

If I die Far from You: Deep Mapping Grief and Loss in the Context of Migration

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Abstract

If I die far from you: mapping grief and loss in the context of migration

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The death of a loved one is one of the most challenging episodes in a person's life. This experience becomes even more complicated when someone dies in the context of migration. Beyond the emotional shock, family members and friends might have to hold posthumous ceremonies at a distance, organize the corpse's repatriation, and deal with their own need to grieve from far away. In this research, I aim to shed light on the potential of mapping for revealing these intimate and heterogenous posthumous geographies. To do so, I have deployed three different cartographic strategies to map the stories of eight migrants. First, I designed a series of narrative maps to focus on postmortem mobilities. These maps reveal that the movement of bodies continues to be influenced by emotional and economic decisions after death. They also display the local and global networks of communication and support triggered by the demise of a migrant. Second, I mobilized two mapping approaches dedicated to charting the personal and the emotional (i.e., inductive visualization and sensibility mapping) to represent the very intimate moments associated with the experience of death in the context of migration. Finally, I introduce the concept of "mapping-ofrenda" as a form of mourning and remembering. This third project emphasizes the value of the mapping process and the opportunity it offers to turn memories into maps. It also illustrates the importance to reconnect with the past and with relatives from afar. As a whole, this thesis considers deep mapping as an intimate and non-replicable practice, as a desire and a never-ending task that calls for a diversification of mapping forms and practices to reflect and face the challenges of engaging with difficult stories. It also establishes postmortem cartographies of mobilities, grief, memory, emotions, and solidarity as essential components of the geographies of death in migratory contexts.

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Dedication

A Paulina, con todo mi amor.

Contribution of Authors

Chapter 2.

José Alavez: Research conception, literature review, creation of the cartography, analysis of the maps, and manuscript preparation.

Dr. Lilyane Rachédi: Provided the transcripts of the life stories, gave feedback during the creation of the cartography and the literature review preparation.

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Chapter 4.

José Alavez: Research conception, literature review, interviews, creation of the cartography, analysis of the maps produced, and manuscript preparation.

Dr. Sébastien Caquard: analysis of the maps and manuscript preparation.

All authors reviewed the final manuscript and approved of the contents

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Chapter 1: Introduction: Mapping grief and loss in the context of migration¹

“Lovely, beloved Mexico, If I die far from you, may they say that I’m asleep, and may they bring me back to you.” (Monge, 1921)

The forced migration of people, along with its political, economic, social, and environmental origins and its devastating human consequences, regularly makes the headlines. From the Libyans fleeing civil war since 2011, to the Ukrainians flying from the Russian invasion of their country in 2022; from Africans drowning in the thousands in their attempts to cross the Mediterranean Sea; to the Latin Americans perishing while crossing the border between Mexico and the United States, thousands of migrants die every year while trying to improve their living conditions.

Scholars, activists, and media have mobilized a range of means to bring attention to this shocking situation. Among these means, maps have played a key role. They have been used to make visible the alarming number of migrants who have perished crossing seas (Vives, 2017; Lo Presti, 2019), deserts (De León, 2015), militarized borders (Weber and Pickering, 2011), as well as during their confinement in detention centers (Mountz, 2011; Mountz, 2020). These cartographies have helped illustrate the growing necropolitical violence against exiles and refugee seekers and the lack of local and international policies for the identification and recovery of their corpses (Squire, 2017; Mitchell et al., 2019; Kobelinsky and Furri, 2020; Lo Presi, 2020).

One dimension that is often missing in these very important and highly political cartographies is the more intimate dimensions associated with death. The intimate postmortem geographies transcend the numbers on a spreadsheet, names on a database, or icons on a map. For the relatives and friends, they represent the economic, political, and administrative constraints of organizing a funeral in diaspora or repatriating the remains back to their home countries; they entail intimate moments, such as listening and fulfilling promises made on a hospital bed; they signify mourning and remembering a deceased loved one within a foreign culture and without the support of family and friends (Rachédi and Kobelinsky, 2018).

Geographers and social scientists have studied extensively spaces associated with grief and loss, such as cemeteries, columbaria, and official and vernacular memorials (see Knifen, 1967; Francaviglia, 1971; Jordan, 1982; Zelinsky, 1994; Kong, 1999; Teather, 2001; Maddrell and Sidaway, 2010; Young and Light, 2013; Nash, 2018; Pearce, 2019). They have also researched alternative mourning practices and spaces (Sloane, 2018). Some examples are the production of green burials—a plant or a tree fed by the deceased’s remains (see Stock and Dennis, 2021), and

¹ Following the work of Alison Blunt (2006), Lilyane Rachédi (2017), and Sabine Marschall (2020), I use the term ‘migration’ in this project as an umbrella concept that refers to individuals or groups who changed their residential location temporarily or permanently by crossing a geographical boundary (i.e., political-administrative, or symbolic) which has some consequences on their internal and social identity (Kearney and Beserra, 2002; Ruiz García 2002). This definition covers both forced migration (due to economic, political, environmental, or social issues) as well as voluntary migration.

the elaboration of virtual memorials hosted on the web (see Sultana, Youngs-Zaleski, and Jiwani, 2019).

Yet, as pointed out by Alistair Hunter and Eva Soom Ammann (2016, 95), “before the 2000s the question of dying and death in migratory contexts received very little attention from researchers, be it in the social sciences or beyond”. In Quebec and Canada, Lilyane Rachédi (2017) noticed that the terms ‘death’ and ‘migration’ still rarely appear together in academic literature, while the study of death in the migratory context is certainly not a new research topic.

Archaeologist Elizabeth O’Brien (2020) traced mourning and migration ceremonies back to the Iron Age. She combined chemical analyzes and archival research to trace the origin of the remains found inside ancient burial grounds in Ireland. According to her research the bones belonged to migrants who fled mainland Europe due to the rise and spread of the Roman Empire. Engseng Ho (2006) employed archival research to study the history of the Hadrami who left their home, Aden in Yemen, in the early 15th century due to drought and war. Ho explained that, during their exile, the Hadrami and their descendants pilgrimaged back to Aden to visit the tombs and remains of their saints known as “the Adani” until 1994. That year, 2,000 armed Yemenis vandalized the graves and corpses of the Adani as part of political and religious feuds. Ho’s research (2006) illustrated how the Adani’s remains anchored the Hadrami’s sense of belonging for five centuries. Further, he assessed how corpses and tombs sustained symbolic and political relevance across generations. Historian Brian Young (2003) addressed the administrative struggles of Quebec’s Chinese Community in the early 1900s to honor their deceased according to their customs in the Mount Royal Cemetery—even though they owned a plot in that place. Although, according to Young, it is unclear to when the Chinese Community obtained the authorization from the trustees to perform their memorial rites, what is clear is the continuous struggles face by migrant communities to grieve their loved ones in diaspora.

Alistair Hunter (2016) noted scholars have started to examine how immigrants experience grief and remembrance in their host countries since the turn of the 21st century. This concern has overlapped with renewed perspectives within human geography and social sciences studying the emotional, virtual, and affective dimensions and practices within the landscapes of death, also known as “deathscapes”² (Kong, 1999; Teather, 2001; Maddrell and Sidaway, 2010; Maddrell, 2017). The compiled academic interest in migrant’s mourning practices and the research of the intangible and experiential features of deathscapes generated innovative methodological approaches designed to study historical and contemporary issues concerning death in migratory migration (Hunter, 2016). These studies incorporate the co-production of in-depth interviews, including life stories and focus groups with migrants to study their intimate end-of-life and grieving experiences (Gunaratnam, 2013; Rachédi and Halsouet, 2017), ethnographic research in cemeteries to study rituals and funerals in the context of migration (Francis et al., 2005; Zirh, 2012; Hunter, 2016; Beebejaun et al., 2021), and the use of literary novels and other artworks as proxies to analyze in-depth the more intimate dimensions of death in exile (Rachédi, 2010; Boucher, 2016). In this thesis, I propose to contribute to this growing body of literature by

² Avril Maddrell and James Sidaway (2010, 4) defined deathscapes broadly as “both the places associated with death and for the dead, and how these are imbued with meanings and associations; the site of a funeral, and the places of final disposition and remembrance, and the representations of all these”.

focusing on the potential of maps and mapping to reveal and study the intimate geographies of grief and loss in the context of migration.

I start this introductory chapter by reviewing how scholars and artists have mapped death in a migratory context. Next, I review the potential of deep mapping to bring the intangible, qualitative, and emotional aspects of space to the fore. Then, I present the deep mapping approach I have developed to reveal the different scales and meanings associated with grief and loss in the context of migration. This chapter ends with an overview of the three mapping projects that make up this deep mapping approach and of the expected contributions of this work.

1.1 The cartographies of death in the context of migration

This section reviews how scholars, cartographers, and artists have deployed maps to analyze death in a migration context. I start by presenting maps designed to show where people died during their migratory journeys. I then turn to projects interested in mapping the burial geographies of migrants. Whereas these two approaches have often focused on the deaths of undocumented migrants, they lead me to propose a third cartographic impulse inspired by the work of scholars and artists on how migrant mourners experience the death of a loved one from afar.

1.1.1 The cartographies of migrant deaths during their journeys

In the last years of the twentieth century, Karl Eschbach, Karl Hagan, Jacqueline Rodriguez, Nestor Hernández-León and Ruben Bailey (1999) published one of the most influential studies about death during migratory journeys. They consolidated a plethora of databases from Mexico's and the United States's municipalities to map the deaths of 1600 undocumented migrants across the border between these two countries between 1993 and 1997. They produced a map that showed that nearly one-half of the recorded deaths were by drowning while trying to cross the Rio Bravo (i.e., Rio Grande). They also demonstrated that the number of deaths increased throughout this period, and this was explained—at least partially—by the militarization of the border which pushed migrants to take more dangerous and precarious crossing paths. The authors recognized that their data seriously underrepresented the number of death since authorities in the United States did not record missing migrants in their own databases (Eschbach et al., 1999).

Years later, Jeremy Slack, Daniel Martínez, Elizabeth Alison Lee, and Scott Whiteford (Slack et al., 2016) followed upon Eschbach's study by mapping data from surveys and interviews made in Mexico to assess the rise of migrants's deaths from 1990 to 2014 due to violence generated by militarization policies at the Mexico-United States border. Their study revealed that some locations were more dangerous to cross than others, mostly because of the local policies. On the one hand, some border municipalities increased militarization and policing, which led to a higher level of abuse and violence against migrants (e.g., Tucson, Arizona). On the other hand, local authorities decided not to provide assistance to undocumented crossers, isolating them during their life-threatening trips through rivers and deserts (e.g., South of Texas). Slack, Martínez, Lee, and Whiteford (2016) argued that the border should not be mapped as a homogeneous line but

rather as a series of regions where the dangerousness for undocumented crossers varies depending on municipal controls.

To address and re-think the non-linearity of border crossing, Meghan Kelly (2016) developed an alternative cartographic method based on interviews she did with two Syrian exiles. Kelly selected six passages from the interviews that revealed the storytellers' experiences crossing the borders between Syria and Iraq, Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan. Then, she asked fifty mapmakers in the United States to create mapping sketches of those passages by using colored pens. Lastly, Kelly created a composite representation of the Syrian border by retracing each sketch with ink and paper (Figure 1). This collaborative map compiled and designed by Megan Kelly (2016) displays the heterogeneous composition of national borders as experienced by exiles and undocumented migrants. It challenges the assumption conveyed by dotted lines on maps that borders are uniform and permeable, while it reveals the inherent subjectivity of any cartographic design through this collage of multiple cartographic interpretations of human experiences.

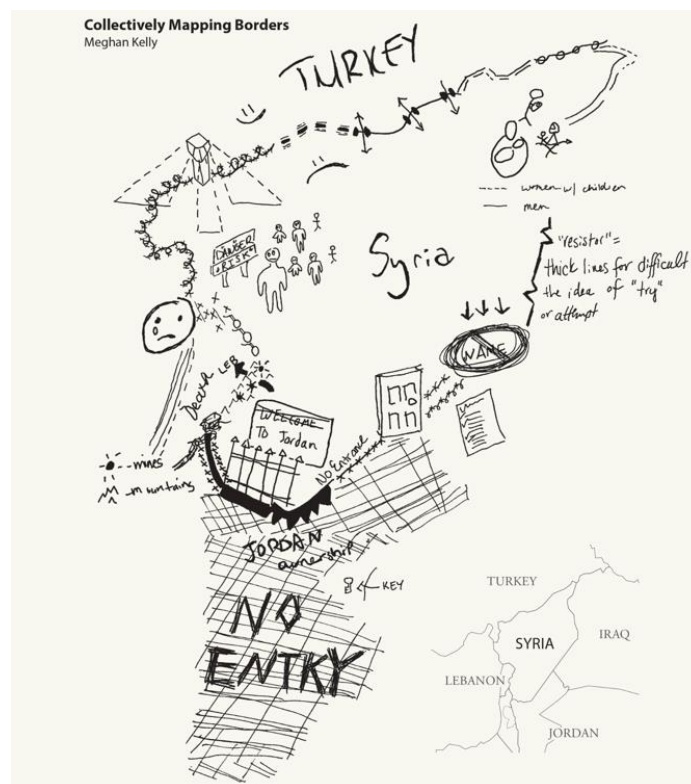


Figure 1. Collaborative map of the interpretation of the Syrian border based on two interviews of Syrian exiles compiled and designed by Megan Kelly (Source: Kelly 2016)

In the first decade of the twentieth-first century, non-governmental organizations and activists started collecting and publishing open records on their websites concerning the death of migrants during their journeys³—particularly crossing the Mediterranean Sea (Lo Presti, 2019). Using these databases, Filippo Furri, Maël Galison, and Nicolas Lambert (Furri et al., 2017) from the

³ See, for example, <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/downloads>, <https://www.gvs-samaritans.org/maps--reports.html>, and <https://www.themigrantsfiles.com>

Migreurop network have created two maps representing the death of migrants. “La butte rouge migratoire” (i.e., ‘the migratory red mound’) mapped the location of migrants’s deaths during their journeys through different parts of Africa, the Mediterranean, and Europe between 1993 and 2016 using crimson mountains, whose height represents the number of deaths and disappearances in each region. The title of this map captures the very high peak of death and disappearance around Lampedusa, Sicily, and Malta (Figure 2).

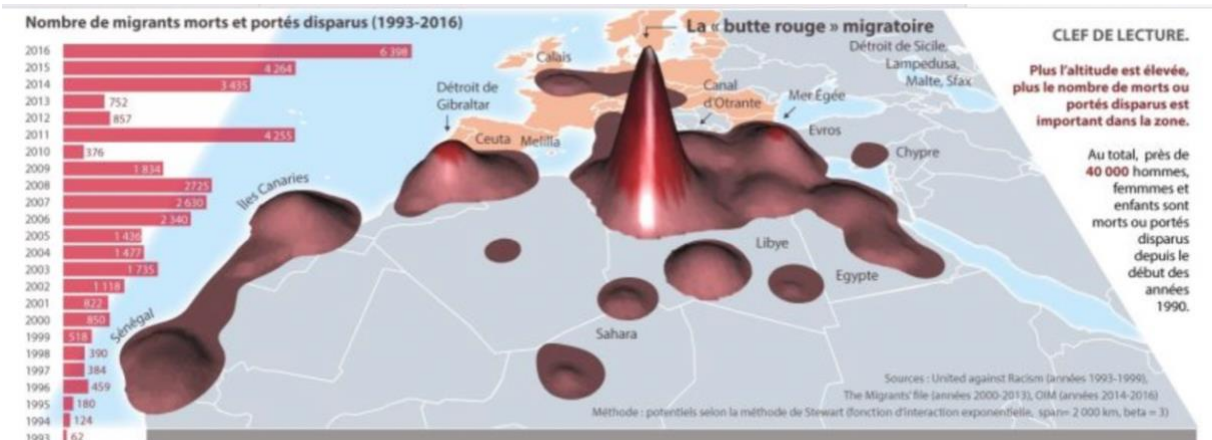


Figure 2. the map designed by Filippo Furri, Maël Galison, and Nicolas Lambert uses the height of crimson mountains to represent the number of deaths of migrants during their journey through different areas of the Mediterranean, Europe, and Africa (Source: Furri, Galison, and Lambert 2017).

The second map produced by Furri, Galison, and Lambert focuses on that particular area. They located the alarming number of migrant shipwrecks that occurred in this section of the sea between 2013 and 2016 based on databases produced by activists. In parallel, geographer, cartographer, and artist Levi Westerveld (2017) mapped over 3000 wreckages in the Mediterranean that ended with migrant deaths between 2005 and 2015 (Figure 3). Westerveld used the location information from data produced by activists to pinpoint each victim’s casualty as an asymmetrical red figure. By doing so, he aimed to stress the individuality of each deceased. Then, in his base map, he emphasized the destination countries’ coastlines to better represent what the travelers expected to see on the horizon (Westerveld, 2017). Levi Westerveld’s map presents a thoughtful blend of quantitative data with personal experiences. By doing so, he conveys a more embodied sense of these tragedies.

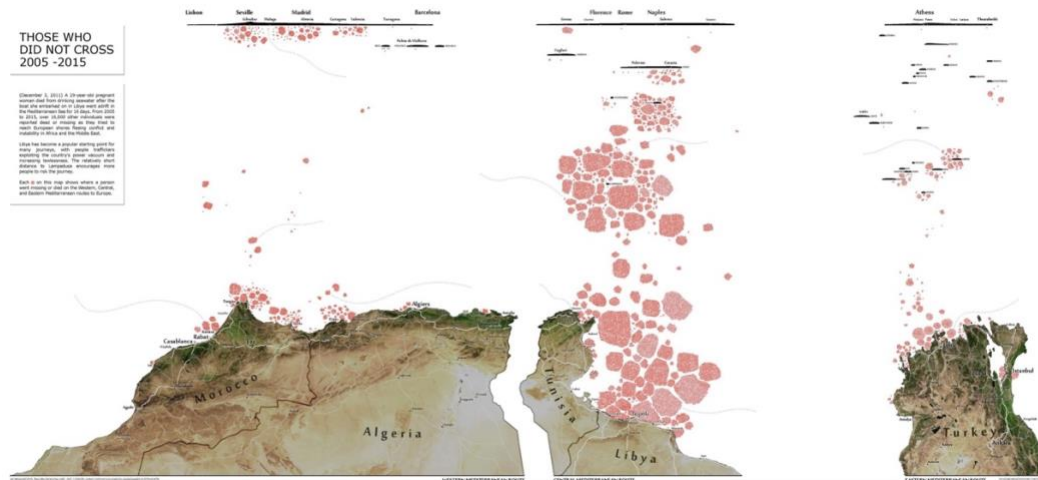


Figure 3. The map elaborated by Levi Westerveld shows where migrants went missing or died during their crossing of the Mediterranean Sea between 2015 and 2015. The map only depicted the European coastlines to represent what the migrants expected to see in the horizon. (Source:Levi Westerveld 2016)

In the United States, The Humane Borders Association, in a partnership with the Pima County Office of the Medical Examiner, produced an open geographic information system (GIS) to query data of over 3600 migrants who died crossing the Arizona desert (Figure 4). The “Custom Map of Migrant Mortality” gives an online interactive access to this database as well as some visibility to this major issue. However, after exploring this geospatial database in-depth, I noticed that it does not include police or military killings. Thus, this database neglects a significant cause of migrant deaths in the border of the United States and Mexico (see De Leon, 2015). Tamara Last and Tomas Spijkerboer (2014) have studied the variation among databases—elaborated by NGOs, governments, and academics—that recorded the number of migrants who died during their trips across the Mediterranean Sea between 1990 and 2013. Their study demonstrated a lack of a systematic and standardized ways of reporting these deaths (Last and Spijkerboer, 2014). Tamara Last developed her own database named ‘Deaths at the borders of Southern Europe’⁴. She produced a comprehensive sampling method that merged data from death certificates, cemeteries, and coastal guard records to trace the deaths and repatriation processes in Italy, Malta, Spain, Gibraltar, and Greece. Although the number and the quality of these databases have improved in recent years, a much more significant effort is needed from local and national governments to provide information in other areas of the world where migrants’ deaths have increased, such as the Caribbean, Oceania, and the Horn of Africa, without a real improvement of the reporting mechanisms.

⁴ This open database can be consulted on: <http://www.borderdeaths.org>

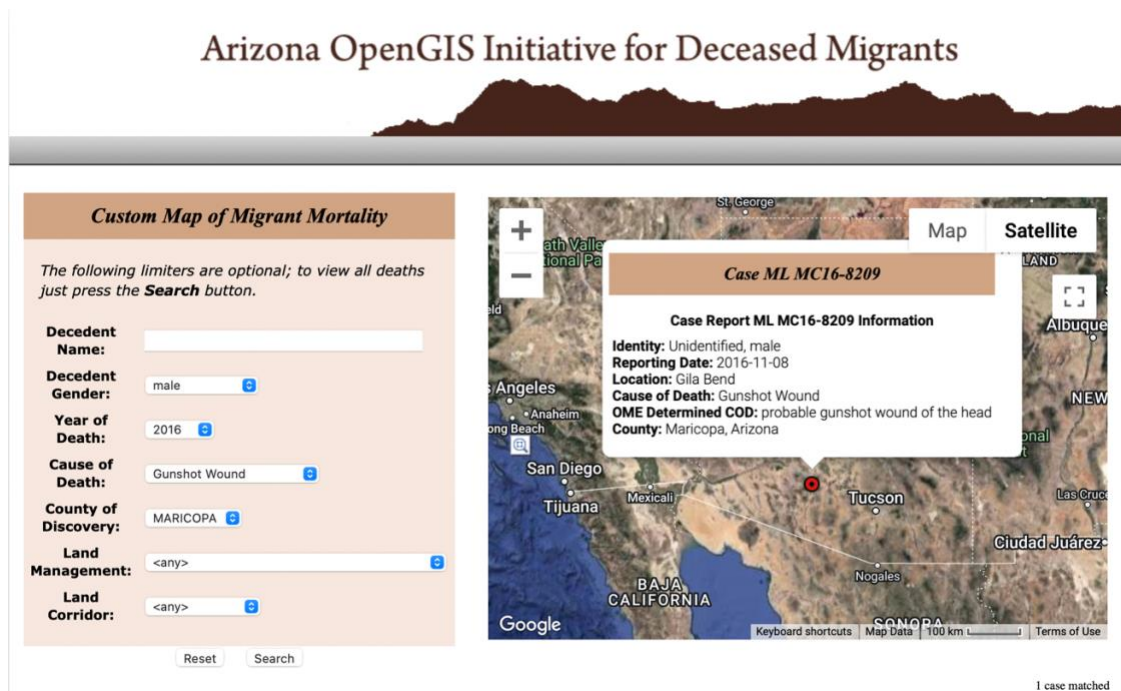


Figure 4. A screenshot of the Arizona OpenGIS initiative after a spatial query showing the report information of an unidentified migrant killed by a gunshot in Maricopa, Arizona (Source: <https://humaneborders.info/app/map.asp>)

1.1.2 Mapping migrants' burial

The second main body of work related to the cartography of death in the context of migration refers to the mapping of migrant's burials. In 1986, Graham D. Rowles and Malcolm L. Comeaux mapped the place of death and place of burial of individuals who died in Arizona in 1983 (Rowles and Comeaux, 1986). They analyzed 23,210 death certificates compiled by the Arizona Department of Vital Statistics. Whereas their map only depicts postmortem migration within the United States of America, it illustrates that death is not the end of human mobility since mourners transport the mortal remains of their deceased to bury them in a significant place. Similarly, in 2012, Swedish geographer Roger Marjavaara (2012) also produced graphs and maps concerning the postmortem migration of 16,360 deceased individuals within Sweden. For this study, Marjavaara gathered and charted data retrieved from The Church of Sweden's archives, containing information on the locations where the deceased perished and where they were buried. Marjavaara's study showed that postmortem migration within Sweden is not negligible as 22.4% of individuals from his sample died in a different municipality than the one in which they were buried (Marjavaara, 2012). Not surprisingly, Marjavaara's maps revealed a considerable flow of postmortem migration from urban to rural areas. He argued that these posthumous trips implied the everlasting spatial attachment and a final return to the place of origin for those who moved to the cities when they were alive.

Carolina Kobelinsky and Filippo Furri (2020) from the Migreurop Network created two maps (Figure 5) concerning death in the Mediterranean. The first map charts the location of eleven cemeteries in Sicily where the Italian authorities buried the corpses of unidentifiable migrants. Unlike living migrants, the Italian government do not track deceased bodies systematically (Kobelinsky and Furri, 2020). Therefore, it is almost impossible for the families to find and

reunite with their deceased loved ones. In the same context, Furri and Kobelinsky's second map charts the local cemetery in Catania, Sicily. This map highlights a plot within the cemetery where several migrant corpses have been buried without proper identification. The authors explained that the authorities identified the migrants' graves with sticks and rocks, items that do not include the names of the deceased. Kobelinsky and Furri (2020) argued that by neglecting repatriation or proper identification of corpses, local and federal governments have made invisible the lives of these migrants, the diverse causes of their deaths, and have stolen from their families the right of claiming their bodies⁵.

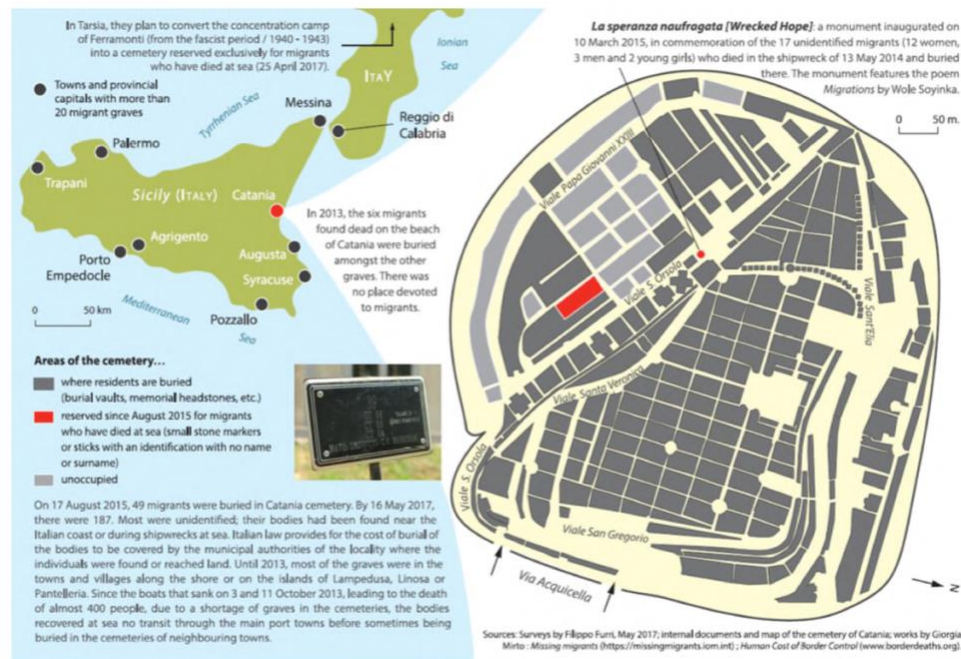


Figure 5. Two maps charting the burial locations of migrants on Sicily, Italy. On the left, the cemeteries in the island that hosted the remains of more than twenty migrants. On the right, the plan of the Catania's cemetery, which highlights the plot where the authorities accommodate the bodies of undocumented migrants (Source: Furri and Kobelinsky 2020).

1.1.3 Mapping (or the lack thereof) grief and loss in the context of migration

Scholars, including geographers, have also been interested more recently in studying the spatial emotions, memories, and practices of those individuals who lost a loved one while living in diaspora. In that sense, they follow the paths opened by poets, writers, and filmmakers who left their homes in Latin America, Africa, and the Caribbean in the second half of the twentieth century due to violence and political persecution and who produced arts to express and share their experiences (Hazelton, 1998; Kaminsky, 1999; Boucher et al., 2016; Bishop, 2016a). While

⁵ In 2013, former Italian Prime Minister Enrico Letta offered Italian citizenship to 627 migrants who died on two shipwrecks off the coast of Lampedusa so that they could be buried adequately in Italian cemeteries. However, the media and activists criticized this political act since the Italian government still persecuted and arrested the shipwrecks's survivors. In the end, Enrico Letta did not grant posthumous citizenship to the deceased (see Rygiel, 2016).

living in exile, these authors reflected on the significance of dying away from home, and the meaning of losing a loved one while living in diaspora. By doing so, they intimately portrayed in their artworks some neglected events concerning the experiences of death and migration, such as the projection of a future death in diaspora and the wish to be buried in one's home country (Monge, 1921); the predicament of not being able to travel back home to attend to the funeral of a relative (Urbina, 1992); the sense of belonging evoked by burial in another country (García Márquez, 1967); the shock of receiving a call announcing the death of a relative while living in exile (Laferriere, 2011), and the commitment of preserving the memories of friends who died away from their homelands (Benedetti, 1982). These oeuvres became inspirations and resources for reflecting and studying the multiple dimensions of grief and loss in the context of migration (see Rachédi, 2010; Boucher et al., 2016). In the early years of the twenty-first century, scholars co-produced in-depth interviews, focus groups, and life stories with migrant mourners. These personal accounts are highly subjective, which is also their strength (Lindón, 2011; High, 2014). Indeed, through controlling what they want to say and how to say it, migrants could communicate their thoughts and interpretations about what happened to them, and their dead loved ones. These methods, then, brought a different angle to the research on death in the context of migration, where narrative took centre stage (Rachédi and Kobelinsky, 2018).

Cartographers and artists have deployed maps to represent narratives, emotions, and memories associated with places (see Caquard, 2013; Knowles et al. 2015; Caquard and Griffin, 2018). Although maps might have not been used to chart stories concerning grief and loss in the context of migration, two scholars have opened the path to start approaching these posthumous experiences. Literary scholar, Karen Bishop (2016b) argued that exiles⁶ move differently in space than the rest of the world due to the different cultural, economic, and political forces they must deal with. She suggested using 'deep mapping' to reveal these unequal power geometries. Bishop explained that deep mapping, as a practice, mobilizes a plethora of 'formalist' and 'non-formalist' cartographic methodologies to analyze places in-depth. By doing so, deep maps, could reveal these alternative 'geographies of exile' that are often buried in mainstream maps. To illustrate this argument, Bishop (2016a) edited a book where academics analyzed multiple mapping methods, such as historical maps, textile cartographies, and drones' images that convey diverse scales and meanings of living in exile. Nonetheless, whereas these scholars made a commendable examination of these different mapping practices and emphasized the importance of mobilizing diverse mapping practices and methods to study and represent the complexity of the exilic experience, they did not provide concrete examples of deep maps or deep mapping methods to actively map in-depth the geographies of exile.

Social and cultural geographer Avril Maddrell introduced deep mapping⁶ as a conceptual approach to analyzing and navigating grief and loss's personal narratives. She explains that these

⁶ Karen E. Bishop employed the term 'exile' in a very inclusive way: "exile includes, yes, those who are still formally banished from their homes, but also the internal exile, the refugee, the asylum/seeker, the diasporic subject, the deterritorialized, the reterritorialized, the economic migrant, the forcibly disappeared, the indefinitely detained, the stateless person, the expatriate, the nomad, and in many ways, also the transnational subject who, if not forced from home, still lives always at a remove from home" (Bishop, 2016a, 2). Yet, I agree with the academics that consider exile a specific form of forced migration caused by political pressure and violence (see Said, 2000; Bolzman, 2012).

posthumous experiences are hosted in three spatial dimensions: material, embodied-psychological, and virtual geographies (Maddrell, 2016). Maddrell's deep mapping approach has a flexible and creative nature, where spaces—as varied as bedrooms, buildings, cities, websites, or even heaven—can coexist in the same spatial representations. Further, Maddrell's deep maps are temporally fluid since the spatial intensity of grief and loss associated with each personal narrative may increase, decrease, or remain the same. Although Maddrell (2016) produced 'mapping snapshots' of two case studies to illustrate her deep mapping perspective (Figure 6 and 7), the influence of her work has been more at the theoretical and conceptual level with the articulation of the necessity of exploring new forms of deep maps to represent and study grief and loss. But what is deep mapping exactly?

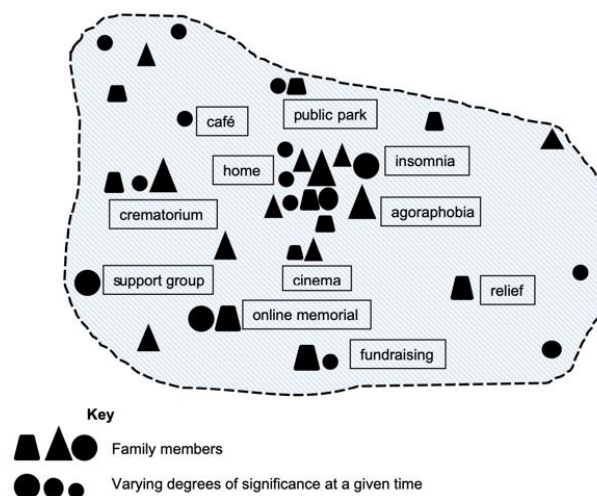


Figure 6. Hypothetical map of the different geographies of grief and loss concerning a family that lost a beloved person (Source: Maddrell 2016)

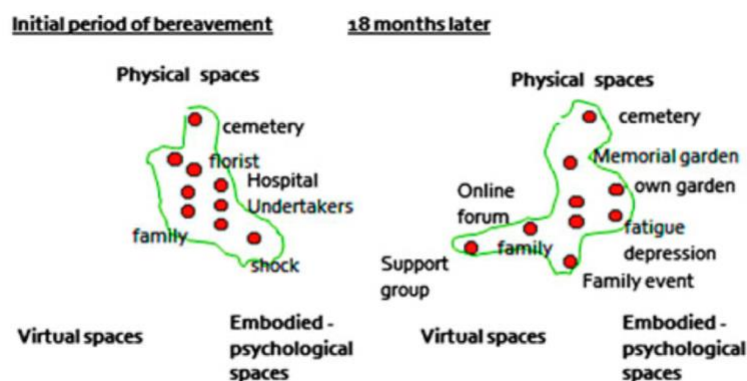


Figure 7. Map of the evolving geographies of grief and loss based on an interview with a bereaved woman (Source: Maddrell 2016)

1.2 Deep Mapping

Deep mapping did not start within the disciplines of cartography or geography. Writer and historian William Least Heat-Moon (1991) coined this term in his book ‘PrairieEarth (a deep map)’. With this manuscript, Heat-Moon aimed to unveil the invisible richness of Chase County in Kansas, United States. To achieve this goal, he employed a survey map of this region, and he divided it into twelve rectangular sections. Then, he researched and wrote stories about each partition. By digging deeper into these narratives, Heat-Moon helped to change the outsiders’ conception of Chase Country. Whereas the region was seen as “a place barren, desolate, monotonous, a land of more nothing than almost any other place you name” (Heat-Moon, 1991, 10), the book depicts it as an almost mythical place. Although Heat-Moon, with this exercise, started to convey deep mapping as an anthropological process (Roberts, 2016). The author did not create new cartographies, but he mobilized a paper map alongside personal narratives, folklore, and archival research to find the richness of the place. Although Heat-Moon’s project is considered more as a reference than a cartographic practice (Bodenhamer et al., 2015; 2021; Roberts, 2015; Wood, 2015;), it has acutely influenced the deep mapping movement.

In a similar vein as Heat-Moon, Kent C. Ryden published his book “Mapping the invisible landscape” (Ryden, 1993) in which he suggested going deep into places to find their meaning. Ryden’s approach was influenced by cultural geography. He argued that traditional maps are too simple to show the emotional dimensions of space; therefore, text is the only method to achieve any in-depth spatial analysis (Ryden, 1993). He suggested that cartography is only capable to depict the visible landscape, such as valleys, cities, mountains, roads, and rivers, and its quantifiable invisible features such as air pollution, noise, and water quality. However, Ryden (1993) claimed that there are also hidden landscapes superimposed upon the geographical surface that conventional maps fail to represent. Meaning, memory, significance, and emotion compose these invisible layers. Following Ryden’s approach, other academics have employed text to ‘deep map’ the complexity of regions (see Maher, 2014) or mobilities (see Weiser, 2016).

Deep mapping has also inspired other forms of spatial expressions. In the early years of the twenty-first century, the theatre troupe ‘Brith Gof’ employed archeology and theatre to interact with intimate spaces. This company argued that two dimensions compose places: the host and the ghost. The host refers to the physical dimensions of places, whereas the ghost alludes to the practices and memories. Therefore, Brith Gof conceived places as a palimpsest formed by the interaction of physical features of spaces with the memories hosted by them. At first, they start revealing the different layers of such palimpsests by researching past events and recreating them through site-based performances. However, they conceived their own approach of deep mapping to go in-depth into each location. They began developing deep mapping as a practice that combines storytelling, different media, and the re-enactment of events through performances (Shanks, 2012). Clifford McLucas—a member of the troupe—envisioned deep mapping as actual cartographic representations, which need to fulfill three requirements: (1) graphic representations; (2) time-based components (e.g., film, music, performance); and (3) opened and never finished databases or archival systems (Biggs, 2010). He also imagined deep mapping as a multidisciplinary and collaborative practice that might include artists, scholars, along with professional and amateur cartographers. McLucas died before attempting to create a deep map, but his ideas have inspired the deep mapping movement.

Historian David Bodenhamer and other digital humanists who have explored and developed the concept of deep mapping have been inspired by Clifford McLucas's ideas (Bodenhamer et al., 2015; Bodenhamer et al., 2021). They also agreed with Ryden's idea that places are built by both intangible and material layers. However, they suggested studying and depicting them by mobilizing different cartographic resources. On the one hand, cartographic tools, such as geographic information systems, the geoweb, and remote sensing, could represent the measurable features of landscapes. On the other hand, arts, multimedia, and narrative resources (e.g., spoken word or podcasts) may depict their invisible and unmeasurable qualities. This approach has inspired relevant deep mapping works, such as the project 'HyperCities' led by Todd Presner (Presner et al., 2014). This project combined multimedia resources, GIS, and the geoweb to map and navigate different historical and contemporary events that occurred in global cities worldwide, such as the Arab Spring in Cairo, the Fukushima nuclear power disaster, and the 2009 election protests in Tehran.

Other scholars have taken a critical stand towards deep maps as a digital artifact based on GIS technologies. Geographer Denis Wood (2015) argued that deep mapping, as a practice, often delivers less than it promises—of developing maps that deeply engage with the meaning of places. For Wood, a big part of the problem is that cartographers drop data into their software without performing fieldwork or engaging with the source material. The representational model of some deep mapping projects based on GIS's traditional cartographic projections has been criticized by Anne Kelly Knowles, Levi Westerveld, and Laura Strom (2015). They argued that these models "hinder our ability to perceive and express how people experience place and space" (Knowles et al., 2015, 239). Wood (2010) and Knowles, Westerveld, and Strom (2015) created their own cartographic approaches to map places in-depth. Their methods do not follow conventional mapping parameters and do not require professional cartographic software. Instead, they are interpretative and creative practices that encourage practitioners to go beyond preconceived and traditional agreements and models to engage with art and storytelling resources.

Wood (2010) published an atlas on the work he did with his students back in the early 1980's in Boylan Heights in Raleigh, North Carolina. At that time, they surveyed the neighbourhood and used conventional and artistic maps to narrate what they saw and experienced. Their maps had a plethora of topics such as barking dogs, radio waves, newspaper delivery routes, streetlights, and Jack-o'-lanterns that together provided a sense of the everyday life of the neighborhood. Anne Kelly Knowles, Levi Westerveld, and Laura Strom (2015) proposed the term 'inductive visualization'⁷ as a creative and exploratory mapping practice to engage in-depth with stories as well as the different places and temporalities that constituted them. Along with students at Middlebury College, they employed this method to map and reflect on the more personal geographies embedded within testimonies of Jewish survivors of the Holocaust. In both cases, they propose to look at the meaning of place from a visual perspective.

To synthesize, I have identified three ways of approaching deep mapping: (1) through writing and performance, as done by William Least Heat-Moon (1991), Kent Ryden (1993), and the

⁷ I explain inductive visualization in more detail in the chapter 3 of this thesis.

Brith Goff troupe (Biggs, 2010; Shanks, 2012); (2) through geographical information sciences and multimedia as proposed by David J. Bodenhamer, John Carrigan, Trevor Harris from the humanities (et Bodenhamer al., 2015; 2021); and (3) through creative practices and new forms of data visualization as done Denis Wood (2010; 2015; 2021) and Anne Kelly Knowles, Levi Westerveld, and Laura Strom (2015). These three deep mapping impulses have been mobilized and combined to map a range of places and spatial phenomena, including grief and loss in the context of migration (Maddrell 2016). In this thesis, I propose to further explore the potential of deep mapping to study the postmortem geographies of migration and, by doing so, complement the existing mapping impulses dedicated to this topic.

1.3 The structure of the thesis

At the start of this mapping endeavour, I realized that mapping the geographies of grief and loss in the context of migration is not an easy task. On the one hand, there is very little data available on this issue. For instance, there is no data related to the repatriation of bodies on the international scale in censuses or other databases (Purnell, 2020). On the other hand, the information linked to intimate experiences, such as funerals and ceremonies, personal feelings and emotions, and the mobilization of social networks, is too personal to be tracked easily and collected systematically. Therefore, I realized that one appropriate proxy to map these issues might be stories and memories shared by the griever (see Rachédi and Halsouet, 2017). Mapping these personal narratives requires a particular set of methods and theories (Caquard, 2013; Caquard et al., 2019). I addressed this challenge during my doctoral studies by developing a deep mapping methodology, which consists of three different mapping approaches as proposed by Karen Bishop (2016b). Each of the three following chapters of this thesis present and discuss one of these approaches. They all have been either published as independent academic manuscripts (i.e., Chapter 2), accepted for publication (i.e., Chapter 3) or submitted for publication (i.e., Chapter 4). I envisioned these three mapping approaches, as a whole, that has the potential to reveal the different geographies of grief and loss within migrant experiences.

1.3.1 Chapter 2: (Deep) mapping death in the context of migration

The first mapping approach is a product of a collaboration between two research groups: the Morts en Contexte de Migration Team (MECMI), hosted by the School of Social Work at the University of Quebec in Montreal in partnership with the Laboratoire d'ethnologie et de sociologie comparative (LESC) from France, and the Geomedia Lab hosted by Concordia University (Montreal). This cartographic venture aimed to map two transnational posthumous events: the repatriation of the migrant's corpses and the mobilization of social networks after the death of a migrant. To achieve these objectives, Professor Lilyane Rachédi and I selected six life stories from a corpus of thirty-one in-depth interviews that MECMI co-produced with bereaved migrants. We chose these stories due to their representativeness and geographic richness (Table 1).

Table 1. Table with the names of the six grievors interviewed by MECMI and their deceased's loved ones. It also shows the relationship between them, and the origin of the storytellers.

Storyteller	Deceased	Relationship	Storyteller's country of Origin
Rabia	Rahim	Husband	Afghanistan
Lenka	Dragomir	Husband	Serbia
Paul	Eric	Friend	Senegal
Elisa	Jenny	Friend	Ecuador
Lyes	the storyteller did not mention the deceased's name during the interview	Wife and son	Algeria
Alicia	the storyteller did not mention the deceased's name during the interview	Husband	Congo

Then, I mapped stories to study their geographies in depth (see Caquard et al. 2019). This chapter discusses the transnational geographies emerging from the stories of Rabia, Lenka, and Paul. The maps produced in chapter 2 allowed me to study the affective links between the country of origin and the host country stressed by the posthumous repatriation of the body and the appearance of transnational and local networks that assisted migrant grievors economically and emotionally. It also highlights some of the limits of Euclidean cartography to map important places such as home, my room, or the shoes of the deceased in the hallway. To map these intimate and not geo-locatable locations, I had to mobilize alternative mapping approaches, which I did in the following chapter.

1.3.2 Chapter 3: Mapping intimate geographies of grief and loss

In this third chapter, I mobilized two exploratory and alternative cartographic impulses—Inductive Visualization (Knowles et al., 2015; Westerveld and Knowles, 2018) and sensibility mapping (Olmedo, 2015)—to chart places that could not be associated with Euclidean coordinates but that are important to reveal the emotional dimensions described by the storytellers. During this venture, I had the support of Élise Olmedo, a postdoctoral fellow at the Geomedia Lab in Concordia University (Montreal), whose research has been on sensibility mapping throughout her graduate studies (see Olmedo, 2015). Over several months, she guided me through my sensibility mapping practice. She also commented on the multiple iterations of the two maps I produced during this process. The first depicted the intimate geographies of grief and loss of Elisa, a migrant who lost her friend Jenny while she was living in Quebec. The second map charted a pivotal chapter in Paul's interview: the moment his friend Eric died at his home. I chose to map this episode since Paul focused on narrating this painful event during his interview. The process of producing both cartographies allowed me to discover spatial dimensions within the stories that I could not have noticed by simply reading the transcript or listening to the interview.

1.3.3 Chapter 4: Mapping ofrenda: Mapping as mourning in the context of migration

The principal research question I wanted to address in this last chapter was: how do the migrants remember and grieve for their deceased loved ones while living far from their home countries?

To do so, my original plan was to organize a series of collaborative cartography workshops where migrant mourners would have been invited to share memories of deceased relatives and friends through the creation of a collective map of remembrance. I was not able to organize these activities because of the COVID-19 pandemic, so I conducted instead two series of mapping interviews with two women from Latin America who lost someone close while living in Quebec (Table 2).

Table 2. Table with the names of the two women I interviewed to co-create memorial maps. It also includes the name of the deceased, the relationship between them, and the storytellers' countries of origin.

Storyteller	Deceased	Relationship	Storyteller's country of Origin
Amelia	José Rogelio	Father	Colombia
Alice	Several relatives and friends	Relatives and friends	Italy and Mexico

Since I shared a similar cultural background with the storytellers, we mapped together an 'ofrenda'—an altar that Mexicans put inside their homes to remember their loved ones. In this last cartographic project, I propose the concept of mapping-ofrenda: a collaborative cartographic process that provide a framework and support for remembering as well as for healing. Mapping-ofrenda also explores the possibility of grieving from afar when mourners reside far from their families and close friends. This last project focuses on the importance of posthumous mapping practices to reconnect with past experiences as well as with other grievers.

1.3.4 Chapter 5: Conclusion

In the final chapter of this thesis, I examine my project as part of the deep mapping movement. I conclude that the result is not so much a deep mapping venture as envisioned by spatial humanists, such as David J. Bodenhamer (2015). It is rather a personal journey to discover diverse cartographic expressions capable of engaging with the geographies of those migrants who have suffered the death of a loved one in Quebec. This personal journey started with the title of my thesis, which is based on an iconic song from my home country, Mexico: "if I die far from you" (Monge, 1929). The song narrates the story of a migrant who asks his loved ones to repatriate his remains back to Mexico in case he dies in another country. The song highlights different issues in my research topic, such as the projection of death, a posthumous return home, and the emotional promises that migrants must keep after the deceased of a loved one. It also emphasizes folklore's importance in studying intimate and personal geographies. My personal mapping journey finishes with what Karen Bishop (2015) called 'a cartographic necessity of exile' from my own experience as a son of a Puerto Rican migrant who lost her mother while living in a migratory context in Mexico. I explain how this project, without noticing it at first, was influenced by my mother's and my own grieving. Finally, I reflect on how this cartographic venture and through this reflection, contribute to some extent to both expanding the concept and the practice of deep mapping, and bringing some attention to the potential of mapping intimate postmortem geographies for grieving and remembering those who die far from us.

Chapter 2: (Deep) Mapping postmortem geographies in the context of migration⁸

2.1 Abstract

What happens to migrants when they die? Inspired by the emerging academic literature concerning death in the context of migration and Avril Madrell's (2016) deep mapping framework to study the geographies of remembrance, grief, and mourning, I mapped the postmortem geographies of three migrants who lived and died in Quebec. This mapping process traced posthumous geographies through the stories told by partners and friends of the deceased. While these geographies can cover multiple components of death, such as memories of the deceased and artifacts associated with them, in this project, I focus on the mobilities of the bodies and the geography of the social networks triggered by death. Mapping the bodies' transnational mobilities reveals both the links that are developed over time between the country of origin and the host country, and the journeys that bodies of migrants often take before reaching their final destination(s). Mapping the social networks that emerge after death in the context of migration reveals both their global facets and their local structure, which are ephemeral and extremely difficult to locate spatially. By employing maps and stories, this chapter provides insights about the complex dimensions of these postmortem mobilities. Further, it calls for alternative sources of information and forms of spatial expressions to continue the study of the geographies of death in the context of migration.

⁸ A version of Chapter 2 has been published: Alavez J., Rachedi, L., and Caquard S. (2021) (Deep) Mapping postmortem geographies in the context of migration. *From the European South*. Spring 2021 (No 8). https://www.fesjournal.eu/numeri/maps-mappings-and-cartographic-imaginings/#deep-mapping-postmortem-geographies-in-the-context-of-migration_416

2.2 Introduction

Death in the context of migration is a growing issue that has sustained attention in both the media and academia. However, death also happens once migrants have reached their destination and have settled down. They have not died while crossing seas, deserts, or borders, but by accident, disease, homicide, or old age (Lestage, 2008; Hunter and Soom Ammann, 2017). For those migrants, death is not the end of their migratory story; it is another chapter (Marjavaara, 2012). Their bodies may remain where they perished or travel long distances to return to their home country, city, or village (Hunter, 2016). Their families and friends' networks might be mobilized to help with emotional support, religious ceremonies, financial expenses, and the administrative burden of repatriation and burial (Balkan, 2016; Le Gall, 2017). Memories of the deceased might travel through the people who carried them and hold them, as well as through the photographs and artifacts associated with them (Rachédi and Halsouet, 2017). These virtual, emotional, and physical geographies and mobilities of bodies, artifacts, and memories often overlap in time and space, making them a complex spatial phenomenon to research (Le Gall and Rachédi 2019). Based on a conceptual framework developed by Avril Madrell (2016) to study the physical, embodied-psychological, and virtual spatial dimensions associated with remembrance, grief, and mourning, I propose a cartographic approach to study these posthumous geographies in the migratory context.

This mapping endeavour is the first step of a partnership between researchers in social work and cartography towards a deep mapping project of postmortem geographies. Deep mapping is envisioned here as a process, characterized by its collaborative dimension (Warf, 2016; Presner, 2019) and the combination of conventional and alternative mapping strategies (Bodenhamer, 2015; Bishop, 2016b). These produce spatial expressions dedicated to representing multiple aspects of places. In this first step of our deep mapping project, I focus on a conventional cartographic strategy to represent postmortem migrant stories. To reach this goal, I have mapped the physical, virtual, and psychological spaces and mobilities described in three postmortem life stories told by relatives of migrants who lived and died in Quebec (Canada). By mapping the spaces and mobilities of their bodies and their social networks, this chapter aims to better understand the relevance and the limits of mobilizing formalized maps of stories to study postmortem geographies. This chapter starts by reviewing the academic literature related to death in the migratory context. Then, I discuss the methodological framework and the cartographic approach used to map and study the selected stories. Finally, I present the results of this process, highlighting the potential and limits of formalized maps to explore postmortem geographies in the context of migration.

2.3 Death in the context of migration

Studying death in the context of migration is not an easy task, given the difficulty of gathering reliable or consistent data about migrants in general and dead migrants in particular (Lestage, 2008; Mbiba, 2010; Marjavaara, 2012; Rachédi and Halsouet, 2017). Since official state agencies do not compile these data systematically, researchers have developed their own methods to collect them. Whereas certain issues around migrants' deaths—such as the repatriation of their corpses—can be tracked rather precisely using quantitative data, capturing the emotional, cultural, and social meanings of postmortem geographies is much more challenging. To study these personal and intangible geographies, researchers have based their analyses on particular

case studies, employing qualitative methods such as interviews, life stories, and multi-site ethnographies. Through these, they acknowledge the importance of personal memories and experiences for understanding the complex relationships that exist between death and migration (Hunter and Soom Amman, 2017; Rachédi and Kobelinsky, 2018). I argue that these studies revolve around four different angles: the body, memorial practices, social networks, and artifacts.

In diaspora, the burial site might be more important than the place of birth (Ho 2006). This is because the body's final destination may help to clarify issues around identity, loyalty, and belonging (Marjavaara, 2017). Even though "the literature on the geographies of the body has done little to engage with the significance of bodies once they cease to be living" (Young and Light, 2013, 136), a few studies have been interested in tracking and analyzing the burial places of migrants.

In geography, the first study related to this topic was elaborated by Graham Rowles and Malcolm Comeaux (1986). They used death certificates to study the postmortem migration of individuals who died in the state of Arizona. Their assessment found different flows concerning postmortem national migration in this state, such as the predominant postmortem mobilities from Arizona to the Great Lakes region linked to the "snowbirds" seasonal migration (Rowles and Comeaux, 1986). More recently, Beacon Mbiba (2010) examined the repatriation of Zimbabweans from the United Kingdom. He studied these migrants' preference to be buried in urban cemeteries or rural homes in Zimbabwe after having lived in diaspora. Just like Rowles and Comeaux, he collected data from local funeral parlours, but he also conducted small telephone surveys and media coverage. Roger Marjaavara (2012) proposed another method of collecting data to systematically study internal postmortem migration in Sweden. Marjaavara, who coined the term "post-mortal mobilities", gathered information from the burial registers inside Swedish churches, which he merged with micro-data on migration patterns. Then, he generated a series of plots and maps to showcase the flows and factors which "might explain the geographical patterns of post-mortal mobility in Sweden" (Marjavaara, 2012, 257). In a following study (Marjavaara, 2017), he further explored migrants's desires regarding their perspective places of burial. These various studies have emphasized the importance of migrants' bodies' posthumous mobilities and their links to homemaking and belonging processes.

Other studies have focused on the rituals and ceremonies associated with death in the context of migration. Katy Gardner (2002) examined the transnational burial rituals performed for and by Bangladeshi migrants who lived in the United Kingdom. Through a series of interviews, she highlighted the interplay between gender politics, state restrictions, and economic factors on rituals performed in the cities of London and Sylhet. Alistair Hunter (2016) used media analysis, semi-structured interviews, and archival research to reveal the power dynamics and conflicts related to the burial and memorialization practices of two case studies of Muslim and Hindu migrants in the United Kingdom. Johanna Zulueta (2016) offered another angle to the repatriation studies, funerary meanings, and burial of migrants. She interviewed older Okinawan women, mostly widows, who returned to Japan. Zalueta focused her research on the decisions concerning the imaginary of their future funerals and rituals. The study demonstrated that their lives abroad influenced their choices due to cross-cultural marriages and experiences, which created tensions with their hometowns' more traditional views (Zalueta, 2016).

The corpse's presence is not always a condition for memorialization practices in diaspora, as noted by Clara Saraiva and José Mapril (2014). These authors used a multi-sited ethnographic

approach to research the funerary practices of Bissau-Guinean migrants in Portugal. They explained that, according to their tradition, communities must conduct funerary rituals for the deceased migrants in both countries. Whereas the body's repatriation depended on economic or symbolic factors, these funeral ceremonies give the dead a final and everlasting connection within their home-country families, ancestors, and diasporic communities, demonstrating the transnational links between countries.

Social networks play a crucial role when death happens in the context of migration. Besim Can Zirh (2012) performed multi-sited ethnographic research following Alevi immigrant communities in Turkey and Europe. He studied how different institutional and family networks are mobilized to assist with funeral and repatriation practices. Furthermore, Zirh claimed that these mobilizations are part of community-making and transnational practices that need to be understood beyond the fixity of national scales, borders, and representations (Zirh, 2012). His arguments resonate with Françoise Lestage's (2008; 2009) studies of migrants' postmortem repatriations from the United States to Mexico. In her analyses, Lestage explained how the networks of families and friends might interact with the state, the private sector, and public agencies during the repatriation process, creating transnational dynamics.

Technology is also part of the networks' analysis. Josiane Le Gall and Lilyane Rachédi (2019) studied the cases of migrants who live in Quebec and could not attend funerary rituals of family members or friends in their home countries. They focused on the practices around technology, which enabled these migrants to attend their loved ones' funerals virtually. They argue that even if live streaming has revolutionized the way people connect and interact around the world, "these new methods of communication cannot compensate for physical separation, despite transnational exchanges and rituals" (Le Gall and Rachédi, 2019, 79). Giuseppe Beluschi-Fabeni (2018) echoed these claims in a similar study as he analyzed the impact of communication technologies involved in funeral rituals on the Korturare Roma community.

Lastly, some researchers have investigated the role of objects in the context of death in migration. Objects can serve as physical proxies of memories and emotions associated with the deceased (Maddrell 2013; Romanillos 2015) while inviting the living to subscribe to a duty to remember (Rachédi and Halsouet, 2017). In Montreal, Emma Harake, a Lebanese visual artist, discussed how photographs helped migrants remember their loved ones who died during their life in diaspora in Quebec (Harake, 2019). Objects might also serve as an extension of the body. Saraiva and Mapril (2014) explained how the Bissau-Guinean communities in diaspora return a suitcase with the departed's essential belongings when the family does not have the economic resources to repatriate the body. These suitcases, called *mala*, preserve the links between the countries of birth and death, allowing the community to mourn migrants in two different places simultaneously while giving the deceased a symbolic return to their home ground (Saraiva and Mapril, 2014).

Even though academic and media circles often focus on the journeys and geographies of the living migrants (Marjaavara, 2017), it is clear that their bodies, artifacts, memories, and networks are still moving in space after their death. These posthumous mobilities are still part of the migrant's experience, since "[they] represent the continuing of human mobility to a place of great significance for the individual or his or her survivors" (Marjavaara, 2012, 257).

2.4 Deep Mapping postmortem geographies in the context of migration

Deep mapping is a movement in the spatial humanities that aims to combine different sources of data and forms of spatial expressions (such as maps, drawings, texts, and videos) to knit together diverse narratives (Presner, 2019) and create different databases that help to reveal the deep meaning of places (Bodenhamer, 2015). Although the origins of deep mapping are often traced back to the publication of “Prairyerth: A Deep Map” by William Least Heat-Moon (1991), the concept of deep mapping has been greatly developed in the last decade. In particular, there has been clear emphasis on the process of making maps (Roberts, 2016) and on their storytelling potential (Harris, 2015). This perspective has led to the production of contrasting projects where stories and memories played a central role (see Wood, 2010; Presner, 2014; Naramore Maher, 2014; Mattern 2015; Cateridge, 2015; Scherf, 2015; Bishop, 2016; Kawano et al., 2016; Novković, 2019).

In the context of postmortem geographies, Avril Maddrell (2016) has proposed the mobilization of deep mapping to depict messy, shifting, and multi-layered geographies of living with loss (Maddrell, 2016). Maddrell’s deep mapping approach focuses on the interaction and overlapping of three concrete spaces associated with grief and mourning: physical, embodied-psychological, and virtual spaces. The physical and material spaces include artifacts, public memorials, and evocative landscapes. The psychological spaces are linked to feelings, emotions, memory, and psychological responses to particular locations (e.g., insomnia, sadness, and agoraphobia). The virtual spaces include online chat rooms, community and support networks, and even religious universes such as heaven, nirvana or, hell (Maddrell, 2016).

This mapping endeavour is part of the project built by the research team Death in the Context of Migration (MECMI). This team of social workers collected thirty in-depth life stories of migrants who lived and died in Quebec. The stories were narrated by family members and friends of the deceased. One of the main goals of MECMI was to reconstruct and then analyze the spatial meanings and trajectories of the deceased and their loved ones to better understand the ordeal of death in migration and to support the bereaved. Moreover, MECMI aims to raise awareness among social work practitioners about the spatial issues regarding death in the context of migration (e.g., mobilization of transnational networks, barriers to mobility to attend funerals, development of emotional and financial assistance).

Among the thirty collected stories, MECMI selected three of them to be mapped due to their representativity and geographical traits. The story of Rahim⁹, who died by accident a few months after arriving in Quebec; the story of Dragomir, who perished while visiting his home country after living in Quebec for many years; and the story of Eric, a young exile who arrived in Quebec looking for a job. They came from the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Africa, respectively. The stories of Rahim and Dragomir were narrated by their wives, Rabia and Lenka. Paul told the life story of his friend Eric.

⁹ For confidentiality reasons, the names of the participants and the deceased, places, and dates are not the real ones in this chapter. All the stories have been collected after ethical clearance was sought from the Comité institutionnel d’éthique de la recherche avec des êtres humains (CIEREN) of the University of Quebec at Montreal (UQAM)

The first phase of the mapping process consisted in identifying and cataloging the sections of each story that had spatial information (e.g., place name or movement) that could be linked to our topics of interest (e.g., body, social networks, artifacts, ceremonies) and time periods (e.g., year, month or day). I used the qualitative software MaxQDA to help us with this phase. Once the data was collected, I selected a mapping application to visualize it. Although there are now a range of online mapping applications dedicated to telling stories with maps, such as ESRI Story Maps and StorymapJS (Caquard and Dimitrovas, 2017), there are very few mapping tools designed specifically to map stories to study their geographies. Atlascine is one of these applications. It is an open-source tool designed to map the spatiotemporal structure of stories and to help identify places that are important within stories. It also focuses on the multiple connections that exist between these places such as journey and postmortem mobilities as well as less obvious ones such as phone calls between two people in two different places and memories triggered about a place from a distant location (Caquard and Fiset, 2013). Atlascine also offers the possibility to map in parallel stories (such as those of the storyteller and of the deceased) and to compare the geographies of different stories. In our project, I used Atlascine to map the postmortem life stories with a focus on the trajectory of the body before and after death, as well as the social networks that were triggered by this tragic event.

2.5 The Body

Different factors influence the final destination of a body as families must take into account their economic, social, and political contexts (see Hunter, 2016) as well as the will of the deceased and their own wishes. The stories of Rahim and Dragomir illustrate this issue. Rabia explained how her husband Rahim identified Afghanistan as the place where he wanted to be buried –his final home. Days later, after his death, Rahim’s body was repatriated to Afghanistan.

He said, “it’s your choice if you stay in Canada or if you go back to Afghanistan, or Pakistan, or anywhere... For me, the children needed to be safe. Now, all the decisions are yours. But please send my body to Afghanistan.” And I said, “yes, of course,” It was not easy for me, but it was his decision and his last wish ... (Rabia)

We split the map of Rabia and Rahim into two parts: premortem and postmortem migrations. The first part (Figure 8) synthesizes their life as children and adults in Afghanistan and their migration as a couple to Quebec. It epitomizes the diasporic journeys of many migrants, who, like them, left their home countries due to violence or economic issues. However, this map is just one half of Rahim’s migration story; the map concerning his postmortem geographies closed the loop with the repatriation of his body to Afghanistan (Figure 9). This second map illustrates a chapter “highly ignored in contemporary migration studies” (Zirh, 2012, 1760): the journey back ‘home’ of Rahim’s body, which shows that migration does not stop with death.

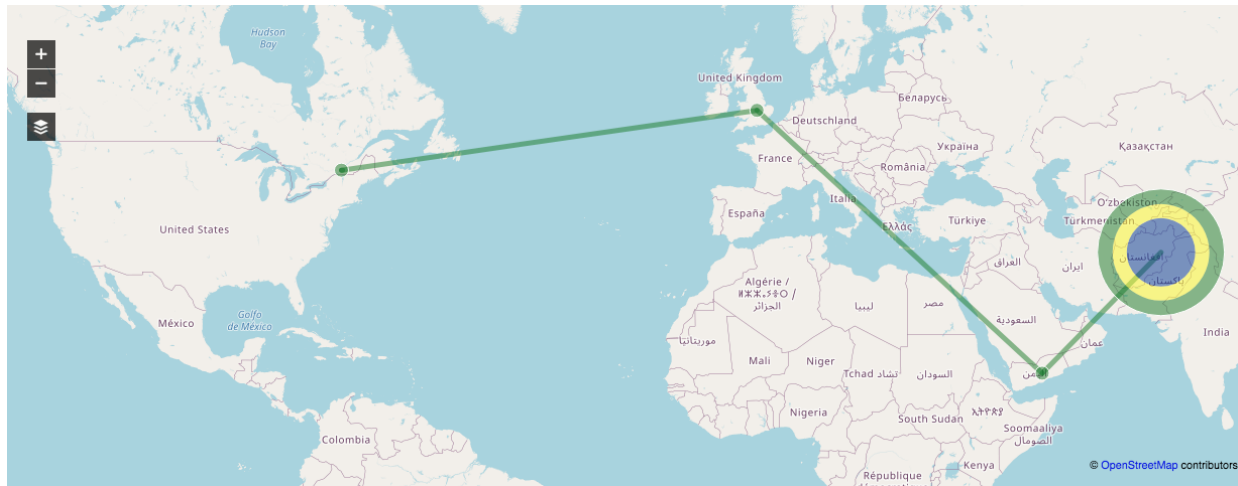


Figure 8. Rabia (yellow) and Rahim (blue) travelled as a couple (green) from Afghanistan through Yemen and the United Kingdom before arriving in Quebec (green line), where Rahim died a few days later after an accident (Author: José Alavez)

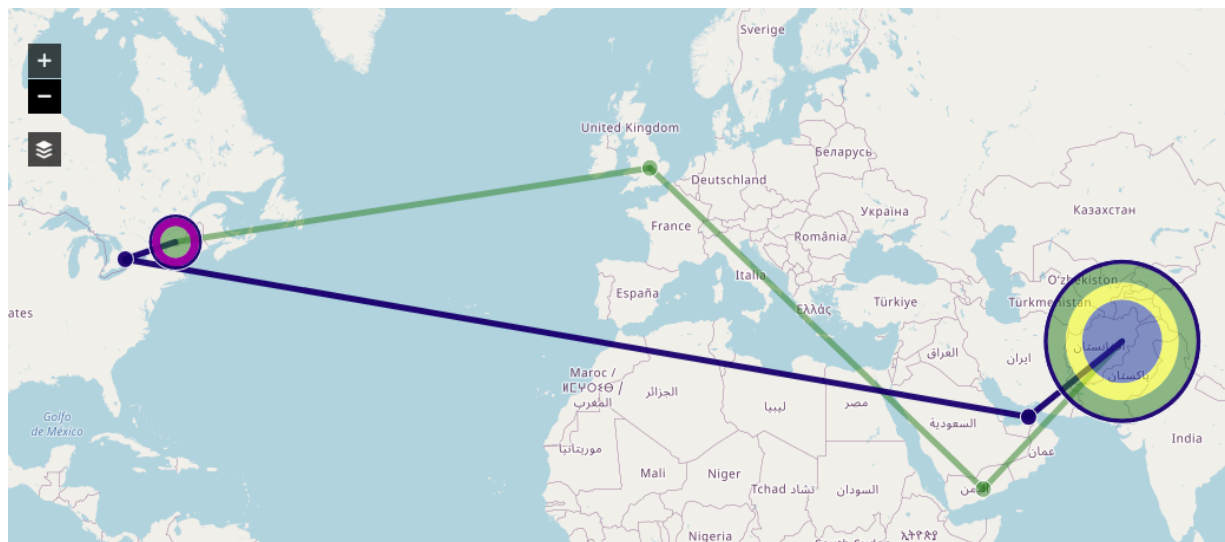


Figure 9. Few days after his death (purple), Rahim's body was repatriated to his hometown. As narrated by Rabia, the corpse transited through Toronto, Dubai, and Pakistan before arriving in Afghanistan (blue line) (Author: José Alavez).

The second story that we mapped is that of Dragomir, told by his wife Lenka. Lenka and Dragomir lived together in Quebec for many years. However, Dragomir did not die in Canada like Rahim, but of a heart attack during a visit back to his hometown in Serbia. Lenka and Rahim's life story map is minimalistic: two points and one line that grows as the couple travels back and forth between Quebec and Serbia (Figures 10 to 13). The growing lines between both places capture the idea that migrants, after their arrival to their host country, connect societies of origin and settlement (Basch, Schiller, and Szanton-Blanc, 1994). Furthermore, this connection captures the idea "that 'home' and 'abroad' are not distinct spaces of migrants' lives, but are interconnected through a multifarious web of material and affective exchanges between migrants and their home communities" (Kvietok, 2018, 60). As Saravia and Mapril (2014) mentioned, the repatriation of the body and its meanings contribute to strengthening the links between these

societies. This issue is particularly evident in the context of Dragomir and Lenka's story, since this link was strong enough to repatriate the body from the country of origin (i.e., Serbia) to their host country (i.e., Canada) in a sort of reverse repatriation process. Indeed, as recalled by Lenka:

He preferred to be buried in Serbia. But my two daughters told me that they preferred their father to be buried in Quebec because they want to visit his grave. I thought about it, and finally, I decided to respect the wishes of my daughters. (Lenka)

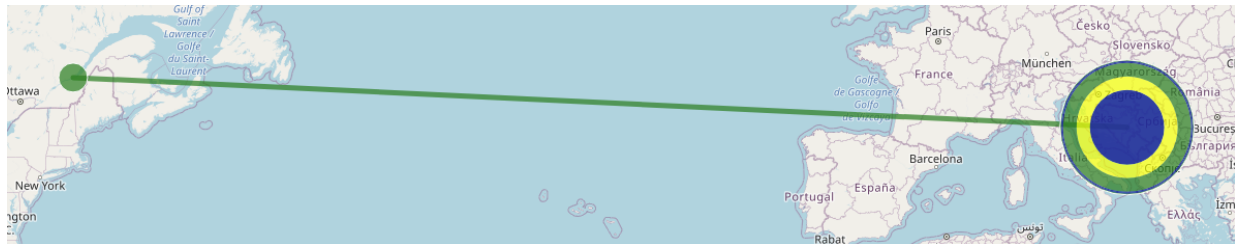


Figure 10. The symbols show where Lenka (yellow) and Dragomir (blue) lived in Serbia first as individuals, then as a couple (green) before migrating to Quebec (green line) (Author: José Alavez).



Figure 11. During their lives in Quebec (green), the couple travelled multiple times to their home country, which is materialized by the green line becoming wider every time they travelled.



Figure 12. In one of their journeys to Serbia, Dragomir suffered a heart attack (purple). Lenka (yellow), who was in Quebec at that time, travelled to Serbia after receiving the news of her husband's death (yellow line).

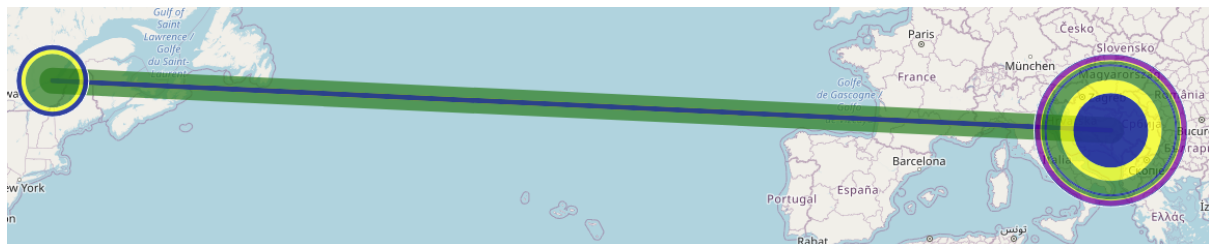


Figure 13. The body of Dragomir is repatriated to Quebec (blue line) a few days after his death.

Classic migration theories, such as the *push and pull* theories, identify economic, political, and demographic factors as the causes pushing people out of their places of origin and pulling them towards their destination places (Castles, Miller, and De Haas, 2014). While these factors might contribute to understanding some facets of the postmortem mobilities in the context of migration, the stories narrated by Rabia and Lenka showed that the sense of *home* and *belonging* were fundamental to comprehending the decisions concerning the final resting places of Rahim and Dragomir. These decisions could create spatial tensions since the sense of belonging of the family members may differ from the deceased's funeral wishes, showing that inside the stories of migration, *home* is not often anchored in just one place (Blunt, 2007). The maps reveal these tensions as the magnitude of the concentric circles illustrate the amount of time these families spent in certain places, a factor that contributed to their (lack of) spatial attachment to Quebec or to their country of origin. However, what these maps do not show is the sense of home or belonging to these places and how it evolves over time, not just for the deceased or the storyteller, but for other family members as well (e.g., Lenka and Dragomir's daughters).

2.6 Networks and Archipelagos

Mario Benedetti (1982, 72) compared the Uruguayan diaspora to an *archipelago* in his novel *Springtime in a broken mirror*, as explained by one of his characters, an exile in Australia: *I always said that, in Australia, we are the Uruguayan archipelago. Because in fact, we make up a series of islands, islets, single guys or couples or families, all isolated from each other, existing in solitude, comfortable perhaps, but in solitude, nonetheless. Some send money to their families back in Uruguay. It gives their lives and work some meaning.*

Benedetti suggests that people living in diaspora resemble islands and islets, which together form an archipelago. These islands are isolated from each other but remain connected to the island of departure (i.e., "Some send money to their families back in Uruguay"). These islands can also be connected during particular national events such as presidential elections and crucial sport events (Malella, 2013), as well as during more personal events such as death. Death can contribute to revealing some of the connections between these islands within the archipelago and beyond.

Rabia described how, after Rahim's death, her family and friends traveled to Quebec from around the globe to help her with the ceremonies' administrative and emotional burden (Figure 14).

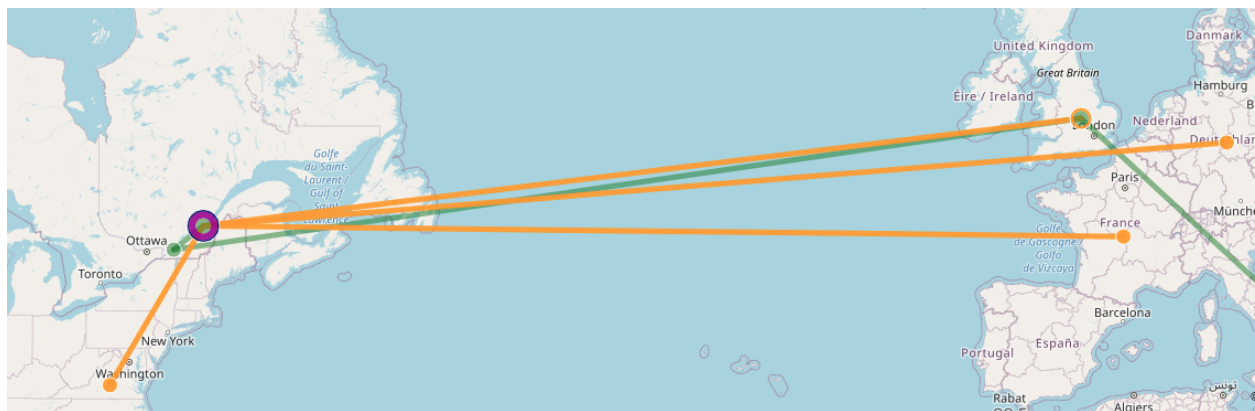


Figure 14. After the death of Rahim (purple), Rabia's family and friends travelled to Quebec in a matter of days (Orange lines) to help her (Author: José Alavez).

In this example, the network represents the physical mobilities of people who traveled to join Rabia. Still, often these connections remain distant and are mediated by means of communication, illustrating the importance of telecommunications in death and diaspora (Le Gall and Rachédi, 2016). This was, for instance, the case in Lenka and Dragomir's story (Figure 15).

I received condolences. I still remember the calls from his friends and family, and people we haven't seen since the war. It was very touching to speak with people we have known in 'another life' (Lenka).

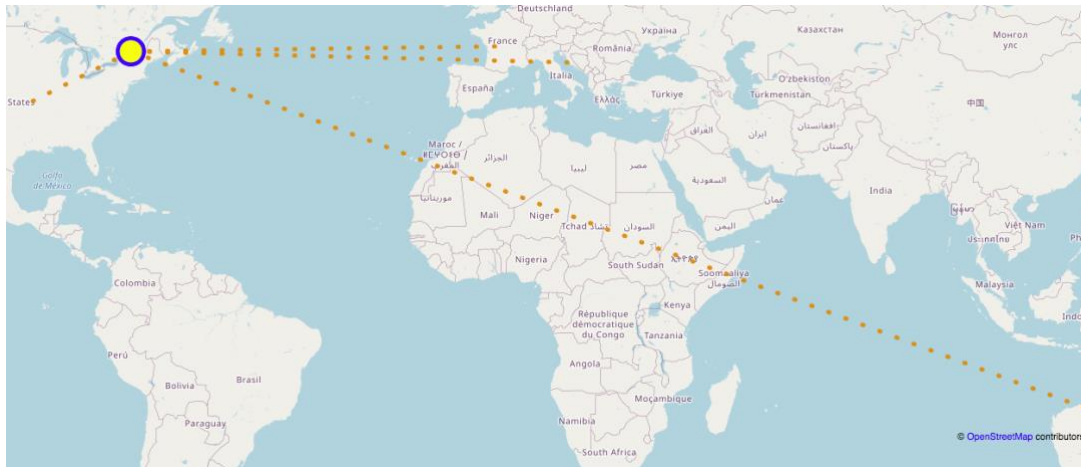


Figure 15. After Dragomir's burial at Quebec (blue), Lenka (yellow) received messages from friends (orange dotted lines), who lived in exile around the world (Author: José Alavez).

In these two examples, the archipelago is global, but there are other forms of archipelagos that emerge outside of the communities of origin at a very local scale. Local and global networks become interconnected through the focal point of the death. This is clearly illustrated in Paul and Eric's story. Paul described in detail the events that occurred the day his friend died, and the difficult task of announcing his death to the family. The map revealed the global archipelago of this segment, but it failed to depict its local geographies, reflecting the lack of precise locations at the local and personal scales in the story (Figures 16 and 17).

Well, let's say that the day he died, the first person I called was a friend from work. I said, 'Listen, I'm alone at home, Eric died, you have to come.' He left his job. He arrived before the firefighters and all the services.

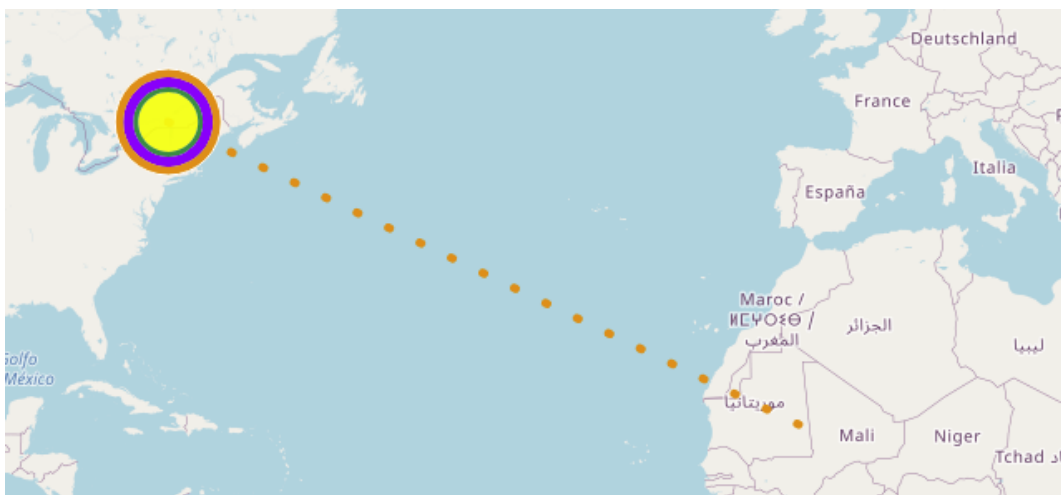


Figure 16. Global network of postmortem communications described in Eric and Paul's story (Author: José Alavez).

I didn't feel strong enough to do it at the time. Announce the death of a son to his mother [in Africa] by phone. I needed to be sure she has someone next to her before I tell her this sad news. So, I contacted Samuel, who was the one who put me in contact with the family regarding the case of Eric. (Paul)

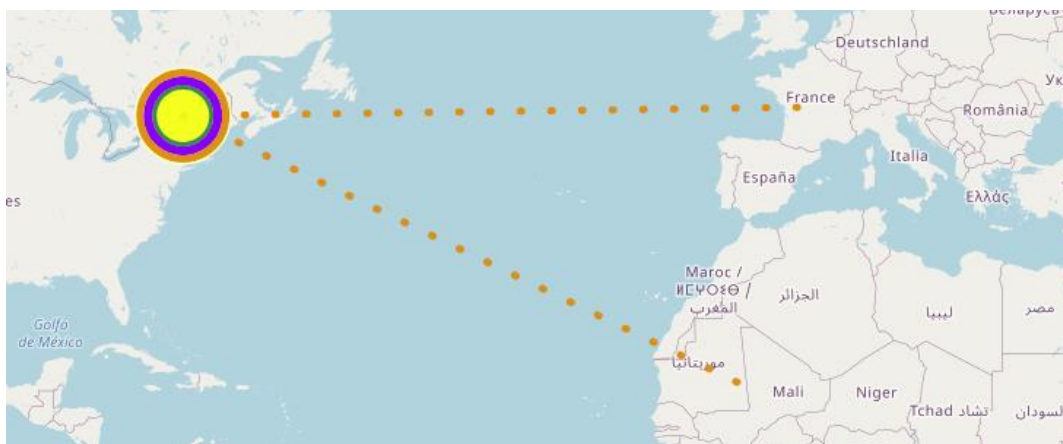


Figure 17. Global network of postmortem communications described in Eric and Paul's story (Author: José Alavez).

As for the father, well, he lives in Paris. I couldn't reach him... I couldn't reach him, and he actually saw my phone number, and he called me back. He called me back and told me – 'how is it going in Canada?' Spontaneously, I said to him, – 'well...you know...'. I didn't know if the mother had informed him or not. So, he was not aware that his son had died. He responded – 'what did I know?' ... There, I realized that he was not even aware of it. (Paul)

Eric and Paul's story reveals, beyond the global archipelago to which many migrants belong, the importance of *weak ties*, acquaintances with whom the migrant has sporadic interaction (Granovetter 1973). These weak ties often play a central role during the funerary and repatriation processes (Rachédi and Halsouet, 2017; Saramo, 2019). A friend from work helped Paul during the postmortem shock, while an organization of African migrants in Canada helped him with Eric's death's financial and administrative burden.

People register their family members. I think the repatriation rate is \$ 15,000, so we take this \$ 15,000, and we divide it among all the members who are registered... People arrive by word of mouth. They saw that it is something that works. They took care of everything: the exhibition halls, the repatriations, the paperwork with the embassy and others... Éric was under our wing, so we registered him before he died. (Paul)

In most stories, weak ties are part of a local archipelago. They are activated only when necessary, but they often escape the conventional mapping process since they appear at local scales where places are described with common noun place names such as ‘the hospital bed’, ‘the childhood home’, or ‘the funerary’. Mapping these local archipelagos is about mapping relationships at multiples scales rather than mapping precise geographic locations. It is mapping connections.

On the one hand, Atlascine enables the representation of these relationships when they are associated with geographic locations as illustrated with the mapping of the connection between Quebec and Serbia in Lenka and Dragomir’s story. On the other hand, it is unsuitable for mapping relationships between non-geolocatable entities such as common noun place names or persons; it is inappropriate to map the weak ties between an individual, the organization and the people that provide support on a daily basis; it is inappropriate to map the importance of personal spaces during a difficult time, such as a private room in a hospital.

Mapping these personal geographies is key for revealing and studying postmortem geographies, but it requires alternative forms of spatial expressions that prioritize topological relationships between places, people, objects, events, emotions, and memories, instead of their geographic location. This is what led Anne Knowles, Levi Westwerveld, and Laura Strom to develop the concept of Inductive Visualization to map testimonies of Holocaust survivors (Knowles et al. 2015) and to propose a topological Geographic Information System (GIS) that prioritizes relations over Euclidean location (Westerveld and Knowles, 2021). This is also what drove Elise Olmedo (2015) to develop the concept of sensibility mapping to represent aspects of stories (such as emotions) that can be extremely important but quite challenging to map with cartographic tools. This also prompted us to combine conventional mapping approaches with alternative ones in a previous project that mapped memories of exiles in close collaboration with storytellers. This was done to, as much as possible, respect their experiences and the way they wanted their memories to be mapped (see Caquard et al., 2019).

The diversification of spatial expressions of postmortem geographies becomes particularly meaningful with the diversification of data represented. Deep mapping projects are supposed to include a range of data such as statistics, interviews, archives, and stories, with the expectation that this diversity might help understand a particular place in more depth (Bodenhamer, 2015). However, as mentioned earlier, outside of interviews and stories, there is a lack of data to extensively study postmortem geographies of migrants. Furthermore, the focus on particular places in a deep mapping project does not fit postmortem geographies, which involve different networks and mobilities at local and global scales. A deep mapping project of postmortem geographies could then focus on mapping one case study, instead of one place, in depth. This might require not only collecting postmortem life stories of relatives and friends, but also untangling the decision-making process, as well as performing media analysis about the postmortem journeys. The extremely complex logistical, emotional and ethical challenges raised by such a project could be addressed by studying a well-known case: a death in context of

migration that has attracted enough media attention to produce a large and diverse collection of stories, interviews, and articles.

Such a deep mapping project would require particular attention towards the entire mapping process: from the data collection to the data coding, the development of spatial representations, and their reception not only by the general public, but also by the people who have been directly affected by the death under study. Although all these phases are important in any mapping project, they become even more crucial in the context of mapping postmortem migrations. Mapping is a process of emphasizing and erasing that can take another dimension when representing such a polarizing topic as death and migration. Who decides what should be emphasized and erased in a deep mapping project of postmortem migration, and why? What might be the implications of this decision?

These questions should be addressed while keeping in mind the healing potential of this type of project. While storytelling has proved to be an efficient healing technique (Blanco, 2015; Mongeau and Rachédi, 2017; Saramo, 2018), mapping can also contribute to the healing process that follows the loss of a friend or relative (Coulis, 2010). Activities such as collaborative mapping workshops dedicated to the representation of the life and death of loved ones can be part of this deep mapping project and can be seen as a tribute to the deceased. While these activities might be organized in small discrete groups, their outcome may become public and controversial given the emotional and ideological dimensions associated with death in the context of migration. This brings us to what might be the most fundamental questions to ask ourselves when starting a deep mapping project of postmortem geography: why are we doing it and for whom? or rather, who should do it and with whom?

2.7 Conclusion

Based on Avril Madrell's (2016) deep mapping approach—which focuses on the interaction and overlapping of three concrete spaces (i.e., physical, embodied-psychological, and virtual spaces) associated with death, grief, and mourning—this chapter reflects on the potential and limitations of using cartography to map postmortem geographies through the analysis of three life stories of migrants who experienced the death of a loved one. The maps produced for this project made visible the idea that a migration process does not end with death; death is part of a longer personal and collective trajectory that unfolds in different dimensions. In this chapter, I focused on two of these dimensions: the final journey of the body and the emergence of postmortem networks.

Through the mapping of these dimensions, this project offers a glimpse of the multiple directions at which the body travels and at which social networks get triggered and activated by death, somehow challenging the classic push and pull theories that conceive migration as unidirectional flows between countries. Yet, these maps fail to reveal most of the local postmortem social and material geographies. Most of the local places were unmappable with Atlascine since they were not attached to geographic coordinates, and parts of the social networks also went missing on these maps for the same reason. This issue underlines the necessity of mobilizing alternative forms of spatial expression that prioritize topology over location, connections over geographic coordinates, and mobility over layers. This problem led me to conceive a new mapping endeavour to map the intimate geographies of grief and loss in the following chapter.

The project presented in this chapter remains at the surface of the stories mapped and the issue under study. It requires going deeper into the narratives and the connections between them. It is also necessary to mobilize different forms of spatial expressions and—if possible—integrate more data, media, and stories. In that sense, a deep mapping project that captures every geography inside death in the migratory context might not be completely achievable. It may be more in the realm of intention than of possibility—a task that is impossible to reach, but one that keeps on inspiring me to try.

Chapter 3: Mapping intimate geographies of grief and loss¹⁰

3.1 Abstract

Cartography has been pivotal in making visible the number of people who die in the context of migration. In this chapter I explore the potential of mapping to study and develop another dimension of the geography of death within exile: the more intimate dimensions of postmortem geographies as experienced by those who survive a loved one. Inspired by Avril Maddrell's (2016) call for developing new cartographic representations to share difficult emotions and memories associated to death, I mobilize two alternative mapping practices – inductive visualization and sensibility mapping – to chart the emotional and intimate geographies embedded in the stories of two migrants who lost a close friend with whom they lived while in exile. The mapping process that led me to represent these intimate postmortem geographies brought me to reflect on the importance of developing alternative cartographic forms of expression that focus on the experiential and the emotional, rather than on the factual and the measurable. By steering this cartographic shift away from death as the end of a journey to death as yet another event in the life of those who survive, I propose a cartography of grief and mourning that aims to contribute to individual and collective remembering.

¹⁰ A version of chapter 3 has been accepted for publication on June 30, 2022. Alavez, J. (forthcoming) Mapping the intimate geographies of grief and loss. *Cartographica*.

3.2 Introduction

The approach presented in this chapter builds on the growing body of literature that engage with stories, memories, and emotions (D'Ignazio, 2009; Caquard, 2013; Kelly, 2016; Caquard and Griffin, 2018) with a particular interest in two contemporary alternative mapping methods: sensibility mapping (Olmedo 2015; 2018; 2021) and inductive visualization (Knowles, Westerveld, and Strom, 2015; Westerveld and Knowles, 2018). These two methods were selected for their capacity to identify and express the subtle, the intimate, and the personal. They have been deployed in this chapter to map the geographies of grief and loss of two migrants who experienced the passing of close friends while living in Quebec. This article begins with an overview of how researchers and artists studied the geographies of grief and loss. Then, it transitions to how geographers have mobilized maps to study emotions and memories as they relate to intimate spaces. The third section discusses the mappings of two interviews with individuals who lost a loved one in the context of migration. The last section of the chapter discusses the potential and limits of these methods for mapping these intimate posthumous geographies.

3.3 Space, Death, and Intimacy

At the turn of the twenty-first century—inspired by feminist, affective, and humanistic studies—academics focused on exploring the intangible, emotional, and symbolic dimensions of deathscapes (Kong, 1999; Maddrell and Sidaway, 2010). The interest on places connected with death and dying inspired a range of research projects on the politics of memorialization (Young and Light, 2013; Hunter, 2016), funerary practices in diaspora (Hunter and Amman, 2017; Saraiva and Mapril 2015; Saramo 2018), the symbolic dimensions of vernacular memorials (Petersson 2009; 2010; Maddrell 2013), leisure activities in cemeteries (Deering, 2015), the cultural, social, and emotional implications of natural burials (Clayden, Hockey, and Powell, 2010), as well as the analysis of online memorials (Maddrell, 2012; Sultana, Youngs-Zaleski, and Jiwani, 2019). While these studies have mainly focused on the tangible features of deathscapes (e.g., cemeteries, columbaria, and roadside memorials), researchers have also engaged with the more emotional and intimate dimensions of the geographies of death.

Intimacy is present in places that host people's meaningful memories, emotions, and dreams (Gutierrez Hernandez, 2015). It is also part of a set of complex multi-scalar processes and relations that connect the body with national and international networks and forces (Pain and Staeheli, 2014). Social scientists have studied the intimate geographies of death by employing methodologies that rely on mourners' stories, perceptions, and testimonies. Jenny Hockey, Bridget Peenhale, and David Sibley (2005) interviewed older widowers to explore the role of objects and quotidian spaces after their partners' death. The research found that these personal items and geographies were relevant components inside the interviewees' grieving experiences as they triggered distinct memories and emotions that could range from grief to solace (Hockey, Peenhale, and Sibley, 2007). Joanna Wojtkowiak and Eric Venbrux (2010) conducted a large-scale survey in the Netherlands to research how many people in the country had a posthumous memorial at home. The results showed that more than 30 percent of their sample had at least one of them inside their domestic space. The researchers also found that 80 percent of these private

memorials have been kept for more than a year. Wojtkowiak and Venbrux's study illustrates that death commemorations and the preservation of human remains are also part of domestic spaces.

Avril Maddrell (2013) coined the oxymoron absence-presence to frame her analysis of the intangible, affective, and more-than-representational dimensions of places associated with the death of a loved one (Maddrell 2013). The term absence-presence conveys the idea that—after death—the deceased still have agency and presence in the living world by evoking memories and emotions. While Maddrell coined the concept of absence-presence to research the emotional and affective features of vernacular memorials on the British Islands, it has been fundamental to better understand the posthumous connections between mourners and intimate spaces. Inspired by Maddrell (2013; 2016), Annika Jonsson and Tony Walter (2017) studied the intimate geographies of death by interviewing twelve individuals estranged from Sweden and the United Kingdom. The study revealed that these places triggered different interactions and emotions from cherishing and enjoying places to the memories of their departed loved ones to avoiding them completely because of the pain and anxiety they trigger. Brenda Mathijssen (2018) coined the term 'transforming bonds' to frame how grieverers may reshape and alter the relationship with their deceased beloved by interviewing fifteen mourners in the Netherlands. She explained how some of her research participants (re)negotiated the presence of those who passed away in their homes by (re)moving photographs or altering the appearance of furniture (Mathijssen, 2018).

Artists have also explored the links between death and intimate spaces. Filmmaker and photographer Briony Campbell (2015) recorded the last six months of her father's life, who died of cancer. Campbell and her father documented personal moments inside a hospital room and their home. Their project made public some of the more private experiences and intimate spaces related to the event of death, challenging the medicalized and distant relationship with dying in the western world (see Ariès, 1975; Giddens, 1991). Writer and poet Catherine Owen (2020) edited a collection of essays that explored how human and non-human deaths shift the emotional relation with everyday spaces. The collection concludes with a section for those who experienced a loved one's death while living far from home, highlighting the impotence of not being next to a family member in their final moments or attending their funeral.

These academic and artistic works illustrate how intimacy transcends the measurable components of the geographies of grief. They focus on grieverers' experiences, emotions and memories associated with posthumous items and places (Tuan, 1977)—and how people perpetuate a spatial connection with their departed loved ones (Maddrell, 2013; Jonsson and Walter, 2017; Pearce, 2019). To unveil and study this array of intimate posthumous places, Avril Maddrell (2016) proposed to map them by mobilizing contemporary mapping practices and concepts, such as deep mapping. While Maddrell designed two schematic maps to illustrate her approach, she clearly identified the need for further empirical cartographic work.

3.4 Deep mapping intimate spaces

In the early years of the twenty-first century, the troupe *Brith Gof* conceived deep mapping as an artistic exercise that aims to tell the unknown stories of spaces through storytelling, audiovisual presentations, lectures, and in-situ performances (Pearson and Shanks, 2001). Yet, they also consider that deep maps as actual cartographic representations (McLucas, 2000). They argued

that deep maps should be composed of three elements—a large material structure (i.e., horizontal or vertical), time-based components such as film or music, and open and never-finished databases (Biggs, 2010). Brith Gof propelled deep maps as an actual cartographic practice among geographers, artists, and spatial humanists, who created projects that mixed narrative, multimedia, conventional maps, and art to better understand the hidden dimensions of places.

Anja Novkovic (2019) combined ethnographic research, art, and cartography to deep map an unnamed alleyway in Downtown Montreal. She revealed its intimate attributes by making an Atlas based on six of this public space's lesser-known stories. On one of her maps, Novkovic charted the story of Nancy, who rescued and performed an impromptu funeral for a rat inside the alleyway. Novkovic argued that the map of Nancy and the rat emphasizes that remembrance and affection can be attached to unnoticed spaces—a relevant consideration to study intimate postmortem geographies.

Two recent and very similar cartographic approaches, inductive visualization (Knowles et al., 2015; Westerveld and Knowles, 2018; 2021) and sensibility mapping (Olmedo, 2015; 2018; 2021), have highlighted the importance of intimate spaces inside narratives and experiences. Anne Kelly Knowles, Levi Westerveld and Laura Strom have developed the concept and the method of inductive visualization to systematically map the structure, content, and meaning of testimonies from the Holocaust (Knowles, Westerveld, and Strom, 2015). While mapping the narratives of two Jewish survivors, they experienced the difficulties of including on their maps relevant intimate spaces dissociated from any geo-located position, such as bedrooms, cabins, and barracks (see Westerveld and Knowles, 2018). They identified these micro-geographies as essential to comprehend the survivors' experiences fully. Consequently, they developed a hybrid method. First, they placed well-known locations such as towns, cities, and countries on a blank map to create a background layer. Then, they employed topological relations (e.g., near, far, inside) to position those places on the map without assigning them precise locations. Although, the final cartographic representation was imprecise in terms of the Euclidean locations; it was thoughtful and powerful in the way they visually depicted some of the spatial experiences, mobilities, and memories narrated by the storytellers.

Elise Olmedo (2015; 2018; 2021) developed sensibility mapping to bring emotions and memories to the fore. The main goal of this method is to express visually intimate spaces that are often evoked rather than clearly described by individuals. During her doctoral research, she co-created a series of textile maps with low-income women from the Sidi Yusef neighborhood in Marrakesh. One of her maps depicts the quotidian places of Naima, one of her interviewees. The map charts the tension between Naima's domestic spaces (e.g., sleeping areas, dining room, reception room) and her informal workplaces (e.g., the traditional couture association, the rich Moroccans' houses). Olmedo and Naima worked together to co-construct a textile map according to Naima's experiences, stories, values, and daily life. Years later, Olmedo employed sensibility mapping to create a series of maps based on the life stories of two Rwandan exiles (Olmedo and Caquard, 2022). She used colored pencils and aquarelles to visually express some emotionally intense and intimate moments of loss, fear, grief, and hope associated with the genocide.

Inductive visualization, sensibility mapping, and the deep mapping framework proposed by Avril Maddrell (2016) have some common traits. First, they aim to unveil spatial memories, experiences, and emotions. Second, they conceive mapping as a process that requires an in-depth engagement with the source material, such as stories, testimonies, or interviews. Third, they all have developed these methods to map stories related to death. Maddrell has focused on personal experiences after the passing of a close relative, inductive visualization was deployed to map testimonies in the context of the Jewish Holocaust, and sensibility mapping was utilized to chart intimate memories of the Rwandan genocide. However, the core difference between these approaches is that Avril Maddrell's framework remains conceptual. In contrast, inductive visualization and sensibility mapping are applied cartographic methodologies. In the following section I present and discuss the mapping of the intimate geographies of grief and loss of two migrants who lost a loved one while living in Quebec, inspired by these three mapping impulses.

3.5 Mapping intimate geographies of grief and loss in the context of migration

The maps produced in this research represent intimate geographies expressed in open-ended interviews with Elisa and Paul, two migrants who experienced the death of close friends while living in Quebec, Canada¹¹. These interviews are part of a corpus of thirty, all of which were carried out by the team Morts en Contexte de migration (MECMI) within the School of Social Work at the University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM). This research team aimed to study, among other issues, the different scales and meanings of the posthumous geographies associated with losing a loved one in the context of migration and exile (see Rachédi and Halsouet, 2017; Rachédi and Kobelinsky, 2018; Le Gall and Rachédi, 2019). In a previous phase of this research project (and also in the previous chapter), I used geolocated maps to represent and study spatial aspects of Paul's interview at an international scale, including the transnational repatriation of his friend's corpse and the mobilization of loved ones who provided Paul economic and emotional support.

However, these maps fell short of representing spatial memories and emotions associated with Paul's intimate geographies. Further, I could not map most of the postmortem geographies with Elisa's interview using Euclidean cartographies because she barely mentioned places that could be geolocated on a map, such as cities, regions, or countries – instead, her story was rich in intimate places and meaningful artifacts, such as domestic spaces and photographs. Therefore, I proposed to employ inductive visualization and sensibility mapping to delve into the posthumous experiences of these two in-depth interviews. In this mapping project, I chose inductive visualization to map Elisa's interview since this method allowed me to systematically chart the intimate geographies that I could not link with Euclidian coordinates (see Westerveld and Knowles, 2021). In contrast, I deployed sensibility mapping to delve into a meaningful and personal event on Paul's interview. I selected this cartographic impulse due to its capacity to reveal and emphasize the more emotional and ephemeral geographies within different types of stories and testimonies (Olmedo and Caquard, 2022).

¹¹ For confidentiality reasons, the name of the interviewees and the deceased have been changed in this chapter.

3.5.1 Jenny and Elisa

Jenny was a journalist who moved from Ecuador to Quebec in 2014 in search of professional opportunities. One year after her arrival, Jenny met Elisa: another Latin American migrant with whom she became a close friend. At that time, Jenny was still adapting to her new life in Canada and Elisa helped her through this process by introducing her to other members of the Latin American diaspora in Canada. After a few months, Veronica invited Jenny to live with her, but after almost a year of living together, Jenny suddenly passed away in her room. After her death, Veronica and Elisa were shocked, but with other migrants they were able to organize the funeral and help with the repatriation process. A couple of years later, members of the MECMI team invited Elisa to reflect on her mourning experience during an interview.

Elisa's narrative mainly revolved around four intimate issues regarding death in the context of migration (see Rachédi and Halsouet, 2017): the day Jenny died, her funerals and posthumous ceremonies, the meaningful items, and Elisa's projection of death in diaspora. To chart these topics, I used the visual grammar developed by Westerveld and Knowles (2018) to map emotions and memories. First, I hand-drew circles to depict each physical space in the story (e.g., building, room, vehicle). I used crosses to represent meaningful objects, blurred shapes for virtual spaces, and dotted lines served to represent forms of communication (e.g., telephone calls) (Figure 18). The opacity of each Figure symbolized the number of mentions of each place during the interview (Figure 19). Lastly, I added the snippets from Elisa's interview related to each one of these geographies, and I colour-coded them according to the four topics identified previously (i.e., the day Jenny died, funerals, items, and Elisa's projection of death).

This map's design and content was presented to and discussed with the MECMI team. After getting their feedback, I identified two distinctive features related to Jenny's intimate postmortem geographies. I called them *postmortem presence* and *postmortem influence* based on Maddrell's terminology. On the map, postmortem presence refers to those places and objects charged with intense posthumous memories of Jenny (Maddrell, 2013; Pearce, 2019), such as mementos or quotidian spaces. On the other hand, postmortem influences are actions and events that emerged as a response to Jenny's death, such as funeral ceremonies, telephone calls, or future thoughts about a coming death. I coded the quotes related to postmortem presence with purple and the passages linked to postmortem influence with green (Figure 20).

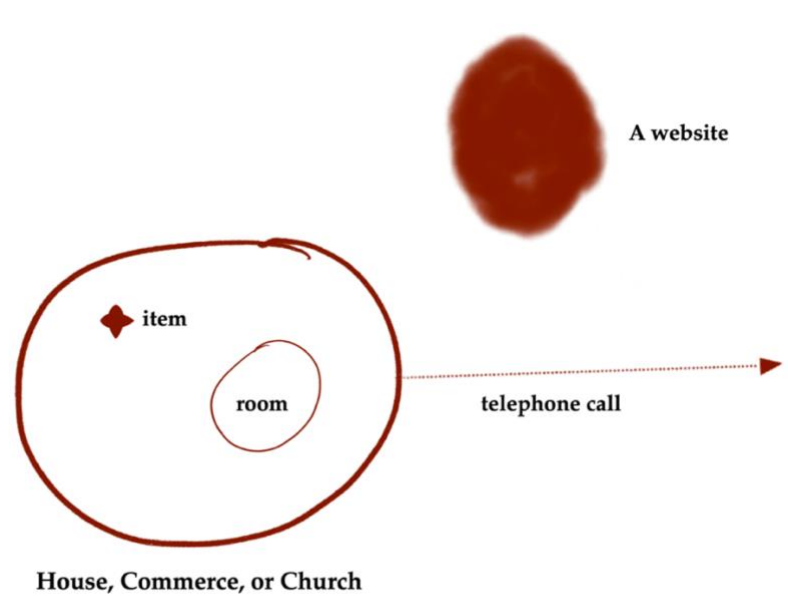


Figure 18. Visual grammar of Jenny and Elisa's inductive visualization based on the work of Levi Westerveld and Anne Kelly Knowles (2018) (Author: José Alavez).

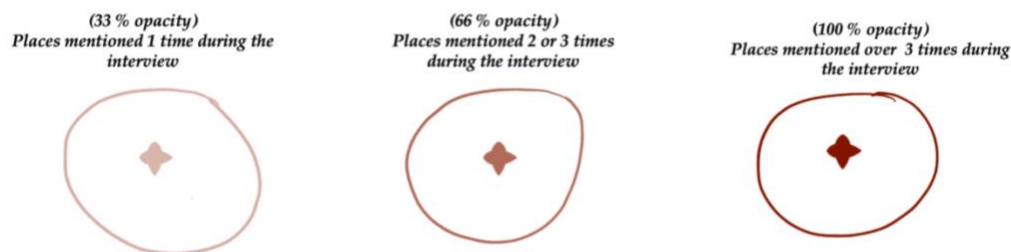


Figure 19. The opacity of the Figures symbolized the number of times Elisa mentioned a place during her interview with MECMI (Author: José Alavez).

Four main places emerged on the map—Veronica's home, the funeral parlour, the church, and Elisa's home. Veronica's home appeared when Elisa narrated the events that happened the day Jenny passed away. Also, when Veronica confessed to Elisa how challenging it was for her to enter Jenny's room. Solidarity was a crucial element to better understand postmortem influence on the funeral parlour and the church. Elisa received multiple donations for the funeral room without asking for them. Moreover, after Jenny's body was repatriated to Ecuador, her close friends and other members of the migrant community gathered in a Catholic Church to remember her. Jenny had postmortem presence during the ceremonies: her body was in a coffin during the service at the funeral parlor, and her photograph was displayed throughout the posthumous ceremonies. This photo became a key memento within Jenny's postmortem presence in Quebec as it was distributed among her friends and the Eucharist's assistants. Elisa brought home one of Jenny's portraits as well. Elisa also mentioned how Jenny's passing made her reflect on her future death in diaspora. She already chose a portrait of hers—currently displayed in her living room—for her funeral. Furthermore, Elisa has requested that her sons send half of her ashes to Ecuador while the other half would stay in Quebec. This wish reveals the tension in terms of

belonging among migrants and exiles: for many of them, their home exists in two or more places (Blunt, 2007).

The last section of the interview also marked a turning point. Elisa is no longer just talking about Jenny's postmortem story; her future death became part of this posthumous narrative, and therefore, of this inductive visualization. This map illustrates that death is a spatiotemporal process that transcends the dying event and the burial place (Maddrell and Sidaway, 2010; Maddrell, 2016) as other intimate geographies emerged in the story after Jenny's death. Further, Elisa associated these places to emotions, such as grief and loss. Yet, she also linked them to positive memories related with friendship and unity in diaspora—an issue stressed by Elisa during the final segment of the interview.

I think one word sums it all up: Solidarity. It is solidarity that touched the hearts of those who barely knew her and the people closest to her. Solidarity drove us to give her a last farewell beautifully and touchingly. It is the minimum that a person can receive in their home country, so we did it here in Quebec (Elisa).

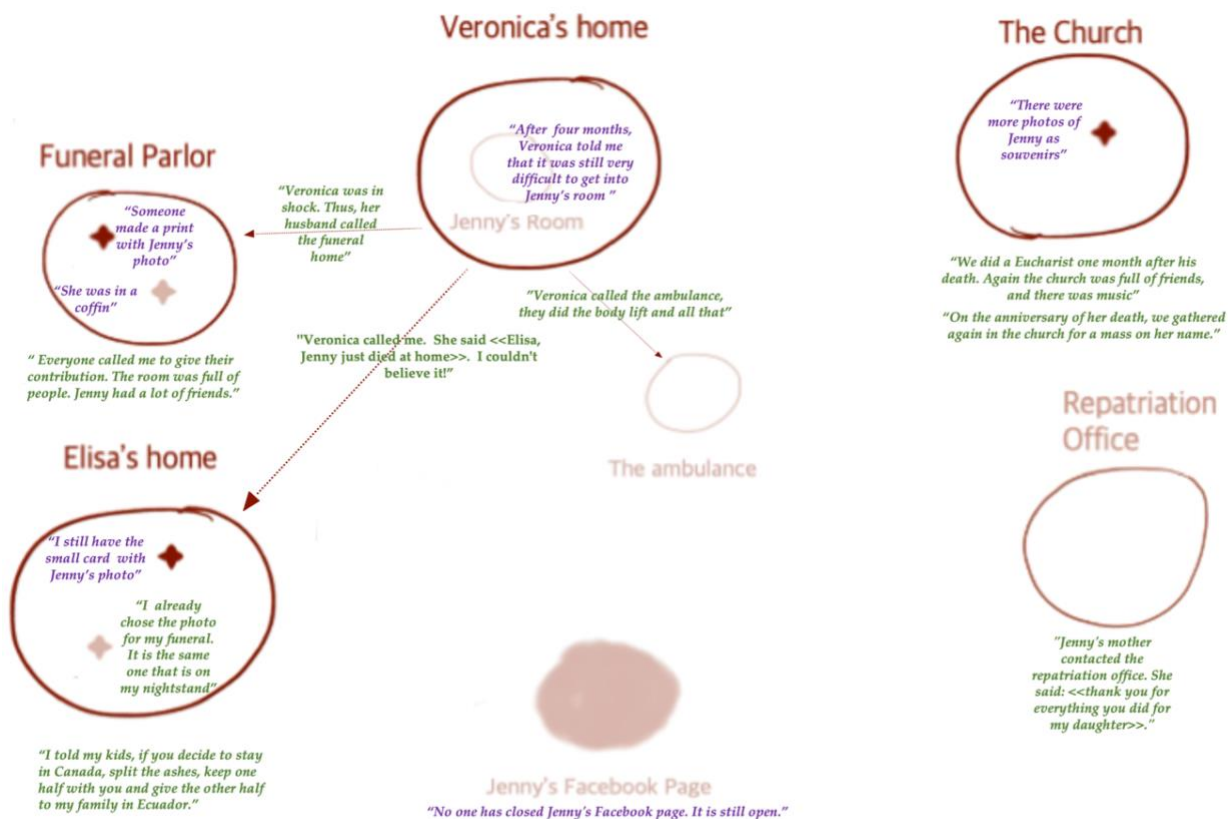


Figure 20. This inductive visualization illustrates Jenny's postmortem presence (purple) and postmortem influence (green) in Quebec as narrated by Elisa (Author: José Alavez).

3.5.2 Eric and Paul

Eric came from Senegal to study in a university in Quebec. He was welcomed in Canada by Paul, a close friend of his family. After a couple of years of living at Paul's place, Eric died due to a sudden heart attack while sleeping. During the interview with the MECMI team, Paul related in detail the unfolding events of that day. Overall, I distinguished three main sections in that interview: Paul's time-space routine, Paul's shock when he faced Eric's death, and the transnational telephone call from Paul to announce the death of Eric to his family. These three sections have their own set of events, which I included on the map. Paul opened the first section with the following account:

It was December when he left us... He was with his classmates, a small group of students. It must have been around 10 p.m. when he returned home...I was there, sitting in my little office preparing my work for the next day ...He arrived, and I said hi to him... He told me that everything went well with his friends (Paul).

Paul provided the temporal context (i.e., December at 10 p.m.), the spatial setting (i.e., Paul's home), and the context (i.e., Eric coming back home after meeting his friends). After this opening quote, he mentioned the hour on two additional incidents after Eric's arrival—when Paul had breakfast with his family and when he was ready to depart to his workplace. The association of quotidian actions with a concrete time and space is what David Seamon (1980) defined as *time-space routines*, which characterizes this first section. Paul leaving home to work at 2 p.m. was the last of the time-spaces routines of that day. This scene closed the first section of this episode.

The next section started with an unusual event. Before leaving home, Paul saw Eric's winter boots next to the main door, which meant that Eric was still at home and not at the university where he was supposed to be at that time. Paul called Eric without receiving an answer. He went to Eric's room, knocked and opened the door, and saw Eric lying in his bed. He tried to wake him up, but Paul realized that Eric passed away while he was sleeping. Paul mentioned that he entered a *state of shock* since he could not make sense of what happened to Eric.

After Paul found Eric's winter boots his time-space routine was no longer the common thread of the narrative. Time geographers have suggested two different concepts for time: Chronos and Kairos (see Sui, 2012). "Chronos concerns the exact quantification of passing time expressed in successive readings using rationalized and decontextualized devices and tools such as a clock or a calendar" (Sui, 2012, 8). As mentioned, Paul employed chronological time (i.e., hours) to organize the events concerning his time-space routine. On the other hand, Kairos is not quantifiable; it characterizes moments by their significance (Peeples et al., 2007; Sui, 2012; Crowther, 2014), such as the trauma and the feeling of time suspension occasioned by the death of a loved one (Leydesdorff et al., 2002; Rachédi, 2017). Paul calling the police and an ambulance closed this second section.

Eric was an international student in Quebec, so Paul needed to announce Eric's death to his family. The third section is made of the description of the telephone calls from Paul to Eric's parents, who lived in Europe and Africa. Lilyane Rachédi (2017) argued that announcing the

death of a loved one from abroad produces a metaphorical *shockwave* that travels across space. She also explained that, when a loved one passed away on the context of migration, geographical distance amplifies the power of the shockwave as “the physical, and palpable observation of the dead body is not immediately accessible” (Rachédi, 2017, 25).

On the sensibility map (Figure 21 and 22), I identified and drew the nine incidents that happened between the arrival of Eric at night and the telephone call from Paul to Eric’s parents. Then, during the mapping process, I explored the relationships between each event. After various mapping attempts and feedback from the MECMI team and other cartographers, I distinguished the three different sections of the narrative: time-spaces routines, state of shock, and postmortem shockwaves. I represented the time-space routines as a semicircle built with bricks—one of the principal construction materials for housing in Quebec. I included three digital clocks that accompany the events where Paul mentioned the chronological time. Then, I depicted the state of shock as cracks that broke Paul’s time-space routine. The cracks also epitomize the change of time in the story from Chronos to Kairos. Lastly, I employed earthquake shockwave symbols to portray the news that traveled from Paul’s home in Quebec to Senegal and Belgium. By utilizing sensibility mapping to map this episode, it was possible to include items (e.g., boots), domestic spaces (e.g., Eric’s bedroom), and transnational communications (e.g., international telephone calls) inside the same cartographic representation. This sensibility map is not a finished product. It is an interpretative process of the spatiotemporal dimensions of Paul’s story about Eric’s death, which could keep on evolving based on comments, critiques, suggestions, and additions by social workers. In the end, as the MECMI team suggested, this map might become a resource to support other migrants during their experiences of mourning (Maddrell, 2016; Rachédi and others, forthcoming).

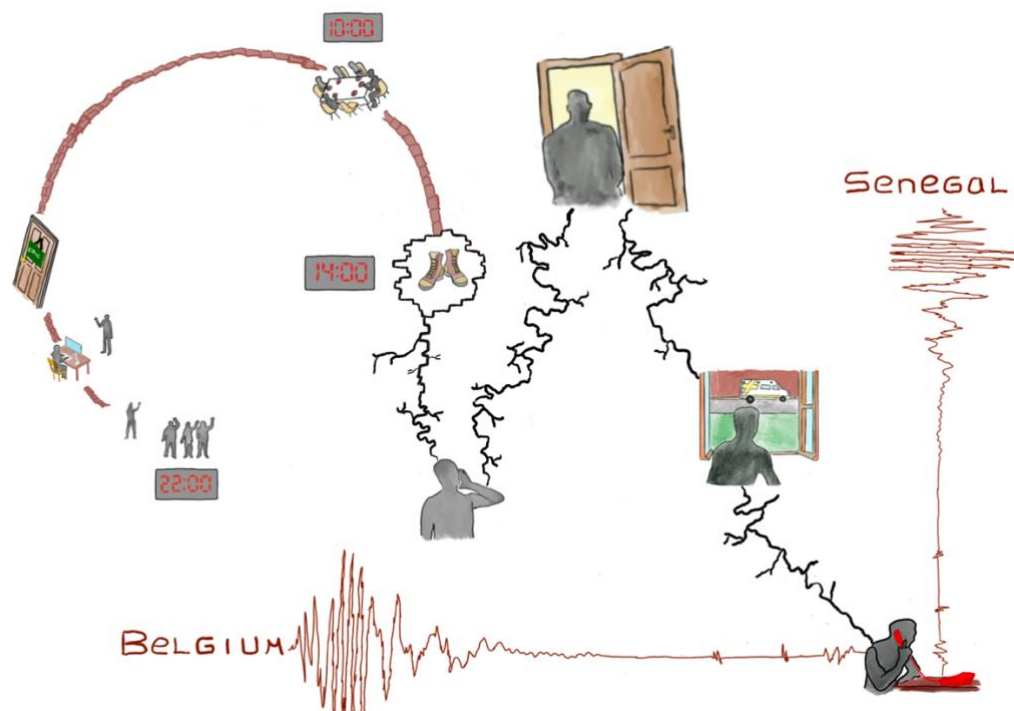


Figure 21. Sensibility map that charts the three stages experienced by Paul the day his friend Eric passed away (Author: José Alvarez).

Quotes from the interview



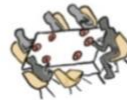
"So he was with his classmates, a small group of students, it must have been around 10 p.m., when he returned home."

"I was there, sitting in my little office ...He arrived and I said hi to him... He told me that everything went well with his friends."



"He was very, very, very reserved. when he came back he went alone to his room, but we said goodbye."

"The next morning, we had breakfast and my kids went to school...Eric arrived late last night, so I did not wake him up"



"Did Eric go to school without saying goodbye to me? I opened the door to look down, and I saw his winter boots. It was weird. How come he didn't go to school, whether he has class or not?"

"I went to his room, I knocked, there was no answer, I opened the door, and I saw him... I thought he was sleeping soundly."



"The fire department, the ambulance, the police, they all came. It was a terrible shock... he came home yesterday, he showed no signs, no pathology whatsoever so it was really painful."

When I came back from the hospital around midnight, I told myself that I must inform his parents...I didn't feel strong enough to do it at the time. Announce his death to her mother through a long-distance call.



Figure 22. Quotes from Paul's interview that I used during my sensibility map process (Author: José Alavez).

3.6 Concluding reflections

Social scientists have utilized biographical accounts and interviews to study how griever kept and produced memories and emotions associated with their deceased loved ones (Walter, 1996; Maddrell, 2011; 2016; Sloane, 2018; Mathijssen, 2018). In this article, I propose to map these posthumous narratives with two alternative cartographic methods—sensitivity mapping and inductive visualization—to navigate and illustrate how postmortem reminiscences and emotions are hosted in intimate geographies. These personal cartographies graphically convey where griever feel close to the departed and the locations linked with painful postmortem memories (Maddrell, 2016; Jonsson and Walter, 2017). Moreover, these maps have the potential to display how mourners spatially (re)negotiate, transform, and relate their grieving experiences (Mathijssen, 2018).

The maps in this project illustrated how Paul and Elisa's respective geographies of grief extended from micro-spaces (e.g., the body or domestic space) to the national and international scales (e.g., the family scattered around the world) (Pain and Staeheli, 2014). Paul's map depicts how Eric's posthumous intimate geographies stretched from his winter boots (i.e., a harbinger of his death) and his bedroom (i.e., the place where he died) to Belgium and Senegal through telephone calls. Likewise, Elisa's map illustrates how Jenny's postmortem absence and influence expanded from her bedroom at Veronica's home to other public and private spaces in Quebec (e.g., the funeral parlor and the church). Elisa's map also showcases that Jenny's postmortem intimate geographies extended between Ecuador (through the repatriation of her body) and Canada (through the posthumous ceremonies celebrated by other migrants). These maps can be considered snapshots of Paul and Elisa's experiences of grief (Maddrell, 2016), as well as a form of mourning and remembrance (Coulis, 2010).

Mapping is indeed as much an outcome as it is a process as emphasized in post-representational cartographic theories (del Casino and Hannah, 2006; Kitchin and Dodge, 2007; Dodge and Perkins, 2015; Rossetto, 2015). Both inductive visualization and sensitivity mapping demand that mapmakers deeply engage with personal stories and experiences. In this project, the cartographic processes included multiple iterations of: (Re)reading the transcripts, examining theoretical approaches, delving into creative representations related to death in the context of migration, conceiving and sketching visual forms of expression, and receiving feedback from the MECMI team. During these phases, the maps became sounding boards that enhanced the comprehension of the source material provided by MECMI, emphasizing the importance of the process in any creative mapping endeavor. These steps also contributed to making the mourners' testimonies visible. Mapping is a way to mediate memories and emotions, while providing alternative means to share difficult stories with different audiences.

Cartography has been extensively deployed to trace and quantify geographies of death in the context of migration at multiple scales, often to demonstrate the multiple institutional, environmental, and capitalistic forces that have contributed to these deaths (Lo Presti, 2018). The cartographies proposed in this chapter aim to reveal the more intimate and personal geographies of these deaths' impacts on other migrants, friends, and family members. They speak about other postmortem realities of migration and exile that are associated with important human values such as solidarity, friendship, memory, and love. They also emphasize meaningful events on Elisa's

and Paul's narratives. Yet, Tony Walter (1996) and Brenda Mathijssen, (2018) pointed out that mourning is not only made up of painful events or posthumous ceremonies; mourning is a process that lasts years—perhaps a lifetime—and continuously transforms the meaning of mourners' intimate and daily geographies. In the next chapter, I mobilized two open-source storymaps platforms to better understand mapping as a mourning process within the migratory context.

Chapter 4: Mapping-Ofrenda: Mapping as Mourning in the Context of Migration¹²

4.1 Abstract

This chapter proposes the concept of mapping-ofrenda, which envisions mapping as a form of mourning and remembering while living in diaspora. Inspired by the traditional Mexican ofrenda, the mapping-ofrenda aims to collect, curate, and represent posthumous memories. It can be produced collaboratively or individually, built with physical or digital maps, shared with other people, or kept private, and be dedicated to a single deceased or to an entire community. Through the process of co-designing two online ofrenda-maps with two Latina American women living in Montreal (Canada) we identified some of the potential of mapping-ofrenda, including its capacity to stimulate our memories and remember stories on the verge of disappearing, to ground them to places, and to share them with people that might live far away. Mapping-ofrenda can also be a way of making visible the global geography of migration through highly intimate memories and acknowledging both the very personal and the highly universal need to remember and grieve. Finally, the main value of mapping-ofrenda in the context of migration, may be its capacity to reactivate and strengthen existing links and connections between people that are still alive but that may live far away.

¹² A version of Chapter 4 was submitted to “the Journal of Cultural Geography” on June 30, 2022: Alavez J. and Caquard S. (under review). Mapping-Ofrenda: Mapping as mourning in the context of migration

4.2 Introduction

In Mexico, November 2nd is the Day of the Dead – *día de Muertos*. On that day, families set up an altar in their homes called an *ofrenda*. On it, they display mementos related to their deceased loved ones, such as their favourite food, photos, and evocative items. Selecting the mementos and setting up an *ofrenda* is often a social event done with relatives. It is an opportunity to share memories about those who have died and with whom we want to keep a bond. It is an opportunity to remain connected to the deceased and to their spirits. Keeping these connections is of particular importance in the migrant context. With more and more individuals living abroad, far from their family, preserving links with the dead becomes a way of remaining in contact with the living and more broadly with the society and culture of origin.

Migrant mourners have employed different means to recall posthumous stories and memories, including erecting public monuments (Marschall, 2020), developing online memorials (Maddrell, 2012; Sultana et al., 2019; Horsti, 2019), organizing conversations with other migrant grievors (Richards et al., 2020), or creating artistic expressions such as poems or novels (Allende, 1994; Laferriere, 2011). These memorial acts strengthen the postmortem emotional ties between grievors and the deceased, also known as *continuing bonds* (Klass et al., 1996; Klass and Steffen, 2018). In this chapter I explore the potential contribution of mapping to reveal and strengthen these continuing bonds as part of the mourning and remembering process.

To do so, I introduce the concept of “mapping-ofrenda.” The idea of a mapping-ofrenda is inspired by the Mexican tradition of the *ofrenda*, as well as by a range of artistic and academic practices that have untangled some of the connections that exist between maps and the intangible, such as emotions and affects (Aitken and Crane 2006; Caquard and Griffin 2018; Steger et al., 2021), mourning (Coulis 2010), remembering (Olmedo, 2018; Peterle, 2018; Mapes and Koopman, 2020; Wood, 2021), and memories of intimate experiences about exile and forced displacement (Knowles et al., 2015; Mekdjian and Szary, 2018; Campos-Delgado, 2018; Caquard et al., 2019).

This article starts with a review of the different types of continuing bonds that connect migrants living abroad with their home country and with their relatives, followed by a review of the mapping approaches developed to express and expose our intimate relationships to places and people. In the following section I present the *ofrenda* practice, and I introduce the concept of mapping-ofrenda. This concept is further developed through the co-creation of two mapping-ofrendas in collaboration with two Latina American women living in Quebec. The article ends with a discussion about the potential and limitations of the mapping-ofrenda to strengthen and develop continuing bonds in the context of migration.

4.3 From continuing bonds to the mapping of copresences

Death does not end the emotional ties between people; it just modifies them. After the passing of a loved one, mourners are still connected to the deceased through the stories they share about them and the memories and emotions triggered by objects, places, songs, words, and pictures associated to them (Root and Exline, 2014). The term *continuing bonds* was proposed by Dennis Klass, Phyllis Silverman, and Steven Nickman (1996) to describe and analyze these affective

postmortem connections. The authors use continuing bonds to explain how people preserve and incorporate the memories and emotions associated with their deceased friends and relatives into their everyday life (Walter, 1996; Klass et al., 1996; Maddrell, 2013; Root and Exline, 2014; Klass and Steffen, 2018).

These continuing bonds take another dimension for migrants who live abroad when someone close to them dies far from them. Due to economic, administrative, or political constraints, it is often quite challenging and sometimes impossible for people living abroad to return home to attend a funeral, grieve with their families, or visit the tomb of the deceased (Bravo, 2017; Mas Giralt, 2018). Nevertheless, the need to grieve and mourn within foreign cultures and societies remains essential (Henry et al., 2005).

In her work about how migrants connect with their kin from a distance in moments of crisis, such as the deceased of a beloved person, Loretta Baldassar (2007; 2008; 2014) has identified four main strategies deployed by mourners that she called “copresences”: (1) copresence by proxy, (2) virtual copresence, (3) physical copresence, and (4) copresence through imagination.

Copresence by proxy is achieved through physical objects that harbour memories or emotions related to a loved one (Baldassar, 2008). These meaningful artifacts may become more significant and visible after the death of beloved people as they embody their presence and memories (Hallam and Hockey, 2001; Maddrell, 2013; Romanillos, 2015). Because of their emotional value, these items often accompany migrants during their transnational journeys (Rachédi and Halsouet, 2017). Rosa Mas Giralt (2018) assessed the role of copresence by proxy during an interview with Julia, a Honduran woman who migrated to the United Kingdom. Before her immigration journey, Julia inherited a few belongings from her late father and traveled with them to the United Kingdom. She explained that she would never consider leaving these items in Honduras as they embodied her father’s support and love (Mas Giralt, 2018). Julia’s statement echoes other testimonies of migrants in Quebec. The research group “death in the context of migration” (*Mort en contexte de migration* — MECMI) interviewed migrants from different origins and cultures to better understand their experiences associated with losing someone they care about in Canada. These scholars found that many of their interviewees hold items that belonged to their deceased loved ones, helping them to preserve a strong emotional tie with the with those who have passed on (Rachédi and Halsouet, 2017). One of the best illustrations of copresence by proxy might be the altar built during the Day of the Dead (i.e., the ofrenda) since it is made of objects and items associated with defunct loved ones (Brandes, 2006).

Virtual copresence is a form of bonding from a distance using digital means of communication. Mourners who reside far from the deceased have used communication services for centuries to be in contact with relatives and friends to express condolences and offer support (Bravo, 2017; Saramo, 2018). While mourners have used postal services, flowers, telegraphs, and telephones, they now also use social media such as Facebook and Instagram to share and instantaneously receive photos or videos of the deceased. Mourners also write messages directly on the social media accounts of the departed if they remain open after their death (Adams, 2015; Babis, 2021). This practice allows migrant mourners to feel close and express their feelings about both the deceased and surviving loved ones without traveling (Walter, 2015). Mourners also employ video applications (e.g., Skype and Zoom) to attend funerals virtually when it is not possible for

them to travel where the ceremony is taking place (Le Gall and Rachédi, 2019). People living in the context of migration have also created digital cemeteries to share and express their grief (Sultana et al., 2019). Some of these tributes created by migrants remain active for years, demonstrating the potential of digital technologies to maintain continuing bonds throughout the migratory context (Sultana et al., 2019; Wilding and Baldassar, 2020). Although these technologies offer a proxy for physical presence, they certainly do not replace it since, as pointed out by Le Gall and Rachédi, “[w]hat is lacking among migrants is the ability to meet with their families [physically] and talk with them, and this lack is felt particularly strongly in moments of crisis” (Le Gall and Rachédi, 2019, p.79).

This is where physical copresence becomes important. Baldassar (2008; 2014) explains that physical copresence is achieved through direct contact between people in the same place. For people living far from their family, physical copresence is often limited to a couple of relatives and/or close friends. It can take place during funerals, ceremonies, or informal gathering. Physical copresence can also be extended to copresence with the remains of the deceased, such as visiting the tombstone or keeping some ashes, but here again it is much more complicated for people living abroad (Jassal, 2015). When someone dies abroad, the physical copresence with the body is often tied to the repatriation process of the remains. While the repatriation of the migrant body provides the deceased a symbolic return home (Gardner, 2002; Oliver, 2004; Zirh, 2012; Hunter, 2016), it often means griever in diaspora must travel considerable distances to visit the grave (Heikkinen and Lumme-Sandt, 2013). Certain family members choose to keep the remains in their host country, or to divide the ashes between different places (Walter, 2012; Jassal, 2015) as a symbolic gesture towards the multiple geographies of migrant lives.

The fourth type of strategy identified by Baldassar (2018) to maintain emotional links from afar is through the use of imagination. Mourners employ copresence by imagination to experience an embodied connection with the deceased (Maddrell, 2016). These ties are crystalized on the internal beliefs of meeting a beloved again on another plane (e.g., Heaven or Nirvana), prayers to ask for the welfare of a loved one’s soul (Cameron Meyer and Carlton-Ford, 2017), or by having internal conversations with a deceased (Mankell, 2017). Copresence through imagination can be facilitated by different practices such as religious ceremonies or ‘memorial conversations’ which have been employed by social workers to accompany migrants in their grief (Mongeau and Rachédi, 2017). During the memorial conversations, social workers prompt a series of questions such as: “What could the deceased say about you or your loved ones? What advice could the deceased give you today?” (Mongeau and Rachédi, 2017, p.164), to help grieving migrants feel closer to their deceased loved one even if their body was buried in another country. Yet, Mongeau and Rachédi (2017) warn that this type of practice should be used with caution since it can trigger painful memories for people who have lost friends or relatives under challenging circumstances.

Copresence through imagination can also be facilitated through writing which can take the form of a journal, letters, or even a novel. For instance, writers Mario Benedetti (1982) and Dany Laferrière (2011) wrote about how individuals who returned from exile to their countries bring back with them the spirit and memories of those who died and were buried in diaspora, producing their symbolic repatriation as expressed by Laferrière (2011, 219):

*My father has returned
to his birthplace.
I brought him back.
Not the body
burned to the bone by ice.
But the spirit that made it possible
for him to face
the deepest solitude.*

These different forms of copresence illustrate the variety and the complexity of spatial dimensions that are at stake when death hits migrants. Researchers have extensively studied physical locations associated with death in the context of migration, such as the place of death, cemeteries, official memorials, and funeral parlours (Gardner, 2002; Zirh, 2012; Hunter and Ammann, 2017; Saramo et al., 2019; Marschall, 2020), as well as different postmortem geographies, such as the movements of the corpse (Zirh, 2012; Jassal, 2015; Alavez et al. 2021). Other scholars have focused on how migrant grievers, in their quotidian lives, deal with local geographies that host precious recollections or harbour painful memories associated with a deceased (Alavez, forthcoming). In this project, I aim to further study the potential of maps and mapping to (re)build continuing bonds in the context of migration by using the four main copresence strategies proposed by Baldassar (2008; 2014) to structure my reflections.

4.4 The ofrenda

According to Mexican folklore, the spirit of the deceased returns to the realm of the living to visit their families on the Day of the Dead (i.e., November 2nd). Each year, towards the end of October, people across Mexico set an altar —called ‘ofrenda’— in their homes to provide the spirits of the dead with the things they enjoyed when they were alive, such as their favourite food, drinks, and belongings (Brandes, 2006). Grievers also decorate the altars with candles, sugar skulls, paper crafts, and flowers (i.e., marigolds) (Pomar, 1987). However, ofrendas are much more complex than simply remembering the deceased; they have a social function. Relatives and friends build the altar together by laying on it objects that make them remember the deceased, and once the ofrenda is finished, the participants spend the night telling stories about the departed (Mendoza Lujan, 2006; Nanko-Fernández, 2014; Cottingham, 2017).

Mexican migrants have carried this tradition to their host countries since it represents a means of remembering their deceased relatives and friends from afar as well as preserving their culture (Marchi, 2009). For many migrants, ofrendas remain part of the domestic space, but they have also built public ofrendas as means to grieve collectively (Brandes, 2006). Ofrendas have also been erected in the public sphere for political statements such as celebrating Mexican heritage abroad or protesting migrant deaths (Marchi, 2010; Cottingham, 2017).

While ofrendas remain mainly made of analog artifacts (e.g., photos, drinks, food, cloths, objects), they can also take a virtual or performative form to enhance their significance and their visibility (Cottingham, 2017). For example, Nina Lutz (2020), a graduate student at the MIT Media Lab, employed computational technologies to apply digital layers to a physical ofrenda. Her ofrenda became an art installation during which visitors were invited to generate their own

altar by interacting with multimedia content related to the day of the dead celebrations across Mexico. Lutz's goal was to promote this tradition outside Mexico and to study how digital technologies can deepen Latinx culture in the United States (Lutz, 2020). Multimedia artist Monica Grunwald (2021) also manufactured an immersive ofrenda named 'El Muro de Duelo' (The wall of mourning) as a response to the construction of the wall on the border of the United States and Mexico. Her altar is composed of two chambers separated by a wall. One of the chambers, a dining room transformed into a mourning room with candles, is inaccessible. Grunwald's ofrenda points out how immigration policies robbed families of their right to mourn the passing of a beloved person together.

Among the multiple museum initiatives celebrating the Day of the Dead and Mexican culture across the United States of America (Congdon et al., 1999; Marchi, 2009), the annual displays organized by the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) is of particular interest. In one of their ofrendas, they set up an Instagram account so that people around the world could share photos of their deceased beloved. Then, the pictures are projected on an altar during the exhibition (Viera et al., 2020). In 2021, the Los Angeles Times (2021) newspaper also presented a digital altar on their website with photographs and written messages shared by griever. This digital ofrenda exhibited 1,000 pictures uploaded by mourners from Mexico and The United States.

The production of digital and analog ofrendas have contributed to strengthening the affective links between Mexican migrants and those with whom they share stories and memories. These stories and memories are often linked to places and people that have been left behind. The ofrenda's folklore is fundamental while living in migration since the soul of the deceased will visit the griever in their homes—even if they live far from the grave of the deceased (Román, 2018). Ofrendas embody a range of places and spatial relationships that are core to people living abroad: the places where they live, the ones they left and the ones they crossed; the places where their relatives live and died; and the places associated to all the memories, stories, and artefacts that the altar is made of. We propose that mapping-ofrendas might be a way of revealing the complexities of these spatial relationships as well as a way of exploring the potential of mapping as a form of mourning in the context of migration.

4.5 Mapping an Ofrenda

Making maps as a form of mourning and remembering is not something that has been extensively discussed in the literature. One notable exception is the series of maps designed and discussed by artist and teacher Michael J. Coulis (2010). After losing his wife in a car accident soon after their wedding, Coulis went alone on a bike trip across Canada to deal with his grief. In several places, Coulis experiences 'spatial hallucinations'—places where he vividly recalled his partner (Coulis, 2010). This resonates with the concept of spatial copresence by imagination described previously, and the idea that the presence of the deceased accompanies the mourner (Maddrell, 2016; Pearce, 2019). Throughout his biking journey, Coulis produced a series of very personal analog maps as a form of auto-ethnographic exercise that combines cartography, continuing bonds, and mobility. As discussed elsewhere, "More than the maps per se, the power of this project lies in Coulis's capacity to transform a very personal experience into a meaningful conversation between mind, body, places, and memory" (Caquard 2011, 139). In the mapping-ofrenda projects discussed in this chapter, we propose to further explore the potential of mapping

for grieving from a distance through co-designing two mapping-ofrendas with two Latina American women living in Montreal: Alice and Amelia.

Alice defines herself as an Italo-Mexican immigrant living in Montreal. Every year she crafts an ofrenda with other migrants. Following the Mexican tradition, Alice dismantles the altar after three days. Alice was interested in a digital mapping-ofrenda project as a means to collect family memories and to share them with her relatives who live far from her in Italy and Mexico.

Alice told her life story during a two-and—half-hour open-ended interview that took place on January 2021. She started by narrating the migratory path of her family in detail. Her father met her mother in Chihuahua, Mexico. After a brief stay in Mexico City, they traveled to Italy, where Alice and her sister were born. Alice and her family migrated to Quebec after spending much of her childhood in Italy, driven by her father's work. After four years of living in Montreal, Alice's family split. She and her mother stayed in Quebec while her father and sister returned to Italy. After her parents' separation, Alice started a relationship with a Mexican immigrant who introduced her to the Day of the Dead tradition. Alice was intrigued by the ofrendas since they allowed her to mourn and feel connected to people who died in Italy and Mexico.

I had a boyfriend from the D.F. (Mexico City). Since we met, each day of the dead, he always made an altar, and I learned that from him. I consider it a very healing practice...as a migrant, I cannot go—every year—to the cemeteries in Italy or Mexico. Therefore, this tradition was ideal for remembering my defunct loved ones... I started making ofrendas with him, and I have never stopped. (Alice)¹³



Figure 23. Alice's ofrenda (photos by Alice)

¹³ Translated by the author from Spanish to English

After the end of this relationship, Alice continued building ofrendas with other migrants with whom that tradition resonated (Figure 23). By doing so, Alice maintained the social element of the ofrenda by sharing and listening to stories about deceased that are far away from the people who contributed to the altar. Alice narrated some of these stories with the support of photographs and objects. For example, she related the story of a cup, which a dear friend gifted to her. After her friend's passing, Alice brought this item from Italy to Quebec as a memento and every year she puts it on the altar to remember him. The ofrenda also included her deceased relatives' favourite drinks: coke, coffee, and tequila for her Mexican deceased; wine and beer for her late Italian grandparents. These items produced continuing bonds by proxy with her family from Italy and Mexico. These items also create continuing bonds by imagination because, according to the tradition, the souls of the deceased would travel from their countries of origin to Quebec to taste the drinks of the ofrenda.

Mapping this ofrenda became mapping the interview in which Alice talks about the different objects that constitute her ofrenda, but also the different places, memories and stories associated to these objects. To keep the integrity and the details of these stories and memories, the latest version of Atlascine was chosen by the storyteller and the researchers. In this version, Atlascine offers the possibility of mapping any kind of audiovisual story in their entirety using tags. As described by Olmedo and Caquard (2022), the core idea of this new version of Atlascine is that it keeps the map and the story (i.e., audio/video and text transcript) always side by side. The map is interactively connected to the story via annotations which enables the user not only to visualize the story, but also to understand how it has been tagged. This interactivity also gives the possibility to use the map as a way to navigate within the story. Therefore, mapping with Atlascine allows to listen, observe, and represent a narrative. An Atlascine map is made of tree rings symbols that are coloured according to the colours associated with each theme/tag. Through this mapping process, the map-ofrenda offered an overview of the geography of the memories shared by Alice during the interview. It also offers the possibility of visualizing different moments in Alice's interview when she talks about meaningful places, events, or persons. Further, Atlascine allowed us hearing how Alice talks about these sections during her interview—including her intonations and silences.

After listening to the interview several times, a series of themes of interest were identified to be tagged and mapped, such as Alice's family members (e.g., Alice, sister, mother, father) and the different items that are part of the ofrenda (e.g., objects, food, participants). Those themes were annotated along with the places that they were associated with by Alice. By mapping memories associated to each family members and to each meaningful item, an overall geography of the ofrenda started to emerge (see Figure 24).

This geography is made of places with which Alice feels a close attachment: Mexico (i.e., her mother's home country), Italy (i.e., the country where she was born), and Quebec (i.e., the place where she currently resides). Mapping this ofrenda also revealed the geographies of certain objects that people carry with them (Figure 25). For instance, the ofrenda had a rosary from Chihuahua, where Alice's mother was born. The rosary evokes Alice's nostalgia for home, a common emotion for people living in diaspora (Blunt, 2007; Brun and Fábos, 2015).

For me it is a very important rosary because the Raramuri community made it with the soil of Chihuahua. They taught me that if I want to remember home, I need to wet that rosary; then it

would smell like the ground after it rains. When I feel nostalgic for Chihuahua, I wet that rosary and I imagine that I am on my patio, in my house, in Chihuahua. (Alice)

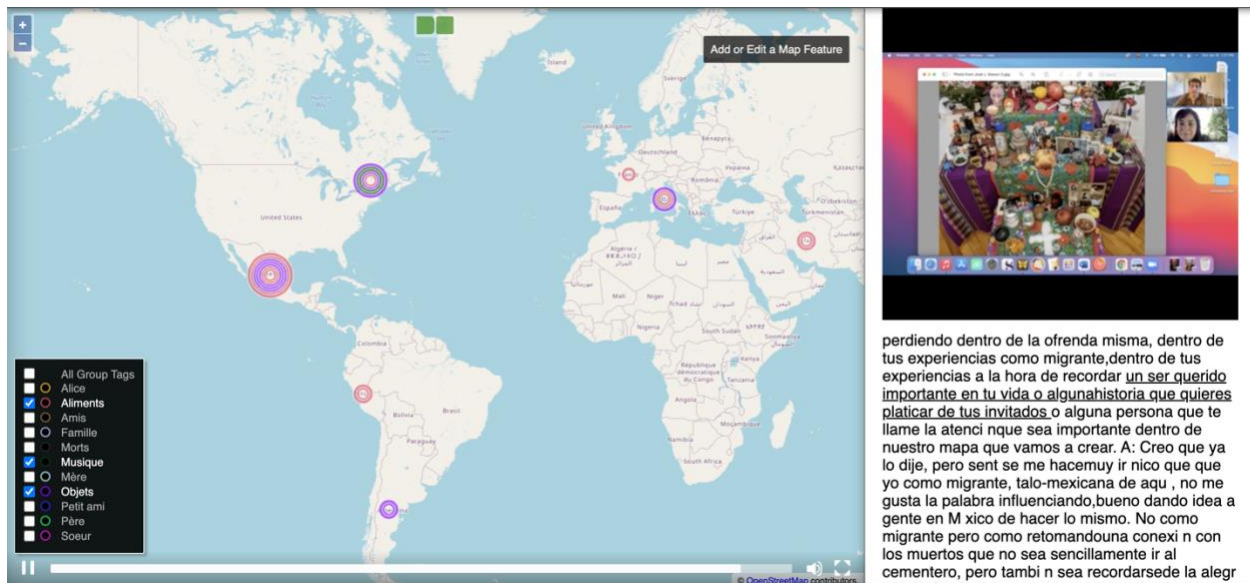


Figure 24. This map of Alice's ofrenda unveils the global geography of what constitutes her altar as well as the types of the memories and people associated with different places.

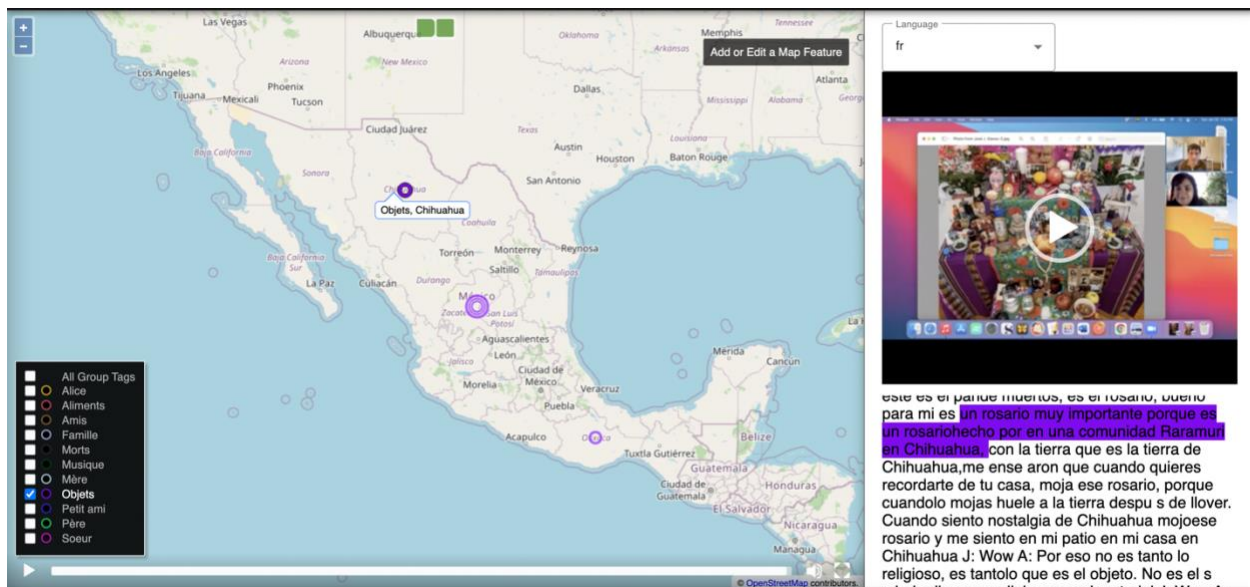


Figure 25. Mementos on Alice's ofrenda associated with places in Mexico (e.g., rosary, crickets).

The altar also included a few cricket handcrafts that Alice bought during a trip with her father to Oaxaca, Mexico. These crickets symbolized a meaningful time with her father, who is not dead but lives far from her.

Yes, it is an ofrenda for the day of the dead, but it is also an ofrenda of remembrance. It reminded me of trips that were very important for me, for example, when I went with my father—an Italian—to Oaxaca...those crickets have that meaning for me. (Alice)

This map also shows the extent of places and stories shared by other contributors to the ofrenda. A friend of Alice's brought her late grandfather's cards, dice, and pipe from Argentina, while another carried traditional drinks from Peru. A contributor from France bought cheese for their relatives, and Alice's boyfriend left dry fruit for his late friends from Iran. Alice did not go into the details about these items since they are part of personal accounts and private conversations, but those contributions illustrated the social and the collaborative dimension of Alice's ofrenda.

Alice explained that the ofrenda is more than the sum of the items it is made of. She emphasized that an essential part is the process of making it rather than its final appearance. At times, Alice had to drive significant distances to get one item, such as a guava that she wanted to offer to her uncle. She also explained that music is an essential intangible element of the ofrenda that plays different roles. It allows the participants to remember special events associated to a particular song or music (Hallam et al., 1999; Jonsson and Walter, 2017), while it also connects migrants with their culture while living in diaspora (Henry et al., 2005).

... and I say, 'play the songs!', because you remember people through music. We talk about if they like a particular song... and, in the end, (music) also connects us because almost all the people who come to this celebration are migrants... it is a way of reconnecting us with our life, where we come from. (Alice)

In the final stage of the interview, Alice expressed some concerns about making the ofrendas. She felt that it might be a form of cultural appropriation since she doesn't consider herself fully Mexican. However, this form of guilt has not yet stopped her from recreating the ofrenda every year; the ofrenda is too important in Alice maintaining her continuing bonds from afar.

This mapping-ofrenda offered different forms of copresences as revealed during a debriefing session with Alice. First, we discussed with her the capacity of the mapping-ofrenda to reveal copresences by proxy. She described that what she really appreciated about the map is that it clearly revealed the global geography of such a small altar she and her friends set every year in the corner of her living room to share intimate memories. Mapping the ofrenda was a way to move from the very personal and intimate to the collective and the global. She acknowledged that she unconsciously knew the global extent of this network, but the map made it much more evident. Alice also recognized the potential of this map to contribute to virtual copresences. She ambitions to send the hyperlink of this online map to her relatives in Mexico and Italy to share with them the stories hosted on the mapping-ofrenda and to ask them to contribute with their own memories and stories. Third, Alice expressed that an essential part of her ofrenda is its social dimension. For the next 'día de muertos', she plans to invite the other participants to be part of the mapping-ofrenda. We discussed the possibility of this mapping-ofrenda project to evolve into a collaborative effort where every contributor might tell their stories about the items they set on the altar. Lastly, Alice also mentioned that each ofrenda is different every year since the participants are not always the same—and sadly, more friends and relatives have perished over the years. Nevertheless, she suggested utilizing the mapping-ofrenda as an archive of the memories shared during each day of the dead and to expand this archive over time. In that sense, the map-ofrenda could become an archive of objects, places and practices that trigger and perpetuate the memories of the deceased.

4.6 The map as an ofrenda

In the second project, I worked with Amelia, a Colombian immigrant living in Quebec, to map places where she feels connected to her late father. The map was considered a form of altar in which each posthumous memory concerning her father was organized geographically, while the mapping process took the role of building the ofrenda and sharing stories about her father. This map was co-constructed through a series of four working sessions from July 2021 to January 2022 that took place online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the first session, Amelia and the researcher agreed on the project's objectives. Additionally, Amelia narrated her life as a migrant in Quebec and how it changed after her father's passing. The second session was structured around discussing the options for carrying out 'the mapping-ofrenda'. After some consideration, Amelia decided to create a digital story map that would include multimedia files (i.e., audio or video) allowing her family—and particularly her aging mother—to listen to her voice instead of simply reading her memories. Among the multiple existing online mapping applications (see Caquard and Dimitrov, 2017), StoryMapJS was selected for this project. StoryMapJS is a user-friendly online mapping application designed to map journeys and to tell stories with maps, texts, photos, and audiovisual material. It also offers an interface in Spanish, which was essential for Amelia, who wanted to share the map with her relatives in Colombia.

The third session was a virtual workshop during which the map was developed. Amelia and the researcher identified three chapters in her memories associated with her father's passing that structured the map-ofrenda: the day that Amelia received the notification of his death, the posthumous memories in Montreal as a migrant, and her childhood memories in Colombia. The final session was a debriefing interview that served to reflect on the potential and limits of this exercise.

Amelia moved to Quebec, Canada in 2004 for economic reasons. She did a series of part-time jobs before deciding to go back to university to obtain a graduate degree with the goal of achieving a certain level of economic stability. One night, while she was returning from school, she received a voice message from her sister informing her that their father had just passed away in Colombia. Amelia knew that her dad was not doing well, and she was supposed to travel back home the following week to take care of him. When she heard the news, she entered a state of shock and started to cry. She then decided to go to the airport to change her plane ticket to leave as soon as possible, but the airline company refused to make the exchange. She then travelled to Colombia the following week as originally planned and when she came back to Montreal, something special happened to her. On her way back from the airport, she stopped at the Place-des-Arts metro station where she heard a street musician playing Schubert's Ave Maria with the violin. This music triggered the memory of her father, who then materialized in the metro station next to her (Figure 26).



Figure 26. Amelia remembered the day she felt the presence of her father in Montreal's subway.

This kind of posthumous appearance is known as ‘grieving illusion’ (Parkes and Prigerson, 1986) or ‘grieving hallucination’ (Coulis, 2010). Amelia called this episode a ‘grieving strategy’ during the interview. She explained that it was triggered by the combination of the music and the place, as she was eager to share the music heard in the Montreal subway with her father. In fact, Amelia believes that she brought her father’s spirit back with her from Bogota to Montreal. Her father never had the chance to come and visit her in Canada, so she gave his spirit a tour of the Saint-Joseph Oratory and explained to him that the brother André—who founded the oratory at the beginning of the 20th century—shared with him a catholic faith and a need to help people. Amelia’s father also appeared to Amelia in other occasions and locations, for instance in Montreal’s Old Port and Mount Royal Lookout where Amelia wanted to share the atmosphere, architecture, and scenery of these places with her father. However, one of the places with the strongest emotional bonds with her father ended up being Park Lafontaine. After her father passed away, Amelia met Suzanne—an older woman suffering from a terminal illness—in this park. They became friends after having several thoughtful conversations in this place. Two years later, Suzanne passed away, yet Amelia kept in touch with Suzanne’s relatives. On one occasion, she was invited to a party where she met Suzanne’s widower. Amelia mentioned to him her father’s passing and her ‘grieving strategies’ to preserve his memory with her in Montreal. Suzanne’s husband smiled at this revelation and confessed to Amelia that he senses that his deceased wife leaves his clothes ready for him every morning. Amelia and Suzanne’s husband connected their continuing bonds by imagination during their talk. Together, they created a narrative where their deceased loved ones kept each other company and waited for them in the afterlife. For Amelia, Park Lafontaine is a place that crystallizes the shared memory of her father, Suzanne, and her widower (Figure 27).



Figure 27. Amelia narrates how she feels the presence of her father and Suzanne in Park Lafontaine.

In the second half of 2021, Amelia went back to Colombia and stayed for six months because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This extensive stay gave her the opportunity to get her family involved in the mapping project. At first, Amelia had informal conversations with her brothers and sisters to collect their memories associated with their father. They became very interested in the mapping project and began interviewing each other. They even traveled to a hacienda where they grew up to locate places where they shared intimate moments with their father on the map (Figure 28). For example, Amelia interviewed her sister Lucy on a rock along a stream where their father used to reflect and clean himself after work. Amelia found her father's favourite novel inside the house, and her sister Nancy showed some earrings that he had made for her. The book and the earrings illustrate how belongings of a deceased can become invaluable legacies (Hockey et al., 2010; Maddrell, 2016). Amelia also shared the online map with her nephew, who lives in a distant city in Colombia. He decided to contribute to Amelia's mapping project by recording himself playing his grandfather's favourite song on the guitar (Figure 29).

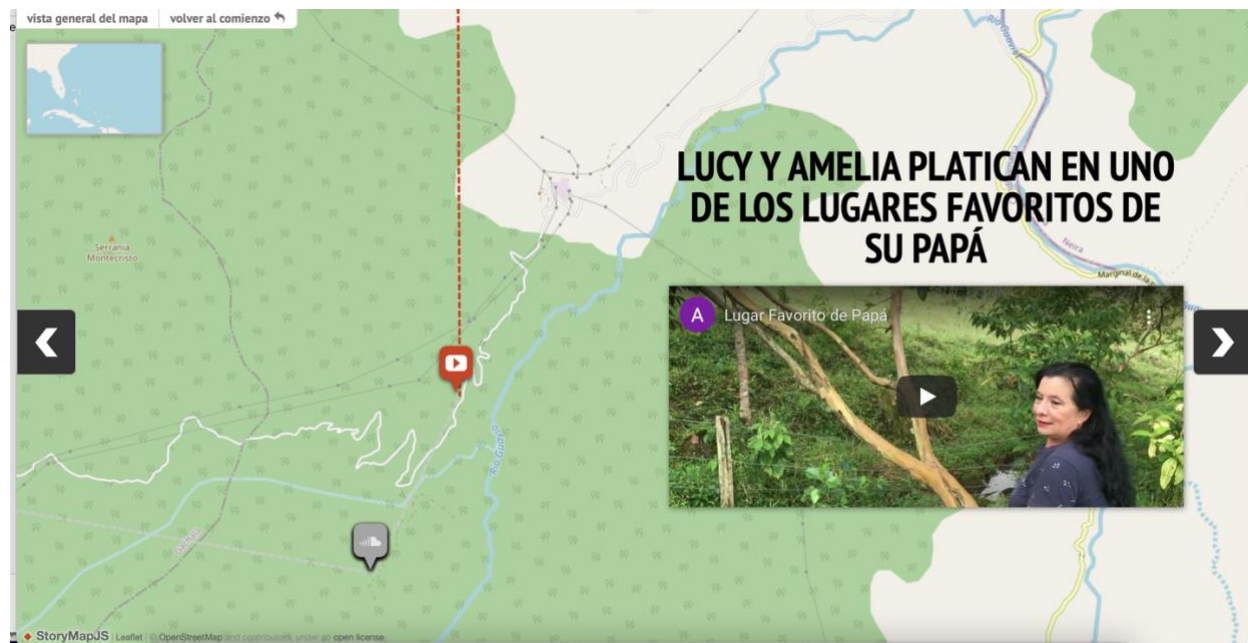


Figure 28. Lucy and Amelia remember their father in one of his favorite places.



Figure 29. Adrian, Amelia's nephew, played the guitar to remember his grandfather.

Throughout this mapping process, Amelia and I realized that there were singular differences between the continuing bonds in Montreal and those in Colombia. The former appears more personal and associated with imagination in Montreal's public spaces that Amelia's father never visited. The latter's were mostly anecdotes reconstructed within the family and linked to intimate and domestic spaces, such as the family home, a stream, or a garden. Annika Jonson and Tony Walter (2017) explain that most continuing bonds are associated with places that griever and

their deceased loved ones experienced together. Yet, they also mentioned that these postmortem ties could exist in spaces where grievors would have liked to visit or encounter their deceased beloved (Jonsson and Walter, 2017). This is the case for Amelia. The map as an ofrenda suggests that postmortem emotions and memories travel with migrants to their host countries and might help them to produce continuing bonds in diaspora (Boccagni and Baldassar, 2015). However, some other posthumous memories and stories remain in their countries of origin, and they may be waiting for the return of migrants and exiles to unearth them. What makes a memory travel or stay in a particular place remains to be investigated.

Amelia returned to Montreal in January 2022 after a six-month stay in Colombia. We met online for one last time to reflect on the map and ponder on the project's next steps. During this debriefing session, Amelia expressed that the mapping-ofrenda represented for her a valuable practice for coping with grief and sharing precious memories about her father from afar. During this session, Amelia also acknowledged that she felt guilty for having been the only storyteller for this project. She then invited me to tell a story about a relative or friend who had passed away. I decided to narrate the story of my mother, who suffered the loss of both of her parents as a Puerto Rican migrant living in Mexico. After listening to this story with attention, Amelia invited me to make a mapping-ofrenda for my grandparents, reversing the role originally defined between the storyteller and the cartographer, but also embracing the sharing and listening spirit of the ofrenda and extending it to the mapping-ofrenda.

Three months after this debriefing session, Amelia contacted me with more photos and memories that she wanted to add on her map. In particular, she wanted to include two mementos that she brought from Colombia to Quebec during her last trip as means to feel close to her family (Mas Giralt, 2018). They were a pendant that belonged to her father and a mug with a photo of her parents. She also mentioned that she has been talking to her sisters and they planned to unveil the mapping-ofrenda to their other relatives next August, on her father's birthday. During this event they will ask other relatives and friends to participate in this project, including their brother who is a writer and lives in Bogota, and their niece who studies in Germany. Amelia believed that the mapping-ofrenda could serve as a potential mediator to reconnect with them. In that sense, Amelia's map goes beyond the representation of her continuing bonds related to her father to become a collective ofrenda that serves to strengthen social connections in the context of migration. It is a process that enables one to reconnect with those who died, as well as with those who are still alive but live far away.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I introduced and discussed the concept and practice of mapping-ofrenda. Inspired by the Mexican tradition of setting up an altar during the Day of the Dead to remember and honour departed loved ones, I co-designed two online ofrenda-maps with two Latina American women who migrated to Montreal, Canada. The original goal of these two projects was to explore the potential of mapping-ofrenda as part of remembering and mourning while living in diaspora. The project co-designed with Alicia led to tracing the geography of the objects and memories that were part of her traditional altar, while the mapping-ofrenda co-designed with Amelia was dedicated to places of memories related to her late father, who died in Colombia while she was living in Canada. Approaching these two projects through the different strategies

developed by migrants to bond with loved ones from a distance (see Baldassar 2008; 2014) led us to identify three potential contributions of mapping-ofrenda in the particular context of mourning in the context of migration: triggering and sharing fading memories, revealing the global extent of intimate geographies of grief and reactivating and strengthening connections with people that live far away.

In February 2019, The New York Times published an article about grieving strategies shared by their readers. One of them answered: “There is no greater gift than a story about a [deceased] loved one at the very moment it seems there will never be new stories” (Pogue, 2019). Through its capacity of triggering buried memories associated to places, the mapping-ofrenda can contribute to gifting mourners with new stories about deceased loved ones. Mapping-ofrenda is as much about sharing vivid memories as it is about triggering and reactivating fading ones that could generate stories on the verge of being forgotten. Maps, just like places, smells and, sounds have the potential of reactivating buried and fading memories. Maps can also be mobilized to share these stories. Although not everyone wishes to remember and mourn—publicly or actively (Jonsson and Walter, 2018), for those who wish to, online or analog maps offer appropriate options.

Mapping-ofrenda can also unleash and reveal the geographies of memories that are embedded in the traditional ofrenda (i.e., in the altar). During her interview, Alice talked about the meaning of the different items her traditional altar is made of. Turning this interview into a mapping-ofrenda revealed the global geography of her memories and of her relationships to the past and to the present. While these geographies were condensed within the small intimate altar she built in a corner of her home, the mapping-ofrenda enables them to reveal themselves along with the rich and complex geographies and mobilities that often characterize migrants’ lives. Mapping these posthumous intimate geographies can also contribute to revealing the global scale of grieving and remembering in the context of migration.

Yet perhaps the main value of mapping-ofrenda in the context of migration is its capacity to reactivate and strengthen existing links and connections between people that are still alive but that might live far away. In both mapping-ofrenda projects presented in this chapter, the connection with relatives and friends as well as their involvement in the mapping process appeared to be a necessity. Amelia’s family members ended up contributing to the mapping-ofrenda while Alicia was planning to invite relatives and friends to contribute to it. In both cases, mapping-ofrenda was envisioned as an opportunity to reactivate and strengthen the connection with the living. Mapping-ofrenda is then as much about (re)connecting with our memories as it is about (re)connecting with the present and with the people we love but who may be living far away.

What characterizes mapping-ofrendas in this chapter is their capacity to stimulate our memories, to ground them to places, and to organize them spatially. They open the possibility of preserving those intimate reminiscences as well as sharing them. They seek to reinforce or recreate bonds with the past, as well as with the present through nurturing relationships with living relatives and friends that can be far away. Mapping-ofrenda in the context of migration is a way of condensing time and space into a map format, making visible the global scale of intimate memories,

honouring the life journey, and acknowledging both the very personal and the highly universal need to remember and grieve.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Inspired by Avril Maddrell's (2016) and Karen Bishop's (2016) proposals, I explored deep mapping as a methodology to represent and analyze the different geographies of mourning and loss in the context of migration. I started this project by reviewing the work done in deep mapping and identifying three central praxes developed over the years. The first one envisions writing and theatre as the primary form of spatial expression (see Heat-Moon, 1991; Ryden, 1993; Biggs, 2010; Shanks, 2012). The second relies on geographical information sciences and multimedia to research and navigate the different dimensions of space (see Presner, 2015; Bodenhamer et al., 2015; 2021). The third engages with creative approaches to analyze and reveal more personal and qualitative features of places (see Wood 2010; 2015). Yet, some practitioners of this third perspective have been critical of deep mapping as a method and have distanced their cartographic processes from it (see Knowles et al., 2015). However, these three deep mapping praxes have in common their interest in diversifying the means of expression and the source of data for reaching a common goal: an in-depth understanding of a place or an event.

Throughout my own practice, I was able to envision deep mapping from a slightly different perspective. A viewpoint that resonates with the one proposed by Kent C. Ryden (2015, 644), for whom "deep mapping is primarily a sensitivity rather than a technique or method, a way of seeing rather than a strategy or a school". Indeed, in this project, I do not see deep mapping as a method, a set of replicable steps, or even a collection of mapping representations. I consider deep mapping as an intimate and non-replicable practice. I experienced deep mapping as a desire, a never-ending task that invited me to mobilize multiple forms of mapping to reflect and engage with complex stories, memories, and emotions. In this project, the relevancy of deep mapping lies as much on the maps created as it does on the performative and non-representational outcomes: mapping as a way to listen and engage in-depth with narratives of mourning and loss; mapping as means to reflect alongside storytellers; mapping as a way of interacting with social workers, cartographers, and artists; mapping as a form of engagement with diasporic literature and folklore; mapping as a reflexivity process; mapping as support for grieving in the context of migration.

This deep mapping project also led me to reflect on the past, the decisions and difficulties I experienced during my practice, and what I learned from them. As a doctoral student intending to use cartography to analyze what happened to migrants after they died in Quebec, my first hurdle was finding the data to create these maps. I was expecting that data concerning migrant mortality or their bodies' repatriation should be accessible in regional or national government databases. Unfortunately, it is not the case. However, during my search for data, I encountered the academic work of the team 'Morts en Contexte Migratoire' (MECMI) in Quebec. I contacted them by email, and I was invited to present my research proposal to their lead researcher Lilyane Rachédi. She was intrigued by my mapping project since she saw the potential of maps to visualize their interviews, focus groups, and life stories, as well as a resource to dialogue with migrant griever about their experiences (Alavez et al., 2019; Rachédi et al., forthcoming). Lilyane Rachédi told me that MECMI was finishing co-producing a series of interviews with migrants who lost a loved one in Quebec and suggested that I could map one of these interviews. She selected the migratory trajectory of Alicia and her late husband. Alicia and her family migrated to Canada with the idea of settling in Quebec after residing in various countries (e.g.,

Congo, Burundi, Chad, Belgium, and France). However, after their arrival, Alicia's husband's job forced him to continue traveling and soon after, after returning to Quebec from one of those trips, he suddenly died from a brain tumor. After his passing, his body was repatriated to Congo.

I was ready to map this story, but there was an issue. This interview, along with all the others, was in French, a language I can read but hardly speak. Therefore, we designed a way to collaborate. We created an online table with the main events within Alicia's interview (Figure 30). The table allowed me to see the structure of the events described by Alicia and to start exploring different options to map the interview. Ultimately, I considered Atlascine the more suitable platform to map the chronology of events compiled in the table since it could dynamically represent the premortem and postmortem mobilities of Alicia and her partner in their story¹⁴.

Trajectoire Alicia

	1985	1990	1995	2000	2010	2015	2017
Naissance du futur mari à Alicia au Congo	Études en médecine du futur mari à Alicia au Congo.		1997 : Mariage immigration au Burundi	2005 : Naissance du premier fils, au Tchad	2013- 15 mai : au Tchad Examens médicales avant d'immigrer au Canada, tout était correct.	Réseaux après le décès :	
Naissance d'Alicia au Congo			1998 : Immigration de la famille au Tchad	2007 : Naissance du 2 ^e fils, au Tchad.	2013- 17 mai : Présentation de la mémoire de maîtrise (bien réussie avec distinction) du mari au Belgique. Il fait un AVC	Primaire : <i>Enfants au Canada, sœur, frères et famille du mari au Congo,</i>	
				Réseaux avant décès	2013 13 Juillet : Immigration de la famille au Canada. Entrée du mari à l'hôpital Notre Dame à Montréal. Diagnostic d'une tumeur cérébrale.	Communication téléphonique, suivi du rapatriement et funérailles au Congo, soutien moral.	
				Primaire : <i>mari et enfants, sœur, frères et famille du mari au Congo</i>	2013, Août : Retour du mari au Tchad pour régler les choses du travail. Il a été envoyé à l'Afrique du Sud pour poursuivre les soins.	Secondaire : <i>Ami du père de son défunt mari, travailleuse sociale, quelques</i>	
				Secondaire : <i>collègues d'études, au</i>	2013-1^{er} octobre : Retour au Canada, entrée à l'hôpital.		
					2013-10 octobre : Décès du mari		

Figure 30. Screenshot of the table I co-created with the MECMI team to map Alicia's story (Courtesy: Lilyane Rachédi)

Once this first map was designed, we presented and discussed it with other social workers in Quebec and France. Their feedback opened relevant questions for my own project: what different postmortem mobilities exist after the death of a loved one in the context of migration? Can multimedia (e.g., music, spoken word, videos) be used on a map? (Rachédi et al., forthcoming). Further, thanks to the discussion around Alicia's map with the MECMI team and the elaboration of my literature review, I found three additional geographies associated with mourning in the migratory context that could be interesting to map: social networks, artifacts, and memories. Indeed, the process of designing Alicia's map was crucial for putting together the second chapter of this thesis: (Deep) Mapping postmortem death in the context of migration. However,

¹⁴ The other reasons of why I selected Atlascine are part of chapter 2 of this thesis.

paradoxically, Alicia's map is not part of this chapter. This map that existed only as web document disappeared when the server that hosted this portion of the Atlascine project went down. While the rest of my maps were backed up as screenshots and videos, Alicia's map was not. However, I fortuitously found screenshots of Alicia's map on an external hard drive in early 2022 (Figure 31). This event was an important reminder that digital maps are ephemeral and must be archived properly. It also emphasized the importance of the mapping process beyond the cartographic outcome.

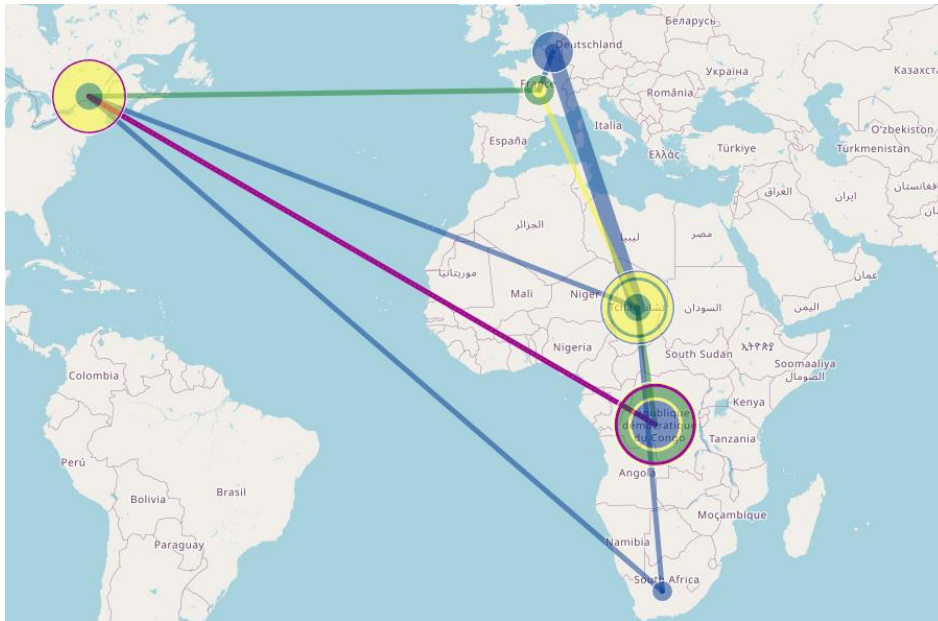


Figure 31. A screenshot of Alicia's map. It depicts Alicia's journey in yellow, her husband's journey in blue, their journey together in green and the repatriation of the corpse from Quebec to Congo in purple (Author: José Alavez).

The third chapter of the thesis is structured around two interviews: Elisa and Paul. While a third one (i.e., Lyles's interview) was mapped, it was not included in the chapter for personal reasons. Lyles was a skilled migrant from Algeria who traveled to Quebec to start his graduate studies. After two years, he traveled back to his home country to marry his fiancé. They returned to Quebec as a couple, and months later, they were expecting the birth of their first child. However, the mother and the baby died during childbirth at the hospital. A few days later, their remains got repatriated to Algeria. Lyles returned to Quebec after the repatriation (Figure 32).

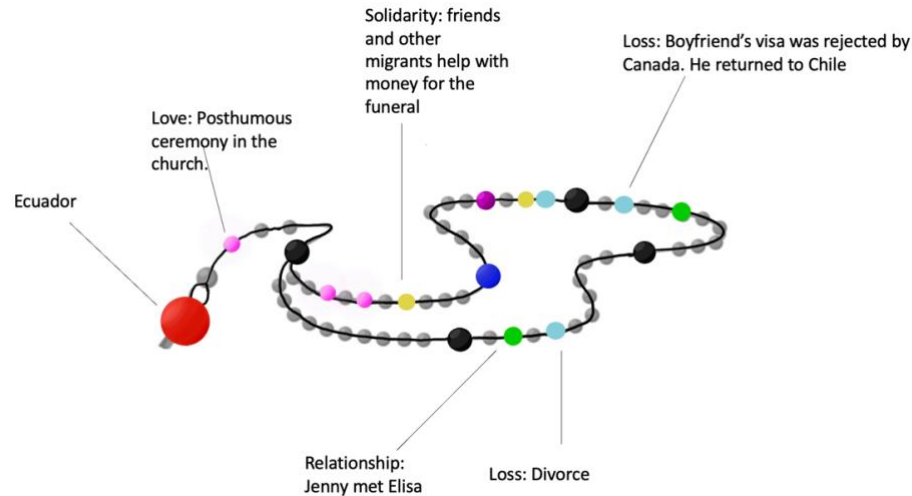


Figure 33. Sketch of a rosary representing the intimate events of Jenny's presence in Quebec as narrated by her friend Elisa (Author: José Alavez).

Whereas Elisa's cartography focused on the multiple intimate chapters as described in her narrative, Paul's map only emphasised one meaningful episode of his interview: the moment Eric died inside his home. I produced a sketch based on what happened that day as narrated by Paul. I conceived it as a wall on Paul's and Eric's domestic space. The cracks on it conveyed the flow of Paul's interview (Figure 34).

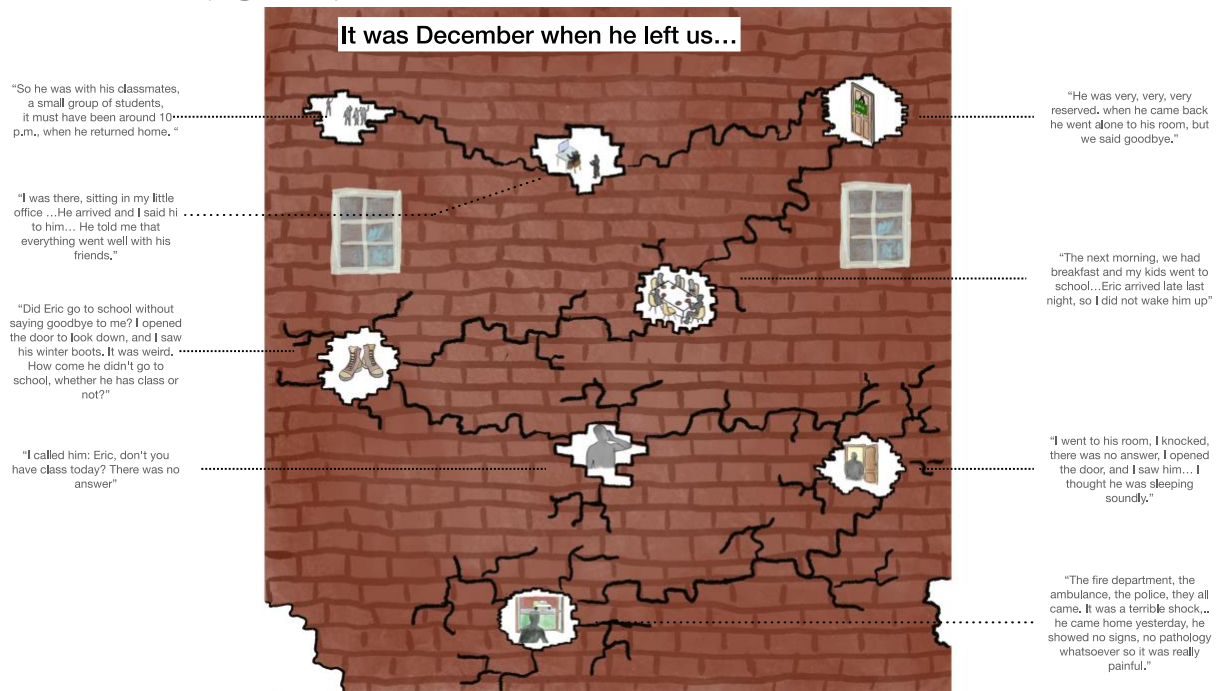


Figure 34. First sketch of Paul's story. In this representation the cracks on the wall conveyed the flow of the interview (Author: José Alavez)

However, as happened to Anne Kelly Knowles, Levi Weterveld, and Laura Strom (2015) during their first attempts to map the testimonies of Holocaust survivors, I had the sensation that Paul's map was not conveying the deep meanings of the interview. I read the transcript several times with that sketch on the side in search of clues. Then, I realized that the problem was that the

illustration was not depicting a key dimension of this interview: the change in temporality (e.g., Kronos to Kairos) after Paul found Eric's boots by the door. This issue led me to deconstruct the first draft and to turn it into the final representation (Figure 21). By reflecting on the significance of the mapping process, I realized that the first sketch was as crucial for my thesis as the final sensibility map.

After finishing Elisa and Paul's maps, I aimed to reach them to talk about these cartographies. Lilyane Rachédi and other social workers from MECMI were willing to support me in contacting the participants. They also agreed to provide me support and guidance during the interviews since I would address sensitive topics. But the COVID-19 pandemic made it difficult to meet with Elisa and Paul. However, I still considered the need for my deep mapping project to have participation and feedback from mourners who lost loved ones in the migratory context. Thanks to my closeness with some members of the Latin American community in Quebec, I was able to invite Alice and Amelia to my mapping-ofrendas project. The mapping process with them turned out to be close and intimate because, in large part, we speak the same language and share similar cultural attitudes towards death.

During our debriefing session, Amelia asked me to tell a personal story about a deceased loved one. I related the story of how my mother, a migrant living in Mexico, endured my grandmother's death in Puerto Rico. After hearing the story, Amelia suggested honoring my grandmother with a mapping-ofrenda. I told Amelia that I unintentionally started that personal mapping process three years ago. Indeed, in fall 2019, Lilyane Rachédi invited members of MECMI including myself to write a short narrative with the theme of death in a migratory context for a writing workshop. This activity aimed to create a compilation of stories that social workers could employ as pedagogical resources. I wrote a short story, "I am going home", based on the day my grandmother died and my mother's ongoing grief. MECMI did not publish the compilation of stories, but the theater troupe "ESPACE GO" produced short films¹⁵ based on the narratives we wrote during the workshop. I used this movie to start my mapping-ofrenda and reflect on my personal mapping project.

My maternal family is part of what some scholars call the sunbelt diaspora (Silver, 2020). In the second half of the twentieth century, thousands of Puerto Ricans left the island, searching for a better life. My mother was part of that exodus. She arrived in Mexico City during the last years of the 1970s. In 1990, my uncles migrated to the United States with their families. Seven years later, my grandmother left Puerto Rico and moved to Mexico City. She lived with us for 15 years before moving back to San Juan, where she passed away in 2012.

By watching the movie produced by ESPACE GO, I realized that essential aspects of my thesis project were also part of my family's grieving in the context of migration: the transition from Kronos to Kairos inside my household when my mother tried to call my grandmother the day she passed away with no answers. The metaphorical shockwave when my uncle Victor called from

¹⁵ The videos produced by ESPACE GO can be found on the following link: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1SnODWwcccdwkQZJWa2jcKCQRbRmgMJx2?usp=sharing> (Source: ESPACE GO and Lilyane Rachédi)

San Juan to inform us that my grandmother was motionless in her bed (Figure. 34). The mobilization of my maternal family travelling to San Juan for the funerals (Figure. 35). My mother's administrative difficulties to arrive on time for the funeral, as happened to Amelia. The impossibility of my father to accompany her to Puerto Rico since he did not have a United States visa. The decision of what to do with my grandmother's ashes. And, finally, my mother's and my own trip back to Mexico City, and our ongoing grieving from afar.



Figure 35. Screenshot from the short film "I am going home" (2021). My mother, interpreted by Lesly Velázquez, receiving the news concerning the death of my grandmother (Courtesy: Lilyane Rachédi and ESPACE GO)

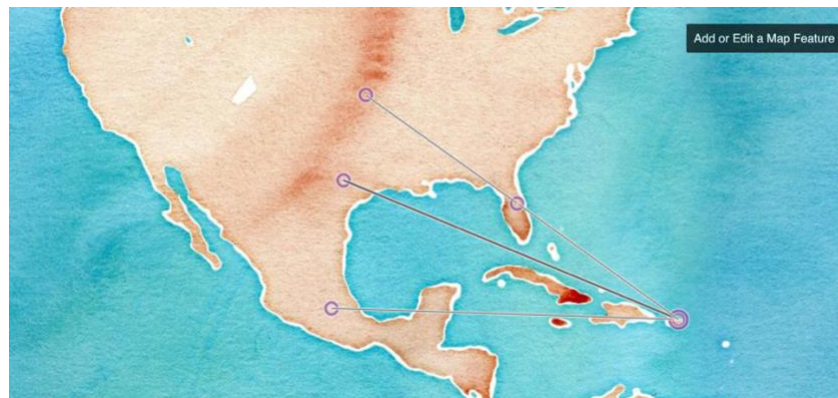


Figure 36. Map of my family travelling to San Juan after the passing of my grandmother (Author: José Alavez)

Tony Walter (1996), Avril Maddrell (2016), and David Charles Sloane (2018) have expressed the importance of their grieving experiences during their reflexivity processes. After his father's death, Tony Walter (1995) wrote an autoethnographic academic article. He reflected on how, for him, mourning consisted of an ongoing and everlasting process and not a series of steps that grievors must overcome. After experiencing the deaths of family members, friends, and a child at birth, Avril Maddrell (2016) reflected on how her grief and memories intensified in particular geographies. These experiences led her to produce her deep mapping approach. Lastly, David Charles Sloane (2018) expressed how the sudden death of her wife drove him to consider and study the different options to memorialize a beloved in the twenty-first century (e.g., a webpage, planting a tree) and to ask himself if the cemetery is dead.

I did not consider my mother's and my own grieving as a starting point in my doctoral dissertation. However, my deep mapping practice gradually blurred the distinction between my

academic practice and my personal experience (Peterle, 2018). I was not just producing cartographic representations of the interviews of Rabia, Lenka, Paul, Lyles, Alicia, Elisa, Alice, and Amelia. I deployed deep mapping to listen in-depth to their stories and comprehend my own. I learned that grief and migration share—in terms of Karen Bishop (2016b)—a cartographic necessity. A necessity to express: ‘this is here’ and ‘that is there’, ‘I am here’ (Bishop, 2016b), and ‘my departed loved ones are with me’. The need to tell, listen, remember, and share stories in order to feel close to those who died far from us. The need to express that physical and emotional distances are not always the same. The need to comprehend that death in migration is not the end of the journey. As Uruguayan Mario Benedetti (1982, 121) wrote about the passing of a dear friend during their exile:

We should remind ourselves that among the many clichés of the capitalist world surrounding the business of death, it's often said that it is 'the final abode'. And yet, for a comrade like Luvis, where we are leaving him today will in fact prove to be his penultimate abode, because his final resting place will always be within us in our affection and memory.

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