



Living in between

How refugees and volunteers in negotiation (re)construct citizenship and humanitarian care in the camps of Grande-Synthe, France

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¹ Photo front page: <http://www.telerama.fr/monde/a-grande-synthe-malgre-un-nouveau-camp-les-refugies-ont-encore-les-yeux-rives-vers-l-angleterre,141397.php>, assessed 15th of August 2016.

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Foreword

On a Sunday afternoon in May I joined Newa and her kids for a walk around the lake. The lake is located at about 300 metres from the camp's back entrance, so on sunny days it was a place where many camp residents liked to hang out. Some people would go fishing and later prepare fish on their improvised barbecues in the camp. In these peaceful moments spent at the lake, camp life seemed almost normal. The realization of its 'exceptionality' hit me when we walked back. Six gendarmes were waiting in their van at the barrier of the back entrance. Suddenly I realized I had left my passport in Newa's shelter. The officer quite aggressively asked: "Do you even realize how dangerous it is to go to the lake without identification? What if an accident happened?" He asked my name and birth date and said he would give a call to the Belgian police to check on my identity. I felt upset about the normalized injustice of the situation. It was dangerous for me to go to the lake without my passport, but refugees who didn't have any identification papers could just drown. "Please, help her!" Newa's daughter asked, presuming that the officer was criminalizing me. Yet the irony of the situation was more than clear: in the political hierarchy of citizenship, illegal and stateless refugees did not deserve the same protection that was granted to me as a legal citizen.

Newa and her kids are in England now. So are most of the other refugees that speak or are spoken about in this thesis. Their stories form a complex chain of experiences of repression, which begins in their country of origin, follows them on their journey towards France, and settles with them in their temporary refuge at the border between France and England. As stateless people, illegal immigrants, and bare victims, their personal stories have continuously been silenced. And so they wander in liminality, always in-between. I hope England will give them a chance to build up a new life. A chance to step out of the invisibility that characterizes their past and present. So that one day, they will be able to move freely and lead the 'normal existence' that legal citizens take for granted.

1. Introduction

...

Jump over here...

Ask your questions.

And listen to

My sensitively answers.

Jump to our history.

We are living on the same planet

Where is earth destination?

Why you have all opportunities?

All services?

Why I have to accept staying in the small chicken house?

And bloody waiting to the door of hope !?

Who know when it will be open?

Who will open it for us?

...

* Sirwe, 'the Mother of the Jungle', 5-5-2016²

In between the lines of Sirwe's poem lie the questions and tensions that form the main concern and motivation of this thesis. They reflect the painful inequalities - in terms of humanity and in terms of citizenship – that shape our moral economy (Fassin 2005), in which some humans are believed to be more equal in their existence and movements than others. To protect the privileges of nation-state members, people in 'the camp' have to be criminalized and deprived of citizenship (Fassin 2005, 381). The refugees in the camps of Grande-Synthe are mostly stateless Kurds who have structurally been denied citizenship in their home countries. Therefore, they've landed from one situation of exclusion in another.

We live in a world where belonging to a nation-state forms the naturalized order (Eliassi 2016). In this order, refugees and stateless minorities, second-class citizens who've lost their home (or never found a legal place nor had the protection of a nation-state guaranteed), are denied both a place in history and the right to full existence in the present. Instead, they live in a liminal space, both inside and outside the world at the same time (Beneduce 2008, 512), where they find themselves in a situation of living 'betwixt and between' home and host, part of society, but sometimes never fully integrated (Thomassen 2009, 19).

The theoretical aim of this thesis is to contribute to the academic debate on regimes of repression (border politics) and compassion (humanitarianism) and unravel their categorical thinking and discriminatory consequences. (Fassin 2005, Ticktin 2011). Both

² Find the entire poem on page 67.

discourses focus on the here and now and ignore the shared histories and future dreams of full (legal) and bare (illegal) citizens. They reduce the last group to an anonymous mass of either criminals or suffering victims and stimulate thinking in terms of exclusion, enlarging the gap between 'us' and 'them'. By acting in the name of a universal, shared humanity, humanitarian care unintentionally keeps the unequal relationship between the haves and the have-nots intact (Ticktin 2011). Agier argues that this makes the camp both a metaphor and concrete fulfilment of the exceptional treatment of human waste – of the undesirables – that have no voice and place in this world (Agier 2010, 42). I will illustrate how the same counts for the camps of Grande-Synthe, where on one side full citizens (volunteers) drop of charities...and on the other side bare humans (refugees) are made dependent upon these gifts for their own survival. Sirwe's resistance poem tries to bridge this gap by defying full citizens to recognize the shared histories and silenced voices of the homeless. It emphasizes how these are formed through politico-economical processes of domination. "We are living on the same planet", yet continuously run into borders as we move. 'The Mother of the Jungle' challenges 'the privileged', 'the full citizens' to call into question the very freedom they enjoy as they deny it to others (Darling 2009). She invites them to take a jump into the unknown (like refugees do), and engage in a conversation with their 'Other' – the figure the full citizen needs so he can define himself (Dikec 2002; Fassin 2005, Ticktin 2011).

In their focus on 'caring for bare and suffering humans', humanitarian camps work through a policing of emergency, which as Agier argues, makes them spaces of pure waiting without a subject (2002, 336). Ramadan emphasizes that such a temporal focus limits development and critical discussion about sustainable solutions (2012, 75). It makes life in camps ambivalent – being lived in between emergency and duration, the here-and-now and the long term, the sentiment of physical or social death and the recommencement of life (Ramadan 2012, 75). Within this liminal space of structural invisibility, people can only live in 'frozen time'. They find themselves trapped between an obscure past and an uncertain future, (Beneduce 2008, 512). The same uncertainty can also be heard in Sirwe's final questions: "*Who know when it will be open, who will open it for us?*"

In their search for citizenship (and the 'normal life' that goes along with citizen rights), stateless refugees in the camps of Grande-Synthe are trapped in-between regimes of compassion and repression. In this thesis I will argue that the experience of statelessness and liminality, which characterizes their daily life, calls into question the exclusionary, territorially fixed meaning of national citizenship, which continues to shape European asylum policies. Furthermore I will problematize the concepts nationality and citizenship as limit concepts that only have a meaning if their shadow-concepts against which they are defined (statelessness and non-citizenship) are taken into account too.

The refugee camps of Grande-Synthe, as grey zones of no-man's land- form a fruitful site for the contestation and redefinition of the concept of citizenship. In the camps, a diversity of 'liminal beings' – a term that I will not only ascribe to the 'refugee population' but also to the

volunteers coming to help— come together, where they occasionally blur the strict lines between full and bare citizens.

The main question of this thesis is: *How do refugees and volunteers in negotiation (re)-construct citizenship and humanitarian care in the camps 'Basroch' and 'La Linière', Grande-Synthe?* Having spent one month in camp Basroch (the 'Jungle of Grande-Synthe') and two months in camp La Linière ('the first official refugee camp of Europe'), from the 9th of February till the 11th of May, I will draw on my own ethnographic experiences and daily conversations as a volunteer in the camp to illustrate the complex and nuanced ways in which both volunteers and refugees negotiate their citizenship in relation to each other. It's a story about the numerous challenges that limit their hospitality and their powerful attempts to cross the borders that hold them apart. These limitations reflect the frontiers and power hierarchies that continue to shape the relationship between citizens/non-citizens in and outside the borders of the camp – a relationship defined by unequal access to citizenship. I think the hope for new possibilities and perspectives lies in the attempt.

1.1 Context

Refugees and sans-papiers in France

Until the 1980s, refugees in France had a relatively 'privileged' position within the French hierarchy of foreigners. The fall of the Berlin Wall and opening of borders in 1989 strongly increased mobility to and within Europe, which resulted also in confusion between economic and political migrants, discrediting the latter (Fassin 2005, 376). According to Reinisch, these 'blurred lines' between political and economic migration made it possible for governments and media to focus on 'illegal immigrants' and evade responsibilities altogether (2015, 520).

The 1993 *Paqua Laws* introduced a zero immigration policy in France (Ticktin 2011, 34). The Sans-Papiers Movement responded to this exclusionary politics in the language of human rights and emphasized how France, despite its historical 'human rights' identity, was now denying people equal protection (Ticktin 2011, 33). Their struggle fell on deaf state ears. France turned to the right after the 2002 elections, and even more with the election of Sarkozy as president in 2007. Undocumented migrants found themselves increasingly isolated, out of sight in banlieues or placed in detention centres without trial (Ticktin 2011, 37). Ticktin notes that these practices must be placed in a political environment where policing is ever more apparent and applauded (Ticktin 2011, 40).

The exclusionary French political environment discourages many undocumented migrants from staying. In 1999 the migrant camp *Sangatte* was opened, which soon came to be a transit camp hosting sans-papiers that wanted to cross the Channel to England. To block the illegal entrance to its territory, the British government decided to restrain access to asylum (Fassin 2005, 363). In 2002, Sarkozy closed Sangatte, because it would form a magnet for illegal immigration and he said it was shameful for a modern democracy to allow such an institution to persist (Fassin 2005, 364). After the closure of Sangatte, several illegal camps were built around Calais, also known as the jungles.

Research Location: From 'the Jungle of Hell' to the First Humanitarian Refugee Camp in Europe

While the migrant camp in Calais is known by its nickname 'The Jungle', the first camp in Grande-Synthe, a suburb of the city of Dunkirk, became referred to in the media as 'the Jungle of Hell'. (The official name was 'Camp Basroch'). The camp underwent a major transformation over the course of the past year. Migrants had been building temporary encampments in Grande-Synthe since 2006, but for a long time the encampment had no more than 100 inhabitants. Since the summer of 2015 however, the population has grown rapidly. In October around 1000 people lived in the camp and at the start of January the number had already risen above 2500. International humanitarian organizations largely remained absent from the first camp in Grande Synthe³, and the French government refused to officially recognize the harshening situation of the 'illegal migrants' stuck at its national borders. As an answer to this political neglect, a collection of individuals and citizen initiatives has been running the organizational structure of the camp – such as the collection and distribution of donations that arrived at the camp on a daily basis – for a part in collaboration with the refugee inhabitants. Meanwhile, gendarmes kept watch outside the camp borders to decide whom and what materials they allowed entrance, an attempt to control the population and prevent the place from growing into a permanent settlement.

In the first week of January 2016, the rainy weather turned 'the New Jungle' into a big mud pool. Volunteers on site began sharing photographs of the living conditions through Facebook on a massive scale, which put 'the forgotten camp in Dunkirk' into the centre of media attention. On the 11th of January an announcement was made that the camp would be removed in four weeks' time.⁴ The mayor of Grande-Synthe turned to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF, Doctors Without Borders) to help provide the refugees in the camp shelter from the cold. MSF would take responsibility for the building of a new refugee camp, against the will of the French state. On their site, they announced: '*MSF is poised to take action in the face of the authorities' failure to do so by offering decent living conditions to 2,500 refugees in Grande-Synthe*'⁵. The new camp would accommodate refugees on a voluntary basis: it would be an open zone that people could enter and leave whenever they wanted to. MSF planned and constructed the camp in collaboration with other organizations on site. Eventually the management of the camp was given to the French organization Utopia56. As the manager of Utopia explained to me, they provided a backbone and incorporated other experienced associations into the organization of the new campsite, La Linière. The situation today is different. I will elaborate on the changes in La Linière's management in the afterword of this thesis.

³ <http://www.thelocal.fr/20151020/refugee-camp-northern-france-living-in-squalor-calais-dunkirk>.

⁴ http://mobile.lemonde.fr/immigration-et-diversite/article/2016/01/11/un-camp-humanitaire-a-grande-synthe-dans-quatre-semaines_4845164_1654200.html?xtref=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.fr%2F

⁵ <http://www.msf.org/article/france-new-site-required-urgently-refugees-grande-synthe>

Research population

The research population of this thesis consists of volunteers and refugees who worked and lived in the refugee camps of Grande-Synthe. I met a diverse group of volunteers who came to the camps either on their own or with an organization. Most of them were from (neighbouring) European countries but there were also people from other continents who were staying in Europe for studies, work or holidays. The refugees in the camp were mostly from Middle Eastern countries, in contrast to the Calais Jungle, which has more of a multicultural mix. The majority in Grande-Synthe, about 85%, were from Kurdistan, more specifically the Iraqi part. There were several minorities from other parts of Kurdistan, Iran, Syria, Kuwait and Vietnam. Most of the refugees that will speak in this thesis are stateless. With a population of almost 35 million, Kurds form the largest group of people on earth who don't have an independent nation to call their homeland. They are scattered across several countries, in a centuries-long quest for nationhood denied by a succession of international conferences, Western intervention, repression, and internal divisions (Östör 2000, 883). As James D. Kelly notes, borders were drawn for the Kurds by the retreating colonial powers that divided them among the then new nation states of Syria, Iraq, Turkey and Iran⁶ (2010, 195). Kurdistan was split into minority enclaves in each of these new countries dominated by Arabs, Turks, and Persians. But it was a place before there were borders, before modernity laid down lines across the mountains and valleys (Kelly 2010, 195). The oppression of Kurds in Iraq continued under the violent Saddam Hussein regime. Jimenez and Kabachnik however describe Iraqi Kurdistan as an 'oasis of peace in a desert full of conflict' and emphasize how especially Iraqi Kurdistan is relatively safe compared to the rest of Iraq: *'Ever since the establishment of the no-fly zone in northern Iraq following the first Gulf War in 1991, Iraqi Kurdistan has secured ever greater autonomy and, thus, has been shielded from most of the violence that has been associated with Iraq since the fall of Saddam Hussein'* (Jimenez and Kabachnik 2012, 31).

Kurds were not the only stateless group in the camp; I also spoke with a few Bedoon people, who have a long history of discrimination in Kuwait. Amnesty International reports of war, violence and discrimination that formed a daily reality in the different countries of origin of the refugees in this thesis.⁷ It reports on how in Iraq, foreign military forces have been carrying out air strikes against IS in support of the Iraq government, some of which reportedly killed and injured civilians in areas controlled and contested by IS. Furthermore it notes how political tensions rose in the semi-autonomous Kurdistan region. For Iran, the report notes how disadvantaged groups continued to experience systematic discrimination by state authorities, particularly in employment, housing, access to political office and the exercise of

⁶ A map of Kurdistan can be found at page 66.

⁷ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/iraq/report-iraq/>
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/iran/report-iran/>
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/kuwait/report-kuwait/>
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/syria/report-syria/>
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/asia-and-the-pacific/viet-nam/report-viet-nam/>

cultural, civil and political rights. For Kuwait, it reports that members of the Bedoon minority faced discrimination and were denied citizenship rights. The government continued to withhold Kuwaiti citizenship from over 100,000 Bedoon, whom they considered to be illegal residents. Bedoon rights activists faced arrest and prosecution.

Most of the refugees in the camp wanted to go to England. Language played an important role in determining this final destination, along with the fact that many have friends or family in the UK with whom they wished to reunite. Initially Grande-Synthe was just a temporary stop on their journey, within a stone's throw of their goal – but the personal accounts of refugees in the camp illustrate how this last barrier often turns out to be the hardest to overcome. Many people lived in the camps for several months, which turned their temporal stay in the camp into a situation of semi-permanence (Enav-Weintraub 2008, 7), in which they found themselves stuck in a frozen time between past and future.

1.2 Positioning and methodological reflection

Positioning

My positioning as a researcher tends toward a combination of 'engaged anthropology' and 'social critique' (Low & Merry 2010). Low and Merry translate engaged anthropology as a practice that has a beneficial effect on the promotion of social justice (2010, 204) and social critique as a practice that uses anthropological methods to uncover power relations and structural inequalities (2010, 209). However, I am aware that my position in the field is situated in the same hierarchy. To do 'democratically relevant' anthropological research in this sense requires not only a critical awareness of the power inequalities within my field of study, but also of one's own position and history within that same hierarchy. We are only privileged because others are not. I've been challenged to engage in research while being constantly aware of my own privileged position as a university student in a wealthy country – being one of the lucky few. The greatest challenge then, for me as an anthropologist, lies in the question: what could I, as an anthropologist but also as a citizen and as a human being, do for 'the excluded' in the camp? How could I do justice to their voices and stories without reproducing the borders that separate us? The most dignified answer for me, was to become a careful listener who would address the injustice that colored their existence and emphasize the importance of their voices to be heard.

Methodology

Most of the information in this thesis was collected through *participant observation*. By taking full part in the daily activities of both my research groups I was able to map out and gain insight into the practical organization of both camps (DeWalt & DeWalt 2011, 1). Participant observation also helped me to grasp the point of view of both of my research populations (DeWalt & DeWalt 2011, 11) and at the same time to develop a holistic, objective understanding of the organization of the camp (DeWalt & DeWalt 2011, 110). Bernard emphasizes how in some kinds of research, informal interviewing is all you've got (Bernard

2011, 211). This largely applies for my research setting: in the chaos of people coming and going in the camp, I met new people everyday so informal interviewing served as my main method over the entire course of my fieldwork. I used informal interviews not only as a way of tracking information, but also to build up greater rapport with my informants. My type of participation was mostly 'active participation'. This is when the ethnographer engages in almost everything that other people do to learn the rules for their behavior (DeWalt & DeWalt 2011, 23). I decided to become a volunteer myself, which challenged me to carefully balance the extent of participation in both groups so I could build trust with my different informants. My decision to become the phenomenon I was studying (volunteering in the camp) entailed a dilemma on objectivity and required me to continuously switch back and forth between the insiders' view and that of an analyst (Bernard 2011, 371). On a practical level, this meant that I had to sneak away to the back of the tent to jot things down whenever something interesting happened. Since there was so much happening on a daily basis and since there was a constant lack of volunteers, I felt like I couldn't miss a day, for if I wouldn't be there, refugees might not get their clothes. As a consequence, there were days in which I lingered between exhaustion and depression. In these moments I had to push myself to take a physical and emotional break, because I became too much involved and lost my sense of objectivity. When the new camp opened, the distribution coordinators asked me if I wanted to take responsibility for the women and children clothing distribution container. I decided to accept this challenge because it could serve as a unique opportunity to develop an understanding of the working of and dilemmas entailed in this chain of aid distribution. Due to this commitment I was focused on one specific area in the camp, which helped me build friendships with women and children: I became a familiar face to them, and it seems presence is the first ingredient in building trust. Bernard argues that trust lowers reactivity and lower reactivity means higher validity of data (Bernard 2011, 354). During the last weeks of my fieldwork, I took a step back from my role as a distribution volunteer. I felt like I was too much focused on one area and decided to take a break so I could fully focus on my interviews and get more insight into the daily life of the camp residents.

In addition to participant observation, I used *unstructured interviews* to get deeper insight into the lived experiences, perceptions and motivations of (long-term) volunteers and refugees. I experienced that in my research setting informal interviews (especially with volunteers) were usually short conversations. By making an appointment to have an interview, people would really take their time to share their thoughts with me. I learned that a refugee camp is not the easiest place to conduct unstructured interviews. My interviews took place in very diverse settings, but mostly outside. This entailed not only difficulties in terms of sound recording; often there were also other people involved in the interview who influenced the answers of my interviewees. Sometimes this resulted in interesting extra information, for example when I was interviewing Cyril (the French school coordinator). We were sitting in the coffee and tea area in La Linière and an Iranian man whom Cyril knows passed by and they started to chat. It gave insight into the vulnerable

position of minorities in the camp. Unstructured interviews turned out to be a well-suited method in my research for interviewing volunteers, because they were usually short in time. In my experience, informal interviews worked better for the refugee population. The 'created interview setting' seemed to block the natural flow of the conversation with them. Besides that, some refugees preferred not to be voice-recorded.

Social media research (mainly an analysis of the conversations and discussions held in different Facebook groups for volunteers), helped me to develop insight into the perceptions and motivations of volunteers towards refugees and the tensions between the different actors at play in the organization of the camp. Especially around the camp move, some outrageous discussions took place about the changes in policy. I also followed refugees' posts about the situation in the camp, or about their new lives when they made it to England. According to Hammersley & Atkinson, the processes of negotiation, interaction and identity formation are just as real in virtual communities/digital spaces as in real life (2007, 139). *Text analysis* was a final method used throughout my research. This ranged from the narrative interpretation of Sirwe's poem, through the studying of letters to inform camp residents, to an analysis and comparison of policy documents. I tried to contextualize these written sources by relating them to the reactions and interpretations of my informants.

1.3 Structure Thesis

Chapter 2 'The (Hi)story Behind the Suffering Victim', focuses on the consequences of humanitarian care and the victimization of refugees by humanitarian organizations and volunteers in the camp. I will argue that a single focus on a universal 'shared' humanity drives attention away from the (political) history and structural causes of refugeeness that drive people to the camp and silences and restricts people in their agency.

Chapter 3 'The Permanent Temporality of Life in the Camp', focuses on the limits of humanitarian care in the present moment. I will argue that the emergency structures of the camp policies overshadow the long-term needs of refugees and disempower them to organize life on their own terms. Both refugees and volunteers contest these discourses, through tactical resistance acts and long-term projects that prioritize sharing and long-term thinking. These contestations however are limited by the complex internal power inequalities of the camp.

Chapter 4 'Tomorrow Inshallah' looks into the future of the people in the camp. It will illustrate where they want to go, how they hope their future will look like as well as the obstacles in between the current situation and their desired outcome. In their negotiations with different actors in the camp refugees prepare for their futures and reconsider their possibilities. I will emphasize also the importance of hospitality- and support networks in the uncertain 'new life' outside the camp.

The final chapter is a conclusion in which I put in a different light the main arguments of my empirical chapter together and formulate an answer to my research question. In this chapter I will also revisit my theoretical aim and critically reflect on the reach of my findings.

2. The (Hi)story Behind ‘the Suffering Victim’



A pile of donations in the mud in the Basroch camp⁸

⁸ Photo by Simon Krieger

2. The (Hi)story Behind ‘the Suffering Victim’

2.1 Surviving in a mud pool: the Absolute Victim

Despite the warmth of the electric heater and the cosiness of drinking cinnamon tea on a carpet of blankets in their tent, the realization of the shitty living circumstances hit me especially when they started talking about the rat plague that was all around. Rats running across the roof of the tent at night, while raising a baby child...⁹

The first part of my fieldwork took place in the ‘Basroch’ camp in Grande-Synthe, also referred to as ‘the Jungle’. This makeshift camp was located close to the centre of Grande-Synthe, in a park that was planned to become a fancy eco-neighbourhood¹⁰. The French government refused to recognize this illegal settlement, which made it a space of exception; a no-man’s land where the laws of democracy didn’t apply and where smuggler gangs held power. The only ‘care’ arrived from citizen initiatives and independent volunteers, mostly from neighbouring countries, offering a practical answer to the neglect of their governments to recognize that human beings were stuck at their borders, struggling to survive. They fundraised in their local communities and eventually started to organize the distribution of basic necessities such as tents, food and clothing to and inside the camp. When I asked volunteers about their initial motivations for helping in the camp, many replied that they saw pictures or heard stories about the terrible living conditions in the camp and were shocked that a situation like that could exist in Europe, in a rich Western country. Conditions were said to be much worse than in the better-known refugee camp of Calais. Several volunteers explained how they felt compelled to do something to help, in order to improve the living conditions of the people in the camp and the welcoming of refugees more generally.

During the first week of January 2016, the rainy weather turned ‘the Jungle’ of Grande-Synthe into a big mud pool. *“It wasn’t even suitable for animals”*, Malik, a Bedoon refugee from Kuwaiti told me when I asked him about the old campsite. Looking back at this situation, Elisabeth, an English volunteer said: *“I honestly believed in January when the camp was flooded again, that the authorities would send buses and would take people away to somewhere safe. I couldn’t believe that didn’t happen. But somehow and I do not know how, people survived.”* Indignant volunteers posted photographs of the humanitarian disaster that was going on ‘in their own backyard’ on social media, hoping to create more awareness and get more aid coming to the camp. It worked. A chain of donations arose and began to reach the camp on a daily basis. According to one of the volunteers from the kitchen, a lot changed between December and February. *“In December there was nothing. No kitchen, no distribution areas, no communal centres. Only three toilets and a cold shower.”* Due to the sudden rush of media attention, the camp transformed rapidly: distribution centres were set up to collect and hand out tents, blankets, sleeping bags, clothing and shoes, and a kitchen

⁹ Field note, 23-2-2016

¹⁰ <http://www.okra.nl/en/projects/ecoquartier/>, assessed 14th of August 2016.

was developed to provide inhabitants with food three times a day. Apart from that, many volunteers would visit refugees from tent to tent to distribute food and gas and ask them about more specific needs.

I spent a lot of time volunteering in the women and children's distribution centre, sorting out the bags and boxes that people had brought from England, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and France. I remember people coming to the distribution tent who would shamelessly dump their 'clothing garbage' on the floor right at the entrance. Some of these clothes were all smudgy and full of holes; some pairs of shoes were completely worn-out. For me, these donations reflected a perception of poverty: refugees were living in animal-like conditions in the mud and apparently this made some donators assume they had no clothes to put on their bare bodies and would be grateful to receive the waste they collected while cleaning out their closets. As volunteers we would spend a lot of time filling garbage bags and making 'boxes of shame' in which we collected all the 'funny', inappropriate donations. Sometimes these donations painfully reflected misperceptions of the living conditions in the camp. *"I was shocked by the ignorance of some people donating clothes. From high heels to summer dresses, satin pyjama pants, G-strings and linen jackets. Brought to the camp without any idea or awareness of the kind of clothing that you yourself would want to wear when you had to live in a tent in the mud"¹¹* At the end of the day these boxes would be sent to the warehouse in Calais where another team of volunteers would find a more suitable place to bring them. For me, these gifts were a clear reflection of a perception of refugees as victims who needed someone else to take care of them, a form of silencing and not listening, which different anthropologists describe as one of the (unintentional) consequences of humanitarian care (Ticktin 2005; Malkki 1996).

Many volunteers in Grande-Synthe pointed to their 'shared humanity' as one of the main reasons why they came to and stayed in the camp to help. They cared because it felt inhuman not to care. *"We all work together for one common cause and that's humanity"*, said Charlie, a British volunteer. No matter how well meant such a humanitarian focus carries unintentional consequences for the people it aims to serve. In her ethnography 'Casualties of Care' (2011), Miriam Ticktin problematizes humanitarian aid as a politics of compassion that represses people in the name of care. Humanitarian organizations, she states, recognize only the bare life of suffering bodies. By focusing on a universal, shared humanity, they allow bodies to be imagined outside time and place, outside history and politics (Ticktin 2011, 11). She names MSF (Doctors without borders) as an example of an organization that responds to situations of suffering brought on in large part by inequality, injustice and war, without addressing the causes of suffering (Ticktin 2011, 84).

MSF is the same medical humanitarian organization that, in collaboration with the mayor Damien Carème, took responsibility for building a humanitarian refugee camp in Grande-Synthe, against the will of the French state. The organization focused on the planning

¹¹ (Field note on my first day in the Jungle, 9-2-2016).

and building process but withdrew from its management position as soon as the camp opened (7-3-2016). On their site the organization announced: *Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is poised to take action in the face of the authorities' failure to do so by offering decent living conditions to 2,500 refugees in Grande-Synthe, France. Time is of the essence with the onset of winter and rain and the refugees continue to live ankle-deep in mud in a flood-prone area of Grande-Synthe close to Dunkirk*¹². Neither the (personal) histories of the refugees nor the political inequalities driving them to France were part of the discussion.

According to the French anthropologist Michel Agier (2010), humanity has a double-sided identity, which doesn't express any alternative. Its double is merely the reflection of a wounded, suffering, or dying humanity: the absolute victim (2010, 31). He describes it as an identity defined by 'an equality whose opposite is not inequality but the suffering of silent victims, whom the humanitarian world designates as its true beneficiaries' (Agier 2010, 32). Both Ticktin and Agier illustrate how humanitarian aid overshadows the shared history of political inequality between the humanitarian helper and his 'victim'. The humanitarian helper recognizes the pain of his fellow human being, but focuses only on the suffering of that human being in the present moment, without recognizing the diverse and complex interconnected factors that cause refugees to flee their countries. Abramowitz et al, who interviewed several anthropologists on the policies and practices of humanitarianism, emphasize how many of their informants felt that humanitarians show political naiveté by failing to recognize the real drivers of humanitarian crisis: political oppression, class oppression and economic and social injustice (2014, 8). As such, instead of creating more equality between humanitarian helpers and refugees, which it preaches, humanitarian aid often only widens the gap between them.

While the 'Jungle' in Grande-Synthe was initially built by refugees themselves, the humanitarian camp that MSF provided was more of a top-down solution that didn't involve its beneficiaries and future inhabitants, the refugees, in any form of decision-making. As absolute victims, they were stuck in the mud with little information, sceptically waiting to be 'saved' and eventually moved to what – according to volunteers – was to be a better place.

2.2 Gaps in the perception and representation of 'the Absolute Victim'

"A few weeks ago, one of my clients told me: "You know, there are Syrians here and they've put a sign on their door saying "we don't need any help", while the entire village wanted to help them!" I said: "Maybe they didn't need help." He looked at me with surprise. So I said: "Maybe all they needed was a chance."

(Eric, a Belgian volunteer)

The quote above for me accurately captures the perception of refugees as helpless victims. Eric and I talked a lot about a number of universalist stereotypes about refugees that circulate

¹² <http://www.msf.org/en/article/france-new-site-required-urgently-refugees-grande-synthe>

both on the ground and at a higher political level. To name just one example: the idea that refugees shouldn't be well off. This assumption is also discussed by Lisa Malkki, who conducted research among Hutu refugees from Burundi in Tanzania (1996). She compared the perceptions of 'being a refugee' of Hutu refugees with the perceptions of the staff of international organizations. Malkki states that humanitarian staff members conceptualized refugees as 'pure victims', abstracted from their specific political, historical and cultural contexts (Malkki 1996, 378). Hutu refugees on the contrary, saw themselves as a nation in exile and perceived their displacement as an era of moral trial and hardship that would enable them to reclaim their homeland somewhere in the future (Malkki 1996, 380). When the humanitarian workers in her research discovered that the refugees in the camp had a standard of living that was higher than the living standard in most Tanzanian villages, they were surprised. The image of 'the refugee as a victim' thus resulted in 'a moral intent to say that a proper refugee shouldn't be well off (Malkki 1996, 383).

The same assumption of poverty lived also among many of the volunteers I talked with in the camp in Grande-Synthe. Eric explained his surprise when he realized this assumption was wrong: *"I didn't expect there would be people living here who actually have money. It's an image you keep in your head and then suddenly there's this gap: huh?"* As a researcher who had just arrived to the field, I have to confess that I was also slightly surprised to meet a refugee who came to France by airplane and simply asked for a one-month residence permit. How could people 'choose' to live in the mud when they weren't poor? What may nuance the story a bit is the simple fact that not all of the refugees walking around in the camp were actually living there. Several people were renting hotel rooms or apartments close to the camp (sometimes with the financial support of family members or volunteers) and only visited 'the Jungle' to pick up free food and clothes. Furthermore, even though some refugees were wealthy in their country of origin, they had to invest a lot of money in their journey and as long as they were in the camp they did not have an income. People could thus come from well-off backgrounds but this did not necessarily mean they were still well-off as they lived in the camp. The ticket prices that smugglers charged for the journey to England were high; the price for a 'regular ticket' was between 5,000 and 6,000 euro per person. For a 'guarantee ticket', the prices doubled. Volunteer Cyril emphasized how in addition there was also a lot of exploitation of refugees by smugglers: smugglers would sometimes pretend to sell 'all-in tickets', making refugees believe that they didn't just pay them for the journey but also for their shelter and all the food and clothes they received in the camp – which were actually free.

In the women and children clothing distribution centre, I sometimes heard volunteers complain about women being 'picky' about the stuff we gave them. Again, this confirmed a perception of refugees as victims who were expected to be thankful and in general to passively sit back and receive. A couple of times, I heard volunteers with whom I worked together in the distribution say that refugees made use of their victim position (and the compassion it awakened) to their own benefit. Harrell-Bond (2002) describes a similar tendency of self-victimization by stating that the image of helpless refugees reinforces the

idea that they need outsiders to help them and this also informs refugees' perceptions about the role they're expected to play to be successfully obtaining aid (2002, 57). There is however also a politics of compassion (Ticktin 2005) at play here: whether or not a particular refugee is likable may in itself be the basis for inclusion or exclusion (Harrell-Bond 2002, 68). As a volunteer I was sometimes guilty of this exclusion as well, keeping aside scarce items like tracksuits for my refugee friends, minor political decisions that could in some way contribute to the inequality that I wanted to end. Refugees were very aware that we kept 'limited' stuff in the back of the tent. I once had a conflict with a man when I told him we had no tracksuit for him. He said: *"I don't trust you when you say that you don't have any tracksuits or shoes"*. I wasn't lying at that moment, but he was right that we usually kept stuff in the back, to make sure that women did not take all the luxury items for themselves, their friends, or to give or sell them to the mafia. Other volunteers saw it more as a 'healthy sign' of being human: for them their pickiness reflected the fact that despite the harsh living conditions, people maintained their pride and still cared about what they looked like.

At times, refugees in the camp actively counteracted their image as victims. For example, women counteracted the image of assumed passivity by helping to clear up the distribution tent whenever they noticed I was working alone and had a hard time in managing the place. When I went to visit Erin's family with a group of Dutch volunteers, he said he would buy a chicken downtown and insisted we would come back to have dinner in their tent. But when one of the Dutch girls proposed to share the costs, he was offended. Binar also would not allow me to share in the costs when we had fries at a local kebab place.

Volunteers were at times conscious of the victimized refugee image they represented, in order simply to convince people 'at home' to donate more or to keep donating. This often put them in dilemmas: should they 'fool' their local communities by simplifying or exaggerating the truth if it was for the benefit of the refugees? I remember having a discussion with two Scottish volunteers. One was running a charity in Scotland and when she visited the new camp, she discovered that many refugees were better off than she expected. She however doubted whether she should tell the donators of her charity about this reality, because this involved the risk that all donations would be put on hold (and if the conditions got worse people might eventually be left with nothing.) She decided it would be better to play it safe and try to accumulate extra stocks.

Despite all the good intentions, simplified regimes of representation, presenting refugees as poor and voiceless, carry consequences and also find their way to the media. Harrell-Bond & Voutira (2007) state that public perceptions of refugees often entail dehistoricization of their experiences. They emphasize that those recognized as refugees should be considered heroes instead of victims because they managed to overcome all the obstacles put in their way in the acquisition of status (Harrell-Bond & Voutira 2007, 295). According to Malkki, these representational practices are problematic because they hide the political (and political-economic) connections that link the histories of 'the audience' with 'the

people over there' (Malkki 1996, 389). Bearing the ideas of Ticktin in mind, I would suggest that the same holds true for the connection between 'Western humanitarian helpers' and their beneficiaries. Ticktin states that regimes of care don't change the dominant order and the structural inequalities that enable the maintenance of that order (Ticktin 2011, 20). "*They allow us to ignore painful histories, entrenched inequalities and our complicity in these by blocking out all but the present*" (Ticktin 2011, 59). According to Ticktin, to care differently only becomes possible by recognizing the shared history that shapes the unequal relationship between the haves and have-nots (2011, 219). Recognition and understanding requires a shift from silencing to listening. To care differently then consists of paying careful attention to each personal yet shared (hi)story that brings people to the camp. Because it is only by paying attention to one's historical background that one understands the choices of migration for people in the camp.

2.3 "Jump to our history, we are living on the same planet."

Some volunteers explained to me how finding out about people's personal histories was their main motivation for coming to the camp. A British woman with whom I worked together both in the old and new camp emphasized: "*In England, I work with asylum seekers. I came to volunteer here to see where they've come from.*" A Scottish volunteer told me how she visited the camp twice and unlike the first time, she now had really talked with people about their history: "*I've finally been able to form a picture of what brings people here, their motivations and their goals. It is so important that our governments start to face and comply with the situation.*" Many volunteers I spoke with emphasized the shared (political) histories that connect volunteers and refugees in the camp, which challenges humanitarian discourses imagining refugees as people without a history. Cyril, a French long-term volunteer accurately emphasized the European involvement and responsibilities in the conflict in the Middle East: "*Who armed Daesh? We have to think about that. And after that to close the borders? It's not fair. It's really not fair.*" British volunteer Jack told me: "*My country has like fucking fired that part of the world up. I feel ashamed of my country*". His comment reflected a similar critical perspective.

When talking with refugees about their history and driving forces, I found that some people in the camp fled directly from war. Especially people from the Iraqi cities Mosul and Kirkuk emphasized that the situation in their city was simply too dangerous to stay. About Kirkuk, I heard several men say: "*Everyone's fighting for my city*". They explained to me that the conflict in Kirkuk is international in character. The international 'interest' for the city they ascribed to economic reasons: Kirkuk's grounds hold a large amount of oil. Sverker Finnström makes a similar argument for the context of Acholiland, Uganda, where the Ugandan army has been fighting rebels from the Lord's Resistance Army. Although fought on local grounds, the conflict in Acholiland was global in character (Finnström 1999, 5), something that the international community wouldn't recognize: the outside world put the blame for the war on local culture (1999, 26). Finnström emphasizes how the war fought in Acholiland ought to be

understand from a wider perspective: *'The LRA is buying machine guns from Britons, military advice from Americans, anti-tank weapons from Iraq and landmines from the Khartoum government'* (1999, 28). The same seems to hold true for the current conflicts in Kurdish Iraq, which as refugees in the camp emphasize are not only fought between ISIS, the Iraqi army and the internally divided Peshmerga¹³, but also shaped by European forces.

Erin, a refugee from Kirkuk who lived in England before, said: *"I miss my country, you know. But it's bad now. It's big problems, too much people dying. I don't know who's good, who's no good"*. With a lump in my throat I listened to the story of Karwan, a Kurdish soldier from the Iraqi army. Isis had killed his brother and threatened to do the same to him. He left for Europe without saying goodbye to his mother. Karwan cried as he told me his story. Malik, who was translating the interview from Arab to English, held Karwan in his arms and whispered, *"it's okay"*. I felt speechless and uncomfortable, clueless about how to react to the situation. Eventually I just remained silent for a while. Karwan noticed my unease and encouraged me to continue the interview. When I asked him about the future, he said: *"I just hope to get to England soon and be safe. I want to get there, and then forget everything. I'm really tired here."* Karwan's story lingered in my head for a couple of days. My role as a volunteer brought me into daily chit-chat with a lot of refugees, yet it was new for me to have people to trust me and share part of their life stories.

People who didn't directly flee for war perhaps suffered from less visible conflicts, but similarly lived in areas of structural political unrest and inequality. Suffering has many layers and this complicates the political categories of who's recognized as a refugee. According to Paul Farmer (2002), structural suffering is characterized by the experience of occupying the bottom rung of the social ladder in inegalitarian societies. He emphasizes individual suffering is structured by historically given and often economically driven processes and forces that conspire to constrain agency (Farmer 2002, 425). When it comes to the experience of statelessness, this individual suffering relates to a structural lack of recognition.

The majority of refugees in the Grande-Synthe camps are stateless people from the Kurdish region of Iraq, who didn't lose the protection of a territorial state (like many others 'seeking refuge'), but never had that protection guaranteed. When asking refugees about their country of origin I rarely received the reply 'Iraq' or 'Iran'. Kurdistan was their country. Volunteers were often not 'satisfied' with this answer and would ask: *"Yeah, but which part of Kurdistan are you from? Iraq, Iran, Syria?"* Sometimes refugees would reply with the name of a state, but more often they stuck to their first answer. In an article on the experience of statelessness of Kurdish migrants, Barzoo Eliassi (2016) illustrates how belonging to a nation-state is a naturalized order in our world, which leaves many in a position of invisibility. The Kurds in his research felt that their identity was always a question mark (Eliassi 2016, 7). He emphasises that his informants experienced self-doubt about their identity because their

¹³ The military forces of Iraqi Kurdistan, divided and controlled separately by the KDP (Democratic Party of Kurdistan) and the PUK (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan).

voices have historically been ignored and underrepresented (Eliassi 2016, 8). The probing by volunteers in the camp—who weren't satisfied with the answer of Kurdistan as a country of origin – (unintentionally) denied the existence of a Kurdish nation-state and as such the identity of the people concerned. *'Statelessness isn't only a structural status injury'*, Eliassi notes, *'it also haunts people in their everyday life. It deprives people the right to define themselves'* (2016, 15). By emphasizing their Kurdish origin, refugees in the camp defined themselves on their own terms and demanded recognition. The expression of Kurdish identity was also visually expressed in both camps through flags, signs and inscriptions.

As stateless people, the majority of refugees in the camps have a history of exclusion from a national 'home' and the basic rights that national citizens enjoy (such as a passport, education and the right to work). Kurds weren't the only stateless group in the camp. There was also a Bedoon minority. Malik emphasized how the Bedoon minority in Kuwait had a history of structural discrimination: *"In my home in Kuwait there are two kinds of people. Bedoon people and Kuwaiti citizens. For a long time we are suffering from that, there is no job. For that in my home I had no job, just selling fruit in the street."* Malik's comment shows how statelessness often goes together with discrimination in the job-market. He also explained that he wasn't allowed to study because he had no papers.

The driving forces that cause people to 'flee' or migrate often consist of a complex combination of factors. Oude Breuil (2014) makes a similar argument about the informants in her study, stating that their decisions to move were seldom only informed by economic deprivation but often wished to escape a social position and role they had at 'home' (2014, 134). For some refugees in the camp their journey to Europe was an attempt to escape the restricted freedom they experienced back home, not only because they were stateless Kurds but also because they didn't feel free within the Kurdish community. Binar, a Kurdish physics student from Iraq, who told me he was an atheist, said: *"I went away from Iraq because of stupid Kurdish people who were always telling me what to do and how to behave. Telling me to follow the laws of Islam like praying and doing the Ramadan, but they don't really follow the rules themselves."* Religious freedom was also referred to also by other refugees as one of the driving forces for coming to Europe. Erin explained: *"Big problem, you know about the religions, big problems...here Muslims and Christians and everybody's together. Like brother sister, like nice people together. My country is racist. But this is my life. No fighting. If I go to mosque, if I don't go to mosque..."* Erin told me that he hoped in Europe, his son could grow up in a free and democratic environment. He explained how when he was young, his teacher at school in Kurdistan used to slap him because he had trouble learning to read and write Kurdish.

"You know before when I've been in college...I'm not good for writing. And teacher slapped me, He said: go bring your mother and father. And I said to my mom: please teacher said come for school and my mom come to speak to teacher. Teacher he talked to my mother:

why your son is not good at writing... and then when I got to home my mom slapped me too. Too much bad. That's why I moved (...) Europeans have...nice teachers...nice people...nice life. It's all nice."

By paying attention to the personal histories of people in the camp, the image of 'refugees as victims' may be challenged and nuanced. Belgian volunteer Eric emphasized that according to him, there is a lack of attention for the personal narratives of people in the camp, which results in a generalization of people into categories and 'legitimizes' the current border politics of Europe.

"Every one has his context, his personal story. Today I visited Nawa, a mother of three. She lost her husband and one of her children when she got on the boat from Turkey to Greece. She hasn't heard from them since, she doesn't even know if they're still alive. If we would record all these different stories and anecdotes, then the real mess will pop up. That's the real mud. And yeah, like mud, these personal stories tend to stick together a bit."

Attention to personal histories nuances thinking and speaking in universal categories based on 'common denominators', as is the case for 'refugees' in media and political narratives. When listening to personal stories, the gaps inside those universals may reveal. Anna Tsing defines gaps as 'conceptual spaces and real places into which powerful demarcations do not travel well' (Tsing 2005, 175). Inside the gaps, friction exists within the global context. Gaps are always being produced as discriminations are made. Whenever we want to trace the limits of hegemony, we need to look for the gaps, Tsing concludes (202). She emphasizes how by actively shifting focus towards the gaps, the landscape becomes a medium of telling stories of oneself and others (Tsing 2005, 201). The same seems to count for the context of the camp. English volunteer Jack told me: *"I can't relate to any of the negative stories you hear about refugees you know. David Cameron calls them a bunch of immigrants. Fucking nonsense. I'm 100% behind these people and their desire to get where they want to go. Because you hear their stories you know. You hear the fucking horror stories. How could you not want to help them?"*

According to De Certeau, stories privilege a logic of ambiguity through their accounts of interaction. He beautifully describes how they turn frontiers into crossings and rivers into bridges. *"Sometimes you find the best of glory in hardships"*, Cyril said about the Jungle. Despite the muddy circumstances, it was a place of sharing. *"People were showing their life. There was no barrier. Suddenly you find: "it could be a member of my family."* De Certeau notes that bridges represent a betrayal of an order. But he adds that at the same time they allow for a re-emergence beyond the frontiers of the alien element that was controlled in the interior. *'It gives objectivity to the alterity which was hidden inside the limits'* (De Certeau 1984, 128). His definition of stories reminds me of Dikec's theory of hospitality, which he defines as *'a constant process of engagement, negotiation and perhaps contestation in which*

host and guest are held in tension and play shifting roles' (2002, 237). Although the identities of host and guest mutually depend on each other to construct themselves, their political relationship may be defined by inequality (Dikec 2002, 238). I noted how, ironically, many volunteers in the camp are themselves refugees, in the sense that they saw in the camp as a 'refuge' too, an escape route from crises in their own lives. In the camp, they could take a break and forget about their own misery by focusing on the misery of someone else. Ticktin argues that humanitarians often choose their careers to help themselves (as forms of self-care or as fulfilling their own needs) as much as for those whom they purport to help (2014, 279). Fassin emphasizes the continuous inequality incorporated in this double care: 'expressing sympathy for the asylum seeker or the undesirable immigrant holds fewer benefits for that figure than it has for us, as we show how humane we finally are' (Fassin 2005, 382). Even when playing 'shifting roles' the larger inequalities remain. Harrell-Bond (2002) states that humanitarian work with refugees can only be made more 'humane' by acknowledging refugees not as victims to be pitied, but as survivors of adversity, who often demonstrate unimaginable strength and dignity in the most adverse circumstances (2002, 52). A Dutch volunteer who was helping with the women distribution for a couple of days emphasized in a blog:

"I feel like there's a lot of "white saviourism among the volunteers in the camp, while there are about 3000 young refugees who are capable of taking care of themselves and their environment. I mean, they've come all the way from Kurdistan. I think they're victimized more than necessary. A community-driven camp would be a much more liveable environment for everyone".

Humanitarian emergency aid focuses on a shared humanity. As Agier, Ticktin and Malkki argue, this is problematic because it imagines and represents bodies as voiceless victims outside history and politics. Through such regimes of representation, the political connections between full and bare citizens are overshadowed. I've argued that attention for personal histories may nuance the stereotypes that result from universal thinking. The next chapter, which focuses on the daily needs of refugees in the camp will further these contest humanitarian approaches... Several projects in the camps have been set up to focus on the strengths and talents of refugees instead of approaching them as passive victims. These attempts, however, continue to be limited by a complexity of factors.

3. The Permanent Temporality of Life in the Camp



Shelter no. 1, La Linière Camp

3. The Permanent Temporality of Life in the Camp

3.1 La Linière and the limits of emergency care

*It is the first day of the move and I am in the new camp. Refugees, who've arrived by bus or got a lift from volunteers, are queuing up to receive a bag of basic living necessities and a key to their 'new houses'. It catches my eye how many people are already building extensions to their shelters. Despite the emergency structure of the camp, refugees seem to realize already that their stay in this camp may probably take longer than a couple of days, if not months.*¹⁴

On the 7th of March 2016, 'the new camp' opened. It was the first official European humanitarian camp to open in history. The manager of Utopia56, the organization that ran the camp from March till May explained: "*The goal of MSF and the mayor (of Grande-Synthe) was to show that it's possible to welcome people in decent conditions.*" People who previously lived in the Jungle were 'invited' to move to the new camp –but since local authorities were given the task of completely demolishing the Grande-Synthe Jungle, staying was not an option: refugees could either move to the new camp or seek shelter elsewhere, such as in one of the smaller illegal settlements that were popping up closer to the Belgian border. The contrast between the muddy Jungle and La Linière was striking and everyone I spoke to agreed that at least the basic living conditions in La Linière were a major improvement: there was no mud, tents were exchanged for wooden shelters, there were clean sanitary facilities (in the mornings showers even had hot water), a phone charging area was built and a laundry service made it possible for people to have their clothes washed and not always be dependent upon new donations. Eric, who was transporting refugees from the Jungle to la Linière and helping refugees move into their shelters, was impressed by the enthusiasm of some new arrivals: "*It was fantastic to see people get out of the car, saying: 'Now I have a house! This is my number!' While they were standing in front of a goddamn shitty shelter. But of course, it was like day and night.*"

Although people experienced La Linière as a physical improvement, both refugees and volunteers emphasized the isolated location of the new camp. The humanitarian crisis that was taking place in an illegal camp right in front of the Grande-Synthe population was moved to a place of exception: a bare, well hidden no man's land that consisted of rows of small wooden huts sandwiched between the highway and the railway. After visiting the new camp for the first time, a Dutch volunteer wrote: "*it is located totally out of sight for the local citizens, how convenient.*" Her comment can be connected to the work of Thomassen (2009), who related the situation of illegal immigrants to Turner's concept of the 'neophyte' (Turner 1967, 97), which he describes as persons who have a physical but no social reality and hence have to be hidden – they ought not to be there (Thomassen 2009,19). In 'Homo Sacer', Giorgio Agamben writes that the fundamental categories in Western politics are on the one

¹⁴ Field note, 7th of March 2016.

hand 'bare life' –the fact of being alive – and on the other hand full life – social presence in the world (1998, 12). He argues that refugees disturb the organization of the modern nation-state because they break the connection between man and citizen (1998, 77). Agamben describes the camp as a place where the exception becomes the rule. Khosravi refers to this isolation as 'the logic of the camp': *'wherever they occur they include the same principle, which is to place undesired people outside the society'* (2010, 70). In contrast to the Jungle, where the local community lived on the other side of the road, the new camp was abandoned and refugees had to walk at least 15 minutes to reach the closest supermarket or to take the bus to the city. *"In the Jungle we were close to everything,"* several refugees commented. Freya, an English volunteer, told me how before the move she tried to inform refugees about the isolated location of the camp: *"What I was saying to people before the move when they were asking me about the new camp was physically your needs will be better but socially the camp is worse in terms of it being isolated from the rest of society."* This isolation seems to be a worldwide characteristic of refugee camps. Valentino Achak Deng, who lived in the big Kenyan refugee camp Kakuma for several years, raised the following question when looking back at his life in the camp:

"What kind of life did we have in Kakuma? Was it even a life? People held divided opinions about this. We were still alive, so in that sense we had a life: we got food, we could make new friends, we could learn and we could love. But we were living in a no-man's-land. Kakuma was a no-man's-land. It was the Kenyan word for 'nowhere'. It was like a purgatory. There was absolutely nothing, which made us dependent on the UN for everything" (Eggers 2006, 449).

The new camp's policy emphasized security and providing emergency aid, which resulted in new rules about incoming donations. Volunteers were no longer allowed to independently bring donations into the camp. They were asked to bring all food and clothes to the l'Auberge des Migrants warehouse in Calais, from where it would be distributed to Grande-Synthe on a daily basis. This change was noted and criticized by both of my research populations. Several refugees told me how they received fewer donations than in the old camp. *"Here there is nothing"*, Malik noted. These restrictions had been implemented to prevent the new camp from becoming an organizational chaos like the Jungle. The old camp had no central policy, except that local authorities guarded the entrance of the camp where they'd forbid people to bring in anything 'permanent', such as building materials and tents. Inside the camp, there were no laws and different organizations and independent volunteers intuitively tried to implement rules to manage the distribution of aid as fairly as possible. Elizabeth noted there was a constant lack of communications between organizations because everyone was so focused on helping in 'the present moment'. Due to a lack of a central organization or policy, there was a constant surplus of unwanted items in the women and children's distribution tent. There were rarely sufficient people to sort donations and only few volunteers could commit for

long periods of time. As a result, every week a new 'system' would be invented, eventually resulting in the same chaos. This lawless chaos on the one hand made it almost impossible for refugees to find the clothes they needed. On the other hand, some people took advantage of the lawless situation and used it as a source of money making: there was a lot of exploitation going on among the refugee community. The manager of the women and children clothing distribution told me how a couple of women were known to fill large bags of clothes, not for their own families but to sell clothes to more vulnerable parts of the refugee population. Vulnerable refugees were threatened in such a way they wouldn't make use of the distribution channels and were forced to buy food and clothes from more powerful refugees. La Linière's distribution policy served as a way to create more equality among the refugee population and to prevent exploitation and conflicts from happening. The aim was to make it a safe and humane place for people to live.

Especially during the first weeks after the camp opened, Utopia56 put extensive emphasis on camp security, since the state would use any insecurity incident as a reason to close the camp. Ironically, the camp manager told me that the local authorities did not move whenever something bad happened in the camp. For example, a big tent was stolen and they wanted to know what happened; yet the police wouldn't act. *"We hope that the camp will become like any other place in France where if you do something bad you will get in trouble."* The absence of the police inside the camp relates to Ticktin who argues that in spaces of exception, the relationship between the law and the police changes (2014, 278). Policemen would only enter the camp to check for weapons or to arrest smugglers. Besides this task, they guarded the entrance and exit of the camp to check volunteers' passports (to guarantee the safety of 'legal citizens') and make sure that neither volunteers nor refugees would bring in forbidden items. Similar to the illegal old camp, their function was limited to 'controlling'; any occurring incident continued to fall outside the law.

The French state put some security measures on the camp, which resulted in a rule that gas was not allowed inside the camp and refugees were forbidden from cooking inside their shelters. As a result of these policies refugees were limited in their possibility to provide for and take care of themselves. In the Jungle, volunteers would bring material aid to refugees so that despite the muddy conditions, people could still run their own households. In the first weeks after the move, I followed a number of heated discussions in the Belgian volunteer group on Facebook about the new camp's management, organization and policies, and rules that restricted volunteers from bringing in donations. It was noted that because of this focus on emergency aid and security, the camp managers didn't listen to what refugees themselves desired or considered as their true needs. One volunteer emphasized how these security measures started to dominate the organization of camp life: *"I find the communication and involvement to and with residents inadequate. It's all about safety now. This aspect was lacking in the old camp and is very important. But allow others to keep an eye on the human aspect too, because this often gets lost in the focus on organizing the camp securely."* Her comment relates to the work of Harrell-Bond, who argued that top down humanitarian policies

carry disempowering consequences, because they make refugees clients of those upon whom they are dependent for their means of survival and security (2002, 55).

It reflects how the freedom to decide for themselves, to decide how they wanted to live their lives, was taken from the refugees in La Linière. As such, friction is created between the architectural infrastructure and emergency-focused policies of the camp and the lived reality of its inhabitants. They are not in the camp for a moment of emergency. I spoke to refugees who had lived in the camps for seven months or more. For them, the 'temporal' life in the camp has become much more of a long-term, semi-permanent situation, which has changed their needs. Ticktin argues that we have to think carefully about the conditions under which we want to preserve the architecture of refugee camps. As a consequence of focusing on emergency care, they often don't allow refugees to participate in larger polities, neither give them the means to obtain what they themselves deem absolutely necessary, instead of having to rely on standardized humanitarian kits (Ticktin 2014, 278). In order to create a more liveable situation, refugees and volunteers reacted to this tension through creative tactics and by organizing empowering projects.

3.2 “All we want is a normal life”

“When refugees come to Europe they are treated as second-class citizens. But we don't need your expired food and second-hand clothes. We are all human beings who want to live a normal life. That's the only thing refugees are looking for: a new and free life.

Sirwe, the mother of the Jungle.

You've already been introduced to Sirwe through her poem in the introduction to this thesis. She's a charismatic woman, a serene appearance who lived in the camp with her four sons. She made the above comment during one of the conversation classes in the adult learning centre. Her talk identified a friction between the needs of the refugee population and the way the camp was organized.

In his research on the experiences of the conflict in Acholiland (Uganda), Sverker Finnström describes the process of forced resettlements of the Acholi population to protected villages. In these camps, the state imposed itself on the local population by regulating everyday life (1999, 33), which inhabitants experienced as socially and culturally destructive. *“Life in the protected villages is contrary to how most Acholis want to live. Personal background and biography are neutralised and individuals are made equal but also identical. Heterogeneity is homogenised. In the long run people see themselves being turned into passive victims as their cultural agency is diminishing”* (Finnström 1999, 35). In other words, people in these 'protected' camps were denied the agency to decide about their own lives and made completely dependent on aid agencies for survival.

The case of La Linière both confirms and counters the situation that Finnström sketches. Camp policies were largely focused on emergency aid and therefore the organization of clothing and food distribution did regulate the lives of inhabitants in a top-down

way, without heeding their point of view. But it would be too simplistic to state that they left no room for any discussion and negotiation. Within the structured camp space, refugees developed opportunities that gave them bits of power in the hierarchy of the camp. I will relate these acts of negotiation to De Certeau's theory of the 'Practice of Everyday Life'. He describes tactics as '*ways the weak make use of the strong*', to establish degrees of creativity in the place that lays down its laws for them (De Certeau 1984, 30). On the 17th of March a community meeting was organized to improve the communication between the managers, volunteers and refugees in the camp. Dissatisfied with the way the food distribution was organized, some men emphasized: "*Stop cooking for us! Give us rice and chicken so we can cook for ourselves*". Their comment reflected a desire to be self-sufficient or at least have a say in the food they were offered. The daily reality spoke for itself: only a small amount of people (mostly single men) would actually queue up at the food bus. Families preferred to cook their own meals. One of the women who regularly invited me to try her Kurdish meals, started to shake her head whenever she saw me eating one of the meals from the food bus: "*No good, come to my house to eat!*" Food forms part of people's cultural heritage, and in the camp, sharing food served as a way to share a part of traditional cuisine, something that gave people a sense of agency and proudness. Eventually, a team of young Kurdish cooks called 'the Jungle Brothers' got permission from the camp managers to provide Kurdish dinners for the camp population, in collaboration with a team of German volunteers. The Kurdish boys told me how their moms at home in Kurdistan had taught them to cook traditional Kurdish food. The same team later also started preparing the lunches. This 'power change' relates to Foucault's theory of power as 'a complex field of possible actions, in which all actors operate and from which the prospects of escape are limited for dominant and sub-ordinate groups alike.' Power in that sense can be seen as something productive and not only repressive (Hardy 2003, 466). The structure of the new camp produced resistance, which eventually led to more autonomy. At the same time, volunteers developed projects to give residents a sense of agency.

In May, right after I left the field, the long-expected community kitchens opened, one of the first attempts to give refugees some autonomy to cook for themselves. The team had been working on these plans since November, long before La Linière opened. They presented a number of ideas to MSF about projects that could be developed in the new camp, such as a school, community spaces, kitchens, playgrounds and an adult learning centre. Charlie, The volunteer responsible for this project emphasized: "*We are hoping they become community homes and that the community will look after them. I really hope it gives them some more autonomy and independence and a feeling of self. We really want to encourage them to be self-sustaining rather than looked after all the time, you know.*" The camp manager made a similar comment: "*The main idea is to give some autonomy to the people living there. Community kitchens where people can make their own food and in fact get back to kind of a normal life.*"

Emergency aid doesn't only have disempowering consequences in the present moment. According to Ramadan, another problematic consequence of emergency aid is that it limits development and critical discussion of sustainable solutions for the situation people are in (2012, 75). The educational projects in the camp focused precisely on these long-term needs. The founders of these projects explained to me the importance of education in the camp. It served as a way to give people a sense of 'normality': *"In the old camp the priority was for the crisis to work but alongside that it was nice for people to have something that was more normal,"* Elizabeth from the adult learning centre explained. *"Teaching English and French seemed to be the most immediate thing that was possible to give people a little bit of normal life. Refugees now nicely call it 'the University'. We thought it would be good to create something with a sustainable future because any refugee camp that is here for the long-term should have education."* Cyril, the French teacher in the school agreed: *"When you are speaking about the camp it's more about food, clothes, but no education. But education is one of the basic human needs, and it's also a duty, under a legal constitution, and based on human rights."*

The schools had not only 'professional teachers', but also assigned 'assistant teachers', refugees who spoke Kurdish or Farsi who were able to help children maintain the same levels of comprehension of Kurdish that they were developing in English (and French). I experienced the schools in both camps as learning spaces where volunteers and refugees shared knowledge in a very horizontal way. For example, the school in the Jungle, would not only be attended by children but also by adults who wanted to improve their English. One day I stated helping Semengul with the pronunciation of the English alphabet, but in the end we just taught each other: she would give me the names of Kurdish fruits and vegetables, which she drew up in her notebook, and in return asked me for the English translations. It was really a horizontal engagement in which we were both learning and held expertise in a different field. Cyril told me how he also experienced teaching as a shared act: *"We have three mothers coming with their son... Usually we teach them English and they help us teach math to the kids. Therefore it's a kind of...we share. And you know sometimes we play Sudoku with them and have competitions. We have this kind of relation, a lot of complicity. When they challenge you, it's good. That's part of life."*

These examples illustrate how the established hierarchies between refugees and volunteers in the camp could occasionally be reversed – by developing relationships that were not focussed on assisting but on sharing. Rozakou who conducted research on hospitality among refugees and volunteers in Greece argues that such a relational approach may help reconstruct refugees as political subjects (2012, 573), Her findings relate to Darling's descriptions of camps as grey zones and a potential site of opening doors and windows, 'a place where new relations between citizens and non-citizens are established (2009, 662). Rozakou however argues that even on level of everyday interaction the entrenched understandings of citizenship and state ownership dominated and hospitality emerged as the

privilege of the citizen performed on the non-citizen, the refugee (2012, 572). Occasional reversals of hierarchy in the camp were limited and should be contextualized in the complex power dynamics that shape its living environment.

3.3 The complexity of living in the space of exception

The lawlessness of refugee camps makes them potential sites for new encounters in which universal hierarchies may be reversed. But this should not underestimate how camps are at the same time places of extreme violence, hierarchy, and dehumanization (Ticktin 2015, 85). This counts for both the Jungle and La Linière. The new camp was still an open camp, which resulted in violent gangs that held power in the Jungle moving along with the other camp residents. Under the surface of the policies and negotiations that sought to bring back a sense of normality and security for the camp residents, it remained a place of crisis. It was a place of exploitation and moneymaking, where mafia held power over the more vulnerable parts of the population. The schoolteachers emphasized how the unaccompanied minors in the camp were particularly vulnerable. On their blog they explained how gangs preferred to use children to front their criminal activities: *“If the police turn up in the course of a criminal enterprise, with a child fronting the enterprise, it will then be the child who is committing the offence. The onlooking gang members then appear to be merely ‘innocent’ bystanders.”* They hoped the school could serve as a safe space where children could come to talk about whatever concerned them. On the Edlumino blog the teachers present themselves as independent of all the different influences in the camp, which enabled them to maintain objectivity in the camp.¹⁵ Besides unaccompanied minors, those refugees who had close contact with volunteers and regularly talked to the media had a higher risk to be threatened by smuggler gangs because their ‘voice’ could threaten their business. Because of this risk, Sirwe’s family had to leave the camp for a couple of weeks and find shelter elsewhere.

As a consequence of these internal power inequalities, the managers of La Linière decided to not involve refugees into the daily organization of the camp. Most of the ‘jobs’ in the camp, from construction to distributing to cleaning, were done by volunteers, with the exception of a bike shop where refugees repaired broken bikes. In the Jungle, volunteers had decided to collaborate with refugees in the kitchen and distribution areas, and this had resulted in a lot of discrimination and favouritism: some refugees would keep behind stuff for their friends and not distribute to certain minorities in the camp. Especially the kitchen and men’s distribution had to deal with many problems: eventually smugglers took over in these places and denied entrance to a large part of the camp population – forcing them to buy food and clothes through them. As a result, the most vulnerable people in the camp were threatened and never reached the distribution centres. Freya, an English volunteer who spent a lot of time with minorities in the camp commented:

¹⁵ <http://edlumino.org/blog/edlumino-blog-relationships-and-safeguarding>, assessed 10th of August 2016.

“This is the problem in trying to support refugees in running things themselves, which they should be doing but actually you can’t really do that if there’s discrimination among the refugee community because then...I know that some people working in the men’s distribution were prioritizing and giving clothes to their friends rather than being equal and dividing them among everyone. It is a problem, I don’t really know how you could solve it.”

In line with that, Cyril emphasized how he would love to have refugees more involved, but how in the old camp smugglers took over the showers and started to ask refugees to pay, which explains why Utopia56 asked an association to take care of these facilities. Remarkably, the decision to empower some refugees to cook Kurdish food instead of having volunteers cook for them also neglects some minorities (Iranians, Kuwaitis, Vietnamese) in the camp. *“We don’t get food at the food truck”,* Malik (a Bedoon Kuwaiti refugee) said. *“We prepare our own Arab food.”* As an answer to this neglect, several volunteers would focus on the empowerment of minorities in the camp. An Irish volunteer would for example get specific ‘luxury ingredients’ for the Vietnamese inhabitants so that they could cook their own dishes.

Several volunteers commented that they found Utopia56’s solution – forbidding all other forms of collaboration – too simple. They emphasized that refugees could be incorporated into other areas than the kitchen. A French volunteer said: *“There has to be a way to work together in a democratic way, and give people something to do. For example, by having a system of constant rotation.”* Utopia56 had already implemented a rotation scheme for volunteers to work in shifts, so it could easily be extended to incorporate refugees into different tasks. Yet to achieve this, organization would come from top-down again – so it continues to limit people in their agency.

As a result of these limited working opportunities, refugees did not have much to do in the camp. Karwan said: *“I spend my days between the phone charging area and my shelter.”* Many people told me they were bored and tired of endlessly trying and waiting. Their daily reality relates to Michel Agier’s argument that ‘policing the emergency makes camps spaces of pure waiting without a subject’ (2002, 336). He emphasizes how in the camp, the problem of idleness dominates life, which makes refugees feel powerless and useless (Agier 2002, 329). Idleness certainly also characterizes the situation of La Linière. *“We assist them completely, I can’t understand that. In Calais refugees are building their own houses,”* Cyril commented. He was actually working on the idea of setting up a local economy in the camp so that refugees could make themselves useful:

“We could grow flowers, plants with the refugees, give them kind of working papers. If they want to work together it could be nice. There’s plenty of hidden issues that we don’t think about because we are much more focused on the primary need. For example when you have a beaten woman: ask her what’s her first need. She won’t care about food or clothing. We can extend that to a better understanding of the camp. People who are here

don't have a job. What's the first need for them? Is it food? Clothing? Or a job?! It's a different way of looking at the camp".

To look at the camp differently, means to recognize the hidden issues that the emergency structures ignore. Exploitation, domestic violence, a lack of work and more generally the idleness of living in the camp for a semi-permanent amount of time remain hidden in the focus on the present.

3.4 In frozen time

"In the old camp people were surviving. They had no time to think about their future and where to claim asylum. In the new camp conditions are better, people find rest and start to think about their future, and they also become depressed because their future doesn't happen, they're stuck."

Eric, a Belgian volunteer

Despite the powerful attempts of both refugees and volunteers to address the limits of emergency aid and to develop projects that could create a more liveable and sustainable camp, the new camp also confronted people with the uncertainty of their future. As Eric's comment reflects, people found more time to think and with this came the realization of their 'frozen lives'. They were stuck in a situation of liminality, of in-between-ness. Traditionally, the anthropological concept of liminality refers to a ritual passage of which the final stage is reintegration: the recognition as a part of the social order, being welcomed with a new role (Szakolczai 2000, 220). When this process doesn't happen, liminality becomes permanent and as such places people in a situation of 'frozen time' (Szakolczai 2000, 220). The people in the camp have not yet found a legal place and therefore experience their lives as frozen. '*Camps produce the misery of meaningless lives*', Ticktin argues (2014, 278). The story of Diyar may illustrate this comment. Diyar, an English literature student from Kurdish Iraq, told me how for him, living in the camp was not really a life: "*This place is driving me crazy. Despite the bad situation of Kurds in Iraq, I would rather be there now than stuck in France. I had a life there. I was the best student in my year, I was making plans to do a PhD and afterwards teach at the university. And look where I am now.*" His story can be related to the work of Navaro-Yashin, who has written on the case of Turkish-Cypriots in internationally unrecognized Northern Cyprus. She describes how her informants lived in zones of spatial and temporal surreality (2003, 110) and felt how their lives were kept on hold (Navaro-Yashin 2003, 121). "*In this place, which was transformed into 'no man's land', time is caught, like the flip-second of a camera shot, in-between. Somewhere in the middle, life was frozen, trapped, held on hold. They live in enforced division*" (Navaro-Yashin 2003, 117). A similar argument is made by Enav-Weintraub, who conducted research in the West Bank. She illustrates how people in the West Bank live in a situation of permanent temporality (Enav-Weintraub 2008, 7), which relates also to Agier's view of camp spaces being experienced by their inhabitants as a never-ending present (2010, 38).

As a result of the conflicts they faced and the harsh journeys they made, many people in the camp were dealing with trauma and depression without getting professional help. There were many people in the camps who had lost family members and close friends. Combined with the hopelessness and uncertainty of being stuck in the camp, these depressions tended to increase. Semengul, Diyar's mom, emphasized that she was feeling lonely. Her daughter had been on the other side of the channel for two weeks, and Diyar often left the camp to hang out with friends at the mall, so during the day she was left alone in their shelter. At the end of my fieldwork I spent a lot of time with Newa. She was raising two kids on her own (her youngest has Down syndrome and required a lot of attention.) While having tea she told me how she was completely exhausted. *"It's okay when I am surrounded by people"*, she said. Receiving guests helped her forget the harsh reality of her life for a while. She would invite me for tea or lunch whenever I passed their shelter. Newa explained to me how on Saturdays volunteers were passing by her shelter continuously to say "hi" and check up on how she and her kids were doing, but the rest of the week was quiet. At these moments, I often found her on the phone with family members in Kurdistan. Through the app Viber, many camp residents maintained phone contact with friends and family members outside the isolated camp, some of them 'back home', others in England. Oude Breuil notes how her informants (prostitution migrants in Marseille) found a mobile solution to their mobile existence through digital storytelling. (Oude Breuil 2014). She illustrates how for her informants, digital storytelling helped people sustain family ties and actively remember home (2014, 138). For the refugees in the camp, I would argue that through digital storytelling they could maintain a sense of mobility while being stuck. For the refugees I spoke with, phone contact with family members in England also formed a way of imagining home outside the camp. In the camp, they were liminally inside and outside the world at the same time (Beneduce 2008, 522) and I felt like the location of La Linière painfully contributed to this ambiguous sense of reality. *As I watch the scenery, a feeling of isolation overwhelms me: the camp is sandwiched between a highway on the right and a railway on the left. Every moment of the day, residents will find themselves directly confronted with their own lack of mobility as they watch European citizens rushing by, traveling freely towards England.*¹⁶

Ironically, volunteers in the camp were on many levels also 'liminal beings', stuck between past and future. In between-jobs, feeling unhappy about their current lives and uncertain about their future. In the camp they felt they could contribute to something precarious. It was an escape route from the routine of normal life, which is paradoxically the exact thing refugees are looking for: to live a safe, free life in which they can be educated and work. The next chapter will elaborate on these future ambitions.

¹⁶ Field note, 7th of March 2016.

4. “Tomorrow Inshallah!”



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¹⁷ Photo by Laura Liliana, <https://humblebeeing.wordpress.com>, assessed 13th of August 2016.

4. “Tomorrow Inshallah!”

4.1 Imagining a new life outside the camp

“Many people think we want to go to England for the money, but that’s not true. We want a life. And my friends in the UK told me that they have a life.”

I picked up this comment from a conversation between a group of volunteers and a Kurdish-Iraqi refugee having a chat during lunch break. In the coffee and tea area, volunteers would take a break from their daily tasks and engage in conversations with refugees (mostly young men) about their histories and future plans. “*What do you hope to find in England?*” volunteers would ask. “*To get back to a normal life*”, was often named by refugees as a hope and expectation. Irfan, a Bedoon refugee from Kuwait, attached a Justin Bieber poster to the canvas of his tent. When a journalist asked him about it he replied: “*This is a little boy, he has everything. I want a life like this man. Not to be a star, but I want to be safe. I want papers...I don’t want to have the police behind me all the time. It’s very, very hard.*”¹⁸ Stateless people are an absolute majority in the Grande-Synthe camps. Many refugees in the camp are therefore specifically looking for equal access to citizenship and the protection a nation-state, something they never received. As the Kurdish refugees in Eliassi’s study emphasized: ‘*We’re not asking for something new, but for something the whole world is enjoying and knows well*’ (Eliassi 2016: 13). My interview with Malik supported his argument:

“England knows our hard...Bedoon people. They know about us. I don’t know anything about England. But I need to get to the country and start a good new life. I need to be like everybody. To have insurance, to have identification papers, to get to the hospital if I get sick. I need to finish my current terrible life and get a new life with a future and I need education even if my age is old now. And I need a job, get a good job and I’ll be free.”

“Why England?” was a question that popped up time and again. England isn’t famous for having a very welcoming asylum policy, so volunteers were curious what made refugees hold on to this “English dream”. When I asked people why they preferred England to for example staying in France I generally got two answers: language and family. If people had learned a foreign language at home it was usually English and most of the people in the camp had either family members or friends who already lived in England. These two factors gave at least some hold on and security about their future. Anthropologist and himself a former refugee Shahram Khosravi notes that family networks are a very important source of information and something to hold onto for refugees around the world (2007, 328). The same applies to my informants: it provided them with a sense of certainty to hold onto in the endless uncertainty that characterizes camp life. These examples illustrate how the “English dream”

¹⁸ <https://news.vice.com/article/we-visited-the-lesser-known-french-migrant-camp-thats-next-in-line-for-evictions-1> assessed 26th of May 2016.

that refugees held onto, reflected a sense of home and belonging that wasn't necessarily tied to England as a place but more as a space (Mallett 2004) that was already inhabited by something 'familiar', be it a known language or people.

The "English Dream" not only emerged in refugees' stories but also visually appeared throughout both camps in the form of flags, texts and paintings. For example, the Jungle was divided into different streets, and these carried names such as 'Queen Elizabeth II Street' and 'David Cameron Street'. Furthermore I noticed several people putting the name of an English city as their current home on Facebook. Facebook has no borders, so my interpretation was that online they could already imagine themselves on the other side. Mallett argues that home can also be an imagined space. *'Home is often found in social relations, a feeling, a process, a set of practices, a source of identity, imagined or symbolized'* (Mallett 2004, 63). Her argument relates to the work of Brenda Oude Breuil, who notes that imagination can serve as an active strategy for migrants to (re)create belonging to ones community and social cohesiveness. For the situation of prostitution migrants she argues: *'Since imagination always was an improvement on the home they left behind, imagination also served as ambition, a goal that created physical and social movement'* (Oude Breuil 2014, 139).

For some refugees in the camp it was not their first journey to England. Some men in the camp told me how they already had an English passport, but went back to their home country or France to be reunited with family members and help them on their journey to the UK. Many of them did not see their flight to England as a one-way-journey. I remember a talk with an English translator from Kurdish Iraq who told me: *"When the situation in my country is stable again I want to go back and bring something from England. Teach people the language. Bring money I earned. I hope I can mean something for the people there"*. Erin also emphasized how he wished to go back to Kurdistan if the circumstances had improved: *"You know, if I stay for ten years and my country is okay, it's gonna be okay, I want to sign for going back to home. If my country no have problems, I want to go back because I love my country."*

According to Liisa Malkki, refugees in particular illuminate the complex ways in which people construct, remember and claim particular places as 'homelands' and 'nations' (1992, 25). Their displaced existence calls into question the meaning of the nation-state. Malkki elaborates on her own research in Burundi to illustrate how Hutu refugees negotiate their national 'being in the world'. On the one hand she spoke to refugees in a camp who valued their refugee status as a refusal to become naturalized and to put down roots in a place where one didn't belong (Malkki 1992, 35). This reaction reminds me of people in the camp, who reflected fear of being fingerprinted in France. The Dublin Regulation governs which country is responsible for refugees' asylum applications, which is normally the state where one first entered the EU.¹⁹ Fingerprints may be taken when refugees enter another EU country. These are sent to the Eurodac database to check if people had already been fingerprinted elsewhere. When La Linière opened, many of the camp-residents from the

¹⁹ <http://www.unhcr.org/4a9d13d59.pdf>, assessed 13th of August 2016.

Jungle were concerned that the new camp would be a place where they would be fingerprinted. This would root them to the French territory, a place they did not want to belong. The other group in Malkki's study was living in a township and they assimilated and mixed up different identities. They dismantled the national metaphysics by reusing a mapping of origin altogether (Malkki 1992, 36). I noted a similar reaction from Binar who used to work in the women and children's distribution. He didn't feel a complete member of the refugee population and told me he identified more with the volunteer group, so when it was decided that refugees were no longer allowed to work in the distribution centres he fell between groups. Binar told me that for him home could be anywhere, as long as people were nice.

According to Grillo we seem to have trouble with the balancing act and prefer to reify local identities or construct universal ones. The reality is more nuanced: people live more and more 'in-between', in liminality (Grillo 2007, 201). Little by little, he continues, instead of being someone from here or there, we become simultaneously here and there (Grillo 2007, 202). People negotiate their self-definition in new contexts and across time and space think and act beyond the local (Grillo 2007, 203). '*Nations are territorializing concepts*', Malkki argues. Both Malkki's findings and the experiences of my research informants illustrate how home and one's sense of belonging isn't necessarily nation-state bound. Yet current day European border politics continue to hold onto the concept of the nation-state as a way of in-and exclusion. The situation of living in the camp and the endless nights of trying to cross symbolize how refugees find themselves stuck in a category of illegality, of exclusion. Seyla Benhabib argues that citizenship rights must be resituated in a transnational context. She states that transnational migration illuminates a conflict between sovereignty and hospitality. '*The universal declaration of human rights recognizes the right to emigrate but not the right to immigrate. This leaves many undocumented migrants and refugees in the murky domain between legality and illegality*' (Benhabib 2005, 675). Their dreams are put on hold by nation-state boundaries and as a result, they find themselves trapped between their own ambitions for a better life and the inflexibility of the European immigration system (Davis 2016). Paradoxically, the EU borders will be most open to those whose hefty citizenship makes them least likely to move (Macklin 2007, 359). In relation to this, Darling emphasizes that we need to call into question the very freedom we enjoy precisely as we deny this freedom to refugees and asylum seekers (2009, 662).

4.2 Closed doors and criminalizing discourses

"Yesterday I tried for UK, but it was frozen, the lorry. After two hours the driver called the police. The policeman wanted to shoot me. I said: "Please don't do that. I have a son." He talked to me very, very bad. He told me: "Go back to your country. Why do you come to France? England don't want you. England is closed."

Erin, a refugee from Kurdistan, Iraq.

Erin and I were drinking tea outside his shelter as he told me this story. It was a clear day, one of the first days of May and the sun was at its warmest, yet his story made me shiver. It

was the second night in a row that Erin and family had tried to get to England but got caught by French authorities. The same policeman had discovered them the day before, and according to Erin he got even angrier when he recognized their faces. When he asked the man if his two-year-old son, who was ill from sitting in a freezer truck for two hours, could warm up in the police car for a bit, the cop had coldly answered: *“That is not my job.”*

I met this family almost three months earlier in the old camp, while handing out food and bottles of gas with a group of Dutch volunteers. Erin had invited us to have tea in their tent and insisted we come back for dinner. One of the Dutch volunteers complimented him on his perfect English. *“I lived in the UK before,”* he explained. *“I lived in Manchester for three years but in 2012 I got a refuse and went back to Iraq.”* Now he was making the same journey again, this time as a married man, with his wife and two-and-a-half year old son. They had already been stuck in France for six months. *“How long did it take you the first time?”* I asked. *“Last time was easy. It took me four days to get from France to England.”* During our conversation we suddenly noticed how the atmosphere in the camp changed. We heard people shouting and saw men running towards the highway. *“Traffic jam”*, Erin said. *“They are trying for England.”*

Unfortunately, Erin’s story isn’t an exception. Some people in the camp tried to cross every night, yet ran into the same obstacles over and over again. When discovered by the police, they could be put into detention centres for a couple of days to weeks, but mostly they were dropped somewhere in the middle of nowhere and told to walk back to the camp. Many spent their nights walking and their days catching up on sleep. These failed attempts illustrate how instead of finding the protection they seek – which their own state cannot guarantee (any longer) – asylum seekers worldwide become the victim of systematic repression (Fassin 2011, 221). Repression characterizes our moral economy, which criminalizes and deprives people in ‘the camp’ of citizenship to protect the privileges of nation-state members (Fassin 2005, 379). Fassin states that border politics fall under a larger ‘biopolitics of otherness’ in a polarized world (2004, 380). He bases his argument on the work of Agamben (1998) who makes a distinction between ‘the camp’ (a space where the exception becomes the rule) and ‘the polis’, as if they form two separate models of social organization, Fassin argues that the polis and the camp are two sides of the same coin of our contemporary democracies.

‘Because these regimes defend the polis for the happy few, they invent the camp for the undesirable. In the former, life is recognized as the political existence of the citizen, whereas in the latter, it is reduced to the bare life of the vagabond. The polis needs the camp in order to ensure its existence’, he concludes. In other words: to keep the current political order intact, we also need to sustain the existing inequalities within that order’ (Fassin 2005, 381).

The tensions between the full citizen and bare vagabond explain why humanitarianism is so closely linked to politics. Erin’s story forms just one painful example of the exclusionary working of our moral economy. Most of the refugees I spoke to told me about their personal

experiences of police brutality as they tried to cross borders in Europe. One family explained that the Bulgarian police had taken their passports because they wanted to force them to stay in Bulgaria. They were put into detention for twelve days and had to survive on dry bread and toilet water, before they were able to continue their journey. It illustrates the harsh repression of “the undesirable”. In the old camp, a Dutch volunteer shared an indignant written reflection that addresses the criminalization of illegal refugees by French authorities.

“(…)That Sunday the boy had been trying to get into a lorry in order to be reunited with family in the UK. Since his attempt to get across the Channel – the only way to request asylum in the UK – was illegal, the police had beaten him up severely so that he wouldn’t try again. He was dropped in the middle of nowhere at 68 kilometers distance from the camp. And then they took his I-phone. Apparently this is legal (...) While it is “illegal” to try and reach the UK border, it is legal to leave thousands of men, women, children and babies living in inhumane conditions, without food, clothing or even shelter, on a dump site consisting of mud, rats, and human waste (...) It is “illegal” to smuggle people desperate for safety in dinghy’s across the European border. But it is legal to let thousands of them die in order to protect our own wealth (...)”.

Her comment highlights the ambivalence of the discourses that decide how refugees are (to be) dealt with. Isn’t it ironic that refugees are constantly criminalized for not having papers while more often than not the act of criminalization itself (young men who get beaten up and robbed as they try to reunite with their families) ends up violating all human rights?

‘The polis needs the camp to ensure its existence’, Fassin states. This clearly speaks from the English border politics. When having a chat with a British volunteer on the way to the warehouse in Calais, she said: “England only puts money in building higher fences and in the coming years wants to welcome barely 20 000 refugees.” There are many contradictions involved in such security investments, since England puts a lot of money in border controls, but at the same time profits from illegal migration as all the smuggler money ends up in British banks. Border policies have become a huge industry, notes de Haas (2015, 4) and French volunteer Cyril addressed the same issue in our interview:

“England has its own part of responsibility because all the money of the smugglers goes to English banks. Therefore, they know it. Why do they close the border? Because then they have more money. There’s kind of complicity. It’s about 6 billion, the whole profit of smugglers. It’s a lot of money. Therefore I mean, you know, if you don’t change the politics...how could you deal with the smugglers? We are to some extent responsible of that. I think that has to be clear. How can we improve politics? We started to block the border and look how ironical it is, we still have freedom for economy and put a border for human beings. Plenty of contradictions.”

On the school blog, volunteers wrote that it is often said in jest that the whole camp situation in Northern France is a clever UK means-testing immigration system. The people who can get out of the camps and get themselves smuggled are those who are wealthy enough to be able to afford the fees charged by the smugglers.²⁰ Jack and Erin told me how the refugees who were still in the camp in May, were mostly poor people who could not afford the high prices that smugglers charged and were to sneak themselves into lorries without smugglers' help.

For those who have the money, the smugglers in the camp however served as freedom facilitators upon whom they were dependent to reach their goal. This dependence complicates the criminalization of smuggler networks in politics and media. Hein de Haas emphasizes that border controls have only diverted migration to other crossing points, made migrants more dependent on smuggling and increasing the costs and risks of crossing borders (de Haas 2015, 1). Politicians and the media routinely blame smugglers for the suffering and dying at Europe's borders but de Haas explains how this diverts the attention away from the fact that smuggling is a reaction to the militarization of border controls and not the cause of irregular migration. He states that border policies to combat smuggling are bound to fail because they are among the very causes of the phenomenon they claim to 'fight', which overshadows also the structural causes of illegal migration and the governments' responsibility in creating conditions under which smuggling can thrive in the first place (De Haas 2015, 3). According to Shahram Khosravi, the relation between refugees and smugglers is stereotypically misrepresented by the media and politicians as 'refugees caught in mafia-controlled criminal networks' (2007, 323). He explains how his own smuggler saved his life in one of the most dangerous places (2007, 324). An Iranian couple in the old camp emphasized that the police arrestments of smugglers in the camp weren't really advantageous for them. *"We are dependent upon these smugglers."* Cyril reflected on this dependence as follows: *"The trouble with the smugglers is that the families need the smugglers because it's the quickest way for them to go to England. Therefore it's a kind of, you know, a contract between themselves. They were even hiding the smugglers from us."* On his journey to Europe, Khosravi found that many smugglers were themselves migrants or refugees who joined the business for a few years before going to the West (2007, 326). I heard the same story in the Grande-Synthe camps: some refugees would work for a smuggler for a while so they could save money for their own journey. The line between refugees and smugglers in the camp thus isn't unambiguous. Volunteers who told me they helped refugees by smuggling them across the borders of the Benelux and Germany add an extra layer to this complexity. The smugglers in the camp thus form a heterogeneous group, of which one part intermediates with good intentions for 'their clients', whereas the other part is a dangerous criminal network. Because of refugees' dependence on smugglers, volunteers often found themselves in a dilemma of intervention. Were they to encourage the police to arrest smugglers? Eric emphasized that smuggler criminality was surpassing itself in the camp, so his opinion was that volunteers had to intervene now. *"It's true that they are dependent upon the smugglers. But then we have to*

²⁰ <http://edlumino.org/blog/edlumino-blog-eid-mubarak>, assessed 10th of August 2016.

make sure they can depend upon those who don't threaten or exploit them but who treat them decently."

In order to protect their business, smugglers in the camp tried to keep refugees away from volunteers, because these contacts could influence refugees' perception about England. For this reason, several volunteers told me how they were concerned about starting a legal centre in the Jungle – which 'threatened' smugglers' businesses and therefore could put volunteers at risk. These plans finally got off the ground in La Linière. Next to that, refugees would discuss their future possibilities based on different asylum policies in negotiation with former refugees, volunteers and professionals in the camp.

4.3 Future negotiations

"I think people are dreaming about England, and I think it's kind of an English El Dorado, which is not true at all. They might find a job in England, for sure, quicker than in France. But how much they will be paid? Nothing! Illegal market. And if they're going to France, they will wait for a long time, but when we pay we pay like the other. What's the best solution? To wait? If you wait that long, you get very disappointed. And it's very destroying"

Cyril, a French volunteer

Through informal conversations, volunteers tried to provide refugees in the camp with a realistic picture of the differences between asylum policies in France and England (as well as in Belgium and the Netherlands). Several volunteers noted how in comparison to the Jungle, refugees in La Linière were more likely to ask the advice of volunteers about the differences among European countries and the longer they spent in the camp, the more people started to take into consideration alternative destinations. In these talks, volunteers tried to prepare refugees for what they could expect 'across the border'.

Jessica Reinisch emphasizes how France and England not only have different asylum policies but also different interpretations of the term refugee. To be recognized under the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, you must have left your country and be unable to go back because you have a well-founded fear of persecution based on one of the following reasons: race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Since the majority of people in the camp have no recognized nation-state and have experienced discrimination, the expectation would be that their refugee status would be recognized as such. But as Reinisch notes, 'persecution' remained undefined. In France, only individuals at risk of persecution at the hands of governments are considered to fall within the remits of the Convention, whereas in the UK, persecution can also be the result of non-governmental agents and forces (2015, 520). An English volunteer who worked with asylum seekers in the UK nevertheless emphasized: *"You have to be very lucky to be granted asylum as a Kurdish refugee in the UK. Even when people choose to stay in the UK illegally and get a job, fake assurance papers get discovered easily – and people end up being*

deported." A few years ago, Hintjes (2012) argued the same about failed Iraqi asylum seekers. She notes how her informants' daily experiences represented an existence well below what could be defined as a decent living: *'they are not usually allowed to work. If they work without permission, they risk criminal charges, with the possibility that they will be both imprisoned and then also detained and deported.'*

The UK is not a member of the Schengen area and has declined to take part in the EU agreement to receive 120, 000 refugees. Although Iraqi refugees were third place in the ranking of the highest number of asylum applications in the UK (2805), only 14% of the applicants were eventually granted asylum. For Iranian refugees, the highest number of applicants (4305), almost half of the group were granted asylum status.²¹ The asylum reports do not say anything about Kurdish refugees. Hintjes (2012) noted that at the same time that flight from Iraq had continued, there had been a global push to ensure the return of Iraqis to Iraq. She emphasized that among European states, the UK returned the most Iraqis, sending them to the Kurdish controlled north (Hintjes 2012, 90). This raises up questions for the chances of Kurdish Iraqi refugees in the camp. Hardy emphasizes how the determination processes that allocate refugee status are often based on limited information about countries most have never visited and about which the facts were unclear and, often, contradictory. Her comparison of the information of the Foreign Office with Amnesty Reports, reveals the arbitrariness of the system (Hardy 2003, 476). This strengthens her argument that a refugee only exists insofar as he or she is named and recognized by others (Hardy 2003, 477).

When comparing the English Asylum report to the French one, it is interesting to note that the French government states that it has space in detention centres for migrants seeking asylum whereas the UK detention centres are full and therefore asylum seekers are sometimes held in prisons. Furthermore there's a difference in employment possibilities. In France, asylum seekers may work, while in England the law allows access to employment only following a labour market test and allows asylum seekers only to work in listed occupations. This may explain why Cyril states that in England, refugees will only be able to work on the illegal market.

Soon after I left the field the legal information centre opened, where refugees could go to for advice. Besides that, the English conversation classes in the adult learning centre served as another way of orientation and preparation. Elizabeth told me the following about the long-term goals of the centre:

"Apart from being a place where people can learn French and English, we wanted to be a place where people can make friendships and understand people from different cultures and places and to be tolerant and also to try and be more informed ... that the UK is awful, the UK is a difficult place to live if you're a refugee and we want people to be prepared for that. It's

²¹ <http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/united-kingdom>, assessed 15th of July 2016

not just about the skills of learning a language, it's about learning language for understanding - for understanding ourselves and society."

These classes had the purpose of preparing refugees to their future life outside the camp, be it in France, the UK or elsewhere. *"In a refugee camp, you have the advantage of having many different cultures, which is good, so we make that part of what we are"*, Elizabeth added. Sometimes the subjects in these classes were very serious, at other times they dealt with 'lighter' subjects, for example a class I joined about "Multiculturalism in the UK" in which we watched a movie about the new mayor of London (the son of a Pakistani bus driver who declared his love to his wife with a fish burger from McDonalds and aims to make the houses in London affordable for everyone).

Another powerful source of advice were former refugees, who had themselves fled from Kurdistan, Iraq or Iran years ago and now held European passports. They had gone through asylum procedures themselves so they could provide refugees with first-hand information about the working of the system. For example, a Kurdish-Iraqi man who got Belgian citizenship visited the camp a couple of times and was now helping some refugees with applying for asylum in Belgium. There was also a Kurdish-Iranian woman with Belgian citizenship who was giving some young men advice. Eric emphasized that these 'in-between' persons could also improve understanding between volunteers and refugees in the camp and could break or nuance misperception. (At the same time these individuals were in a risky position in the camp: when smugglers found out that the Belgian-Iranian woman spoke Kurdish she was threatened, for she was assumed to be a police-spy.)

Besides volunteer and former refugees' advice, refugees' family networks also served as an important source of information. At the beginning of May I met Newa's brother Belen. Newa and her kids were trying to get to England with the help of a lawyer. Belen has been living in London and Sheffield for almost 15 years and told me he came 'on holidays' to the camp to visit his sister and her kids. He said many people hold on to the dream of England as if it's a paradise in which to live, which according to him was far from true. *"Living in England is actually very difficult, it's very hard to find a job there at the moment."* Stories of family members and friends in that sense provided refugees with a realistic image of their country of destination, which could practically and emotionally prepare them for the future that was waiting for them across the border.

During my last fieldwork day, Belen told me that in the morning a white van had picked up the family that lived in the shelter across the street. These 'mysterious white vans' were from the organization Afeji – who informed people about their asylum possibilities in France and helped them with their housing and asylum procedures if they decided to stay. Since 'La Linière' was managed by a French organization more French volunteers reached the camp, which gradually changed refugees' perception of France. At the end of my fieldwork, Elizabeth told me how in the language classes, French was becoming more

popular: *"I think it's because people feel positive about the experiences of meeting French. Now they've realized that the old camp was not France."*

Months of waiting and unsuccessful trying also made some people in the camp eventually decide to give up on England and return home. *"Can you order a trolley for my family? We are going back to Kurdistan this Friday"*, a girl asked me in the distribution centre. A few days later she came back with her grandmother to pick it up and make the trip back.

During the last weeks of my fieldwork, more and more refugees crossed, sometimes more than fifty persons a week. When I heard the news about friends who got to the UK it often left me with mixed feelings. At first I was filled with joy, because now they were where they wanted to be, and for many this meant they could reunite with family members. But on the other hand, this start of a new life in England as refugee (in many cases without a passport), who entered the country illegally, is characterized by great uncertainty. Thomassen writes that if moving into liminality can best be captured as a loss of home and a ritualized rupture with the world as we know it, any movement out of liminality must, somehow relate to a sort of home-coming (2014, 17). However, liminality continues to characterize the life of 'illegal travellers' as they pass the border to their point of destination. Perjin for example, a 15-year old girl from the Kurdish part of Iraq, lived in the camp with her older brother Diyar and her mom Semengul and was trying to get to Birmingham to reunite with her father. Perjin got to England before the rest of her family, and when I asked Semengul about her daughter, she replied: *"Perjin stays inside the house all the time, she is afraid to go out"*. Locked in illegality, without a passport, scared to be caught and deported by the police, back to France, or worse: Kurdistan.

Volunteers have recently been organizing a network that continues to help refugees on their arrival in the UK and helps them with housing and legal issues. Several volunteers posted their concerns on Facebook about families who recently arrived in the UK but found themselves isolated, so they were looking for someone who could show them around. Ghorashi argues that a feeling of home is essential for people to build a safe life and a secure future. She states that a relatively secure existence is only possible when people feel that they belong to their new environment and have the feeling that their contribution to society does in fact contribute to building a fairly safe future (2007, 131). The support networks in the UK served as a first step to make people feel at home. Elizabeth emphasized how the adult learning centre in the camp also served as a place that builds links: *"When people come to the UK, we are in touch with people and they can begin to meet people"*. Jack told me about the importance for refugees of having someone familiar around: *"Maybe...if they see a friendly face they know... And it's my country, I know my way around. I can talk to people and ask ... I can probably make myself useful for them. And it'll just be nice to see them again."* When Freya came back to visit the camp after a break of two weeks she said: *"I expected to find rest, but soon I found that in England everything continues, families who reach the other side and need support, someone who can show them around or just a familiar face in a*

country where they hardly know anyone.” Often times, the camp had already provided refugees with a small network of English citizens across the border.

As for the situation in France, the camp manager told me about a project that connects refugees who claimed asylum to host families, who can provide temporal shelter instead of putting everyone together into camps or asylum centres. *“Our hope for future is to give an answer to this call of tens of thousands of European citizens that have already offered either to lend their homes. The idea is not to just send people to other people...but to create an association that takes care of that...to help people in the long term.”* Volunteer Cyril was also involved in this project: *“You just need to network. And you can start to work on a very human understanding of it. Because you could come to the refugees and say: look, this family with a face, a name, with a house. (...) There’s plenty of other doors we can open.”*

Just like the negotiations between different actors in the camp, these support networks and hospitality projects form powerful attempts and examples to disrupt the categorical walls between national citizens and those who wish to enjoy the same rights and question the discourses that keep them apart.

5. Conclusion

The academic aim of this thesis is to write ‘as a hair in the flour’ in order to unravel and problematize the discriminatory consequences of stereotypes about refugees that dominate in humanitarian and political discourses. No matter if these regimes of representation produce voiceless victims or threatening criminals, both extremes reduce refugees to embody a homogeneous mass of people ‘without a history’. At the same time they take away international responsibilities in the conflicts that cause people to flee (Finnström 1999, Malkki 1995, Ticktin 2011). Anna Tsing argues that we have to write ‘as a hair in the flour’ if we want to look for weaknesses, confusions and gaps in business as usual (2005, 5). In these gaps, a more nuanced story about life in the camp unravels. It is a story of a collection of limited acts of hospitality that question and address the exclusivity of membership to ‘the nation-state’ and ‘citizenship’, which locks stateless refugees in immobility.

Discriminatory discourses

Fassin argues that our world is characterized by a separation between humanitarianism (compassion) and politics (repression) (2005, 367). Humanitarianism recognizes only a shared humanity that has to be cared for in the moment of emergency. As Ticktin argues, it has no long-term plan to address inequality (Ticktin 2015, 82). Due to its emergency focus, humanitarian care does not recognize people’s histories or long-term needs. It ignores the shared histories between the haves and the have-nots (Agier 2010, Ticktin 2011) and overlooks the reality that keeps refugees stuck in the camp for semi-permanent periods of time (Enav-Weintraub 2008). Despite its apolitical claims, humanitarian care carries political consequences: it approaches refugees as passive victims who are symbolically disempowered to organize life on their own terms (Harrell-Bond 2002).

Outside the camp, repressive politics criminalize refugees for crossing national borders illegally. Paradoxically, these same governments profit enormously from the migration control industry and in that sense encourage illegal migration to take place. Fassin emphasizes our moral economy, criminalizes and deprives people in the camp of citizenship in order to protect the privileges of the polis, its nation-state members. Illegality is thus ‘created’ as a means for full citizens to define themselves against: *‘to keep the current political order intact, we also need to sustain the existing inequalities within that order’*. The extreme tensions between these two figures (bare vagabonds and full citizens) explain why politics and humanitarianism are so profoundly linked (Fassin 2005, 381). Both legal citizenship and humanitarian care are relational concepts, defined by inequality and politico-historical processes of in- and exclusion. The negotiations of my research informants illustrate how occasionally, these inequalities could be disrupted. In these moments, they (re)constructed the meaning of citizenship and humanitarian care in the camp.

How do refugees and volunteers in negotiation (re)construct citizenship and humanitarian care in the camps of Grande-Synthe?

Gaps and negotiations

The polis needs the camp to maintain its existence. The identity of the full citizen thus depends upon its counterpart, the bare vagabond. '*All identities are relational*', Dikec states in his argument on hospitality (2002, 239). That means 'the other' (the refugee, the victim, the illegal non-citizen) is produced by the very actions of defining that 'other' as different from 'us' (Dikec 2002, 240). Refugees and volunteers simultaneously confirmed and challenged the categorization of normalizing discourses through negotiations. For example, both groups would emphasize refugees' victim role in order to increase the amount of donations coming to the camp. Refugees simultaneously rebelled against their role as victims because they took it as an offense to be treated as passive, lazy or unable to take care of themselves. Through tactical resistance acts, they tried to bring to attention their deeper needs: recognition for their history of statelessness, a sense of autonomy, equal rights and on the long-term access to citizenship. In these moments of resistance they attempted to break down the hierarchy that volunteers/ organizations had implemented upon them in order to regulate humanitarian care. Volunteers simultaneously disrupted the hierarchy, in the Jungle by encouraging people to work and in La Linière by developing projects that gave refugees a sense of autonomy and normality. Besides that, the educational projects in both camps focused on the act of sharing and future-preparation. Refugees and volunteers also played 'shifting roles', in the sense that some refugees identified more with the volunteer population and some volunteers emphasized their own refugeeness. For many volunteers, the camp served as an escape route to forget or reflect on crises in their lives.

In these moments of negotiation, my informants, 'as hairs in the flour' wrote against universal discourses and categories too. I call these negotiations acts of hospitality. Hospitality, according to Dikec, is a refusal to conceive host and guest as pre-constituted identities. This may also count for the categorization between refugees as illegal non-citizens and passive victims and volunteers as legal citizens and active saviours. It disrupts a hierarchical relationship and as such problematizes the discriminatory thinking behind humanitarian discourses and national border policies. In their encounters, my informants discovered gaps in the normalizing discourses that shaped their unequal relationships. These gaps allowed for friction and negotiation to occur and for differences to be recognized (Tsing 2005). According to Tsing, friction reminds us that heterogeneous and unequal encounters can lead to new arrangements of culture and power (2005, 5). She adds that these processes of misunderstanding are in many ways productive (Tsing 2005, 6). Inside the gaps, in the lawlessness of the camp, people engaged into conversations and reversed attention from silencing to listening. As such, a space was created in which refugees could express and volunteers could recognize their histories, present needs and future aspirations. These

moments of recognition could illuminate how the push and pull factors that shape people's migration motives at simultaneously shape their needs in the present moment.

Liminality and limits of hospitality

Tsing argues that the symbolic work of social mobilizations on the edge between the national and the transnational is crucial for contesting national hegemony (2005, 224). Their intercultural practice can serve to translate and give meaning to local stories (Tsing 2005, 228). The encounters between volunteers and refugees emphasize the reality of transnationalism and question the exclusivity of the nation-state system. 'We seem to have trouble with the balancing act', Grillo notes. 'People live more and more 'in-between', in liminality (Grillo 2007, 201). Little by little, he continues, instead of being someone from here or there, we become simultaneously here and there (Grillo 2007, 202). The liminal existence and sense of belonging of the refugees I spoke to, illustrate that our modern reality asks for a more flexible and inclusive concept of citizenship. 'Nation-states are territorializing concepts, the roots are in constant change', Malkki argues. Refugees' displaced existence calls into question the very meaning of the nation-state (Malkki 1992). Its current strict territorialized nature leaves the stateless and those in the camp invisible. The inflexibility of the European immigration system puts their ambitions for a better life on hold (Davis 2016). As such they find themselves trapped in the camp, in a situation of frozen time, waiting in permanent temporality (Navaro-Yashin 2003, Enav Weintraub 2008).

In the camp as a liminal no-man's land, a borderland where the laws of democracy don't apply, refugees find themselves trapped in a situation of 'in-between-ness'. They're in between places (between their country of origin and their country of destination), in between time (a lot's past and an uncertain future), in between temporality and permanence, in between the polarized yet linked categories of victim and criminal, in between normality and abnormality, visibility and invisibility, in between inclusion and exclusion.

"The paradox of the frontier is that it is created by contacts. The points of differentiation between two bodies are also their common points. It's an in-between space" (De Certeau 1984, 127). For refugees and volunteers this difference and connection point lies in their unequal access to citizenship. In legal and political sense, their relationship continues to be shaped by inequality. In her research on hospitality in Greece, Rozakou concludes: 'Even on level of everyday interaction the entrenched understandings of citizenship and state ownership dominated and hospitality emerged as the privilege of the citizen performed on the non-citizen, the refugee' (2012, 572). And even though in the liminal, grey space of the camp new relations between citizens and non-citizens are established (Darling 2009: 662), the borders are still there. What are their legal and political chances when they make it across? Will they be granted asylum? Will the endless waiting in the camp flow into another chapter of endless waiting? Will people be able to find a job without being exploited? Will they be able to lead a normal and 'equal' life in the end? Or once again find themselves running against

border, stuck in this 'in-between' space of not being granted 'full citizenship? Full citizenship is only full because it denies other people this privilege to protect the happy few. To address this hierarchy, Navaro-Yashin raises the question: *'Doesn't the exception (always) have something to tell us about the rule, totalitarianism about democracy, the camp about modernity, the illegal about the law, the abnormal about the 'normal'?' (Navaro-Yashin 2003, 110)*. In line with that: doesn't statelessness first and foremost tell us something about the state – for the very existence of the state is based on the logic of in-and exclusion? The personal stories of liminality as well as the hospitable encounters that form the subject of this thesis form a modest attempt to encourage discussion regarding this exclusivity of citizenship and freedom of mobility....

Afterword

My personal journey

The thesis you have just read is a story that is never finished. What I tried to put on paper are scattered fragments collected in the chaos of my memory. The complexity of life in a refugee camp is hard to grasp and balance, maybe even more so if you're there everyday.

I vividly remember my first day in the field. I was deadly scared. I didn't know anyone in the camp; I only had two phone-numbers of volunteers from ABC (an English organization). I think the police that guarded the entrance could sense my nervousness, because I was immediately denied access for not having a permission document from the city hall. While observing the coming and going of people to the camp, I noted how a group of Swiss volunteers could enter without documents. And so I worked up all my courage and asked why they could enter without a problem. I was lucky. The cop nodded, I was in. That's where my journey started. And throughout this three-month-long trip I was constantly confronted with my own liminality. During the first month of my fieldwork I rented a room in an apartment of a local inhabitant of Grande-Synthe. Every evening, I would leave the 'cosy misery' of the camp to cross the street and walk home, through quiet villa neighbourhoods. As I entered the shiny, clean apartment with my muddy clothes on, I could still smell the wood fire and food people were preparing in the camp, accompanied by the sound of voices and drums. I was in-between-roles. I didn't live in the camp, and exchanged this existence for a normal bed at the end of the day. But I also no longer belonged to this normal life. I remember arriving home one night, and being approached by two refugees who were trying to find the Jungle. They immediately recognized me as a volunteer due to my 'bare-life' appearance. Inside the camp I was also in-between. I was both a researcher and a volunteer, and this put me into dilemmas of self-representation. While volunteering in the women and children's distribution, journalists would regularly visit the tent, asking for a volunteer to talk to. I usually shared my point of view with them, but it often left me with mixed feelings. My own focus in the field was not so much about how I saw it, I was first and foremost interested in tracking other people's perceptions. In these moments of media-attention, I had to balance between my role as a volunteer and as a critical student, constantly careful to not share information that could hurt anyone in the camp.

This thesis is a story that is never finished. Like most anthropological research, my fieldwork has its biases and its gaps, for it is mostly based on a collection of circumstances and random conversations with the people I accidentally met along the way. Furthermore it is completed by my own perceptions of everything that crossed my path, so ideas may be incomplete and coloured. So here we are. It's been a hell of a journey, an emotional rollercoaster and a struggle until the end. But most of all it's been a privilege, a wonderful experience that brought me to the strongest people who taught me to embrace my weaknesses and find my own strengths.

The camp after I left

My research took place in a rapidly changing context. It started in the Jungle of Grande-Synthe, an illegal makeshift camp that was removed by French authorities during the first week of March. I witnessed the 'birth' of the first Humanitarian camp in Europe, as well as its first two months of 'childhood' under the management of Utopia56. Today, the situation in La Linière is not the same as it was at the time of my research, nor will it be the same tomorrow. Two days after I left the field, Utopia announced that the French State would take over the management of the camp. It is now governed by a tripartite agreement between the City Council, the State, and the organization Afeji²², which helps refugees with their asylum requests in France. At the end of June, the police of Dunkirk spread the message that the camp is not intended to be a stopping place between France and the UK, and is only open to migrants who plan to seek asylum in France. At this moment, the camp houses around 700 persons, about half of the population that moved into the camp on the 7th of March. On the 2nd of August Utopia56 shared a message that the pilot committee of the 4 and the City hall of Grande-Synthe took the decision to further restrain the welcoming of new refugees. In a letter written on the 8th of July Damien Carème (the mayor of Grande-Synthe), specified to keep welcoming women travelling alone with their children and people presenting significant health issues. For now, Utopia56 still manages the community kitchens, food distribution, the laundry, shelter reparations, supervision of children in the school, the welcoming in the women and children's center, the night watch and the cleaning of the camp. The organization has announced that it will gradually leave the camp, at the end of September the latest. Utopia56 explained that they do not wish to participate in the camp's restrained welcome policy, and will instead focus on other areas.²³ Along with Utopia, Edlumino (the camp school) will be leaving the camp by the 31st of August. The children in the camp have been transitioning into French schools, which as the organization notes, improves integration and provides a much broader set of educational opportunities for the children.²⁴

Looking back at La Linière as it started, I am reminded of a quote by Elizabeth:

"I hope the camp will keep the spirit of the volunteer-refugee movement, which is so powerful and brings the spirit to the camp like nothing else. I think the history books will remember the mayor Damien Carème for making this camp happen. I think the history books will remember this time for being a time when the volunteer movement across UK, France, Belgium, Germany grew and grew because people wanted to express their solidarity with the rest of humankind."

²² <http://www.utopia56.com/en>, assessed 4th of July 2016.

²³ <http://www.utopia56.com/en/actualite/utopia-56-will-be-gradually-leaving-the-liniere-camp>, assessed 14th of August 2016.

²⁴ <http://edlumino.org/studium-la-liniere>, assessed 15th of August 2016.

Zor Supas, shokran, merci beaucoup, thank you!

First of all I want to thank my informants for opening their hearts and sharing their stories with me. Meeting you was an enormous privilege and it made my three months in the camps an unforgettable experience. I cherish the moments we shared and I hope to see you again soon! Some in England (inshallah!), others back in France or wherever life will bring us. Besides that, I want to thank my supervisor Marike van Gijzel for her continuous support and critical feedback on what became this document. Thanks to her objective insights, I found my way through the chaos the many times I got lost. I would also like to thank my peers, Anne de Zeeuw and El Arabzadeh for their support and feedback along the way. Finally, I want to thank Daniel Frett for checking my English and my parents, for believing in me unconditionally.

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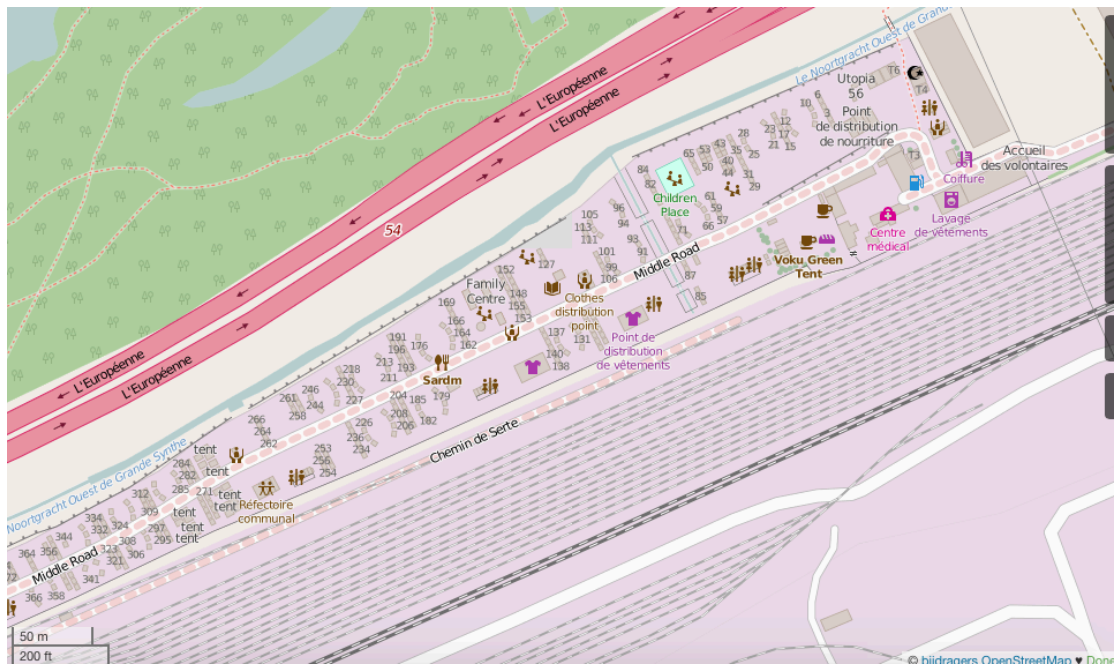
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Attachments

1) Map of the 'Jungle' of Grande-Synthe



2) Map of La Linière



3) Map of Kurdistan²⁵



²⁵ <http://www.independent.com/news/2012/dec/13/report-kurdish-syria/>

*"If you want,
Jump with me.
Turn all the black page,
To your favourite colour.
Take upstairs, on there
Seat on the chair.
You cannot see the moon.
Jump and close your eyes
Touch the clouds in the sky
Feel it and change it.
Do you think it's vapor of water?
No my friend
It's smoke of those bullets..
That fired for killing!
Human to human!!??
That's what we had seen...
(Dead body),
Lake of (blood) on the street,
(Screams) until to now,
Ringing in side our ears.
(Crying)
It was the only thing we can do.
Jump over here ...
Ask your questions.
And listen to
My sensitively answers.
Jump to our history.
We are living on the same planet
Where is earth destination?
Why you have all opportunities?
All services?
Why I have to accept staying in the small chicken house?
And bloody waiting to the door of hope!?
Who know when it will be open?
Who will open it for us?
Jump with my tears my friend
And tell all the world (smile)
As a mother I was cried enough
Instead of all.
Jump and carry on like a rabbit
On our cold wishes
On our foggy sigh of seen
Or let us jump to the death
That makes you more proud..
Mr. politicians"*

Sirwe²⁶, 6.May. 2016

La Linière camp, Dunkirk, North of France

²⁶ Sirwe is, like all the other names in this thesis, a pseudonym.