Counter-mapping, Refugees, and Asylum Borders

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Migration maps are lively cartographies, which require to be constantly updated with numbers, statistics and figures showing the geographical changes in migrant routes, and the quantitative variations in migrants' composition. Focusing on refugee maps in particular—those produced by international organisations such as UNHCR for instance—it's worth noting that what ends up on the map is both the presence of migrants in a given space and their juridical status. Refugee maps are by far more static, representing the migrant population in a refugee camp or the results of asylum claims. More broadly, both refugee maps and migration maps at large stand out on a pre-given territoriality, formed by a constellation of nation-states: a Westphalian imaginary substantially underpins and inform migration and refugee maps. Yet, as we demonstrate in this chapter, border regimes and migratory movements produce spaces that cannot be contained within the temporal and spatial fixes of the geopolitical map. How to account for the geographies of asylum, those that result from the spatial restrictions imposed on asylum seekers and of refugees' movements and those enacted by them in order to claim a space of refuge? How to bring to the fore spaces of movement and control that are not comprehensible on the geopolitical map of Europe? In short, what does it mean to engage a counter-mapping approach in relation to migration and asylum policies?

The aim of this article is to mobilise a counter-mapping approach with respect to the normative geographies of the asylum system, and to explore firstly what "counter" means in the context of a critical cartography of migration, and then to unpack the main theoretical and political tenets such a methodological perspective mobilizes against. Our take on counter-mapping relies on what we would call a *reflexive cartography*, meaning by that an analysis that does not consist only in a cartographic practice, but that, rather, interrogates the predicaments and the implications of mapping migration. More precisely, counter-mapping is for us a "reflexive practice" (Foucault, 1968), that is a *methodological approach* that unsettles and unpacks the spatial assumptions upon which migration maps are crafted. Moreover we also refer to cartographic experimentations that trouble the spatial and temporal fixes of a state-based gaze on migration. In sum, counter-mapping as a method and counter-mapping as a cartographic experimentation intertwine as part of our critical account of the visualisations of migration and refugee issues.

This means engaging in a counter-mapping approach to borders and migration that consists in refusing *the visibilities and temporalities that are performed by the statist gaze that produces migration maps.* By speaking of a state based-visibility on migration—a sort of "seeing like a state"

(Scott, 1998) approach to migration—we refer to the fact that migrations are (re)presented and narrated on the map as a visual counterpoint to the nation-state, while at the same time, being grounded in it. That is, migrations are visualized on maps as deviations from what can be called the *territorial norm,* that is from the primacy of the territory and of a settled subject figure in the Western political tradition. Further, the state's cartographic perspective consists in "translating" some practices of movements into "migration flows", through a process of abstraction, and in reifying some subjects as ”migrants”. It is important here to clarify that a state-gaze on migration is not narrowed to state-actors' interventions in the field of migration. More broadly, by a "state-gaze on migration" we refer to the enforcement of the nexus between migration and government; that is, migration is posited as an unquestioned object of government, a phenomenon that requires mobilising governmental approach to it. The state-based gaze on migration is characterised not only by a specific spatiality - the territorial norm - but also by a certain temporality through which migrations are "captured" and framed as an object of governmental concern. More precisely, migration maps produced by states or by international agencies are sustained by a sort of *hidden linear temporality*, insofar as they appear deprived of a temporal dimension. In fact, the narrative that sustains institutional migration maps is a South-to-North linear movement that migration routes are supposed to reproduce.

Does counter-mapping in the field of migration consist in a "disobedient gaze" (Heller, Pezzani, 2014)? The argument that we develop in this chapter is that counter-mapping should be put to work in relation to migration governmentality not(only) in terms of *seeing differently* or *seeing more.* In other words, *it is not a question of "gaze" on migration*; it is instead a matter of a particular knowledge production practice that brings to the fore spaces of mobility and control that cannot be grasped within the register of cartographic representation.

By assuming counter-mapping as a method, we shift the attention from the question about how to represent (or not to represent) migration towards an interrogation about the effects that mechanisms of control generate on migrant lives and geographies, and about the temporary or constituent spaces opened up by migration movements and border enforcements. This means investigating the spaces of governmentality (contested spaces of control) and spaces of movement that are generated through measures of border enforcement and migration movements and that are not apprehensible on the geopolitical map.

Counter-mapping as method means, first of all, conceiving of counter-mapping as an epistemic approach and not merely as a cartographic perspective. It means referring to an analytical gaze that requires engaging both in a deconstructive move and in a constructive one. The former consists in

refusing the temporalities and the visibilities of migration enacted by states. The latter involves bringing to the fore the multiple disjunctions between the spaces and the borders of sovereignty on the one hand, and the spaces of migration mobility and control that are the outcome of migrant movements and "bordering practices" (Parker, Vaugham-Williams, 2012). This resonates with Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson's argument about the heterogeneity of spaces (and times) as a characteristic of contemporary capitalism: they point to a fundamental disjunction between spaces of capital and spaces produced by logistics, and the "traditional" territorial spaces of the state (Mezzadra, Neilson, 2017). Border practices are not narrowed here to border controls and border enforcement measures but, rather, include the technical cooperation between the EU and third-countries and the virtual circuits of data flows and data exchange activities. These spaces of control remain essentially invisible, and therefore inexistent, on geopolitical maps. Simultaneously, there are migration spaces that remain unaccounted and unperceived, and which result from migrants' movements and presence as long as these exceed and cannot be contained by the government of routes—i.e., what Sebastian Cobarrubias and Maribel Casas-Cortes poignantly named "itinerant borders" (Casas-Cortes, Cobarrubias, 2015). This doesn't mean falling in the trap of a "romanticization" (Scheel, 2013) of migration, as a phenomenon that would in itself challenge the "national order of things" (Mallki, 1995)—or, in our case, the cartographic national order of things.

What is the "counter" in counter-mapping migration governmentality?

Reflecting on counter-mapping and migrations entails a radical questioning of critical cartography at large. Indeed, migration allows us to raise fundamental interrogations on cartographic representation: the gist of any critical approach to migration maps revolves around the question of the extent or degree to which it is ethically and politically desirable to even map migrations. In other words, while critical question has generally been "how to unveil the silences of maps?", if we focus on migration maps and draw from critical cartography literature (e.g., Harley 1989, 2009; Sparke, 1995) we should instead ask: "what should not be put on the map?", what is politically important to conceal from the public gaze in order to preserve migrants' desire and practices of movement across space?

Secondly, counter-mapping migration governmentality involves engaging not only with space but also with time. Migrations tend to be represented through temporal fixations - that is, through snapshots. In this way, what is fundamentally missing, and what is erased from the map, is the autonomous temporality of migration (migrants' own lived and enacted temporality in movement), and how this autonomous temporality is obstructed and altered by migration policies and border enforcement practices. Mapping migration needs to rely on the *mobile spaces* that characterise the

border regime and, relatedly, on their temporary dimension - as spaces that are generated by the implementation of migration policies, or as migrant spaces of transit and refuge that are suddenly evicted, or as mobile borders that are constantly displaced in oder to follow and anticipate migration movements.

We expand here on the theoretical implications of counter-mapping in the field of migration. This involves questioning the gaze mobilised by the academic scholarship that "(however critical) is implicated in a continuous (re-) reification of 'migrants' as a distinct category of human mobility" (De Genova, 2013: 250). For instance, looking at the Mediterranean sea, we see how, in the Mediterranean northern shore's accounts, rescued migrants get depicted and narrated in a way that reiterates the gesture of making migration start in correspondence with the *scene of drown and rescue* or at the moment when migrants enter or land in Europe. Challenging the state-based visibilities of migration entails shifting away from the regime of visibility that is at stake in a governmental gaze on migration. However, it is not merely a question of overcoming some spatial delimitations. Rather, the main point is related to the spacetime narrative that implicitly sustains discourses and analyses on migration, and which tends to posit an indefinite (spatial and temporal) "before" where migrants pass through before landing on the European shores.

Migrants are, in some circumstances, the *looked at* and *monitored* subjects par excellence. *To be looked at* and to *be monitored* correspond in fact to two coexisting but distinct mechanisms of visibility for capturing subjects within a gaze. Migrants are looked at insofar as they are object of processes of racialization, selection and categorization—all processes that feed a political economy of exploitation—, despite this is often disjoined from an act of interpellation (Fanon, 2008). They are monitored as a way of governance in which populations can be controlled, detected and mapped.

Migrants are also targeted by a politics of invisibilization making them inexistent to state records and data even if they are spatially present within these states' territories. Two main points ensue from this context. First, challenging the regime of visibility that underpins the government of migration means questioning the gesture of freezing migration into a stable and essentialized category, and hence shifting the attention to processes of "migrantization" whereby governmental technologies fix certain categories of people as migrants. The visibility of migration cannot be disconnected from the spaces and times whereby people are labelled and governed as "migrants" through border enforcement policies, state discourses, techniques of control, and forms of visualization. Starting from a critical appraisal of governmental visibilities, the goal of a non-cartographic counter-mapping approach does not consist in extending the field of visibility of migration (i.e., making some objects more visible, giving them visibility). Nor does it consist in

showing what remains hidden or overshadowed in processes of migration. This type of move would, in fact, contribute to the translation of movements, subjects and conducts into “governable” targets, hence making them intelligible in the terms of power’s discourse. The work of critical geographers is particularly helpful in this regard, as it explains what a counter-mapping gaze means at the level of knowledge production. In *A History of Spaces* John Pickles stresses that counter-mapping must go “beyond the unmasking of the silences in traditional maps to the production of new maps,” pointing to what he calls “a de-ontologized cartography” (Pickles, 2004: 23) that needs to produce a new openness, bringing to the fore spaces that result from connections and border practices.

In the article “Unfolding mapping practices: a new epistemology for cartography”, Robert Kitchin, Justin Gleeson and Martin Dodge advocate for a radical shift from a critical cartography still grounded on maps as fixed and autonomous objects (an ontological dimension) towards an understanding of maps in terms of mapping practices (an ontogenic approach) (Kitchin et al. 2012). Through this move they reconceptualise mapping as something that should not be disconnected from the discursive and non-discursive practices that make a series of lines and dots, a map. This methodological and epistemological move entails questioning the critical cartography literature which has been essentially predicated upon deconstruction - “deconstructing the map” (Harley, 1989). Maps, while critically analysed, remain nonetheless autonomous artifacts characterised by a certain degree of ontological security. Pushing this argument further, they move beyond post-representational map analyses, arguing that what matters is not stressing the irreducible discrepancy between map and territory, but to disjoin the map from the question of representation as such. In “Seeing red. Baghdad and the eventful city”, Derek Gregory points to the nexus between spaces of constructed visibility and spaces of intervention (war battlefields), highlighting how a focus on modes of visibility and of visuality allow to grasp the specific entanglement between biopolitics and geopolitics. Gregory concurs with the challenge of the ontological security of maps - proposed by Kitchen et.al -, adding that, however, a shift towards mapping practices requires not a narrow attention to mapping as such, but rather, an exploration of the security operations and the biopolitical modes that sustain any regime of visualisation.

Producing visibility on what remains under the threshold of knowledge results in the governamentalization of migration to the extent that it does not question the categories and the political mechanisms that sustain the regime of visibility. In “The evidence of experience”, Joan Scott provides a critique of the quest for evidence that is at the core of history as a discipline, arguing that “the evidence of experience”, as it is produced by analyses that challenge normative

history, tends to reproduce “rather than contests given ideological experiences, its categories of representation” (Scott, 1991: 778). In this way, she concludes, “the project of making experience visible precludes analysis of the workings of this system and of its historicity; instead, it reproduces it terms” (Scott, 1991: 779).

Scott’s position entails refusing the categories and the epistemological-political rationales that establish the condition of emergence (i.e., the visibilization) of subjects as migrants. Simultaneously, a counter-mapping gaze consists in unsettling the binary alternative between making visible and letting/making invisible, pointing rather to the constitutive opacity of migration governmentality (Pinelli, 2017)[1]. In fact, a counter-mapping approach does not consist in unveiling the secrecy of state’s operations, nor in embracing a neo-positivist approach and proving evidence of the state’s violations of the international law.

Counter-mapping as a method takes a distance from an epistemic commitment to fill in the gaps of black holes and grey zones of maps. On the contrary, it starts from the assumption that the struggles over the border regime do not depend on a lack of knowledge but, rather, on the hyper-exposure of states’ “warfare on migrants” (Garelli, Tazzioli, 2016a and forthcoming). Hence, a counter-mapping gaze would engage in undoing and rewriting the modes of discourse and visibility on migration not according to a less-to-more logic - more of visibility, more of knowledge, more of evidence - but by building new and different constellations of political and historical connection[2].

Contributing to Scott’s argument, according to which “making visible the experience of a different group exposes the existence of repressive mechanisms but not their inner working or logics” (Scott, 1991: 799), we suggest that it is not so much a question of unveiling human rights violations to which migrants are subjected. Neither is it a matter of making migrants’ presence visible. In other words, *counter-mapping* consists in a *rippling gesture* that brings to the fore spaces of control that are neither accounted for, nor represented on geopolitical maps but that are the result of border cooperation practices, virtual spaces of data circulation, or spaces formed by channels of forced mobility. Moreover, a counter-mapping approach to migration and borders engages in highlighting the spaces of mobility opened up by migration movements, thereby bringing attention to the way in which these latter exceed the humanitarian and security captures of the border regime. William

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1 Conceiving this latter as a field of tensions and struggles between techniques of migration control and (Mezzadra, Neilson, 2013)

2 In this sense, such a counter-mapping approach differs from the Forensic perspective, proposed by Eyal Weizman and the Forensic Architecture research group, that aims to prove material evidence of human rights violations (Weizman, 2014).

Walters has poignantly remarked that "a cartography of deportation is virtually non-existent" (Walters, 2017), arguing for an engagement in mapping practices that chart channels of forced mobility. He writes, "Border studies displays an ingression bias. It is focused much more on the socio-material systems that are dedicated to policing movements towards the territories of the global north than it is with questions of how the removal of people is carried on" (Walters, 2017).

Counter-mapping asylum's borders:

Building on the theoretical understanding of counter-mapping and migration illustrated above, we turn to questioning the territorial norms and normative predicaments that underpin the asylum regime. Our use of the expression "asylum regime" is meant to resonate with analyses of the border regime that highlight both the heterogeneity of bordering policies and their contested nature - conceiving the politics of migration control as a field of struggle (De Genova, 2016; Mezzadra, Neilson, 2013; Tsianos, Karakayali, 2010). Moreover, by speaking of "asylum regime" we point to the spatial restrictions and the effects of temporal suspension - what can be alternatively called spatial and temporal confinement - generated by the asylum system. The asylum system should not be taken as a monolithic entity but, rather, as a set of national and international laws, measures and policies that are enforced for producing and governing both asylum seekers and those whose claim to international protection is rejected. We contend that it is crucial to maintain the two verbs - *to produce* and *to govern* asylum seekers - in order not to essentialize "asylum seekers" or "refugees" as distinct subject-categories that would pre-exist to the functioning of the asylum system itself. In fact, it is the politics of asylum that produces some subjects as refugees (and as asylum seekers), well before managing them as refugees. Relatedly, while it produces asylum seekers, it also illegalizes some migrants. In other words, in order for refugees to exist and to be legally recognised as refugees, many other migrants need to be illegalized and excluded from the channels of protection. Therefore, it is within such a framework that a counter-mapping approach to the asylum's borders should be situated. By engaging in a counter-mapping approach to the asylum regime, we want to critically address and twist two main aspects of it: the normative predicaments of the asylum, and its territorial norm. The first point, the normative predicaments, refers to the normative-juridical ground that historically and politically sustains the global politics of asylum. The second point, the territorial norm, consists in the persistence of a strict relationship between refugee status and migrant's country of origin, or better in the dependence of the former from the latter (Garelli, Tazzioli 2013a and b).

Our counter-mapping approach in relation to the asylum regimeis formed by two simultaneous methodological and theoretical moves. One consists in a non-normative approach to the politics of

asylum, challenging the normative ground and the territorial norm of the asylum system, that in fact determine the modes of migrants' spatial and temporal confinement, as well as of the multiple exclusionary partitions that are enacted by national authorities governing refugees and the UN Refugee Agency UNHCR. Our goal consists in assessing the consequences of refugee politics by interrogating how we can disconnect claims to refuge and protection from the juridical institutions of asylum. This does not mean, however, engaging in a naive move which would consider the political history of the asylum system as something that we can get rid of, while still using the same vocabulary. Rather, we want to bring to the fore how certain migrant struggles and claims have, *de facto,* cracked and exploded the normative and exclusionary terrain of asylum, forcing us to rethink of it not in opposition to but, instead, together with migrants' practices of freedom (De Genova, Garelli, Tazzioli, forthcoming). As we illustrate later in the article, migrants' collective refusals against the spatial restrictions imposed by the Dublin Regulation and by the asylum system, as well as against the Relocation Programme, unsettle the supposed opposition between practices of freedom on the one hand, and seeking refuge on the other. In this sense, as we will develop in the next section, challenging the normative grounds of asylum does not mean dismissing the juridical level through which refugee status or other forms of temporary protection are granted. Rather, our point is that the existing legal framework can neither accommodate nor match the forced mobility practices of the people who seek asylum in Europe today.

The second related counter-mapping move is a spatial gaze that brings to the fore the convoluted geographies of asylum, that is the spaces of control and mobility opened up by the implementation of the asylum regime and by migrants' "spatial disobediences". Yet, unlike a "disobedient gaze" (Heller, Pezzani, 2014), this does not aim at appropriating states' technologies for twisting it against them or for proving evidence of human rights violations. On the contrary, it starts from the assumption that border regime struggles do not depend on a lack of knowledge; instead they are connected to the hyper-exposure of states' "warfare on migrants" (Garelli, Tazzioli, 2017b). Hence, a counter-mapping gaze undoes and rewrites migration visibility and it does so not through a sort of crescendo logic (more of visibility, more of knowledge, more of evidence) but by building new and different topologies of political and historical connections. In the specific case of asylum, this consists in undoing the Westphalian-geopolitical cartography that underpins both the academic and non-academic analysis of refugees' mobility and spatial claims. Instead of locating asylum seekers' presence in a given country or analysing how they impact on societies, we advocate for an analysis that takes into account the spaces of refuge and control, as well as the exclusionary channels of asylum that crisscross, or better to say "exceed", the geopolitical map. and ? (Mezzadra, Neilson, 2016; Walters, 2017).

The territorial norm of asylum

What we call "the territorial norm" of asylum clearly emerged in its consequences on migrants' lives in 2011, with the outbreak of the war in Libya and with the political turmoil of the Arab Uprisings and the geopolitical destabilisation of the entire Mediterranean region that followed (Cassarino & Tocci, 2012; Garelli, 2013a). The arrival of 1 million Libyan war escapees in Tunisia in 2011 was a case in point: while about 600,000 of them were Libyan citizens, the remaining were third-country nationals who had been living in Libya for years as migrants. Once they crossed the Libyan-Tunisian border to escape the war, they were directed to Choucha camp by international organisations, i.e., to a refugee camp located in the desert, along the road which connects Tunisia with Libya, ten kilometres away from the border of Ras-Jadir. The camp was opened in February 2011 explicitly to host people fleeing Libya. The asylum claims of most of these people ended up being rejected by UNHCR. Thus these people became "illegal" migrants on the Tunisian territory.

This migrant group was denied international protection because their asylum claim was examined on the basis of the country of origin criterion. That is, migrants' asylum request was processed by UNHCR asking the question "why did you escape your country of birth?", instead of asking why they fled Libya, the country where they have been living for years. Three years later, in 2014, about 400 rejected refugees were still at Choucha camp, persisting in demanding that their asylum claims should be processed considering their forced mobility from Libya due to the war. "We all fled the war in Libya, so no distinction should be made among us. We are all refugees as we had been forced to escape the country where we were living and working"[3]. Remaining at Choucha even after the official closure of the camp in June 2013, they subverted the territorial norm of asylum. They in fact replaced the country of origin criterion with the space of migration where they had been living until the war broke out and where their common experience of Libyan war refugees/escapees was produced. Up against (Confronting?) the geographies of the asylum regime, they claimed a right to protection predicated on *migration geographies,* that is on the spaces where they were residing, having moved there years ago and still being there at the time when the war broke out. More than a mere politics of actual presence (in the Tunisian space), they defined themselves as "refugees" on the basis of their histories, patterns and spaces of migration. Thus, the intertwining of *history* (of migration) and *cartography* (of present spaces of residence) is what determines the counter-geographies of asylum claimed and enacted by rejected refugees at Choucha camp. However, despite their protracted struggle at the camp, UNHCR did not reopen their cases for consideration.

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3 Interview with rejected refugees at Choucha refugee camp, August 2014.

In May 2017 a group of 34 rejected refugees were still living at Choucha camp, which they felt was the only safe place for them in Tunisia[4].

Undoing the antinomy between asylum and freedom

Lampedusa, December 17, 2015: a group of about 250 migrants who had arrived in Lampedusa, between November and early December 2015 and who refused to be fingerprinted by the Italian police, organised a march in the streets of the island and a sit-in in front of the main church chanting "No fingerprints. We want freedom. We want to move out of the camp". While they initially resisted identification on an individual basis, over the span of a few weeks this silent individual dissent became a collective concerted refusal. They carried on their collective struggle against identification inside the Lampedusa hotspot until January 6, 2016, when they staged another public protest by remaining for two nights outside the main church on Lampedusa island. At the end of January they were transferred to Sicily in groups of ten, where they were fingerprinted by the use of force (Garelli, Tazzioli, 2016b). Most of them were Eritreans, hence people eligible for the Relocation Scheme, which was launched in the European Migration Agenda in May 2015 and had been conceived as the EU programme for transferring "persons who are in need of international protection"[5] from Greece and Italy to other member states. Yet, by refusing to be identified they were at the same time refusing to apply for the Relocation Programme. Refusals against the exclusionary channels of the Relocation multiplied in Greece as well. While there are no official statistics of migrants' refusals, our 2016 fieldwork in Greece, as well as NGOs and activists' reports indicated that a relevant percentage of people eligible for the Relocation Programme decided to move on in an autonomous way. The main reason for these individual and collective refusals were the slowness of the relocation procedures and, most importantly, the impossibility for migrants to choose the EU country of destination. These "outrageous" refusals, as the President of the EU Commission, Claude Juncker, called migrants' rejections, show that "migrants assert their freedom into the process of protection, initiating a discrepant politics of asylum that starts from their actual experiences, extant social relations, desires, aspirations, and political subjectivity" (De Genova, Garelli, Tazzioli, forthcoming). In fact, migrants who refuse to apply for the Relocation scheme

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On June 19, 2017, the camp was fully evicted, and the group of 34 rejected refugees was left with no space on the Tunisian territory and at the same time still blocked in a legal limbo. Migrants

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https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/2_eu_solidarity_a_refugee_relocation_system_en.pdf

“enact their freedom to choose where to settle in Europe and thereby stage their refusal of the coercive refuge forcefully mandated by EU agencies” (De Genova, Garelli, Tazzioli, forthcoming).

Thus, while migrants are usually depicted by states and non-state actors as deserving protection only insofar as they are considered in a condition of substantial unfreedom - about the place to live and where to move - through these “outrageous refusals” they staged practices of freedom and claims to asylum as non-oppositional terms. To put it differently, migrants’ reiterated refusal of the spatial restrictions imposed by the Dublin Regulation and by the Relocation Programme undermined the image of the worthy refugee as the subject who cannot but accept protection at any cost. Instead, these people staged the possibility to choose where to go to claim asylum as the non-negotiable condition for seeking asylum in Europe. In this way, they essentially troubled both the image of refugees’ political subjectivity and the idea of a politics of free mobility. Their enacted refusals force us to rethink the critique of the border regime and political claims in a way that match with refugees’ radical practices of freedom: refuge and possibility of choice cannot but re-elaborated together.

Migrants’ Europe map:

The second related counter-mapping move in relation to the asylum regime that we mentioned above consists in a cartographic experimentation that strives to account for the spaces of refuge and transit opened up by migrants’ practices of movements (why 'practices of movements' and not just movements?. While the external frontiers of Europe and internal national borders are extensively marked in our geographical imagination, the temporary spaces of transit and refuge that result from the clash between migrants’ movements and border enforcement politics are missing in the geopolitical map of Europe. Our argument is that instead of locating on maps migrants and refugees or of representing their routes, we should gesture towards (advocate) a re-mapping of Europe bringing in the temporary spaces of migration, transit and refuge that have multiplied across the European space. Most of these spaces are informal encampments, built by migrants or by refugees’ supporters groups, and that, however, have become also zones of control - as it is the case of Ventimiglia, the Italian city located at the Italian-French border that since 2015, when France suspended the Schengen agreement.

Following the multiplication of official and informal encampments and the uneven temporality made of appearances, evictions and recursive re-emergences of these spaces of confinement, the impossibility of a fixed cartography of migrant encampments is blatantly revealed. Moreover, tracing a history of the turbulences of migration camps involves resisting claims to transparency and full visibility, dealing rather with what Ann Laura Stoler has called “symptomatic” spaces (Stoler,

2010: 7), that is spaces that can be grasped only through minor traces left in the archives. In fact, many of the encampments that mushroomed across Europe as a result of border enforcement measures or as spaces of refuge opened up by migrants are not apprehensible through a mapping gaze that aims to unveil hidden places in the name of transparency or to make fully visible what is invisible. On the contrary, by bringing attention to the traces left by these encampments and to the irregular pace of their emergence and disappearance it becomes possible to draw what we call a *minor cartography of vanishing refugees' spaces*. Such a map would be a constitutively opaque and missing cartography, which confront us with the spatial and temporal traces of heterogeneous encampments.

However, by highlighting the fundamentally fleeting dimension of migrant spaces of refuge and confinement we should not conclude the impossibility of an archive of encampments nor the total disappearance of the memory and the existence of places that have been evicted or shut down. Spaces of refuge and transit often crystallise or remain alive in collective memory due to reiterated re-emergence of these spaces, upon eviction or, in the case of institutional camps, after being officially closed. Many of these places blur with the surrounding urban areas and cannot be approached through the lens of extraterritoriality. What we want to suggest is an ethnography of "infamous" vanishing spaces, which brings attention to temporary migration sites that become apprehensible only through "an encounter with power" and as something that is "beside what is usually estimated as worthy of being recounted" (Foucault, 1954: 79).

Re-mapping Europe, as a space of migrant and refugees' temporary spaces, requires navigating through the interstices of the produced opacity of migrant encampments, for grasping the persistence of camps' traces, as spatial landmarks in migrants enacted geographies. Thus, it entails bringing into maps the dimension of temporality, accounting for and keeping alive the temporariness of these spaces. Yet, more than mapping official refugee camps or reception centres, the crafting of refugees' map of Europe involves a research on unofficial spaces that have been produced as an effect of migration and border policies, as well as of migrants' practices of movement. Some of these spaces of transit have become places of containment or are places with European cities that have played the twofold role of spaces-refuge and area controlled by the police, and then have been evicted as dwelling places where migrants found a temporary place to stay. Others are self-managed places, like Refugee City Plaza Hotel in Athens, or square and public spaces that had been sites of migrant struggles for some time - Orianenplatz in Berlin. This map-archive is an ongoing collective project that we have put into place with a group of researchers and activists based in different European countries, with the goal of keeping a memory archive of

refugee' spaces that had been evicted, or "disappeared". Simultaneously, this allows challenging governmental refugees maps that locate refugees in spaces, counting them and visualising their juridical status.

Conclusion: asylum beyond its normative ground?

Mobilising a counter-mapping gaze to the asylum regime involves, as we have illustrated above, engaging both in a cartographic experimentation - remapping Europe through the multiple, informal, and temporary refugees' spaces-- and a methodological approach, which undoes (critiques?_ the normative ground of asylum and tries to rethink politics asylum and practices of? freedom together. Yet, pointing towards a non-normative approach to asylum does not mean dismissing the level of rights and the legal guarantees of international protection. Rather, as we have shown above, rethinking the politics of asylum should start from actual migrants' spatial disobediences, which posit freedom of choice and movement and seeking refuge as two inseparable claims. In other words, we are not interested in a reconceptualisation of the abstract or philosophical terms of asylum but in unsettling its normative assumptions through a material politics that matches with migrants' enacted claims to freedom and refuge.

These tactics would certainly require further strategic engagement with the juridical horizon of rights. Instead of relying on the exclusionary existing legal framework of the asylum regime, we gesture towards a research agenda and a political practice that would explore new forms of rights, what Michel Foucault defined "relational right", i.e., those rights to be invented and that "permits all possible types of relations to exist and not be prevented" (Foucault, 1997: 159). Such a perspective entails refusing to assume the subject of rights and its institutions as the starting point of the analysis. It prompts us instead to begin the analysis from the practices of freedom and the fields of struggles through which rights are negotiated on the ground, strategically claimed, and enacted. Indeed, rethinking the politics of asylum from within migrants' struggles for freedom of choice and movement is not merely a question of individual rights to be granted but of a relational right that would restructure the relationship among residents beyond the divide between citizens and non-citizens. Therefore, recalling Edward Said's argument, geography "can also be the art of resistance if there is a counter-map and a counter-strategy" (Said, 1995: 27). Similarly, we contend, the politics of asylum can be turned from an exclusionary normative setting into a contested political terrain, as a struggle for refuge through practices of freedom.

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