

Abstract

Krivelj is a small village in Eastern Serbia, equidistant from Bulgaria and Romania, with origins dating to the fall of the Ottoman Empire (Balkanologie, 1998, p.1). This project understands Krivelj as a nexus of the geopolitical arms race for critical raw materials. The focus is on investigating how the pursuit of copper – crucial for post-carbon technologies but also for military hardware – impacts the everyday lives of the community where extraction occurs. This dissertation aims to understand the connections between policy, international investors, local spatial planning, global supply chains, and national infrastructure, as they manifest in the daily lives of people and places where decisions converge and are implemented. The project is framed by the question ‘how copper is done’ in Krivelj. Thus, it rejects a detached planetary perspective, but neither does it cultivate a fetishized local view. A transcalar approach connects the local and the global, employing geomatics, fieldwork, critical cartography, and data science to analyze and represent supply chains, international law, bedrooms, and personal narratives. The outcome of this research is the development of a research methodology for both practice and teaching: Architectural Cartography (AC). AC attempts to link global phenomena to their local effects and provides residents, designers, and decision-makers with shared material for analysis and action. Critically, AC is a method in which drawing and image-making are central to the research itself, rather than merely outcomes or complements.