MA-Hauptseminar Kulturgeographie (SS 2022) in Kooperation mit dem MA Politikwissenschaften & MA *Human Rights*
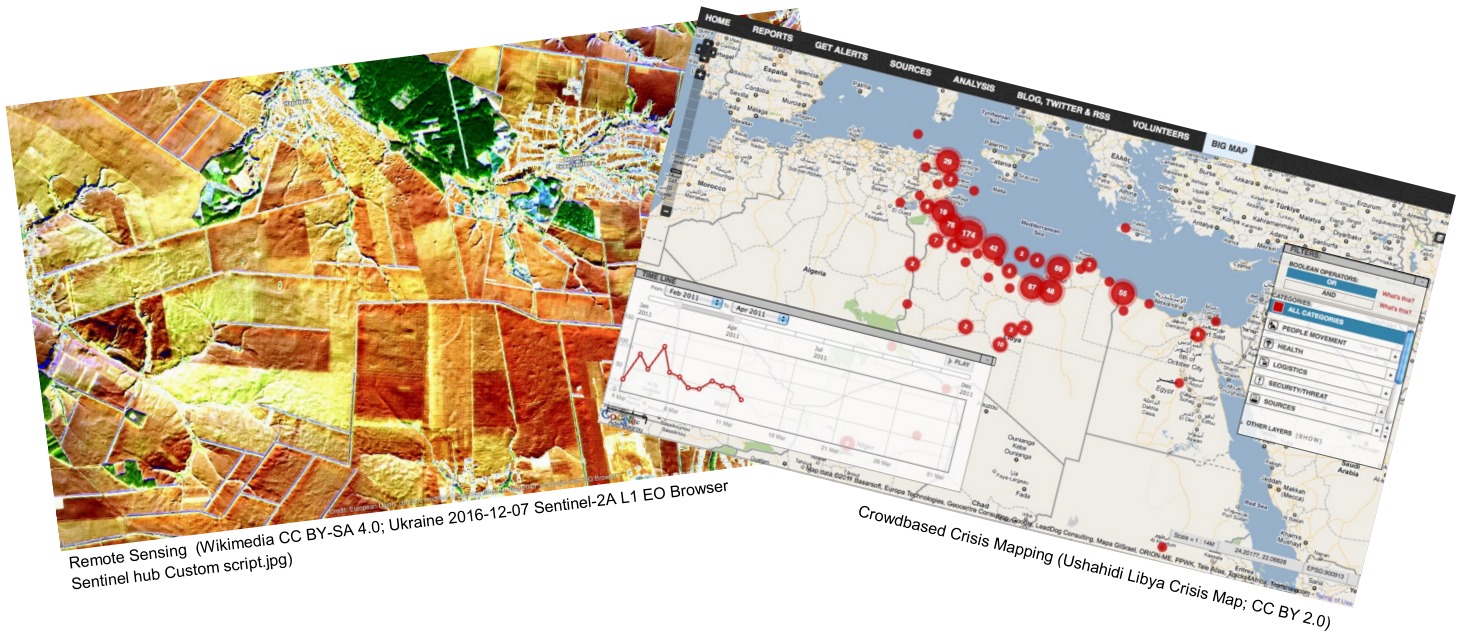
Digital Geographic Information for Monitoring Human Rights Violations: Challenges and Opportunities

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Remote Sensing (Wikimedia CC BY-SA 4.0; Ukraine 2016-12-07 Sentinel-2A L1 EO Browser Sentinel hub Custom script.jpg)

Crowdbased Crisis Mapping (Ushahidi Libya Crisis Map; CC BY 2.0)

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International human rights NGOs such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have actively sought to engage with satellite imagery, crowdbased mapping and other forms of digital geographic information to investigate and document human rights abuses. Smaller organizations such as Bellingcat, Forensic Architecture, Mnemonic, Tactical Tech, WITNESS and others specialize in digital data, train investigative journalists and human rights activists to analyse said information, but also to produce it in the first place (notably videos and images). The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has recently published a new protocol, in collaboration with the Human Rights Center at UC Berkeley, on digital open source investigations.

The exponential rise in digital data has undoubtedly increased the importance that such data play in human rights research, advocacy and accountability processes, especially when relevant geographic locations are difficult to access. This is particularly the case in the context of violent conflict or in highly repressive political systems, but it also applies to very remote areas that are difficult to reach for field research. At the same time, there remain many research and documentation challenges, not least ethical concerns. What can digital geographic information tell us about human rights around the world? And what does it not tell us?

In this interdisciplinary seminar, we will analyse recent developments in the use of remote sensing and user-generated open source data for human rights related research, advocacy and accountability. Participants will gain an overview of this quickly evolving field and also learn some basic data analysis skills to access digital geographic information themselves.

Literatur:

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