Why All Maps are Wrong

[Name of the Writer]

[Name of the Institution]

Why All Maps are Wrong

The majority of the maps we see today are designed based on a more than 500 years old design. Most of us might be thinking that it is where the problem lies with the maps today. No, it is not where the problem exists. For understanding this problem, consider flattening a 3D object on to a 2D surface. Surely, achieving this task would mean that there would be some sort of distortion in the area and size of the final product, as revealed by Carl Friedrich Gauss a long time ago. Mathematicians have tried to solve the flattening of 3D objects on to 2D surfaces using something known as projection. A handful of popular flat rectangular maps employ cylindrical projection. In this projection, a flat paper is placed on to the globe and each point is projected accordingly. However, it is worth noting that the final product varies according to the surface of the object, which the globe is being projected on to.

Over the years, cartographers have come forward with different maps, with each suggesting their version as the best one. One such cartographer was Gerardus Mercator. He came forward with the best possible projection in 1569 known as Mercator Projection. It is considered the best projection because it preserves the shapes of many countries. The Mercator projector is famous for providing accurate navigation information. However, the drawback of Mercator projection is that it misrepresents size to preserve shape and angle. Greenland and Africa are of the same size on Mercator projection, despite having a significant difference between them when viewed on the globe. To witness an accurately displayed size of the countries, one can see Gall-Peters Projection. This projection shows Africa much larger than Greenland, as it is. However, the shape of countries is distorted.

With the development of GPS navigation, Mercator projection was abandoned by cartographers. Most of the cartographers have agreed upon Winkel Tripel Projection that preserves shape and size somewhat accurately. However, there is no right projection.

The best method to see the earth would be to see the globe entirely, as Google have abandoned Mercator Projection in 2018 and now one can see the entire globe.