



The Peters Projection World Map is one of the most stimulating, and controversial, images of the world. When this map was first introduced by historian and cartographer Dr. Arno Peters at a Press Conference in Germany in 1974 it generated a firestorm of debate. The first English-version of the map was published in 1983, and it continues to have passionate fans as well as staunch detractors.

The earth is round. The challenge of any world map is to represent a round earth on a flat surface. There are literally thousands of map projections. Each has certain strengths and corresponding weaknesses. Choosing among them is an exercise in values clarification: you have to decide what's important to you. That is generally determined by the way you intend to use the map. The Peters Projection is an area accurate map.

The Peters Map and The Mercator Map

Which is bigger, Greenland or China? With the traditional Mercator map (circa 1569, and still in use in many schoolrooms and boardrooms today), Greenland and China look the same size. But in reality China is almost 4 times larger! In response to such discrepancies, Dr. Arno Peters created a new world map that dramatically improves the accuracy of how we see the Earth.

Mercator's projection (created at a time when navigators were sailing on the oceans in wooden ships, powered by the wind, and navigating by the stars) was particularly useful because straight lines on his projection were lines of constant compass bearing. Today the Mercator projection still remains useful for navigational purposes and is referred to by seafarers and airline pilots.

The Mercator is also a "conformal" map projection. This means that it shows shapes pretty much the way they appear on the globe. The mapmaker's dilemma is that you cannot show both shape and size accurately. If you want a true shape for the land masses you will necessarily sacrifice proportionality, i.e., the relative sizes will be distorted.

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