The paper investigates spaces of displacement and makeshift inhabitations along the border of Paris’ Boulevard Périphérique, identifying how such a material infrastructure generates thresholds and encounters between the urgency of resistance and the political violence of rejection.

At Parisian borders, ongoing practices of containment and control coexist with the production of collective resistance and solidarity. This is testified by the multiple experiences of makeshift dwellings over the years, such as La Zone and the bidonvilles of the northeastern periphery, as well as the current dispersed system of makeshift camps that have been proliferating since 2015. These dynamics testify to the ambivalent proximity that permeates such geographies as simultaneously controlled, exclusive, and protective, through opaque liminalities that serve as fertile ground for equally opaque bodies.

The paper stems from field-based research developed between September 2021 and September 2022 in Greater Paris, collaborating with local associations supporting people on the move and refugees inside Parisian border makeshift camps. The study attempted to make visible plural patterns of urban space production, neglected by the contemporary neoliberal and securitised city, and promote new forms of inhabitation. Based on that, the research aimed at deciphering new categories of urban planning that testify to the gigantic power of autonomous practices against the negligence of states and international organisations alike. By delving into such dynamics of resistance and imperfect strategies of inhabiting the uninhabitable, the paper looks at borders as occasions to enact weak and minor projects able to keep alive those areas in which plural lives find degrees of protection and legitimacy in their spatial expression.
INTRODUCTION

Since 2015, thousands of refugees, people on the move and people seeking asylum have transited through Greater Paris either to seek refuge in France or continue their journey to the United Kingdom. Several makeshift camps and other types of informal shelters have proliferated in the French capital since then, in the form of temporary settlements, through more or less dispersed tents or precarious cardboard boxes in public spaces, as well as through the occupation of vacant buildings.

Owing to the extreme temporary nature of such camps, unfinished migrations or the consequence of the inefficiency of the system of reception and accommodation of people seeking asylum in France, many of these settlements are either situated near the main railway stations (Babels, 2017), or along Paris’ borders, along what locals call ‘intra-muros’, distinctly marked by the circular outline of the Périphérique.

In the years from 2015 to 2017, considered to be the apex of the so-called European “migration crisis”, the city saw the development of makeshift camps, shelters, and squats capable of accommodating thousands of people, as a fix to address the inertia and incapability of governments and international organisations to provide decent protection and support.

Until now, the neighbourhood of Porte de la Chapelle, on the border between the XVII arrondissement of Paris (intra-muros) and the municipality of Saint Denis (extra-muros), has been an emblematic space of transit and refuge. Despite the ongoing police evictions and public hostility, the district has remained a favoured place for makeshift inhabitation and solidarity since 2015.

As an administrative borderland between two prefectures and municipalities, characterised by the mass presence of transport infrastructures, the area has served both as a liminal territory of marginalisation as well as serving as a pretext to keep the undesirables (Agier, 2016) in their invisible makeshift roost and make them stranded within such spaces of blurred authority.

Here, at the same time, the municipality of Paris, together with the association “Emmaus solidarité”, opened up the humanitarian camp of Porte de la Chapelle in November 2016, with a capacity of 400 places, intended to host first migratory arrivals.

Even after the humanitarian camp was dismantled, Porte de la Chapelle continued being one of the main places of transit and refuge for most people on the move arriving in the capital, with makeshift camps settling every week and local associations distributing aid through daily “maraudes” (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2).

This paper investigates how borders are inhabited and politised, and how marginalised bodies and spaces coexist in the contemporary European neoliberal city, constantly bordered, and zoned to conform to common perceptions of renewal and security.

By delving into spaces in which new patterns of imperfect inhabitation are constantly renegotiated to guarantee the existence of fragile and common lives, our aim is to analyse the border as a medium to promote new categories of architectural and urban planning. This spatial inquiry restores the ephemeral and ongoing taxonomies of border infrastructures, as continuously repositioned, reconsidered and reactivated by different means.

Barriers, infrastructures of connection, makeshift camps and spaces of solidarity are different yet contiguous sequences of a common infrastructure of holding that find fertile ground at the border. Not only are such conditions kept marginal and concealed, pushed outside and inside in an eternal state of opacity, but it is exactly through such opacity that borders embody and people’s experience of space becomes visible and manifested as an autonomous resistive act of their own legitimacy.

It is a means of separation between “us” and “them”, a “vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary” and it is therefore “in a constant state of transition” (Anzaldúa, 1987: 3).

Borders reflect the equally ongoing temporary and marginalised condition of bodies in transit. Accepting the assumption that borders are multifaceted, ideological, and imagined spaces that raise new and inhabited sovereignty (Longo, 2019) and institutional material dispositifs that allow a silent reproduction of power of minor and autonomous voices in architectural and urban planning across borders and cities.

This means understanding the threshold that lies between ‘projecting’ and ‘separating’, so restoring the responsibility of urban planning and policies to create spaces of coexistence and difference (Di Campli and Bianchetti, 2019) that refuse practices of differential inclusion.

The paper stems from empirical observations carried out throughout one year of field-based research on spaces of migration and refuge in France.³ Longitudinal data have been collected from testimonies and experiences of displacement from people on the move and from supporting actors through participatory observation, by collaborating with local associations supporting people on the move through weekly aid distributions and informal sheltering. Semi-structured and in-depth interviews have been coded and cross-compared to identify contingencies and genealogies in Porte de la Chapelle. Newspapers and national and local reports allowed us to gather information about evictions and violence at the border and represent them through spatial and textual counter-narratives of displacement in the area.

The research has used cartographic analyses, photography, and statistical and territorial data. Other than studying the territory through a multi-scale approach, the convergence of ethnographic research and architectural inspection permitted drawing on the analysed spaces as spatial dispositifs to acknowledge urban theories and philosophical inquiries.

The mapping of makeshift camps, spaces of support and practices of hostility has been overlaid to identify common spaces of vulnerability and holding. In fact, the research aimed at highlighting the ambivalent status of control and care towards refugees, people seeking asylum and people on the move, as a result of the concurrent practices of rejection and solidarity.

Displacement and encampments have long been at the forefront of policy and planning agendas for states and international organisations, across internal frontiers and urban areas. The thousands of people that transited temporarily across the border of the Périphérique have soon faced the inefficiency of its system of reception and the hostility of law enforcement, and local citizens as well as urban projects...
of institutional urban planning and policies to shelter yet preserve some common perception of urban renewal, Porte de la Chapelle will highlight such ambiguous contingencies of care and control at urban borders.

Finally, we conclude by analysing possible encounters between urbaniy, borders, and the makeshift practices of resistance by people on the move and supporting actors.

We aim at making visible such radical infrastructures in which one can see the gigantic power of marginalised autonomies against the negligence of states, the strategies elaborated by people left at the border to inhabit the marginal and manifest new legitimacies and identities of urbanity.

GREATER PARIS: BORDERS AS CATALYSTS OF MAKESHIFT DWELLING

Genealogy of Parisian borders

The territory of Greater Paris represents an emblematic case of spatial inequality, where the conflictual relationship of bodies and spaces inhabiting the neoliberal contemporary city, has radically transformed the city of passages into a territory in which spatial and social borders have cancelled out any possible condition of porosity (Viganò et al., 2018).

It is a material borderland, where the massive presence of infrastructures of production and mobility define margins of contrasting spaces and methods of adaptation; a social borderland, where wealth, poverty and vulnerability are able to encounter each other and, at the same time, are made visibly distant (Secchi, 2013).

On the one hand were the densely constructed, nineteenth century Haussmannian Paris and the business districts of the western luxury residential banlieues of the prefecture of Hauts-de-Seine; on the other hand, were the industries, immigrant hubs and former bidonvilles of the “quatre-vingts- treize”, the prefecture of Seine Saint-Denis.

In the common imagination, the city of the rich is in the south-west, in the VII or XVI arrondissements of the large Haussmannian parks and palaces.

The city of the poor is near the north-eastern borders and ‘extra- muros’, around the municipalities of Saint-Denis, Aubervilliers and La Courneuve (Fig.3).

While on one side, the causes of this division are to be found in a plurality of stories of industrial and financial planning, immigration, and common perception, on the other, their origins respond to the unique strategy of separation and zoning at the centre of the urbanisation of capitalist societies, of which the French capital is an emblematic catalyst example (Dear and Scott, 1981).

The new asset of the city created during Haussmann’s time is already spatially strategic by virtue of overcoming sanitarian production crises through to the recodification of zones, and the connections between dynamic centres of activity, all perceived to systematically generate capital (Harvey, 2003).

Throughout the entire nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the production of the city was driven by the intention of generating a new collective image of social order under the pressure of progress and innovation. Its erratic course is to be found in the conflictual relationship between this strategy and the acts of resistance and support towards vulnerable classes, progressively invisible or invisible.

Paris, as a scenario of modernity inhabited by conflictual classes (Benjamin, 1935), recalls the generation of collective resistance, the socialistic utopias, and most importantly, the elaboration of new forms of self-organisation and occupation of spaces and practices of refuge.

Multiple experiences have followed this ambivalence throughout the years, such as the development of La Zone, the area of slums and informal dwellings that proliferated to occupy the voids left by the deconstruction of the Enceinte de Thiers (the outer wall of Paris); the bidonvilles of the industrial areas around Nanterre or Saint-Denis, responding to the urge of housing for the labour force; the porous system of squats and shelters; and nowadays, the makeshift camps of people seeking asylum and people on the move of the north-eastern arrondissements of the city and in neighbouring municipalities.

Peculiarly, all these new forms of subaltern urbanisation (Roy, 2011) mainly occurred and keep orbiting around the material and administrative border of the Périphérique, pushed by repulsive forces and spatial opportunities of take informal action both inside and outside on the outskirts of the French capital. To counter-act these phenomena, the efforts of urban public policies from the 1970s onwards were aimed precisely at including these areas into the bigger conurbation of Paris, which in some ways culminated into the current conformationation of the area of Grand Paris. However, obsessed with what Secchi defines as a “quantitative theory of the production of building market” (Secchi, 1984) - that is basically the idea that it was enough to build houses to solve the “problem of integration” – housing and public projects then followed the necessity to separate and divide, enhancing the border and the progressive reproduction of nuclei of wealth and security, leaving behind the dimension of a possible collective coexistence.

Transferring this historical analysis to the twenty-first century and across the spectrum of spaces of displacement and refuge the
question of collective lives – in contrast to differential inclusivity and progressive borderisation - remains unsolved. In the context of the Grand Paris, such spaces of displacement remain anchored to the need to delimit, separate, move away, to open and to close. Urban planning becomes a dispositif of control for the creation of a collective idea of safety and order.

Based on that, public policies, covered under the spectrum of urban regeneration, are justified to exercise their dominant power to separate and force established forms of local practices and identities.

At the same time, those forcibly displaced by these acts of exclusion through inclusion, are pushed to find makeshift solutions to subvert these processes, forging new strategies to inhabit the systematised uninhabitability of certain spaces.

Residual voids, vacant buildings, and wastelands are some of the spaces that have become, on the one hand, the result of the zoned contemporary city and, on the other, the shelter for the undesired bodies from the space of ordinariness. Critically reading the territory through these places of difference permits deciphering practices of adaptation and sharing that generate the need for movement and coexistence between black bodies in a white space (Mbembe, 2019).

Looking at the methods and dispositifs used by refugees, people seeking asylum and people on the move to subvert established local identities and claim their right to space is fundamental to interpreting unsettled urban and architectural patterns of imperfect inhabitation on the edge.

Porte de la Chapelle

Based on participatory observation carried out through volunteering assistance to people in transit between September 2021 and August 2022 in Paris, we present the case of Porte de la Chapelle as a fragment of such infrastructure of concurrent dynamics of care and control and concentration (Tazzioli, 2018; Sharpe, 2016; Derrida, 2000) at urban borders. Porte de la Chapelle serves to represent the complex and often conflictual approaches to addressing the spatial legitimacy of marginalised communities in urban areas, as well as people’s autonomous power of claiming a right to space.

Through longitudinal analysis of the area, we have been able to recount the evolutions and current conformations of border inhabitation in the area, in order to understand such strategies of imperfect dwelling and their function as a generator of legitimate patterns of urban infrastructures of lives.

Porte de la Chapelle is a neighbourhood in the XVIII arrondissement at the edges of the capital, bordering the city of Saint-Denis. As the name suggests, it is part of the 17 gates of the city, situated on the old Enceinte de Thiers (outer wall) replaced by the Boulevard Périphérique.

The area is recognised by the massive presence of infrastructure, being it the intersections of various local and national roads and motorways commencing from this gate and creating an important and massive transport hub. Given the peripheral and industrial nature, the presence of important infrastructures, and notably the historical establishment of informal dwellings and bidonvilles, Porte de la Chapelle represents specific urban and social properties in the collective imagination of the inhabitants – those linked with immigration, clandestine precariousness, and unsafe activities.

The bordering infrastructure shapes a territory composed of a series of liminal spaces with unspecified functions or management: a patchwork of different yet equally undefined spaces that blur the dichotomy between what is public and private or their accessibility (Fig.4).

In this context, Porte de la Chapelle becomes an active space of migration and refuge in the city, providing opaque spaces that allow the presence of equally opaque bodies. From 2015 and with the progressive evacuation of the Calais jungle, makeshift camps started to establish in the northeastern periphery of the capital, especially in the district of La Chapelle. Starting from La Chapelle and Stalingrad, people in transit and refugees have been progressively displaced and pushed outside of the city.

Pushing displaced persons from Paris and from the neighbouring departments soon made the border the privileged and densest space of refuge, keeping people in a constant state of opacity and displacement of the spaces they inhabited.

With the presence of such a vulnerable and dispossessed population, the reputation of the neighbourhood develops further as the setting of many other situations of precarisation, such as prostitution, drug dealing, and different kinds of criminality.

In fact, institutional support and law enforcement have been made in an effort to preserve the boundaries between local communities and the unsafe conditions in the camps, defending the safety of residents by constantly evacuating and displacing the unhoused people. Despite the perpetual evacuations and mass displacement of persons in Porte de la Chapelle over time, the neighbourhood is also home to one of the main dispositifs of reception put into action in 2016 by the municipality of Paris.

The Centre Humanitaire de Porte de la Chapelle, commissioned by the nation and managed by the capital city and Ensemble Solidarité, was conceived by the architect Julien Beller in the form of what has been nicknamed “the bubble” (Fig.5).

The project continues, with the objective to create temporary dwellings for first arrivals, thus with the consequent aim to curtail the situation of people living in the streets and makeshift camps.

Other than promoting a new culture of accommodation and concentration (Katz, 2022), a visibly overstretched reception with biometric recognition upon entry (Champagnac and Le Courinant, 2022), the centre has often not been enough to host arrivals, enabling the proliferation of dispersed makeshift camps in its proximities, making people waiting to be located in the centre, unwilling to enter it or refused for lack of available places.

Both for its physical configurations and for the ambivalent concurrence of practices of rejection and reception to which it was subjected, Porte de la Chapelle might probably be considered the main space of displacement in the Grand Paris since 2015, with frequent forced evacuations, often consisting of thousands of people.

At the same time, the area is at the centre of processes of renewal initiated in 2002 by the city of Paris. The municipality is gradually putting into action the propositions of the Grand Projet de Renouvellement Urbain (GPRU), an operation of redesignation of areas of primary intervention, through projects intended to tackle the unfavourable living condition of its inhabitants, and promoting economic development and access to services and public spaces. The main interventions in Porte de la Chapelle include the research centre of Campus Condorcet or the ZAC Gare des Mines-Fillettes. This is a project extended on either side of the ring road aiming at promoting social inclusion by dismantling the threshold of the Périphérique. In addition to the already established process of gentrification and therefore protracted displacement of refugees and people on the move in areas to be reconsidered, the Olympic Games to be held in Paris in 2024 have been imagined as a way to give a new prosperous life to the neighbourhoods of the Parisian periphery and the department of Seine-Saint-Denis.

Based on that, Saint-Denis, right on the outskirts of Porte de la Chapelle, would become the location of the majority of Olympic sites and Porte de la Chapelle a
great new hub of touristic and sporting attractions with the construction of the Paris Arena II (Fig.6 and Fig.7).

This decision provoked a big reaction among activists and researchers (Wolfe, 2023), especially those with concerns around the increased potential phenomena of gentrification. The additional dispersion of the unhoused and vulnerable populations inhabiting these places.

This is progressively testified by the operations of the municipality in the first months of 2023, such as the recurrent police harassments and evacuations of refugees in the area. Once again, people are forcibly displaced into a limbo of opaque assistance, while their forcibly displaced into a limbo of opaque assistance, while their forcible displacement.

**CONCLUSION: BORDER URBANISM**

**Borders to hold the marginal**

The current situation at Porte de la Chapelle, analysed throughout the field-based research in 2021 and 2022, as well as through ongoing observation of the actions of volunteers and activists in the area, shows a sensibly less dense presence of people on the move and people seeking asylum, with makeshift camps that appear more as an archipelago of tents and informal dwellings distributed within and across the existing infrastructure.

**Compared to past years,** the people transiting here are progressively confronted with the spatial violence of planning agendas and evictions, through interventions of renewal, gentrification and tourism driven by the upcoming architectural interventions of the Campus Condorcet and/or the Olympic Arena.

**Nonetheless,** the strong attachment of displaced persons to the place, either for the presence of support or for the already established multiculturalism of this neighbourhood, makes it still highly frequented daily and a perpetual space of people’s makeshift inhabitation. Based on this context, understanding the ambivalent dynamics of reception and rejection across the Périmérique requires requestioning the role of borders in reshaping the social continuous reconfiguration of neoliberal cities. The empirical research promotes the urge for a paradigm shift in urban planning, especially when related to those liminal and dividing areas where marginalised communities are displaced. By deconstructing the conceptual and material representation of the borderland, we attempt to interrogate the role of the urban and architectural project in keeping alive those areas in which loss, multiplicity and difference find spatial legitimacy.

To begin with, the border itself constitutes a spatial dimension, not a mere line, but a borderland constituted by an infinity of punctual elements characterised by the interconnection and conflict between the two localities and identities of the bordering territories.

As a buffer zone, the border space takes its form from its separating elements, implying that its material and social characteristics are defined and made spatial through its relationship with the neighbouring and the outside (Febvre, 1988).

What crosses this liminality is then somehow equally separate, categorised, simultaneously inside and outside the physical space and its normativity. The border itself changes depending on who traverses it, is an “interactive biopolitical architecture” that constructs and deconstructs itself depending on the relationships between individuals and “a negotiating device that mediates between birth and nationhood” (Petti et al., 2007: 77). Consequently, the border space is the epistemic element or, citing Sassen (2007), “heuristic space” –, a generator of the multiple and imperious actions that the territory can be perceived.

It is precisely through this controversial reflection that the border space, be it the national frontier, the urban/rural separation of the urban liminalities of unsolved legacies, is positioned at the backbone of the practices of differential inclusion that enable ambivalent dynamics of hostility and solidarity towards the marginalised and undesirables (Agier, 2008).

Placing these assumptions in the construction of the Paris Arena II (Fig.6 and Fig.7).

This is the case of most of the makeshift camps and spaces of refuge analysed in the Greater Paris area. Porte de la Chapelle is an administrative border and infrastructural hub, an encounter of different mobility systems and a crossing point for a great number of daily commuters, passing through for a couple of minutes a day. It is a place of different levels, passages and surfaces which accordingly generate a series of liminalities and wastelands that remain unsolved in the calculated and zoned system of the city. It embodies the property of the urban border as a space not initially conceived to be inhabited, but rather to be traversed, where the efforts of planning were focused on transport and systems of connections. This place falls into crisis when people are forced to inhabit it, in spite of the primary function as a space of transit, and reassembling it as a space of shelter and support – as maintained by the several associations that act in these liminal areas of the city.

Delphine Seyrig, Porte d’Aubervilliers, Cheval Noir or La Marsellaise6 are several other examples of makeshift places.
of dwelling and refuge where care is enacted through such forms of displaced urbanity, reacting to the differential exclusion that public spaces embody in the neoliberal European city. Hence, through different practices of appropriation of space across the border, the inhabitants are building the public space, subverting norms and limitations and reshaping the apparent selective uninhabitability of the city (Simone, 2016). At the same time, this ambivalent condition is mostly reflected in such public and accessible border areas where refugees, people on the move and unhoused people find shelters to set up their refuge. Bridges, infrastructures, and wastelands are turned from public areas into shelters, subverting in some ways what right to space and public spaces embody in the urban areas. It demonstrates the prevailing correlation between the placeless status of people seeking asylum, people on the move, and the spaces they are compelled to inhabit.

This condition is enhanced spatially by places characterised by the massive presence of infrastructures, ambiguous boundaries, undefined wastelands, and marginality resulting from displacement, epitomising the blurry threshold between accessibility, legality, private and public.

It represents the spatial manifestations of the enduring state on hold that displaced persons embody. At the same time, Porte de la Chapelle forms part of an assemblage of makeshift shelters within the city, challenging its norms, identity, and apparent uninhabitability, and establishing new forms of legitimacy through displacement. Against the negligence of states, new patterns of space reproduction emerge, supporting informal practices of resistance, embracing the voids, the marginal and the unfinished.

The acts of solidarity in Porte de la Chapelle are architectures in transit, lifelines (Boano and Bianchetti, 2022) that create new spaces of maintenance and coexistence among vulnerable lives kept marginal at borders (Fig.8).

They are not solutions of reception, yet they allow one to "live with the struggle" (Haraway, 2016) and guarantee a certain access of rejected lives in transit. This paper is not a direct critique of current planning agendas along Paris borders, nor paradigm it claim to depict possible solutions of reception in the territory under investigation, although it stems from a clear prospect of public space. Through different practices of inhabitation (Boano, 2021; Boano and Astolfi, 2020), Porte de la Chapelle, and more widely the whole Parisian Périphérique as the makeshift inhabitations that have proliferated around it, make clear how borders enact simultaneously ambivalent dynamics of exclusion and inclusion that control marginalised bodies yet permit some degrees of protection and existence.

This situation calls for the development of new diagnostic mechanisms as well as new design gestures to confront injustices and to imagine unthinkable futures and different ways of living.

This requires asserting that design is conjugated in the gerund, not in the past nor in the future, but in an indefinite verbal mode that indicates an ongoing process, an operative time, but inoperative intentionality.

Paraphrasing Agamben, only by seeking this form of a project without end can we disable the dispositif of the project.

For Agamben, resistance to violence is not another "violence", rather, "it is a violence that denies the self as it denies the other; it awakens a consciousness of the death of the self, even as it visits death from the other" (Agamben, 2009).

The deactivation of such a "marking" of violence implies a rethinking of the relationship between potential and actual, the affirmation of ongoing production and, finally, the construction of an ontology of modality through the notion of inoperative practice. What is rendered inoperative is an action towards a state both in order to open to new uses and forms that do not abolish the old, but rather display it in an unstable continuity.

Such an action, that "returns to the potentiality in the form of inoperativeness and ineffectiveness" (Agamben, 2011; 251) is the way to deactivate the inherited violence of exclusion.

Such a project requires both to understand and to reconstruct the threshold, materially and conceptually. It urges rethinking the threshold that surrounds the makeshift camps and reforms inhabitation not only in its spatial and territorial configuration at the border, but also in the opaque and ambivalent significance between what is outside and inside, legal and illegal, or us and them.

Looking at these thresholds enables us to encompass the possibility of potentially closing or opening them, guaranteeing the opaque space, or making these practices visible, equally, decide whether to keep people apart or elaborate strategies of living together. Based on that, the project of the border is an infrastructure that rejects overdetermination, as it would be a system of control, but rather an open system of relationships: axially among different potential and multiple scenarios. It is not inextensive, thin, or ephemeral; it is not a temporal urbanism, or a tactical move, it is rather a minor infrastructure that refuses to conceive spaces and the people inhabiting them, but still allows some degree of protection.

The search for an inoperative project for urban and architectural design is in fact the search for a minor space, to counter the nature of urban and architectural design as operational, practical, masculine, concrete, tangible, and problem-solving oriented action. The search for a minor project (Boano, 2021) is not to be confused with contemplative quietism detached from reality in its scholarly academic version, or of banal disciplinary neglect; rather, it is to be located as a paradox of practice, situated in an interrupted, inferred, and formal arrogance inoperative. The search for a minor project sustains not the space of a new task, or of banal disciplinary variation, or of banal disciplinary version, or of banal disciplinary action. The search for an inoperative project (Boano, 2021), rendering the mainstream project as other than poiesis, which does not produce something other than itself.

It is an interrupted, inferred, inward-oriented design action – not because it is dysfunctional or destructive, but because from the beginning it is devoid of any telos, any task. Not a counter-hegemonic project – another major language – another historical project or a renewed humanistic discourse or a new manifesto of action, but rather Bartleby's powerful "I prefer not to" voice (Melville, 2021). Thus, the inoperative project is not exhausted, it remains in potency; a potential that, instead of passing into reality, remains pure potential. A potential that, instead of passing into reality, remains pure potential. Despite and precisely because of its precariousness and elusiveness, the minor project sustains not the space as such but the space of variation, difference (Di Campi and Bianchetti, 2019), rendering the mainstream and formal arrogance inoperative.

To think of such a project as inoperative is thus to put the minor critique of the present back at the centre, resisting, and reversing the arrogant anticipation of what is yet to come. Minor is an adjective that qualifies an action, a tone. Resistant and at the same time immanent.
Thus, make-shift camps, dispersed in temporary sites, squats, or other informal spaces of reception served to identify material and social infrastructures of borders. The inoperative project has its origins from the recollection of these practices as make-shift dispositifs to rest, gather, self-care and collective care, and shared boundaries. Consequently, interactions with the local network of support highlight possible scenarios of coexistence: marauders, outreach and close contact with people on the move are crucial to decipher the conceptual prospects of such a project.

The minor project here is unfolding existing dynamics of resistance, claiming new identities, autonomous, and imperfect modes of inhabitation. It refuses overdetermination and is therefore weak, fragile, constant reconstructing uses and interactions. Dispositifs to gather, eat, rest, and protect as temporary and ephemeral dwellings built and managed with the network of assistance may represent an abacus of make-shift tools that attempt at enhancing protection, degrees of coexistence and transit in the camps, in the host communities or in the territories of transit, of which the Parisian Périmètre is an essential example.

They promote new modes of inhabitation that could be transient and ephemeral, movable and adaptable to spaces, and concurrently produce new uses and legacies. They serve as a setting for a plurality of spaces where practices of the make-shift, support and hostility converge and seek recognition in the wider urban theory, determining new platforms of an imperfect, transient weak and ambivalent infrastructure of holding.