

Street Homelessness, Visibility and Recognition: Navigating the Dilemmas of Mapping Homeless Spatialities

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Abstract

This article critically examines the potentialities of counter-mapping as means of facilitating public recognition of street homelessness as another (rather than Other) form of urban life. The focus is on the possibilities of countering the displacing effects of Othering through curated engagement of the housed public with the proposition about the possibility and acceptability of inhabiting the city which emerges from the unhoused manner of emplacement in shared urban settings. The attention is aimed at the uncertainties related to using a map – conceptualized as a system of ontological claims and locative assertions – as a medium of this engagement. While exploring the potential of cartographic visualization in articulating the lived perspectives of homeless dwellers and supporting their claims for belonging in the city’s public spaces, this paper examines also the risks of unleashing the power of mapping in this particular spatialized struggle for recognition. It draws attention to the ambiguities of the politics of visibility granted by mapping to spatial/meaning propositions and the limits this politics encounters when employed to intervene in the everyday politics of public space where visibility of non-normative spatialities constitutes a matter of public concern. In doing so, it complicates the notion of a link between public visibility afforded to the counter-hegemonic ontological propositions by mapping and their social recognition.

Keywords

Homelessness, visibility, recognition, ethics, counter-mapping, theories of practice



Introduction: Homelessness, City, and the Logic of Alterity

There are growing recognition gaps (Lamont 2018), disparities in social worth (Fraser 1995; Honneth 2012; Taylor 1994), between various modes of inhabiting the contemporary city, which contribute to material and symbolic inequalities (Lamont, Beljean, and Clair 2014) between members of various urban populations. Among those whose social worth, legitimacy as city dwellers, and dignity as human beings is rarely being acknowledged are urbanites who live their lives in a homeless situation. Homeless city dwellers experience the most extreme form of stigmatization – they are being perceived, and often treated, as less than human (Guillard and Harris 2020; Harris and Fiske 2006). Certainly not by everyone, but often enough to constitute a case of a “routinely dehumanized population” (Guillard and Harris 2020, 200). In the realm of urban everydayness, the sociomaterial context of embodied and emplaced human co-existence, homeless urbanites are socially and morally positioned as Others (Spivak 1999; Thomas-Olalde and Velho 2011), essentially distinct from the members of the housed population. In the shared, nominally public, urban spaces, where the politics of everyday urban life is being played out, their sight elicits disgust (Clifford and Piston 2017; Fiske 2013), their appearance provokes a sense of dis-ease (Kearns 1993), and their mode of establishing themselves in place is being deemed out-of-place (Cresswell 1996). Spatial exclusion, resulting in the condition of placelessness (Kawash 1998; Lancione 2016; May 2000), which constitutes a form of ontic injustice (Jenkins 2020), is only one example of the material effects of the process of Othering and the failure to recognize social worth and human dignity in an urban life that is lived in the midst of homelessness.

Critical urban scholarship has done surprisingly little so far to challenge the logic of alterity that molds everyday encounters between housed and unhoused populations in the urban milieu of their co-existence. With its predominant focus on the curtailment of homeless geographies linked to the punitive urban policies targeting undesirable public appearances (Amster 2003; Atkinson and Laurier 1998; Cameron 2007; Davis 1990; Doherty et al. 2008; Mitchell 1997; Smith 1996b), for a long time it had tended to represent urban life that is lived in a homeless situation in terms of survival (Dordick 1997; Mitchell and Heynen 2009; Snow and Mulcahy 2001). Such framing has been criticized for reducing urban homelessness to a non-agential mode of subsistence and, consequently, depriving it of a sense of humanity (DeVerteuil, May, and von Mahs 2009; May and Cloke 2014). Another influential framing had used the notion of tactical inhabitation (Ruddick 1996; 1998) to represent homeless modes of doing the urban living. This framing claimed to return a sense of agency to the accounts of urban homelessness by attending to the ways in which homeless dwellers navigate more or less hostile urban environments. Yet, by framing homeless practices in terms of “re-inscriptions” or “re-appropriations”, it had not succeeded in neutralizing the Othering effect of the socially meaningful difference performed by homeless dwellers by the way they appear (J. Butler 2015; Duff 2017) in shared urban settings. As such, this framing had reproduced, at least implicitly, the opposition between “the proper” and “the transgressive” (Cresswell 1996) way of being and acting in urban spaces, reasserting the precarious positioning of homeless city dwellers in the ongoing battle over “who has the right to decide what uses of space are within the public interest” (Kawash 1998, 320).

Only recently, the notions of performativity and affectivity have been mobilized in an attempt to expand the understandings of the geographies of urban homelessness beyond those produced by its rationalities or confined to its institutional landscapes, and to overcome the limitations of the survivalist and tactical framings (Cloke, May, and Johnsen 2008; Daya and Wilkins 2013). A practice theoretical lens has been applied to paint a more nuanced and humanized picture of urban lives lived in the midst of homelessness (Hodgetts and Stolte 2016), and to articulate them as a mode of inhabiting the city, which is underpinned by its own logics and has its own concerns, but which is in essence not unlike any other way of doing the everyday urban living (Martini, 2021). The concepts of assemblage and abstract machines have been deployed in analyses of the constituency of the everyday experience of homelessness

in relation to the urban fabric that aimed at contesting “the canonical view of homeless people and the city as two discrete, dichotomised, categories” (Lancione 2013, 359). Finally, the notion of propositional politics of life lived in the midst of homelessness has been introduced (Lancione 2019, 2020) with an explicit call for scholars to (finally) see it for what it is – a form of urban life. Precarious, harsh, uncanny, but a life nonetheless. A life which “does not need alterity to be defined” (Lancione 2019, 4) as it speaks its own proposition about the possibility and acceptability of inhabiting the city. A proposition which “functions as a statement of truth, provided that one is ready to understand its conditions” (Lancione 2019, 3).

Through reframing of the relationship between “the homeless”, their lives, their rights, “the public,” and “the city,” all of these theoretical and analytical interventions have contributed to the affirmation of humanity in life lived in a homeless situation in critical urban scholarship. In this paper I am interested in the possibilities of extending this reframing beyond academic debates and challenging the logic of alterity in real-life encounters with street homelessness. To this end, I critically examine the potentialities of counter-mapping as means of creating space for recognition of street homelessness as a form of urban life, contributing to the ongoing conversations about ethically sound and politically effective ways of countering stigmatization of urbanites experiencing homelessness through public engagement (Kiddey and Schofield 2011; Lancione 2017; Morris et al. 2012; Schmidt and Medeiros Robaina 2017). I offer an illustrated map of Kraków, Poland, depicting the city’s public spaces through the prism of homeless logic of inhabitation, produced with an intent to support homeless dwellers’ claims for belonging in these shared urban settings.

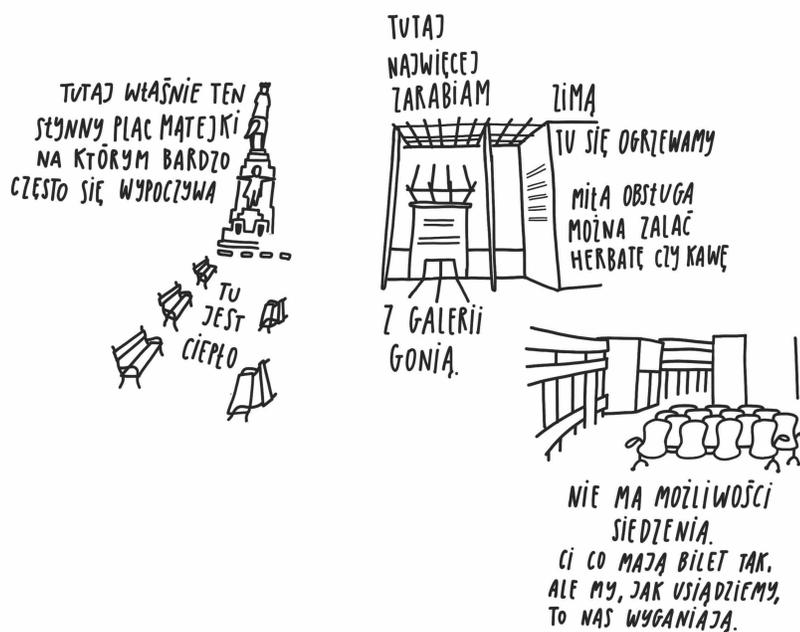


Figure 1. Fragment of the map depicting three public settings in Kraków in their homeless practical intelligibility. Translation of inscriptions: “Here’s the famous Matejko square, where we often have a rest”; “It’s warm here”; “Here, I can make the most money”; “Here, we’re getting warm in winter”; “The staff here is nice, one can get some boiling water to make tea or coffee”; “They kick us off from the mall”; “No way to have a seat. Those who have tickets can do that but we get kicked off”. Illustration by Małgorzata Spasiewicz-Bulas. The whole map is available at <https://homelesscity.project.uj.edu.pl/>

The map, illustrated in Figure 1, articulates rationalities, affectivities and normativities that circumscribe a lived proposition about the possibility and acceptability of inhabiting the city emerging from homeless spatiality. As such, this map constitutes an invitation for the members of the housed public to enter into contact with the city in its homeless practical intelligibility and thus to engage with the propositional politics of the unhoused manner of emplacement. By bringing to the fore human traits of this mode of urban dwelling, the map calls for its recognition as another (rather than Other) way of making a place for oneself in the city.

I offer this map as, at once, a response to the call for new cartographies of homelessness capable of illuminating homeless modes of inhabiting the city according to their own practices (Cloke, May, and Johnsen 2008), and a provocation for discussion about what good, if anything, could such cartographies do in terms of enhancing homeless dwellers' capabilities for exercising their right to appear in shared urban settings. In this discussion, I draw upon the notion of cartographies produced to practically intervene in unjust social processes and their material effects within research-activist practice of counter-mapping (Counter Cartographies Collective, Dalton, and Mason-Deese 2012). Counter-mapping employs cartographic visualization to affirm the existence and the identity of otherwise unacknowledged phenomena (Pavlovskaya 2009; Wood 2010), such as territorial rights (Peluso 1995), or sexual subjectivities (Knopp and Brown 2003). In this way, it harnesses the affirmative power of visibility afforded by mapping to secure social recognition of counter-hegemonic spatial/meaning propositions. In what follows, I underscore the ambiguities of this politics of visibility for the lived spatial relations that calibrate around stigma, and draw attention to the theoretical and practical limits it encounters when employed to intervene in the everyday politics of public space where visibility of stigmatized appearance constitutes a matter of public concern. In arguing that counter-mapping subjects mapped phenomena to public appraisal, the positive result of which it cannot secure, I complicate the notion of the link between public visibility and social recognition. In the remainder of this paper, I confront the uncertainty inherent in counter-mapping practice while discussing the dilemmas of mapping homeless spatialities. With its potential to counter the process of Othering of homeless dwellers' manner of emplacement in everyday urban spaces and thus to support the practico-material realization of their right to the city (Duff 2017), this ongoing project carries also a risk of exposing this vulnerable urban population to negative social responses. The paper is organized in the following way. The next section outlines the theoretical, methodological, and empirical ground on which the idea of using a map as a medium of public intervention has grown. Then, the workings of maps as catalysts for action are discussed, as well as the risks of unleashing their transformative power in spatialized struggles for recognition. The last section provides a tentative resolution of the counter-mapping dilemmas highlighted in the second section and explains the logic and the form of the discussed mapping intervention.

Grounds for Intervention: Disgust and Displacement

Curated engagement of the housed public with the propositional politics of homeless manner of emplacement discussed in this paper constitutes a final part of my doctoral research project. In this project, I have adopted a practice theoretical perspective (Nicolini 2017; Reckwitz 2002; Schatzki 1996) and approached street homelessness as a mode of inhabiting the city – a constellation of social practices of urban dwelling (arrays of everyday activities, linked and governed by practical understandings, teleoaffectivities, and rules), carried out by people amid arrangements of material entities (other people, organisms, artifacts and things) which channel, facilitate, or constrict the carrying out of these activities (Schatzki 1996). Empirically, the project has focused on street homeless spatialities (Heidegger 1996; Schatzki 2010) – performative transformations of the material entities amid and with the use of which practice-specific activities are carried out into places of and for these activities. Methodologically speaking, it has involved immersion in the experiential and spatial unfolding of the everyday urban life lived in a street homeless situation in the city of Kraków, Poland during walk-alongs, a hybrid between

participant observation, interviewing, corporeal engagement and auto-observation (Martini 2017) guided by 18 homeless dwellers. I met most of them at Zupa na Plantach, a transitory space of care (Cloke, Johnsen, and May 2007) created by the Zupa Foundation around weekly soup runs provided to those in need at one of the public squares in the inner city of Kraków, in which I have participated for over two years as a researcher (looking for a setting that would allow for establishing relations based on mutual recognition and trust between me and people participating in my research), and as a volunteer (helping with the soup runs, but most of all with building and maintaining relations with those entering this space, which constitutes an important component of the practice of care performed at Zupa na Plantach). Walk-alongs conducted in 2018 with homeless dwellers may be construed as a research phase and modality (Lancione 2017) of mapping Kraków as a homeless city. One of the results of this phase and modality of mapping was that it has rendered Kraków visible in its street homeless practical intelligibility (Farrugia 2013; Schatzki 1996), that is, in the way in which this city is made present to its homeless dwellers in the process of living within it – performing social practices, such as rough sleeping, panhandling, scavenging, socializing, resting, in material settings such as parks, squares, streets, shopping malls, and train stations. It has also rendered visible some of these settings as sites of struggle for recognition of homeless spatiality as an acceptable performative expression of practical understandings of what these settings are for, and therefore for whom they are. This phase and modality of mapping provided both the empirical ground and motivation for public intervention, a research-activist modality and phase of mapping, which came later and is discussed in the remainder of this paper. At the research stage, the issue of what should constitute an object of the possible future intervention was already relatively clear, both for me and the research participants. We both hoped that the knowledge we had co-produced could be used to address one of the exclusionary apparatuses operating in the city's spaces – namely disgust (Clifford and Piston 2017) – directly affecting homeless dwellers' capabilities for accomplishing places of and for their activities in shared urban settings (Martini 2021; Rennels and Purnell 2017).

Disgust, elicited by a mere sight of a person socially marked as homeless, operates both as means and grounds for exclusion. It pushes homeless dwellers to look for a place for themselves in the hidden cracks of urban materiality, to literally disappear into surroundings, or to engage in self-concealment (Hopper 1991), a careful attempt to disguise attributes which make them identifiable as homeless in order to blend into the human background of shared urban settings. Disgust pushes then homeless dwellers to self-exclude themselves from settings where their social worth could be assaulted (see, for example, Koprowska et al. 2020). In other words, it pushes them to relegate themselves to the status of not visible in order to salvage dignity. Disgust serves also as grounds for “sweeping up” homeless dwellers from shared urban settings through vindictive or just daunting measures deployed by the disgusted members of the housed population (see, for example, Margier 2016) or on their behalf. It also fuels the NIMBY syndrome (Dear 1992; Takahashi 1997) which constricts or completely sabotages more accommodative initiatives addressed to homeless dwellers, like the setting up of new facilities or implementation of Housing First programs. The intervention was then meant to be addressed to “ordinary” people and the affective registers of their mundane encounters with embodied and emplaced street homelessness. It was meant to be addressed then to powerful agents of spatial exclusion overlooked by the dominant critiques and interventions, which tend to focus on rather abstract structural forces, like “capital” or “the state” (see, for example, Coleman 2004; Mitchell 2003; Smith 1996a).

The idea that grounded engagement with misrecognition of street homelessness and its practice-specific spatialities might take a form of counter-mapping was mine. It came about at the later stage of the project, after a long period of reflection on the best means for curating this engagement, which had been interrupted several times by other commitments, like producing more traditional academic research outputs, I had to attend to. At this point, participation of the whole original group of participants in this decision-making process was impossible. Some of them passed away, some disappeared, some didn't

want to be involved because of simply being busy with attending to the practicalities of their daily lives, which became even more complicated since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The rationale behind my decision on the form of the intervention was the assumption that its medium needed to be spatially sensitive given that real-life encounters between housed and unhoused city dwellers take place in space; that the space of the physical urban settings is where their different, practice-specific spatialities collide with each other and stir up conflicts – conflicts over “the limits of what is considered permissible” (Wikström 2005, 52) in these settings, which also demarcate the limits of who can appear in these settings. A map was then a relatively straightforward choice. A further rationale was the character of the research material generated at the earlier stage of the project, namely the spatial transcripts of the walk-alongs, that is, transcripts of audio recordings of the walk-alongs synchronized with GPS recordings, which together documented both the experiential and the spatial unfolding of homeless practices of dwelling. But most importantly, I thought about mapping because maps have proven to be effective tools for action. They simply have worked

Affirmative Power of Maps and Struggles for Recognition

The Workings of Maps

There is no doubt that maps have power. “Maps don’t watch. They act. They make things” (Wood 2010, 51). They are capable of bringing subject positions and their worlds into being. But also, of destroying them. On the one hand, both historically and in the present, maps have been used to control and to wield power by those in power (Akerman 2009; Edney 1997; Winlow 2009). On the other though, the power of maps has been seized by the powerless in acts of resistance and applied to successfully perform desirable transformations (Bhagat and Mogel 2008; kollektiv orangotango+ 2018; Patel and Baptist 2012). Reclaiming maps (Dodge and Perkins 2008) as tools used in struggles for recognition builds on the insights yielded by the process of their critical deconstruction, which unveils their powerful workings (Harley 1989; Kitchin and Dodge 2007; Kitchin, Gleeson, and Dodge 2013; Pickles 2004; Wood 1992, 2010; Wood and Fels 2008). According to one of these deconstructions, authored by Denis Wood, maps are propositions; that is, “they are statements that affirm or deny the existence of something” (2010, 41). They authorize “the state of affairs which through their mapping they help to bring into being” (Wood 2010, 1). Maps are thus systems of “ontological claims (this is) and locative assertions about them (this is there)” (Wood 2010, 86), for, “to express a content element in the cartographic sign plane it has to be given a location in that sign plane” (Wood 2010: 58). Thus, as Wood further explains:

Every proposition expressed in the sign plane of the map embeds a fundamental, ontological proposition inside a locative one. The locative proposition, *this is there*, nestles within it the ontological proposition, *this is*. Mapmakers have often disclaimed any prerogative with respect to this precedent existential proposition, but in fact it is precisely here where the map’s ability – and propensity – to bring a world into being resides (2010, 56).

The transformative potential of maps, explained in Wood’s terms, resides then in existential and locative propositions they make that evoke the existence of mapped phenomena, which is further affirmed by two features socially attributed to maps – their factuality and authoritativeness (2010, 52). In this sense, mapped phenomena become real by virtue of cartographic visualization (Pavlovskaya 2017).

Ambivalence of Visibility and its Effects

Making use of this affirmative power of visibility afforded by mapping constitutes a foundation of reclaiming maps as tools in struggles for recognition. Yet, the celebratory narrative that underpins many of these efforts, which is perhaps best epitomized by the motto “Making the Invisible Visible”

(Map Kibera Trust 2009), tends to overemphasize the positive effects of visibility and thus oversimplify its relation to recognition. According to this narrative, visibility, i.e. the affirmation of existence, seems to be directly linked to recognition, i.e. the acknowledgement of an identity (and social worth), of this existence. Through this direct link, for instance, countering cartographic exclusion (Lambert 2020) is often related to countering social and material marginalization (Pavlovskaya 2017). This is seen especially in projects involving mapping informal settlements or indigenous territories, where cartographic affirmation of the unacknowledged form of inhabitation or unacknowledged use of space is supposed to result in their recognition as a legitimate part of the city (Kalkman 2019) or a legitimate claim of entitlement to a territory (Wainwright and Bryan 2009). This implicit logic, according to which mapped phenomena become not simply seen, but seen as “something” (Skeggs 1999), underlies initiatives of other kinds as well, like mapping evictions in Los Angeles (McElroy 2018) (in order for them to become recognized as a form of neoliberal urban injustice as opposed to, for example, “necessary, justified cost of urban renewal”), or mapping house squattings in Berlin (Morawski 2018) (in order for them to become recognized as enactments of the right to the city as opposed to, for example, “illegal acts of appropriation of private property”), and many more, if not all, counter-mapping projects. However, recognition, which all of these efforts aspire to bring about, does not rest on the intentions of those who demand it but on the reactions to their demand. As a social act (Honneth 2012), and therefore a social relation (Brighenti 2007), recognition necessarily involves others and their responses. And these responses may not be positive. On the contrary, as “the ironic effects” of some counter-mapping projects remind us, a call for recognition issued from a counter-map may as well be answered with (further) oppression (Elwood 2006; Fox, Suryanata, and Hershock 2005; Hodgson and Schroeder 2002). Visibility subjects the mapped phenomena to social appraisal, the result of which may be both recognition and denial of it (Brighenti 2007). At the same time, visibility constitutes a prerequisite for recognition. Phenomena need to be visible so they can be incorporated into social imaginaries (Pavlovskaya 2009) and engaged with (Awan 2016). In this sense, visibility is critical for any identity or territorial claim-making.

The necessary involvement with visibility coupled with ambivalence of its effects turns every counter-mapping project into an inevitably risky endeavor, especially when the entanglements with visibility and recognition of the mapped phenomena are already tremendously complex, as in the case of street homelessness. Firstly, historically it was the increased visibility of people experiencing homelessness on the streets of Northern American and Western European cities in the 1980s (Anderson 1993; Takahashi 1996) and Eastern European cities in the 1990s (Pospěch 2020), accompanied with categorical and moral Othering, which made street homelessness and its practice-specific manner of emplacement become an object of public attention, a matter of public concern. Since then, street homelessness has been not only present in social imaginaries, but has haunted them as a signifier of physical, social, and moral abjection and a threat to the symbolic and material orderliness of public spaces. As such, it has triggered outbreaks of moral panics and more or less punitive urban policy responses, which has led to increased exclusion of homeless people from shared urban settings. Secondly, street homelessness, regardless of the historical, social, or geographical context of its appearance, produces visibility by itself. Deprived of the domain of the private into which one can withdraw (Kawash 1998), a life lived in the midst of homelessness is inescapably visible to others. And partly due to that mere physical visibility it becomes morally questionable, as “everyday conduct, like sleeping, which in itself is morally unproblematic, becomes morally polluted just by being misplaced on the public space–private space axis” (Pospěch 2020, 3; see also Dixon, Levine, and McAuley 2006). City dwellers who live their lives in a homeless situation concern “the public” not because of their precarious living circumstances, but mostly because they are visible. For their sight, which is unsightly, tempers the atmospheres of urban settings and disrupts public comfort. It is then invisibility which protects homeless city dwellers from experiencing public contempt. Any attempt to unleash the transformative potential of

mapping with an intent of countering stigmatization of homeless modes of inhabiting the city, then, necessitates a careful consideration of what should constitute “this” in the ontological proposition which is to be cartographically affirmed, not to increase visibility of what is already seen and by the very fact of being seen contributes to misrecognition.

Ambiguity of Visual Representation

Dilemmas revolving around the question of “what to map” are closely followed by uncertainties regarding the ethically sound and politically effective language for cartographic articulation of the appropriate ontological proposition. As Nishat Awan reminds us:

Embedded in the question of how to map is a necessary discussion on the types of representations that are being used. In the history of map-making the dominant maps have been those produced in the West according to a logic that privileges topographic representations above all others. Whilst the grid as a device for measuring and representing space was being used by the Chinese since the first century AD, it is the European conventions of map-making, such as the adoption of longitude and latitude, that have had such a profound effect on what we consider to be a map (2016).

Given the already mentioned historical entanglements of Western practices of mapping with various forms of oppression there is “a perverse sense of the unseemly” (Pickles 2006) about traditional mapping conventions established within the discipline of cartography. On the one hand, some counter-mapmakers oppose topographic representations as suppressing other (non-Western, indigenous, artistic) ways of map-making and thus marginalizing other ways of geographical knowing and becoming. In this context it is often also being argued that “the dominant tropes of such map-making leave out much: scale, color coding, longitude and latitude, do not account for temporality, touch, memory, relations, stories and narratives – in fact it is experience that is altogether removed” (Awan 2016). In this sense, the status of points, lines and polygons as appropriate means of representing lived experiences of lived-in spaces is being questioned (Brown and Knopp 2006; Roth 2009). On the other hand, some voices are being raised in the defense of topographic representations, arguing that the form of representation does not matter, “as long as the content is oppositional” (Awan 2016). Points between the grid’s lines then continue to be drawn to counter, for example, institutional racism (Fórum de Juventudes do Rio de Janeiro 2018), or sexual harassment (Flinkman 2018). What is more, some battles for social justice might not have been won if not for the subversive use of traditional cartographic conventions (see, for example, Riewe 1992).

The politics of different types of cartographic representations is also associated with the character of their locative assertions. Traditional cartographic conventions represent mapped phenomena in a way which enables their more or less precise localizability beyond the map. A map’s locative assertions may be then used to respond to its ontological propositions directly, on the ground, which, depending on the character of the response, may be a desirable or undesirable effect of mapping. For instance, a point which marks a precise location of an encounter with a homeless person in a topographic representation of a city’s space, when appearing on the map via Arrels Tracker (a mobile app created by a Spanish non-governmental organization working with homeless people to gather information about the locations of those in need, which has been recently introduced in the Polish city of Gdańsk), issues a call for support. But when the same point appears on the National Safety Risk Map (a geoportal created by the Polish Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration and the Police through which citizens may report threats to public safety), what it calls for is a disciplinary action. In this case, locational information provided by a map enables and directs both caring and punitive responses to homeless appearance in the city’s

space. Ambivalence of localizability and its effects adds thus another layer of uncertainties related to unleashing the transformative potential of mapping in spatialized struggles for recognition.

Navigating the Dilemmas of Mapping Homeless Spatialities

What to Map?

If an appearance of a homeless person in a shared urban setting, like a subway car (Kawash 1998), a library (Hodgetts et al. 2008), a sidewalk (Duff 2017), or a square (Margier 2016), in itself manifests “a series of individual political claims for support, for recognition, care and inclusion” (Duff 2017, 526), then the reactions that this visible act of dwelling typically invokes imply that increasing visibility of homeless dwellers’ public appearances through cartographic affirmation will not only not lead to the recognition of their social worth, but may reinforce its denial. Thus, the visible aspect of street homeless practices, that is their performative dimension, shouldn’t constitute “this” in the ontological proposition put forward by a map that aims at countering their stigmatization. Bearing this in mind, I have focused on what remains invisible for the “public eye” when homeless dwellers perform their daily routines in its sight, namely the teleoaffective structures of practices which organize and shape these performances (Schatzki 1996). Performances, as the visible expressions of practices, are carried out according to the practice-specific rationalities, affectivities, and normativities, which embrace understandings of how and where they are performable or ought (not) to be performed. It is these logics that drag homeless dwellers (Reckwitz 2012) across the city’s spaces in pursuance of their (practice-specific) ends and drop them in settings where the tasks necessary for accomplishing these ends might be performed. It is these logics, in other words, that circumscribe how it makes sense for homeless dwellers to engage with the urban environment, how to be bodies (Reckwitz 2002) in urban space.

Practical understandings, teleoaffectivities, and rules of the street homeless mode of inhabiting the city remain invisible, unknown for the majority of the housed population. What is visible, when encountered in a shared urban setting, is a strange performance which transforms, for example, a public square into a place to sleep, and thereby challenges the non-homeless practical understanding of what this setting is for, and consequently, what it is (Cresswell 1996). A strange performance which stands out by virtue of its divergence from the taken-for-granted function and meaning of this setting, and is deemed out-of-place by virtue of the negative valuation of this divergence. Then, in a sense, the desirable effect of the discussed mapping would be to make this performance invisible, in the sense of non-alarming, unmarked, unnoticed, or in other words: normal (Brighenti 2007; Goffman 1971). And this may potentially be achieved by rendering visible the “hidden” logic which this performance is a visible expression of. When seen in the context of its own rationale, this performance may become more legible to those who see it, and thereby less strange. And this may open up a space for its recognition as an expression of another (as opposed to Other) way of making a place for oneself, another way of dwelling. “This is a form of human dwelling” seems to constitute then an appropriate ontological proposition to be put forward by a discussed counter-map, “precarious, harsh, uncanny, but human nonetheless.”

How to Map?

In searching for a cartographic language that would enable a legible articulation of this proposition, I drew inspiration from various sources: art, geography, and architecture. In particular, from locative artists, Jeremy Wood and Esther Polak, and their GPS-based everyday embodied cartographies of London and Amsterdam (Lauriault and Wood 2009; MacDonald 2018); as well as an illustrator Mitch Miller and his dialectograms of living arrangements of Red Road Flats and Duke Street in Glasgow (Miller 2013). From Annette Miae Kim’s poche, ghost, and narrative mappings of practices of inhabiting sidewalks in Ho Chi Minh (Kim 2015); Nishat Awan’s topological representations of migrant territories emerging from everyday walks on Stoke Newington High Street/Kingsland Road in London (Awan 2016); and Adele Irving’s, Oliver Moss’, and Lovely Jojo’s annotated map of Newcastle which traces

the life-histories of homeless city dwellers across the city's space (Irving and Moss 2018). What all of these diverse examples have in common is that they depict physical urban spaces as dwelling spaces (Ingold 2002). They show how the spatial, durational, and experiential logic of everyday inhabitation transforms spaces into a matrix of places in which people experientially act. They also illustrate how gender, class, or ethnicity differentiate the logic of inhabitation, and, consequently, the meaning of spaces that emerges from people's practical engagement with their lived-in environments. In terms of the language of cartographic representations, these examples demonstrate that a variety of techniques and conventions may be used to visualize space as it is produced and experienced by dwelling body-minds.

In my own representational experimentations, I was considering at first adhering to more traditional conventions which have proved useful at the research phase of mapping street homeless practices of inhabiting Kraków. Aerial view, detailed locational information, color coded points, lines, and polygons helped me to make better sense of the research material generated during walk-alongs with homeless dwellers and to visualize the city in its street homeless practical intelligibility (Martini 2020). However, conventions and techniques used to create maps which facilitated analysis turned out to be too limiting and potentially risky in the research-activist phase of mapping. In this modality, aerial view could encourage detachment rather than engagement, and reproduce the controlling gaze afforded by the top-down perspective. Flat surfaces of polygons could obscure the texture of spatial entities, and the unambiguity of their attributive characterization could smother the experiential complexity and "messiness" of the lived-in environment. Therefore, with an intent to produce a map that would be legible and informative for "ordinary" viewers, but in addition would engage them emotionally, I have turned to hand drawn illustration. This evocative visualization technique not only brings liveliness into the cartographic representation, but also affords much more flexibility when one wants to break the bounds of Euclidean geometry and Cartesian spatial ontology, combine multiple scales, perspectives, and gradients of locational information. Flexibility which allows for making the invisible reality apparent, but protects from exposing it, allows for being authoritative, but protects from becoming authoritarian (Awan 2016).

Putting Forward a Claim for Recognition

On the basis of this provisional resolution of the counter-mapping dilemmas revolving around the questions of what and how to map, an idea emerged to draw an illustrated map of Kraków's public spaces where homeless dwellers are visibly present, and to present these spaces through the prism of their logic of inhabitation. To avoid stepping into another ethical "mine field", homeless dwellers themselves are not depicted (nor secretive or private homeless spaces, nor secretive appearances in public spaces). Only their voices recorded during walk-alongs are used in the form of anonymized quotes. From these quotes a narrative about rationalities, affectivities, and normativities which mold homeless appearances, as well as their lived experiences of (non)belonging in these settings, is composed. The role of the narrative consists of inscribing in the spaces depicted on the map the implicit logic of street homeless practices that are being carried out in these spaces. By making visible the thoughts, emotions, and daily concerns of those who carry out these practices, this inscription brings human traits of street homeless modes of engagement with these urban settings to the fore. As such, the map is meant to mediate real-life encounters with street homelessness in Kraków's public spaces and, through facilitating the engagement of social cognition (Guillard and Harris 2020; Harris and Fiske 2006, 2007), it is meant to shift affective registers of these encounters from fear and disgust to empathy.

This idea is now being developed in collaboration with socially engaged illustrator Małgorzata Spasiewicz-Bulas / Słucham i Rysuję, housed and unhoused members of Żywa Pracownia (including one of the research participants), an organization which facilitates spaces of professional and social inclusion of homeless Cracovians, and the already mentioned Zupa Foundation. Acknowledging that this map can only be a departure point (Paglen 2007), we plan to embed it in an ecosystem of educational programs

and communicatory practices designed to enable political listening (Bickford 1996; Couldry 2010) to the voices which speak through this counter-cartography, as well as to accommodate varied potential responses to their call for recognition. This ecosystem will have to have the capacity of accommodating not only sympathetic responses, which could be nurtured through raising awareness about the possibilities of active involvement in providing direct support for Cracovians experiencing homelessness, but also conflicts. For drawing this map and confronting the housed public with its proposition means engaging with the local cosmopolitics (Farías and Blok 2016). It means taking a stance in the situated battles over whose urban reality is being allowed to be articulated and whose is being concealed. It also means unveiling the social production of spatial relations (Kawash 1998) masked by the taken-for-granted normativity of the dominant mode of inhabiting the city, that is disrupting the ontological security, the confidence “in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action” (Giddens 1990, 92) of those whose public performances harmonize with the dominant regimes of appearance. And this may be perceived as a threat and responded to with violence (Kawash 1998).

Conclusions

Critical urban scholars have recently articulated the need for editing back the neglected spatialities of the city into our accounts of urban space (Amin and Thrift, 2002) and this task has been widely undertaken. In some cases, with an explicit intent to use “the editing back” as means for creating “the conditions necessary for those other than the privileged few to participate in the imagining of our cities” (Awan 2016). Homelessness scholars, who have seized on the idea, have called for new cartographies of homelessness that would result in remapping the city in terms of its homeless enactment. In this paper, I have extended this call by shifting the modality of remapping from research to research-activism, considering what good, if anything, it could do in terms of enhancing homeless dwellers’ capabilities for exercising their right to appear in shared, supposedly public, urban settings. In doing so, I have engaged with the ongoing debates on the relevance of research on homelessness for the homeless people themselves, the agency of various forms of the outputs produced by this research, and the politically effective ways of using them to connect with different audiences and form broad alliances for social change (Cloke et al. 2000; Lancione 2017). I have also contributed to the conversations about the commoning (Stavrides 2019) of everyday urban spaces through pointing to a way of facilitating recognition of different ways of relating and belonging to the urban world. Street homelessness is not the only non-normative spatiality that is being performed in shared urban settings, and homeless dwellers are not the only ones who experience displacing effects of the normative regime of public appearance that doesn’t make space for difference (see, for example, R. Butler and Bowlby 1997; Ferreira and Salvador 2015; Mathews 2019). Mapping homeless and other “heretical” practices of inhabiting everyday urban spaces in a way that brings their rationalities, affectivities, and normativities to the fore can play a role in disrupting the naturalization of arbitrariness of the dominant sense of the proper way of engaging with urban environment, and thus challenge the power of taken-for-grantedness taken as orthodoxy (Cresswell 1996).

In critically examining the potential of mapping in facilitating recognition of street homelessness as a form of urban life, I have put counter-mapping practice on the empirical trial of strengths through exposing some of its assumptions to the specificity of this phenomenon. In doing so, I have challenged the focus on visibility in counter-mapping practice which tends to frame it as a normative goal without elaborating on its more nuanced, non-linear relation to recognition. I have drawn attention to the insecurity of the ontological propositions put forward by maps, whose affirmation, and therefore transformative power, is contingent upon the reactions to the maps’ call to action.

In this account, I have sought to not only provide an example of what mapping as research-activism might look like but also, or even first and foremost, to illustrate the diversity of concerns that it might give rise to. To this end, I have highlighted the uncertainty in the counter-mapping practitioner’s

position who lacks the comfort of knowing if “the outcome [of her endeavor] will be successful or even constructive” (Hale 2001, 5). In confronting the uncertainty that stems from this peculiar positioning, I have provisionally resolved the dilemmas revolving around the questions of what and how to map in order to harness the power of cartographic visualization and, at the same time, minimize the risk of further exposing what is already vulnerable by and in its visibility. The tentativeness of these answers marks a reflexive commitment to developing an ethically sound and politically effective way of mapping for a particular cause. But it also speaks of an immanent (rather than aberrant) status of any answers to ethical dilemmas posed by counter-mapping practice, as they are always provided from a position characterized by “the grave uncertainty” which comes with “the grave responsibility of having a direct and demonstrable impact on the lives of people and on a given political processes [*sic*]” (Hale 2001, 5). Taking this responsibility seriously means, at the very least, accounting for the possibility that the provided answers may turn out to be wrong and preparing in advance for what might happen if this appears to be true.

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