate if you are at least 12 years old, able to understand the study information and questions in German or English, give informed consent, and use the laptop or web interface independently. No specialist knowledge of maps, cartography, fantasy literature or graphic design is required.

What am I supposed to do as a participant?

If you choose to participate, you will look at one or more maps and answer brief questions about your impression of the cartographic style and the planning idea shown. The questions use 1–5 rating scales. You be asked to provide basic demographic information (age group and gender).

There are no right or wrong answers. The study is interested in your personal impression.

After completing the task, you may see a visual summary of previous participants' responses and your own answer in relation to them. Participation takes only about one minute per map.

What are my rights during participation?

Your participation is voluntary. You can stop participating at any time without giving a reason and without any disadvantage. If you do not want to continue, you can simply close the browser window or leave the laptop station. Your answers will not be saved until you submit them.

Because the study data are collected anonymously, it is not possible to delete your responses after submission as they can no longer be linked to you.

What risks and benefits can I expect?

The study involves minimal risk. You will look at maps and answer short perception questions. No sensitive personal data are required, and the study does not involve deception, medical procedures, stressful tasks, or assessment of your abilities.

Possible minor discomforts include brief visual or cognitive effort, standing at the laptop station, or choosing not to answer a demographic question. You can stop at any time.

There is no direct personal benefit. However, you may find it interesting to compare your impression with the current distribution of previous responses. By participating, you contribute to research on how maps can support imagination, discussion, and participation in spatial planning.

Will I be compensated for my participation?

There is no monetary compensation. The only incentive is that you can directly see a summary of previous responses after completing the task. You can also optionally leave contact information if you would like to receive information about the final study results.

What data is collected from me and how is it used?

The following research data will be collected:

- the map (respectively cartographic style) that was rated;
- ratings and responses given during the task;
- age group and gender;
- selected language version;
- source or context of participation, for example library installation or online link;
- date of participation (no timestamp to avoid identification via surveillance cameras)
- time taken, and similar technical metadata needed for data quality checks

The research data are used to analyse whether different cartographic styles influence participants' perceptions of mapped planning ideas.

All data will be collected in an anonymised form. No name, address, exact birth date, or other directly identifying information is required to participate. The research dataset will not contain directly identifying personal data.

If you choose to leave contact details in order to receive information about the final study results, this is voluntary. Contact details will be collected separately from the research responses and will not be used to identify your ratings. Contact details will only be used to communicate study results and will be deleted afterwards.

Depending on the technical hosting setup, standard technical server logs may be generated for security and operation of the website. These logs are not used in this study.

The data will be stored on an ETH-secured server. Access to the research data is limited to the project team.

Results will be published only in aggregated form, for example in a thesis, scientific publication, presentation, or project report. No conclusions about individual participants will be possible from any publication. Anonymised data may be published for further use, for example in a scientific data repository.

Are data or results exclusively shared with third parties?

No non-anonymised data will be shared with third parties. Results may be shared publicly only in aggregated or anonymised form, for example in scientific publications, presentations, reports, or data repositories.

Who is funding the study?

The study is conducted as part of the ETH research project [CARTISTIC](#) and funded by ETH Zurich.

Who reviewed the study?

This study was reviewed and approved by the ETH Zurich Ethics Committee under application number 26 ETHICS-285.

Complaints office

The secretariat of the ETH Zurich Ethics Committee is available to help you with complaints in connection with your participation in the study. Contact: ethics@sl.ethz.ch or 0041 44 632 85 72.

Consent Procedure

By clicking “I agree – start study” in the app, you confirm that:

- You have read and understood the study information.
- You had enough time to decide about your participation and are taking part voluntarily.
- You are able to understand the study information and questions and use the interface independently.
- You consent that the data described above may be collected from you and used as described.
- You know that the data collected from you may be published in anonymised form.
- You know that anonymised data may be published for further use, for example in a scientific data repository.
- You know that you can stop participating at any time.
- You understand that, because the main study data are collected anonymously, it will not be possible to delete your responses after submission since they can no longer be linked to you.
- If you provide my contact information to receive study results, you consent that this contact information may be stored separately and used only for this purpose.