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MAKING BETTER LIVES – HOME MAKING AMONG HOMELESS PEOPLE IN PARIS

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Submission date of hard copy: 7/3/2018

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Abstract:

How do homeless people make homes on the street? Over two years of fieldwork in Paris, I observed the daily practices and routines of people who are sleeping rough. How do they earn money through begging? What factors do they consider when finding and making shelters? I followed people through different institutional settings – a homeless day centre, a needle exchange, a centre for people with alcohol problems and ultimately also a homeless shelter – on their way away from the street always documenting the conflicts between their short term – drugs and alcohol – and long term hopes. I observed the ways which they were supported by assistants socials and other institutional actors in their struggle to create spaces of reflective freedom. I argue that their efforts were about home making and as such about making a better life first on and then away from the street.

Acknowledgments:

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Introduction

In 2012, 28.800 people were in Paris living in situations defined as *sans domicile* [homeless] by the French statistical agency, an increase of 84% from 2001 (Pierre-Marie et al. 2014).[1] Most of these people were male (59%), single (67%) and foreign (55%) (ibid.:2). The large majority (>85%) lived in temporary accommodation (30% in hotels, 15% in social apartments, 41% in homeless shelters (see Ch. 6) (Yaouancq and Duée 2013). This thesis is mainly concerned with the other 14%, the people who live on the street, who neither have a permanent shelter nor an income, and who are most affected by mental health issues and drug and alcohol addiction (Laporte et al. 2015; Laporte and Chauvin 2010; Grinman et al. 2010; Hodder, Teesson, and Buhrich 1998). My focus is on people who are defined as roofless in the ETHOS categorisation of the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA; Edgar, Doherty, and Meert 2004): "people living rough [with] no access to 24h accommodation / no abode" and "people staying in a night shelter" (FEANTSA 2006:1). In France, this sub-group of homeless people is called *sans abris* [without shelter].

My concern is about the daily lives of the *sans abris* on the streets of Paris where I spent two years between October 2014 and 2016. I observed primarily how people survive on the street, how, in fact, they make homes there: how do they earn money (Ch. 2); how do they find and make shelter (Ch. 3); how do they work with institutions to find ways to move away from the street (Ch. 4); what practices revolve around alcohol and drugs (Ch. 5); what role can a temporary homeless shelter play for a formerly roofless person (Ch. 6)? Unlike earlier work on homelessness in general (Jencks 1995; McNaughton 2008; Desjarlais 1997; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009) and Paris and France in particular (Declerck 2003; Garnier-Muller 2000; Zeneidi-Henry 2002), I am answering a more recent call for an anthropology of the good as articulated by Robbins (2013, 2015). Following a general trajectory from living *sans abris* on the street through various institutions — day centre, needle exchange, homeless shelter — I will describe

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[1] Unlike with the yearly Homeless Monitor in the UK (Fitzpatrick et al. 2017), the French Statistical Institute (INSEE) only conducts a study of the state of homelessness every 10 years (INSEE 2001; INSEE 2013). But as with most statistical surveys of homelessness any number cannot be exact due to the collection method (counting users of homeless services). Taking into account the invisible homeless, the French Fondation Abbé Pierre, for instance, hence estimates the number of people who are *sans abris* in France in 2016 to be over 140.000 (Fondation Abbé Pierre 2016) compared to only roughly 14.000 in the 2012 INSEE study.

my informants' active struggles. While Robbins observes that what he calls the 'suffering slot' has been the dominant trope for the last two decades in anthropology, three themes have come to complement anthropological analyses recently: value, morality and well-being (Laidlaw 2014; Zigon 2011; Lambek 2010; Robbins 2007); empathy, care and the gift (Throop 2015; Sykes 2007; Mol 2008; Winance 2010) and time, future and hope (Miyazaki 2006; Crapanzano 2003; Green 2012; Bear 2014). I will further situate my work in between these three areas further later in this introduction, but first I want to lay out briefly why, particularly in accounts of homelessness, overcoming the 'suffering slot' is an important step to capture experiences on the street.

Within the 'anthropology of suffering', homeless people have been described as half-dead zombies struck by illness — physical and mental alike — (see Declerck 2003, particularly his own illustrations and drawings) — as 'the useless' (Garnier-Muller 2000) and as 'dopefiends' (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009). Often, these descriptions aim at understanding the reasons for homelessness, marginalisation and exclusion through lenses of inequality, structural violence and social suffering (Singer 2006; Bourgois 2002; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009). In what I would describe as the most prominent French example of this genre, ethnologist and psychoanalyst Patrick Declerck describes the 'clochardisation' [immiseration] of people on the streets of Paris in the 1980s and 1990s and the impossibility of their reintegration into any kind of mainstream society.

My observations in fact mirror many of these findings: while being very heterogeneous, homelessness is very much the product of a structural malfunction of the social, economic and welfare system — inequality and poverty as well as a lack of affordable housing — paired with certain individual events —mental or physical disease, personal and family issues, such as divorce, death, domestic violence (Neale 1997; Peressini 2009).[2] But my aim in this study is not to follow this tradition, which brought about many important research documents and aided the understanding, in particular, of the reasons for homelessness and the conditions homeless people endure on the street.

I believe, however, that focusing on the structural suffering of the people thus affected is only of limited value for at least two reasons: firstly, and most importantly, the people

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[2] Often, the structural and personal reasons for homelessness are intimately intertwined to make the situation even more complex. Stress from poor working conditions for instance can lead to diseases; job loss can result from structural or individual forces (Fitzpatrick 2005).

I met on the street did not always conceive of their situation as one of suffering. Ricoeur (Ricoeur 1992:190) defines suffering as "the reduction, even the destruction of the capacity for acting, of being-able-to-act". I observed my informants as heavily invested in actions rather than passively being affected and pacified by structures. It is these practices that I will describe in the following chapters. Secondly, focusing on the negative sides of the situation of people on the street naturally produces an incomplete picture. Homeless people, like recovering alcoholics (Zigon 2005), people affected by HIV (Farmer 2005) or people suffering from poverty and restructuring programmes in developing countries (Ferguson 2015), are not consumed by their lack of resources, shelter, relationships and intimacy. They are in fact not even necessarily lacking all of the above (e.g. Lenhard 2014; Lenhard 2017). These observations can also, and to an important extent, inform policy decisions by providing a starting point for supporting people in their own practices and creative ways of dealing with homelessness. While I understand the often politically motivated decisions of earlier scholars of homelessness to portray the deeply negative sides of their situation, I am interested in complementing that picture with glimpses of hope about the future cracking open the suffering (see Chapter 1). As Mattingly (2010) writes, with reference to her research on chronically ill people in the US:

> Hope as an existential problem takes cultural and structural root as it is shaped by the poverty, racism and bodily suffering endemic to so many of the families I write about [...] hope emerges as a paradoxical temporal practice and a strenuous moral project. [...] Hope most centrally involves the practice of creating, or trying to create, lives worth living even in the midst of suffering, even with no happy ending in sight (3, 6)

Over the course of the following chapters I will describe how my informants, such as Alex from Germany, Barut from Bulgaria or François from France "struggle along" (Desjarlais 1994) in Paris, unpacking Mattingly's practices of hope. Accompanying these individuals on the street and following them through the institutional landscapes of soup kitchens, drop-in centres, government institutions and homeless shelters, I will describe how they are making choices that will determine whether they have a good or better life on the street.

Methods: street level ethnography at the *Gare du Nord*

I spent two years in Paris between September 2014 and 2016 doing fieldwork with a loose group of about 30 homeless[3] people. Unlike most other ethnographic studies of homelessness both in France (Garnier-Muller 2000; Declerck 2003) and internationally (Desjarlais 1997; Hall 2003) my starting point was the street, and, as such, my research mostly concerns people who are roofless. I identified the *Gare du Nord* — Europe's busiest railway station, with its more than 700,000 passengers per day — as my main field site for three interrelated reasons: it is a central site for homeless people both during the day and at night in Paris (APUR 2011); it is the first point of arrival (and departure) for many immigrants (Kleinman 2012); its crowdedness with travellers and tourists provides a good source of begging money for homeless people (see Ch. 2). In fact, the APUR (2011:8) study describes the homeless population at the *Gare* as highly diverse but at the same time a good approximation of the population captured by the national statistical study (Françoise Yaouancq and Duée 2013): among the 600 people counted by APUR, many are immigrants from Iraq, Afghanistan, India but also Roma; many are marked by alcohol problems and *toxicomanie* [drug addiction]; most are single men.

  My fieldwork started on the street, at the *Gare du Nord*. For the first three months I spent my days and evenings walking around the area between *Gare du Magenta* in the East, *Barbès* in the West, *Place de la République* in the South and *Stalingrad* in the North, observing what I at first only assumed were homeless people and over time confirmed to be as such. I only slowly started speaking to people whom I had already seen several times at 'their spots', in part because my French was only just developing. My first contacts were part of Natasha's group, a woman in her 60s of Algerian descent who had managed to amass an array of varying followers around her. When I first arrived, Natasha and her mostly male companions would always sit at the same spot opposite the main entrance to the station, just in front of the *Quick* fast food restaurant. Natasha was one of the maternal figures in my field, who, over the course of two years, introduced me to many other individuals, such as Sabal, a Punjabi who became one of my main informants.

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[3] I will from now on use homeless and roofless interchangeably, as most of my informants were part of the wider category of homelessness as well as the narrower one of rooflessness.

Following people like Natasha, Barut and Sabal on their 'mobility paths' (Wolch and Rowe 1992) through the city was how I extended not only my network of informants but also my field site beyond the direct vicinity of the *Gare*. It was also through Natasha that I first learnt about *Freedom*,[4] the homeless institution running several drop-in centres, street tours and a homeless hostel at which I would spend many days volunteering during my two years. While I got to know Carl on the street directly, I followed him through the whole trajectory: I observed him begging many times (Ch. 2) but we also spent many hours at *Freedom's* day centre (Ch. 4) and at a drop-in facility for people with alcohol problems (Ch. 5). I even visited him during the winter of 2015 in his hotel room sponsored by the city of Paris, and went with him to his new shelter on his first day in early 2016 (Ch. 6).

Altogether, this approach to the field as a fluid site that was connected, for me, by the routines and daily processes my informants engaged in produced a very varied image of what homelessness looks like in Paris. I experienced both what rooflessness is — being on the street — but also how people worked *with* institutions such as *Freedom* — in day centres, on street tours, in vans distributing risk reduction material to drug users — and what being on the *inside* of institutions does with people in, for instance, a homeless shelter (again run by *Freedom*, Ch. 6). This fluidity also came with some problems, however. On the one hand, the lack of structure in my approach to the field left some parts of it undiscovered. I had only very little contact with women on the street; about 3 of my core group of 20 informants were female. Often, women not only navigate the social care system more quickly, but there are also more institutions focusing on supporting women in their efforts in moving away from the street — the core of my field-site — more quickly (Passaro 1996; Russell 2011). In France, in fact, only about 5% of people *sans abris* were women in 2016 (Seuret 2016). On the other hand, similar to children — often called 'jeunes en errance' [wandering youngsters] (Pimor 2014) — homeless women are more likely to be invisible and inaccessible on the street, making them harder to include in ethnographic research (see Fournier 2017).[5] There are hence

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[4] All of the names of both individuals and organisations in this dissertation are pseudonyms.
[5] In Paris, a specific network for homeless women who are pregnant or with small children has existed since 2006. *SOLIPAM* is particularly strong in the Paris region (Herschkorn-Barnu 2014).

very few women in my study because they were not easily accessible for me.[6] For similar reasons, I was not able to engage with Roma people; it was impossible to communicate with them and they appeared mostly in closed social groups, unwilling to engage with outsiders (Messing 2014). While many of my informants were in fact (at least originally) migrants, I also did not engage with many Syrian, Iraqi, Afghan or other more recent refugees (Sanyal 2017; Freedman 2017). Their geographies of daily life, as well as support, differed widely from the ones I was engaged in with my homeless informants. Different NGOs and government institutions were involved in supporting refugees mainly with their legal and health problems, meaning that the groups barely mixed.

The fluidity of my own role in the field — between anthropology student, friend, volunteer at *Freedom* — also brought about uncertainties. While it is obviously important to be transparent about your role when conducting qualitative research on sensitive subjects and with marginal groups (Lee 1993; Power 2002), negotiating transparency and my own position when constantly switching between researcher, friend and volunteer was even more complicated. On the one hand, my position with *Freedom* gave me credibility beyond the volunteering context making it easier to engage certain people; on the other hand I had to be careful to make clear my position as volunteer/non-volunteer at any one point in order not to abuse the trust of my informants. As social workers and volunteers often act as gatekeepers for research with vulnerable populations, it was beneficial to myself become such a gatekeeper (Goode 2000). But I found it important to avoid what Ward (2008) describes as semi-covert research, or the absence of informed consent. While it was not possible to remind everyone at every new encounter about the specific role I had at that particular moment, my informants were all aware of my identity as an information-gathering researcher. Since illegal activities — such as drug dealing and theft — were only a marginal focus of my study, I was able to avoid covert methods in order to obtain data (Denzin 1968; Israel and Hay 2006).

The problem of my changing identity in the field was in fact not limited to my

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[6] This quasi-absence of women also led to the fact that I was more or less unable to observer gender relations and sexuality. None of my main informants – to my knowledge – engaged in any kind of partnership or had regular sexual interaction. Sex work – despite knowingly a common form of money-making on the street was also not visible to me throughout my fieldwork.

informants, but also had effects on me directly. It was complicated to delineate the different roles — and the different tasks associated with them — switching between different positions in the field. When was I, as a volunteer, supposed to support and help homeless people? When was I 'merely' an observer interested in registering details and taking notes? While my role as a volunteer and, as such, a gatekeeper helped me to obtain information on the one hand (Goode 2000), it also brought about a professional involvement as well as personal closeness, what Warde (2008) calls emotionality. She explains how in her study of London rave culture "the informal approach of using friendship relationships was a useful way to gain information, but at times it was a difficult emotional role to occupy, largely in terms of the health and legal problems experienced by those I was close to" (Warde 2008:3.1). As I will describe throughout my dissertation, many of my informants suffered from serious mental and physical health issues and I was often one of their main trusted contacts outside of their circle of acquaintances on the street. My triple role as friend/institutional volunteer/researcher brought about important advantages for my informants (quicker access to healthcare, potentially better treatment at institutions) so I was often the first to be consulted about problems. While this was at times straining for me, the equal treatment, anonymity and security of my informants were at all times most important. I observed many criminal acts — the sale and consumption of drugs, the theft of goods, violence — which made it particularly important for me to protect the identity of the people I worked with (Lee 1993; Denzin 2009).

For that reason, I never filmed anything nor did I take audio recordings of any of the homeless people I encountered (Homan 1998; Esterberg 2001; Snyder 2002).[7] Only the interviews with expert — mainly with social work professionals in the institutions I volunteered in — were recorded and transcribed. Notes were my main form of data generation; they were usually taken 'after the fact' which makes many of my quotes non-verbatim (Esterberg, 2001:73). In addition, all of my informants have nicknames and some of their biographies are changed slightly making it more complicated to trace their identity. To guard my own personal safety in the field I made sure to mostly stay in public spaces with my informants, to not get involved in any criminal activities myself

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[7] I tried to distribute notebooks to my informants and use the photo voice method (give cameras to my informants) but was not able to obtain material through these methods.

and to mostly avoid being with high or aggressively drunk people. For the same reasons, I also never slept outside or on the street.

Homelessness (research) in France — definition problems

André Gueslin's (2013) historical overview helps to put homelessness in France into its wider time frame. The original idea of the *pauvres errants* [poor wanderers] dates back to the middle ages, when homeless people were already demonized and mainly received only religious aid. From the fifteenth century onwards, a repressive penal system focused around what was called *hôpitals générales* [mental and poor people hospitals] did not only label in particular *vagabonds* and *mendiants* [beggars] as delinquent, but made it easier to institutionally exclude them (ibid.:82). The 'good poor' was somebody who wanted to work, and poverty became a crime (*délit de misère*) in the legal statutes of the 19th and 20th century, especially with the *code pénal* of 1810. A *vagabond* could go to prison for 10 to 30 days if he (or she) was without home, work and resources. The notion of the *sans domicile fixe* came up first in the 19th century but became commonplace in the 1980s after the establishment of yet a stricter and more comprehensive system of restricting homeless people through the BAPSA (*brigade d'assistance aux personnes sans-abri* [assistance unit for homeless people]) and early homeless shelters such as Nanterre (Declerck 2003). *SDF* were defined as people who sleep on the street or privatised public space, and were dependent on a geography of assistance (Gueslin 2013:407).

Only in 1994 can we see a radical rethinking of how homelessness was perceived in France, with the change of the legal code. In that year, begging and *vagabondage* were removed from the list of crimes; they could not be punished with imprisonment anymore. But even since then, homelessness was still seen as a phenomenon which needed to be pushed into the *banlieus* (suburbs) and away from the city centres based on excuses such as *insalubrité* (health risks). Around the same time, however, media and public awareness changed, bringing about a wealth of NGOs and organisations such as the *Restaurants du Coeur* and *Emmaüs* supporting the population of *SDF.* In the early 2000s, the government followed suit, for the first time introduced its own financial support system. The RMA (*Revenue minimum de l'activité),* the RSA *(Revenue minimum de solidarité active*) as well as the RMI (*Revenue minimum d'insertion*) established in 2003, 2008 and 1988 respectively, for the first time provided a minimum, regular

income to people who are unemployed long term. These changes in how homelessness is viewed in France also slowly appeared in how homelessness was defined.

Now, the official definition for a homeless person of the French statistical institute INSEE is solely based on the person's previous night's shelter:

> une personne est qualifiée de 'sans-domicile' un jour donné si la nuit précédente elle a eu recours à un service d'hébergement ou si elle a dormi dans un lieu non prévu pour l'habitation (rue, abri de fortune).
> [a person is qualified as home-less on one day if in the previous night she has either stayed in a temporary hostel or slept in a location which is not supposed to be inhabited (street, emergency accommodation)] (INSEE 2016).

In a similar way, in 2008 the UN Statistical Division defined two categories of homelessness, roughly mapping onto the differentiation between roof-less (people on the street) and home-less (people living in shelters or temporary accommodation) (OHCHR 2008). Even the European homeless organisation *FEANTSA*'s lauded and widely adapted ETHOS definition still ultimately only includes thirteen different types of inadequate housing from roof-less to people living in overcrowded situations, and does not take into account any other circumstance of homelessness beyond sleeping location (FEANTSA 2006).

The definitions above — mostly focused around *sans* [without] — mirror what Heathcote (2012:7) describes as a life on the street as the ultimate absence of home: "we fear the idea of homelessness, it means a life on the streets, of not having a place to sleep, to eat, to be. Our home is our base, a place that roots us to the earth, to the city or the landscape; it gives us permanence and stability and allows us to build a life around it and within it" (see Seele 2011:108). Instead of a focus on place alone — similar to the definitions mentioned above — I will propose in detail the idea of home-making as a process.

Referring to her research with students establishing their first homes after leaving their parents' houses, Cieraad (2006, 2010) views home as a continuous process:

reinventing home is an ongoing process of linking the present to the past and the future. It entails not only remembering past homes but also projecting future homes. Away from home, whether traveling, migrating or living in lodgings, one becomes more aware of the main of the home one has left behind, temporarily or for good. (ibid.:99)

Also introducing a temporary dimension which I will further develop in subsequent chapters, notably Chapter 1 and Chapter 5, I follow Cieraad (2006) in her emphasis on home *making*. Seconding critiques of home as defined solely by its functions and standardised, socially defined structure (Douglas 1991; Veness 1993), the notion of home as a process allows me to also view the definition of homelessness differently. Zooming in on routines, orders, daily practices to make a home — such as the actual act of shelter making (Chapter 3) or the act of earning money by begging (Chapter 2) — let us rethink and enrich the category by providing ethnographic examples of home (making) on the street.

Only in 2015 did the UN Human Rights Council admit the problems with the purely negative (*sans*) definition as one of lack of (adequate) housing and include both problems of "social connection" and "belonging" and the "choices of survival strategies and lifestyles" in its considerations (Human Rights Council 2015:4,5). I observe here for the first time a rethinking of homelessness to include dimensions which go beyond the devastating nature of house-, shelter- or rooflessness. Particularly the inclusion of the more positive view of homelessness as also being about being active and surviving, "work[ing] hard to establish and build homes" as the HRC puts it (ibid.:4), coincides with my observations on the streets of Paris and provides another anchor and motivation for the complementing view I am establishing. With a focus on this, however, I am importantly not implying that my informants were *not* homeless but merely stress their activeness in a situation of poverty and desolation.

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The historical lack of attention to certain aspects of homelessness is not confined to the abstract, inter-national level of bureaucracy but can also be found in accounts of homelessness in France. More narrative based accounts such as Webb's (2012) or

Prolongeau's (1993) provide a vivid picture of a single homeless life in Paris. Webb, for instance, describes in detail things my informants struggled with, too: accepting that one is now homeless (Chapter 2), the influence of the social worker (Chapter 4) or the prevalence of drug and alcohol issues on the street (Chapter 5). Like Orwell's (2001) classic work, however, they are neither analytic nor structured, merely anecdotal and as such only of limited value for the academic scholarship.

An important canon of work is focused on the attitudes towards homeless people and the relationship between homeless people, the public and the state. Most recently, Loison-Leruste (2014) and Rullac (2005) looked at the idea of a 'culture of homelessness' in France and — coming from deviant studies — their exclusion from public space and opinion. Rullac (2005:chapter 2) goes on to explore ethnographically the *Samu Social*, the biggest support provider for homeless people in Paris. He asks: how is assistance organised? How do the people represent themselves in order to obtain help? As I mentioned before, such institutional — as opposed to street-based — studies are very common in France.

Declerck's (2003) classic account of the emergency shelter at Nanterre is only the most well-known example of such a study. Benoist (2009) updated Declerck's study 20 years later, looking particularly at how the groups of visitors have changed and comparing the shelter to a total institution (Goffman 1991). More medically influenced — and often policy driven — work has been conducted on mental health institutions for homeless people, particularly in Paris (Marpsat 2007; Kovess and Lazarus 2001). Pascal Noblet (2014) studied the *Enfants de Don Quichotte,* another organisation specialising in providing support for homeless people; Chaput-Le Bars and Morange (2014) recently looked at the successes and problems which come with the French variant of housing first (*lodgement d'abord)* comparing it to the Canadian predecessor; Pascal Pichon (2014) conducted a study of the SIAO, something every applicant for temporary housing has to go through, comparing it with the equivalent systems in the UK and Switzerland (see Chapter 6).

I depart from the above studies in at least two respects: firstly, my initial starting point was the street and the institutions I included in my studies, which were part of the natural geography that my informants accessed daily on their trajectory away from the street. Secondly, I was mainly interested in the activeness of my informants rather than

the institutional intricacies beyond the direct points of contact with homeless people. In this sense, my study is less focused on the institutional context which features heavily below (Chapter 4, 5 and 6) but instead has a strong focus on the crucial impact such institutions have on my informants' practices.

As a starting point in the French literature served mainly two studies, Zeneidi-Henry's (2002) elaboration on how homeless people make 'their' city in Bordeaux and Garnier-Muller's (2000) study of homeless people making a life in Paris. In both studies — despite their often more geographical focus — the ethnography of the street plays a strong role. The guiding question for both authors seems to have been similar to my own: how do homeless people actually survive? Zeneidi-Henry coins the term *habiter* (see Chapter 3 below) in order to describe how her informants imagined Bordeaux through their use and appropriation of the city. In her description of different practices — begging (Chapter 2), shelter making (Chapter 3) — she mirrors strongly Garnier-Muller's study. In her observations of Paris — both the street and the support sector — she describes in detail how people beg, how they access the support of the public, where they eat and sleep and how they form relationships.

My chapters below are strongly inspired by these descriptions, but I am trying to take them to the next level. Not only do I include them in a larger narrative — making a good life on the street — I also think them in a new direction. Where the accounts above often stop short of making theoretical claims, I am interested in describing how, for instance, the social work at the day centre of *Freedom* can be understood through an exchange lens or what role the concept of order plays in both shelter making on the street and in an institution. Without being confined to a theoretical school such as Desjarlais' (1997) phenomenological study of homelessness in the US, I try to use my ethnography to engage different kinds of theories ranging from home (Ch. 1, 3), time (Ch. 5), order (Ch. 1, 6) and exchange (Ch. 4).

The common thesis in most of the accounts — as well as in the most prominent international accounts of homelessness — is that homeless people want to leave the

street behind because they suffer (Jencks 1995).[8] What I observed in Paris mirrors this observation but also adds an important dimension in what I describes as the focus on home making. Most of my informants were working — to different degrees — on leaving the street in the longer term but the prospect of and hope for that was supplemented by shorter term daily home making activities on the street. As I will describe in detail in Chapter 1 linking hopes and home both in the long and short term, my informants were in Desjarlais' (1997) words "struggling along", i.e. on a daily basis approximating certain aspects of home on the street and also working in small steps towards the bigger hope of leaving the street. Routines, activities and acts I observed involve the labour of earning money (Chapter 2), making a physical shelter (Chapter 3), consulting with *assistants sociaux* (social workers) to apply for national IDs, health insurance or an address (Chapter 4) but also ambiguous processes surrounding drugs and alcohol (Chapter 5) and finally accessing temporary accommodation (Chapter 6).

Many of these activities are related to a positive view of life on the street not only as one of suffering but also of creative engagement with one's surrounding and conscious strategizing (Mattingly 2010).[9] As Flanagan (Flanagan 2012:57) argues with reference to his homeless informants with addiction problems: many "viscerally experienced hope […] hope was experienced in deeply emotional ways and thus assigned meaning" beyond the pessimistic 'creature living' usually assigned with living on the street. It is in this sense that my informants were working on making a good or better life on the street.

The good life on the street

Robbins (2013) characterizes the decades in anthropology since 1980 as focused on the 'suffering slot'. Reframing the commonplace analyses of the anthropological subject as 'other' or 'savage', new studies of trauma, violence and colonisation brought an understanding of the universal experience of suffering to the fore (ibid.:453). The anthropology of social suffering also extends to medical anthropology where narratives of individual chronic pain, loss, trauma and structural violence are linked to problems in

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[8] I will in all chapters also think through the other side of this as much as possible: people like Naema (see particularly Chapter 2) were not interested in leaving the street behind. In the UK, people like Naema are called "entrenched rough sleepers".

[9] With notions of, for instance, resistance and endurance, certain studies of (social) suffering think this activeness through at least partly (see Kleinman, Das, and Lock 1997). They are usually stopping short of going beyond the notion of suffering and the role (globalized) institutions have in this.

the collective structure of society (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2003; Farmer 2004; Biehl 2005). Connected to a form of ethnographic writing based on unsettling and detailed personal narratives as exemplified by Biehl's (2005) *Vita*, they "offer accounts of trauma that make us and our readers feel in our bones the vulnerability we as human beings all share" (Robbins 2013:455). Following Biehl's protagonist, a Brazilian woman he calls Catarina who suffers from a neurological gene-disease, through various stages of her decline, through extended periods of abandonment by both family and the state, reader *feels* for her beyond any kind of cultural or geographical boundary. The *otherness* is dissolved in the unity of trauma. In the literature on homelessness, similar feelings come to the fore in accounts such as Declerck's (2003) *Naufrages* and also in Bourgois and Schonberg's (2009) *Righteous Dopefiend*. Bourgois and Schonberg, for instance, explicitly describe one after the other the symbolic violence of public health outreach as unfair (ibid.:107); the physical suffering of "being cold, wet, filthy, hungry, and exhausted" through detailed ethnographic accounts (ibid.:113ff); the gendered suffering of, for instance, mothers of homeless children (ibid.:135); the de facto apartheid in the American labour market (ibid.:159ff) and the influence of the lack of fathers on the children (ibid.:188ff), to name just a few examples. These descriptions, while at times graphic, are also subtle and don't have any air of pornographic voyeurism to them, but they are often stopping there, with the suffering.

Throop (2015) deals with the issues of writing about suffering in his ethnography of the Yapese communities of Micronesia. While the Yapese are struggling with historical suppression by various forms of colonial rule (Spanish, German, Japanese, American) — struggling to overcome past suffering (*gaafgow*) — their daily life also revolves around trying to be happy (*falfalaen'*): "Suffering was thus generally deemed virtuous by local standards to the extent that it helped to orient individuals, families, and communities to future horizons of possibility and past legacies of effortful sacrifice. In so doing, suffering defines extended horizons of experience, and accordingly gives rise to possibilities for hope" (ibid.:57). For the Yapese, happiness and suffering ebb and flow, often appear in very quick succession and are both always limited and precarious (see also Jackson [2011] on wellbeing). Even more so, they are not mutually exclusive. As Throop explains: "'*Falfalaen*' does not only exist [...] in suffering's absence". Working hard together, suffering at work, for instance generates the happiness of community and ultimately also the outcome of say a community village house, as Throop himself

experienced while taking part in such painful work. As Hage (2003:20) describes, hope and suffering would often be direct neighbours: while hope is about "one's sense of the possibilities that life can offer […] its enemy is a sense of entrapment, of having nowhere to go".

   Going back to the abstract level, Robbins observes a tripartite way forward in what he calls the anthropology of the good, going beyond the depiction of suffering: between considerations for value/morality/wellbeing, empathy/care/the gift and time/change/hope, a complementary view is currently being established. It is particularly with reference to "profound differences between human lives lived out in different cultural surroundings" (Robbins 2013:456) being lost in the unitary view of trauma and suffering, that Robbins believes we need to rethink some of the developments in anthropology. With regards to the first field — between value, morality and wellbeing — my work picks up from many of the religiously-focused projects on how a good life is defined and ultimately made (Laidlaw 2002; Robbins 2004). Following calls for an *ordinary* ethics (Lambek 2010; Das 2012), I want to extend the project of tracing the good life in the everyday lives of homeless people.

   In Chapters 1, 2 and 3, I will focus not only on abstract ideas of what a better life in the future looks like for my informants (Chapter 1) but describe in detail daily home-making practices as part of the project towards this better life. How exactly do people earn money through begging and accessing the infrastructure of the city? Chapter 2 is concerned with the particularities of what I call, following Arendt (1998), the labour of begging: being visible and invisible at the right moment, flipping the script of their narrative (Summerson Carr 2011), performing neediness and worthiness and building up networks of regulars are all part of the hopeful labour of making money through begging. As much as begging, shelter-making can in this sense be described as an often reflected-upon (hence ethical) act of daily home-making. Thinking through the ideal location, the complications coming with the securitisation of public space ("anti homeless architecture"), the actual making of different types of open and closed shelters — from *abri ouvert,* and *abri covert* to *abri fermé* (Pascale Pichon 2002) and ultimately also the competition over space — were all part of the processual (and often cyclical) character of shelter making I observed. Both activities — begging and shelter-making — can be described by what I call in Chapter 1 'short term hopes for' and 'practices of' home-making. These activities are more about the immediate survival than about a long

term project, while also being necessary for the possibility of the latter, which was formed more directly in the institutional context where the attention shifts more in the second part of the dissertation.

The idea of everyday home-making practices continues as the background also in the following chapters where Robbins' second axis – care and the gift – plays a more important role. In Chapter 4, a homeless drop-in and day centre where many of my informants spent a considerable amount of their time is in focus. I describe the ways in which my informants engage with the institution run by the Catholic organisation I call *Freedom*: I describe the four different core activities at *Freedom* — street tours, activities in the *salle* [main room in the drop-in centre], using the showers and washing machines, 1-to-1 social work encounters — through an exchange lens. While the street tours — classical outreach work, following the same tour every week, visiting homeless people at their spots — resembled most closely a free (but imperfect) gift, accessing the drop-in centre with its coffee, physical warmth and security and the playing of games followed a quasi-unconditional and 'silent' sharing logic (Widlok 2013). Taking a shower was reserved for the most destitute, and using the washing machine was restricted to a handful of people per day — here, conditionality was stricter and a demand sharing logic was in place. The 1-to-1 social work was closest to the logic of reciprocal gift exchange, where a demonstrated willingness to engage and change was exchanged for social work (Mauss 2001; Sahlins 2004). At all times, however, the *lien* [relation] is in the foreground of the work at *Freedom*. I describe in detail how such exchange relationships are first created — started during the street tours, intensified in the centre — and, ultimately, used both as a probe and a condition for further exchanges.

In all of this, I cannot stress enough the importance of my attempt to avoid romanticising the life on the street by thinking through the ambiguity of the situation. With reference to the centrality of drugs in my informants' lives, for instance, I portray in Chapter 5 both the at times positive effects of drugs and alcohol — forgetting, the perception of control — for my informants, but also the violence and suffering connected with addiction. As described elsewhere, the drug is often perceived to *give* something while demanding a big sacrifice from the user (Lenhard 2017). It is then, once again, often institutions that step in to provide care. I was able to conduct additional fieldwork with both a needle exchange organisation that also provides heroin substitutes, and a drop-in centre for homeless people with alcohol addiction also run by

Freedom, to observe this dynamic. The care provided in both cases often came in the form of physical care — for the body — as well as the mental space for and exercise of thinking (reflectively and consciously) about the future. It is important to stress the crucial role which institutional support provided by for instance the social workers at *Freedom* had; the SIAO application for temporary housing for instance could only be filled out by a professional. While the general direction for most of the people I worked with was towards a better life, they did not always and immediately succeed — despite the support provided. Again, the notion of the process character of home-making helps with the oscillating nature of the endeavour.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

Starting with the theoretically grounded Chapter 1, the question of how people "successfully create a good beyond what is presently given in their lives" (Robbins 2013:458) runs as a thread through the chapters. Part of Robbins' third categorisation — time, change, hope — the question of how to create a better situation over time becomes central particularly in my informants' dealing with various support institutions. As I already mentioned above, the drop-in centre run by *Freedom* provided a space where reflective thinking and planning for the future was possible and encouraged. Figuring out the *projet de vie* [life project, plans] together with one's *assistant social* was a central aim at *Freedom*. Thinking about the future and not being caught up in past and present trauma was a main goal. This is what, in Chapter 1, I call hope for the future — a more long term kind of hope.

Mirroring what Lear (2006) calls radical hope or "hope for revival" (ibid.:95), my informants were at the same time forced to figure out a different kind of hope, more immediate and short term. Lear describes — mostly from a philosophical point of view based on certain historical and ethnographic snippets — how the North American Natives tribe the Crow lost every idea of sense — and good life — when they were confined to reservations and when the buffalo was becoming extinct in their territory. Based on a conception of happiness and value centred around being courageous, their structure in life lost every sense when being courageous — when hunting, defending one's territory, etc — lost its meaning. Lear describes how the Crow went on to "find

new ways" (ibid.:64) "giv[ing] up almost everything they understand about the good life" (ibid.:92).

For my informants, an in some ways comparable situation arose on the street. Having lost almost everything — social relations, material stability, employment, often also the familiar context of a home country or city — a re-orientation was necessary in order to survive. In the short term, the radically new environment of being roof-less on the street of Paris, for many a different country, demanded a similarly radical hope to be generated. I describe how daily and short term home-making activities — home as a process — were very important in my informants' lives. In Chapter 2, I will describe how for people like Pascal, a Congolese-German in his early twenties, for instance, picking up begging as a way of making a living afforded a complicated process of re-thinking his moral values. Similar complications and different views on one's environment come to the fore in Chapter 3 with regards for instance to the importance of a certain kind of clothing or shelter when being roofless.

At the same time — and here my account differs from Lear's — most of my informants had hopes about their (future) home which were often connected to memories of an idealised past home country. They were hoping for a remaking of their remembered home in the future. These hopes often fit into collectively perceived (and idealised) ideas of home as my informants would have known it in the past. In this sense, their long term hope was not necessarily radical, but conformed with a life off the street, a life which many of them had known before. This last kind of hope was based on what I describe in Chapter 1 as often nostalgic longing for an idealised past but was further encouraged in the various institutions figuring strongly in my informants' lives. While in Chapter 4, the role of *Freedom*'s day centre in generating a clear way forward for my informants (the *projet de vie*) is in focus, the second part in Chapter 5 focuses in on the role the needle exchange and the day centre for homeless people with alcohol issues — also run by *Freedom* — can have in generating a different kind of, firstly, daily structure and, secondly, an outlook onto the future.

The ambiguous role of alcohol and drugs in my informants' lives — generating what I call a cyclical "drug time", cutting them out of time and making them focus on the procurement of drugs and alcohol — is fought against by the above institutions. I

describe different ways of ordering the present differently and thinking about the future: the risk reduction methods in the needle exchange are about treating one's body more carefully; the daily activities at *Emo* – *Freedom*'s space for homeless people with alcohol problems — were a way of structuring one's day differently; the *atelier de philosophie* [philosophy workshop], one of creating a different kind of mental space for my informants. Both institutions — *Emo* more explicitly and strongly than the needle exchange run by *Sun* — were trying to produce a reflective space for their service users to think about the future and how to change in the present. As Robbins (2015:226) argues: "a good life will be one in which social relations often tend to go well, to be oriented to and disclosive of important values, and therefore to produce a reasonable amount of effervescent happiness that can carry a person forward into the future". The relationships built in the institutional context as well as the space provided for reflective thinking allowed many of my informants to be 'carried into the future' in this way; often, as I remarked before, this moved in ups and downs rather than a straight line.

Even when being admitted to temporary shelters, such as *Valley of Hope* (VoH) — the main focus of my sixth and last chapter — did not guarantee that this future would materialise. Drawing mainly on ethnographic observations from three months of living at the *Centre d'hébergement de stablisiation* I call VoH, the structures and routines put forward by staff and *bénévoles* were part of what Clarke (2015) recently called rules as technologies of the self (following Foucault (1997)). Intricate rules — not to drink inside the *Centre*, how to clean the bathroom, how to use the bins, when and where to shop, when to eat together — were often implemented by signs and meetings. In this sense, the environment of the shelter was in Clarke's words 'ruly'. Following rules and repeating routines established a practical project towards the good life (leaving the street context behind, advancing on the ladder of housing). The rules became part of the person by being learnt or relearnt. Conflicts occurred from this, however, between 'being a good shelter resident' and having other desires, such as drinking and socialising (see Schielke 2009). For some inhabitants, learning the rules of *habiter ensemble* at *Freedom*'s shelter *Valley of Hope* was not easy — or else wasn't desirable — so that the project of the good life approached through the rules as techniques of the self often re-collapsed.

The aim of moving through these various contexts within this thesis, whilst always aware of the ambiguities of the practices, routines and techniques both used by my informants and proposed by members of staff and volunteers in institutional contexts, was to complement the view on a context usually exclusively described in terms of suffering. I am presenting a first version of how a better life can be lived on the street and what kind of good life roofless people hope for. As Robbins claims (2015:229): the "nature of the good lives is different in different places". I am describing its nature in a place where no good life is expected to exist at all.

Chapter 1: Hoping for home

Et je me crée d'un trait de plume
Maitre du Monde
Homme illimité.
(And with a stroke of the pen I name myself
Master of the World
Unlimited man).
(Albert-Bireau 1983:192)

> I want to do something with my life. I want to have a job I like and a group of people I like spending time with, and just a good life. [...] I don't need a big pay cheque, but I want to be paid well enough. I want to have a good job. I want to work, and I would be happy to work hard. [...] I want to start thinking about that now. What can I do when I have my passport?

In Spring 2016, Pascal and I were sitting in a big waiting room of the Lariboisière Hospital, right behind the *Gare du Nord*. I had come with Pascal, to interpret what the doctors had to say to him about cramps which had been keeping him up for many nights. While waiting, Pascal started to talk about his hopes, about what he wanted to do once he got off the street again. He started talking about a life which resembled one he had already lived before.

Pascal was born in the Democratic Republic of Congo 23 years ago, but has lived in Germany ever since his first birthday. His parents had missed the opportunity to get him a German passport, and instead only renewed his right to stay there. He went to school in the Rhine area, living with his mother. His father, a salesman, travelled frequently — it was perhaps this absence that led to his parents' divorce. Eventually, Pascal moved to Munich to undergo an apprenticeship in electrical engineering, an education which easily got him a job and a stable social world of colleagues and friends. He talked regularly about going out to party and buying weed with his 'mates'.

It was only when, two years ago, he got into legal trouble — he spent four months in prison for repeatedly refusing to pay a public transportation fine — that cracks in this secure shell started to open up. The authorities wouldn't automatically renew his right to stay. He and his family panicked as they faced years of court procedures that they wouldn't have been able to afford, and Pascal decided to move to France to apply for

asylum with a fake Congolese identity. Pascal and his family thought undergoing this process in another European country would be the quickest way to a European passport, thus allowing him to travel freely back to Germany. Since his arrival in late 2014, Pascal has been on the streets of Paris, living through three-month cycle after three-month cycle on his *titre de séjour* (temporary right to stay).

About one year after his first night in France, the administration denied his first application for asylum. Subsequently, he found a Congolese-French lawyer who specialized in cases like his. The lawyer demanded payment under the table to make Pascal's narrative more 'believable', and, for several hundred Euro, agreed on reinventing Pascal's story as a political refugee. His parents — despite being separated — were originally supporting Pascal in this undertaking and paid some of the legal bills, not least because the lawyer was well-known for his positive track record:

> I hope that my invitation [for the tribunal, to discuss his refugee case a second time] will arrive over the next couple of days. My lawyer is good. He won a couple of cases already. I hope he can push me through as well. He knows my story and he said he will help me and say everything [in court].

In spring 2016, though, Pascal was becoming tired and fed-up. The lawyer didn't seem to be making any progress; he was in constant conflict with his parents, because his case wasn't advancing quickly enough in their eyes. Every day, living on the street was a struggle for money and shelter amidst violent competition with other people on the street. He wanted to leave that all behind:

> I have to leave this thing [the street]. And if you want to leave you have to leave fully. I might come back to see you and things but when I get my room I will need to take this in my hands. I need to think about my future.

He imagined what this future might look like in many other conversations with me, during moments of relative calm and security — talking to me over lunch or sitting on a chair in the warmth of the homeless day centre *Freedom* (see Chapter 3). But these moments were often overshadowed by other, more pressing or immediate concerns which took over his thinking:

The weekend is the most horrible part. You don't have anything to do. If you don't have friends, like real friends — the others are too different — there is nothing you can do. [...] But then when they [the social workers] at *Freedom* ask me about my *projet* [*projet de vie;* project in life] I don't know. It's a stupid question. I have enough problems at the moment. Do you really think I want to think about my future work life now? I need to think about where I sleep and piss and shit — and you are asking me about my *projet*?

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This glimpse into Pascal's recent past, and the problems he faces and the future he dreams of, brings to the fore two different types of home: what I will call respectively home-as-ideal-homeland and home-as-process (and the latter, as we shall see, is in turn a complex category). Pascal thinks about his family, about his friends, about his former life, about Germany as a place he wants to return to. While originally a home he escaped from, because of trouble with the police and administration, Germany is where his best memories are anchored. He doesn't want to stay in France, and sees his future back in Germany. Coming from the field of migration studies, Brun and Fabos (2015) define this idea of what they call HOME as the "geopolitics of nation and homeland" (13). Pascal's situation demands less of a focus on the politics of the homeland and the role of the state. More important for him is the return movement back into the cultural environment of his past. However, as in Pascal's case, the past is often idealised. When Pascal talks about his former life and the life he imagines going back to, he likes to forget about the cracks: his divorced parents and the subsequent challenging family situation, his marijuana consumption, the unhappiness in his job as an electrical worker and particularly his complicated legal situation without a passport in Germany. During Pascal's Paris days, Germany largely became, in his mind, an ideal homeland. He imagined it — and talked about it — as a place where he was free to do what he wanted (like smoke weed), was materially secure (with a job and an apartment), was surrounded by friends and family (his siblings), and was speaking *his* language and eating *his* food. Doná (2015:69) describes this nostalgia as the "memories of, longing for, and imaginations of homes that are idealized", anchoring the longing in the past, but in the form of a conglomerate of sanitised prior experiences.

While being connected to memories and the past, this notion of home-as-ideal-homeland is simultaneously directed towards the future. Pascal says in the epigraph to this chapter: "I want to do something with my life". He 'wants', he desires, he dreams, he hopes. I will use this last category — hope — as an analytic with which to turn from the past-inspired future-orientation of the above aspect of home to a second one (Crapanzano 2003; Zigon 2009). I will come to describe two — often competing — forms of home-as-process: one concerning daily survival, and one as made up of steps towards the long-term hope for home-as-ideal-homeland. In the present, Pascal tries to translate his longer term hopes into manageable units. He finds himself caught up in poverty, suffering, lack, uncertainty, fear and insufficiency, but he doesn't want to dwell on these things. While he is focused on the future of an ideal-homeland, he is aware of the necessity to break this hope down (often with the help of institutions, see Chapter 4): he needs identity papers to start with, and the help of a lawyer; also a room to stay in, then, perhaps, a modest job and a supporting group of people around him. These compartmentalized, future-orientated home-making practices are one dimension of home-as-process. Pascal's daily hopes are stepping stones towards his long-term hope for a return to home in Germany. They are part of, and add up to, what is referred to above as Pascal's *projet de vie*: his step-by-step trajectory away from the street developed together with his *assistant social* (social worker) at *Freedom* (see Chapter 4). But everyday life also hits Pascal in unplanned ways and demands sometimes competing home-making practices. Living on the street without a fixed place to sleep, shower, or go to the toilet, he is preoccupied with constructing daily routines and navigating and 'ordering' the infrastructures of the city (Douglas, 1991): making money (Chapter 2), finding shelter (Chapter 3), and dealing with setbacks like the denial of his refugee application. It is here that the long-term hopes for home are overwhelmed by a focus on daily hopes of survival or, in other cases, forgetting — when becoming high or drunk (Chapter 5) leads not to a straightforward upwards and outward trajectory, but along an at-best meandering path.

In this chapter, drawing on Pascal's and others' thoughts and hopes about home, I want to dissect and unpack the above two-sided construction of home, as future-tense idealised longing and as a present-tense process of survival in increments. In what manner do people on the street hope? How does everyday life on the one hand prevent people from hoping constructively but on the other hand contribute to the realisation of the very same hope? In the first part of this chapter, I will broaden the picture by presenting Sabal's and

Alex's hopes for home between the homeland and an ideal state, focusing on both the connection of home to the past and its direction towards the future.

In the second part of this chapter, I will tie up this analysis of home with a view on the temporality of hope, arguing that there are two different types of hope at work: Pascal and the others think of home in the long-term — thinking about their *projets de vie* — which is then broken down into structured daily steps towards this (ideal) goal. They are, however, also confronted with surviving and making a home within their everyday lives on the street, supported and motivated by what, I claim, is a much more short-term type of daily hope. I will show how these two facets can at times work against each other — typically when drugs become involved — but I will also demonstrate how the two can be directed towards a greater good, a better life of well- or better-being, the essence of which can be found in the idea of home.

Hoping for the idealised homeland – from the past into the future
I met Sabal very early on in my fieldwork, in December 2014. Late at night, he was sitting just a stone's throw away from the main entrance of the *Gare du Nord* with his friend, and fellow Punjabi, Bouti. When I approached them, I noticed they were not in a good condition: they were sitting on the pavement without blankets or even cardboard, wrapped in a thin piece of cloth, pushed against each other, and intermittently falling asleep from both alcohol and fatigue. Both Sabal and Bouti had already spent a considerable amount of time in Paris. But even after he had been in the city more than a year, Sabal's French was not good enough to converse with me. During that cold winter night, he addressed me solely in English: "Please — I am hungry. Can you help me? Please?". As I learnt over time, he was at that time mostly speaking Punjabi, surrounded by the group of people that also included Bouti. Sabal had come to France after escaping from an Indian prison. After periods in South Korea and Italy — both times also spending time in prison — he arrived in France in 2013.

I didn't notice the bracelet Sabal was wearing for quite a while. It was unpretentious; an unembellished iron ring around his right wrist. It was a *kara*, one of the signs of being an initiated member of the Sikh religion. Sabal was a firm believer, which translated into a certain confidence about himself: "I know I am a good person and that God loves me. I will find a way out of here. God will help me". Sabal hadn't lost his hope and the longing

to 'get out of here', away from the street and, ultimately, away from France. Unlike Bouti, who hadn't yet married, Sabal had a strong reason to go back: his wife and young daughter were still in India waiting for him. "I haven't seen her in almost six years. I haven't talked to her for almost a year. I want to be with her. But I will. God will help me". His dreams took him further: "When I am back home, I want to send my daughter to Canada. I know it's expensive but I want to". He also said he missed the Golden Temple close to his house. The thought seemed to keep him alive. He also made plans that included Bouti: "We will both go home, won't we?". Bouti doesn't answer. But Sabal goes on: "I will take you to my house and we will go to the temple together".

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For Sabal — as was representative of the group of around six Punjabi Indians around him — home was connected to his nation of origin. What I will call his long-term hopes were about going back to his family, his wife and little daughter, and about the Golden Temple, which was, for him, emblematic of his religion. For Sabal, his country — and the Punjab region in particular — was connected to a past which seemed to be both the only stability in his life in the form of familiar memories and his religious community, but also a site of violence and hatred, which had ultimately brought him into prison. He missed his house, his comparative material wealth in India, practising his rituals, speaking his language and eating food he knows well. In France, he understood himself as somebody who was waiting to return to India after the attempts to prosecute him had ended.

The idea of home as 'homeland' figures strongly in the social science literature on migration and refugees. In her study of refugees in Georgia, Brun (2015) finds that return and repatriation are greatly important for the people she worked with who were escaping from the Georgian war in the late 1990s. Home is to do first of all with an "absence" of "social relations and practices possible to enact in the familiar home environment" (ibid.:7); it is related to a feeling of nostalgia for the home of the past: "people long for the home they lost" (ibid.). Like Sabal, Brun's informants think of home primarily as a (lost) homeland, both in the sense of a country and a cultural routine — including taste, language, people and, particularly, family. Home might therefore be understood firstly as a place that carries what Kenyon (1999) calls a right to return and

a place of origin (Birdwell-Pheasant and Lawrence-Zuniga 1999) as a place we depart from and have a desire to return to (Hobsbawm 1991).

Family[10] and religion play especially large parts in Sabal's idea of home, as he continuously spoke about both his daughter and the Golden Temple. Abstracting from the problems and ambiguities he faced in India in both of these realms — his religion wouldn't allow him to drink, and his family was suffering from his 'sinning' — Sabal had built up an idealised version of this home from his memories. Temporal and spatial distance allowed him to think of his home as a rosy cloud of family life (his wife and daughter), relative wealth (his house) and religious contentedness (his temple). This idealised version resembles Pascal's thought about home back in Germany: access to his family, a secure job with a pay cheque, a solid network of friends, a house, identity papers.

How is this idea of an ideal home constructed by homeless people? In their review of the literature on homelessness and home, Kellett and Moore (2003) position it in the in-between of personal and collective-cultural memory and desire: "certain aspects of home seemingly shape and motivate homeless people's experience and behaviour [...] and the desire for [it] acts as a powerful *personal and cultural* objective" (ibid.:124, 8; my emphasis). The ideal home is the effect both of Pascal's and Sabal's own memory of what might have been a happy childhood as well as the social — or cultural — ideal of the typical home. On the one hand, both have experienced this type of home in their pasts, and 'cutting off' the more unpleasant bits appeared in their cases to be a relatively easy exercise. Like the people in situations of displacement discussed by Brun and Fabos (2015), "understandings of home are often based on the past: people long for the home they lost" (ibid.:7) — at least if the past is something that Pascal and Sabal want to and can remember.[11] Sabal's memories of the temple, his descriptions of his house in the

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[10] The association of home with family has been analysed in depth in many disciplines (see Jones 1995) but the literature often talks about the birth family or family of origin, the childhood home often associated in the West with an ideologically charged white, nuclear family. This is not a route which plays a significant role in my analysis above. Instead I will focus on the idealized idea of home often connected to not the first but the last home (and family) of the homeless person.

[11] Towards the end of this chapter and throughout this thesis (particularly in Chapter 5), I will focus more on the other side of this: people who deliberately don't want to reconnect to their past and are not able to easily 'cleanse' it from the traumata and violence they committed and suffered from. Here, the

village of his childhood or Pascal's tales of many nights out with his friends and his loving memory of his siblings pay tribute to this. Home is in this sense anchored in a personal past. On the other hand, an ideal type of home can be described as a social construction. In the context of my informants in Paris, this construction was shaped mainly from two sides: an incorporated idea of normality and the personification of norms by the *assistant social* and charity personnel at institutions such as a day centre or homeless shelter. As I will further describe in Chapter 4, Pascal's case worker at *Freedom*, for instance, would encourage him to think along lines of 'normalcy': reconnect to your family and do everything which will allow you to return. Similar advice was given to Sabal by staff at *Freedom*: he wouldn't easily be able to access social care in France, so his best chance was to return to India where people were waiting for him. Both Pascal and Sabal took these suggestions seriously as part of their *projets de vie*, worked out together with their *assistants sociaux* at *Freedom* (see Chapter 4). I would hence add to Clarke's (2001) theory of the idealised home as the "internalized vision of what other people might think of one": the construction of the ideal happens in tandem between a personal past and social norms. A personal set of cleansed, nostalgic, longing memories of a (better) past home are merged with socially given *and* (institutionally) supported pillars of home to bring about the home-as-ideal-homeland. The hoped- and longed-for home is in this sense born from memories and directed towards the future.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

For Alex, a similarly complex construction of an ideal state of home has led to a desire for a very specific type of home-as-homeland in his adopted *Heimat* France. When I met him, Alex — a man in his late forties who was born in Kosovo but has since spent more than a decade in France — thought very ardently about his French identity, his right to French citizenship, and his support by the French state. In the 1990s and early 2000s, Alex had spent more than ten years living and, most of the time, working in France. In Lyon, he found both a wife and work. After the Kosovo war ended, Alex came to France and was granted a *titre de séjour* [right to stay] for one year which allowed him to take up work, mainly in construction and in manufacturing industry. During this first year, he

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construction of an ideal home either takes more time or is based on different sources than one's own memory. Already the narrative of Alex in the remainder of this section introduces this connection. Alex, however, is still able to access his own past — just a specific part of it (his years in France).

met his future wife. His right to stay was fragile, but was renewed every year during his marriage. His French wife and Alex stayed together for eight years. When they separated, Alex ended up on the street for the first time. He spent one year *sans abris* (without shelter) in Lyon until they officially divorced. After that, he was expelled from France and sent back to Kosovo. Alex stayed in his home town, the place where he grew up, for almost two years. In 2013 he embarked on a new attempt to 'return' to France. He ended up spending some time in Hungary, Austria and again in Kosovo before he arrived in Germany in late 2014. "They were nice in Germany but I didn't want to stay. I don't speak the language and I kept telling them: France, France, France". Eventually, he was able to convince the German administration to put him on a train to Paris rather than back to Kosovo.

When he was living in Lyon for a decade, Alex missed his chance at becoming a French citizen. "I don't even know. They renewed my right to stay every year and I didn't think any further. I was happy". In 2015, when I met him for the first time, this possibility was all he could think about: on November 23, 2015, Alex missed a scheduled appointment with the *Prefecture de Police* in Paris, the institution which would have the power to grant him the right to stay. "It was my chance, I know. I missed it. I missed it". He also knew he messed up before, in a way that might prevent him from ever getting his French passport: "When I came last year, I registered under a different name. I took a different identity. I know it was stupid but I just wanted to get in". He didn't want to give up, though, and was still adamantly trusting in the French goodwill and their institutional precision: "But they have to answer me. I want my papers. If not in Paris, then in Lyon. I don't want to go back. Now I am ready. I will fight. I don't usually get violent, but now I am ready. They have to hit me first and I will hit them back. I don't know any mercy".

For Alex, home as homeland was not a concept that applied to his original home country, Kosovo, but to his adopted home, France. He didn't like to think about or talk about memories of his early life, of his past in Kosovo. Unlike Sabal and Pascal, Alex was not able to cleanse his memory sufficiently to construct an ideal home out of it. Instead, he worked with a different part of his past for this construction: his years in France. Since 2010, he has repeatedly attempted to return, but, when he was eventually allowed back into the country, it seemed as if his ideal state would not come to be. Home was not only about a particular space and certain things related to it, such as language, but it was

about a certain way of life. Alex was hoping for a European passport, for citizenship; he was longing for a life with social security and benefits, if possible in an apartment paid for by the French government. His personal life — finding a new family — was something that would come after that. Alex longed for a materially secure position first. His ideal home was not about returning to Kosovo — a place he associated with the war, and loss — but he was dreaming about arriving and returning to a found home anchored in a specific and idealized part of his past. He was meandering towards this ideal with stops back in Kosovo, Germany, France — through a constant geographical back and forth.

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The three examples above present us with intermingled versions of home as a place to return to and a place to long for. For Pascal and Sabal, home is to be found in their home-countries — in Germany and India respectively — but the countries or certain parts of them appear as idealised places constructed out of cleansed memories. Alex's particular version of France, however, shines brightly as a welfare state able to support him, one which would give him benefits and tangible rights as a citizen. All three narratives are strongly linked to a longing for a certain part of the past.

   For most of my informants, the first version of home — what I call home-as-ideal-homeland — points towards a future and comes from the past; they constitute a goal to be reached, often constructed from memory and (past) ideas of ideal homes. I argue that explicitly focusing on this dimension of time will, in the remainder of the chapter, allow me to helpfully extend my initial categorisation of home along the two contrasting spheres, between the past-inspired but future-oriented home and home-as-process in the present. Having already demonstrated that the past plays an important role in constructing one's ideal home, I will now briefly elaborate on the future-oriented dimension of home by introducing hope as an analytical category.

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Sabal's dream of returning to India, Alex's longing for a place in France, and Pascal's desire to be reunited with his family were not about an immediate tomorrow. They were desires nurtured over extended periods of time. Sabal hadn't been to India for over a

decade; Pascal left Germany more than two years prior to us meeting; Alex had been trying to return to France for over five years. They constitute long-term hopes. Ahmed (1999) supports this view of home as something in the longer-term future in her study of migrants' writing, particularly Asian women living in Britain. She found that home is often a destination, somewhere to travel to:

> the space which is most like home, which is most comfortable and familiar, is not the space of inhabitance — I am here — but the very space in which one finds the self as almost, but not quite, at home. In such a space, the subject has a destination, an itinerary, indeed a future, but in having such as destination, has not yet arrived (331).

According to Ahmed, home is quintessentially not about the present, but about one's hopes, about making home in an imagined place where one has *not yet arrived* (Bloch 1995). Moore (2000) confirms this finding for the context of homelessness, particularly homeless migrants. In fact, she argues that hoping for an ideal home is at the core of a possible conception of home looping back into the discussion about the personal and collective construction of the ideal home: "Home is a powerful desire for many homeless people [...] this desire is shaped by particular goals and lifestyles" (Moore 2000:212).

I want to follow Crapanzano (2003) and Zigon (2009), and link the category of home closely to the future by positioning hope as a driving force behind it. Crapanzano promotes a dichotomised view of hope as in between 'active desire' and 'positive resignation'. He concludes his theoretical analysis of the category of hope in a way that resembles Pascal's hopes for home. He describes hope as being about "opening the future" and a "movement forward" (Crapanzano, 2003:15). The longer-term hopes for home, for a passport and for a return to his maternal family, are a driving force directed towards a long-term future. Pascal's hopes are in Berlant's sense "optimistic", and provide a meaning, motivating him to "keep on living on and to look forward to being in the world" (Berlant 2011:33). Zigon (2009) describes this facet of hope as a "temporal orientation of conscious and intentional action" (258). Working in post-Soviet Moscow with people rehabilitating from drug addictions, Zigon is careful with thinking less about hope's passive/active stance and more about its temporality with its "intentional and creative use of the past and the future" (ibid.). I want to follow up from this and

differentiate along lines of temporality, between the long-term hope for home-as-ideal-homeland and what I will call daily hopes translated into the home-making activities of home-as-process.

Long-term hope and daily hope do not easily slip into the passive/active dichotomy as both can be motivating and forward-driving, about perseverance and change. The first facet of hope as a long-term prospect of home — often for an idealised homeland — was for my informants linked to a (personal and/or collective) past but pointed towards the future (Mallett 2004; Massey 1992). Quotidian hopes could on the one hand be the everyday processes and activities working towards and fulfilling this long-term longing, and hence be active steps in the present. But they can also seem more focused on waiting, on continuity and daily survival (Schielke 2015; Jeffrey 2010), rather than being beads on a string of "a linear path of time toward the better future" (Zigon, 2009:257). They can resemble Zigon's second notion of hope as an "existential stance of being-in-the-world" which "allows one to keep going or persevere through one's life" (ibid.:258). Jeffrey's (2010:5) bipartite notion of 'waiting' in the context of unemployed young men in Northern India mirrors Zigon's description of hope. He differentiates between "relatively purposeless youth timepass and more strategic [longterm] investment" or a purposeless and purposeful kind of waiting (ibid.:34). In fact, however – and here I am departing from Zigon's – my informants at times worked against the long-term hopes, throwing themselves back through a continuous focus on the 'distraction' of a high of drugs and alcohol. As in Jeffrey's case (ibid.:35), some of their 'purposeless timepass' was not entirely useless — at least at first — for my informants. As I will describe in Chapter 5, for instance, some of the men I worked with saw the short term focus — or what I in the context of drug addiction call 'drug time' — as first of all something positive: it gave them a certain sense of control, the opportunity (and illusion) of being able to forget.

I will in the second part of this chapter trace the different types of hope for home further. I will look at future oriented long-term hope (for home in the idealised homeland) as it is translated into the endpoint of a *projet de vie* and then broken down into daily life on the street. At times, the home-as-process can look like a standstill, but "the person's imagination is ceaselessly at work, grasping at straws, glimpsing possibilities, interpreting events, relishing a minor epiphany, tying up loose ends" (Jackson 2011:116). With this notion of home-as-process, I will try to capture the ambiguous practices in the present born out of daily hopes, which are on the one hand

about survival and waiting (money making [Chapter 2], the search for shelter [Chapter 3]), roughly supporting and keeping up the possibility of the *projet de vie* but at times also working against it (drug taking, Chapter 5).

Home-as-process — the ambiguity of daily hopes

In her literature review of the idea of home in the social sciences, Mallett (2004) positions home as always in-between the real — in everyday home-making or practice — and the ideal and imaginative. Following Jackson (2011), she (2004:80) claims that home relates to "the activity performed by, with or in person's things and places. Home is lived in the tension between the given and the chosen, then and now". Mallett argues that "people spend their lives in search of home, at the gap between the natural home and the particular ideal home where they would be fully fulfilled" (ibid.). Taking this analysis to my field-site links the above ideas, about home as a future (ideal) homeland inspired by past experience, to home in the present — and hence takes us to home-as-process.

As Jackson cogently describes:

> A hungry person does not think of tomorrow, people say, not only because hunger strikes at the moral core of what it is to be fully human - deferring instinctual or immediate gratification; it leads inevitably to death in which case there is no tomorrow (2011:59).

Pascal, Sabal, Alex, and the large majority of the people I worked with, were living under conditions of material scarcity; neither money, nor food, nor shelter were available in a stable form. I will use the following chapters to describe in further detail how home was made on a day-to-day basis, unpacking the above lack. However, in the remainder of this chapter I will sharpen the categories: long-term future oriented forms of hoping for home are at times broken down into but at other times are in conflict with short-term daily types of home making.

Brun and Fabos (2015:12) position the idea of home-as-process at the centre of their categorisation. They describe it as a set of everyday practices, while "such practices involve both material and imaginative notions of home and may be improvements or even investments to temporary dwellings; they include the daily routines that people undertake [...] and the social connections people make". Botticello (2007) takes the idea further away from a fixed dwelling towards a "site of practices where comfort, familiarity,

and intimate sociality occur" (ibid.:19; see also: Capo 2015). Home-as-process hence does not have to concern a fixed structure, but practices and routines; it is a "highly complex system of ordered relations with place, an order that orientates us in space, in time, and in society" (Dovey 1985:39). Veness (1993:324), who worked with homeless people in Delaware in the late 1980s, stresses the importance of habits, rhythms and routines — often as mundane as routinely visiting certain neighbourhoods, shelters and food kitchens. As for Pascal, who went to the homeless centre at 9am every morning and ordered his day around the opening hours, Veness found that installing a temporal order to the day as well as the environment were key parts of peoples' daily home-making (see Chapter 6). I find the culmination of the focus on order in Douglas's (1991:289) analysis of home:

> home is always a localizable idea. Home is located in space but it is not necessarily a fixed space. It does not need bricks and mortar, it can be a wagon, a caravan, a board, or a tent. It need not be a large space, but space there must be, for home starts by bringing some space under control.

Home is thus about the process of controlling a particular space. While this space does not have to be a fixed abode [domicile fixe], the home making is about finding a structure and regular rhythms, and constructing routines (Easthope 2004:135; O'Mahony 2013). All this takes us away from the past and the future and back to the present. It takes us away from long-term hopes towards everyday activities, and what I call daily hopes.

   Going back to Pascal I will show how long term hopes can be broken into daily ones. These in turn can be stepping stones along the *projet de vie* towards, in Pascal's case, this ideal version of home-as-homeland in Germany. The daily processes are meant to add up. By introducing to the narrative Barus, however, I will demonstrate how this does not always have to be the case. His focus on daily hopes, such as drug-taking and the begging cycle around it, distracts him from his long-term longing for home (with his family). For Barus, daily home-making can at times even work against long-term hopes for home.

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Since the day I met Pascal, sometime in early 2015, what was most urgently on his mind was leaving the street. The room in a temporary shelter which Pascal saw as a first step in that direction might eventually come from the charity *Freedom*,[12] which he had been visiting on a daily basis for the past months. The drop-in centre of the Catholic organisation (see Chapter 4) is based in the north of Paris, only about a ten-minute walk from the *Gare du Nord*. For months, Pascal arrived every morning around 10am after finding his way from the parking deck at *La Défense*, where he spent his night together with his closest acquaintance, a Polish man his age called Lobo. Temporarily, he found a shelter at the parking garage; he went there every night even though he didn't feel very safe ("There are all these French teenagers; it's not safe. I am afraid they are going to steal stuff"). But it was better than the street, the pavement, and also better than the train the two used to sleep in ("You never knew when the security there would throw you out"). When sleeping at the parking deck with Lobo, two levels down from the busy squares of the financial district, Pascal prepared his bed in piles of pillows, cardboard, his sleeping bag, and plastic bags (see Chapter 3).

Freedom was the place where Pascal was able to relax, though:

> I have become a big gamer there [at *Freedom*][...] I like going there, drinking my milk coffee. [...] It is the only space where I can really relax. It is more or less a place where I can relax. Where there is a little bit of normality. [...] That's where time passes most quickly. From 9-12am — I almost don't notice it. [...] When you are doing *Freedom* [...], you have something to do. It makes it much easier.

Pascal was also keen on thinking more concretely about his prospects of finding a job:

> I don't know the system here. They have these 'formations' but they only take six or nine months, not three years like in Germany. I want to start thinking about that now. I can't use any of my German qualifications. So I don't know how to find anything. I was thinking about the SNCF [French train company]. You talk to tourists and tell them where to go. But then you don't really earn anything and, I don't know, it's not really a good job.

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[12] The name of the organisation has been changed for anonymity and the protection of the people working there.

When I left Paris in the summer of 2016, some of this thinking had already been put into practice: he had started an apprenticeship course, and was granted a second hearing at the court regarding his asylum case. With the help of his *assistant social*, he had found a temporary shelter, *La Péniche*, where he would be able to stay for several years.

  Let me recap: Pascal, was hoping in the long-term for a home (Germany as the homeland) which would come with identity papers, a place to stay, a job and a relationship with his family. This is what I called his long-term hopes for home-as-ideal-homeland with a direction into the future. In the immediate short term, however, Pascal was — supported by his *assistant social* — able to break down the ideal into manageable portions of daily home-making which seemed to add up towards the goal of leaving the street. To start with, he made an effort to find a sheltered place to sleep every night, first in the train, then at *La Défense* (see Chapter 3) and eventually at a temporary shelter called *La Péniche*. He also formed much clearer ideas about what kind of a job he might be able to pick up while in France, started an apprenticeship and made progress in his asylum case. He created everyday 'normality' in the form of routines and repeating rhythms by going to *Freedom* for coffee, games and warmth every day. These routines were part of Pascal's daily home-making activities and as such part of his daily practices of 'happiness' (Walker 2015:5).[13] While working on realizing his future hope for an ideal home in Germany, Pascal on a daily basis was constructing approximations and temporary homes in physical and emotional forms. Like many other homeless people in Paris I will present in the subsequent chapters, Pascal was not only waiting for something to happen, for his ideal future to appear, he was working towards it and breaking it down into little chunks, which would, hopefully, ultimately add up, while also being part of his daily survival.

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This was only one part of the story of the long and short-term aspects of hope and home, however. The connection between the two dimensions can be more ambiguous. While in

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[13] Other studies make a similar link to what they call activities of 'emplacement' (Vigh 2015; Englund 2006); as Vigh (2015:99) understands, it entrampment is about a "desire to move towards a position of social worth" and the "attainment of a (minor) patrimonial position from where to distribute resources and futures" and as such very close to what I call home(-making).

Pascal's case long-term and daily hopes were often going in the same direction, they were for many — at least temporarily — opposed.[14] Berlant reminds us that hopes in general can be ambiguous, both enabling and disabling us one after the other, and sometimes both at once (Berlant, 2007:35). Long-term hopes do not necessarily break down into daily hopes. Particularly in situations of suffering and poverty, the ability to hope can be lost (Throop, 2015:50); one can become trapped or focus on short-term moments of happiness, like, for instance, the high that a drug or alcohol can provide. The influence of law enforcement (see Chapter 2) can also play a large part in this conflict, making people 'stuck' in the present. Daily hopes can then in themselves be debilitating and stifling. By introducing the story of Barus, I will focus on the role played by drugs, as objects of daily hopes, in his life on the street.

Barus was from Bulgaria. Before coming to Paris to live with his brother, who has a secure job in the real estate industry there, Barus worked in construction in Spain for ten years. 2015 marked his fifth year in Paris, most of which was spent on the street — between begging at the *Gare du Nord*, shooting up in front of the *Lariboisière* Hospital, and sleeping at *La Défense*. Due to his high dependence on drugs (see Chapter 5), neither his brother in Paris nor his father in Bulgaria were talking to him anymore. Over time, I saw Barus take everything he could get hold of. The basis of his 'drug diet' was methadone, a substitute for heroin which he received free from *Sun*,[15] a charity invested in risk reduction measures for people struggling with drug addiction. If he was able to earn enough money begging in the train station, Barus also smoked crack because of the 'small high' he got from it and because it kept him going — kept him awake and away from thoughts about his failures to hold on to a job and a more stable life. He also injected *Skenan*, a morphine drug from pharmacies that was usually given out to cancer patients but was easily available on the secondary market on the streets behind the train station.

But, like Pascal, Barus wanted to quit the drugs. I met him late one night in April 2016 at a place further towards the west of Paris. He sat in a niche between two houses in the

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[14] Even Pascal's trajectory was not linear: he still smoked a lot of weed, had issues with getting his right to stay, was unhappy with his temporary shelter and temporarily returned to the street before being granted access to another shelter.

[15] The name of the organisation has been changed for reasons of anonymity and protection of the people working there. I will further describe *Sun's* practices in Chapter 5.

pitch dark, totally alone. At first, he didn't recognize me and asked me for money. He was embarrassed when he realized his confusion. When I sat down with him, he started humming a tune:

> *Sometimes I feel*,
> *Like I don't have a partner*;
> *Sometimes I feel*,
> *Like my only friend*
> *Is the city I live in*

The lyrics are from the beginning of *Under the Bridge* by the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Barus went on to explain his thoughts:

> I sit here on my own. I feel lonely. There is so much stuff going on down there [*Gare du Nord*] and I just came up here to be alone. I want to change [...] I want to leave this life and get clean.

Barus wanted to change — wanted to leave 'them' (his group of acquaintances) and 'there' (the train station where he spends most of his time) behind. In fact, he 'knew' that he was able to get clean; he had done a rehabilitation before when he was in Spain and another one a couple of years back in Paris: "This [the street] is not for me. I should be somewhere else. I know I can do it". He was confident about his own will, and also, in a way, about what he conceived of as his destiny. He felt that he *should* be somewhere else; he shouldn't be lonely and dependent on a city as his 'only friend'.[16]

For Barus, the translation of his long-term longing, to leave the street and the drugs behind, into practical and everyday action was complicated. Taking drugs was one of his daily home-making practices with which he removed himself from time, living according to the drug cycle (what I call 'drug time' in Chapter 5): it was both a consolation for him and a constant source of frustration. He wanted to forget where he was, wanted to forget his situation and the lack of contact with his family, the lack of a network of friends or a stable and secure shelter — in short, the lack of a home. In moments like the above, he realized that the drugs were no solution, that they only helped him temporarily to push

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[16] I will further elaborate on these home making practices involving the city in Chapter 3.

away his long-term hopes by replacing them with a feeling generated by a substance. Barus knew that the substances were not only little more than a cover up but also that they were keeping him on the street. They generated a routine and order for him — and in this sense a home — which was all-encompassing and time- and thought-consuming, what I describe as the cycle of drug time in Chapter 5: making enough money for the next shot, 'scoring' the drugs, shooting up, getting a beer, making money again.[17]

In late spring 2016 and also later in the year, I saw Barus take more drugs than ever — sometimes spending stretches of up to three days on the street without sleep while on crack. His long-term hopes to leave — the way he talks about them, the way he seems to feel about them and how his 'failure' makes him sad and angry — did not go away, however. They were only 'on hold' as he put it, while focusing on a present dominated by daily hopes and practices, which, in his case, often worked against the long-term ones.

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Throop (2015:56) finds similar complications surrounding the notion of hope among the Yapese. One of his informants, Chep, "enjoyed drinking […] The bottom line was that drinking made him happy". Drinking — or in Barus' case, taking drugs — can be about forgetting. It can induce a "fleeting state of being" happy (ibid.) while at the same time being a mode of life which was threatening both his immediate and more long-term life (Berlant, 2011:2). Barus' focus was often fully consumed by the daily hopes and the organisation necessary to feel 'high'. This orderly routine was home-as-process in the present for Barus, but, unlike Pascal's case, it did not match or add up to his long-term hope to leave the street when in the cycle of drug time. Barus's daily hopes and moments of happiness were not connecting him to the future; they were not broken down from his long-term hopes. On the contrary, they were most importantly about cutting off the connection to the past and future and living according to drug time with the consequence of producing more despair (see Chapter 5).

Two factors contributed to the emergence of moments of epiphany I described above

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[17] I will describe both these routines and also the context of the drug taking among my informants in Chapter 5.

where the long-term hope of leaving the street found their way back into focus: his own original suffering in the form of the lack of home (money, shelter, family, security) and the suffering induced by taking the drugs (as physically hurtful and mentally stifling). The two sources of suffering can turn into a driving force in a second step. Barus was fed up with his addiction. He was aware of how it separated him from his family and kept him on the street. While striving for happiness was firstly translated into daily, short-term 'highs' on drugs, it also eventually appeared in a second temporality of an imagined future home.

Conclusion

I have set up, above, the analytical frame within which the remaining chapters of this thesis will operate. What does home look like for the people I worked with on the streets of Paris, and who are regularly called homeless, *sans abris* and *sans domicile fixe*? Through the narratives of Pascal, Sabal, Barus and Alex, I have explored various dimensions to this question and arrived at curiously entangled versions of *home-as-ideal-homeland* and *home-as-process* (see Brun and Fabos 2015). The two dimensions differ not only in their imaginative versus concrete nature but often also in their temporal dimension. While home-as-ideal-homeland is situated in a past-inspired future (I), home-as-process is situated in the present (II). The notion of hope allows me to tie the two together: a future-oriented, more long-term hope for home-as-ideal-homeland interacts in complex ways with the present-oriented daily hope and the underlying practices of home-as-process. As is the case for Pascal, they can motivationally come together, one breaking down and contributing to the other, or they can work against each other, at least temporarily, as in Barus's case. In both cases, the activities I will describe in the following chapters as home-as-process (begging for money, Chapter 2; making shelter, Chapter 3) did not follow a linear, teleological line towards an institutionally-supported *projet de vie*. Many things went wrong — something to which I will pay close attention — which caused ups and downs and meandering movements.

   The two types of hope and the home(s) they stand in for are sources of activity in a context of suffering, however. In fact, my ethnographic observations confirm that "hardship and suffering is [...] shadowed by dreams and ideas of happiness and made endurable as a perceived movement toward better lives and more valued positions of being" (Vigh 2015:97). We should not think of suffering and hopes as too far apart, but rather focus on the intricate ways hopes, happiness and the good life unfold in situations

of poverty, hardship and conflict. In the forthcoming chapters we shall see how these apparently opposing concepts work out in everyday life.

In these chapters, two overarching questions present themselves: on the one hand, I will observe how people operationalise their hopes. How do they translate them into everyday action — how do long-term hopes become daily ones? How do they connect to external help and the *projet de vie* which is prepared for them through their hopes? On the other hand, I will observe what holds people back. What obstructs their way to home? Can the 'home on the street' be too comfortable, and can this in itself become an obstacle? I will look at different (physical) contexts where I observed people's everyday home-making activities. In the order of my chapters, I will follow the typical *parcours* from the street to the shelter also used by homeless organisations such as *Freedom*. It starts on the street — making money (Chapter 2) and constructing shelter (Chapter 3) — then leads on to day centres, outreach tours and social work (Chapter 4), and finds its conclusion in short- and then finally long-term housing (Chapter 6). Meanwhile, Chapter 5 will be dedicated to the role of drugs in the field.

Chapter 2: Labour with, off and on the Street

Sometimes I feel
Like I don't have a partner
Sometimes I feel
Like my only friend
Is the city I live in

'Under the Bridge', *Red Hot Chili Peppers*

François is woken up by park wardens every morning, having slept on the steps under the roof of a little garden shed, situated in the playground right underneath the Church *Saint Vincent de Paul.* "It depends on the time of the year, but they usually open the park around 7 and they know I'm there. They leave me alone but I have to get up". In 2015, François spent most of his days between this park just south of the Church *Saint Vincent de Paul,* the *Gare du Nord* and the *Leader Price* supermarket. Once up, he first walked from the park — which later grew busy with school kids playing football, adolescents smoking weed and others playing cards — to the *Leader Price* up the road. "They open at 7:30am. And the beer there is the cheapest, anyway". When I first met François I was unsure about whether we would get along. He was an outspoken, loud and rowdy Frenchman in his mid-fifties. He joked around — particularly with the young women on their outreach tours[18] who would regularly visit him — and made fun of the world around him. He loved to sing French *chansons*. His voice was pleasant, smoky; it felt like the street itself was singing when he recounted the tales of Yves Montand and Edith Piaf. François understood himself as a *gitan* [French gypsy], a traveller of the world who wouldn't rest at one place for too long. After a decade-long relationship which brought him three children (the names of whom François had tattooed along his arms), he left his family behind over eight years ago to go back onto the road. His life since then has been spent between Paris and the *banlieus*, begging, drinking and singing.

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[18] Many NGOs, including *Freedom* — as well as the *Samu Social,* the *Croix Rouge,* the *Secours Catholique* — or institutional actors, such as the BAPSA (brigade d'assistance aux personnes sans-abri [a French police unit established to help homeless people]) undertook street tours (*tournées rues, maraudes*) where people would walk around the city to visit people on the street. Altogether, 27 different organisations were involved in the coordination of these tours (in 2010, APUR 2011:15). Often, they would offer hot drinks and food as well as help with accessing stationary institutions. I will return to outreach teams in Chapter 4.

   He would always have enough money left for at least one beer in the morning. It was 65 cents at *Leader Price* for the extra strong 8.5% can. His day at the train station commenced from here; 300 meters up the road, the main entrance of the *Gare du Nord*, with its shiny new statue of a red angel-bear, lured him in. His daily work centred around the busy entrances of the station; money was made from the taxi drivers, metro and train passengers, tourists and shop owners. Over the course of several hours, François meandered between one of his resting spots — west of the station next to a small *Monop* supermarket, south of it on the corner of a branch of the *Caisse d'Epargne* bank or right outside the eastern entrance — and the *Leader Price*. Occasionally, he jumped up, to approach passers-by more directly to ask for money, or to empty his bladder in one of the public urinals at that time positioned on every corner of the station. At all times, however, François was on the watch: for people who would give him money, and also for cigarettes on the floor, butts still burning but left with some tobacco to smoke, carelessly thrown out by people entering the station. He was constantly working with the resources the city provided: passers-by giving money, park guards letting him sleep, forgotten or discarded cigarettes, shed roofs, taxi drivers, public toilets, supermarkets. François was working not only on but with and off the street using the resources it provided.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

Barut's reference to 'Under the Bridge' (see Chapter 1) is perhaps the most lyrical description of the complexities of surviving and making money on the street, and makes explicit the most common problem of this way of life: challenged by material poverty as well as loneliness, social isolation and often exclusion from the formal economy (Gaetz and O'Grady 2002), future-oriented hopes have to be translated into survival practices often involving the city, the 'only friend' available. The focus in this chapter will move away from the hope for home as an often idealised homeland, towards the daily practices and routines linked to the infrastructure of the city, starting with the process of labour (Arendt 1998). Arendt defines labour following ancient traditions as a process which produces "vital necessities" (ibid.:7) and assures individual survival (ibid.:47).

Unlike work,[19] the product of which is always something material (ibid.:86,93), it leaves nothing behind, is unproductive. In contrast, labour is never-ending and repetitive (ibid.:102) and as such cyclical, because the need to consume — the second movement in the endless slope of labour — doesn't stop. Labourers are, according to Arendt, bound up by the necessity of daily survival (ibid.:83). She likens labour to the 'menial servant' (ibid.:93), what in antiquity was the way of life of the slave (ibid.:12). But unlike her ancient predecessors, she doesn't completely understand labour as something one needs to rid oneself of (hence the need for slaves in antiquity). She believes, to the contrary, that "the perfect elimination of the pain and effort of labour would not only rob biological life of its most natural pleasures but deprive the specifically human life of its very liveliness and vitality" (ibid.:120). Labour — and the balance between pain and repetition but also its direct link to the need to consume (ibid.:134) — is an essential part of the human condition.

Following Arendt in her conceptualisation, I want to describe begging — and also accessing the infrastructure of the city — as a process of labour.[20] My informants begged to survive; they didn't produce anything of lasting value or importance beyond their immediate ability to consume in a repetitive circuit.[21] As such, begging is categorically unproductive — unlike the work of shelter-making, which is at least temporarily about creating a material home (Chapter 3). Without romanticising the pain and suffering which came with the daily labour of begging for my informants, I also follow Arendt in her more optimistic turn towards labour as something fundamental in one's life. The pain is — mostly — balanced by rewards; begging is often successful and leads to the desired ability to consume. I will anchor these hopes in the lived environment and link them to labour practices of money-making — with a focus on begging — and accessing public infrastructure — supermarkets, toilets, warm waiting rooms — while what I will

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[19] I will elucidate on Arendt's definition of work in the next chapter, when I think through my material of shelter making and *habiter* which as I will argue resembles her conceptualisation.

[20] As this is an analytical description that does not map neatly onto both of my informants' usage of the word or the more commonplace way of saying things, certain expressions (work place, "Let me show you how I work") will slip in. In such a case, the usage is either idiomatic or based on my informants' expressions.

[21] I will leave out other activities of home-as-process in the everyday that my informants regularly engaged in: taking care of one's body (se soigner) and health (santé) are ones which I will touch upon tangentially in Chapter 4. I also only discuss in passing how my informants procured food regularly from soup kitchens, the Armée de Salut, the Restaurants du Coeur (where I worked as a volunteer over several months at the beginning of my fieldwork) and outreach teams in order to focus on the process of begging as labour.

call the work of finding and making shelter will be looked at in Chapter 3. The public space and its infrastructure figures prominently in what I will theorise as the labour of hope (Pedersen 2012; see also Zigon 2005). At times, the labouring practices of homeless people consists in making themselves visible — by portraying neediness and worthiness or by using connections to regulars — to make money from passers-by. At other times, it involves becoming invisible and blending in to gain access to warmth, microwaves and benches, and it always crosses the line between physical and emotional labour.

Consuming lives

Arendt describes labour and consumption as two parts of the same cyclical movement (Arendt 1998:96): "their consumption [of material things] barely survives the act of their production". Before I start with the labour involved in making money, the question of what this money is spent on will first demand some thought. No general statistical survey exists on the consumption patterns of homeless people in Paris.[22] In this complex statistical terrain, the focus is usually on compiling demographic data and on analyses of the ways into homelessness, rather than where and how people on the street spend their money. However, some indication of consumption patterns can be taken from other data.

A significant amount of money, for instance, is spent on alcohol and drugs. In their most recent overview of the available data on homeless people in Paris, APUR (2011) concludes that, based on data from the *Samu Social*, almost 30% of all homeless people in Paris struggle with at least one kind of addiction, excluding tobacco (Laporte and Chauvin 2010; Laporte et al. 2015). The same study claims that the two train stations in the north of Paris —which were within my field of study — are particularly marked by a very high prevalence of both alcohol and *toxicomanie* (hard drugs) (ibid.:8). This reflects my observation that, among the group of my informants — who were in addition all begging and living on the street, another condition associated with high rates of addiction (Gaetz and O'Grady 2002) — up to 90% were regularly consuming large

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[22] An indication of food consumption (via nutrition intake) comes from a clinical study of France (Malmauret et al. 2002)(see Sprake, Russell, and Barker 2013 for UK) ; two older studies look at consumption patterns of homeless people in the US (Hill and Stamey 1990; Hill 2003), mirroring my observations below.

quantities of beer or wine and around 50% either regularly consumed marijuana and / or morphine, crack and other pills.

   Five concrete examples will illustrate this point and introduce further areas of spending, such as food, cigarettes, daily hygiene products and housing. To start with a relatively representative pattern, François might serve as a good example. Most of the money he made on an average day — between 10 and 20 Euro — was spent on wine (he drank cheap bottles of Rosé, at one litre for under 3 Euro), cigarettes, food and the occasional bottle of shampoo, bar of soap or item of clothing. Carl had a very similar consumption pattern, though wine was substituted by beer (he needed about ten cans of strong beer a day) and marijuana was a major additional major expense; his budget per day was hence slightly bigger (between 20 and 30 Euro). Sabal and most others in his group, including Natasha, mainly consumed wine, beer, hot food and occasionally marijuana, too. I found only slightly different patterns among the group around Barut, all of whom not only smoked weed regularly but also consumed hard drugs (heroin substitutes, crack — see Chapter 5) and pills in addition to the alcohol. This added between 10 and 50 Euro, depending on the quantity of drugs consumed.

   Food distribution in particular was very well taken care of by the public administration and the charity sector in Paris, meaning that only a small portion of earnings needed to be spent on that. In 2010, more than 3 million lunches and dinners were distributed in Paris (APUR 2011); most of these were given out through *food bons*, pre-packaged lunch or dinner boxes or in soup kitchens, such as the *Restaurant du Coeur* or the *Armée du Salut*. In an earlier study, about 25% of people living on the street claimed the *bons*, while 29% would regularly eat from the distributed boxes (Brousse, Rochere, and Mass 2002). In a similar way, showers and simple hygiene products (soap, shampoo, shaving kits, underwear) were available for free in Paris from institutions such as the municipally-run *Bains et Douches* (18 centres in Paris) or the *Croix Rouge* (Red Cross) as well as in various day centres (see Chapter 4).

   In what might be the best and most comprehensive ethnographic overview of street homelessness in Paris to date, Annie Garnier-Muller (2000) situates her group of informants in a similar network of institutions: she finds that more than 30% of her informants regularly visited soup kitchens, for instance; roughly the same number also

visited other institutions, such as day centres, which helped with both the provision of food and and with hygiene (ibid.:181). While a small group regularly received payment for work, both legally and on the black market (about 15% according to official statistics on Paris [Emmanuelli and Landrieu 2006]), some people sold homeless newspapers (such as *Macadam, Le Réverbère, La Rue, L'Itinérant*) or received money from the government. The RMI (Revenu Minimum d'Insertion, minimum income for the purpose of inclusion), while available to a larger number of individuals, was only taken up by about 20% of Garnier-Muller's informants. 40% refused public support altogether, and instead engaged in what Garnier-Muller calls illicit (stealing, dealing drugs) or tolerated (begging, black market work) sources of money. According to her estimation, about 80% of the income made by people on the street came from such illicit or tolerated activities (ibid.:160). Turning to the most important of these tolerated sources of daily income, she claims that about 70% of the people she encountered regularly earned their money by begging (ibid.:164).

Money, money, money: the labour of *mendecité*
"I will show you how I work now. Come with me". I had just explained to François who I was, and that I was interested in learning about his 'survival strategies', when he decided it was time to show me around his work place. We had originally met through Natasha, the Algerian-born uncontested queen of the *Gare du Nord* whom I will introduce below. At first I thought that François, who had been on and off the streets for the last eight years, was an aggressive and unapproachable French guy. He was well known among the regulars at the train station and good friends with the 'oldies' in the scene, including the group of Punjabis around Sabal.

Mid-2015. We were sitting right in front of the glass façade in the West of the *Gare du Nord*, close to the departure lounges of the *Eurostar.* It was getting late, but the summer had not fully disappeared and it was still light outside. The station was busy, and one taxi after another drove up in front of it. The first in the queue was where François was headed. He walked to the end of the row on *Rue Lafayette* and knocked on the car's driver's window. The man looked up at him and shook his head. François wasn't too persistent; somehow he knew — from years of experience perhaps — whom to make money from. Confidence was key. The next car had its window open. François addressed the man inside:

"T'as une petite pièce ou une cigarette, chef?"

[Do you have change or a cigarette, boss?]

"Je n'fume pas. Mais, tiens." [I don't smoke but take this.]

[hands over a 50c coin]

"Merci, chef." [Thanks, boss.]

The donor nodded at him as François slowly walked to the next car, a smile on his face. Before addressing the next taxi driver, he looked at me: "Not too hard, is it?". The row of about 20 cars brought in €1.5 and two cigarettes, all for less than ten minutes of work.

   Is what François made look so easy in actual fact labour, as he and many others called it? In this section, I want to focus on the question of how people made money at the *Gare du Nord*. I will describe the most common activity of income-creation among my informants: begging.[23] I frame begging as a particular type of labour both theoretically and as a category directly springing from my ethnography. For my informants, it involved physical effort — walking around, sitting on the pavement, monotonously repeating the same sentence and the same narrative — and emotional labour — overcoming shame and embarrassment, making up narratives (what Summerson Carr (2011) calls 'scripts'), supporting them through their appearance, creating a network of regulars (closely linked to Arendt's notion of action) — in order to turn yourself into a needy and worthy person. Every act of begging, repeated over and over again every day, also started with concrete decisions: which spot to choose? Whom to approach? This is where the labour begins.

Choosing the right location
Carl, who had been a solider in the German special forces for over eight years — travelling the world before being injured and traumatised in a grenade attack in

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[23] Gaetz and O'Grady (2002) in their survey of economic activities among Canadian homeless people found a similarly high percentage of street-sleeping individuals involved in begging (or as they call it panhandling). Similarly to my arguments above, they conclude that in contrast to the culture of poverty / new underclass arguments (e.g. Murray 1990), people on the street are not avoiding work but put in enormous efforts to engage in economic activities.

Afghanistan — introduced an important dimension of the begging process to me. While we will see how crucial self-presentation through language and also clothing was, the first decision concerned the location, the begging spot: what made one location better suited than another? For the longest time, the *Gare de l'Est* was Carl's preferred venue not only due to the arrival of the ICEs from Germany carrying a lot of potential revenue in the form of German tourists into Paris, but because of the train station's architecture:

> The big entrance — 200, 250m with the taxis — where you can walk along in about 10 minutes and in exactly the same interval the people [you just asked] have already disappeared into the train station again. [...] Most are there for the length of one cigarette. [...] My strategy is to not stand on one spot but to walk around. You can make 100-150 people in 10 minutes or something like that.

Doing round after round without asking the same people twice, Carl was easily able to make his 10 or 20 Euro at the station in the course of a morning or afternoon. Enough people were streaming in and out of any of the two neighbouring stations to produce a large enough crowd of potential donors. While Carl preferred the closed circuit of the *Gare de l'Est*, others such as Barut chose to walk from West to East following the long axis of the *Gare du Nord*. My informants consciously thought about their route, testing new ones in an effort to maximise the outcome while minimising effort.

   A second factor which made certain locations preferential was the availability of givers, in particular regular givers, ideally with their purses already in their hands. Carl developed a special connection to a second venue, closer to the *Gare du Nord*. Every day around the same time — at about 6pm when people left the offices in the area and were on their way home — he placed himself right next to a bakery just south of the park next to the church *Saint Vincennes de Paul*. It was a busy street leading down to the *Grands Boulevards* where people were passing through in masses. While not all of the people he asked knew him, a decent number became regulars over time. They would sometimes see him every day and get to know him little by little with advantageous outcomes:

> After some days, some people got to know me. And then they gave me money without me even asking them. Then it's easy. [...] You talk to them a little — like at the bakery. Short conversations.

The bakery and its customers provided two favourable components for Carl's begging work: it was a place frequented by both a changing set of people over short time cycles and returning cohorts over longer times. People would only come once a day, but they came every day — or at least several days a week. This made it easy for Carl to become acquainted with the regulars, who in turn were more likely to give him money (Garnier-Muller 2000:175; Prolongeau 1993:163ff; Lenhard 2014:98ff). This meant less effort in the sense of asking people and walking around and explaining himself, with greater income thanks to the personal connections developed over time. Additionally, people came to the bakery with the intention of spending money, and Carl would catch them either just about to open their purses to buy something or when coming out of the bakery with change in their hands.[24] The barrier of having to make an extra effort when asking for a donation was thus minimalized.

   Indeed, regulars play a key part in begging. As Lankenau (1999) argues, in his study of people begging on the streets of Washington D.C. in the mid-1990s, that regulars play two very important roles: they are part of "status-enhancing relationships" and "provide specific necessities, such as cash" (ibid.:314) without the explicit need to "be panhandled" again and again (ibid.:312). Mirroring what I found during my prior work on relationships with regulars in London (Lenhard, 2014), they fulfil both an important social role (what I called dyadic relationships) as well as a material function. Investing in regulars as part of the labouring process — as with capital investments — would pay out over time. Most importantly, such investments reduce the amount of labour which will need to be put into asking the next time around.

   Others amongst my informants banked on similar locations where regularity was paired with a preparedness to spend money. The Punjabis around Sabal were often outside of either bank branches or supermarkets, and so was François; a changing group of people was camped close to a tobacco shop inside the *Gare du Nord*; another one

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[24] This mirrors a recent debate between virtue ethicists and situationalists. Appiah (2008) for instance describes a situation where a person helps another at least partly because of a "whiff of my favorite perfume" (45). He claims following the situationists: "if the psychological claims are right, very often, when we credit people with compassion as a character trait, we're wrong. They are just in a good mood." (ibid.:45). In this sense, Carl and others were able to understand these circumstantial factors — standing in front of the bakery, sitting in front of the supermarket. They did so to speak undergo the emotional labor involved in this analysis.

around Natasha — whom I will introduce in the next section — always sat outside the busy fast-food restaurant *Quick* on the other side of the street from the station's main entrance.

As I will argue below, procuring money through begging is perceivable as labour in Arendt's sense of the word. As a practice of making home-as-process, already the decision for the best location, the begging spot, as well as engaging people and overcoming certain hostile feelings — both in the potential donor but also for my informants — requires overcoming one's shame and embarrassment, and at times the creative and clever construction of narratives or scripts (Summerson Carr, 2011). Where to stand, and when, was something that my informants learnt from experience and something that was often thought through for efficiency. I will now turn to the stories, and to the presentation of self, that is crucial in the begging encounter. How did my informants display and balance neediness and worthiness, the two most important attributes in the process of begging? What role did the network of regulars play? How did my informants' skills develop over time?

Emotional and physical labour

> Carl: It is also dependent on the weather, the time of the day. It is easier to ask at night because you are less present. Working when the sun is shining is much harder for me. It is embarrassing. […] It is really exhausting to use the same sentence all day long, completely monotonously. And to walk around. Physically, you are really exhausted after two, three hours. […] Bad moods, no motivation — all this puts extra pressure on it.

> Pascal: I have never done anything like this before — begging. It's only punks and Roma who ask for money in Germany. It was this […] pride. He doesn't see you as equal. I always denied. Didn't want to do it. Until this one day. Lalo [Pascal's Polish friend] told me if you want to smoke, you have to beg [Taxi machen]. I didn't have a choice. The first day — on this street opposite the park — I barely asked people. I didn't make any money, not a cent, no. Only in the end, 10 cents from a man. […] I got rid of my shame. I accepted that I was on the street, that I was homeless [obdachlos]. […] After this day, I went begging every day for one

month. It became easier. […] But I am still looking when I ask people. […] When begging I need beer, at least two. To lose my sense of shame. Two beers, then a [piece of] chewing gum.

While Carl was concerned about both the exhaustion which comes with walking around and constantly asking people for money, and the embarrassment of asking itself, Pascal was focused only on the second aspect. Pascal, a newcomer to the world of begging and the street in general, explained how his pride and shame made it hard for him to beg at first. Begging marked him as dependent and ultimately as poor and homeless. He didn't want people to know that he was on the street. He didn't want people to put him into this category. Overcoming shame and embarrassment and accepting the categorisation of 'homeless' required psychological labour, often enabled by marijuana or alcohol — things which then had to be concealed again using gum. Pascal felt inhibited:

> That's my biggest fear, to go down as a real hard-core homeless person. The shame. […] Perhaps it is a question of my mentality. The others live with it. […] They don't have respect. […] I couldn't beg in the metro. Ekki [Finnish man in Pascal's circle of acquaintances] does. […] I often see how people joke about him: 'Regard lui, regard là!' [Look at him, look there!] They laugh about him, how he is begging. I couldn't do that.

Pascal was aware of his own inferior position when asking people for money. The risk of categorisation and the implied social hierarchy that came with 'outing himself' as homeless worried him. He wanted to fight against what according to Simmel (1908) was the quintessential feature of being poor: "What makes one poor is not the lack of means. The poor person […] is the individual who receives assistance because of this lack of means" (Simmel 1908:140). A sense of belonging *outside* of the group of homeless people, of the ones who were assisted was important both for his feeling of self-worth (see also Lankenau 1999), but in a second step also as a tactic. Below, I will further elaborate how Pascal and others managed to keep up a façade through the use of clothes (Smiley and Middlemass 2016) but words, stories and narratives were the most important part of this labour. Pascal used the potential ambiguity of his own standing in relation to the group of donors as a way of hustling.

A clever hustle — part of the "art of deception […] changing the rule of the game and misdirecting the audience in order to 'get over' [to get their money]"(Williams and Milton 2015:5)— is key to how successful you are as a beggar.[25] The goal is to convince people to give to you without being too forceful and intrusive. In fact, linguistically speaking, *mendicité* (begging) is in its origin related to *mensonge* ('lie'), further strengthening the connection between hustling as deception (lying, making up certain facts, displaying only part-truth about oneself) and the labour of begging. Referring back to Pascal, he learnt over time and with numerous days of trial and error which part of himself to present in which situation while at the same time attempting to be true to himself in his identity. He was learning how to hustle people without necessarily revealing his homelessness by forging personal connections (as a German or a Congolese for instance; see below).

Even more suitable in the context where narrative is the most important part of the begging encounter, is the related concept of the 'script'. Summerson Carr (2011; 2006) explains how, in the context of US drug treatment programmes, language is used by patients as a way of getting what they want — often a certain prescribed drug — rather than what they necessarily needed. Users in the outpatient programme in the American Midwest would engage in what was called 'flipping the script': "clients' linguistic interactions with therapists were commonly characterized by carefully constructed, institutionally astute, and strategic performances rather than simple acts of self-reference" (Summerson Carr 2011:196). In other words: they told the doctors what they wanted to hear in a verbal performance, mimicking a certain kind of — in her case — recovering client without giving away the actual inner state, and without being honest (ibid.:188ff, 213). Over time, people learn which ways of speaking — which scripts or hustles — work and which don't, as they engage with more and more institutions and individuals. These scripts — narrated and performed presentations of certain aspects of the self, as I will further unfold below — are part of the emotional labour which begging involves.

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[25] This is true both in relation to the potential donors of money on the street and in the institutional context (Chapter 4) when engaging with social workers, charities and associations (Summerson Carr 2011).

Hochschild (1983; Wharton 2009) categorises emotional labour as one which is face-to-face (or voice-to-voice) and which aims at producing "an emotional state in another person — gratitude or fear, for example" (ibid.:147). While his study focuses on Delta-airline trained air attendants, doctors, lawyers and salesman, at least part of my informants' labour fits into this category. Emotional labour is one which goes beyond "suppress[ing] feelings of frustration, anger or fear" (ibid.:154) and is about "the production of a state of mind in others" (ibid.:156). While there is no employer managing a staff's emotional state in the case of my informants (something important in Hochschild's study), I find his categorisation useful when paired with 'scripts'. My informants engaged in both *repressive* emotional labour — suppressing emotions of shame and embarrassment — and *expressive* emotional labour, by displaying worthiness and neediness and evoking sympathy in the givers (Hoang 2010). As we will see further below, learnt 'scripts' — both in their core form of a spoken narrative and supported through appearance and clothing — are crafted as a tool of this second kind of emotional labour. They are used to solicit money from people by evoking sympathy.

I observed how the expressive 'scripts' focused particularly on three axes that balance each other: neediness, worthiness and personal connection (ad hoc, or in networks over time). Potential givers are more likely to give when they understand that you *need* their personal help; most want to make sure that you are *worthy* of their help and won't spend the money on drugs or alcohol, and they are more likely to engage with you when they feel a personal *connection*. Ideally, all three come together, but at times one of the missing elements — looking worthy — was traded off, for instance, by a stronger personal connection. I will work through these three axes — what I see as the core of the labour of begging through scripts and hustles — by focusing on physical presentation, but mainly language and narrative in the following section. As in Summerson Carr's more clinical setting, my informants learnt over time which scripts worked in which situations, and which axes to focus on more with whom; they developed the skills of labour with, on and off the street.

I. Neediness
It was early on in my fieldwork in 2014 when I took a late night tour around the back of the *Gare du Nord* — a site which was, at that point, unfamiliar to me. It was around midnight; the weather was bad, and it was little wet out. I had just come from observing

people running around in the station and decided, on the way home, to walk down the road towards *Rue Lafayette*. On the corner of the *Caisse d'Epargne* bank, two men in their late thirties were sat on the floor. One of them spoke only English, the other had relatively good French. They were both originally from India, but had already spent some time in Paris. Within a minute or so, the one who spoke English to me had directed my attention to his foot. Even in the dark of the night, I was able to see how bad the skin looked. Not only was it black from the dirt of the street — he was wearing neither shoes nor socks — but it was also weirdly wrinkled, almost as if broken into little pieces. He explained to me how much it itched, and that it hurt when he scratched it. Finally, they asked me: could they have some money to get into a room for the night? The other man was constantly looking at me out of his dark eyes, his head bent down. He was supporting his friend's demand by adding another, non-verbal layer to it. I almost couldn't bear facing the two; I was appalled to see them sit there like that, in desperate need of shelter, medical care, help. I felt that I had to help. This night, I broke my usual rule of not giving to people I didn't know. I gave some money to the two men and walked back home.

This was the first time I had met Sabal and Bouti, and it was one of the only times I was convinced to give money to yet unknown informants. What was different in the situation I described? I perceived the two Indians as acutely in need of my help on that night — because of their illness, their apparent neediness — a feeling which was aggravated by the visibility of their bad health, their lack of hygiene, the weather, the state of their clothes. It was also the fact that the two didn't really seem to speak French, that they looked foreign.

Studies in other contexts — for instance Moeschen's (2008) overview of feigned disability among people who beg in America in the twentieth century, and Schak's (1988) ethnography of disabled people who beg in contemporary China — show even more extreme forms of displayed neediness as an important part of the begging encounter. Looking both at historical material and film, Moeschen describes how disability and impairment were at times deceitfully performed by people who beg, adding another dimension to the display of neediness to solicit gifts. Lankenau (1999), in his study of panhandlers in Washington D.C., observed how his informants "manipulate[d] signs and symbols to demonstrate [...] need" (290) by adapting their

dress code and shaping their public persona (ibid.:305) to earn what Clarke (1997) calls 'sympathy credits'. The aim was always to appear in such a way that one's sympathy margin was high: "Panhandlers that do not look impoverished may unwittingly drain their sympathy margin and receive fewer contributions". (Lankenau, 1999:307). The emotional (and physical) labour of appearing needy is not necessarily enough to solicit gifts, however; people also needed to be perceived as 'worthy' of a contribution (or what Lankenau (1999:309) calls 'respectable') which takes us to the second axis of the begging narrative.

II Worthiness
At the opposite end of the spectrum, I observed how, in the begging encounter, neediness is balanced off with what I call worthiness. People are more likely to give if they think you are not only needy but also worthy of their gift. A common hindrance, for instance, is the perception that homeless people will spend donated money on drugs or alcohol (McIntosh and Erskine 2000).

   In this sense, many of my informants thought about bodily- and clothing hygiene as something that benefitted both their health and their begging work. Hygiene — shaving one's beard, showering regularly, washing and changing clothes — is part of one's presentability. For Camilla, a young Eastern-European woman doing her rounds at the *Gare du Nord*, asking people for money for a train fare, looking appropriate was the most important part of her spiel. For several days in a row I observed how she interacted with people, and her line of argument was based on the fact that people took her to be 'one of them'. Her usual story was a variation on the following:

> Excuse me, I am really sorry to bother you, but I don't know what to do anymore.
> I tried to reach my family but nobody is picking up the phone, and somebody has
> stolen my wallet, so I can't take out any more money or go to the bank. I don't live
> far away, and I only need 5.30 Euro to pay for my train there. Would you be able
> to help me? I would be so grateful to you. I am really sorry to bother you.

The story, however, was only one part of her presentation which was dependent on her looking 'as if' she had actually just lost her wallet on the way home. When I saw her, her hair was combed; her clothes were in a good shape, particularly her shoes — the item of

clothing most under pressure on the street. She always carried around a handbag — small, in comparison to the bigger bags that many of the other people living on the street would have with them containing all the necessities of life. She fitted in very well with the general crowd of tourists and commuters at the *Gare du Nord*.

   Camilla engaged in what Gonyea and Melekis (2016) in their study of homeless women in Boston described as 'passing': some of their informants used a certain way of presenting themselves (using a 'script') to pass as what she calls a 'normal' person rather, than a user of a homeless shelter, both in relation to members of the (potentially giving) public and professionals, such as health-care employers. While the focus of the above study, as well as one by Donley and Jackson (2014) with homeless men in Sanford, Florida, is on reducing visibility *as a homeless person* in order to decrease stigma (ibid.:47), my analysis looks at 'passing' or 'blending in' (ibid.; Hodgetts, Stolte, and Chamberlain 2010) as part of the labour of begging. Camilla wanted to be visible to start with — she was trying to get the attention of passers-by to ask them for money — but *not* as a homeless person. While I will further explore moments where invisibility can be the aim in-itself below — usually to procure access to semi-public infrastructure such as shops, benches or microwaves — being invisible for Camilla is about not being perceived of as unworthy, or as homeless.

   In an interview, Carl further elaborated on worthiness, and how he made it easier for people to judge him adequately as a worthy person. For him, a successful script was about the right presentation. He would make an effort to display certain parts of his identity — his orderliness — but hide others, such as his alcohol consumption:

> You need to be able to make contact with people before you actually ask them for money. [...] I don't like it when people see me with beer. I take a quick break to drink — 10-15 minutes.

While he himself likes to choose the people he asks,[26] he also wants to make it easier for them to see that he is orderly, well-dressed and not aggressive, dirty or drunk. He wants

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[26] On a different occasion, he spells out the people he usually asks along the lines of nationality: he hasn't had good experiences with Asians or middle-aged black men. He mainly asks white people and black women.

to appear worthy of donations, and as if he won't spend his money on alcohol (despite the fact that he, like Pascal, did like to drink whilst begging). Alcohol would decrease his worthiness, and, as a result, his income.

The important puzzle which all of my informants had to deal with was how, in the end, to balance neediness and worthiness. Both are part of what Goffman (1959) calls 'impression management' and Snow and Anderson (1993) term 'identity work': my informants engaged in a constant effort to "anticipate, project, define, interpret, assess, accept, resist and modify images of self" (Dietz, Prus, and Shaffir 1994:60). Rather than acting in accordance with their own perception of the self, my informants were trying to appease the expectation of potential givers (R. Erickson 1995). Appearing 'too needy' — scruffy, unwashed, with ripped clothes — could put off potential givers. Appearing 'too worthy' might in turn raise questions about their neediness. I found that elaborate narratives, such as Camilla's, were one way of addressing this question.[27] Another way was to overcome these initial, first-contact considerations in the mind of the giver, and to build up a network of personal connections.

III Personal connection

Pascal was very good in building on the third axis — personal connection based on certain commonalities with donors — and was clever in adapting his 'scripts' to do so. He had learnt how to craft the narrative he presented to potential donors in order to bring about the desired result. In the following example, he was very successful because he shared a country of birth, a language, an interest in marijuana and a similar age with a group of young German donors, and, later, a Congolese woman:

> It was a crazy day. There were Germans — living in Paris — young Germans who wanted to buy marijuana and I got it for them and they bought me stuff for €10. […] Then just before going back to the train [where he was sleeping at the time] there was this young woman in front of the train station. I asked her: 'Where is the street *Rocroy?*' It is the street where *Freedom* is, but I wanted to start the conversation somehow. She offered to lead me there with the GPS. 'Where are

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[27] Which does not mean that 'slips' were not as common as successful instances of portraying the 'right' kind of self: wine bottles, drug paraphernalia, aggressive and rude behaviour often stood in the way of soliciting gifts. These were moments when the script was forgotten.

you from?' 'From Congo.' *Bäm*. And I immediately dropped my SDF[homeless]-story and used the story of someone who shares a home country, comes from the Congo. […] I never thought anything would happen. […] She asked me. I didn't ask her; she asked: 'Do you have time? Do you have anything to do? Don't you want to take a hotel with me?' […] *Rambazamba*. […] That's the kind of days you have when you make taxi. Crazy days.

Not only is this experience an example of how scripts are consciously used and changed according to the situation, in order to build first of all temporary personal connections, it is also noticeable how Pascal's relationship to begging has changed over time. He gains positive feelings when he is successful, when the work goes well. This success — firstly in the procurement of money and marijuana, secondly a night at the hotel — was not random, but created by the presentation of Pascal's story. Pascal in fact admits himself that he *consciously* changed his story from a needy homeless person into somebody who shares a country of origin with the second donor to forge a relationship with her. Since he started begging, Pascal had developed important skills to increase success. He had become more attuned — through what Summerson Carr calls 'metalinguistic labour' and experience in the field — as to which 'script', which part of his narrative, identity or life — being German or Congolese, for instance — was going to help him earn. In this instance, he quickly switched from a more direct narrative of a needy, young homeless man to building an ad hoc connection (between Germans or Congolese). The third axis — connection — was enough to make the encounter successful, and offset any potentially less convincing displays of neediness or worthiness.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

For Natasha, begging also revolved around building personal connections with potential donors. Natasha is of Algerian descent but has lived in France all her life. In 2015, Natasha was in her late sixties. I first met her early in 2015 in front of *Quick*, the French equivalent of McDonalds, opposite the main entrance to the station; I came to learn it was her usual spot. Natasha always wore a woollen hat, even in the summer, from under which her dark brown eyes would look up at you when you talked to her. Her voice was deep and kind. It didn't quite seem to match her diminutive body, but perhaps years on

the street had given her an inner gravity, a weightiness and depth that radiated out through her words. Natasha shared an important commonality with many of her donors: the Arabic language. This was especially true of many of the street merchants, delivery people and passers-by Natasha talked with, and the shared language created an immediate connection — binding Natasha and these individuals together in an intimate bond of sharing. Bringing these bonds to the fore was important for making money.

On the other hand, Natasha's way of connecting was more long-term and less situational, and included more of what we could call networking. She banked fully on her group of regulars. She had spent more than a decade in the *Gare du Nord* area and hence was equipped with a wide network of people who were willing to help. She didn't make up a script of worthiness or neediness, but one of 'having something in common'. She usually talked about herself to everyone. She talked about the past, how she grew up in Algeria before coming to Paris with her parents and seven siblings when she was still very young. She talked about her criminal career after she moved out from home age 17, leading her into prison as well as a disastrous marriage, which brought about three children who have all grown up and apart. She didn't see them anymore, and they likely didn't know what their mother was doing. Her tone became more cheerful when she started thinking about her friends, the people that had accompanied her over the last two decades on the streets.

But importantly, Natasha used connections she had created over years of begging on the streets and spun them further by giving away personal details. She was hence able to beg almost without moving, often without even asking people to give to her. She called people by their names, joked with them as they walked past and engaged in small-talk about the weather, her life and the police. Very rarely, and usually only towards the end of a conversation, would she ask for money directly. She waited for the moment in which the person was ready to walk away after having stopped to talk. She used this moment of insecurity and vulnerability in which the person was busy disentangling herself from the conversation to make her advance. It worked more often than not. Natasha was needy and worthy *enough* for people to give to her, but the key factor in her begging encounter was this personal contact.

Natasha had spent many years developing her network of people by the time I met her.

She knew the police, and several homeless associations had folders with her name on it; the merchants gave her money and cigarettes and food regularly. Altogether, the network Natasha had developed was more potent and easier to work than a continuous display of neediness and worthiness. Natasha's developed skill as a begging woman consisted less of narratives and scripts but more of continuous investment (of time and personal details) into her network.

Begging as labour

Unlike other forms of labour in what is often called the informal economy (Hart 1973), my informants' economic engagements in begging cannot be understood as a kind of 'waiting room' from which to eventually return to the formal economy (Breman 2013). In most cases, my informants were long-term unemployed people for whom begging was not a mere transitory activity but an occupation. They (especially François, above) described it as their labour (French 'travail', German 'arbeit', or in English, 'job'). In my analysis, I also need to go one step beyond what, in Breman's (2013) study of India's informal economy, parts of of Venkatesh's (2006) and Duneier's (2000) studies of New York sidewalks or Stewart's (1997) classic ethnography of Hungarian Roma, is still very much linked to temporary but contracted forms of black market activity, such as trading, wholesale, workshops, agriculture or rural industrial work (such as diamond cutting). In comparison to these activities, begging does not demand the stamp 'job' (or work) as it is asking money for nothing (Simmel 1908) in the perception of the public. In order to get away from a distinction between real and unreal labour (Grint and Nixon 2015; Strangleman and Warren 2008), I want to follow examples such as Kassah's (2008) study of people with mobility difficulties begging in Ghana and Lankenau's (1999) study of panhandlers in Washington D.C. While Lankenau's focus is more on how begging and the relationships springing from it contribute to the status enhancement of the panhandlers, and Kassah focuses on how begging-as-labour increases the feeling of self-worth,[28] I want to argue that begging is important for my informants not only as a means of making money but a way of structuring and ordering their day and daily life, and thus contributes to making a home on the street. Below, I want to embrace Stettinger's distinction between structured *travail* and undirected *survie*, and also to introduce Pedersen's notion of 'work of hope' (or, for me, 'labour of hope') in order to

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[28] He calls it work, following the common (non-) differentiation.

map different ethnographically-induced ways of thinking about begging onto home-as-process activities (see Chapter 1).

In her ethnographic study of people begging and selling magazines on the Paris metro, Stettinger (2003) divides her informants into two groups: the ones who work (*travail*) and the ones who were merely surviving (*survie*). While she described the former as engaging in a routine with a specific, structured project and an aim for the future in mind, the latter deployed a present-focused, order-less, day-to-day engagement with their economic activity. As a starting point, Stettinger's distinction links onto my analysis of hope and the future in Chapter 1. There, I argued, that my informants were in fact situationally moving between two poles: between a future-oriented long-term hope for the ideal home (-land) and the necessity of the daily living, with daily hope translating into home-as-process. Here, at the concepts of daily hope and home-as-process, is where Stettinger's analysis of work connects with what I observed. As I already suggested in Chapter 1, daily hopes can develop in both the ways that Stettinger describes. It is easy to write off begging as present-oriented and as existing in and for the moment, but I argue that begging, in many instances, resembles structured labour (job, or French *travail*), with skills that are learnt and developed over time: the labour of building personal relationships and developing networks (Natasha); of choosing a spot (Carl); the emotional labour of suppressing the shame and embarrassment to ask people for money (Pascal); the physical labour of standing, walking or sitting searching for potential givers; passing as 'one of us' by staying clean and consciously dressing up (Camilla); and, most importantly, the labour of building narratives and scripts to display worthiness and neediness and to build personal connections (Pascal, Sabal).

On a general level, all of the above activities contribute to 'making a life on the street', and thus to the process of home-making. Begging is not merely an order-less, day-to-day survival practice but a consciously thought-about, planned routine with 'scripts' learnt, revised and optimised over months and even years. Begging, for my informants, was future-oriented — not necessarily in that they would save money for a certain purpose,[29] but in its concrete contribution to survival and hence the continuation of life

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[29] Even though this happened as well. Carl, for instance, before his son's birthday early in 2016, made a conscious effort to put money away for his presents. Similarly, Pascal would save money during his time on the street to rent a hotel room regularly.

and hope. Begging is part of a set of practices — including shelter making (Chapter 3), or coordinating with the *assistant social* at the day centre (Chapter 4) — constituting the daily life of my informants. This daily life is the necessary basis from which a future is imaginable. People on the street are forced to spend most of their energy on being in what seems like a present-oriented state — begging, drinking, sleeping rough — while often this was the only option for them to keep the future, the long-term hope for home open. I want to take begging in this sense more seriously by categorising it as labour, and as a form of ordering one's day and world (part of what Douglas (1991) calls home-making) and creating a sense of both self-worth (Kassah 2008; Lankenau 1999) and income.

While the labour my informants engaged in was future-oriented and structured in the above sense (comparable to what Stettinger calls *travail*, keeping the future open), it also resembled what Pedersen (2012) calls the 'work (labour) of hope'. Describing people struggling ('muddling through') at the lower end of society in urban Mongolia, Pedersen observes his informants 'practicing hope' in that they were aware of the unrealistic nature of their hopes (most of them desired to have a well-paid, stable job or secure material life). Their daily job — in the form of meeting people, pursuing creditors, talking money out of people, convincing people to postpone the payback date for a debt — was not about reaching a goal, it was, in Stettinger's above sense, about surviving (*survie*) and continuing to live life (Pedersen 2012:11). For them, plans (or what I called 'long-term hopes' for 'ideal homes' in Chapter 1) did not have to be about realizable goals in a far-off future; they did not have to be broken down into step-by-step actionable goals but often involved "hoping for the magical manifestation of 'profit'" (ibid.:4). Pedersen's informants didn't necessarily strive towards something tangible and, as he claims, they "did not want to be practical" (ibid.:7), but instead practised hope by continuously doing things which were "active, intersubjective, and […] social" (ibid.:11). The activity itself was to hope as it kept them busy and gave them something to do (ibid.:12) and as such kept the future open.

My informants were similarly engaged in begging as a way of surviving and as such 'keeping the future open' in the simple sense of staying alive. It was not part of a long-term strategic plan , but part of the daily necessity of continuing life; a necessary quick fix. My informants did not think about the future every time they were begging. Some of

their goals and hopes — Alex's longing for a place in the French welfare system, for instance — were unrealistic, too, and they were aware of that. Begging — and the other practices I am about to describe — were hence both about *travail* and *survie*, about labouring towards a hopeful future and simply surviving in the present for a future to come. My informants did not necessarily break down the goals they had about, for instance, returning to their homeland into daily steps either. While I will, in Chapter 4, further consider how institutions in general and *assistants sociaux* in particular helped some of my informants (notably Carl and Pascal) to define daily hopes as steps towards their long-term hopes, begging is not necessarily thought of as part of the *projet de vie* translated into a structured trajectory. Begging is situational; it is different for different people at different times and can depend on the stage in your life on the street (Chapter 4), your mental and physical health, or your addiction (Chapter 5). It is part of the 'labour of hope' and about survival without a clear aim in mind in certain moments, while it is a learnt, structured, routinized, and often consciously thought-through practice of labour being part of the nexus of activities of home-as-process. It is both the more present activity that only focuses on daily survival (Day, Papataxiarchis, and Stewart 1999:2) on the one hand, and a future-oriented, structured aimed undertaking in the sense of keeping the body alive and making time for things to unfold, to work towards the *projet de vie*.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

Asking Carl about his opinion of begging as a job, he would introduce another dimension in the debate: its perception from the outside.

> Johannes: Why would this [begging] not be called work?
> Carl: There is no social acceptance. For 99% of the people, you are the last piece of shit. And that's how they treat you.

Carl sees a problem in the nature of begging, that it is something that people look down upon. From this viewpoint, he argues that begging could not be described as work.[30] I

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[30] Abstractly, this negative view on begging as work could be related to its one-sided nature (not giving anything in return; Gregory 1982) or the dependent nature of the encounter (Simmel 1908). Carl didn't explain his judgment any further to me, however.

described above, how, with different practices — displaying neediness and worthiness, forging connections, producing scripts — Carl and my other informants tried to overcome exactly this negative regard and social acceptance problem. Begging ultimately involves various ways of becoming visible *in a good enough light* for the public. In contrast to other activities people on the street engage in to make money — theft, violence, drug dealing are others we will describe in subsequent chapters (see also Desjarlais 1997; Bourgois 2002; Duneier 2000) — my informants had to learn how to be visible for it. The following sections will introduce other activities of material home-making that involve public infrastructure, focusing both on their role in home-as-process as well as the problem of restricted access in which the skill of invisibility plays a more important role.

Producing invisibility: microwaves, benches and toilets

Begging and receiving gifts in a direct, one-to-one way from the public is not the only way for people to obtain food and other daily necessities, nor is it the only type of available 'labour' in the above sense. Urban infrastructure in and around the train station was an important part of people's daily home-making, and was used to contribute to activities of food procuration and preparation, hygiene and relaxation. A lot of these activities revolved around the ambiguous semi-public spaces of shops and the station. How to use the microwave in a supermarket or the bench in a waiting room when you are not a customer? The labour of scripting, of creating a narrative is in these instances very similar to the begging encounters described above. Being friendly and clean might be one version; making friends with key stakeholders another. But unlike soliciting gifts, many of the practices for accessing infrastructure are not about being visible to the public but about rendering oneself invisible. I will return to the trope of 'passing as' (Gonyea and Melekis 2016) and 'blending in' (Hodgetts, Stolte, and Chamberlain 2010) to describe this second skill my informants learnt on the street.

Darius and Pawi, who spent most of their time over months in mid and late 2015 begging in front of the *Monoprix* supermarket south of the station, for instance, had not only chosen the spot because of the high number of givers but also because of the staff at the supermarket. Pawi and Darius mostly found their food not from passers-by but in the supermarket's bin, which was 'replenished' by the staff every day. At around 7pm every night, one of the employees of the supermarket came out with a big bag of items

about to expire, which included anything from fresh salad to sandwiches and cheese to fruit and ready-made dishes. Staff would allow Darius and Pawi and others from the group of Polish friends to take out as much as they wanted. Here, the display of worthiness towards key gatekeepers - not being aggressive or dirty right in front of the supermarket — played an important role just as during more active begging encounters. Passing as a member of the public, however, was the labour which my informants engaged in when entering the supermarket.

Every now and then, a piece of *steak haché* — a raw burger-patty — appeared amongst the bags thrown into the bin. The patty could not be consumed raw, so the Polish men had to find a way to cook it. The first time, Pawi walked nervously back into the shop with it to put it into the microwave installed to be used by the *Monoprix* customers. As it turned out, however, it was alright for them to make use of the infrastructure as long as they didn't disturb any of the other customers. He explained to me:

> Most of them [the staff at *Monoprix*] are fine with us coming in. The black lady
> even gives us the food bag without putting it into the bin. We can use the
> microwave, no problem. We only need to be careful with the other customers.

Pawi and others, in similar contexts I will describe below, were often tapping into 'publicly' available infrastructure. This infrastructure was in fact usually only available for the private customers of the shop, in the same way as you would usually only receive plastic cutlery at *Monoprix* if you actually bought something to use it with. Pawi was able to get around the barrier of not having bought anything with a conscious effort, however:

> We are clean and friendly. We are here every day, all the time. We talk to the
> people. We try to cooperate. And then we choose who to talk to. They are not all
> nice, but some.

Pawi and the others had to carefully manage how they were perceived as worthy by key stake holders and their visibility to the public in order to access the bins and the microwave. On the one hand, successfully accessing the desired resources required them to appear worthy to the staff in the supermarket, in parallel with many begging

encounters: displaying cleanliness and politeness allowed them over time to build cooperative connections. On the other hand, passing as a member of the public — and being invisible as a homeless person — was important to be let into the supermarket to use the microwave. Pawi needed to avoid "being labelled as a member of the low-status group of 'the homeless'" (Gonyea and Melekis 2016:74), and hid his homelessness so as not to disturb legitimate customers — which would have negatively impacted his network of staff gatekeepers. By being clean, presentable, quiet, and not smelly or rough-looking, Pawi and the others were able to blend in with the public, thus rendering themselves invisible (Donley and Jackson 2014:51).

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

A similar effort was necessary if Sabal wanted to use the toilets of the *McDonalds* opposite the *Gare du Nord* or the warm waiting room in the *Gare de l'Est*. Both venues were protected by security — in the one case the private security of *McDonalds*, in the other *SNCF* ticket inspectors. Sabal explained how he dealt with these issues of access:

> The people know me there. The security guards. I am clean and nice and I always say hello. I go every day. Several times sometimes. They let me because I don't do anything.

Two things are at the core of Sabal's tactic, mirroring what I described also for Pawi: he firstly made himself invisible by not leaving any traces, being loud, violent or aggressive. He tried to fit into the regular crowd of customers. Secondly, Sabal also cleared his path by being a regular, by getting to know the people through continuous interaction. Gatekeepers knew him because he always used the same spots to beg, go to the toilet, or buy beer and food. Sabal needed to be visible to the right people (gatekeepers) 'in the good way' of being known as needy and worthy. He became a regular face to the security guards who negotiated access to venues such as the *McDonalds*. Mirroring the context of the begging encounter, wherein people like Natasha were dependent on a network of regulars, Sabal also depended on getting to know (being visible to) certain people in order to gain access. Reversing the movement of begging, however, here it was him who came to visit them and the infrastructure they guarded.

At other times — again, in an important parallel with begging for money — performing neediness was the most effective attribute to solicit access. Warmth is one of the most sought after attributes of a place, above all in the material and literal sense of a heated place to sit and relax. During the winter months, the main hall of the *Gare du Nord* was no such place. Being slightly warmer than the sub-zero temperatures outside, the thick stone walls were not enough to warm you after a night spent in the cold. The *Gare de l'Est* provided an alternative in the form of a heated waiting room. This room at the far west of the station was reserved for passengers with a ticket. Initial access was not limited, but *SNCF* staff would regularly come in to check the tickets of the waiting passengers. Proper usage was dependent on your status as a customer. Again, Sabal could regularly get around this barrier, and had access to the warmth and comfort of the benches behind the automatic door. This process involved the emotional labour of taking the risk of being found out as well as a certain ability to convince people of his neediness and worthiness.

I was with him once when we were checked by an *SNCF* guard. The uniformed member of staff announced the reason for his visit loudly as he entered the room: "Les tickets, s'il vous plaît" (Tickets, please). We were sitting relatively far away from the door; we both knew that we could easily be kicked out but we took the risk and didn't get up. As the man approached us, Sabal looked at him nodding:

> Good afternoon, Sir. I don't have a ticket. But I am homeless. I don't disturb anyone. I am clean. I am very cold. But I will leave soon.

We did in fact leave after another couple of minutes, but the security person allowed us to stay;[31] he didn't scrutinise us any further. I can only speculate on why he did not police the venue more forcefully: Sabal's politeness was surely one contributing factor; it might again have been his status as a regular visitor which made him more worthy, though he didn't tell me if he actually knew this particular guard.

In general, it seemed possible to negotiate access given that you were able to 'press the

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[31] As I described in my introduction, I often had issues with playing different roles in situations like this. Just as with my homeless informants, people such as the security guard but also at times the police searching potential drug dealers, didn't know how to place me — SDF or not?

right buttons': manage your visibility to the right people and appear needy and worthy if necessary. As I described above, the labour involved in these practices of access was not necessarily physical but emotional and psychological. The negotiations of access involved the ability to deal with one's shame and possible disappointment, to cope with one's fear of being rejected and to guard one's invisibility and the ability to 'pass' and 'blend in'. If addressed by a guard in such situations, the same three principles were at work as in the begging encounter: once rendered visible, it was important to display neediness (no money, no access to other toilets or warmth), worthiness (being clean and quiet, trying to fit in), and to work with personal connections and networks (knowing the guard). Rather than presenting themselves as worthy and needy homeless people, however, access was often negotiated on the basis of passing invisibly — as if a member of the general public. Over time, a certain knowledge was built-up, a certain know-how and rules of thumb as to how to stretch the rules of access to the infrastructure of the city. Over time, my informants learnt how to develop the right skills, rendering themselves visible or invisible, to be a successful homeless labourer.

Conclusion

My focus in this chapter was on my informants' main activity necessary in order to make a daily living: becoming a good labourer to survive via begging and accessing public infrastructure. This process involves significant amounts of labour in both physical and emotional ways. Many activities are about making the right choice to start with: of a spot to beg which provided a sufficient volume of passers-by. The labour involves walking around for hours, asking dozens of people and being rejected; it is about constructing and supporting narratives of worthiness and neediness in scripts, covering up one's status as a homeless person and passing 'as if'. My informants learnt how to balance neediness and worthiness as well as personal connections — the three main axes of the begging work. The labour consists of learning hustles and scripts to negotiate access and donations, to avoid being visible to security personnel, police and the public. It is about developing the skill of when and towards whom to appear invisible or visible. All of the above is ultimately about hope. It was an outgrowth of the hope which at times was future-oriented, structured, and what Stettinger calls *travail*. At other times, the labour itself is hope; less about the future, more about doing *something* in the present, keeping busy with something and keeping the future open.

Similar to Millar's (2008) trash-collecting informants in Rio de Janeiro, the unwaged labour my homeless informants in Paris engaged in was both a result of their situation (an unstable daily life, often involving suffering) and a refuge (ibid.:35). The labour is destabilized by life which demanded an irregular and flexible, rather than wage-producing post-Fordist, kind of occupation (ibid.:48). It involves the necessity of unstructured *survie* but also the conscious development of the skills of a more orderly *travail* (Stettinger, 2003). It allows homeless people to struggle along on a daily basis (Pedersen 2012; Desjarlais 1994), keeping the (hopeful) future open with and on the street. In the next chapter, I will turn my attention towards activities of the literal work of home-making, focusing on the problematic nexus of sleeping and being policed away.

Chapter 3: *Habiter* — the processual work of making shelter when sleeping rough

Most of my informants were navigating between what are, according to the ETHOS definition (Edgar et al. 2007; Edgar, Doherty, and Meert 2004), the two most extreme categories on the homelessness spectrum: they were sleeping rough without a stable dwelling at their disposal (what ETHOS calls 'roofless') or else lived in temporary accommodation — shelters, hostels — without a legal right of exclusive possession or adequate private and personal space ('houseless'). The focus of this chapter is the struggle of people who are roofless — people living in public or external space, or staying intermittently in emergency night shelters (*centres d'hébergement d'urgence*, CHU).[32] According to statistics published by the French Office for Statistics, about 10% of homeless people (*sans domicile)* are in fact roofless (*sans abris*) — sleeping in a place not fit for habitation. One out of five of the people surveyed slept outside; the others would habitually find refuge in parking lots, hallways, train and metro stations, or other covered spaces (Yaouancq et al. 2013).[33]

  As one of the core daily home making activities, how does making a shelter (*abri*) — finding suitable shelter and preparing it — take place for the group of my informants around the *Gare du Nord*? After discussing the intricacies of daily processes of labour and money-making revolving around the work of begging in the last chapter, this chapter will focus on the spaces in which my informants spent their days — and, especially, their nights. While, as I have argued in Chapter 1, the physical shelter is only one part of home and hence only one aspect of home-making, it is the one most often associated with homelessness and the way out of it (Houard 2011; Loison-Leruste et al. 2009). The same question would arise anew, often on a daily basis (Pichon 2002:12): where will I sleep tonight? The process of shelter-making is a perpetual and cyclical one,

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[32] Houselessness and living in temporary shelter (*Centre d'hébergement de stabilisation*) will be the focus point in Chapter 6, in which I describe the practices of structuring and ordering the life projects and daily routines at *Valley*, a homeless shelter run by the same organization, *Freedom,* who manage the day centre discussed in Chapter 4.

[33] Additionally, some of my informants chose not to apply for or take up places in a shelter for various reasons (finding it too tedious to call 115, not wanting to be dependent upon the government, bad conditions in the shelters proposed, etc) (Sheehan 2010:551; Herring 2014:306).

one which is hard to routinize due to regular conflicts with security forces or other members of one's own group. This leads individuals into relentlessly moving around. As Bergamaschi and Francesconi describe in their visual study of homeless people's shelter-making processes in Italy, at first an urban niche (ibid.:36) is transformed, "settled into" — as I describe it, the practice of *habiter* turns a non-place into a place — but very quickly, "they become vulnerable and are thrown out of one place after another" (ibid.:37), so that the process starts anew.

To draw again on Arendt's (2008) distinction between labour and work, I argue that it is this process of *habiter*, of physical shelter-making, which is actually part of the daily work of my informants. While they engage in the (physical and emotional) labour of making money as I argued in the previous chapter, the process of *habiter* is an engagement with the world of things. My informants worked on producing something of durability and permanence (ibid.:94), a shelter which was at least used in the mid-term and not consumed (and disappeared) immediately. The product of the work of *habiter* was a new thing — a place to stay for the night — in a sense a human artefact. Arendt (2008:152) describes herself how "the most important task of the human artifice, which is to offer mortals a dwelling place more permanent and more stable". Tilling the soil for her is one of these tasks which "performed year in year out will eventually transform the wilderness into cultivated land" (ibid.:138). While my informants were not tilling the soil of train stations or parking lots (the non-place as part of the ordered wilderness in Arendt's terminology), they were engaging in comparable activities of ordering and physically transforming as I will describe below. The outcome was always again physical, a certain *abri* (shelter) and at least semi-permanent — we are talking about several months my informants stayed in one place. Something Arendt doesn't capture in her definition of work, however, is the processual and cyclical character of my informants which for both Cresswell (2004:37) and Massey (2005:9) is inherently part of the ever-changing nature of any place: the never complete cycle of finding-making-losing the shelter which is going to be a focal point of the analysis below.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

Many studies have looked at the institutional context of shelter-making in France and

beyond, focusing on emergency shelters (*Centre d'Urgence,* CHU)[34], mid-term temporary shelters,[35] or precarious housing more generally (Dietrich-Ragon 2011 on unsecure housing; Bouillon 2009 on squats). The context of sleeping rough and rooflessness has not been a dominant topic of discussion in the French context beyond questions of either how to rehouse rough sleepers (Gardella 2014; Marpsat and Firdion 2000; Bruneteaux 2005), medical conditions on the street (Laporte and Chauvin 2010; Girard, Estecahandy, and Chauvin 2009) or the more general problem of exclusion (Jérôme 2002; Dambuyant-Wargny 2004). I will engage with work that focuses on the 'inhabitation' (*habiter*) of public spaces (or what Augé [2008] calls non-places) by homeless people in Paris (Lion 2015; Pichon 2002; Gresillon, Amat, and Tibaut 2014; Fillon, Hemery, and Lanneree 2007; Sheehan 2010).

In the first part of this chapter I will look at the economy of hot air vents in particular and the claiming and inhabiting of semi-public space more generally. While hot air vents provide day-time and, at times, night shelter in the direct vicinity of the *Gare du Nord*, many of my informants chose spots further outside of the city centre to spend the night. Following Carl to an abandoned train in the south of Paris, and Pascal to a parking lot in *La Défense*, I will in the second part of the chapter illuminate both how different types of shelter — from open (*abri ouvert*), to covered (*abri couvert*) and closed (*abri fermé*) — are inhabited through what I will describe as a recurring and repeated process of daily shelter-finding and -making. I argue that, by "develop[ing] avenues to make-do" (Sheehan 2010:546), and by applying makeshift processes (Marr, DeVerteuil, and Snow 2009:314) — what I describe as *habiter* (Lion 2015) — my informants transform, at least temporarily, non-places into habitable places. Ultimately, the efforts and work often break down, because of both internal and police-dominated conflicts, meaning that the process of finding and making (*habiter*) a shelter perpetually starts anew.

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[34] See Declerck 2003 on the medical side of the CASH at Paris Nanterre; Desjarlais 1997 on mental health as a driving factor in Boston shelters; Benoist 2009 on exclusion and alterity in Nanterre; Bruneteaux 2010 with a critique of Paris' emergency shelters

[35] See Hall 2003 on UK youth shelters; Grand 2015 as well as Michalot and Simeone 2010 on French temporary shelters

The economy of hot air

A section of about 3x8 metres and another, larger one of perhaps 100 square metres, just west of the main entrance to the *Gare du Nord*, was occupied by big hot air vents when I first arrived in late 2014. These metal grills were outlets for the warm air coming from the parts of the station below the ground, from the metro and from the extensive tunnel system underneath the various buildings in the vicinity. The vents acted almost like a magnet for homeless people, particularly during the cold winter of 2014/2015. People like Mama, or her friend and 'disciple' Mark, flocked around them for a large part of the day.

   Mama spoke fluent French and was from a former French colony, possibly Cameroon. She was in her forties and had been around the *Gare du Nord* for a more than a year. Everyone called her Mama. Hugging her gigantic black suitcase — which contained mainly clothes and often food but which was never actually full when I saw it open — Mama spent a lot of time on top of these hot air vents close to the main entrance to the station. I never saw her outside of the confined space of the extended train station, which she had turned into her proto-home. It provided a space to relax and at the same time a source of income in the form of donations from the general public. Mark had come to Paris from Nigeria only several months before I met him in late 2014. He didn't speak French, only English, and he didn't have a passport. His hope, however, was to move to the UK to 'become a famous pop singer' — but, since his arrival at the *Gare du Nord*, he was supporting Mama by purchasing her food and following her prayers. It was the warmth the hot air vents gave off which attracted Mark and Mama to them. Mama, had over the period of weeks, transformed one corner of the vent space into a camp for herself. Sitting on her suitcase, right on top of the smaller vent which concentrated the hot air, she demarcated the area around her with cardboard or blankets. Some of her clothes usually dried on the fence behind her, which also served as a rack for the bags full of food she was given by organisations that came by almost daily. While she sat up for most of the day — with intervals of sleep in between — during the night she lay down directly on the duvet and cardboard construction, benefiting greatly from the warm air beneath.

   Like the inhabitants of the *Bois de Vincennes* described by Lion (2014) as well as Gressilon, Amat and Tibaut (2014), Mama and Mark marked their area above the vents

carefully. Different parts were demarcated with pieces of cardboard to be used for different activities. While the space was not suitable for producing a sophisticated arrangement of *chambre* (bedroom), *cuisine* (kitchen), *salon* (living room), *salle de bain* (bathroom) and *débarras* (storage and garbage) — the likes of which Zeneidi-Henry (2002:210) observed in an urban homeless encampment in Bordeaux — Mama managed to separate at least four areas according to their usage. Clothes were stored in the suitcase but dried on the fence behind her, having been washed in the station or a *McDonald's* toilet; food always hung in plastic bags from the same fence; bed and living space collapsed into one another on top of the large suitcase, which evolved from being a place to sit, to wait and at times to pray, to being a place to sleep at night once covered with a duvet.

1: Mama sitting on hot air vents, west of the main entrance to the Gare du Nord, *January 2015.*

Sitting on her suitcase, it was if Mama was sat on a throne overlooking her little kingdom, carefully marked with her belongings. As stated above, Mama did not move much, usually only between the benches inside the station and the vents. She was given

the food and water she needed either by Mark or by passers-by and outreach teams from charitable organisations. Most of her time was spent sitting, thinking, sleeping and praying, as Mark explained to me:

> She prays with me. She is a spiritual being. I sing, she prays. And I get food for her. She can't walk well. That's why. All day, she sits and I stand and we pray and sing together.

The same vents were also used by other people with frequency, to provide warmth for the night. One night, in the summer of 2015, I observed a large group of Roma people arrive at around 7pm. Some of them immediately started laying out flat sheets of cardboard, on the one hand providing soft bedding, and on the other preventing the heat of the metal from burning their skin. Some rolled out sleeping bags, readying for bed. Others were not ready to sleep yet, and stayed standing up or sitting on one of the benches situated towards the street, chatting and talking. Mama, accompanied by Mark, stayed in her corner on top of the smaller but hotter vent. The group of Punjabis was also present during that and many other nights. Altogether, up to thirty people spent their evening around the vents.

In his study of homeless people in Paris' *Bois de Vincennes* park, Lion (2014) describes similar processes that his informants engaged, in using the trope of *habiter* (inhabiting) following Lazzarotti (2006):

> *Choisir son lieu de residence, aménager son espace intérieur, le décorer, se l'approprier, instaurer des habitudes spatiales* [...] [*habiter*] *pourrait être défini comme l'acte de transformer ou chercher à transformer l'espace pour y être bien.* [Choosing your place to live, clearing the interior space, decorating it, appropriating it, establishing spatial habits [...] *habiter* could be defined as the act of transforming or trying to transform a space for one's well-being]
> (Lion, 2014:961)

Mama and Mark chose (*choisir*) the space on the hot air vents, appropriated it (*approprier*) using cardboard and other material objects (the suitcase, the duvet) before eventually adding a layer of spatial routines (*habitudes spatiales*) on top of it (praying,

sleeping, eating). The hot air vents were turned into a *trottoir-salon* (pavement-living room) (Zeneidi-Henry 2002:207). The public space in front of *Gare du Nord's* front façade had been transformed to provide a context where the well-being of Mama and Mark — as well as, occasionally, other visitors — was enhanced (*espace pour y être bien*).[36] As I will further describe below, this type of inhabitation of space is indeed motivated by, and at the same time enables, certain positive outcomes: warmth from the hot air vents, security by being together, spiritual community through prayer and singing, and support for one another in moments of sharing food and care.

Securitisation and anti-homeless architecture

At the same time that inhabiting a space such as the air vents brought about positive results, it often ignited conflicts too — as in Lion's *Bois de Vincenne*s, where legal pressure demanded a more discreet or less extensive habitation of woodland (Lion 2014:967). To whom do the woods, to whom do the street and the hot air vents belong? During the winter of 2014-15, the police did not seem to care much about people spending day and night right next to the main entrance of the *Gare du Nord*.[37] But some of these more elaborate activities of home preparation and making brought the dwellers into conflict with the police as well as the security and cleaning personnel. In fact, on the above night, several groups of police officers passed without taking too much notice of the big group of people camping in front of the station. But on another occasion, the police asked another mixed group of people — known to me as regulars to the station, people travelling through and Roma — to move on:

> I was standing with Mark — Mama sitting on her suitcase next to us — one night late in 2014. Together with a French man I only saw on that night [he wasn't on the street and only came occasionally to see, as he put it, some of his old friends], we were sharing cheese and some wine. Other people stood around us; I didn't know any of them intimately but I had seen them around. More people arrived, bringing with them a group of Norwegians: "Yesterday we slept here. Today too.

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[36] As I will describe further below, the striving for well-being was not always successful, and conflicts arose.

[37] The actions of the police were not consistent at all and it was not easy for my informants to figure out which kinds of behaviour would be sanctioned and which wouldn't (see also Sheehan 2010:551), as I will describe further in the last section of this chapter.

Tomorrow we don't know yet", one of them explained to me. A big group of Roma arrived, and they unfolded their sleeping bags onto big pieces of cardboard not far from where we stood, on the big patch of hot air vents. We didn't really mix but we also didn't disturb each other. There was enough space for all of us. Until the police came, that is. [...] They were rather friendly at first, talking to the people around us, but then they moved on to talk to the Roma. I couldn't hear what they were saying, but the whole group disappeared within five minutes. When the turmoil had settled down, only Mama and Mark were left on the vents.

It was not only the police who made life on the vents hard at times (Herring 2014 on US; Milliot 2015 on Paris). The cleaning personnel also came into the picture every morning at around 6am when they arrived to wake up whomever had spent the night on the vents. More than once, I met Sabal in the morning at *Freedom*'s day centre, with him standing there in wet clothes. At times, they would come with their cleaning machines to the front of the train station and spray water onto the whole group of people sleeping there. The cleaning routine did not make a halt for the people using the space on the hot air vents as a night shelter.

*   *   *

These manual and personnel interventions by different kinds of staff or police officers were supported, and at times substituted, by architectural means. Over the course of the 24 months of my fieldwork, the surroundings of the *Gare du Nord* and the *Gare de l'Est* were visibly changed, with the result that using certain hot air vents and other parts of the station became at first more uncomfortable and dangerous, and eventually impossible.

2: Left: vertical vent block, main façade of Gare du Nord, *August 2016.*

3: Right: spikes around a pillar, main façade of Gare de l'Est, *August 2016.*

Horizontal vent blocks, Western façade of Gare du Nord, *August 2016.*

The three images above illustrate the appearance of what has been called 'hostile architecture' (Petty 2016) around the train stations. The metal panel in the first picture shut off an area which — as is visible on the picture of Mama above — used to be open. Vertical air vents would blow particularly warm air out of this niche, attracting people who took turns standing inside it to warm up. A similar closing off space is visible on the third picture from the Western side of the *Gare du Nord*. Here, another niche was fenced off. Whether consciously or unconsciously — *SNCF* officials stated in an interview with me that these measures had been undertaking to 'protect people on the street from burning themselves' — the result of these architectural interventions was an architecturally policed economy of hot air.

In the winter of 2015/2016, additional and substantial construction work was starting in the part of the train station closest to the large vents on the front façade. This led to further infringements on the possibility of using the space by people on the street. While the inside of the station changed slowly over the months, with ever new construction walls, fenced off areas and new shops, the outside around the hot air vents was altered — suddenly and irrevocably — one day in December 2015. A big construction site was put up in a complicated undertaking, involving the laying of concrete foundations for more construction work right on top of the hot air vents where Mama used to sit. The whole patch of vents was fenced off. Temporary office containers for staff who used to work inside the station — now also subject to construction — were erected over the following weeks. According to the plans on site, the temporary offices would remain in place until mid-2018.

4: New construction site, front side of the Gare du Nord*, December 2015.*

The space of the train station is a private space; it is primarily a space for travellers paying for the services of the French national train company *SNCF*, and it is in the interests of the company to make the space as agreeable as possible for its passengers. The infrastructure which is part of the train station is in this sense a space comparable to the toilets in *McDonalds* (see Chapter 2). The station can be seen as what Augé (2008) called a 'non-place', or what Marr, DeVerteuil and Snow (Marr, DeVerteuil, and Snow 2009) call transitional: a grey area and a space for people passing through, formed for

the end of transit and transport (ibid.:94), which usually creates a common identity as a passer-through (ibid.:101). Usage by non-customers is secondary, and technically prohibited. Access has to be negotiated cleverly and tactically ('passing as'), and, in the case of its acceptance, is the exception rather than the rule (see Casey, Goudie, and Reeve 2008). As described in the previous chapter, it can be conditioned on certain behaviours: people acting quietly, keeping the space clean; not too many people at once, dogs kept outside, no smoking inside, and no disturbances to other passengers. As in the case of begging, where neediness and worthiness had to be produced (see Chapter 2), being allowed to invisibly access spaces, or inhabiting the air vents — as well as other spaces as I will show below — is conditioned on appearing clean, quiet and, ideally, also invisible in the eyes of the paying public. Often, if the conditions were not met, surveillance technologies were used to facilitate sanctions (Sharma 2017:129). People were regularly moved on. In this logic, the building works which started in December 2016 were only furthering the business cause of the station: more shops and restaurants will ultimately mean more money and more convenience for the ticket-bearing customer.

   People like Mark, Mama and, at times, Sabal and his Punjabi friends claimed part of a space for prolonged periods of time even though they were not — as Augé puts it (ibid.:101) — in a "contractual arrangement with the place", i.e. they didn't have a ticket, nor had they bought a meal. They were interlopers. They didn't reveal their identities — by paying, or showing their ticket or passport — and hence remained 'innocent', which meant not being defined by the activity of the non-place (which would, in the case of the *Gare du Nord*, be taking the train or metro). Unlike the designated user of the non-place that is the station, my informants did put effort into creating an identity, into personalising the surroundings and making it their own (*approprier*) — in a sense comparable with what happens in bourgeois settings with interior decorations (Cieraad 1999). They built relationships against the non-place logic of "individual anonymity" (Sharma 2009:131). They also worked according to different, longer-term time-scales, not influenced by the symbolically ticking fast clock of the *Gare*, and applied a different logic to the working of the environment. They were working on making a temporary home where people were never supposed to be at home (Augé 2008:109) despite "continuous movement and dislocation" (Sharma 2009:132). In short, they appropriated what was conceived and constructed as a non-place — a space to rush through as

comfortably as possible — into a place. Again and again, they engage in home-making as "an active process in which most people are permanently engaged […] a living process and construction" (Moore and Rivlin 2001:329). Hence, the owners of non-places — the *SNCF*, McDonalds — police illegitimate users as soon as they become *too* visible.

With the above example of the hot air vents as places to sit, to be and to sleep, we are already touching upon one of the core questions concerning homelessness: shelter. In fact, being homeless and a rough sleeper — a categorisation which covers most of my informants at different points in time — firstly means being shelter- or roof-less. In the remainder of this chapter, I will trace the parallel processes surrounding shelter-making: how do people find and make a night shelter for themselves? While the above was focused on the particular space of the *Gare du Nord* and the economy evolving around the specific feature of the hot air vents, I will extend the analysis to other shelter spots used by my informants from the train station area.

The processes of finding shelter and making it: clothes, niches, parking lots and trains

When we talk about people being homeless, what we often mean is shelter- or roof-less (*sans abri*). All of my informants were at some point confronted with the problem of being without a place to stay and sleep on a daily basis. Where do people sleep rough at night? What does the process of finding and also making a shelter look like, for my informants on the streets of Paris?

As I want to show in this section, one of the core activities for the people I encountered in Paris was to find and make shelters on the street. While some ultimately managed to find overnight shelter in emergency shelters (*centre d'hébergement d'urgence*) or temporary housing (*centre d'hébergement de stabilisation*; see Chapter 6), my informants had all spent months or even years sleeping rough on 'the street'. The idea of sleeping on the street, however, is as much a catch-all term as is 'homelessness'. The most extreme practices revolved around what Pichon (2002:19) calls the *abri ouvert* (open shelter) which characterises Alex's sleeping in an uncovered, unprotected niche opposite the *Gare de l'Est*, or indeed the people sleeping on the vents. I will describe below how, in

this case, *habiter* was about constructing and ordering a physical shelter.[38] Others, such as Pascal, Lobo, Carl and Barut, spent more time searching for a solid shelter, *abri couvert* (covered shelter) or *abri fermé* (closed shelter). The parking lot at *La Défense* (the banking district in west Paris) was just such a covered shelter, a semi-public space which was temporarily and partly privatised while I will portray the secluded train cabins Carl and others used over months as a closed shelter, providing a higher level of intimacy and protection (Pichon 2002:20). In all three instances, moments of finding and making shelter were combined into a process of what can again be characterised as *habiter*: "l'action de s'approprier un ou des espaces et de les investir de sens en les rendant familiers avec des activités quotidiennes" ("the action of appropriating one or several spaces and of investing them with meaning by turning them into something familiar with everyday activities") (Lion 2015:961). Whether it was an open, covered or closed shelter, my informants went, over time, cyclically through the same steps of search, appropriation and conflict. I will progress in the following from the smallest possible shelter — one's clothes, also chosen slightly differently — towards the three different types of shelter described above, introducing Alex's makeshift niche, Pascal's parking lot and Carl's train, while always illuminating the above process.

Clothes

The stereotypical image we commonly hold of a person on the street is that of a man in run-down clothes, full of holes, wearing multiple layers of fabric, with a big bag in his hand and a sleeping bag on his back (e.g. LePoint 2015; Huffington Post 2014). I certainly saw people that fit this stereotype, but many of the people I observed and spoke with presented an alternative picture. They regarded the clothes they possessed as something valuable, something worthy of care, something with the functionality of protecting one's body — in short, as the smallest possible home and as an extension of the self (Dittmar 1992). Carl, for instance, who spent many months living in different outside venues all over Paris, had just such a relationship to his clothes:

> The fashion factor doesn't really play a role anymore. […] I don't have to have a
> certain style of jeans. In winter, the biggest factor is protection from the weather;

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[38] I use order here in Douglas' (1991) sense of the word, connected to her notion of home as an order place following Massey's (2005:112) instinct to look beyond order as connected to the liberal state

that it is really warm. [...] I get clothes from people on the street; people who come with food, religious organisations, private people. Then I go to the *Croix Rouge* and I buy from a second hand shop, *Guerissol*. They have many shops. [...] You get a pair of shoes for 5€, trousers for 3€. And they have good stuff. Things have to be intact. And a little bit, they correspond to my earlier style.

For Carl, it was the functionality — warmth, protection — that made clothing valuable, and only secondarily their style, which is so important for the average consumer. Usually, Carl wore a casual outfit based on jeans or track suit basics: loose fitting pants, a t-shirt and a cardigan, trainers and also always a warm jacket (often even in the summer). Most of the time he also carried his backpack with him, which contained important documents (his forms from *Freedom*, his health insurance, the identity papers he had left) and a spare t-shirt, underwear and socks. It was important for him to wash his clothes regularly, something he could do for free once a week or every other week at various institutions around the station (see Chapter 4). It was almost as important for him to change them as well, however. One way of going about that was to seek help from for instance the *Croix Rouge* which, through their *Vestiboutique*, supplied garments to people in need free of charge. More often, however, people found clothes, exchanged them or bought them from cheap shops themselves, as Carl described in the above vignette.

Clothing was rarely chosen at random in any of these instances. During a visit to the *Vestiboutique* with Markus — a German in his late forties who had recently lost his job and spent several weeks on the streets of Paris before moving back over the border — I learnt how important choice can be. Markus hadn't changed his clothes for several months and was desperate to find new ones. We went together to the shop on a Thursday in winter 2015. Led into the back room where the free clothes are stored — away from other pieces which are sold to the general public — Markus was presented with a rack full of items. They had everything he needed: jeans, pullovers, cardigans, big coats, shoes, belts, bags, fresh socks and underwear. Shoes were most important: "I run around all day; I really need comfortable shoes". One pair was too small, another was too big; Markus didn't want sneakers. He needed something warmer. After minutes of consideration, he finally went for the pair which was slightly too big. Similar issues arose with the coat: "this doesn't have a hood". A second one was too short; a third one had too

few pockets. He settled on a coat which had a hood and enough pockets but was slightly too big again. After trying four different pairs of jeans, Markus was getting upset: "they are all too tight and short. I need something else". It was very important for Markus to find trousers which did not only fit well enough to avoid having to wear a belt (an extra item of clothing to care for) but which were also long enough to keep the cold out effectively. Like Carl, Markus was concerned about the functionality of his clothes: the comfort of his shoes, the warmth his coat would be able to provide. Given the chance in the *Vestiboutique*, he tried to maximise these parameters along the lines of functionality to make the 'smallest home' as helpful as possible in situations where sleeping on the street meant that his coat would indeed be the outermost protection against the cold.

Pascal's idea of clothing went even further at times. He was not only concerned about functionality but similarly about looks:

> In the beginning I thought about clothes. You had to be dressed decently. When I started sleeping in the train [see below], I lost this sense for a while. […] Clothes become irrelevant in some way, but somehow, today, clothing — yes, it is not so important — but it has to look decent. You never know who you are going to meet on the street. […] The colours have to fit. Even though I am homeless, it has to fit. Don't let yourself loose so much. […] I also have really nice clothes. Like a good leather jacket, a great coat — you couldn't wear that as an *SDF*. You know why I bought these clothes, really nice? When I am off the street, I am saving them for then. I just bought good stuff which I want to wear some time soon. When I visit my family. I don't want to look like an *SDF.*

Pascal saw clothes in the context of group belonging; if he looked decent then people would not think he was on the street (see Chapter 2). Mirroring his reluctance to beg at first, he also wanted to avoid shame through his choice of clothes. The motive of 'normality', which already played a role for Pascal when talking about his hopes in more general terms (see Chapter 1), once again returns here. He was concerned about how other people — people who are not homeless — saw him and particularly how they categorised him. It was important to him that he passed as a 'normal person', as one of 'them' (the "not homeless"), not only to procure gifts more easily but also as a matter of

self-worth.[39] Pascal's thoughts went even further; he connected his choice of clothes directly to his hope for returning to Germany, and to his family. In fact, he was saving some clothes — in a separate bag stored at *Freedom* — which he would only take out once he made it off the street. He connected his daily home-making practices, his daily hopes, to the long term goal of leaving the street and rough sleeping behind.

Against the common saying, 'beggars cannot be choosers', in certain situations, in fact, the act of choosing clothing can be categorised as part of home- and shelter-making activities. Both when targeting aspects of functionality that are clearly connected to the creation of a more secure, warm, safe space, and also when thinking about marking membership to a group, clothing is indexical of home-making. Focusing on the first aspect, clothing as the first layer of protection is important and demands consideration. For Markus — and for others such as Carl and Pascal — clothes were not randomly selected. As with any consumer in a shop, they took the opportunity to maximise utility and looked for the possibility to choose.

In this sense, but also in the sense of being a materialisation of Pascal's hopes for the future, clothes can be understood as an extension of the self (Dittmar 1992). As Dittmar argues, psychological research indicates that there is a close link between "possessions and who somebody is" (ibid.:43). William James (1981:279f) goes as far as to refer directly to clothes when claiming that "a man's Self is the sum total of what he can call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house". They are particularly important for what Dittmar (1992:47) calls the evaluative aspects of the self — self-esteem and well-being — aspects which also play an important role as a goal of *habiter.* Clothes on the one hand constituted the first shell of protection and functionality for my informants (Markus, Carl), but on the other hand acted as part of the extended, inhabiting self.

Clothes were important anchors of rootedness for my informants, especially in what Declerck (2003) describes as a constant struggle and *mouvement perpétuel* (perpetual movement) for homeless people in France and in the absence of a more elaborate

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[39] Pascal's background made this less surprising, as he had only arrived on the street a few months prior, and was very young (23) and hence likely to leave the street of Paris behind quickly. At the time of writing, he is in fact already at a temporary shelter and undertaking a job training course.

material basis (Miller 2001). However, even in the most deprived setting, clothes were only one dimension of my informants' shelters. I will now turn to three different types of shelters — open, covered and closed — to think through my informants' processes of *habiter* (inhabiting).

1 Abri ouvert: Alex's shelter opposite the Gare de l'Est

While for Pascal, Carl, Lobo and Barut, as I will describe, the choice of a suitable place for a shelter was the most important part of the shelter-making work, Alex had a different approach. For him, shelter-building was more important than the shelter-finding. He had picked a more or less random spot just opposite the eastern exit of the *Gare de l'Est* to spend his nights and days during the time he was not at the homeless day centre (see Chapter 4). The building, owned by the *SNCF*, was nicely equipped with cosy niches in between massive stone pillars all along its sides. He was on the eastern side, protected by a small roof five stories up above him. Alex's corner — only one of about three niches which were inhabited at any one time — was the one closest to the exit of the station. Alex was very careful about the orderliness of his sleeping place. When I approached him there for the first time in early 2015, I immediately noticed how neatly ordered the niche in the building was. The pieces of cardboard serving as floor coverings were ripped so that they fitted perfectly into the two square meters of space between the two stone walls. Two layers of cardboard separated Alex from the cold stone underneath him; another one formed the wall behind him. The whole construction looked like a custom-made built-in wardrobe. He sat on the beige board as he showed me the rest of his *trottoir-salon* (Zeneidi-Henry 2002:207). During the day, his belongings were carefully put away in a backpack and a plastic bag. Whenever he left the niche, he took these two bags with him. He owned a second set of clothes — trousers, a t-shirt, a pullover, underwear and socks — to change into. His dirty laundry was stored in the backpack wrapped in a plastic bag, separate from the other things. His sleeping bag was always attached to the backpack when he left, as Alex considered it his most important possession.

5: Alex's cardboard home, east of Gare de l'Est*, September 2016.*

Alex's construction of a shelter fits well into Lion's (2014:961) conceptualisation of *habiter*: he has chosen a niche, decorated it with cardboard and other belongings and developed spatial habits, such as storing away and separating off certain categories of thing (important / less important, clean / dirty) and the closing off of his space. In fact, when we left the space, Alex was very careful to 'lock it' behind him. He unfolded a third layer of cardboard which he wrapped around the two main layers and a bag with food he left behind in a rectangular shape. As I looked back, his little niche was perfectly protected against the weather. No rubbish or dirt made it overly suspicious. He was aware of the fact that the security guards of the station opposite didn't like rubbish lying around; instead, he chose to leave behind what looked like a neatly sealed cardboard

box whenever he left.

For Alex, the construction of a home out of cardboard, his sleeping bag and some other personal belongings was an exercise of ordering (Douglas 1991). He had chosen a small, for him manageable corner to bring it under control, to keep it tidy. Home-as-process in the everyday was linked to structuralizing routines in Alex's life, both in terms of the physical structures around him (starting with the cardboard and how it had to be folded and ending with how he separated different clean and dirty laundry) and his routine more generally. The space as such — where it was and how well it was covered — was secondary for Alex; the possibility of order, itself dependent on the small size of it among other things, was primary. For Alex, *habiter* consisted of practices of ordering in the present.

Two important aspects of *habiter* were more complicated or in fact not desired in Alex's cardboard home: what Lion (2014:697) describes as *se cacher* (to hide), and cohabitation (ibid.:973) or the living together with others. Alex was very exposed to any passer-by, which, particularly during the night, could potentially lead to threats to his personal security. He was also rather solitary in his niche and didn't engage with any of the other people who were present at the *Gare de l'Est*.[40] At least in part, this lack of togetherness and security (through hiding) were a function of the openness of his shelter but they also contributed to Alex's success in staying at the place for a long period (more than a year): he was himself responsible for managing his behaviour so that conflicts with the police could be avoided; no one else was able to intrude in his shelter and no internal hierarchy led to conflicts as is often the reason for the breakdown of a shelter (as I will describe below). By taking the risk of being alone and without a proper roof (making his shelter less attractive), Alex was able to cut the process of *habiter* and make it at least temporarily less cyclical. In the following sections, I will introduce two different, more covered types of shelter, which will lead us further into the cyclical character of the shelter-making and illuminate the repetitiveness of it.

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[40] In fact, he spent the most part of his day — between 930am and 12pm and 2pm and 5pm — at *Freedom*, something I will come to describe in more detail in the following chapter. Part of the explanation for his particular behaviour might have to do with what the social workers at *Freedom* described as his 'mental health' issues, something which was not investigated or questioned further.

2 Abri couvert: Pascal's and Barut's parking lot

Above I described how, for instance, the hot air vents at the *Gare du Nord* served the very important function of providing warmth during the winter. Such factors — in addition to easy accessibility, security and protection, and calmness — were key when choosing a location for the night. When choosing well, only the minimum of actual construction work for a shelter had to be engaged in; if a location already provided protection against weather and people, it was more a question of making it comfortable. In short: the better the choice, the less work necessary in preparing the space. Unlike Alex, for whom location was secondary, Carl had very clear criteria to make this initial choice of where to establish his shelter:

> Me: How do you find places to sleep?
>
> Carl: I do that systematically. The most important thing is the protection from weather: a roof, a wall, an entrance. The second is not too much human traffic or that there aren't any people any more after a certain time. The third factor is the cleanliness. […] And access also plays a role. That the place is within reach at any one point during the day.

The most important category on which Carl's choice of sleeping location was based was functionality, just as with his clothing. The shelter had to protect against the weather. The place should also be quiet and clean and easy to reach. While Carl was perhaps the most systematic in the way he took these decisions, I observed similar choices in other circumstances: the Polish (see Chapter 2) had chosen the location for their tent because of its proximity to the *Monoprix* supermarket and its relative calmness at night; Mama and Mark stayed around the train station as they thought it was the most secure, due to both the constant presence of the public and security forces; François preferred the playground close to the church *Saint-Vincent de Paul*, due to its quietness and the handy garden shed roof to hide under. Pascal and Barut went further away than all of the above. They slept in a parking lot at *La Défense* for a long period in 2015 and 2016, but they came to this location through a similar process of shelter finding making.

   The parking garage under the big supermarket in *La Défense* was a perfect compromise for both Pascal and Barut, who slept there first independently from each other and eventually together with others on the third level down. While only about 20 minutes on

the *RER* from the *Gare du Nord*, the location was already far enough away not to be totally swamped by other homeless people or passers-by. The first two floors of the parking lot were busy all day with cars driving in and out, full of people and their shopping. When the sun went down, the traffic of people and cars abated. The third level stayed dark the whole day, but, nevertheless, at night life started to find its way down there. I arrived with Pascal one evening in February 2016 at around 9pm, much earlier than he would usually come 'home', as he called it. We came via the metro, and had to walk through about 500m of the *La Défense* area above ground. We followed the flow of office workers towards the shopping mall. Pascal led the way into the centre, where we had to pass a security guard to take the elevator down the first two levels into the parking. The third floor elevator didn't work anymore, and we took the stairs. I saw the first couple of empty bottles. It seemed as if we were entering a different world; the lights already appeared to be more dim on this last set of steps:

> The first time I came down here, it wasn't so dark. I wouldn't have come down and I definitely wouldn't have slept here. [...] Now, I know my way around. It's easy but it's still a little bit scary. You see, there are all these people here all the time and you don't know what they are up to. [...] And not too many people sleep here.

Pascal explained his feelings about the space to me as we turned left at the bottom of the stairs through a heavy door onto the parking deck. While the space was easy to reach with the metro and access was negotiable (the security guards rarely checked people entering the parking), Pascal was at first worried about the number of strangers who spent time on the third floor. Teenagers would come down here in groups to drink, make out or smoke marijuana. Being on his own a lot of the time or only with Lobo, his Polish friend, the presence of the groups appeared threatening at first. Only later at night when the youths slowly disappeared, and when the two found a more secluded spot in a farther away corner of the third floor, did he start to feel more secure.

When we came down to the parking lot in 2016, only the emergency lighting was on. I could already see the black outlines of a shopping cart as we turned around the first and then a second corner, where the light from the central area didn't reach anymore. At the end of the wide parking space, a sleeping bag was put on top of several layers of

cardboard. A piece of garment hung from a rogue wire in the ceiling ("To dry from the bad weather yesterday"). Pascal had chosen a kind of elevated pavement about fifteen centimetres from street level for further protection against animals, such as rats. The abandoned shopping cart served as a place to store stuff: some pieces of clothing, more cardboard, some food cans.

> This is where I sleep every night. This is my sleeping bag. Lobo sleeps next to me most of the time. I think it is safe down here and it is warm and comfortable and dry. Nobody disturbs us here either. Nobody ever really comes down here during the night.

Lobo was a source of safety in the parking lot for Pascal. Not only did the two share a daily routine of going to *Freedom* together (see Chapter 4), they also shared the shelter together in the sense which Lion (2014) describes as cohabitation. Being together with Lobo produced a feeling of security — both would stand up for each other if anything happened (with, for instance, the youths). Just like the decoration — with furniture and material objects — which only plays a minor role for most of my informants or the habits they developed together (*habitude* = habit has the same root as *habiter* = inhabit), living together with somebody, producing a form of sociality, an 'us', can be central to turn a mere *abri* (shelter) into a *habitation* (abode, dwelling), a "significant space, which is emotionally charged for the inhabitants" (ibid.:697).

3 Abri fermé: Carl, the train man

"They call me the train man — even though I don't even sleep there anymore. But I found it", Carl explained to me, with pride. With the train in the south of Paris, Carl had found a yet more elaborate space than even the car park described above, where the beds were literally ready-made to jump into once you figured out a way to enter. He took me to see the train he was talking about, which stood very close to the metro stop *Créteil.* It was an old inter-city train waiting to be moved to where it would eventually be recycled. It had been down there for several weeks; before that, a similar train was parked on the tracks, just a couple of hundred metres away from the overground metro tracks. "This used to be my job [as part of the German special forces in the army] — intelligence, finding things — and finding this train was easy. I just used Google maps, and a day later I started sleeping here". About nine months ago, Carl had stopped living

on the border of a lake not too far away from *Créteil* (which he found was too exposed and easy to access) and was searching for a new place. Sitting in the library of the *Centre Pompidou*, he was browsing Google maps. His attention was caught by what looked like a big train graveyard:

> There was the metro stop and right next to it there were another perhaps 20 tracks. Half of them had trains on them. This was perfect — I thought it would be easy to just break into one of them and sleep there.

That is what Carl eventually did. In fact, he figured out quickly that parts of the space were merely used as an overnight parking slot for *RER*, trains as well as other trains which came freshly out of the washing area. It wasn't safe to sleep in these trains, as they were moved often. The tracks furthest away from the metro stop, however, housed trains which weren't used for intervals of up to several months. Luckily, it was also these trains which had the most comfortable seats which easily turned into wide beds. The fact that the trains were easy to reach (less than 30 minutes from the *Gare du Nord*) and were available for stable intervals of time, turned them into perfect mid-term shelters for people like Carl.

  When he showed me around in early 2016, we entered the first train after having crossed the tracks, trying to avoid the security. A strong smell hit me. "Oh no, they must have been using this as a toilet", Carl explained and pointed at two big piles of what appeared to be human excrement. As we found our way through the train and into the compartments, signs of inhabitation abounded.

6: Left: Inter-city train with glass, flip flops and blanket, Créteil, February 2016.

7: Right: Local train with human excrement and drug paraphernalia, Créteil, February 2016.

Most compartments in this part of the train showed signs of having been lived in recently. Leftover food, mouldy patches of liquid on the seats, clothes, ripped out curtains-turned-blankets, excrement, syringes and needles, methadone ampules, bottles everywhere. The different compartments in the train — one wagon consisted of about 10 of them — were privatised by individuals. Carl explained to me that usually, one or two people would sleep together in a compartment and mark their space — consciously and unconsciously. Clothes were left behind during the day, plates and bottles were kept on the remaining 'bed'. Compartments were turned into personal rooms, all too visible through the big window towards the gangway. They constituted what Pichon (2002:20) calls *abri fermé*, usually a squat or hut which provides an intimate and closed space, far enough away from any other inhabitations and quasi-private. They were the closest spaces to private rooms available on the street — the compartments were just about the size of a small double bed and provided enough space for one's belongings — and allowed for moments of isolation and relaxation outside of the usual public spaces, such as the *Gare*. A habitat in this sense is defined as "*un espace proper dans lequel ils peuvent s'isoler* [...] *se cacher, de se soustraire à la publicité, possiblité tout à fait essentielle à être humain* [a proper place in which they were able to isolate themselves [...] hide, to

exclude themselves from the public, the absolutely essential possibility of being human]"(Lion 2014:697). The moment of being alone and secure, of being outside of the public realm was rarely a possibility for my informants, and the train provided a context in which this happened.

In fact, more and more people became attracted by the prospect of the isolated comfort of the trains, so that issues with both informal rules of conduct (where to go to the toilet, which possessions to respect) and external security forces arose. These security conflicts will be the focus of the last section of this chapter, in which I will describe the eventual breaking down of shelters and the renewal of the cycle of finding and making homes (*habiter*).

Violence and rules of conduct — the last stage in the process
When more people started to arrive, conflicts would arise with the official security forces. As the trains were owned by the *SNCF* and *RATP*, and were at times only waiting to be cleaned or recycled (another kind of non-placed temporarily turned into a place), security forces patrolled the ground regularly. Particularly during the winter months, their attitude was at first lenient. They seemed to accept that people had temporarily claimed the trains as a place to sleep and left them to themselves during the night. Carl explained:

> After midnight, the security guy does his tours. He knows that there are people.
> […] You shouldn't have lights on then. If he finds you, he can throw you out. The
> security came every time at 8am. He was friendly to us but with the others, he
> was such an asshole, to the Polish people. There was a lot of garbage around after
> a lot of Romanians arrived; there were many more people, much more noise. You
> never know when they['ll?] come and kick you out. Perhaps after four months,
> you don't know what is happening when they — Bam! — come at 4am and throw
> you out. That's not easy.

With the mornings, the power of the security forces hit particularly hard. "They come in with the dogs and throw us out. They are so scary. Seven o'clock also on the Saturday. 4am during the week". The security forces imposed a certain order onto the inhabitants of the train, particularly in cases where rules of conduct — coming late and leaving

early, keeping the train clean — were not being met. In the same way as the police and the *SNCF* security patrolled the hot air vents, official *RATP* guards and their dogs made sure the official non-places of the trains were kept in order and that people were moved around.

   As in other contexts on the street (Rowe and Wolch 1990; Bourgois 2002; Whyte 1943), violence within the group was another means to make sure that certain rules of habitation were respected. Conflicts arose because people were not willing to accept an informal code of conduct. Carl explained to me how he controlled his wagon of the train and would not let people enter the — theoretically open — grounds:

> When we first arrived, we made sure that our part [of the train] was always locked [using a simple screwdriver]. Usually, that was all fine. There were conflicts — one had to be dealt with with a stick. With a Romanian. He wanted into our train.

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Similar complications prevented the living together in *La Défense.* Pascal told me, in spring 2016, how Marc and some other Finnish guys had recently not been respecting him or the rules for some time. While he felt ill due to a stomach problem, the others were not respecting his personal space while sharing the parking lot corner at *La Défense*: "They were taking drugs and stuff in front of me. And they wouldn't let me alone and I was really in pain". There were, as he put it, certain *Regeln des Zusammenlebens* (rules of living together), which the Finnish didn't respect. Anger built up over time and ultimately culminated in a crisis of violence, which would often lead to a catharsis: "Marc really is an asshole. He deserves it". A secondary justification — related to another rule of conduct — had to do with Marc's income:

> He has so much money. He doesn't need to be on the street. He doesn't work. He doesn't earn his money. He just goes to the cash machine and takes it from his Finnish bank account. He pays a 5€ fee and he doesn't care. He buys drugs for everyone and chocolate and always has money. […] And he doesn't share. If we are down at the parking and I don't have water and ask him he would tell me: yes,

you can have some, but you have to buy me a new bottle tomorrow. Isn't that horrible? I would give people stuff for free. It's also like that with the drugs. If you get Methadone from him you have to pay him back more. He is like that. He is not fair. He really talks at you as if he was someone better. I don't like that.

Not only is there a certain jealousy in Pascal's speech, but also the explicit suggestions that sharing was part of the cohabitation. More than that, Pascal implies a hierarchy between himself, someone who doesn't use drugs, and people like Marc — as he explained to me on another occasion:

The Narcos [people consuming hard drugs, such as heroin] are the worst. I don't want to see them. I don't like hanging out with them at all. I am doing my own thing. Not spending any time at the Leader Price anymore. I sleep alone or perhaps with Barut. But with the others, it doesn't work. Already with Barut, I can't share a meal from the same plate as him. You have blood all over your hands, you inject, you rub it everywhere, boah!

Pascal groups the people on the street according to the severity of their addiction and the danger they potentially pose to his own wellbeing. 'Narcos' such as Barut were mostly consumed by their addiction (to crack, heroin substitutes and morphines in particular). 'Alcoholics', such as the group of Punjabis around Bouti or the group of Polish at *Place Franz Liszt*, were less active, less aggressive but also similarly taken up by their thoughts about procuring enough alcohol. He who did neither inject nor drink alcohol, regularly saw himself as above these two groups. Behaviour of that kind — such as with Barut — makes him aggressive at times, particularly when certain rules (not leaving paraphernalia around, not stealing from one another) were broken.

Garnier-Muller (2000:101) found a similar idea of grouping around substance-abuse problems in her study of French homeless people. In her case, the SDF were distinct from both sex workers and *toxicomanes* (which I translate as: people with drug addictions):

Si res populations se connaissent, les rapports interinvidiuels sent relativement distants [...] Les SDF ordinaires, et les toxicomanes n'investissent pas de la meme

marnière l'espace, ils n'établissent pas les memes relations avec l'environment. [If the groups know each other, the relations between individuals are relatively distant [...] The ordinary homeless people and the *toxicomanes* have a different way of claiming and maintaining space; they don't have the same relationship to their environment.]

While I will further explore the specificities which accompany addiction to both alcohol and hard drugs in Chapter 5, these — at least from Pascal's side — perceived classifications were having a direct impact on the processes of shelter making. *Habiter* was not always a lonely and removed process of hermitic shelter building as in the case of Alex. It was often embedded in a sociality which, first of all, improved the shelter-making by adding security, but also introduced certain rules of conduct into the process. Good places often attracted more people, which would more easily lead to conflicts with the security forces. In cases where these informal rules were not respected, violence broke out either internally or with external parties, eventually pushing the inhabitants out of the appropriated place. Over time, this often led to breakdowns in relationships and to conflicts, and to a total breakdown of the cohabitation, making it necessary to start the process of *habiter* from scratch at a different site.

Conclusion

For my rough-sleeping informants, the process of shelter-making, or what I have come to call *habiter*, was a multi-faceted process of daily home-making. It involved, in the abstract, the finding of a suitable non-place and the transformation of it into a habitable place — at least temporarily. As I describe above, it could include the building of cardboard open shelters (Alex, hot air vents), but also the more sophisticated habituation of intimate practices in parking lots (Pascal, Lobo, Barut) or trains (Carl). This process of *habiter* can be characterised as a kind of productive, materially engaged work, in contrast to the consumption-driven labour of begging in Chapter 2 (Arendt 1998). While informal rules of conduct helped, especially in case of cohabitation — sharing the shelter — both conflicts with external security forces (police, *SNCF* and *RATP*) and within the group were at times unavoidable, as more and more people were attracted to the place. These conflicts would often lead to a breakdown of the shelter and restart the cyclical process of finding and transforming a non-place into a liveable place.

While rough sleeping can be seen as a hopeless giving-in, I want to describe it as part of keeping up the hope while waiting, as part of keeping afloat and struggling along (Desjarlais 1994). While constantly moving around, perpetually re-inhabiting new spaces, shelter-making was in itself a stabilising force, beginning with the protecting shell of clothing. As I described, shelter-making was rarely very stable, but was rather based on a cyclical process of shelter-finding, shelter-making (ordering, leaving traces, living in it, what I have been calling *habiter*), conflicts, the break-down of the shelter, and a re-start of the process. In the next chapter, I will focus on how activities which often happen in parallel in the institutional context of homeless day centres drive what is called the *projet de vie* (imagining a possible future home, and how to get there step by step). In fact, most of my informants were at least in parts dependent on this kind of institutional support in order to for instance apply for temporary housing.

Chapter 4: Between relationships and the *projet de vie* – social work at *Freedom* through an exchange lens

And for those who appear to drift through the streets or sit around idly talking, playing draughts or drinking, one hesitates to speak of killing time, of aimlessness or hopelessness, since in the enjoyment of being-with-others a situation of unemployment and lack of opportunities is transformed from futility to fulfilment

(Jackson 2005:115)

"Why do you come here?", I frequently asked people in the day centre run by the Catholic organisation *Freedom*, only about a five minute walk from the *Gare du Nord*, where I volunteered for more than a year and a half. Answers differed widely: it is warm inside; they have free coffee; I like playing chess; I use the toilets for my daily shit; my friends are here; I have been coming for years; they help me with my accommodation; I like the *assistants sociaux*; I don't want to queue in the hospital so I visit the nurse here; they give me a razor for free; I just want to sit down; they are my family.

This chapter will deal with the role of an institution in the life of the people whose dreams, labour of begging and work of shelter making I have so far presented as home-making activities. I will focus on the role of one day centre run by *Freedom* which was frequented by many of my informants. I observed two main functions of this centre in relation to home: one more immediate, and one directed more at thinking about and establishing a future. The ESI was what Bowpitt et al (2014) call a 'place of sanctuary' and, as such, of home. It encompassed both emotional and material refuge, where certain immediate needs for warmth, hygiene, playfulness and togetherness were fulfilled. Beyond refuge, the second aim at *Freedom* was to work out the life project — *le projet de vie* — of the people visiting: what are your goals for the coming year? Where do you want to be and how can you get there? The *assistants sociaux* in the team around the manager Pauline and her supervisor Ina helped their *personnes acqueillies* (visitors, lit.: received people) to formulate desires and hopes. They helped them to face the future — providing a rupture from the street showing, and them a way out of unproductive boredom and street problems on an immediate basis. Beyond that, I will describe the

various activities — *tournées rues* (street tours), the general work at the day centre (called ESI, or *Espace Solidarité Insertion* [Space for solidarity and insertion]) and the 1-to-1 social case work encounters in the 'boxes' — and how they contribute to thinking about the future and constructing a present between responsibility and care (Johnsen, Cloke, and May 2005; Midgley 2016). Differentiating between what I perceived to be four of the core activities at *Freedom,* I use an exchange lens as an analytic: the street tours resembled the free but unstable gift (Belk 1996; J Laidlaw 2002); in the *Salle,* the warmth, the coffee and the playing of boardgames was shared quasi-unconditionally and 'silent' while using the showers was more conditional and had to be explicitly demanded (Widlok 2013);[41] lastly, the 1-to-1 social work encounters followed a much clearer logic of reciprocal gift giving where the demonstrated willingness to engage and change was exchanged for social work (Mauss 2001; Sahlins 2004; Bourdieu 1977). I use this theoretical lens of exchange to describe what other scholars call conditionality (Dobson 2011; Johnsen, Fitzpatrick, and Watts 2014; Johnsen, Cloke, and May 2005) and responsibilisation (Whiteford 2010) in social work. In this way, I will present an alternative view on social work with homeless people arising from my fieldwork avoiding the immediately moralised discourse of neoliberalism. Let me introduce *Freedom* in general terms first, however, before leading through the different types of activities described through different lenses of exchange.

Freedom — a matter of relationship-building

The organisation *Freedom* started in 1981 as a project by a single priest in the North of Paris.[42] Based on the belief that people on the street are not only suffering from an economic and psychological injustice but also from a spiritual one, the organisation was first and foremost based on the principle of the *rencontre* (encounter) and the *lien* (relationship):

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[41] Belk (2010:715) calls this open sharing in his literature review of the concept, or the idea of a 'commons to be shared by all' following Gudeman (2001).

[42] *Freedom* was, indeed, founded on Catholic principles — the *mains nues* ('empty hands', described below) was only one of them — and certain activities also lead directly to the church (to celebrate an inclusive mess open to any confession), but altogether *Freedom* was explicitly a) not missionary b) not transporting certain religious values adhering to the French principles of *laïcité* (separation of state and church). I was also not able to conduct interviews with the highest management of the organisation which might have produced a more religious agenda. During my interviews with staff, religious values were not in the foreground. I will hence not further dwell on the religious background of the organisation beyond the direct influence it had on my informants' lives and the everyday running of the day centre.

> *Freedom* has as vocation to go towards getting to know the people on the street, particularly the ones who are homeless and sex workers with the intention of establishing a relationship. Starting from there, we can accompany people in a more global way through the work of our volunteers and employees [...] Based on our experience since 1981, we believe that the success of our efforts depends on the capacity of the people to meet the other person in his or her profound suffering and to accompany him or her towards a path towards reconciliation. (*Freedom* Brochure, 2012: 4; my own translation)

This statement, taken from a brochure published by *Freedom* in 2012 entitled '*Principes et Fondements*' (Principles and Foundations) contains the core of the approach I observed over 15 months as a volunteer in various capacities: be it on a *tournée rues* (street outreach tours) or at the day centre, the work of staff is to go openly towards people on the street, listen and build relationships, to accompany them and build a network around them. Initial encounters happen with *mains nues* (empty hands) — and are not focused on offering material help. The starting point is the accompanying relationship onto which a parkour of support, reconciliation and housing can be built.

Pauline, the manager of the ESI, made this focus on relationships clear to me in an interview: "la relation, se connaître, prendre le temps, la graduité, [...] la fidelité" [the relationship, to know each other, taking the time, gratuitousness, [...] faithfulness] are the main values in her work. "We want to be there for the discussion with the people [...] share time" and ultimately become "a place to rest [...] where the people feel secure [...] a place of life [...] where they have their network of friends." From the relationship built on time and safety and trust, everything else can follow: a network of friends and support, positive ruptures from the street, ultimately a place in life. As I experienced it, the first aim at the ESI was to give people a space and time to settle down and feel into themselves, a place where not to worry in the present, not to be bored — what Bowpitt et al (2014:1258) call a place of refuge and Johnsen et al. (2005a) a space of care. *Freedom* in this sense resembled Scherz's (2014) *Mercy House*, the home for orphans and disabled children in Uganda she studied. In her investigation of forms of what is called sustainable development in Uganda, Scherz describes the Catholic orphans' home as a care came in direct forms — shelter and food provision for instance — but also by "sitting close to someone, listening and sharing food" (77). The focus was on

relationship-building as well as distributing material provisions directly to the people in need, in contrast to the workshop and capacity building culture sustainable that development lives off. Unlike in Scherz's study, however, at *Freedom* the Catholic economy of salvation that the *Mercy House* staff seem to depend on was not made explicit. While there was a common culture likely inspired by Catholic values — the *mains nues*, to begin with — it was not traced back to that culture in the everyday context of care provision. The second step, the second aim at *Freedom* was then to start thinking about what was to come, about one's *projet de vie* (life project), about one's hope and future idea of home. I will in the following map the different logics of exchange — from free and unbinding gifts, to silent and explicit demand sharing, to reciprocal and relational gift exchange — in order to further analyse this process and describe how different types of exchange help to further *Freedom*'s focus on relationships.

   Freedom has operations all over Paris — six day centres, several dozen regular street tours, almost 50 full time members of staff as well as over 250 volunteers (Annual Report 2015) — transmitting their ideas widely. In order to make understandable the specific goal of social work provided by *Freedom*, I want to start with a description of how, particularly during the *tournées rue*s — which *Freedom* began running in the early 1980s — these different principles come to the fore, before moving on to the ethnography of the ESI as a 'sanctuary' between care, refuge and change as analysed through the lens of different logics of exchange. As I will argue, the street tour can be seen as most closely resembling a perfect or free gift (at least from the perspective of the giver), brought to the homeless person directly by the volunteer (Carrier 1994; Belk 1996). This seemingly free gift was not necessarily seen as such by the homeless recipient, however, and brought about conflicts.

Street tours through the 9th — reaching out with empty hands
Street tours at *Freedom* — what are called the *tournées rues* or *maraudes* — always happened in *binome* (pairs) (Cefaï 2015); I met my partner Nina for the first time on a cold autumn day in 2015. We were given the task of covering a large area in the 9th *arrondissement*, south of the *Gare du Nord*. The route was pre-determined: we would follow *Rue d'Hauteville* down to the *Grand Boulevards*, occasionally considering the smaller side streets, and find our way back to the starting point at *Place Franz Liszt* in a big circle. This would take about two hours, we were told. Last year, Nina had already

done a very similar tour with a different partner so she knew some of the people on the way. On average, they had encountered between 10 and 15 people during the two hours of the tour. We were reminded on our first meeting by Martin who coordinated the outreach activities for *Freedom* to stick to the principles of the *mains nues*:

> These tours are time that you give for free. We are not necessarily searching for a solution during that time, perhaps not even for anything tangible. It is about having *fidelité* [trust, faithfulness] and from there something is created but it is not always something we can see immediately.

To illustrate his point, Martin told us about a woman he had been seeing for years on the street but never really got close enough to convince her to come to the day centre:

> But now she is in hospital and that only because of us. She didn't want to go to the hospital without us. She knows my name and she was happy to go with me. She is really in a bad state but it might get better. It turned out that she actually has a bank account and we applied for a new card and we got some money out and bought some stuff for her. See, here we reached this point in time where the work — 10 minutes every week — pays out. Completely surprisingly.

We were supposed to be confident about the eventual success of what we did. The street tour was the first point of contact, the first moment of establishing relationships which could eventually lead to positive outcomes for the people. Sometimes hard to understand for the people on the street as we will see, it was not about offering immediate help in material form but to create bonds of trust, at times leading people to the ESI.

<p style="text-align:center">*　　　　*　　　　*</p>

I knew the people at Place Franz Liszt already. When Nina and I first started, the group of Polish people (see Chapter 3) occupied the space in front of the *Monop* as well as the park benches in the little round-about. We approached Darius, Vital, Kola and Carl — who was still with the group at that time — and shook hands. I couldn't conceal a broad grin: I knew how the men would react to the young and smiley Nina, how they would

want to talk to her and make her laugh. Nina was received with open hands, indeed. The men loved talking to her, bragging about how long they had already been on the street. It was refreshing for them to see a new face, particularly a young female one. They were interested in hearing about her. Everyone was curious why she was doing this with me: "Are you two dating?". We laughed a lot together — the atmosphere was warm.

On that first Wednesday evening, we met a further seven people, none of whom I had seen before. It was interesting — in a way that very much resembled my own initial approach to the field — to walk up to a person sitting on the pavement and introduce yourself. It was especially so because we didn't have anything to give away, we came with empty hands. Ali was the most memorable person we met on the tours over the months. He was originally from Mongolia, but had spent years in Russia and Germany to study. I spoke German to him but we ultimately settled on English among the three of us. He was very receptive:

> I have been on the street here for years. I moved around a lot but now I have stayed at this spot for a while. People know me and give me things. There is this lady who comes almost every day and brings a little candle from the church. I talk to her. She is nice.

Nina remembered him from the year before when he was already using the exact same spot: "You were selling Christmas hats here last year, right?". Ali nodded happily: "Yes, yes. One time last year in December I was. Someone gave me these hats and then I sold them". A little candle stood right next to the hot air vent which he sat on — something we would see again and again during the weeks we visited Ali. If the woman didn't come, he would get it from the church nearby. It reminded him of God, he explained: "God will help me, I believe in that. God will help me find my way".

We talked about *Freedom* and what we were doing on the street and he seemed to understand: "We are not here to give anything away for now. We come to talk to you and see whether you need anything. We can help you find a place to eat and we would very much like you to come to the ESI further up in the 10th *arrondissement*. You would be very welcome there. But today, we are just here to talk and listen to you". Ali was open to us over the coming weeks; he smiled when he saw us coming and enjoyed talking to

us in different languages. "I spent time in Germany. For studies. A long time ago. That's where I learnt to speak German". Ali opened up and told us about his family situation; he missed his brothers and sisters who from what he knows are distributed all over the world, in the UK and Pakistan. They didn't know how badly he was off and that he slept on the street, but he was in touch with his sister who he wanted to visit some time soon. Nina and I both thought that our regular visits were working very well for Ali: he was getting more confident and trustful with us; the relationship developed as he told us about his problems as well as his desires and wishes. He understood that we came to value him in his own right, as a person, not defined as somebody in need of help, but as Ali, a Mongolian man with a story and a life in front of him.

*   *   *

Ali was not always like this; he had bad days and at times became very aggressive towards us. When the winter was coming to an end in late February 2016, he refused to speak to us on two subsequent occasions.

> You don't bring anything. You only come and ask questions. You don't have anything for me. Why would I want to speak to you? You don't help me. I don't want to tell my life story all the time. I need help. It is cold. I don't have anything to eat. At least give me something to eat.

The first time, Nina and I went to buy a little candle for him, the kind we knew he liked. He was very happy afterwards, and almost embarrassed how he had reacted just before: "I am sorry. I really appreciate that you come. I like you. I am really sorry". The following time, we didn't know what to do. We proposed — as weeks before — to show him the way to the *Restaurant du Coeur* (soup kitchen) but he wasn't interested in yet another institution he had to go to. He wanted food, right there and then. Only when he started grabbing Nina's arm did we leave. Our quiet and patient explanations and attempts had come to an end — without success. We were both baffled.

The situation above with Ali is only one example where the value of the empty hands and of the 'relationship first' caused conflicts — both verbal and physical ones. On the same street tour in February, Nina and I encountered similar issues with the remaining

parts of the group of Polish people Carl had stayed with (see Chapter 2) as well as with Joseph, a middle-aged, psychotic alcoholic we saw regularly on *Rue Lafayette*. Joseph screamed at us at times and out rightly refused to talk or even look at us when he saw us approaching. Usually, he sat in the middle of the pavement on another hot air vent right next to a restaurant in between *Poisonnière* and *Le Cadet*. He was heavily intoxicated every time we saw him, a bottle of cheap *rosé* next to his backpack. Of course, the alcohol as well as his supposed mental health problems had an effect on how he reacted. Surely, the winter makes you more nervous about housing and food. Nina and I also talked about how having all these different organisations come and talk to you regularly, always asking the same questions, can make you upset and frustrated.

But, in fact, I saw the above reactions as signs of an ambiguity at the core of *Freedom*. Why do you come with empty hands (*mains nues*), we were asked by Ali? It almost sounded like an accusation. Was he perhaps right to expect help, physical help as this was the one he most needed? Ali did not see the free gift the volunteers were offering as a gift at all; in fact it was very much conditional in his eyes. This view linked directly to *Freedom's* project, which seemed to have two pillars as Nina's explained to me:

> I think we are here to look after the person, not after a case. We focus on the human component of the problem of homelessness. And then, we also want to educate the people a little bit. There are a lot of offers around — for food, day centres, showers — and I think we need to make clear to people that they need to move if they want to be helped.

This last point was not only obvious in Ali's case but also with a Romanian family towards the end of our tour. Every time we saw the three men — two brothers in their early and late twenties and their father — with their girlfriends and wives, they would ask us:

> How much money do you make? Why don't you ever bring us anything? It is hard for us to make any money. I am begging all day but can't make ends meet. You make a lot of money — look at your coat. Can you bring me trousers next time?

We tried to explain to them how they can get help, tried to convince them to come to the

ESI or guide them towards other organisations such as the *Restaurants du Coeur* for warm meals or the *Vestiboutique* of the Red Cross for clothes (see Chapter 3). They were expecting the support to come to them, however. When they engage with associations, one of the Romanian men explained to Nina and me, they expected help: "They come with food or clothes or at least coffee, but you don't have anything". This ambiguity — at least from the side of the people on the street — is an issue which came up during both the street tour and the day centre activity of *Freedom*'s and was hence at the core of the institutional home-making *Freedom* engaged in: why do we have to have a relationship first to be provided support? In what way was the relationship part of the support?

On the one hand, the street tours act as a first point of contact, a way of starting a relationship, of establishing trust central to any homeless outreach activity (Jost, Levitt, and Porcu 2010; Rowe et al. 2002; Cefaï 2015). In this sense, they are what Belk (1996) calls a perfect gift[43] and Bornstein (2012) terms relational empathy: an act of altruism, still aiming at creating social relations but often surprising and spontaneous for the recipient. Bornstein adds, abstracting from her description of various practices of charity and humanitarianism in India contrasting relational empathy with the common Western form of liberal, altruistic humanitarianism (ibid.:170): "those who practice relational empathy turn strangers into kin". In the case of *Freedom,* the repeated, free, immaterial gift of the street tour — of time, attention, information, support — brought directly to the person followed the principle of the *mains nues.* At least from the perspective of *Freedom* and the volunteers, the street tour was first of all an offering and did not demand anything from the recipient — the homeless person — in return. This initial series of encounters was nevertheless supposed to lead, eventually, to a relationship and as such also to the ESI where more advanced care and home-making activities (address, housing, access to welfare) could be supported and a *projet de vie,* a plan for the future of the person, created. It was in this sense that a facet of the street tour resembled Laidlaw's (2002) notion of the unstable gift: "gifts evoke obligations and create reciprocity, but they can do this because they might not: what creates the obligation is the gesture or moment that alienates the given thing and asks for no

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[43] In Sahlin's (2004) classical terminology, this end of the exchange spectrum is called generalized reciprocity, a category he uses for "goods [which] move one way in favor of the have-not, for a very long period" (194). Following Widlock (2013), I refrain from linking this form of exchange — even only through its name — with reciprocity to differentiate it more clearly from the following forms.

reciprocation" (ibid.:58). In fact, most of the people we saw during our tours never came to the ESI, never engaged in the reciprocal relationship a (classical anthropological Maussian [2001]) gift demands. As I have described, already the first step — slowly building a regular relationship — in a sense at times went wrong because of a misunderstanding, a frustration linked to the empty-hands principle. The street tours were also a free, first gift in Simmel's (1950:392) sense: he claimed that only the first gift can be free and is usually a probe of the relationship. In case the probe fails, street tours turn into nothing more than distractions, sometimes welcome and sometimes not so much — a 'free' gift of charity. The moments when Ali – and others – became aggressive, their understanding of the situation became visible: for Ali, we, the volunteers, actually didn't give anything at all; we demanded information, used his time, wanted him to talk to us. Even if well-intentioned, the immaterial gift we were offering was not seen as such. Fortunately, these moments of complete rejection, of not seeing the gift at all, were rare while understanding the immaterial gift as such seemed more complicated throughout.

Coming back to Scherz's (2014) ethnography of development in Uganda, she describes a similar conflict concerning the underlying logic contrasting 'sustainable' with 'unsustainable' development. While sustainable development is about a future-oriented capacity building — teaching people how to help themselves — unsustainable development provides direct and immediate (often material) help. She describes how the demands from the people for the latter — as for instance provided by *Mercy House* in the form of shelter and food — often remain unanswered because of the lack of creating dependency. What supporters of the sustainable development approach overlook is the culture of patronage deeply rooted in Ugandan values which very much allows for one-sided relationships of patronage and hence makes unsustainable development in some instances desirable. In the case of *Freedom*'s day centre, the situation was similarly conflict-laden in the same sense: people like Ali demanded immediate help while *Freedom* is careful to establish *liens* (relationships) of the immaterial kind first. The official rationale behind that was slightly different though: *Freedom* didn't want to do work which other intuitions in the neigbourhood already did very well — giving out food and clothes, for instance — and they were instead focusing originally on a different kind of poverty, what they called *spiritual,* but what was very much aimed at the lack of relationships while being on the street. This tension — between reciprocity,

conditionality and the demands of the homeless people — also translated into activities directly located at the day centre, which I am turning to for the remainder of this chapter. In contrast to the free (but unstable) gift of the street tour, I will argue that some of these activities — particularly the one-to-one social work encounter — followed different logics of exchange, more closely resembling reciprocal gift exchange.

At the ESI

The ESI of *Freedom* is located only a five minute walk from the *Gare du Nord*.[44] For many people around the *Gare*, the ESI was a constant in their lives, which is how it became one of the core locations for my fieldwork. ESI stands for *Espace Solidarité Insertion*, an unusual name for what in the U.K. would simply be called a day centre or drop-in facility for homeless people. Coming from the name, it is a space of solidarity wherein the reintegration of homeless people is furthered. About fifteen similar centres (Department de Paris 2017) exist all over Paris run by organisations such as the *Armée de Salut* (Salvation Army) or *Emmaüs*. Most of them — including the ESI where I volunteered — are financed by funds from the city of Paris, the region (Île de France) and private funds (foundations, volunteers, gifts). It is at the ESI where the idea of the street tour is extended and the *mains nues* principle translated into what at *Freedom* was perceived of as unconditionality: mirroring standard policy at most day centres internationally (Cooper 2001), anyone was welcome to go to the toilet, to have a coffee, to play a game, to meet friends, to simply be inside and warm, to shave, to talk to someone. Here, the regular 10-minute encounters during the street tours turned into something more solid and material; people were given a space in the form of the day centre and many faces in the form of volunteers and staff. They used the *Salle* to play as a way of further building relationships. In addition, a network of infrastructure providing people with the most urgent amnesties, like hygiene spaces, the warmth of a heater, chairs, coffee, milk and sugar was offered quasi unconditionally to everyone who was willing to obey the rules of accessing the ESI (no violence, no drink and food, no aggressive behaviour). Certain pieces of this infrastructure — the showers and washing machines — were more

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[44] I heard about it from one of the volunteers who worked there while talking to Natasha who was offered a place to stay. The week after, I did my first three-hour morning shift at the ESI, something which I would continue until the end of my fieldwork. I met many of my informants here, like Carl or Werner; many others — like the group of Punjabs around Sabal — frequent the ESI to take a shower or talk to social workers. Again others, such as Bela, I took there for the first time.

conditionally shared, as I will describe after first introducing how people access the ESI. The core of the one-to-one social work at *Freedom*, however, followed a stricter logic of reciprocal exchange, as I will argue in the last part of this chapter (*In the box*).

Accessing the ESI

As I come in for my weekly three hour shift as a regular *bénévole* (volunteer) around 1.55pm on a Thursday, twelve people are already there. Three of the social workers are just about to hop over to their offices on the other side of the road, while the leadership team Pauline and Ina are having an after-lunch coffee in the kitchen. Four other volunteers as well as Egon, the 'quiet rock' of a bouncer, and two young men on their civil service — most of them I have known for months myself as we usually all come for the same shift — are preparing the space for the arrival of the people from the street. We put the chairs in order around the tables, make sure the coffee machine is ready, put the plastic cups in a row in between the hot water and tea bags. The atmosphere is pleasant, people talk to each other about their day, about the people they met last time they were here for volunteering. Already in the team, it feels entering into a warm, comfortable place in order to do something helpful once a week. At 2pm the door opens. Egon walks outside and announces that it's time. Some of the regulars are already waiting to be let in. As soon as the door swings to the side, they find their way up the couple of steps to the *accueil* (reception) where one of the civil service men registers them. For the first minutes, roughly half of the staff stand around the entrance door to the main room — the *salle* — and greet people. We try to welcome everyone, smile at the incoming crowd.
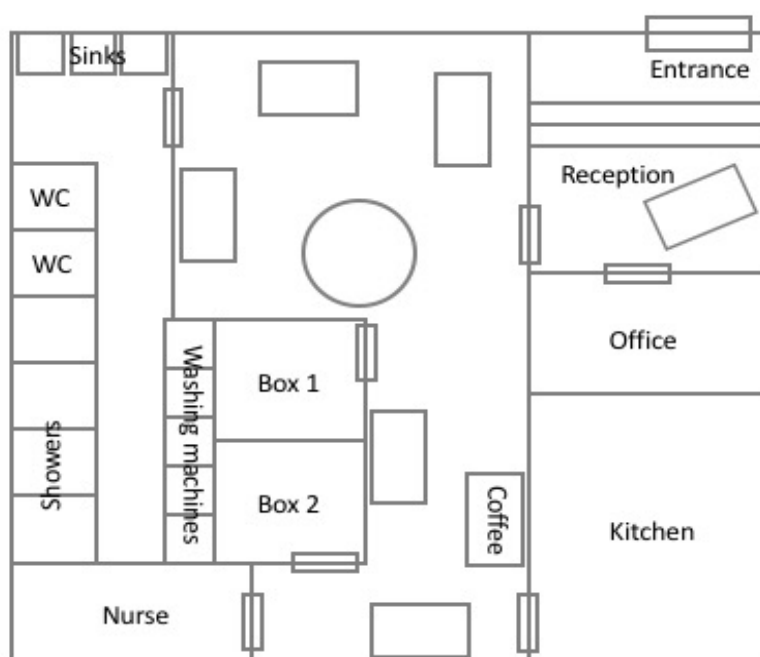
8: Map of the ESI, drawn by the author, April 2017.

Egon greets people as they come in. He stands at the bottom of the stairs leading up to the other rooms, his body filling the whole door. Egon acts as the first point of contact for anyone arriving. He is on the one hand the bouncer making sure that people who are too drunk or too violent are not allowed in (or are thrown out) as well as a constant source of calmness, stability and balance. He has had this role for over 10 years already. At the upper end of the stairs, a big desk stands in front of Pauline's office. One member of staff sits behind the desk counting people as they come in and registering their gender and whether it is their first time at the ESI. No questions are asked, no names are required. Entrance is only conditioned on your past behaviour, judged mainly by Egon and, in complicated circumstances, by the manager Pauline.

It was mainly violence and aggressive behaviour which would cause problems with access. In January 2016, for instance, a conflict surrounding Moritz and Yosh initiated a lot of trouble as Pascal explained sitting with me in the *Salle* of the ESI:

> They have been terrorising everyone for a while. They are beating up people, threaten them, take money from them. One guy, they almost killed in front of *Leaderprice*. They kicked him in the head several times while he was already lying

on the floor. They took money from the old Patrick and even Steph [people visiting the ESI regularly]. They take peoples' beers.

After having started a violent fight in the ESI itself, Moritz and Yosh were not allowed in for several weeks. It protected Pascal and other visitors in situations like the above with its rules of conduct. It was a what Bowpitt et al. (2014) called a 'place of sanctuary', of refuge but also of change, of what I call softly conditioned but quasi limitless sharing to start with and only later of reciprocal exchange initiating development in the visitors. In their description of the day centre Bowpitt et al. refer — following Hope (1995) — to the sanctuary in its Judeo-Christian tradition as a place of both "escape from the demands, injustices and oppression of the outside world" and a place of "challenge, risk and change" (ibid.:1255). I will unpack this double-sided description of the ESI in the following leading through three further types of closely linked but subtly different exchanges from the sharing of infrastructure and the *Salle* to the conditioned usage of showers to the reciprocal gift-exchange surrounding the one-to-one social work.

Playing at the salle and 'silently' sharing infrastructure
The core of the ESI was the *salle*, nothing more but a big room of about 50 square metres filled with tables and chairs. There were enough seats for about 40 people at a time; six large tables invite the people to sit down, relax, rest, play a game, have a chat or simply quietly enjoy their hot tea or coffee. The chairs in the corners are 'reserved' for the tired ones. One black lady named Lise, for instance, came in every day for a long while in winter 2015; every morning at 9.30am, she was among the first to enter the ESI and immediately found her seat right next to the heater towards the back of the room. After having deposited her belongings — normally a significant number of plastic bags — at the door, she sat down, embraced the heater and closed her eyes. As it was for her, the *salle* was a resting space for many people. They come to sit down, escape from the rain or heat and the street in more general. People are invited to relax and left to themselves. An old black man for instance spent the whole afternoon shift sleeping with his head on the table one day in March 2016. Nobody had seen him before, nobody knew anything about him. The whole team left him alone, however, and only when the closing time was come close, Egon carefully woke him up. He explained to me after:

He could barely get up. He slept there all morning — but its fine. I had to accompany him outside. That's how feeble he was. We leave people stay here to relax and calm down.

The ESI was in the above sense a sense of calmness, relaxation and safety; a space of warmth in the winter month, of refreshing water in the summer — to put it short: a refuge, a space where "essential maintenance" (Johnsen, Cloke, and May 2005a: 805) in the form of warmth, security and sleep were supported. But it was also a space to play against boredom.

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On my first shift at the ESI in early 2015, I did not quite know what to do. I had volunteered in similar venues before but the ESI was different. You weren't here to solve problems in the narrow sense but you were here to get to know people — build the *liens* which were at the core of *Freedom*'s mission. It turned out that one way of doing that in a literally playful manner was by engaging in a game of chess and other board games. There was a vivid community of mainly Arab-speaking French men who met at the ESI — most of them formerly on the street, and now with an apartment or at least room in a temporary hostel — to play. Yannick asked me after having found out what I, the new one, did in life to play straight away. I think the first game was not particularly long, perhaps 15 minutes, but it was really only the first in a long row of games. Every time we were both at the ESI, we played. Luck changed sides regularly; we were both able to beat each other which made the engagement even more interesting. Yannick explained once to me why he came to the ESI:

> I come here every day. I play chess, drink coffee, talk to people, see my social worker. They are my friends here. It's like family.

For him, who was estranged from his core family — his wife left him with his daughter and son about two years ago — the ESI had over time become something like a replacement family. Long before I came, he had established a routine which made him feel secure at the ESI.

I didn't only play with Yannick; we regularly changed partners, organised little tournaments, challenged each other. The community of chess players consisted of perhaps ten people. During the games, we didn't talk very much. But we learnt other things about each other: how do you deal with stress? Are you a good loser? Do you cheat? We developed favourite partners, learnt about each others' preferences for hot beverages, gossiped about each other. We became an intimate group of friends and competitors, important, friendly social contacts which many of my informants were missing in their lives.

Chess was not the only game which was played at the ESI. Some other board games, cards or Scrabble were regulars as well. In particular, TriX was very popular as it is played by between 4 and 6 people sitting around the big round table at the centre of the room. Guillaume was one of the regular visitors who was always to be found around this table. He never took off his sunglasses — he had a severe eye problem — while he might not see very well, he loved to joke and laugh. TriX was exactly the right playground for him, particularly when the young women doing civil service were part of the game as well. They joked around and tease, competed and got to know each other. Guillaume explained to me:

> It is a time off here. Away from the street. I'm not bored here. I play and forget and have all the people. They are my friends. We play together.

Playing TriX was not only a way of dealing with boredom, it was also a direct way of generating a group feeling, a feeling of being together in something while at the same time providing an easy battleground which could help to resolve conflicts without violence. Just as in Geertz (1993) Balinese cockfight, my informants used the safe space of the playful battlefield to figure out little conflicts and sneaky accusations. Guillaume was first among the people to take small personal animosities or interests to the TriX board. Guillaume loved to cheat. He wanted to win — often to impress the girls, sometimes just to stay on top of the (social) game ladder. Particularly with Lana, a young Norwegian volunteer, he loved to tease around. After she left *Freedom*, he talked to me about her regularly:

> I loved playing with Lana. I always won [...] and I could joke with her. She was

new and I could help her. I explained the rules to her. […] How is she anyway? I liked her.

Altogether, newcomers — both volunteers and homeless people — had an easy way in through these games. Like with Lana, it was often Guillaume who invited new players to join them. He made people — particularly new volunteers or members of staff — feel welcome, had them participate in the game which naturally unfolded with a lot of casual conversation and laughter and used the situation to teasingly play around.

<p align="center">*   *   *</p>

Despite the focus on playing and overcoming boredom, something else was often at the centre of attention for the people: minutes after the door to the ESI opened, the hygiene spaces were already full. Nina ruled over the showers, the washing machines and the four sinks located on the other side of the big *salle*. She handed out razors, soap and paper towels; took care of the washing for you; would provide towels and hair cutting equipment. Many people come to go to the toilet, shave, brush their teeth, wash their clothes, shower. All of these services are available for free — while not for everyone at any one time. Men can only come in in the morning and ask for a razor or a toothbrush, for instance, and to wash one's clothes, one has to obtain a ticket one week in advance as described above. Showers are only permitted to a handful of people, the ones — as Pauline's describes to me – who are "the really down-and-out, the ones who can't possibly walk to a public shower, the ones really entrenched on the street".

   In fact, while access to the ESI was only based on the obedience of a handful of rules, the infrastructure it provides was not unconditionally shared. Pauline explained to me further why certain barriers were helpful for the aim of the ESI:

> When the showers were still open for everyone and we would give out food, we would get all of these people. Quite a few of them were not on the street; they would only come to get some breakfast or take a shower because they didn't have one in their small rooms. They would leave after half an hour without having spoken to anyone, without sitting down. Now, people come to stay much more.

Ultimately, limiting certain parts of the infrastructure[45] — making them available only for people who really don't have an alternative option because of their immobility for instance — helped to put up a barrier for certain who would otherwise not come to the ESI and were not interested in its core functionality — relationships and community. It helped to avoid turning the ESI into a public bath or wash salon and instead allowed focusing on human interaction.

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The ESI was first "a safe place, where people can at least meet their survival needs without any further expectations" (Bowpitt et al., 2014:1259). It was a place where self-care was enabled and on an even more simple level a space of distraction from boredom, a space to play. This was one side of its sanctuary character. The advice, assistance and non-interventionist "provision of essential resources [did not only] aid people's survival on a day-to-day basis" (Johnsen, Cloke, and May 2005b:327), they were also a starting point for a network of human relationships between staff and visitors but also between visitors themselves. Relationships were built which were conceived of the basis for any further support and for addressing 'underlying issues' (Midgley, 2016:618). As Pauline put it: "We do our work well […] if we construct a network of company [social network] for the person with the person". In all of the above senses, the ESI was a space of an immediate home, a space where home-making activities take place and are encouraged.

Analytically, the activities that took place in the *salle* — playing games, talking, drinking coffee — as well as the hygiene spaces — shaving, washing oneself, using the toilets, brushing one's teeth — can be described through the lens of institutional sharing. Price (1975:4) defines sharing as an "integrative or coordinating process […] allocat[ing][…] economic goods and services without calculating returns". Prototypical acts of sharing can be found in the 'pooling and allocating of resources within the family'. While not all of the sharing between the ESI, its staff and homeless people was of economical goods — it also and perhaps primarily so involved time and attention — the

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[45] Additional infrastructure at the ESI included a nurse, who came in twice a week for the morning period to look after minor medical ailments. In her 2x4m corner room which — besides a stretcher — only housed a big cupboard with the most important medical supplies; she looks after open feet, ingrown nails, rashes and other wounds.

important aspect of communal ownership (Belk 1984) and the effect of linking people through "solidarity and bonding" (Belk 2010:717) were also at the core of *Freedom*'s activities described above. Unlike in more directly reciprocal gift exchanges (see below), giving back was not expected and it also did not influence the entitlement to any further participation in the community or to using the infrastructure (see Woodburn 1982; Woodburn 1998). In fact, the sharing of the infrastructure and the playing were what Widlok (2013) describes as 'silent' (or indirect demand) sharing. By that he means the sharing of something "for its own sake" (ibid.:16), i.e. in my case for instance the warmth of the space or the coffee, but without the demand for the sharing being uttered (ibid.:21). The demand is implicit in the act of entering the ESI.

On a more detailed level, I already observed a subtle difference in logic between the activities at the *salle* and the usage of the infrastructure, particularly when looking at the restricted access to the showers. While the *salle* was — abstracting from the general rules of conduct and the implied rules of exclusion (due to, for instance, violence) — free and open to use and as such unconditional, usage of parts of the infrastructure followed a slightly different logic. Already, to obtain a toothbrush or a razor you had to ask Nina; to wash your clothes you had to obtain one of five daily slots at the beginning of every week (which you were free to do); to access the showers you had to register your demand which had to be approved in a general staff meeting (criterion: was he or she able to go anywhere else for a shower?). The second type of sharing — more restricted, based on requests — resembles most closely what Widlok (2013) calls, in contrast to the silent sharing of the *salle*, explicit demand sharing. Here the sharing is clearly "initiated by the receiver" (ibid.:21). One's desire to use the washing machines, the showers or a toothbrush had to be made explicit; my informants had to voice these demands to staff. Extending Widlok's categorisation further, in the case of the ESI this type of explicit demand sharing was also risky: there was a chance of refusal. It was possible that all of the washing machine slots were taken; even more so, only certain (the most 'destitute') people were allowed to use the showers. As I already alluded to above, this riskiness came with conflict potential of people feeling unfairly treated. Access to social work was even more risky in this sense, however, as I will lay out in the following.

The above activities also all served as a ground for staff to test the people visiting. It was at stake whether — and I put it in extreme words here — they would have access

to the care work of the *assistants sociaux* in which they would be able to plan their *projet de vie* (life project) and particularly were supported in accessing external infrastructure (housing, banks, health insurance). Staff tried to figure out whether the homeless people were what is at times called welfare-ready (Johnsen, Fitzpatrick, and Watts 2014). While the relationships building up above were surely at the core of the aim of *Freedom* (see quotes above), [46] they were also a way of testing the engagement of the homeless person. The second part of the ESI as a sanctuary — a place of challenge and change — started in this way. Using this relationship built on the everyday activities described above as a starting point, the one-to-one social work in the box was challenging people, trying to get them to move and look forward. The aim was to define the *project de vie* as a longer term hope and come up with activities and steps to reach this goal in the more short term, often the kind of activities I will further describes as techniques of the self (Foucault 1997b) below. As I will describe further below, not everyone was willing or allowed to engage in this kind of support. Access to an *assistant social* followed a much stricter logic of reciprocal exchange than accessing the *salle* and the internal infrastructure. As Pauline put it: "people have to come for some time before they are followed (suivie) by a social worker". The kind of responsiblisation Whiteford also describes in his study of homelessness in Dorset (2010b) was perhaps a necessary part of hope- and future-making but like the tension between *mains nues* and provision of services and support problematized above, it created conflicts. It was really in the box where the core of the one-to-one tinkering, longer term care and encouragement (Mol 2008; Winance 2010) started.

In the box: formulating the projet de vie

"Quel est ton projet de vie?" Carole would start a first session with a new *accueillie* (visitor) like that: what do you want to do with your life? Usually, she then sits in the box, one of the two mini-social work offices cut off from the main room through glass walls. Facing each other over a desk — the only piece of furniture — Carole would either

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[46] Often, other activities were offered under the banner of *dynamisation* going beyond the ones in the *ESI.* Resembling closely what Hodgetts and Stolte (2016) call leisure practices, these would include more aim-oriented group activities such as French class or cinema club or outings (to the cinema, theme parks) and more general celebrations (e.g. the yearly *fête de la rue*). They were meant primarily as activities of rupture from the street, punctuating escapes which "can be built upon to work with homeless people to address their needs and restore normality in extra-ordinary lives" (ibid.:912). I will here not focus on these activities as they do not help us to understand another dimension of exchange at *Freedom*.

type into a computer or write on sheets of paper, listening carefully. It was this kind of help which many of the people come to *Freedom* for: individual social work leading the way from the street into housing; filling out forms to apply for unemployment benefits, an ID or health insurance card; support with doctor's appointments and other administrative necessities. The boxes were used as a space to retreat and have more serious, more direct conversations, a space to formulate the *projet de vie*.

Many informal conversations preceded this moment of entering the box (or sometimes another office in a different part of the building); a formal discussion in the weekly staff meeting every Tuesday was when it was collectively decided that a new person would now be *suivi* (followed) by a social worker, such as Carole, Marie or Véronique. One member of staff would bring the suggestion to the group and usually a consensus was reached quickly. The main criteria were simple: Has the person demanded clearly to be helped? Can we support the person? Has she been around regularly, has she created a relationship? If the three questions above were answered with a 'yes' and if there was no feeling that things went too quickly (Carole: "la personne accepte de vraiment s'installer [the person accepts to take her place]"), one of the *assistant social* would be assigned to take on the person.

The first step would be again to listen. Like Carole, most social workers told me that they saw it as their most important task to encourage the person to listen into themselves honestly and openly. The aim was, in abstract terms, to produce a space of reflective freedom (Laidlaw 2014:148), the "reflective consciousness [allowing us to] 'step back' from and evaluate our own thoughts and desires, and decide reflectively which desires we wish to have and to move us to action". Carole described her work in the box in the following way to me:

> We start with talking about the *parcours* [past trajectory]. We already have an idea [...] what we might be able to do. [...] I also observe the needs, the objectives which we fix together because in social work we talk about the person's *projet*, which means the project we have developed together [...] which can respond to the situation and the needs connected to the *parcours* [past trajectory]. That means that the person speaks out about the desires and needs.

Building on the person's description of the past (*parcours*) and as Véronique put it: the people's *blessures* (injuries), Carole jumps through the present — identifying needs — into the future and towards unfulfilled desires (*projet*). As I described in Chapter 1, most of my informants had hopes. The aim of the *assistant social* was to unearth them, make them accessible and then cut them into manageable chunks which could be worked towards one after the other. These hopes — in the near or more distant future — would together constitute the person's *projet de vie.* Pascal formulated his in the following way:

> I need money and a place to sleep. Immediately if possible. I want to get a European passport so that I can travel back to Germany [where his family was]. I need an address for that and I need a post office [bank] account to be paid money by the French state. [...] I also need a job. I am bored and I want something to do. I mean, I had one in Germany and stuff, but I want to do something else. And they don't know about my life in Germany.

For his social worker, Carole, this translated into the following: he needs a *domiciliation* in order to receive post and to register with the bank and he needed to fill out an SIAO form (Services Intégrés d'Accueil et d'Orientation [Integrated Services for Reception and Orientation]) to access first temporary and eventually longer term housing. While there was no standard way out of the street Pascal's main demands — the address and housing — would often be part of people's *projet de vie* formulated at *Freedom*.[47] Both could not be reached by the homeless person alone as they required institutional backing. In both processes, social workers (and the organisation behind them) acted as facilitators. Véronique described this to me in more general:

> I would say we try to calm people down. We are mediators [...] Often when I take people to appointments, I don't do much. I am just next to the person. I am there to reassure. [...] Sometimes I take the role of the mediator, when the person needs me to talk.

Marie added:

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[47] It is important to note that these needs are not universal. Housing, for instance, was not in reach or desired by everyone. There was no ideal case — hopes differed widely — while at the ESI they were usually connected to leaving the environment of the street.

We can have some ideas for the person but it is always necessary that he tells us: 'This is my project.' […] We need to work hand in hand with the person.

The social workers understand themselves as the ones supporting the homeless people formulate their desires; they are there to support and suggest rather than lead the way, to translate rather than talk. This was at the core of their provision of care.

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The role of the *assistant social* was often one of a translator and a mediator; Carole helped Pascal and also Carl to formulate and precise their demands; before her, another *assistant social* laid the groundwork with supporting him in narrating his history both in terms of health, housing and work. While Carole only really followed their demands — in this case for instance the desire for housing — she was helping him to think beyond his own horizon. She was extending his wish and translated it into the everyday reality of the administrative structure of the SIAO. She was able to anticipate problems which Carl would not have thought about — a state agency losing an application for instance — and as such was a quintessential part for the success of his striving.

A whole group of people was in fact necessary to help Carl, Pascal and the others reach certain ones of their goals. People who fill out forms with and for them — Carl's French was workable but not good enough for administrative tasks; people who accompanied them to visits at potential shelters and hotels; people who vouched for them in relation to the SIAO and wrote reports on their progress. People who translated verbal explanations and letters for them. Social work at *Freedom* was a process of constant tinkering (Winance 2010); volunteers and staff worked together to first build a relationship; they build a basis of trust together which allows the person to more freely think about and finally utter his desires and dreams of one or the other kind of home-making. The relationship was the platform on which this honesty and confidence to talk openly about one's desires was constructed. The *assistant social* was then able to further nurture the dreams and operationalises them into smaller steps, such as filling out forms, making a phone call, accompanying a person to have passport photos taken — while keeping the big picture, the *projet de vie* in view.

In the above sense of tinkering, the social worker is caring in Mol's sense of the word. She defines care as open-ended, needs-based process of support, always also with active involvement from the person receiving the care (Mol, 2008:19). In her case of diabetes care, Mol focuses specifically on the process-character of care as well as its two-sidedness. Care was always also dependent on pro-activeness from the care receiver. For a diabetic, for instance, constantly monitoring one's own blood sugar level was an important part of the care process. As Golightley demonstrates discussing a mental health care home, care usually involves a process of support, help and pedagogy (Golightley 2014:57), a multi-faceted effort of interactive consolation and encouragement (Mol, 2008:29). The notion of the process of care can also be found in Winance's idea of 'tinkering' care. He describes care as a process to "meticulously explore, 'quibble', test, touch, adapt, adjust, pay attention to details and change them, until a suitable arrangement (material, emotional, relational) has been reached" (Winance, 2010:111). The care relationship is hence one of messy trial and error. In the process, different means and measures are played around with and switch to reach an arrangement. Throughout, the process usually involved both a material and emotional component.

In the setting of the ESI, care already started with "build[ing] a relationship [...] [with] assess[ing] the rough sleeper's situation" — with listening and understanding the needs of the person, with understanding their *parcours* (Midgley, 2016:619,623). The person cared for is an immediate part of the caring process; the demand has to come from them, the initial information (the narration of the *parcours*) is provided by them, too. The process is ongoing — back and forth between the social worker and the homeless person through meetings and simple encounters in the *salle* — and two sided. The person's demand is answered by the social worker. Encouragement, ruptures or also directly educational activities — as part of the *dynamisation* — are sometimes successful leading to further engagement as in the case of Carl and Pascal and at other times less so. Both parties constantly push and quibble in order for an SIAO request to go through, for instance. Working together is necessary. Altogether, the activities at the ESI were part of what Conradson (Conradson 2003:508) defines as a space of care: a "socio-spatial field disclosed through practices of care that take place between individuals", providing welfare which goes beyond the merely bodily encompassing the social and emotional

(Johnsen, Cloke, and May 2005b:326). It includes more freely shared resource provision (coffee and tea; hygiene spaces) as well as advice and assistance (provided at the reception of the ESI) usually with an open-door or no-questions-asked policy as also practised at the ESI. It went beyond that in its focus on the *projet de vie* — where the bodily maintenance was replaced by a mental stretching, helping the person to open towards the future, towards the hope for a future home. In the two-sided nature of this type of care in the one-to-one social care encounters I find my initial clue as to differentiate it as a form of reciprocal gift exchange, as I will lay out further now.

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As helpful as this kind of care proved to be for many visitors of the ESI — Pascal and Carl among others — Johnsen et al (2005b:329) do note, however: day centres — or in their case a soup run in the UK — are "on the one hand inclusive of difference but, on the other, [...] not entirely devoid of exclusionary practices". I observed the same complication at the ESI. Let us look at the process of following (*suivre*) a new person more closely to introduce the last logic of exchange — the most reciprocal one — to demonstrate this.

   I already alluded to the fact that not everyone was helped immediately in the same way at the ESI. Just as access to the shower, access to *assistants sociaux*, to the boxes, was restricted. Access to the services was restricted as not everyone was deemed 'service worthy' as it is called in the English-speaking context (Meanwell 2013). Marie described it in the following way to me in an interview in late 2016:

> We don't answer immediately [to demands]. [...] It is necessary to take the time to get to know each other. [...] Sometimes they don't even stay for five minutes and they want something. [...] We need to understand whether we can help and who is best [which social worker]. [...] [We want to avoid] that the person is excluded from the centre [for housing] immediately because there is a big [drug] addiction or perhaps a mental health problem or just because the person is violent.[48]

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[48] As I will explain in Chapter 6, many hostels didn't allow their inhabitants to drink or take drugs; a zero-drug policy was common. This could also be an exclusionary criterion in the decision of taking on a new resident.

Time — time spent at the ESI, time shared with staff and other visitors, and time going by in more general — was an important part of what was expected from the homeless person as a kind of initial investment. Relationships — initiated and freely offered at first from the side of the volunteer or *assistant social* — had to develop over time before the person could be 'followed'. While the types of sharing at the ESI described above where about building relationships (see Belk 2010:717), the relationship was a prerequisite for the social work encounter. Time was a condition that differentiated the one-to-one social work as gift exchange from other kinds of exchange at the ESI. The example of a Tunisian woman — Bela — I encountered the first time on a street tour in late 2015 demonstrates these principles at work. While I could convince Bela to come to the ESI, she caused immediate confusion there. Not only did she arrive with a shopping cart full of things and requested immediate storage of some of her luggage, she also tried to see a social worker on the spot. She came with a lot of health requests — she suffered from several visible skin diseases and a thyroid problem — which staff at the ESI were unable to respond to. Bela came back a couple of times but grew more and more frustrated because her demands for help — also of the administrative kind dealing with her foreign bank accounts — were not answered. I lost track of Bela after having accompanied her to the hospital on my own accord once.

   While the ESI as such, the *salle* and most of the infrastructure was a space of almost unconditional and immediate sharing, benefitting from the administrative support of an *assistant social* was not. Only people who came regularly, spent time at the ESI — people who established a relationship in the *salle* — and who were known as non-violent, responsible and with a manageable set of needs would be taken up by an *assistant social*.[49] The manager Pauline made clear that this was mainly a mechanism of self-protection for the ESI; it was supposed to prevent people from having several *assistants sociaux* in different institutions support them and hence double up work unnecessarily. One also wanted to make sure that only people who *could* be helped were supported; refugees for instance usually had a different set of problems for which the contacts at

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[49] Unlike in Marvasti's (2002) case (looking at an emergency shelter in the US), the construction of the homeless people at the ESI as service-worthy did not primarily happen through narrative construction but through certain behaviours.

Freedom and the experience of staff were not well-suited. This second point was crucial: if the aim of the social work, of the care, was ultimately to support people to first formulate a *projet de vie* and secondly to work towards it — to change their way of living — it was important to make sure that one's resources, experience and knowledge was suitable to tackle the individual set of problems the person came with. In other words: intense care was only going to be put in where change was possible. Building a relationship first was one way of figuring this out — it was a testing ground, as I called it above.

In other words, however, care was only provided for people who were willing to give something first. Following the logic of Sahlin's (2004:195ff) balanced reciprocity — a direct exchange in precise balance without a toleration of one-way flows — care was only offered to people who had spent considerable amounts of time at the ESI. Only people who 'engaged', who came regularly and were known to everyone, were open to talk and interested in the community, the relationship building, would be taken on. People had to demonstrate their willingness to engage and ultimately to change first before they would have access to the expertise of an *assistant social*. The gift of their engagement, their time would be reciprocated later with care in the form of an address, support with housing applications and the like. The relationships building in the *salle* was as I described above both the aim itself but also a testing ground for future care provisions. This type of exchange resembled most closely the archetype Mauss (2001) analysed as gift exchange: a *reciprocal* exchange unfolding over *time* based on *relational* bonds. In contrast to the sharing above, the exchange surrounding social work was already based on an existent relationship and was part of continuing it into the future.

An important question was how the judgment was made; how were people deemed service-worthy (Meanwell 2013)? As on the street tours, where people became angry because we didn't offer any immediate (material) help, visitors like Bela — but initially also Pascal who was made to wait — did not comprehend the hesitations to support them. Why were some people getting appointments? Pauline only had a vague response to that: "It is a question of *feeling* — it is because of that that some might at times have the idea that certain people have certain privileges." There were no clear check lists — how much time was enough? — just subjective judgements on the suitability and readiness of one or the other candidate to be 'followed'. Dobson (2011:553f) describes

this kind of uncertainty as part of the 'practice reality' of homelessness care: "contradictions in responses highlighted the complexity of front-line work". While this subjective decision making might at times contribute to some of the conflicts above, I didn't see a systematic or conscious kind of exclusion at the ESI. Sometimes, initial judgments might have been wrong — but usually they would be revised and for most people, it ultimately worked out. Both Pascal and Carl were willing to wait, to further engage and were both finally housed. The question remains: did the most disengaged people — people suffering from several mental and physical health problems, such as Bela — fall through the cracks systematically, though? Would the ESI have been able to support them properly?

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A second issue followed immediately from the above logic of reciprocal exchange as a condition to access one-to-one social work: the potential performance of an identity to fulfil the exchange conditions. As I already describe in Chapter 2, regarding the work of begging, people figure out what they needed to say and do in order to get what they want. Summerson Carr (2006; 2011) describes in her study of alcohol-dependent, often homeless individuals in Chicago how they learnt a "verbal rendering of a script" and how to make it "successful [… and] and believable" (192) — while not necessarily always telling the truth. In his classical study of two Boston homeless shelters, Desjarlais (1997) observed similar language- and performance-related tactics: "People continuously shape-shifted in this untidy, post-institutional world of conversational pitches and counterpitches" (215); his informants would switch discourses to position themselves adequately to what they thought the situation demanded; they jumped between multiple self-representations mostly in order to maximise outcomes in the form of access to support.

Did the social workers at *Freedom* need to expect such a tactical façade? Help was based on the relationship but what when the relationship was faked? I discussed this question with Pauline, the manager of the ESI, during a casual conversation in early 2016. She explained how complicated it is to see everything for people working at ESI: "We only really see one part in people's lives; only the life they have when they come here. I know this is sometimes not enough. But what can we do?". Moritz and Josh had

just left the Salle as Pauline and I started talking. They were the reason for me to really start thinking about this question of the façade in relation to the ESI. I explained to Pauline what I was worried about: "I know them from the street. I see them in a different space, where they behave differently. They beat people up. They threaten people and take their stuff. They have beaten up some of the people here before and taken their money. I don't like that they come in here and invade this space. They want to profit from your help". She was aware of the issue but keeps up the principle of the unconditional space: "This is shocking in fact. It's horrible what happens on the street. I know that these things happen all the time — but like I just said: I can't do anything. I only know them in here. I only know so little about the people who come in here. I only see them here where they present a particular part of themselves".[50]

   Moritz in particularly who towards the end of 2016 also managed to secure a space in a hostel through the ESI was well able to perform what Summerson Carr (2011) calls 'flipping the script'. While being aggressive and violent on the street — to secure material benefits — he was well-versed, nice, behaved and most importantly also a regular at the ESI to build the necessary relationship to access his desired form of support. For Marie, these different masks people would use in different situations was not necessarily an issue, it was part of the protection necessary on the street:

> We are happy when the person comes out from their little space on the pavement [...] When they come here from the street [...] you can feel that the masks fall down [...] They might play Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde on the street, but here...

The problem of 'flipping the script' was potentially less of an issue at the ESI due to the position of the *assistants sociaux*. During my interviews, staff at the ESI ultimately declined the categorisation of people into bad and good SDF or deserving and undeserving poor (Rullac 2008:157). While a certain reciprocity was part of the everyday practice, almost everyone — as long as their needs were not too complex — would ultimately be taken on by one of *Freedom*'s *assistants sociaux* if they demanded

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[50] This conversation was the only instance of me talking to an institution about my informants. The reasons here was one of personal safety as I felt threatened by Moritz who had in fact approached me violently before. The conflict was resolved soon after.

support. The rules of the ESI as well as the condition of 'regular engagement' had to be fulfilled. In comparison to what Johnsen et al (2005) and Whiteford (2010) describe in the UK homeless service context where "access to homelessness service and housing advice is increasingly dependent on compliance with work-plans, sobriety requirements and conduct agreements" (ibid.:195), the *Freedom* approach to what is often termed 'responsible citizenship' seemed more tame, their exchange conditions less demanding. In Whiteford's study of a day centre in rural Dorset, the visitors were charged for food provided to "instil a sense of responsibility". He situates his observations in the wider political context of moral regulation, social control and welfare conditionality (Johnsen, Fitzpatrick, and Watts 2014) also sweeping into the homeless sector. In contrast to Whiteford's case, at the ESI there was an explicit negation of making the homeless people responsible to behave in a certain way (to pay, for instance). Unlike what Johnsen et al. (2005) observed in the UK, there was very little control and surveillance in place at the ESI beyond preventing violence to erupt. Also, what happened on the street, stayed on the street and did not necessarily have an effect on their treatment at the ESI. While Whiteford describes the policies of the day centre in Dorset as at least partly exclusionary (ibid.: 200) — even if not perceived so by the service users themselves — I observed an effort to stronger focus on care rather than responsibilisation at the ESI. This is also where the ESI contrasts heavily with the kind of welfare conditionality Han (2012) observed in Chile: she described how a "system of punishments and rewards" (ibid.:67) was in place pushing people to "learn responsibility" (ibid.). In order to obtain support — mainly financial in this case — the people dealing with the social workers in the government office Han observed had to define and reach personal goals: "You're in a program that has goals. Have to reach those goals. So if you don't reach them, we do not give you the things" (ibid.:66). At the ESI, I did not observe this kind of exclusionary and inflexible conditionality of support. Ultimately, I concur with Midgley's (2016:625) concluding remarks in her study of Newcastle homeless care providers "both responsiblisation and a[n] […] ethics of care were present in all participants' accounts […] It is the relative balance between the two discourses that informs differentiated perceptions of responsibility and their resultant practices". Most of the basic care at the ESI — heath, a place to rest, hygiene, coffee, play — was shared almost unconditionally and only more complex parts of the social work were based on a logic of reciprocal exchange. Partly to avoid doing work twice, the one-to-one social work demanded longer-term engagement, the investment of time and the demonstration of a certain kind

of responsibility from the homeless person, often judged subjectively but usually in favour of the person.

Conclusion

The ESI in the form of its space, the infrastructure and most importantly the people — staff, volunteers and other visitors — provided a variety of (home-like) facilities of care. Parallel to Dobson's (2011:551) categorisation of activities at a UK drop-in centre, I want to present them in the following structured table.

Activity	Description	Exchange logic
Street tours	• Regular weekly outreach with *mains nues* to build relationships over time • Actively going towards people offering (non-material) support	Free or (unstable) perfect gift
Salle: games and information	• Advice and information about facilities (food, emergence shelter) • Reception space as soft monitoring tool (Johnsen et al., 2005) and to efficiently deal with easy requests	Silent Sharing
Infrastructure	• Physical needs: shelter, hygiene, warmth, play • Unconditional access to the *salle*; condit. access to showers (need) and washing machines (first come)	Explicit (demand) Sharing
In the box: social work	• Administrative support with complex requests (domicilisation, housing, ID, bank, health insurance) • Semi-conditional access (general meeting decision) based on 'feeling' (regularity, time, relationship) and demand from person	Balanced reciprocity

From the (almost) free gift of street outreach (from the perspective of the volunteers) to more conditional access to certain parts of the infrastructure and the reciprocal nature of the access to social work, the homeless person was increasingly challenged and asked to give something (time, engagement, willingness to change). Seen critically, many of the relationship building activities were indeed also a way of testing the people taking part in them to assess whether they should be allowed to access other, more sought-after parts of the care provision. If let in to the social work, the care goes beyond materiality but helps the *persons accuielies* to translate their hopes into manageable chunks — of administrative work for instance — and supports people in walking along the way. By providing a secure space, by helping people to make boredom more productive and create relationships of trust, homeless people feel more comfortable planning ahead and talking about their hopes and desires of home-making. In this sense

the ESI is a space where reflective freedom (Laidlaw 2014) is fostered. With its activities, the ESI provides certain alternative ways of looking at the world, of playing and learning and ultimately of thinking about one's future (Meanwell 2013:445). Support for and access to basic, immediate home-making activities was shared unconditionally; more complex, future-oriented, one-to-one social work was restricted and tested beforehand, based on a logic of reciprocal exchange or balanced reciprocity.

This analysis of the day centre through a logic of different forms of exchange does not only provide a complementary view onto social work, but also helps us to think through issues of what is in other research called welfare conditionality (Dobson 2011; Johnsen, Fitzpatrick, and Watts 2014) or neoliberalist responsibilisation (Midgley 2016). In providing a more directly ethnographic description springing from the activities at the ESI, I am trying to avoid a re-writing of big whitewashed societal narratives of for instance neoliberalism and focus instead on in my case the core ambiguity between desires and demands of homeless people and expectations and demands of care providers (see Scherz 2014).

Large questions and ambiguities did in fact arise not only due to what I described as the reciprocal character of the core care relationship but also due to issue of what happens outside of the protected walls of the day centre. How can you engage people beyond the hours that they spent in the enclosed space, which almost feels like an enclave? Particularly when it comes to drugs, the ESI was ill equipped to support people in their situations. I will in the next chapter look at how people like Carl and Barut cut the time, how they were trying to forget the past and the future *projet de vie* focusing on the drug cycle. Describing both the street in which drugs support an at least temporary control-taking and ordering and the institutional context of a needle exchange program and a day centre for homeless people with alcohol addiction, I will explore the role drugs play in daily home making further presenting the volatile good life they are part of.

Chapter 5: Drug time — cutting through time with alcohol and drugs

"The easiest thing in the world is to stop smoking. I did it a thousand times."
Mark Twain

During the winter months of 2015-16, a group of at times six Polish people made their living on *Place Franz Liszt* in front of a *Monoprix* supermarket. Two big hot air vents opened up right in front of the automatic sliding door. One and a half square metres of floor constantly released a stream of warm air. Pavel and Damian barely moved away from this spot throughout the day — only to pee right around the corner, in the small side street leading away from the buzz of *Place Franz Liszt*. The beaten-up white McDonalds cup was enough to make people understand: "Une petite pièce, s'il vous plait?"(Spare some change, please?). The money the men made in front of *Monoprix* was rarely spent at this up-market supermarket, however. The beer at *Leaderprice* less than 150m in the direction of *Gare du Nord*, was cheap: under €0.6 for a can of strong, dark beer.

   While Damian and Pavel were mostly very careful not to make a mess, cleaning up their garbage and making sure they were not seen peeing by the people who were potential givers, they didn't always succeed. Consuming between 10 and 20 beers a day, often supplemented with as much vodka, whisky or other hard alcohol they could afford, they would both get upset and more aggressive as well as tired and passive as the day unfolded. Pavel fell asleep many times while sitting in front of *Monoprix*. Problems arose when they were too drunk to sit, concentrate and ask the people coming out of the *Monoprix* for change. The hot air vents on which the men were camped pushed the odour of alcohol right into the noses of people passing by.

   Sleeping was at least partly the aim of the alcohol consumption. The men had fled Poland to find jobs, money, a better life — in some cases also to avoid prosecution. In Paris, it was hard for them to find work — the manual work they could provide was not in terribly high demand, and their trustworthiness and reliability as people living on the

street was not judged to be high either. Unemployment meant boredom; collective boredom led to alcohol, which eventually led to sleep. Sleep meant forgetting. When the men were really drunk towards the end of the day, when they had had a good work day begging, made enough money and bought a lot of vodka, at least then they didn't have to think any more.

Once when I met Carl and the Polish crew in such a state, Carl wouldn't stop talking:

> We made so much money today. This guy, he gave me €20. We bought Vodka, that's why Vita is passed out in the tent. [laughs] I spoke to Lisa [his ex-girlfriend] today. The kids and her are fine. [His face becomes more serious] I want to see them, but I can't go back. [...] At night, the dreams come back. Every time. I don't sleep if I don't drink. And usually I need a joint, too. [...] All this stuff from the war. I don't want to be in Germany. It was so much worse when I came back to Berlin. I didn't treat Lisa well [...] was gone for days. [...] And now these dreams. I don't have anything to do. Nothing tires me out. I just sit around. That's why I need this [holds up the half-full Vodka bottle].

<div align="center">*   *   *</div>

Most of my informants — Pascal being perhaps the only exception — were either heavy drinkers or addicted to hard drugs, such as the heroin substitutes methadone or *Subutex*, different types of Morphine pills — the most common among them *Skenan* — and crack. Often, both addictions came together. In Paris, drugs are consumed by more than a fourth of homeless people according to a recent Samenta survey (Laporte et al. 2015:695). In addition, roughly 20% self-reported as being alcohol-dependent. Both numbers, however, must be seen in the context of this study, which was conducted among emergency and long-term shelter users rather than among people sleeping rough. In contrast, rough-sleepers and people who beg — and most of my informants fell into both categories — tend to exhibit a particularly high tendency to consume alcohol (and drugs) according to statistics from the French Institute of National Statistics (Beck, Legleye, and Spilka 2009). For many of my informants, drugs and alcohol were part of the daily life to an extent that they dictated the rhythm of it, as I will demonstrate in the next part. I argue that, in trying to cope with both the uncertainty of the months ahead

and a general inactivity, waiting for something to happen and trying to forget the misery of both the present and particularly the past, drugs help people such as the Polish crew described above, as well as Carl, Barut and Moritz to cut through time. They introduced a different, cyclical kind of time, what I call 'drug time'. Alcohol and drugs helped, at least temporarily, to take control over one's thoughts — making them subject to the high of the drug rather than the low of the nightmares — while in the longer term would result in conflict and more pain, themselves regularly leading to moments of epiphany and a desire to stop 'using'.

I understand addiction in this context, following Krivanek (1988), as a process and a "behavioural pattern involving drug or alcohol consumption that alters the way an individual thinks, feels and behaves, that he or she likes in the short term but dislikes in the medium and long term" (Flanagan 2012:29). It is my aim in this chapter first to describe the inherently ambiguous role of drugs and alcohol alluded to in this definition. I put the notion of drug time at the core of this ambiguity. On the one hand, for some of my informants, who are the focus here, drugs were part of daily home making processes in that they produced a cyclical structure — the rhythm of drug time — which helped them to cut themselves out of time — forget the past traumas and the future *projet de vie* (see Chapter 4), at least temporarily.[51] They were part of a way of (positive and negative) ordering in Douglas sense of home-making (Douglas 1991, see Ch. 1). Extending classic ethnographic accounts of homeless addiction (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009; Desjarlais 1997; Weinberg 2005), I describe drugs here as part of edgework producing drug time, which itself was seen as a way of ordering and taking back an imagined and temporary level of control for my informants. I will describe below how both drinking and taking drugs led my informants into a strict, repetitive and cyclical rhythm of begging-buying-using. It is this often stressful rhythm I call drug time. On the other hand, however, the imagined control achieved through drugs often easily collapsed into yet more despair and impotence to take over responsibility over one's life.

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[51] I am avoiding getting into a medicalised view on addiction and the rationalisation of it describing substances such as alcohol and drugs as an anaesthetic, a means of tolerating, a relaxant, a way of forgetting (Philipps 2014; Marr, DeVerteuil, and Snow 2009; Rowe 1999; Opalach et al. 2016 [on Poland]; Thompson et al. 2010 [on Texas]; Adlaf, Zdanowicz, and Smart 1996; Beck, Legleye, and Spilka 2009 [on France]), of taking care of oneself (Drumm et al. 2005). Instead of focusing on the why, I will concentrate on the influence drugs had on rhythms and time in my informants' lives.

I will, in the second part of the chapter, turn towards the influence which institutions such as *Sun* and *Emo*, a bus distributing syringes and medication and a day centre for alcoholic homeless people respectively, have presenting an alternative to drug time. How were they, in different ways, supporting the people in their efforts to structure their days, bodies and futures? I will lay out how in both institutions drug addiction was again ordered — this time institutionally — introducing a more risk-averse ways of coping and spending one's time differently. At *Sun,* drug time was worked against through regular pick-up times for the substitutes and paraphernalia and its effects on the body were put into focus. At *Emo,* a more comprehensive alternative daily rhythm and a space for reflection to open up the future — the *projet de vie* — was offered.

Drug time and edgework as a way of temporary ordering

Carl was in his early thirties when I first met him. He was short, only about 170m but his frame was solid and heavy. When Carl turned 19 and had just finished his Abitur in Berlin, he decided to join the army. He proved to be rather good at what he did there: "One day after the 100th morning run, one of the officers came up to me and asked me whether I wanted to join this special unit. I didn't even know what that really meant but agreed on the spot". He was quickly sent away on his first mission. Getting out hostages from Kosovo; similar missions in the Congo and other parts of Africa followed. Most of his time was spent in Afghanistan. During one of the supposedly less dangerous daily patrols there, his jeep came under enemy fire. Two of his comrades died from a grenade. Carl and another one were heavily wounded but called for support. For weeks, it was not clear whether he would survive.

Back in Berlin, Carl couldn't come to terms with the state he was in. After months in a coma and a lot of medication, he agreed that he was not fit for combat any longer and joined the security forces protecting German embassies around the world. After years of high-adrenaline combat action, Carl got bored. He had a lot of time to think and started drinking heavily.

> I never liked drugs. My mum was — perhaps still is — a heroin addict. That's why I grew up with my grandparents. I mean, I smoked some stuff when I was in Afghanistan — man, the best you can get in the world — but never got into injecting or anything. Just drinking.

Drinking got him expelled from the army. He was sent back home to Berlin and again referred to a trauma programme. He refused, and instead stayed with his long-term girlfriend, Lisa. Nine months later, their son was born. Carl got into trouble more and more frequently. The drinking became worse. He got into fights regularly, and came home bloodstained. Before his son was two months old, Lisa threw Carl out of their house. In the end, he had to respect Lisa's decision: "I didn't want to have anything to do with Germany anymore. I risked my life for them and they wouldn't help me. Yes, they offered me this therapy but I wanted to continue living a normal life". He came to Paris to work with an ex-comrade driving a truck. After losing this job for drunk-driving, he couldn't afford his apartment. He started sleeping on the street in late 2014. The drinking continued. It was a means to forget for him: "I don't want to think too much. When I lie down at night, I can't fall asleep because all these pictures are coming back. If I don't drink I can't sleep at all".

<p align="center">*   *   *</p>

The mental pressure, the trauma, the fear of nightmares and flashbacks, boredom ("a life lived in endless and empty repetition", Gardiner 2012:45) and inactivity — Carl and the Polish people I started this chapter with cited various reasons why they drank daily.[52] Rather than focusing on these here, I want to analyse the effects drinking had on my informants' lives. The addiction produced a continuous circle of 'drinking to beg — begging to drink — buying more alcohol — drinking — more begging' as part of the group life of the street (Snow and Anderson 1993:210; Denzin 1968:45). It is this kind of cyclical rhythm I call 'drug time'. Following Bowles' (2016) analysis of people living on boats in London, I observed my informants as living according to a different, non-linear 'time map' (Bear 2014). While Bowles' informants' time is produced by "interactions between humans, the weather, the seasons, animals and the chaos of fate and chance" (ibid.:102), my informants were subjecting themselves to a cyclical rhythm dominated by the threat of withdrawal symptoms, the availability of begging money at the stations and the opening times of shops and the availability of dealers. While Bowles' people

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[52] Mental health issues were – from my own amateur perspective – also clearly part of the reasons but they were not talked about. Neither my informants themselves nor the institutions they engaged in (see below) focused on any kind of mental health (neuroses, psychoses) but rather on the addiction directly.

were living on boats according to the materiality of their river environment (ibid.:103), my informants were living according to the materiality of alcohol and drugs. Both rhythms, however, were uncertain and unstable, often involving a lot of movement which made forward planning complicated ("more akin to divination", ibid.:106). In both cases, time was experienced "through the prism of the rhythms of the tasks" (ibid.:107), which in the case of my informants was the addiction understood as the procuring and consumption of substances.[53] Drug time was not only a cyclical rhythm between begging and drinking/taking drugs, it also had a second effect on the movement of time, what I call a movement of cutting oneself off from time. This mirrors Denzin's (1987:112) classic sociological account of the alcoholic self as "lost within time [...] ill at ease within time" while trying to "control time". While in drug time, Denzin (ibid.:127) goes on to argue "the alcoholic will maintain his or her belief in self-control" while in fact "the drug has taken control of the user's life" (ibid.:45).

   Picking up from this last point about control, alcohol and drugs in fact at times helped my informants to perform what McNaughton (2008) calls 'edgework'.[54] Edgework involves "actions that people voluntarily engage in [...] that carry inherent risk and crucially involve negotiating at the edge of normative, responsible behaviour" (ibid.:33). In her study of how people in a large post-industrial UK city fall in and out of homelessness, McNaughton includes drug use in this kind of behaviour (besides for instance violence and suicide attempts) and states further: "Engaging in such actions, that carry clear risk [...] can be understood as ways to exercise individuality and freedom [...] an attempt to escape" (ibid.) Facing structural violence and poverty and linked phenomena (mental and physical health issues), edgework is part of keeping up hope in McNaughton's informants lives just as it is for mine. She goes on to explain that "people lose sense of time and space when they engage in these activities" (ibid.:34). Edgework usually constitutes an attempted "rupturing of normal day-to-day life" (ibid.:37). My research mirrors her observations with regards to the understanding of alcohol and drugs as a means of losing a sense of time and space — as falling into drug

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[53] Like Bowles (following Bear 2014) I acknowledge that my informants' environment was not always made up of this particular kind of time and rhythm. The drug time, however, became the main axis of subjection for informants such as Carl, Barut and Moritz.

[54] I understand edgework similarly to what Goffman (1991:309) calls 'secondary adjustments', actions that help a person who feels caught in a situation to "lose himself in, temporarily blotting out all sense of the environment which, and in which, he must abide".

time or choosing to fall into it. Alcohol appears to be a way to cut oneself out of time, out of one's worries about the past and about an uncertain future. In a way similar to what Day et al. (1999) describe as short-term thinking, the 'politics of the present' (ibid.:18) as a main function of homelessness, I describe the above edgework through alcohol as a cutting through time, cutting off oneself by blotting out past, present and future worries and miseries. Focusing on pleasure and happiness, the informants in the contributions to the volume by Day et al have developed a lifestyle of "living in the present" as "an active, not passive, response to conditions of marginalization and social exclusion" (ibid.:7,19). What my informants did resembled this description in many ways but I would choose my words differently: they were not focused on the short term or the present when drinking (or consuming drugs) but rather trying to cut themselves out completely from the linear flow of time by engaging in the cyclical flow of alcohol or drug time. In this, the present was almost automated by routines surrounding the alcohol and drug consumption endlessly repeating themselves.

While Carl — and people like Barut in the following section — stated very explicitly that they drank in order to forget the past, it is implicit that by doing so they were also trying to take back a certain kind of control, a function McNaughton ascribes to edgework as a "exercise individuality and freedom" (2008:34). Engaging in alcohol consumption, Carl chose to make himself subject to different thoughts. It produced a kind of freedom He described at length and repeatedly to me how, without the influence of alcohol or marihuana, thoughts would take over his mind, particularly in the form of nightmares at night. The alcohol helped him to disengage from these thoughts, to find a rupture from them. It is in this sense that I call drinking a type of re-ordering, rather than chaotisizing, producing at least temporarily what Douglas (1991) describes as an ordered home (see Chapter 1). This type of control was, on a higher level, a way of submitting oneself to a different but self-chosen external regime — in this case the cycle the alcohol or drugs demand. Instead of being controlled by thoughts and nightmares of, for instance, a traumatic event in the past, it was now the alcoholic high which controlled the mind.

But control was over the choice of the master rather than over the mind. As such, it loosely corresponded with the DSM idea of alcohol as a substance which people attempt to use to govern the realm of freedom (Valverde 1998:28). Valverde (1998) — following

the early ideas of, for instance, Benjamin Rush — explains this paradoxical twist on the exercise of choice and freedom in the following way: "although people begin drinking of their own free will [...] the habit of drinking eventually leads to the disappearance of the very willpower" (ibid.:2). Once turned into a habit, empirical philosopher Valverde argues, alcohol (and drugs) are "fundamentally conservative, tending to keep us in our place" (ibid.:35). Again, it is this cyclical habit I call drug time. I will now further open up this relationship between the freedom to choose, drug time and the problems which come with a developed habit in the above sense by looking at Barut's experience with hard drugs.[55]

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

Whereas Carl was mainly focused on alcohol — both before and in Paris — Barut was a user of heroin substitutes and crack. While this brought with it very similar considerations — he also tried to forget past and present worries, wanted to cut himself out of time — the addiction to methadone and crack also came with a slightly different type of rhythm, a slightly different drug time. The ordering effect the hard drugs had on Barut's life was more apparent than in the case of Carl and alcohol. Crack and also methadone made it necessary or him to earn more money, move more quickly, haggle and negotiate with dealers — in short, it required him to work and care more for the substance. As I describe in a piece focused on the care that drugs demand from the user (Lenhard 2017) — in the form of money, time, attention to bodily needs — Barut was subject to a rhythm imposed on him by the drug addiction. The addiction had become a habit in Valverde's (1998:35) sense, an engrained way of going about things, imposed drug time.

Barut grew up in Bulgaria. His parents had separated early, with his mum moving to Greece and his dad staying in Bulgaria. When he was 19, he was studying towards a technical degree but he stopped to go to Spain to earn money in construction. He worked there for eight years before he got into drugs. After taking heroin for over a year, he decided to join a rehab programme, after which France seemed to be a good place to

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[55] While there are clear differences in the tempo of the drug time — hard drugs demand more attention and money, the cycle is quicker — I want to first of all stress the parallels also between the two groups of users.

start anew. His older brother lived in France, selling and maintaining property. The two of them tried to work together for a while, but Barut couldn't keep up with his brother's speed and rigour. He got back into heroin. When his brother found out about it, he kicked him out of his life: "If you want to die, do it, but not here, not in my arms". Barut found himself on the street for months before he started another rehabilitation programme. He felt left behind by his family. In rehab in Paris, he met Anna who provided a spur of hope for him: "I thought she was a nurse, she was so beautiful! But then I saw the marks on her arm [from a suicide attempt]". They fell in love and he moved into Anna's flat. "She helped me feel better. I was like shit but she made me feel good. I had the best moments of my life with her." After two years, they realised it wouldn't work out; he started seeking help in drugs again. Since April 2015, Barut was a regular visitor at the *Gare du Nord*.

Barut's motivation was at the absolute bottom when we met: "I don't have any ambition. I don't want anything. I wake up in the morning and don't want to do anything. I wake up at night and have nightmares [particularly] if I don't take the methadone before I sleep. I drink during the day and smoke so that I forget". I ask: "But you were ambitious before; are drugs the problem?". Barut answers: "No, I don't have anything, really. My problem is that I don't have anything that I strive for. The drugs come after — they make me forget that".

As in Carl's case, Barut wanted to forget; he wanted to cut away the past, his isolation, his sorrow with Anna, his poverty. He wanted to forget the past and the present — and explicitly pushed away the future and in this sense cut through time very similar to Carl:

> This [the street] is not for me. I should be somewhere else. I know I can do it. But I am not ready. I did the rehab thing twice [in Spain and in France] so I know I can do it, but not now. (Barut)

He was confident about his power to work eventually towards his future outside of drugs, but also believed that it would take him some more time until he would be ready to do so. Rock bottom — or as Flanagan (2012:52) in his ethnography of homeless people with addiction in Atlanta calls it, the 'breaking point' — was not yet in reach.

When I met him some time after again, running around at the *Gare du Nord*, he seemed very nervous indeed. "Je suis malade aujourd'hui. C'est la manque [Today, I am ill. It's the withdrawal]". He needed methadone, and was hardly able to concentrate enough to talk to me; he was constantly looking around, seemingly on the lookout for something. He needed to make money quickly as he had missed his chance to get methadone for free from his distribution centre;[56] it was too late for today. Barut's day was externally dominated and ordered by the struggle to make ends meet for the drugs. His way was subject to the drug time, a daily rhythm more strict and pressing than that which alcohol (a much cheaper pursuit) would place on people like Carl.

In the morning — often waking up outside of the centre in a parking lot at *La Défense* (see Chapter 3) — he tried to have some methadone left to start his day. Ideally, it would be enough to allow him to feel stable enough to wake up and ultimately make his way over to the *Gare*, where begging was his main source of income. Like Camilla, he practised spot begging, running through the train station asking people for money (see Chapter 2). Unlike people such as Carl, who had enough beer for the day with 5 to 10 Euro, Barut needed somewhere between 40 and 50 Euro to feed his addiction, sometimes considerably more. A dose of crack — the only 'real' high for him as the methadone only took away the pain and stabilised him — was €15 and lasted only for some minutes of smoking. Extra methadone for days when his distribution centre was closed or he had missed the distribution period would be €5 per hit. *Skenan*, which could be injected on top of the other drugs as a small high was €5 per hit. The need for generating enough funds to finance this addiction kept Barut busy and created strong routines. The care the drugs demanded from him (Lenhard 2017; Weinberg 2005) — including both the effect of the withdrawal and the threat of it — created a physical urgency which turned Barut into the nervous and unstable person I described above. Paradoxically, however, it forced him to order his day to a far greater degree. It forced onto him a quick, cyclical drug time, even stronger than the one produced by alcohol. He had to plan ahead, plan his finances, even the geography of his movements through the city: how much money do I need to make for the next hit? Where will I get it from? When

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[56] As I will describe further below in this chapter, most people who had an addiction to heroin substitutes would get a certain part of their intake from a legal distribution centre, at one of which I volunteered for over a year between 2015 and 2016. Usually, however, additional methadone was traded on the street and supplemented with *Skenan* — a morphine medication — and crack. This was also the mix Barut took.

do I need to shoot up so as not to feel too ill to continue making money?

This recurring cycle surrounding drug addiction was described poignantly by Bourgeois and Schonberg (2009) in their study of San Francisco homeless people with heroin addictions. Having lost their jobs in manual labour over the last decades of the twentieth century, many of their informants engaged in daily routines surrounding panhandling either using signs, offering small services or threatening passers-by. Some of them also relied on stealing goods and money in the neighbourhood (ibid.:165f), ultimately always to "solve the most urgent physiological problem before worrying about anything else" (ibid.:80), i.e. to pay for the next hit. As Bourgois and Schonberg (2009:5) conclude:

> They have subordinated everything in their lives [...] to injecting heroin [...] their commitment to heroin. [...] Virtually every day on at least two or three occasions, and sometimes up to six or seven times, depending on the success of their income-generating strategies, they are able to flood their bloodstreams.

To sum up what we can take from Barut's example, I argue that the influence of hard drugs in his life are twofold, both part of and effects of drug time. On the one hand, the above drug cycle — drug time as a way of edgework — is part of daily home-making, as part of Barut's daily survival and ordering. While the influence of drugs on the life of people on the streets is often described in purely negative terms as affecting both mental (Rayburn 2013; Unger et al. 1997) and more general health (Grinman et al. 2010), Bourgois and Schonberg (2009) argue in way similar to me that users take benefit from consuming drugs beyond the high. While Bourgois and Schonberg found mainly social benefits connected to group life, for my informants, the group seemed less important than the influence of the substances themselves. The addiction to various substances forced Barut into routines both in terms of timings and localities. It was as Javier, the manager of the substitute distribution program of *Sun* I will describe below, called a 'crutch' for people, one "which helped them to advance in life at first". On the one hand, the addiction structured Barut's day: getting up as early as possible, taking the train to his work place, begging at the *Gare du Nord* to make money for his first shot, buying crack on the platform of the metro line 4, finding a spot above the parking garage behind the station or in the toilet on the drug strip towards *Lariboisière*. It made Barut

dependent on the drug. Throughout the day, he engaged in a continuous circle of begging / scoring / shooting up / smoking / being high, only interrupted by brief stints of relaxation when food and alcohol were consumed or the police patrolled the drug strip behind the station. This rhythm, the drugs time, was initially perhaps even chosen by Barut (in an act to liberate himself from the trouble with his family, to forget) and was as such a way of coping by cutting himself out of time as it was for Carl. Methadone allowed him to control his pains — both remembered and physically present — while crack or *Skenan* made him high, gave him pleasure. Javier, *Sun's* substitute programme manager, clearly differentiated here:

> What is forgotten with the substitutes is the pleasure. Why do you take drugs? Because it feels good. You want to feel good. After, the problems arrive, but at first is the pleasure.

Javier — who has worked in drug substitute programmes in Paris for over a decade — is, however, acutely aware of the temporary character of this effect. His usage of the terms 'at first' and 'after' indicate a switch in modes of drug taking. At the same time as the control over memory and pleasure, the addiction often took over control itself (see Denzin 1988). The drug — or alcohol — in the case of Barut and Carl ultimately turned into more of a slippery slope my informants slid down rather than a crutch which helped them walk further. Barut was dependent upon the drug and at the same time he became unable to exercise responsibility towards anyone or anything else, including a possible *projet de vie.* Just as in McNaughtan's (2008) description of 'edgework', Barut was only seemingly and temporarily in control. Engaging in the risky behaviour of drug taking, he was constantly 'on the edge' (ibid.:37). As he himself admits (above), the drugs demand attention, care and time; control can constantly switch hands, again away from Barut. As Rowe (1999) describes the ambiguous effect of drugs for his New Haven homeless informants as "affecting everything in the addict's life, creating new problems and deepening those that may have contributed to the drug use itself" (ibid.:28). The positive effect drugs might initially have can quickly turn around; control is lost both over one's thoughts — dominated by the addiction — and emotional state. As Bourgois (2002) describes in his study of people addicted to crack cocaine in the US, drugs ultimately have a negative effect on psychological insecurity and control over oneself. The initial high induced by the drugs and the seemingly ordering drug using lifestyle eventually

disappears. In the ordered short term, drugs and the cyclical quick time maps they generate create a feeling of being in control which in the longer term often collapses completely.

In most cases the order of the daily drug and alcohol cycle in the long run only lead down a one-way street. It disconnects users from their actual desires, as Annabelle, addictologist at *Emo,* explained to me. On the one hand, it gives people like Carl and Barut structure in their lives and allows them to take control from their perspective (at least seemingly, leaving the substance's impact outside of the equation), giving control over to a substance they initially chose. But on the other hand, it did this in an explicitly desired time-cutting way, separating the users from past, present and future, and lifting them into a world dominated by the care for the substance, something which was initially desired but ultimately became the source of more worries itself. I found Barut regularly on Sundays or Mondays behind the *Gare,* in a state of despair, having lost his dog or his backpack, and telling me so excitedly and angrily in a voice made high by being awake for days on end: "I haven't slept for more than two days; I was here all day and night yesterday. We made lots of money. Now I can't find my dog anymore". Again, he looked around nervously, unable to focus. He had smoked crack to keep himself awake; all the money would have gone into sharing one pipe after the other with one of his friends at the station. Drugs did initially produce the illusion of helping to take back control, while eventually the *projet de vie*, with its future orientation, was cut out from their thoughts when engaging in heavy alcohol or drug use. Users were cutting themselves out from time in this sense, first voluntarily — to forget — but eventually against their will, as they were consumed by drug time. The dependency upon the drug was more important than responsibility for their lives.

It was in situations such as the above, when Barut was desperate to stop and change, that institutions started to come into play. Barut had already done two periods of rehab; Carl had refused to join a medication programme in Germany, but was more and more willing to engage with institutional help now that he was in Paris. Snow and Anderson (1993:212) argue that what I describe above as the edgework of cutting off past, present and future did not necessarily happen intentionally or tactically, but as a form of 'drifting into' over time. My informants would perceive their consumption initially as a form of taking control *back,* while as the substance became a stronger force in their life

— as they drifted into the addiction further — control was lost even further. When people like Barut and Carl saw that the drugs did not only help them — to forget, keep themselves busy, order their lives — but created a state of impotence as they took over, they would increasingly search for help with organisations such as *Sun* and *Freedom*, which had just started a special programme for homeless people with alcohol abuse problems in early 2016. It is the influence these institutions have, by offering alternatives to drug time to people living with addictions, that I will turn towards in the second part of this chapter.

Sun and *Freedom*: institutional alternatives to drug time in a drug-substitution program and day centre for alcoholic homeless people

The methadone distribution van as well as the risk reduction van were run by *Sun*,[57] as places to provide understanding, help and advice; they were places where a different type of ordering of time to the one searched for in drug consumption was created. *Sun* was originally founded more than twenty years ago as a subsidiary of *Médecins du Monde*, but quickly became independent as an organisation dedicated to risk and harm reduction among drug users[58].

   Financed by the regional agency for health in Paris, it runs both one stationary and one mobile centre for addiction-related matters (*Centre de soins d'accueil et de prevention en addictologie*, CSAPA) and one fixed and one mobile centre for risk reduction issues of drug users (*Centre d'accueil, d'accompagnement et de reduction des risques pour usagers de drogues*, CAARUD), all of which I volunteered in for several months. The main aim of *Sun* was not to lead people to abstinence but to help them to take care of their health while still taking drugs (see for 'harm reduction': Erickson et al. 1997, Langendam et al. 2001). Here was a crucial difference — both in logic and process — between *Sun* and, for instance, the rehabilitation programme Zigon (2011) described in post-Soviet Russia. Comparable to typical Alcoholics Anonymous programmes (see below), the heroin users undergoing rehabilitation in Zigon's ethnography are working towards absolute

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[57] In this part of the chapter, I will mainly focus on the perspective of staff as access to the users at particularly *Sun* was limited (encounters were very fleeting). I will point out where this perspective appears to be flawed and add as much detail from the point of view of the users for both *Sun* and *Emo* as possible.

[58] At *Sun* individuals were referred to as a *usager* [user] because they used drugs (not as shorthand for a service user). I will apply this term in the same way.

abstinence, all under a banner of moral obligation. Driven by a Russian Orthodox morality of sin, Zigon's informants were expected to follow a relatively predisposed way of coming to abstinence, engaging in regular activities such as repentance and prayer (ibid.:114ff). While these processes are focused on the soul, the activities at *Sun* are not only more varied, less prescribed and geared towards a common end — abstinence — but they are also mainly about the body, and about reducing the harm done to it.

At *Sun,* the mobile centres — a re-vamped van — focused on people who were either sleeping rough or in environments close to the street (*banlieu* high rises, council housing, etc.), and were, for them, a first point of contact to start a conversation about drugs, health risks and how to deal with them. As Javier, the manager of the CARUUD during my time as a volunteer with *Sun*, explained to me:

> The [risk reduction] material [such as syringes], well, that is a means of attracting them, a means of starting conversations about risks with them. […] Somebody who comes and takes one body [of a syringe] and ten needles […] we ask him: why do you only take one body? […] There are bacteria building up and you can contaminate yourself […] It is a means to start discussions about practices.

Unlike the findings of Zigon's ethnography, the main aim of *Sun* was hence not to bring people immediately back onto the *projet de vie*, to start thinking about the abstinent future*.* It was about conversations, about helping people to feel safe and stable in the moment and reducing the (health) risks drug consumption brings with it. Only if it was an explicit aim of the user did *Sun* start a debate about rehab and abstinence, as Javier further explained to me:

> Our objective […] that's not necessarily to stop with the drugs […] and it will never be us who propose that route […] apart from when we see that the person puts herself in real danger. [If somebody comes and says:] 'Oh là là – now I would like to stop.' – it is then when we say: 'If you want to get to the bottom of this, we can help you find a place where you can quit [the drugs].

In the next section, I will further pursue this idea of risk and harm reduction through conversation, and the accompanying work of re-ordering the users' lives and view on time. Outlining the practices of *Sun* first, I will lay out how their support and their offers

provided a basis of stabilisation, structure and, in particular, ordering the body.

*   *   *

Sun's CARUUD (Centres d'Accueil et d'Accompagnement à la Réduction des risques pour Usagers de Drogues, or 'Centre for the reception and support of drug users at risk reduction') was an adapted white van, the size of two normal cars. Two steps up from street level, people were usually welcomed by at least two or three members of staff and a volunteer. From behind the counter, we would hand over risk-reduction material for free. Eight different types of syringe, 14 different types of needle and various accompanying materials, such as alcoholic pads, clean water, filters, glass pipes and hydrating cream, were all given out. As in the ESI of *Freedom*, the only necessity was to register with a pseudonym and a date of birth, mostly for statistical reasons to keep track of the products needed and to avoid serving minors, which was forbidden by law.

On an average three-hour stretch of time, we would see around 50-80 people in the little van parked right next to the hospital *Lariboisière*, four times a week, evenings and afternoons. Most of the visitors would be male, between 20 and 30, and used methadone and *Skenan* and, regularly, crack. The majority would be long-term (over one year) users of drugs, with one foot on the street between sleeping rough, staying in squats and social housing. Most of the interactions in the bus were short, not abrupt or unfriendly but straightforward and goal-oriented. People came in and knew what they wanted. "I'll take ten 10ml, 5 dark brown [needles], 5 yellow [needles], and water, big cups [little metal cups, where the mixture could be cooked] and disinfectant. And a crack pipe". The demands were very similar, only usually varying in the number of syringes. On average, people would come twice or three times a week to stock up; they knew the 'opening times'.

The central hub for *Sun* was not at the *Gare* but their office in *Parmentier*, where the doctors held appointments. After an initial interview with a nurse — where individuals were asked what their addiction is, what their story is, and what they think they need — a specialised doctor was consulted who was able to put the person on the right prescription: methadone, subutex, several types of medication against neuroses and psychoses, Valium. The dosage varied depending on the strength of the addiction. For

some people, the *accueil* of *Sun* was a hanging out place, like the ESI of *Freedom* was for others. Most came and went quickly though. Again, the rhythm was fast in this circle. After the initial consultation, the daily or weekly dosage was often not picked up in *Parmentier* any longer, but at the mobile CSAPA (Centre de Soins, d'Accompagnement et de Prévention en Addictologie [Centre for the Care, Attendance and Prevention in Addictology]), which functioned like the CARUUD. Both vans worked in tandem, and could be found at similar spots but at different times of the day. The main difference was that only registered users were able to obtain medication from the CSAPA and the risk reduction material at the CARUUD was available for everyone.[59]

We stood next to the *Gare de l'Est* looking right out at the platforms. It was a rainy winter day, even snowy at times. People dropped in slowly after we arrived at 14h30. Some finished their cigarettes while approaching the van, others took a moment to recover from the quickly changing weather. Like the CAARUD, the CSAPA van was stocked with risk reduction material. People come here every day for something else, however: the safe and free distribution of medication. A second door separated the medical cabinet from the rest of the bus. As people stepped in from the queue, which can spill from the bench inside to the outside of the van, the door opens, the doctor — today Karine — called the next one in. Inside, a little counter cut the room into two and housed the doctor behind a computer screen and the nurse holding on to the big bottle of methadone. As the door closed, the person announced his name and number (identifying him or her in the computer system). Karine found the prescription on the screen and Sarah, a specialised nurse, poured the methadone from the 5-litre bottle into a blue plastic cup. Some also got a pill or two — to combat depression or schizophrenia, or to deal better with an alcohol addiction. The majority came for the methadone. People had to drink the sweet syrup immediately. Most washed the taste away with a glass of water, before walking out through the back door. "A demain" (see you tomorrow). Methadone or subutex were distributed here to the same group every day.

Yana and Jakob, a Finnish couple who were Barut's acquaintances, came along every day. We knew each other from the *Gare*, and had talked several times. One day, they

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[59] Since I finished my fieldwork in autumn 2016, *Sun* has closed the mobile van for the distribution of the substitutes and replaced it with the first stationary shooting gallery in rooms of the hospital *Lariboisière*.

arrived almost too late. Yana was not in a good state, just about finding the door to the doctor, and Jakob waited outside to look after their two big suitcases. They slept in the train, like Barut. Yana took a while. Jakob got nervous and left the bags sitting next to the public toilet. People walked by. They looked at the bags, looked at the van while he strolled down to *Gare de l'Est.* Inside the doctor's area, Yana had a hard time explaining her situation to the doctor. She had not only drunk too much, but also taken a lot of *Skenan*. She was unhappy in Paris, in pain about not being at home in Finland, angry with Jakob. Everything came together. She couldn't stop crying in her inability even to stand. The doctors decided not to give Yana her methadone that day. They listened carefully and judged that the risk of the methadone having a negative effect with the morphine and the alcohol was too high. Yana would come back the next day and the situation could be re-evaluated.

<center>*   *   *</center>

In dealing with Yana, staff at *Sun* had a clear aim in mind. The discussion was not about abstinence; it was not about giving up, but about being more safe, about being more stable. The doctors in particular were concerned with the bodily balance of Yana. They tried to give helpful feedback and support Yana in her difficulty with both the withholding of medication and caring words. As Adèle, a social worker at *Sun* for over three years, described: "We are a place where we give people the feeling that they exist […] where they can relax, protect themselves and take a break […] We are trying to be authentic and […] answer their demands". At *Sun* the aim was to provide a place of refuge — as at the ESI — as well as a certain amount of stabilisation if people show behaviour as risky as Yana above [Javier: *se degrade énormément*]. These examples of practices called harm reduction allowed people slowly to re-connect both with their body — avoiding health risks such as hepatitis and HIV in particular — and also with time.

Harm reduction (P. G. Erickson et al. 1997; Gowan, Whetstone, and Andic 2012; Campbell and Shaw 2008) as first developed in the Netherlands in the 1970s includes practices which often still have abstinence as their end point but mainly focus on the intermediate steps. Practices include needle exchanges, HIV and Hepatitis testing, educational courses, support groups, and the distribution of drug substitutes, such as

Methadone. Like at *Sun*, the main practice studied ethnographically by Gowan et al in a large Midwestern US city was that of a mobile needle exchange for heroin (substitute) users. Documenting different methods of harm reduction — such as addiction management plans (ibid.:1255) something which didn't exist et *Sun* — their main point is about the ability of the drug user for self-care. My ethnography fills in details — particularly concerning the body — where Gowan et al's argument exists on a more explicitly political level.

At *Sun* harm reduction was also about providing support with practices of self-management. Most of these were focused on managing the body *better*, i.e. with less risk of attracting diseases and infections: providing clean needles to avoid sharing, giving out filters to clean the substance mixture, advising on the usage of the right needle, freely distributing clean cups and surfaces to prepare the mixture, giving out heroin substitutes instead of the often very diluted heroin from the street. The above offerings from both the CSAPA and the CARUUD were geared towards treating the user's body differently while not necessarily changing the pattern of the addiction. *Sun* aimed at providing free and easy to obtain alternative methods of better treatment for the user's body, of reducing the harm done to it.[60] It is here where I see the main support offered by *Sun* in addition to the altering of the drug time rhythm. Once people showed a general willingness — incentivised by among other things the free offerings of paraphernalia — *Sun* made users adapt their daily rhythms with its opening times. This had a particular effect on people picking up their Methadone every day at the same time. The cycle of begging-buying-consuming-high for people like Yana and Jakob was interrupted; drug time was at least for one cycle replaced by the time of *Sun*.[61] The influence of institutions on the rhythm and order in my informants' lives was even more apparent at *Emo,* run also by *Freedom* like the ESI. *Emo* was focused on homeless people with alcohol addiction and offered a more comprehensive alternative to drug time (and its daily

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[60] For this support to work, users had to already have decided that they searching for a change in their practices. *Sun* did not try to coerce people into adapting to practices (which is the case once you joined AA, see below) but made highly voluntary offerings the success of which was dependent on the willingness of the user to engage.

[61] Bourgois and Schoenberg (2009) argue that in fact substitutes such as Methadone only replace one addiction with another. Highly critical of a possibly underlying 'neoliberal agenda' they describe harm reduction as a 'band aid' obscuring the structural forces behind the addiction problem. I follow Gowan et al's (2012) rebuttal that the lives of the users are nevertheless concretely ameliorated; harm reduction has a positive impact on their body and on the replacement of drug time.

order) by provided a place for reflection and allowing people like Carl to slowly refocus on the past and the future.

Structuring the day, distracting you, making you think — Emo as a place of busi-ness
Since January 2016, *Emo* was a space where between five and seven homeless people from all parts of Paris united by their common alcohol addiction met every morning at 9am. Located in a big suite of rooms in the 2nd *arrondissement*, usually one volunteer or *stagiaire* (student of social work on an obligatory internship) as well as a *salarié* (full time employee) were present to engage the people who came that day. The morning always started with a small communal breakfast; we sat around a big table and shared coffee, some cookies or cake and fruit juice. Everyone spoke freely; people talked about their days, their plans for the weekend, often also their sorrows. After a couple of weeks — the people who came were always the same — the atmosphere was familial. This was partly because everyone here was in a similar situation and had been referred to *Emo* by one of the drop-in centres run by *Freedom* (see Chapter 4). Annabelle, the manager of *Emo* explained to me: "They come here and know already that they have a problem with alcohol. […] They want to change something about their relationship with their consumption". In order to support this already present awareness and willingness to change, *Emo* understood itself as a space of experimentation, of trying out different practices throughout the week both as a new institution and for the visitors.

Every day of the week had a different purpose: Monday was supposed to be an easy start without too much of a programme, a day of games and talking between 9.30am and 12.30. Usually, there was no theme, just the game — anything between *Monopoly* and *Uno* was chosen by the men.[62] We practised fair play as much as an easy form of being-together. Tuesday was explicitly reserved for planning outings. As at the ESI of *Freedom* (see Chapter 4), money was budgeted to provide experiences of rupture, of distraction which would take the men away from the street and their usual circles. Alice, a psychologist at *Emo* who ran the Thursday activities, described this as the day when desires and pleasures would be planned in an autonomous way. Annabelle added: "The people can really dream up things for the excursions […] We try to give as little guidance

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[62] *Emo* was —at least to my knowledge — a space for men only to avoid the additional complexity of added gender conflicts. This is why I talk solely of 'men' in this part of the chapter.

as possible". The activities ranged from evening visits to the cinema, to visits to different museums (they went to the *Musée de l'air et de l'espace* [Aerospace museum] for instance) and theme parks (in summer 2016 we went to the *Mer de Sable* together). Wednesdays were focused on a more hands-on experience of creativity: an art therapist came to draw and paint with the men. Choosing a different topic every week, Carl and the others would spend two hours painting and one hour discussing each other's works connecting the mind back to the body.[63] Thursday was the closest to the well-known meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous (Wilcox 1998; Antze 1987; Denzin 1987) filled by what Annabelle called a *group de parole* (a talking group) where experiences were put into the centre of attention. Here, the men discussed with Annabelle and at times another psychologist or addictologist topics surrounding addiction and alcohol, usually through their personal lens.[64]

On one such Thursday, we discussed abstinence and reduction. The session started with an announcement by the two coordinators:

> On the next trip, the next outing, we will have beer. We will also have beer here because we don't want you to be 'in withdrawal' while being here. The idea is to be transparent and to talk to each other and to not have bad feelings about the addiction. We know that you are in different states during your addiction and towards abstinence and we want to help each one of you to deal with it the way you want.

Annabelle wanted to create an atmosphere of comfort, of feeling good as well as an open space for everyone to talk. Everyone was supposed to be realistic about their needs — and abstinence was not immediately possible for people like Carl who had just started to think about their addiction as a problem. While the focus on speech and the group setting resembled an AA meeting, the idea of obligation — to be abstinent, to each other, to God — was totally absent at *Emo*. Rule number four in the 12-step-programme reads:

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[63] As the art therapist was very particular about the group setting, this was the only day which I never participated in. The men were always completely alone with the therapist during the Wednesday sessions.
[64] As already alluded to above, mental health issues – while surely part of many of my informants problems – were not discussed at either *Emo* or *Freedom*. While I was not able to investigate this further, the lack of resources – psychologists and psychiatrists are expensive – was necessarily a contributing factor.

"Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs". The AA group was — as Antze (1987) takes from his analysis of both ethnographic data and the AA Big Book — geared towards "immunity from drinking [through] work with other alcoholics" (ibid.:167). The group was part of the pressure making apparatus. Rather than admitting — as Denzin (1987:75) claims in his analysis of AA principles — "powerlessness" facing alcohol and the need for surrender, *Emo* tried to foster reflection, a space to figure out one's own way to deal with the addiction, a space of comfort rather than pressure. It was in this sense a place where the constant cyclical running around of the drug time was replaced by both a stable structure for each morning and a 'break' for the mind.

The rest of the session evolved around the input of a guest — Pierre, in his seventies and an alcoholic for over 45 years but abstinent for almost a decade. He shared some of his experiences and ideas with the group, both about how he got into alcohol and how he felt about it after such a long abstinence:

> You start for a reason; you start because things happen and you are depressed and things but alcohol doesn't help. The first time it helps you to forget and to be happy but over time it makes the circle harder to get out of. It pushes you deeper in; you need to drink to feel okay. You are always in pain.

Pierre caught the general spirit of the group with this statement. Everyone was there because they had come to a point where their addiction wasn't helping them anymore, where it didn't make them feel better but in fact caused additional pain. For Carl and another one of the regular visitors, for instance, this pain had to do with failed relationships, with leaving their family behind. For others, it was more directly linked to physical violence, losing one's job and being stuck.

At *Emo*, the men were able to talk about these experiences and find people who had similar problem to deal with. As Carl explained to me, it was helpful to see that he was not alone in his suffering. Annabelle mirrored this statement wholeheartedly: "People come for two reasons: their inactivity and solitude". The community provided by *Emo* was again different from what the men would have found at AA (or in Zigon's (2011) rehabilitation facility in Russia): rather than creating an atmosphere of religious and

moral pressure, geared towards abstinence through surrender, *Emo* was about sharing experiences — in the form of pleasure — and alternative routines and time maps.

*   *   *

I usually joined the group every Friday for the *atelier de philosophie* run by the former philosophy professor Paul. We took our seats in the big leather sofas at one end of the room. One Friday, we talked about justice, on another occasion about freedom. Paul started the discussion usually with either some quotes he would distribute on a sheet of paper or some drawings and caricatures which fit the topic: "Which one do you like most? Which associations do you have with the drawing or the quote?". The discussion about justice mainly meanders about injustice; how soldiers misbehave in wars, how corporations are unjust, how people can just kill each other. Another regular, Tariq, got really upset towards the end:

> We always talk about the bad things; we talk about injustice but there is good people as well. Why don't we talk about that? There [are] not only bad things. I want to talk about how we succeed in life!

Tariq's demand to look at the positive side of things mirrored interestingly the general atmosphere and outlook at *Emo*. People came here at a stage when they were on the one hand still struggling — the addiction was for most of the regulars still very much part of their daily life — but were willing to start thinking about the present and future again. Carl had reached a point where he was able to face his past and make plans for his future. By the time he came to *Emo* regularly (from February 2016), he drank less and depended less on alcohol to 'cut the time'. The Friday philosophy ateliers were one way of encouraging thinking and reflexivity. Participants in the programme Zigon (2011) describes are similarly encouraged to reflect in a "laborious and reflexive process of coming to know herself as a sinner" (ibid.:136) aiming at "cleansing the soul" (ibid.:137). As the practices of working on oneself and achieving abstinence — praying and repentance — the reflection was quintessentially moral and religious for Zigon's informants. Alcohol was a sin and recovery was a struggle to overcome that evil (ibid.:143). Despite its religious foundations, *Emo* did not employ any such language or practice. Reflection was encouraged often on a similarly abstract level but geared

towards directly worldly and concrete ideas, such as responsibility and freedom.

At *Emo,* in the session on 'freedom', the discussion quickly arrived at a slightly different question, one of fragility. Annabelle remarked how "you need to really know yourself before you can be truly free — including all your shortcomings". Nico wholeheartedly agreed with that and made *Emo* and other associations at least partly responsible for his movements in the right direction:

> I think she is right. It took me some time to uncover [*decacher*], find out about myself and accept where I need help. […] What really helps me are the associations. If I didn't have them I wouldn't be there today […] Others help me to be free; it's not always just because of me that I am free.

<p align="center">*   *   *</p>

As with the day centre (ESI), just about a kilometer further north, *Emo* was a place of refuge for my informants. They came here after they had decided that a change in their lives (the quitting of alcohol) was necessary but also that they needed help, as Nico made clear (see Weinberg 2005:196 on the 'pledge'). The activities *Emo* offered were contributing to ordering and structuring people's lives in the same sense as the shelter was in Desjarlais' (Desjarlais 1997:93f,175) study of Boston: "The shelter fixed time as an episodic steady-state order. […] The clocks and routines seemed objective". Showing up every day at 9.30am was a first means of structure; it was also expected to notify the group of any appointments which would clash with *Emo* hours beforehand adding another layer of future planning. The brainstorming on Tuesdays was ultimately not only about coming up with an interesting idea for an outing, but also about taking initiative, developing organisational skills, showing responsibility for small tasks in the group.

The Friday philosophy sessions were ambiguous in a similar way. As the manager, Annabelle, explained to me they were about making people think differently, not only about everyday life but reflecting on bigger, more abstract question. They were also about engaging with each other, building a sociality as a group while always also thinking about themselves. *Emo* was — as Weinberg (2005:118) explains in his study of

homeless people with addictions in the US — providing "tools for working on their recoveries [making] the residents [...] the primary caretakers of their own recoveries". A similar sense of self-responsibility was fostered also in Zigon's (2011) informants. He explains: programme participants worked towards a normal life, one of "responsibility for others [and also] perhaps more important self-responsibility" (ibid.:154). While Zigon likens this notion of the responsible citizen to an emerging neoliberal agenda in Russia, I would like to paint this emphasis in more positive terms as a form of trust, a faith in people to be able to manage. Rather than taking addiction as a permanent disease (like at AA, Antze 1987), granting responsibility to a recovering alcoholic adds something to his or her sense of self-worth. At *Emo,* visitors' responsibility in fact came in waves, as people were most importantly provided with a space to be and reflect, a home, with a certain order — interrupting the drug-time every morning — but with considerable freedom to misbehave (drink). Unlike at *Sun,* the people working at *Emo* were more directly involved in changing the visitors' lives over time opening up their view onto the future again.

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For Carl, the support at *Emo* was, notably, exactly the right type of push he needed to order his thoughts. While he had gained access to at first a hotel and, eventually, mid-term housing (see Chapter 6), the conversations I had with Carl when we were at *Emo* were very clearly linked to a more positive outlook onto his future. Not only did he reconnect to his ex-girlfriend and his son in early 2016, he also cleaned up with the lies he used to tell her and had started making hopeful plans again:

> Now she knows kind of where I am. I told her that I don't have an apartment and that I don't have a job and that I am on the street and that things are not good. [...] Flights aren't expensive and she didn't say 'no' to not getting back together. I still have hope for this. There is a chance. I am sure. They are the only people in this whole world I care about. I do need to get back closer to them soon. They are my family, you know. They are my people.

Carl came full circle here to rethinking his connection to home, now in the sense of what he considers his family, 'his people'. He came to a point where hope started to play an

important role in his thoughts about the future again ('There is a chance. I am sure'). The turn away from using alcohol as an anaesthetic 'painkiller', from cutting himself off from time, as I argued above, was on the one hand very much based on his own decision. He chose a different type of freedom — not being free of an institutional time structure as when resorting to drug time, but with a direct anchoring in routines proposed by *Emo*. It was a also time order in which alcohol did not play the role of pushing away his thoughts — past, present, future — but one which he was plugged into, aware of. He joined *Emo* from the beginning because he felt ready for it. He was ready to leave the street behind. On the other hand, the activities and encounters at *Emo* supported and pushed him further and allowed him to disconnect himself from the street. As he explained to me, this was crucial for him:

> They are all drunkards and if I am with them I drink too. I'd much rather just not go and see them now [...] I wasn't here at all yesterday and that helped me not to drink at all. [...] It's fine at the moment. I don't have at tremor or anything. I can pretty much just not drink at least for now. When I had this period of hard alcohol last autumn when I was hanging out with the polish guys I really went all the way. We had a lot of vodka and whiskey. Then I had problems getting up in the morning and issues with my hands trembling. Now I am fine, actually. As long as I keep myself busy everything is good. [...] I do need to really find something to do. The structure which *Emo* gives me is good but I still don't really know what to do in the afternoon. I don't really have any place to go to or anything to do really.

While the evaluation was surely a momentary picture — as many people dealing with addiction, Carl had regular episodes of heavy drinking; his development was not linear but he progressed in waves (see Ray 1961) — he clearly had a positive view of his situation. He showed a clear interest in his future again. *Emo* was a place that kept Carl busy, a place of busy-ness, in a different way than the painful and stressful drug time did. It gave him something to do, and, when he wasn't occupied by its activities, the likelihood of falling back into the habit of spending time on the street with the others brought him closer to drinking. Being at *Emo* kept him away from the street and at the same time changed his state of mind; it provided a daily structure, a point of departure and it helped him to discuss his ideas about the future with Annabelle on a regular basis.

As we sat down after a morning at *Emo* in summer 2016, he explained to me:

> I want to be close to my family again and I want a job. [...] I can do software stuff.
> [...] The market here is racist [against foreigners]. No stupid jobs [...] but perhaps
> I need to compromise first to get back into the rhythm. I don't want to have a base
> here long-term, I think. I want to get back to Germany but then I know it will be
> so much a harder to cope. When I am on German soil I just can't anymore, it all
> comes back. [...] For now, I need to get my issues under control first. I know that
> the alcohol will most likely accompany me for the rest of my life but I will have to
> keep it under control.

Carl's view at this point was more focused on the future than at any point since I first
met him in late 2014. He wanted to find a job — to get back into what he described as a
'normal' rhythm — and was thinking of moving back to Germany. While he was still
aware that his nightmares might become stronger again in Germany, he was willing to
work on that as well as the alcoholism, his first means to suppress the pain. He wanted
to get things 'under control' and look into the future again. But unlike in Zigon's (2011)
drug rehabilitation facility the future was for Carl at *Emo* not opened up — or pushed
onto people — through religious and moral argument and ultimately through
disciplinary measures, such as public penance (ibid.:144) but by providing space to
reflect and engage, by raising awareness and giving opportunities and alternative time
maps to people.

Conclusion

> You know, it was after I lost my family that I started using hard stuff. I had
> always been using shit. I smoked for years when I was younger. But three years
> ago, when my wife left me with my little daughter I ultimately ended up on the
> street and I met this woman. [...] She was a smoker and told me: 'Why are you sad
> all the time? Just smoke some crack with me'. So I did and it helped. It really
> helped me to not think about it anymore. [...] But now I am sick of it. I want to
> stop it all. I am a different person when I take drugs. I am outside of myself. [...]
> The problem is not doing two weeks of rehab. Everyone can do that. But after that
> you go back to street and meet your old friends all of whom are using and – voilà
> – you are back in it. You need to stay away.

Moritz's explanation mirrors what I have described in the above: as with Carl and Barut and the group of Polish men whom I discussed in detail, Moritz's addiction started as a way of self-medicating, and of forgetting. My informants used alcohol and drugs as a way of controlling their nightmares, their traumata, their bad memories as well as their fear of the future. It helped them not to think about their fears and cut them out of time, cut them off. It produced stressful drug time, a regime, a routine of begging-scoring-shooting up. As I observed, drugs and alcohol were part of both the coping and response mechanisms and as such of a better life on the street — taking control over thoughts and pleasure — but also to a further decrease into more pain. Drugs and alcohol — addiction more generally — was both imagined as a way of control and a part of the complex of problems on the street. At the same time as control returned temporarily, as the addiction becomes stronger and the men get accustomed to a group on the street, control is often lost. Many of my informants did not, however, unconsciously fall into a spiral of drugs — into a cyclical drug time routine — but instead noticed, quite consciously, their downward turns. I showed how drugs were originally part of a remaking of time cutting the user out of past and future, making him responsible to the substance but unable to be so to anyone or anything else in the end. This is when institutions, such as *Sun* and *Emo,* offered support, and, for people like Carl, provided the important ground of re-structuring and busy-ness, but a more reflexive, plugged-in type of institutional business in contrast to the drug time. While *Sun* activities were focused on a 'light' restructuring, an interruption of drug time but mainly on treating the user's body differently through harm reduction methods, *Emo* was providing a more radical and comprehensive alternative routine replacing drug time and creating a space for reflection to open the future again.

In the next chapter I will describe how the structures imposed by institutions can go too far, looking at the temporary housing programmes in which some of my informants took part. Coming from the street to a hotel and being admitted into a temporary hostel at first sounded like the long-awaited progress for people like Carl or Pascal. In reality, however, two years on the street produced a routine — often surrounding alcohol and drugs, as described above — which was incongruent with housing institutions.

Chapter 6: Towards a room of one's own: living in 'ruly' temporary accommodation

In this chapter, I will follow the development of Carl, who, in 2016, managed to find temporary accommodation in a hotel and eventually moved into a *Centre d'hébergement de stabilisation* [shelter for stabilisation] in the 12th *arrondissement*. Looking closely at his time in the hotel as a kind of winter emergency accommodation that was not too different from Declerck's (2003; see also Pichon 1996; Gaboriau and Terrolle 2003; Bruneteaux 2005) study of *Nanterre* — a classical *Centre d'urgence* (CHU) — I argue that, despite its short-term nature, the hotel created an important prolonged rupture from Carl's life on the street. Located in the far West of Paris, his small room did not only provide relative stability of shelter (see Chapter 3), privacy and autonomy, it also brought about a re-structuring of Carl's daily routines. Both geographically and activity-wise, Carl was able (and willing) to focus less on begging, drinking and drug time (see Chapter 5), and instead concentrate on leaving the street behind.

In the second part of the chapter, I will move on to observations of my time as a volunteer at *Valley of Hope* (VoH), a *Centre d'hébergement de stablisiation* (CHS) run by *Freedom* in the 15th *arrondissement*. In France, institutional housing for homeless people is mainly provided in so called *Centre d'Hébergement et de Réinsertion Social* (CHRS) which make up about half of the 80,000 places in 2010 (Rullac, Noalhyt, and Neffati 2014). The second half of the places available comes in the form of either hotel rooms or CHSs / CHUs. Living for three months in a CHS I call *Valley of Hope* (VoH) with men such as Franck, Jean and Patrice, I observed how they were on the one hand adapting their single rooms as a material home (see Zulyte 2012; Miller 2001), but struggling on the other hand with rules and routines. I argue that the structure put forward by staff and *bénévoles* — not to drink inside the *Centre*, how to clean the bathroom, how to use the bins, when and where to shop, when to eat together — were part of what Clarke (2015) recently called technologies of the self (following Foucault [1997]). While Clarke thinks through material concerned with Shari'ah law — a 'more total' legal regime than that which is at work in a homeless shelter — some of the rules I will describe below resemble the intricate complications surrounding handshakes or nail polish for many Muslims. It is in this sense that I will describe the environment of the shelters as 'ruly'

following Clarke. By following rules and repeating practices and routines, a project towards the good life (leaving the street context behind, advancing on the ladder of housing) is advanced through internalisation and entrenchment (ibid.: 249,251,253). Such rules become part of the person by being learnt or relearnt. Conflicts occurred in this way, however, between 'being a good shelter resident' and other desires, such as drinking and socialising (Schielke 2009). For some inhabitants, learning the rules of *habiter ensemble* at *Freedom*'s shelter *Valley of Hope* was not easy — or they didn't want to learn them — making it so that the project of the good life as approached through the rules as techniques of the self often re-collapsed. Ultimately, then, these techniques had ambiguous effects: the rules were helping some people, such as Franck, to relearn and practice routines of living together and managing their lives, while they created obstacles for others, such as Jean, who preferred to return to the street rather than follow the 'ladder' from institution to institution.

Altogether, temporary accommodation — be it the emergency shelter a winter-hotel provides or the three to four years my informants were able to spend in *Centres* such as VoH — with its struggle between enough/too much of freedom and 'ruly' order, which worked for some but not all of the people I met. I will unravel these struggles and how the imagined *parcours* out of homelessness does often lead to — as Bruneteaux (2005:108) puts it — a semi-permanent circle starting with Carl's time in the hotel.

Living in a hotel room — a rupture from life on the street
As part of the winter initiative of the city and the mayor in Paris (Paris.Fr 2017),[65] Carl was offered three months in a private hotel in the West of Paris (Méner 2013). Organised by Carole, Carl's social worker at *Freedom* at the time, he moved in before Christmas 2015. I visited him on a cold afternoon in mid-January 2016. The train took me to a bourgeois suburb of the city. As I climbed up the stairs from the metro and stepped into the cold of the street at around 4.30pm, the only other people around were elderly women. The house was right on the corner, impossible to miss with its big sign and its brightly lit restaurant on the ground floor. Two people sat at the bar talking to the patron as I walked past the windows and into the black door with the sign 'hotel'.

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[65] Under this *Plan* already when temperatures fall under -5C at night, additional efforts by the *Samu Social* and other organisations are put in place (increased number of street tours, additional resources for hotel rooms).

Nobody greeted me as I entered and climbed up the three stories that lead me past rooms with erratic numbers — 1, 157, 2 , 269, 3, 389.

As I knocked on Carl's door hoping that he hasn't forgotten the *rendez-vous*, I wondered: "Can this ever be [his] home?". He opened and invited me into his room with a smile. The window was wide open. The room was small but had everything one needs: the bed took up most of the space, built into a niche; black duvet covers and sheets made the room appear dark. A big, open shower right next to the toilet was separated from the main area with a curtain. The floor was laminate, and the bathroom, which was a centimetre higher up, tiled. The walls were covered in white, unassuming tapestry. The closet was walled off and, again, separated with a curtain. During my stay Carl didn't turn on the light. It smelled of cigarettes.

I brought some things to eat — baguette, cheese, some sweets — and a beer for Carl.[66] We started talking about 'stuff':

> I don't have anything from Berlin days anymore. Everything was in my backpack which was stolen. All my pictures — of [his family], the cats — my knives and flashlights. The only thing that is left is my belt. I got it from my grandfather once. I think I must have had it for over 15 years. I was wearing baggy pants to school and one day my belt just ripped. I went up to him and asked him whether he had a belt for me. That's the one that he gave me.

In fact, Carl didn't have a lot of things. The clothes he was wearing, another pair of shoes, another t-shirt, some underwear, a brand new Adidas jacket ("I got it yesterday"), some magazines and lighters and a fork and a set of scissors, a pocket knife and a spoon. There was no food other than that which I brought. There wasn't even a bottle of water, but only plastic cups which he took from *Freedom*. He wasn't really interested in things, it seemed, and he was only a little upset about the loss of his precious (and expensive) army backpack that contained all the different items he brought from Berlin.

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[66] Bringing a beer to Carl, a recovering alcoholic, was a decision I had not thought through at the time. I felt it was the right kind of hospitable gift, one which Carl would value while at the same time contributing to his addiction. In retrospect, the decision remains ambiguous but in line with the risk reduction policy Carl was part of at *Emo.*

He did mention his deceased grandfather's belt, an important memory from earlier days. It is one of the first times, Carl spoke so positively about the past, I feel the hotel — and the rupture it brings with it — has opened up a space for this type of longing for an idealised past translated and connected to a possible future home (see Chapter 1). I argue that this has to do with the change in rhythm the move to the hotel meant for Carl: a rupture from his routines around the *Gare du Nord* and the people there.

<p align="center">*   *   *</p>

From January 2016, Carl's daily rhythm changed quite drastically. Unlike in many other emergency shelters in Paris where for instance opening times and eating times were strictly fixed (Declerck 2003; Bruneteaux 2005), Carl was open to do so at his own speed and in his own way. As I describe in the previous chapter (Chapter 5), *Emo* had just opened and Carl went there every morning at 9am. Importantly, Carl claims that he doesn't drink during or even before the *Emo* sessions. "That would totally take away the whole point. I smoke a joint in the morning so that I don't drink. But I don't wanna touch alcohol before I go there".[67]

He has detached himself from the *Gare du Nord*, not only by going to *Emo* but also by changing his working habits. While he finds it harder to beg in the West because people seem less inclined to give, he still spends most of his time outside of the city centre. It is similar with his food consumption: a lot of the food Carl eats since he has moved to the hotel he has stolen. He doesn't go to food places for homeless people (*Armée du Salut, Restaurants du Coeur, Trinité*) anymore. "I did that when I was on the street. Not anymore. It's far away and you must queue and it's just a nuisance. I can just as well walk into a shop and take what I want. Here, they don't even have security". The part of town where Carl has his hotel room is not very aware of a homeless problem. Perhaps this perception also extends to stealing — Carl doesn't have any problems with security guards even though he often goes back to the same shop every day.

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[67] As I already describe in Chapter 5, his desire to not drink was not always easy to maintain. Alcohol and drugs came and went in cycles; Carl's abstinence or reduction had good and bad days (see Bourgois and Schonberg 2009).

Most importantly, his social group has shifted drastically since Carl started living in the hotel and going to *Emo*. Carl doesn't spend time with the Polish guys anymore.

> Whenever I am with them, I will drink. It's just like that. They don't do anything else all day. They don't have any ambitions or goals. It's a shame. Darius [one of the group of Polish men] is my age but he just doesn't get himself together.

Carl has goals, he has ideas what to do with his life. He wants to get out of the context of homeless people and while the only people he really knows in Paris are on the street, he seems dedicated to make a different kind of living for himself:

> I need housing, then I will find a job. I want to somehow be there for my son. That's the most important thing. And like this here [on the street] I can't.

The hotel provided an important starting point — a point of closure and distance from the street. It allowed him to spend time physically away from the *Gare du Nord* and provided a space for him to build his own alternative routines.[68] While these routines were still partly illegal or marginalized (stealing food, begging), many of them were not tied to his former social group anymore. As Carl described above, it was often the sociality of the group of Polish people which led to his heavy drinking. Additionally, through the support that the structure of *Emo* brought to his life (see Chapter 5), Carl was able to focus on goals in the future again by detaching himself from the home he had made before on the street: a proper place to live, a job, reconnecting with his family.

*   *   *

Carl knows that the comfort of having his own room is only a temporary benefit that the *Mairie de Paris* offers during the winter months. He doesn't want to go back to living on the street. He and his social worker at *Freedom*, Carole, have been working on a solution to this problem for months. The necessary form (SIAO — integrated system of reception

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[68] As mentioned above, hotel rooms make up about a fourth of institutional housing for homeless people in France. The fact that Carl's room is more private than many hostel rooms (see below) is due to the fact that not enough actual emergency shelter space is available. Carl 'got lucky' while he already had to downgrade and share a room in his more long term shelter after the hotel as I will describe below.

and orientation) had been sent out in late January. In fact, *Freedom* have one Centre of their own — *Valley of Hope* (VoH) — in the South West of Paris which Carl and I visit in late January 2016.

I pick him up from *Emo*. He drinks the first beer of the day on the train. He is a bit worried about visiting and moving in, as he is not confident in speaking French. The first thing we talk about after the lunch, which Carl barely touches ("Too much red wine yesterday. I am feeling sick"), is the availability of language courses at VoH. Many things are on offer: from personal training to regular classes, anything goes, as long as Carl makes his needs and demands clear. In general, this is how VoH seems to work: similar to a general 'housing first' approach (for France: Houard 2011; Joubert 2015) — practised with much success already in some US states (Padgett, Henwood, and Tsemberis 2016), it understands itself as a first stop out of homelessness and into society.

> We are a community and want to help people follow their projects. We help people to live together again by just practising it. Eight people share a flat. Each with their own room but shared kitchen and bathroom and living room facilities. The shopping and cooking and cleaning is done communally. Everyone finds and then follows their own path while ideally, your flat becomes a constant in your life at least for a couple of years.

This is how Victoria, the Centre manager at that time, explains it to Carl after lunch. Carl seems to really like the place: "I would have my own room and could just be there. And within a couple of months I would be able to find work. I need this kind of structure and stabilisation. In February, I will start with my [psycho]therapy and I will continue going to *Emo* to think about my addiction. So, I hope I can really use this chance properly".

Carl started to look ahead further during the time at the hotel. As I describe above, it provided a break from the street, both geographically and in terms of routines. It was a space of temporary stability and security that allowed Carl to focus again on his desires (seeing his family) and hopes (finding a proper place to stay, finding a job), and the way towards those goals — working with Carole, filling out forms, going to *Emo,* drinking less. While Carl was left very much to himself during the ultimately four months he

spent at the hotel — he saw Carole and the *Emo* staff regularly on his own accord — the next step out of emergency and into longer term accommodation would change this autonomy and unruliness with both beneficial and difficult consequences for the homeless individual, as I will describe in the remainder of this chapter mainly through my observations at VoH.

The most important question became: how much of the emphasis would be on reducing Carl's problems (trauma therapy, drug rehabilitation) and how much would be about what Clarke (2015) describes as techniques of the self[69] (Hoch 2000:867) in order to successfully "travel through the hierarchical continuum of care" (or the staircase system [Busch-Geertsema and Sahlin 2007:68f]) from the street to the emergency shelter to a transitional shelter? What influence does a 'ruly' environment have on a shelter inhabitant? When his stint at the hotel came to an end, the most important thing for Carl was to provide continuity, paradoxically a continuity of the rupture from the street. Carole was very aware of that, pushing the administration behind the *SIAO* forms regularly to take on Carl's demand for temporary housing which was ultimately heard just before his stretch at the hotel came to an end in late spring 2016.

Moving in and moving on — Carl's arrival at his *Centre*

In the end, Carl was offered a place in the all-male *Centre d'hébergement de stabilisation* I call BdR in the 12th *arrondissement*. Here, the match seemed better than at VoH as the group was slightly younger and less in need of support. Almost by accident, I accompanied Carl on his moving-in day. I hadn't seen him for some weeks when I came to a Friday morning session at *Emo* and he told me excitedly that he just left the hotel this morning to move into BdR. We spent the morning together with the others discussing the question of 'sharing' before leaving the centre early to take the metro to Carl`s new home.

> The hotel was nice and everything. I had my own room with stuff, but there was really only one chair and not enough space and it didn't feel like a home. Now this is definitely at least one level better.

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[69] The emphasis would need to be on these techniques of the self — something eventually inherently part of the routines of my informants — if the change was supposed to be long term and sustainable.

He was excited; after spending days worrying about how his future would look like after he left the hotel, he was happy. In fact, I also saw it in his outer appearance: he seemed bronzed from the sun which had been blessing Paris recently and perhaps also from the relative security which awaited him.

> I left the hotel with all my stuff just two weeks ago. It was raining horribly and I had all these bags with me. I arrived at *EMO* with them and didn't know what to do. Fortunately, Carole had just received the news that my hotel would be prolonged for another month and that at the latest by the end of that period, I would be able to move. It's so important; having a roof over one's head. I couldn't sleep for days.

Not knowing where to sleep at night is perhaps the most disturbing worry Carl had. Having a place to stay for the night is about more than just sleeping as I explained already in Chapter 1. It is about having space for resting and relaxing; a space to find oneself after a hard day of begging on the street to make ends meet; a space for hoping, thinking of the future. This is something Carl had already found in the hotel, where his mind was able to look forward, look to work towards a different future. But now, in the *Centre,* Carl was offered more long-term stability — stability to plan, a secure place to start from — for over three years. The line 14 takes us to the 12th in no time. Five minutes' walk from the station, a modern, clean, 5-storey building awaits us. Carl had already visited a week before to see whether he could imagine living here. He did have his doubts. After all, the offer was for a double room, a room shared with somebody else. Could Carl really imagine moving in with another person? What about privacy? What if the other person was messy, or a snorer? He was willing to take the risk and agreed on taking up the offer. As his stint in the hotel came to an end, he didn't really have another option.

It takes a moment before the door is answered. Upstairs we meet the two social workers responsible for the Centre. Elena and Camillo are welcoming, friendly, with open faces and the necessary patience to explain to Carl the rules of the house again in a language which he still has some trouble understanding. Camillo makes sure that Carl knows what to expect:

We do as little as we can. The people here are adults and they can do most things themselves. We are here for them if problems arise, but overall they are responsible. This is the difference between the *Centre d'Urgence* and the *Centre d'Hébergement*. Here people do their own washing, they buy their own cleaning products and their toilet paper. They can stay away if they tell us beforehand. They are free to do whatever they want.

Carl nods. Freedom and responsibility sound good for him who is very much able and willing to take his life into his hands. He doesn't have any questions, and is ready to see his room and, almost more importantly, his roommate. We walk upstairs to the third level where Carl lives at the very end of the long floor. Forty rooms are to be found in the Centre. 70% of them are single rooms. All of them are inhabited by men. Carl's roommate turns out to be a nice, quiet Italian man. Carl is confident that the two would get along. Camillo and Elena take us downstairs into the canteen to introduce Carl to the kitchen staff ("Just so that they know your face") before leaving us to it:

Bienvenue. Vous etes chez vous maintenant. Voilà.
[Welcome. You are at home now.]

*   *   *

Moving into the *Centre* meant a continuation of Carl's housing stability, a continuation of the rupture from the street, and moving up the ladder of the 'continuum of care' — the ladder which would eventually lead to *lodgement* [housing]. But in comparison to his stay at the hotel, where this rupture started, Carl's move to the *Centre* meant a change in several ways.

As Hoch (2000) describes in his study of homeless shelters in the US, BdR — and also VoH, as I will show below — focused on providing stability of housing to begin with but also a "challenge of social improvement" (ibid.:868). While the longer-term outlook and the relative freedom ("We do as little as we can") allows for many opportunities given the initiative of the homeless person, the hostel environment was also geared towards changing the residents' behaviour. In Hoch's case, people were counselled, trained and

educated with the aim of pushing them out of homelessness and poverty. In Paris, the social improvement was usually more concrete and everyday, as I will show below. But, in fact, people were usually not "free to do whatever they want" as Camillo explained to Carl in his opening statement. More freedom — in comparison to *CHUs* in particular — was linked to more responsibility (Bruneteaux 2005; Grand 2015). Responsibility usually translated into rules — of individual behaviour at and outside of the *Centre* as well as rules of collective behaviour, such as dinner times and cleaning schedules. This environment might in this sense also be called 'ruly' (Clarke 2015): Carl was supposed to take over responsibility (cleaning, shopping) while he in fact remained in an environment of support (cooking and general administration at BdR was taken care of, for instance). He was given the autonomy to make his own routines within a structure provided by a loose set of rules also in relation to others (his roommate most importantly). In this sense, BdR does not, from the outside, seem too different from what I observed at VoH.

While I was not able to access Carl's *Centre* on a regular basis to observe the culture of responsibility there mentioned in the opening statement by Camillo, this will be the focus of the second half of this chapter in which I will describe the life at *Valley of Hope* in between imposed order and temporary home and person making.

Vivre Ensemble at *Valley of Hope*

In the summers of 2015 and 2016, I spent altogether almost 10 weeks in a *centre d'hébergement de stabilisation* run by *Freedom*. The place I call *Valley of Hope* (VoH) is part of a new wave (Busch-Geertsema and Sahlin 2007:72) of smaller and more long term hostels of single rooms replacing big communal places such as Nanterre (Declerck 2003). It is conceptualised as a communal living space where people from the street — *residents* — and *bénévoles* (volunteers) live together. 24 people — 8 women and 16 men — occupy single rooms and two small flats for couples, across three floors under one roof. Fifteen of them were homeless during the period prior to moving into *Valley of Hope.* Most of the *residents* (inhabitants) were older (55 years or more), came out of long term unemployment and were able to live off benefits while often being unable to work due to physical and mental health issues. Having applied through SIAO like I described for Carl above, they eventually move into VoH with the prospect of staying for up to four years. The volunteers are mostly students, young professionals and people in between

jobs. The explicit idea of VoH is that the two groups live together (*vivre ensemble*) on a daily basis sharing spaces such as the kitchen, the bathrooms and toilets on each floor as well as a living room, a computer room and a garden for everyone on the ground floor. Shared facilities come with shared responsibilities, such as the weekly shopping, communal cooking as well as maintaining the garden and cleaning. Altogether, VoH corresponds closely to the definition of a homeless shelter provided by Busch-Geertsema and Sahlin (2007), who explain that hostels tend to involve shared spaces, limited (or no) private space and some kind of supervision. VoH is a hostel built for the special purpose of stabilization. According to its own status, VoH which is financed by both public and private means has the general objective to:

> […] give people who have lived on the street previously the necessary time and the space to find themselves and a new autonomy again — this is achieved through a shared living arrangement between 'volunteers' and people in precarious situations (from the organisation's website, translation author's own)

The explicit aim is to offer a space of stability to re-learn decision making in a context of being with other people; while the goal is left unspecified, VoH is a training ground (McNaughton 2008). The supervision over this training is provided by three permanent members of staff — a *résponsable* (manager), an *assistant social* and an *educatrice specialisée* (both different types of social workers) — as well as a varying number of temporary staff — people doing civil service or an internship for their social work studies (see also Chapter 4). While the manager and, at times, also the *assistant social* take care of many of the administrative burdens, like budgeting and maintenance of the house, the group of temporary staff is mainly concerned about organising specific activities, like the ones at *Freedom*. Certain activities, such as gardening, are also provided by volunteers who did not live at VoH but came in once a week. Before I come to think about the role staff played at VoH, I will first focus on the two groups of people who were living there.

A room of one's own: material home-making
VoH is located not too far outside of the centre of Paris in the 15th arrondissement; the neighbourhood is comfortably middle-class. The street is dominated by big and, by the standards of Paris, tall apartment blocks. The former convent was given to the

organization (which still rents it for a symbolic sum) by the order about five years ago, and is hidden in the second row, several metres away from the street. I enter the premises through a heavy metal door, stepping into a courtyard which stretches the whole length of the actual building on its right. A garden on the left as well as a shed (used for things such as painting workshops) complement the development.

When I ring the bell, Paul, the director of VoH until summer 2015 and himself a former monk, welcomes me into the ground floor area. The spacious garden where people come to smoke spills into a big open plan eating, sitting and cooking area. A media room with two computers doubling as the library, is where we briefly sit down. It is tucked away between the two offices for staff and the living area. Paul is in a good mood, excited to move on after four years of running VoH. We already had a briefing when I first came down several months ago, so today he leads me quickly to the second floor where my room for the coming weeks will be. Three apartments are stacked on top of each other, the first two floors for men, the top floor for women. All three have eight rooms which are arranged along a long, windowless corridor. On the one end of the corridor is the kitchen (and one set of stairs leading up and down); on the other end are two toilets and three showers as well as the washing machine and cleaning utensils. Despite posters on the wall everywhere, the apartment feels empty outside of the private rooms.

Paul opens the door to my room — the third one when entering through the main door — and it unfolds neatly in front of me. I immediately gaze out of the window right opposite the door: it takes up the whole width of the back wall. The shutters are down to keep the hot July air out. A small single bed takes up the biggest part of the room underneath the window. A small desk, a chair and a cupboard stand opposite. The built-in wardrobe and a dustbin are right behind the door. This initial setup is the same for everyone who arrives here — volunteers and *résidents* alike.

*   *   *

Unfortunately, I was not able to observe anyone moving in. What kind of initial routines did they have to make the place their own? I could only look at rooms when they were already decorated, made fuller from years of living in them. I never saw some of the ones on my floor. Three months were too few to build up a relationship strong enough to

allow me into their private rooms. Franck, however, had immediately been very open with me, and he showed me around his room when I arrived for my second summer in 2016. He is a diminutive but charming character in his 60s with a lot of grey hair hanging wildly into his face. He was born and raised in Belgium, lived in Luxembourg and eventually moved to France several decades ago. He is into music and technology, a fact that became immediately visible when entering his room.

9: Franck's room at VoH, August 2016.

The room is full of things. Some of them are ordered — notably his laptops, just in front of the window — but most are wildly distributed all over the room, some loosely, some in bags. As Franck walks me through his rooms he points out the things most important to him: his electrical equipment. He is proud of his 17-inch monitor, which he often connects to the only laptop which actually still works and his collection of tablets, pocket PCs and phones. There are cables everywhere. Most of the things which are in the bags are clothes, bed linen and towels; some are filled with documents. His walls are totally empty and there are no visible personal items, such as photos or family memorabilia.

Franck listens to loud rock music most of the day, loves to wear leather and owns about five different mobile phones and tablets in addition to his non-functioning laptops. As he tells me, most of these things he found in bins in wealthy neighbourhoods of Paris previous to his move into VoH in January 2015: "You find a lot if you do the bins and know where. I found everything there". He is very proud that he has this kind of material affluence nowadays.

*   *   *

Private space is something which is very often missing while living on the street, and even many hostels only offered shared accommodation, as in the case of Carl's hostel. At *Valley*, the residents all have their own room. As Zulyte (2012) found in her study in a shelter for homeless mothers in Lithuania, material objects — and the memories connected to them — played an important role in people's home making activities. She (ibid.:24) describes:

> Generally, people create, buy or redecorate material objects and place them at home in order to express themselves [...] the process of redecoration and refurbishment of a flat or a house may mark the beginning of a new period in one's life.

She finds these more general patterns at work in the shelter where people enjoy changing around furniture, finding and buying new pieces as "one of the ways of recreating one's room in the shelter" (ibid.:36). For Franck, the arranging of the pieces was not as important as the collection of them; he seemed to enjoy both the acquisition (striking a good deal, or finding them for free) as well as the hoarding of formerly expensive technology equipment. They were an expression of his self-esteem and persona, of somebody who was able to 'get things' and be part of a modern lifestyle connected to phones and technology, while they were also an expression of his tastes (the focus on rock music symbolised by his guitar). The material environment of the one-room home, Franck constructed around him was as Clarke (Clarke 2001:25) theorizes a home-in-process, "in which past and future trajectories [...] are negotiated through fantasy and action, projection and interiorization". Through objects like the

computers, Franck was still connected to his past on the street (where they came from) while imagining and fashioning himself as a technology-savvy individual; his mobile phone(s) helped him to connect to both friends from street days as well as family in Belgium and Luxembourg. The objects give him something to do (Garvey 2001:55), allow him to construct a history and his way out of it and ultimately also open ways to further progress by enabling him to build (new) personal connections. In this sense, they are a bridge for him between the past and a possible future, grounding him in a material present (home).

   The freedom to decorate one's room, to use it in one's own way, was also valued highly and in beneficial terms by staff, such as the first director, Paul. He explained to me, with reference to Franck:

> It is really good for him here. He has enough space and is really making the most out of it. He is also able to live together in the group here unlike many others.

He was referencing space and what Franck makes of it, explicitly linking the 'good use' of one's room to a Franck's more general good life. But he also pointed at a second dimension of life at the shelter, one more contested and contestable while even more in the focus: the living together. The core of VoH was not the solitary material life in the room I describe above, but sociality, the *vivre ensemble* [living together] which was connected to the 'moving on' in various ways as I will describe now.

Vivre ensemble
I arrive in the kitchen, and a lot of people already sit around the table, cooking or stretched out on the sofa and chairs. It is boiling hot. Jan looks back over his shoulder from his position at the oven, sweating, and smiles at me: "Bonsoir. Good to see you. It's hot". Niceties are exchanged, I shake hands with everyone. Hanna, the *assistant social* who is responsible for our *étage* is present too. It is Monday which means the communal dinner doubles up as the *reunion* [meeting].

   Every Monday all the inhabitants of every flat meet over dinner with one of the *assistant social* to discuss the week ahead and potential issues which have arisen the week before. This week, all seven inhabitants — five *résidents* and two *bénévoles* — are

there at around 8.10pm when Hanna starts talking about cooking and deliveries: "We should have two more dinners this week. When do you want to eat together again? Who wants to cook?". We decide on Wednesday and Thursday, and two volunteers are quickly found for the preparation. In fact, everyone fills out his schedule — when will they be around for dinner and lunch — for the whole week to make the planning and cooking easier. The weekend is as usual emptier as people visit friends or want to keep their evenings free. This week, food is also going to arrive, which is ordered centrally for the whole house. I am going to pick it up with Franck from the storage space on the 4th floor on Wednesday after making sure what we are missing in the kitchen. Lastly, the cleaning tasks are distributed. A list is handed out which has all our names on it; everyone chooses a part of the communal spaces down. "Oh, I don't know. I did the kitchen last week. I'll do the entrance this week". Nobody likes to clean the bathrooms or the toilets, which are usually cleaned by the volunteers. But everyone is expected to do their share.
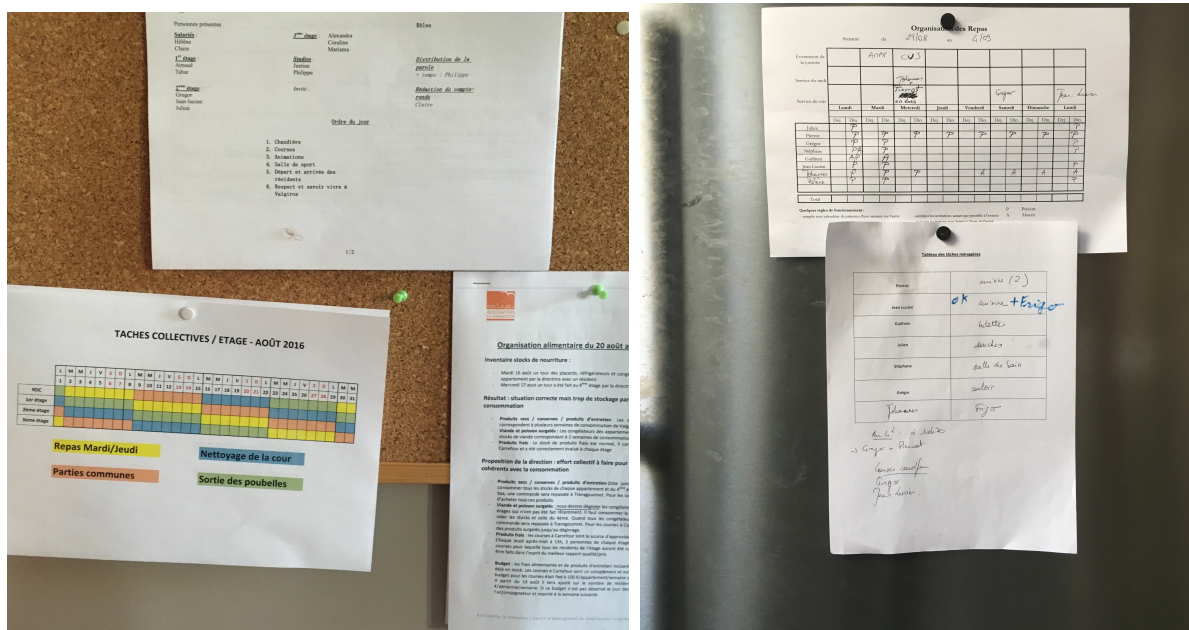
10: Left: The notice board with different announcement and collective tasks.

11: Right: The planning lists on the fridge; meal plan above, cleaning below; August 2016.

Jan is in the mood of talking today. In fact, he has observed that people steal the water bottles he puts into the fridge, and don't clean up their plates and, somehow, that they are also missing glasses, cutlery and cups. "It is not the right way of living together. Everyone is supposed to do their share. We are all in a *cohabitation* [shared house]

together". He seems really angry — in fact he is still sweating after preparing dinner at the hot oven, even though he doesn't eat anything. Food is distributed onto our plates as the reunion comes to an end this week. Hanna puts up the sheets on the fridge –— a visible reminder — and lighter dinner conversation unfolds.

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Many of the Monday reunions happened in a similar way, if often after the actual dinner. Three important things were always on the to-do-list: the timetable for the week's lunches and dinners, responsibilities for cleaning the communal spaces and thirdly complaints. As Hanna explained to me:

> The planning sheets, I know they have difficulties reading and using them but symbolically it represents something very important in terms of spatial and temporal order. It is a symbolic structure in terms of the time and the days.

Planning the week ahead was something which was not usually done on the street (Day, Papataxiarchis, and Stewart 1999). A much less mediated idea of time — or being cut out of time as with drug time (Chapter 5) — was exchanged at VoH for one geared towards the (near) future. People were asked — not always successfully — to pin themselves down to accomplish certain tasks and to take part in certain activities up front, at the beginning of the week. As Hanna observed: this was part of an important structuring effort on the part of the community at VoH as much as it was important to enable the people to live together without friction. Written and visible timetables were used as material techniques (of the self, Clarke 2015) to accomplish this task both to plan ahead and to check up on people who had not followed through with their plans and promises (of cleaning for instance), just as in Desjarlais' (1997) Boston shelters. The after-dinner meeting was another one of these techniques at VoH which provided a space for people to be reminded of certain rules and routines of communal life but also to remind others of breaches of such rules. Hanna's distribution of tasks and Jan's complaints — people stealing his water bottles, missing cups and cutlery — are examples of this.

Desjarlais (1997) reports, how some of the residents in the shelters of his study valued the routines — their "consistency, solidity, and stasis" (ibid.:77) — very highly. Just as in my case, Desjarlais' residents were encouraged to re-focus on standard time, on what Thompson (1967) calls 'work time', taking them away from street or drug time (see Chapter 5). Like in Boston, schedules and timetables at VoH were also a means to encourage residents to lead more active lives and helping them to make and commit to plans (ibid.:90). Timetables and planning sheets were material manifestations of the 'ruly' environment at VoH structuring time in a partly self-defined way (inhabitants were able to choose activities, or announce when they wouldn't be there). Ultimately, this 'ruly' environment of technologies of the self was geared towards a development out of homelessness not necessarily through imposed and sanctioned discipline, transparency and omniscience but — again as Desjarlais (ibid.:102) describes — the encouragement of slow change and the development of embodied new routines.

In fact, other sheets ordered different aspect of the household. The ordering regime extended quite literally to the toilet seat.
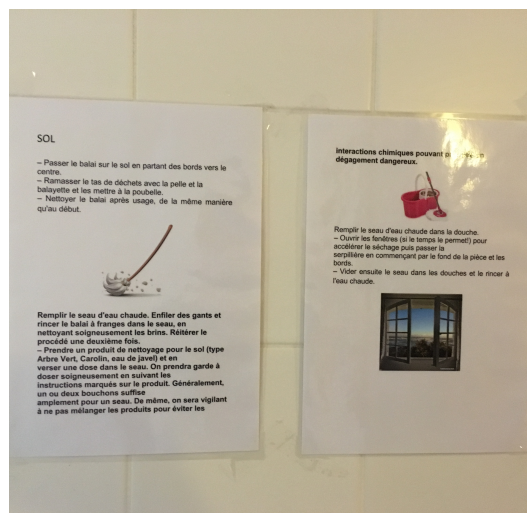
12: Left: Laminated sheet in the 2nd floor bathroom explaining how to clean the floor.
13: Right: Laminated sheet in the 2nd floor bathroom explaining how to clean the showers.

Esther, the latest *directrice* at VoH who started in early 2016 explained to me where these sheets came from: they were often reactions of *benevoles* to complaints of the residents. Together with the staff, to fix an issue such as messy bins or unclean toilet facilities, a written kind of prescription often served as the seemingly best and easiest

way. That most of the *résidents* were not used or willing to read and then follow pages of written rules on how to use a sponge rarely changed these behavioural patterns of printing and making things visible. The sheets were first of all a means of influencing people's behaviours but they were also the result of prior complaints and problems. The jungle of sheets I encountered in 2016 was a result of months of surviving a shortage of staff and resulting complaints from the *résidents.* The underlying principles were only watered down in this way which — due to their ubiquity — often led to people no longer looking at any sheets at all.

But living together at VoH indeed came with more general restrictions. In fact, the first greeting to your new apartment already on the entrance door to the floor is A4 pages full of rules. In particular, the topics of alcohol and smoking are sensitive ones at *Valley* as they are in most circumstances for many homeless people. I described in more detail in Chapter 4 how alcohol and hard drugs are used on the street. These patterns of usage would not suddenly change when an *hébergement* was offered and indeed as Fabian, another volunteer explained to me in an interview, most of the residents at VoH are alcohol dependent. On paper, however, VoH was a dry hostel: no substances were allowed to be consumed inside, mirroring what Flanagan (2012:64) found in his study of homeless shelters in Atlanta and the US more generally: "most long term shelters require complete abstinence from substance use". Indeed, Michalot and Simeone (2010) also find that in French shelters (any after the CHUs) the perceived consumption of alcohol can be one of the main exclusion criteria. In theory, VoH was, in its statutes, similarly opposed to the alcohol consumption of its inhabitants. In practice, however, the *résidents* were either able to smuggle alcohol inside or go outside the front door to sit on a bench and drink. If bottles were found in the rooms, the consequences were minimal; a verbal warning was already considered a rather harsh way of dealing with this transgression. In practice, VoH was already an almost wet hostel which was clinging on to certain more traditional rules which were slowly changing.[70] The practical non-existence of sanctions — at least sanctions imposed from staff — was an interesting difference to the environment Clarke (2015) describes. In many contexts where Shari'ah

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[70] Particularly in 2016, after the opening of *Emo*, discussions within the organisation *Freedom* were much more geared towards allowing people to continue their consumption also at VoH. The paradigm of risk reduction was taking over from the one of abstinence. Before the time of my leaving, however, no changes were introduced in the daily life of VoH.

law was applied, he argues that in fact the transgression of rules and the following correction of the mistake was "were the presence of a rule becomes apparent" (ibid.:233). The "danger of error" (ibid.) at VoH was also present but errors were rarely corrected meticulously; rather there was a certain leniency in treating breaches and conflicts, as the episode concerning Jean below.

*   *   *

Overall, Esther and her staff did still believe in the higher significance that the kind of order sheets, food and shopping routines, consumption rules and budgets have on the residents. "So, when a guy is ready to move on, he will order his stuff, voilà". The work starts with small and concrete things like the cleaning or the shopping, fixing certain meeting times with the idea that "if you start taking care of little things in terms of your cleaning or your hygiene […] that will help you after when you are alone to live normally". She cites Georg — one of the newer residents on my floor, a Polish man in his mid-50s, ex-military, very friendly while not too talkative — as a positive example for this:

> Georg, he does the whole floor and even more but he would never say anything if the others don't do their work […] he understands that one needs to work together, live together, work on living together.

Hanna added to this analysis:

> I believe that says a lot about oneself — if you see how certain people just clean their rooms, make food, do their tasks. If everyone did that, VoH would already be a better place. […] Georg, for instance, he manages to deal with rules because is good at integrating a new habit.

Georg was seen by both Esther and Hanna as somebody who followed the rules and was progressing in his way out of homelessness. He was successfully able to pass the different tests of *vivre ensemble*: not drinking, fulfilling communal cleaning tasks, taking part in meetings, volunteering for cooking. As Hanna and Esther both argue, that will qualify him in due time for the next step, a different kind of (often more independent)

living arrangement. Returning to Zulyte's (2012) study of a Lithuanian shelter, parallels can be drawn. Zulyte found similar rules about cleaning and time-tables, the absence of substances (and visitors) (see also Grand 2015): "they have to adapt to the rules of the shelter and to get on with the other inhabitants here" (ibid.:34). Complaints about the rules were frequent and so were certain breaches of rules. Zulyte concludes that, ultimately, the shelter was a testing and training ground (McNaughton 2008) both for the institution (is the *resident* able to move on?) and the inhabitant (what do I really need and want?): "While interacting with the 'potential environment' of the shelter, most of the homeless mothers are able to feel and to perceive who and what is not included into their most intimate space and their personal life. Thus, a shelter definitely can help homeless people to build up their self-awareness" (ibid.:44).

At VoH, rules are fixed even more in the form of an initial — again more or less symbolic — contract new residents sign when the start living at VoH. Hanna explained to me:

> They all sign a contract, yes. […] They set themselves goals in five areas: health, work, housing, rights and everything which has to do with pleasure. For some, it is just 'I need to see a doctor regularly', 'I need to take care of my addiction', 'I need to check with the unemployment agency'. […] I try to identify the principal problem of the person and after that to construct different steps to deal with it.

The contract — beyond the general rules of *vivre ensemble* — described above was focused on more personal goals of development. Defined in an initial discussion with Esther or Hanna and refined on a regular basis, it was the ultimate goal sheet. How am I developing? Constant self-reflection was written into the inhabitants' routines in this way, in a way which was also encouraged by *Emo* (see Chapter 5). The contract in fact can be seen as another manifestation of a technique of the self in Clarke's sense: geared towards the continuous development and thinking about a personal future, it constituted a constantly adapted, again usually sanction-less technique, partly measuring tool (how much have I progressed), partly self-defined catalogue of goals. It was both a way of imposing certain daily routines onto people as well as a way of thinking beyond them about a better future for my informants and the *assistants sociaux*. Which role, however, do the different impersonations of the institution — staff and volunteers — play in the collection of these techniques of the self?

'Working' at Valgiros – mimetic education and restauration

Once during my first summer at VoH, I prepared food in the kitchen as Jean stormed in and asked: "Did you clear the table yesterday after dinner?" I replied: "Yes, isn't that what we do? You weren't there by about 8.45pm so rather than leaving it out, I thought it would be good to just put it away?" "We are not in prison here. I can come and eat when I want and you can't just clear the table like that". Jean was one of the long term *résidents* whose stay in VoH will end in about a year. He was in his 50s, relatively short but bulky with a drinker's belly; his arms were covered with home-made tattoos. He started out being very friendly, as he spoke good German thanks to his time in the French military as an exchange in Germany, but when he drank he would becomes unpredictable to an extent that people avoided him and were afraid of his erratic behaviour. His aggressiveness also came out on that occasion.

Suddenly, the discussion switched to another level: "You have only been here for a month; you can't just change everything and make your own rules." Quickly, Jean became very aggressive, stormed through the kitchen, opened and closed the fridge violently, the same with the kitchen door. He turned around and looked at me and shook his fist in front of me and threatened me with words "It will be hot tonight" (at the reunion). Jean arrived last for dinner that night, and hadn't lost his aggression. He didn't want to look at me and screamed around: "Do you want me to tell everyone now? Do you wanna eat first?". In fact, the dinner itself went relatively smoothly; nobody further asked Jean what he meant for the time being.

After dinner, though, Jean put forward his complaints about me taking away the plates as well as the table from the kitchen to my room (as Paul had advised me to do). "This is not to be excused", he argued, "these two mistakes, there is really nothing that can take them away. I will stay angry with him. It's fine for everyone, but really this doesn't work for me". From these very concrete complaints towards me, he switched to a more general discussion: "Something on this *étage* needs to change and it is up to you [looking at Fabian and Christoph — the two *bénévoles*] to do this". Fabian answered very clearly: "We are not in a forest; this is a shared living arrangement. We are living together". He explained that the volunteers were not responsible to look after, rule or decide about the *résidents*: "Staff tell us: you live together. There is no hierarchy. There are a couple of

rules that everyone follows and if need be there is the *directeur* but on the *étage*, there is no hierarchy." Fabian wanted to establish that there is no responsibility he had over the *résidents* — problems are to be figured out together. This togetherness also means sharing responsibility: "Everyone gives as much as he can and wants to. At times, people give more, at others they take more". He was careful to further explain this to Jean, thinking back to other situations where conflicts such as the above had come up calming him down by complimenting him: "Often, you give a lot [contribute a lot]. Some people can't do it the same way, though. They might be giving back other things".

We came to a point when cleaning up after the reunion — no one else said too much during the discussion between Fabian, Jean and me — where Jean and I embraced, exchanged a couple of words in German, and could look into each other's eyes normally again.

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One of the *bénévoles* in my second summer at VoH described the role of the social workers in the following way to me:

> The social workers need to define the frame [*cadre*], propose activities and take care of everything which has to do with re-integration and health. [...] They have the right of coercion; it is them who make sure the limits are guarded.

In contrast, the role of the *bénévoles* themselves — permanent occupants of a room just like the *résidents* — is according to Fabian, another *bénévoles* in 2015, much more complicated:

> [We are playing] a kind of double game, as [we] are the 'long arm' of the social worker in the apartment while at the same time trying to integrate into a life with the habitants on an equal level. [...] We need to be visible and respect the order of things. [...] But the turnover of us is so high; we don't really provide any kind of stabilization.

Both of these statements taken together reflect the conflict with Jean above: it is unclear

who is responsible for dealing with disputes; the hierarchical positions of permanent staff and *bénévoles* vis-à-vis the inhabitants is in practice not transparent and as a consequence there are unresolved questions about who is able to communicate and enforce rules of the *vivre ensemble*. In the above situation, Jean is, additionally, testing his own limits: how far can I push the newcomer [me] and impose my own ideas onto him, educate him in a way? Who is going to stop me? The conflict is resolved not through the demonstration of authority — Fabian is very clear on the *bénévoles*' lack of it — but appreciation. As soon as Jean notices that we are not trying to blame him for anything but in fact usually value his contribution to communal living — his cleaning, washing, ordering — he retreats. This kind of treatment mirrors what Hanna describes as the core of the *bénévoles*' box of instruments:

> The volunteers are there to live at VoH and press their rhythm on their flat. Their main instrument is mimesis.

By appreciating Jean's action in more general terms — rather than producing a (false) hierarchical order — Fabian demonstrates the kind of behaviour he would expect the other *résidents* to show in similar situations. On the one hand, Jean's aggressive behaviour had no material consequences; no sanctions were put in place. A certain responsibility was left with the volunteers, however: people like Fabian were expected to 'manage well', foresee how much pressure they could put on people like Jean, how much space was necessary. Ultimately, the volunteers were part of a process of collective education and training (McNaughton 2008:113), however: resolving conflicts together, shopping together, cooking together, cleaning the flat collectively. The idea is to give an example, be an exemplar and practice a light kind of paedagogy (Humphrey 1997).

The conflict above brings to the fore an issue at the core of Busch-Geertsema and Sahlin's (2007) critical reflections on the use of homeless hostel accommodation in Europe: a hostel is not the best place to prepare its inhabitants for the independence of living alone or outside of an institution. They argue that, indeed, "staying in a hostel requires a special competence which is quite different from living independently. Whether or not people behave well in hostels has very little to do with their capacity and

capability to manage in a self-contained dwelling" (ibid.:76).[71] Was Jean's problem in dealing with certain social situations hence only growing out of an artificial social setting so very unlike other settings outside of the hostel? Busch-Geertsema and Sahlin go on: "Instead of learning how to cope in society outside inmates have to struggle to defend their identity and adapt to their role as, in this case, shelter residents" (ibid.:78). According to their critique, in most shelters control of the residents is much more important than servicing and supporting them (ibid.:80). At VoH, I did observe a 'ruly' environment where certain techniques of the self — materially appearing as time-tables, planning sheets, contracts — were put in place. But control in the above sense — surveillance, room checks, sanctions — was more or less absent. While this lack of disciplinary power and focus on support can be seen as negative, this seems to be an environment Busch-Geertsema and Sahlin are missing in most homeless shelters.

Was there, however, something missing? I saw how unlikely it was that people passing through VoH would indeed very quickly live completely independently again even if only because they couldn't find work. Most of the residents leaving VoH over the last five years either went into other collective housing projects, some of them slightly less supportive, or back into a street environment. Perhaps the utopia of climbing up the ladder of different hostels to 'ultimately exiting from homelessness through acquiring a flat' was what should be questioned. Was the possibility to relearn "how to have control over his choices, […] to manage his 'freedom' and the pressure this 'freedom' brought" (McNaughton 2008:113) at first more important than any kind of preparation for what is often called independent living? Was it only at a later stage of the ladder that the focus should shift to preparing people for living alone rather than supporting them to learn or re-learn rules of collective togetherness? A first step — and VoH was very much seen as a first point of stabilisation — might have to be restoration of the person as Hanna explains below.

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In contrast to the *bénévole*, the role of the social work staff — the *assistante sociale*

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[71] While the togetherness practised at a hostel might indeed be good as a preparation for (wage) work — something Busch-Geertsema and Sahlin underestimate — this aspect is not too important for my informants as most of them were not able to work or long term (and entrenched) unemployed.

Hanna, the *educateur specialisé* Bernard and the varying directors in particular — is more explicitly geared towards enabling change. As Hanna lays out:

> The social workers are there to press for change and to apply the catalogue of rules. Their main instrument is the contract.

She goes on to explain that her main goal is one of restoration:

> I often think of a façade or a nice picture which was somehow damaged. My role is to repaint the parts which have been damaged and to see which material is the best to restore it. This takes a while and if something goes wrong — the paint doesn't work or something — I need to make sure it doesn't further damage the person.

On the one hand, Hanna sees herself as a restorer of people; she wants to protect the inhabitants from outside forces and from falling down, accompanying them on their chosen way proposing activities and projects [materials]. On the other hand, she has a stricter role as a change-maker. She is responsible for imposing the rules where need be and softly enforce the contract of goals (see above) the *résidents* defined for themselves. Ultimately, like the conflict with Jean described above, the practices of holding people responsible were rather weak, supportive rather than sanctioning, however. During my three months at VoH not a single sanction — house arrest or a fine for instance — was enforced. The culture was one of restoration in this sense indeed. In her study of homeless accommodation in the UK, Hutson (1999) argues that often a lack of fit between institutional rules and inhabitants desires can lead to conflicts. While she proposes informal networks and flexibility on the part of staff as potential aids, I would describe the culture of restoration (rather than discipline) as an important factor in managing VoH. While VoH is a place of training (as McNaughton [2008:113] calls the supported accommodation she observed) –—"training to take responsibility, to behave in the right way, to make the right choices and to be able to reintegrate into society" (ibid.:113) — it was also a place where wrong decisions, slips and mistakes were not sanctioned; both staff and volunteers had to accommodate the *résidents*. It was in this

sense that also VoH like McNaughton's hostel was perhaps not 'real life' (ibid.).[72]
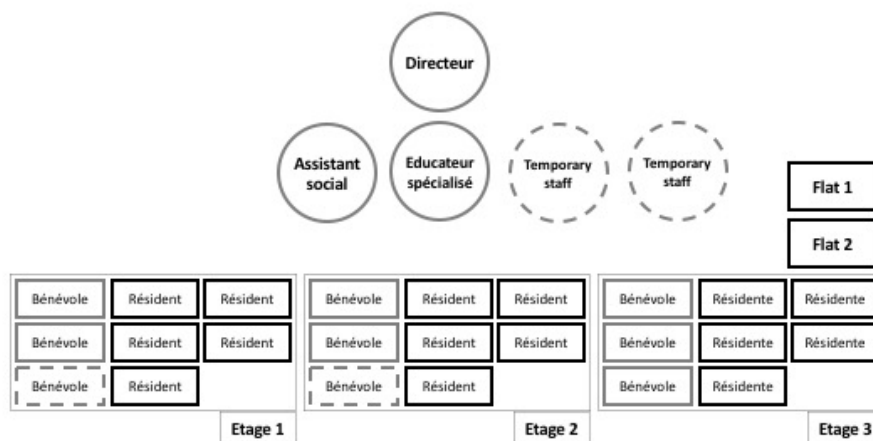
14: Organigram of the order of people at VoH, own graphic.

I have tried to capture the ideal and imagined situation of living together and defining the life together at VoH in the above graph. As we have seen particularly in descriptions of situations of conflict above is that this picture is indeed an ideal scenario: volunteers — such as Fabian — have to step up at times incorporating roles of staff; at other times volunteers are in fact absent.[73] Inhabitants are pushing against both other residents and staff and volunteers, straying outside of their boxes as much as they can. Even more so can the structure collapse into a rather flat hierarchy when things go well, such as during outings and celebrations like the five years of VoH in 2015. Most importantly, however, the structure is always a temporary one — a testing ground, as I described above — for the *résident* as the aim is one of moving on and out.

Moving on — towards home?

> It is kind of like the cocoon (which the caterpillar spins for itself) where the 'bureau' [staff] and the 'house' [material environment] protects you from the outside […] and allows you to be and become yourself. The interior is really soft and you can develop until you are ready to become the butterfly.

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[72] Unlike Lyon-Callo (2004) in his devastating critique of the homeless shelter industry in the US, I can, however, not make any substantial critique of places such as VoH being a "governmental intervention designed to reform poor people"(ibid.:109), a "liberal effort [as part of the] neoliberal and conservative policy makers['] interventions". Rather, my observations were on a 'lower' more everyday practical level on practices of support, restauration and proposed change.

[73] When I arrived in 2016, a shortage of volunteers (four instead of six male volunteer positions were filled) was causing significant complaints from residents. I signify this in the graph through the broken line around two of the volunteer boxes. Normally, even live-in volunteers have occupations outside of VoH during the day so that they are present mainly during the evening and weekends.

This is how Fabian, *bénévole* during my first summer, described VoH to me in an interview. He saw the place as a kind of cocoon, a material and personified structure of protection, giving the *résidents* the chance to develop themselves. This view seems rather fitting considering the ethnographic descriptions above; VoH is not only a place of protection but also a place of change, of (softly) pushing the *résidents* up the (imagined) continuum of progress out of homelessness, like a cocoon protecting the caterpillar's transformation into a butterfly. It is important to consider one notable difference: inhabitants are not necessarily protected until they are ready, but only until their three to maximum four years are over. Despite this leaving date always looming on the horizon, I did not observe the kind of paradox at work in Desjarlais' (1997:37) Boston shelters, where staff had trouble making clear that the accommodation should *not* become a home. If at all, the moving on was perhaps left a little bit too late at VoH.

  The time limit at VoH is hence what hit Jean just before I arrived in the summer of 2016. I learnt about his plans to move to a much more independent living/working environment in the *Bretagne* only retrospectively. He had in fact already spent a week there and decided it would be the right thing for him. As Fabian told me, however, his last weeks at VoH were rather complicated: a lot of drinking, violence, fear of leaving, missing meetings with staff. He ultimately didn't take the train to the new place but instead disappeared in Paris. He returned to VoH a week later pretending, that he had passed a week in the *Bretagne* while having been spotted by other members of *Freedom* in his old neighbourhood in the East of Paris. Because his room was already reserved for somebody else, he was in the end not able to return to VoH and left more or less unaccompanied, starting another complex cycle in between the street and homeless institutions (McNaughton 2008:87ff).

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Jean's situation is extreme, but is not without its predecessors (another woman had just left from VoH before I arrived in the summer of 2015 and has since been seen living back on the street), while other inhabitants of VoH do indeed go on to live in different hostels and more independent living situations, following the pathway off the streets

(Marr 2012). Talking to directors, members of staff and volunteers alike, however, the general opinion is that moving on from VoH is complicated.

   Another volunteer explained this to me with reference to other problems the inhabitants already often bring with them. Commenting on Jean's situation, he said: "This [VoH] isn't working for him. It's sad to say, but I think he isn't really able to live in a shared living situation or even society". Jean like many of the other inhabitants at VoH does indeed suffer from severe alcohol addiction as well as varying degrees of mental health issues.[74] A one-year intern had her own explanation with reference to the people's motivation:

> A lot of them are not easy to motivate, they are sitting in their rooms all day long watching DVDs, playing games, drinking and being bored; but they also don't want to be engaged very often.

Both of the above blame the people themselves and their (lack) of capacities for the failure of not moving on successfully: they are ill; don't want to change; resist. Paul, the first director of VoH, on the other hand seemed more realistic and self-accusatory in his judgment of the place:

> It is complicated. There are people here who simply arrive at re-connecting to life. They find projects, friends, little things to do. But there are others who don't. We invest time and effort but it only works for some people.

I would propose a slightly different view on things, starting with the explicit aim of the work at VoH following Esther, the most recent director of the place:

> You see, passing from a 'now' — because on the street 'where do I sleep tonight, what do I eat now' […] creating a time a little bit longer and ultimately […] a future [is a great success].

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[74] Other inhabitants, Momo and Jan, were diagnosed with even more severe mental health issues, such as hallucinating depression. They went to outpatient facilities in the *quartier* on a regular basis to deal with these issues which were – like at *Emo* and *Freedom* – not discussed within VoH as the necessary resources (psychological or psychiatric care) were consciously drawn in from the outside.

VoH was neither necessarily a home nor a passing step towards a more independent home on the next level, on the next stage of the 'continuum of care'. It was a testing and experimenting ground which provided relative stability, a space to use technologies of the self to define oneself in relation to (imposed) rules and structure and timetables (see Zulyte 2012:44). Some (social) mechanisms had to be restored or relearnt (Hanna); others were taken up naturally (material home making). Ultimately, VoH was a space where one could look at the future again. The ruliness of the space was really focused on the technologies of the self, on the self-government rather than the external disciplining. Rules — also in material manifestations such as time tables, planning sheets and contracts — were in place, yes, but they were negotiated with the inhabitants; they were neither strictly enforced nor — potentially even more important — sanctioned, opening up the space for reflection and ultimately thinking about the future on their own terms.

Franck was doing exactly that in our last discussion together in the summer of 2016. He explained proudly how he had recently visited his mother in Belgium: "I am not at home here. I need my people". He was thinking about moving back — back to where is family was, both his mother and his ex-wife. He was trying to re-connect to his past and his home-country. His hoped for and desired home was never going to come from a shelter – or in that matter an apartment in Paris. It was deeply linked to his past, his memories and his family such as it was for Sabal and Carl (see Chapter 1). I learnt only in late 2017 that Franck had actually been able to make this move back to his family.

Conclusion – Better lives on the street

There is no panacea for the suffering and self-destruction of the protagonists in these pages [...] I hope my presentation of the experience of social marginalization in El Barrio, as seen through the struggles for dignity and survival of Ray's crack dealers and their families, contributes on a concrete practical level to calling attention to the tragedy of persistent poverty and racial segregation in the urban United States

(Bourgois 2002:318)

On these sidewalks, the vendors, scavengers, and panhandlers have developed economic roles, complex work, and mentors who have given them encouragement to try and live

"better" lives. This is the story of the largely invisible social structure of the sidewalk.

(Duneier 2000:314)

Comparing Bourgois's and Duneier's concluding remarks, for their studies of two different types of American urban economy both heavily focused on the street, the sidewalk and drugs, one observation stands out for me: while Bourgois explicitly refers to the suffering of his informants and his attempt to make people aware of the tragedy surrounding it, Duneier closes his study by drawing the reader's attention to his informants' attempts to construct *better* lives. This observation is also what I am taking away from my two years of fieldwork with homeless people in Paris: structural inequality, housing shortages, unemployment, drug addiction and mental health problems — all of these factors contribute to Pascal's, Carl's and Barus's situations, as they do for most of the people I encountered during my fieldwork on the streets of Paris. With my above analysis of hope for home, (ordering) techniques of the self and their link to the future, however, I have gone beyond the description of homeless people as marginalised, entrapped and suffering, and instead observed how such individuals struggle to make a better life on the street (Robbins, 2013).

  To conclude, I here want to try to conceptualise this better life in a more abstract way, as one which is about the creation of spaces of freedom — from the freedom from fear and freedom of relative safety and stability that a home provides, to the reflective freedom fostered by the *assistants sociaux* at *Freedom, Sun* and *Emo.* I want to argue that my informants were striving — in their own ways — towards being better selves. The self is to be understood in Foucault's sense as "not given to us […] as a work of art" (Foucault 1997:262), and in this sense defined through a *rapport à soi* "which [he] call[s] ethics, and which determines how the individual is supposed to constitute himself as a moral subject of his own actions" (ibid.:263). The means that enable the self to become an ethical subject is called by Foucault the "self-forming activity (*pratique de soi)*" (ibid.:265). Foucault further defines the practices of the self as practices of freedom (Foucault 1997a), to be understood always as "relationships with others" rather than the liberation from any form of domination or as isolation in autonomy (283). In this sense, I want to understand the activities, processes and routines my informants engaged in — the labour of begging (Ch. 2), the work of making a shelter (Ch. 3), working with the day centre (Ch. 4), engaging in drug time (Ch. 5) and accessing

temporary housing (Ch. 6) — not as activities of resistance or liberation but as practices of the self, and as such of freedom.

So far, ethical studies of freedom have often looked at religious contexts (Robbins 2004; Laidlaw 2014), where techniques of the self are deliberate, often very disciplined religious practices of, for instance, monks or believers. They often involve prayer, religious devotion and the repentance of sins (e.g. Cook 2010; Mahmood 2012; Elisha 2011). While much of the other strand of the anthropology of ethics — the ordinary ethics debate — involves moments when deliberation and reflection are lost or become more random (Das 2012; Lambek 2010), my own study is to be situated best within this context of the ordinary ethics. In particular, Mattingly's (2014) observations, in the context of poverty-stricken African-American families caring for children with chronic illnesses, prove to be constructive in relation to my project. Some of her informants in fact were homeless before being able to establish a family setting in which care provision for the children was one of the main aims. Minor moments — a visit to the clinic, coaching the drill team — acted as 'moral laboratories' where "the moral work of transformation" took place (76). The everyday moments she describes — just as many of the everyday struggles I talk about above — "feed an ongoing practical and dogged hope to create something morally better" (ibid.:78). The context of homelessness is obviously rather different from the specific institutional settings of most of the anthropology of ethics focused on religious contexts but I believe similar processes are at work on an abstract level. Looking back at the daily home-making processes the chapters 2 and 3 focus on — begging and shelter-making — it is clear how much thinking, reflection and deliberate action is involved. Different conscious choices, for instance — how to dress, how to address people, where to stand, which narratives to use with whom — are at the core of what I call the labour of begging in Chapter 2. In a similar way, finding and making a shelter is often highly reflective, as I describe in Chapter 3. Carl described what kind of place is the ideal shelter place for him: protection from weather, not too much traffic, cleanliness, easy access to amenities. In a similar way, Pascal added another important dimension: the safety provided by sleeping together with friends. These reflective considerations, while being about daily survival rather than spiritual well-being and purification, are techniques of the self in the Foucauldian sense. According to Foucault, such techniques are practices which "permit individuals to effect, by their own means, a certain number of operations on their own

bodies, their own souls, their own thoughts, their own conduct, and this in a manner so as to transform themselves, modify themselves, and to attain a certain state of perfection, happiness, purity, supernatural power" (Foucault 1997b:177, cited in Laidlaw 2014:101).

   It would be too much to speak of a state of perfection or purity in the case of my informants, but it is for this reason that I am describing their striving as one for a better life. Most importantly, however, I want to argue that many of my informants often used what Laidlaw (2014:148) describes as a reflective consciousness: it "means that we 'step back' from and evaluate our own thoughts and desires, and decide reflectively which desires we wish to have and to move us to action". The self of my informants was also "to a significant degree self-constituting and self-responsible [and] to that extent free" (ibid.:149). Having said that, it is very important to keep in mind the external limitations of this freedom, something I have addressed throughout my dissertation. Not only did the general condition of poverty and of living on the street exclude my informants from many spaces — think for instance of the policing of the hot air vents around the *Gare* I describe in Chapter 2 — it also made it necessary for them to be supported by *assistants sociaux*, for instance, access to temporary housing through the SIAO system (see Chapter 6). I am hence not trying to describe my informants as free from restraints or free from power relations. In fact, this is also not a kind of freedom Foucault thinks could ever exist. As he argues (Foucault 1997b):

> I do not think that a society can exist without power relations, if by that one means the strategies by which individuals try to direct and control the conduct of others. The problem, then, is not to try to dissolve them [...] but to acquire the rules of law, the management techniques, and also the morality, the *ethos*, the practice of the self, that will allow us to play these games of power with as little domination as possible. (298)

I can rephrase what I am describing in the Chapter 4, 5 and 6 along exactly these lines, then: how did my informants put themselves in situations of dependency — in the day centre, with the *assistants sociaux*, with drugs, in the homeless shelter VoH — and how did they try to manage them? What I describe in Chapter 4, focusing on a day centre run

by the Catholic organisation *Freedom* is a first instance where my informants willingly chose to enter a relationship of power, in fact were able to invest their time, effort and trust to be able to access an *assistant social*. While on the one hand the day centre was a place of home — of warmth, security, hygiene, coffee — it was also a place where change was initiated and the *projet de vie* was formulated. This *projet* was future-oriented, a description of the more long-term hopes my informants had about their better lives. In the *box,* the offices of the *assistants sociaux*, informants such as Carl and Pascal were provided both with a space to reflect and think about the future and also with support in the form of a *lien*, relationship.

What we can see in Chapter 5, is how such relationships of dependency can go at least temporarily wrong. The drug-taking, and engaging in what I call drug time, can again be seen as a form of struggling along. The goal of cutting oneself out of time — forgetting the past, not thinking about the future, not feeling in the present — and ordering the daily routine in an automated rhythm is a short term hope for many of my informants. As I describe, they enter a different relationship of dependence with the substance in question, which ultimately often takes over and creates a (temporary) inability to reflect, and hence an inability to engage in practices of the self. Often, it is again institutions — such as the needle exchange *Sun* runs or the day centre for alcoholic homeless people organised by *Freedom* — which make it possible for my informants such as Carl to turn their lives around. Through various activities — rupturing outings to theme parks, bonding over playing games together, thinking abstractly during the philosophy *atelier* — the visitors at *Freedom* are presented with a strong alternative to the drug time. At the same time, they are again put into a position where reflective thinking about the future is made possible.

What we have already seen both in *Freedom*'s day centre as well as at *Emo* and to a certain extent also at *Sun,* became even more pronounced at VoH, the homeless shelter where I spent three months living as a volunteer. Always building on a voluntary desire put forward by the *residents* of VoH, living together with volunteers — often students, people in between work — could act as a kind of exemplary practice of the self. The volunteers were supposed to be exemplars (Humphrey 1997), who, by sharing responsibilities and space, provided an anchor for the homeless people, an example of how to act. As we have seen, in reality the (morally, Laidlaw 2014:111) 'ruly'

environment of the hostel in fact caused many problems, too. While posters with prescriptive rules in the bathroom and in the kitchen, contracts and in theory binding disciplinary punishments were meant to make the *residents*, such as Jean, ready to move further on towards a better life, they often stifled the inhabitants further. The problem my informants ultimately encountered is again described by Foucault (1988:65):

> the final goal of all the practices of the self still belongs to an ethics of control. [...] one exercises over oneself an authority that nothing limits or threatens

Here, once again, we see a very clear and understandable limitation of my informants' striving for a better life and engagement in techniques of the self to do so. Throughout the chapters, but particularly in Chapter 5 when I discuss drug time, it becomes clear how my informants were not able to "control [their] desires, rather than being a slave to them" (Laidlaw 2014:120,124). What I call short term hopes can take over the imagination of my informants, especially when it comes in the form of drugs can make reflective thinking impossible which is why so many people engage in an up and down rather than a continuous movement away from the street. The conflict of values described by Laidlaw (2014:169) pans out in this way for my informants — between long and short term hopes. As he argues in general terms:

> "living a life requires doing so with reference to values that make conflicting demands". The aim can then only be the "cultivation of an open responsiveness to the sheer contingency of what might come into view" (ibid.:176).

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

I didn't meet Carl again after I left Paris in September 2016. On various visits throughout the year that followed, I was not able to trace him anymore even through institutions, such as *Emo*. Only when I randomly bumped into Pascal on my way home one late night in Spring 2017 did I get news. Carl had left Paris and had apparently gone to London. From their mutual *assistant social* at *Freedom*, Pascal had learnt that not only had Carl left his secure housing in the South-East of Paris (see Chapter 6) but also that he had made up all kinds of things about his past. Without being able to recapitulate the full

extent of his lies, it was clear that he never was employed by the German army. As I describe in Chapter 2, the army figured heavily in Carl's narrative: he described his experiences in Afghanistan as the source of trauma leading to both his alcohol problem, the aggression towards his family and eventually his homelessness in Paris. He had lied to his *assistants sociaux*, his friends on the streets and also to me about this.

Does this jeopardize the whole description surrounding him, he who was one of my main protagonists? Any doubt about the 'validity' of my data in the above sense — people lying to me about their past — in fact only has a limited effect on the validity of the descriptions I put forward in this dissertation. Unlike many other studies of homelessness, my focus was not on the reasons for people to be on the street, but was on how my informants creatively engaged in making better lives with, on and eventually off the street. My focus was on home-making techniques, ranging from begging and shelter-making to taking drugs and accessing temporary accommodation and how these can be described as techniques of the self ultimately leading to certain types of (still limited) freedom. Lying was part of the repertoire of techniques of the self, what Summerson Carr (2011) calls flipping the script. It was part of the way Carl used his freedom. While not always successful nor reflective and consumed by short term hopes for instance drugs provided, I observed my informants engaging in many efforts aiming at freedom defined as "the always qualified and provisional outcome of ongoing efforts and reactions; it therefore stands not in opposition but requires self-discipline" (Laidlaw 2014:108). While self-discipline is not commonly attributed to homeless people, it was something I observed regularly: be it in begging, making shelter or defining their *projet de vie*. We should value homeless people for that, also in our policy provisions, or to say it with Duneier (2000:316f):

> We will improve our well-being by making provision for more persons, not fewer, to engage in informal entrepreneurial activity […] if they accept such activity as inevitable and, in its way, admirable as well […] There will always be people who, faced with dispiriting social conditions, give up. The people we see working on Sixth Avenue are persevering. They are trying not to give up hope. We should honor that in them.

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