

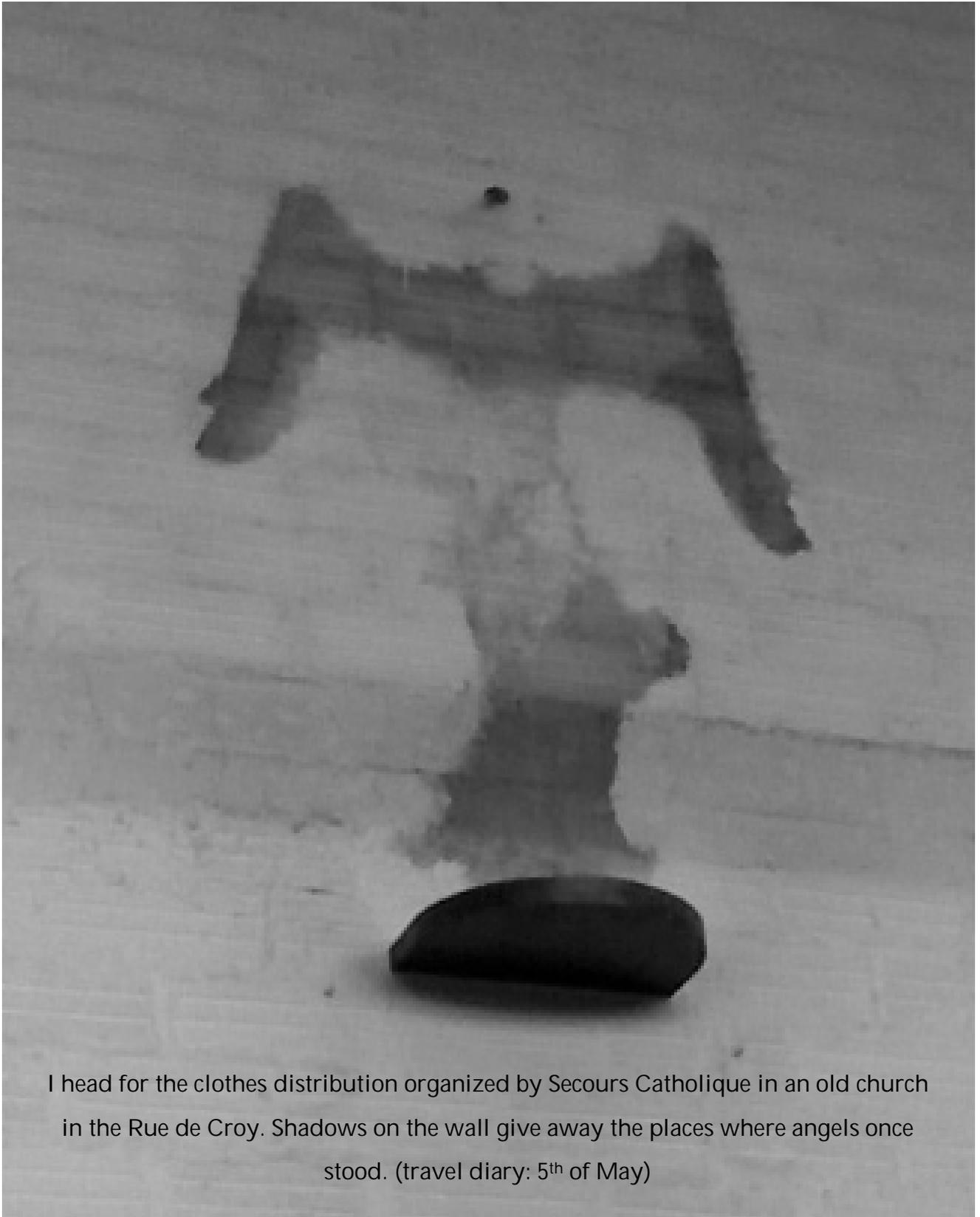
“There are no Angels in Calais”

The impact of French migration policies on the migrants of Calais.



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“In fact, we are the untouchables to the civilians. They think, more or less explicitly—with all the nuances lying between contempt and commiseration—that as we have been condemned to this life of ours, reduced to our condition, we must be tainted by some mysterious, grave sin. They hear us speak in many different languages, which they do not understand and which sound to them as grotesque as animal noises; they see us reduced to ignoble slavery, without hair, without honor and without names, beaten every day, more abject every day, and they never see in our eyes a light of rebellion, or of peace, or of faith. They know us as thieves and untrustworthy, muddy, ragged and starving, and mistaking the effect for the cause, they judge us worthy of our abasement. Who could tell one of our faces from another? For them we are *Kazet*, a singular neuter word.” (Levi, 1958)



I head for the clothes distribution organized by Secours Catholique in an old church in the Rue de Croy. Shadows on the wall give away the places where angels once stood. (travel diary: 5th of May)

Summary.

Calais, where France almost touches Great-Britain, is one of the many spots in Europe where immigration is highly visible. Because of its location, it has been an important knot for immigrants trying to reach the United Kingdom. In September 2009 a large improvised camp near the city (called *La Jungle*), in which hundreds of migrants resided, was destroyed by the French police. In that time it generated a lot of attention, both positive and negative. Now that we are more than a year further, it is time to make up the account. Has the dismantlement been successful? And what are the consequences of the attempt to diminish immigration for the individual migrant? In the underlying case study, these questions will be clarified. Although this will result in a picture of the situation in Calais in specific, it can (and should) be seen as a test to immigration policies in Europe in general. I will argue that diverse processes are taking place which are a genuine threat to the immigrant. Dehumanization, criminalization and exploitation are visible in Calais, and without a doubt throughout the rest of Europe as well. Ultimately I will suggest that this is the price to be paid if countries wish to think in terms of people who are 'welcome' and who are 'unwelcome'. Illegalizing people is at the basis of the identified problems.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Paragraph 1: Foreword.

“ ” *Two young boys wave to me and show me with gestures that they want me to sit next to them on the concrete. We start talking a bit, though their English is not really good. “Please, drink, drink!” So I take a sip of their juice, expired since a couple of days but still good. (travel diary: 30th of January)*

Afroozⁱ turned out to be the name of the Afghan boy that was the first migrant with whom I would speak in Calais, France. Gently he offers me the juice and the food that he has just received out of the hands of the volunteers of the Salam humanitarian organization. For a week (and later more than that) I will share his domain: the streets of Calais, where so many migrants are stuck on their way to The United Kingdom. This was my first impression when I arrived in Calais, the 30th of January 2010. Although I have to admit that I was rather nervous when I entered the car that brought me to Calais that morning, everything turned out just fine. The Dutch organization ‘De Heksenketel’ put me directly into contact with the organization Salam, and after some research on the internet back in Holland, other organizations were added to the list. In just a couple of days I integrated in what is a strange kind of meeting place: some hundreds of men and boys from approximately ten different countries, gathered in a cold French city thousands of kilometres from their homes. Entering the United Kingdom has been made very difficult by all kinds of border controls, so the immigrants are forced to resort to illegal measures. Since it can take a long time before one manages to cross the Channel, Calais has become a halting-place for those who are on their way to The United Kingdom.

ⁱ Names of all migrants and most volunteers have been modified to guarantee their privacy.

The title of my thesis derives from a conversation with Benoît, the father of a family of five that hosted me for some nights in Calais (travel diary: 1st of February). It has been one of the most striking conclusions I have drawn during my visits to the coastal city: indeed, "there are no Angels in Calais." The situation with migrants, policemen/politicians and humanitarian organizations is very complicated and pretty ambiguous, but on each side we can find examples of wrong-doing. Not one of the groups in this field consists merely out of 'Angels'. But then what grants the Demons the right to come to exist? How do migrants live in Calais, and why? And what are the goals on either side? The underlying study is an attempt to answer these questions.

I would like to thank all the organizations for being so hospitable to show me around. Thanks a lot to la Belle Etoile, Calais Migrant Solidarity, Auberge des Migrants and Secours Catholique. Special thanks to De Heksenketel, with whom I drove to Calais for the first time and who were so friendly to introduce me to several other organizations. And special thanks to the organization Salam as well, which not only turned a vegetarian into a highly skilled chicken peeler, but also provided me with a place to sleep. Thanks to all the organizations for helping me out, but most of all for the profound work they do to comfort the needy.

Furthermore I am very, very grateful for the hospitality of Yoann Petit and the Bouché family, members of the Couchsurfing network who have hosted me for several nights; in this sometimes literally and figuratively cold environment, it was good to be able to 'come home' and talk about my experiences, and to share my thoughts.

Many thanks to the migrants as well. Although most will be gone for good, I want to stress that without their willingness to speak my thesis would have been doomed to fail. Many were willing to tell me even the most critical information, and I have not seen more hospitable people in a long time. Next to a very interesting time with plenty new and sometimes tough experiences, I have had good laughs every day, thanks to them.

Further, I appreciate the time Farah van Valkenburg took to speak to me about her experiences. Reading and talking about her thesis on Calais bettered my insight into the situation (van Valkenburg, 2009).

I would like to thank Gonzague Cuvelier for providing me with photos that enrich this thesis. Other pictures are provided by photography student Eric Giraudet de Boudemange, including the beautiful picture on the cover. Thanks a lot for this, Eric, as well as for a very special and highly interesting day in Calais (travel diary: 2nd of February). One picture in the de-humanization chapter is taken by Steven Greaves. I am grateful that I can use this picture to illustrate my story. His work can be found at www.stevengreaves.com. All other pictures are by me.

Then there is the help of Ton Fiselier, Méline Bernard and Anke van der Heul. Ton has been correcting my English, and was brave enough to come along with me to Calais once (which is not much of a holiday resort). Méline has commented me thoroughly on the content of my thesis. Together they helped me improve my thesis in all its dimensions. For this I want to express my gratitude. Thanks to Anke, I now finally have a decently looking index.

Lastly, a lot of thanks to Henk van Houtum, my thesis supervisor, and my parents. All three have never lost faith in me, something I have highly appreciated. On top of that all three have been talking to me extensively, and in doing so have helped me to fine-tune my thesis.

Paragraph 2: Calais in a Nutshell.

If someone would have told me a year ago that a mere four hundred kilometres from my hometown Nijmegen, the Netherlands, existed the 'phenomenon Calais', I guess I would not have believed it. In many ways, one is stepping into another world: a fantastic semi-French, semi-foreign dreamland. Or should I say wasteland, for though the town is a beloved residence place for some, it is nothing more than a necessary transit-place for most. The coastal town of Calais, where The United Kingdom almost touches the European continent, is one of the many testing grounds of the European policies concerning immigration. What happens here is not unique in the world, but it is certainly a vivid example of wider immigration policies. The

phenomenon of migration towards Europe is not new either, but more than ever governments are feeling the need to 'keep them out'. And in doing so, states seek the boundaries of what is tolerable. In their turn, migrants find new ways to slip through the mazes in a search for better opportunities. Once inside the European Union, many claim asylum. However, for some the journey does not end with merely entering the union: they intend to go to The United Kingdom. Many expect their chances at a job to be better there, or they have family already living in the country, or maybe they know the language. However, since the country is not a part of the Schengen treaty, the border between the British isles and the rest of the member states of the EU is not (yet) open (Brady, 2009). This means that all travellers are in need of the right papers (that is: passports of Schengen-countries, or the essential visa) to enter. Poor non-Western countries are not in this Schengen area, and on top of that they receive only rarely visa to travel to the West (van Houtum & Boedeltje, 2009). For those who are lacking these papers, entering in illegal ways is the only option. This can take several weeks or months, in which the migrants try their luck almost every night. Clinging to lorries and trains, they hope to pass the heavy border controls and reach their El Dorado on the other side of *La Manche* (The Channel). After a period of relatively much compassion, the French government is now playing it hard. When the number of migrants kept growing, the French government under President Jacques Chirac (with current President Nicolas Sarkozy playing a decisive role as Minister of the Interior) decided to tear down the Red Cross Camp in Sangatte that gave them shelter, claiming that this was necessary to break the might of the human traffickers and to bring an end to the appalling conditions inside the camp (Le Figaro, 2002).

However, the determination of the migrants to reach their destination turned out to be strong, and although they had nowhere to go to, Calais remained a strategic point from where to get to The United Kingdom. The problems didn't disappear with the closure of Sangatte, and now the migrants were sleeping rough in the streets of Calais. Due to the difficulties they encountered when trying to enter their Promised Land, their make-shift camps soon turned permanent, strongly resembling Third World shanties. As if they understood this comparison, the French government acted

in the way the government of Kenya would act when faced with slums arising on the edges of Nairobi: they destroyed *La Jungle*, "home" to some hundreds of migrants, on the 21st of September 2009 (Johnston, 2009; Le Monde, 2009)ⁱⁱ. What followed could best be described as a cat and mouse game: many migrants remained in the town, regularly building new make-shift camps, which were soon after broken down again by the police.

Paragraph 3: The Main Question.

The situation that I found in Calais when I arrived there for the first time, struck me. It is not uncommon to see tramps in the streets, neither in the Netherlands nor in France. However, to see three hundred homeless people roaming around makes things slightly different. And these men are not only grown-ups; plenty are unaccompanied underage migrants without their families, on their own in a faraway country. They are on their way to a country that is not letting them in with pleasure. And the French government does not want them either: with more and more force these men and boys are persuaded to leave the country.

When we consider the situation, there are two forces colliding in countries or areas that are trying to diminish the influx of migrants. On the one hand, there is the wish by the French and English government to control immigration. Under no circumstances, a person that is not an EU resident may enter France without visa or asylum request, and even EU residents must all be checked before entering the United Kingdom. Those who do not possess the required documents are considered 'illegal'. The French government is momentarily increasing the pressure on the people that didn't ask for asylum in France, to leave the country or yet demand asylum. It is, in other words, a country's right to its sovereignty (Joppke, 1998; Schindlmayr, 2003).

ⁱⁱ See also http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4kBLGDt_T4.

On the other hand, there is the wish to act in ways that do not harm the migrants themselves. However, the acts of denying access to a country, or sending back migrants on charter flights to the country they came from, are *in itself* a form of harm-doing. Namely, these acts are based on the practise of force, and thus against the will of the migrants themselves. Also, since some years now, the French government blames the basic standard of living that has been granted to migrants for attracting migrants towards the coastal town (Allen, 2009a). If there are warm and dry places to sleep, with scheduled food distributions, migrants would head for Calais in greater numbers, government officials theorize. And as long as the standard of living is high enough, migrants do not mind spending some time there while trying to reach The United Kingdom during the nights. Steadily worsening the living conditions, blocking forms of aid to the migrants, and increasing police activity might bring an end to this situation, so the French government assumes.

These two forces, namely the immigration control on the one hand and the maintenance of human dignity on the other, are severely colliding in Europe. They are in some cases colliding to such an extent that countering immigration cannot be accomplished without damaging the human dignity of the immigrant: these two goals are not only at daggers drawn with one another, they are even fully contradictory (Benhabib, 2007). This can be seen on the Southern shores of Europe, where the national governments and the Frontex agency are trying to restrict and prevent immigration to Spain, Greece and Italy. In order to do so, ships are sent back, and migrants are remitted to Libya, a country that never ratified the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. Another area where Western wealth is protected from 'illegal aliens' is the U.S. Southern border: Mexicans and others from Latin America trying to enter face fences, and Minutemen are patrolling to keep their lands safe.

This thesis aims to find out more about this problematic relationship between immigration control and the maintenance of human rights and dignity. Does the French government succeed in finding a balance between diminishing immigration

on the one hand, and guaranteeing human dignity on the other? And if not: which of both objectives prevails? The main question to be answered will thus be: *what are the consequences of the French government's wish to control immigration for the individual migrant in Calais?*

In **Paragraph 1.4** I will bring forward some debatable concepts that should be examined before proceeding with this thesis. In the remainders of this chapter, I will outline the methodology that has been practised to accomplish this thesis (**Paragraph 1.5**). Since I will also introduce the humanitarian organizations and the key sites of Calais, it should be read both as a methodologies chapter and as a thorough introduction to the situation of the migrants in Calais. This chapter is not only necessary to understand my research, but also to understand the circumstances in which migrants have to live.

Having outlined the concepts and methodology, I will turn to the actual circumstances that have been caused by the French policies, as found in Calais. Since all migrants are migrants that are willing to enter Great-Britain, I'll start by explaining why the migrants that have already reached Western-Europe still try to make their way across the Channel (**Chapter 2**). This is crucial to understand the existence of the phenomenon 'Calais'. Afterwards, daily life in Calais is covered. The three main implications of the politics towards migrants are taken into account, namely the de-humanizing conditions they find themselves in (**Chapter 3**), the criminalization they face (**Chapter 4**), and the exploitation of those who are illegal (**Chapter 5**).

Now that the implications of the wish to control migration are clarified and interpreted, it is time to make up the balance in the conclusions in **Chapter 6**. Herein, I show the underlying links that tie the implications of migration control tightly together. Furthermore, a discussion is added in which I question the perceived need for migration control.

Paragraph 4: Concepts.

As might have been noticed in the previous paragraphs, I use the term '*migrants*' to describe the subjects of my thesis. This is probably the most important concept I use, and not the least debated one. Other options would have been '*foreigners*', '*refugees*' or '*illegal immigrants*'.

I do not use the term '*foreigners*', since it is in fact too broad to be applied to such a specific group as the one I describe. Calais, being a coastal city and the main place connecting the British islands with the European continent, has seen lots of foreigners since long before the recent migratory developments. What differentiates these migrants from most other foreigners in Calais is their place of origin, as well as their intentions. While many travellers in Calais come from E.U. countries (and thus are allowed entrance relatively easy), these migrants come from further away. Second, while most travellers intent to stay for a relatively short period (that is: to visit as tourists or business(wo)men), the majority of the migrants are willing to stay for a longer time. The term '*foreigner*' thus doesn't fit this thesis.

But what about the term '*refugee*'? According to the United Nations 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, a refugee is a person who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country..." (UNHCR, 1951). Also this definition doesn't show a perfect fit with the status of the men in Calais, as can be explained by the following fragment found in my travel diary:

“ ” *When we talk about their fellow migrants, one of the Kurds asks me: "Do you think that these people are poor?" He doesn't believe in it, because most have paid considerable amounts of money in order to travel to Calais. (travel diary: 9th of May)*

It is correct that the travel itself has and will cost most of the men in Calais a considerable amount of money, particularly when we take into account the purchasing power in the country of origin. Especially the prices to be paid to human smugglers are extraordinarily high. This implies that in general, the men are not the poorest of the poor. Furthermore, most of the migrants come to work or to go to family.

I do not use the term 'illegal' either. This term implicates that a person is not only doing something that is forbidden; it implicates that the very existence of the person in that place is not allowed. Although the term is quite common in daily conversations, in the field of science and politics it does not go without debate (Cohen et al., 2003). By calling a person 'illegal', someone is already taking a stand, namely he agrees on a person being unwelcome. A state has the ability to define who's in and who's out: "however it is defined, illegality is a creation of the law" (Dauvergne, 2008). As a researcher, I wish to understand what laid the foundations for this term and whether the decision to call someone 'illegal' can be justified or not. In other words, I do not use the term 'illegal' since I feel the need to question the term in itself.

These are reasons to use the term 'migrants' instead of other terms. However, this term is not totally satisfactory either. First, many migrants would probably prefer working for some years in Great-Britain, and afterwards return to their families in the countries of origin. And most will maintain their ties to the country of origin, for example by sending back remittances, practising the culture and keeping in touch with family members abroad. If the legal circumstances would allow it, transnational migration could be much more intensive, with people travelling back and forth between 'sending' and 'receiving' country. The term 'migrant' implicates a certain form of permanency (Vertovec & Cohen, 1999).

Furthermore, the definition of a refugee according to the United Nations is limited to persecution only. People fleeing famine, natural disasters or deplorable economic situations are not included, and thus not perceived as being genuine refugees. Still for these people, just as for political refugees, can (literally or figuratively) count that “in the long run, we’re all dead”. Although it is not recognized as such, these forms of migration could be seen as a flight as well.

Lastly, what should be noticed is that although many aren’t refugees fearing for their lives, this obviously doesn’t mean that *none* are. Though this seems a rather trivial remark, politicians and the public now and then depict all migrants to be *solely* economic migrants. Treating them according to this assumption, as is done in numerous instances, is not only life-threatening for those who are genuine political refugees but also in violation of diverse human right laws. An example is one of the Iranian men to whom I spoke when I was at the site of the showers:

“ ” (...) *what I see is a back full of scars. Numerous large slashes run along his shoulders and further down. He demonstrates me how the police hung and beat him, wrists tied to the ceiling, after he had taken part in the anti-Ahmedinedjad demonstrations last year. (travel diary: 3rd of May)*

Another concept that I use now and then is ‘deportation’. I am well aware of the unpleasant tone this word brings along: to some it might remind of the cruelties committed during the Second World War. In no way I want to draw a link between these two events. However, the word deportation in itself means nothing more than the expulsion of a person or group of people from a place or country. This meaning consists of two factors, namely (1) the sending away of persons from one place to another, and (2) the use of force. Without any doubt, both of these factors are present when migrants are being sent back to their country of origin (or a transit country) without their own approvalⁱⁱⁱ.

ⁱⁱⁱ “...without their own approval”:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCZWWQ4BOB0&feature=player_embedded

Lastly, I will use the concept of 'human smuggling' (Kyle & Koslowski, 2001). I do not use the term 'human trafficking' here, since there is an important difference between the two. "The distinction is based on exploitation: trafficking has it and smuggling does not" (Dauvergne, 2008). In Calais, the men that call in the help of smugglers to get them into The United Kingdom made these decisions themselves. They give their approval to be transported and are free to go after reaching the destination. In the case of human trafficking, the transported men, women and children have nowhere to go and are exploited by the traffickers.

As I've said in my foreword the three main 'players' in Calais are (1) the migrants; (2) the (local) government and police; en (3) the humanitarian organizations. What should be stressed is that these 'players' are not necessarily organized groups. Deeds by migrants, whether they be positive or negative, are in most of the cases individual actions. Although some might think differently, the group of migrants in Calais exists almost solely out of individual travellers; there is no such thing as an organized 'invasion' of The United Kingdom (de Haas, 2007). However, when a police officer acts, he or she acts in the name of a government. The job brings along the following of orders given by his or her superiors. This difference in accountability should be kept in mind during the rest of my thesis .

Paragraph 5: Methodology.

The underlying thesis could best be described as a *case study* (Yin, 2009). The researcher is concerned with a certain phenomenon in its natural context. In this case, the phenomenon 'Calais', the specific circumstances concerning migration in this geographical place, will be described. I will use several methods to gain a better understanding of the situation and to solve the main question.

This thesis will be based partially on available literature, and partially on the qualitative research I have conducted in the field.

First, *literature* will be present throughout this paper. I've made good use of previous research papers and essays on migration. On Calais in specific, the master thesis of van Valkenburg (2009) was good introductory material. Next to that, I have used articles from a number of newspapers. The Calaisian newspaper 'Nord-Littoral' has been publishing on the migrants issue regularly, also on its website. The same for the Calais Migrants Solidarity movement and the Dutch organization De Heksenketel. The French C'SUR umbrella-organization and the No Border network have been sending updates through their mailing lists. This way I could keep up with the news from Calais while being at home, and check it through other channels.

It is important to take into account the neutrality and objectivity of the sources. Since immigration is a fiercely debated subject, I needed to pay extra attention. Sources can both be left-wing (e.g. the No Border network) or right-wing (e.g. English newspapers The Telegraph and The Daily Mail). Obviously, this does not imply that they do not depict the facts as they are; however, one should carefully examine their *interpretation* of these facts for this may vary between sources. Claims of eyewitnesses have not always been used, since I could not verify them. In other cases I have successfully verified a claim in a certain source by witnessing the same behaviour or circumstances in the field. Their stories should be checked with the greatest care. If the story cannot be checked, it should not be held as truth just like that. Especially the stories of the flight from their home-countries can be misleading. Since Great-Britain (and other West-European countries) grants asylum only to "genuine" political refugees, immigrants need to have a solid refugee story. The ones coming from areas not recognized as a threat to their safety will have their asylum claims very likely rejected. They decide to make up a story. A clear example was provided on the 10th of May:

“ ” *I walk to the lunch with Shakir and a friend of him. "Most people there are from Palestine now", he explains, pointing at the 'house of the Egyptians'. He himself*

says to be from Gaza, and he is trying to find a better future in The United Kingdom. He lost his sister due to the conflict between Hamas and Fatah, he says. "Gaza is one big prison camp with 1.5 inhabitants", he explains me as if he is the president of a renowned NGO.

“ ”

When Dareios finally takes my invitation to drink a coffee with him, he laughs a bit about the story of Shakir. "That's what they all say!" he exclaims, "in fact this Shakir is from Egypt, but he told you his asylum story" (travel diary: 10th of May).

Why this man did not tell me the truth I do not know. There are two possible reasons. The first is that he did not trust me fully at that moment, which is a possibility since I met him only ten minutes earlier. The other possibility is that he is practicing and repeating his asylum story over and over again in order not to make mistakes during his interview in The United Kingdom. Whatever his reason may be, it proved that one should be careful with the stories of migrants. This I have tried. Some of the stories of which I doubted the liability have been left out of this thesis. Others have not, but I have modified them slightly so that one can understand quickly that a claim may or may not be true. In the example above, one can notice in what way: instead of writing that Shakir is from Palestine, I write that he "says to be" from Gaza. I have done so in numerous instances in my thesis.

This is already an implication for the second part of my research, namely the *qualitative research* in Calais. It will play an important role in this thesis. Although my research is to a large extent a literature study, the qualitative research written down in my travel diary is used as both evidence to support certain claims, as well as a means to illustrate theories. Fragments of my diary are thus used throughout the text. Furthermore, the total of my experiences from day to day is printed in the Appendix. This part of the research has been necessary to answer my main question. When I state that I want to find out what the consequences of the French policies are for the individual migrant in Calais, this implies partially that I wish to see the situation through the eyes of the migrant. His perception is part of the goal of this thesis. In order to understand this so-called '*emic perspective*' (t Hart, Boeije & Hox,

2005) I will talk as much as possible to the migrants. In some cases, I will take part in their daily lives.

This brings me to the next methodological point I wish to explain, namely the role of the researcher. Gill and Johnson (2002) have developed a categorisation of the role of the observer. They divided the possible roles into four distinct categories, namely the Participant as Observer, the Observer as Participant, the Complete Participant, and the Complete Observer. The determining factors here are whether the researcher's identity is concealed or revealed, and whether the researcher is observing or taking part in the activity. I will shortly discuss both determinants.

First, my identity as a researcher has been revealed to all involved. Therefore I am definitely not a complete participant, nor a complete observer in the typologie of Gill and Johnson. I've told the volunteers of the organizations about my aim in Calais on the first occasion that I came to help with their respective associations. With the migrants I did the same, although I felt like I had to be a bit more careful than with the associations. As I have written already, a factor that has been highly important for the success of my thesis is the amount of trust the migrants give me. Therefore I needed to be cautious not to generate suspicion among the migrants. I thought it would be too risky to *start* conversations with the announcement that I was a researcher, for researchers can work for the government as well. This could have led to a general distrust. On the other hand however, it would be completely unethical *not* to reveal my identity as a researcher. Although I have changed the names of all migrants deliberately, so to guarantee their privacy, there might have been reasons for migrants not to tell their stories if they knew it would be written down by me. An example is feelings of shame. To conclude: I had to find a way to mix both values. This has been accomplished by starting the conversations with the migrants on a very basic level. Examples are superficial conversations about their countries of origin, about the length of their stay in Calais, or about football (which is truly a global fascination). Shortly afterwards, after I understood that a migrant trusted me, but before I asked more in-depth questions, I told him that I was conducting research. If he didn't mind me writing out his remarks, we could have more in-depth

conversations. Most migrants were O.K. with it, some were even glad to hear about my research:

“ ” *He waves me goodbye with the sentence: “please, write about this situation in your thesis” (travel diary: 6th of February).*

Second, a difference is made between observing the activities of the studied persons and actually participating in these activities. Overall I have been observing the activities of the migrants, and not participating in them. I’ve been watching the circumstances and the behaviour of these men, and have been talking with them to understand what they do and what is done to them. This makes me, in the typology of Gill and Johnson (2002), an ‘Observer as Participant’. In some cases, however, I’ve traded my place outside the migrant community for a place inside it. By doing so I could better imagine what life is like for them. The same has been the case for the voluntary associations: in helping them, I better understood what a daily burden they have to face when they wish to improve the living conditions of the migrants (see for example travel diary: 3rd of May). Being incorporated into the voluntary organizations and the migrant community “enables the researchers to share their experiences by not merely observing what is happening but also feeling it” (Gill and Johnson, 2002). One example of taking part in the daily lives of the migrants is the two nights that I’ve spent at the BCMO, the cold weather shelter (travel diary: 3rd and 4th of February). This has been of great use to feel what it is like to sleep with tens of unknown others in a gym without beds. Another example is eating with the migrants at the food distribution. I hoped that it would show them that I did not hesitate to sleep where they sleep, and eat what they eat. The effect had two dimensions: it made me better understand the lives of the migrants, and it was for them a sign that I could be trusted. In short, I have joined the organizations very frequently, but since I have been participating in the daily lives of the actual migrants (the subject of my thesis) to a very limited extent, I would define my role as a researcher as being rather an ‘Observer as Participant’ than a ‘Participant as Observer’.

Then there is the question to what extent the privacy has been guaranteed in the underlying thesis. For two reasons, the information provided in this thesis can be sensitive. First, the migrants have an interest in their anonymity (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). According to the Dublin-II regulations, an asylum-procedure should be settled “where the asylum-seeker has entered the territory of the Member States [of the EU, MvN] irregularly” (UNHCR, 2006). When names would be given in my thesis, the UK Border Agency could possibly find out that a given migrant has been in France before coming to Great-Britain. This might lead to the forced return to France, which is then due to this rule responsible for the asylum claim. For the same reason, most migrants refused to be photographed. Second, the information can do harm to the volunteers of the humanitarian associations. The information they provided has been criticizing the police or other associations, and in some cases volunteers provided information that could even harm their own position in the association. Revealing the identity of the informant would be irresponsible and unethical. For both migrants and volunteers I have left out all determining characteristics that could lead to their indirect identification by others (Bell, 2005).

In order to guarantee privacy I have also changed the names of all migrants and most volunteers. Some information might not be sensitive to anyone, which accordingly does not necessitate anonymity. However, it is not up to me to decide which kind of information is confidential and which is not. Things that I would label as not being sensitive, could be seen differently by other readers or by (one of) the parties involved. I prefer to be very strict in guaranteeing privacy through changing almost all names rather than taking for granted the tiny chance that someone has to bear the consequences.

Some other research considerations have to be taken into account as well. One important remark on face-to-face interviews is that one should avoid stressful situations for the participants, for example through pressing for an answer (Sekaran, 2003). In two ways this has been guaranteed in my thesis. First I wish to make clear that many of the men with whom I have spoken have approached me for a

conversation, instead of the other way around. They were not only *willing* to speak, but even felt the *need* to do so. Second, my role as being partially participant, partially observer and partially interviewer was decisive in this respect. Since I was conducting fieldwork concerning the entire situation in Calais, literally *everything* around me was object of my interest. Not only the conversations with migrants, but also the buildings, the police, the behaviour between migrants, even the weather and all other relevant features of life in Calais were important to me. Because I was deducing my information from numerous different sources, there was no need for me to force migrants to answer a certain specific question.

Furthermore, Bryman (1988) raises a highly relevant concern about observation techniques. A researcher, he states, should behave appropriately by attempting to avoid the observation of behaviour related to the participant's private life. I share this concern, but have neglected it altogether in this research. I have witnessed, or maybe even sought for, the most intimate details of a participant's life. An example is the personal hygiene of the migrant. Although the simple fact that I was there to witness or ask could have hurt one's feelings now and then, it is exactly this absence of dignity that came to play a key role in this work. On top of that, since privacy and toilet facilities are often lacking in Calais, me and all others *had to* witness private behaviour by migrants. More on this in the chapter on de-humanizing living conditions.

Another important factor with which I have to deal here is that of *objectivity*. When one glances at this thesis, I can imagine that he or she perceives this thesis to be utterly subjective. That reader is partially right and partially wrong. Certainly: the titles of my Chapters (de-humanizing conditions; criminalization; exploitation) can hardly be called objective. However, they are based on largely objective observations (in my honest opinion). The citations that I use and the behaviour that I witness are genuine and unchanged. They become subjective only after my interpretation. A revealing example is given by Brian Pratt and Peter Loizos (1992). One and the same form of habitation can be called a 'slum', 'shanty-town', 'informal low-income

accommodation', 'squatter settlements' or 'our home' by different parties. "Each classification", so say Pratt and Loizos, "bears its own weight of subjective values". Exactly the same case can be discussed in the case of Calais and, as the reader will notice, I chose to call this type of habitation 'slums' or 'shanties'. A migrant himself might disagree: those coming from genuinely deplorable situations in developing countries might consider it to be just fine (although I highly doubt it and haven't heard anyone saying so). In these cases, I have tried to express a more Western look on things. Not many Westerners will perceive 'the Jungle' on the outskirts of Calais to be more than a slum, and especially not in a Western environment with modern buildings, so I decided to give it that name. The same is the case with police activity. Although a small fraction of the migrants stated that the French police was 'good police', I assume that most Westerners would call the behaviour of the French policemen at least 'grave' like I do, no matter whether they approve with or denounce it. Nonetheless, it is true that my analysis can be considered subjective. Probably not all of the readers will agree that the sum of policies, treatments and circumstances add up to the point of de-humanization, criminalization or exploitation. What has to be kept in mind here is that these three categories are to a large extent the perceptions of the migrants, not necessarily that of the researcher. Through conversations I understood that migrants *feel* less than human, that they may *feel* criminalized, and that they may *feel* exploited or misused. The reader must carefully tell apart the perception of the researcher and the perception of the migrant.

Lastly, Pratt and Loizos (1992) raise another concern. The perfect scientific research is a research that can be reproduced endlessly. For several reasons, this is problematic in the case of Calais. First, in social science one must take into account the changing circumstances. One day, another country than Great-Britain can be the final destination for a large quantity of immigrants, and another border can be the final threshold for them to take. The response of the government to the group of migrants may be less or more violent than it is now. Furthermore, the migrants may have other nationalities than the current group. Now, most come from Afghanistan or Sudan, but this might change with the next war or crisis. All these factors make that

the exact same research as the underlying thesis is hard to reproduce. What makes this even harder or simply impossible, which is my second point, is that the large majority of migrants with whom I have spoken are gone already. During my second visit, only months after my first visit, there were very few migrants that I recognized. All others went to The United Kingdom, other places in France or Europe, or back home. The pool of respondents that I established during my visits is now scattered and no longer available in Calais. Due to these two reasons, it is impossible to reproduce the very same research. However, the subject of this thesis is all about politics in this certain context and this specific time. It is not meant to be universal or infinite, but local and temporary: I want to sketch the situation as it is now. This is what differentiates a thesis on the politics of migration in Western-Europe in the 21st century from a research in natural sciences.

Organizations.

I came to Calais for the first time on the 30th of January 2010, a couple of months after the raid on *La Jungle*. Still, some three hundred migrants have stayed in Calais, in spite of the omnipresent police and the lack of places to sleep. After the destruction of the jungle, migrants haven't been able to put up any kind of shelter without evoking immediate police raids. The only aid that is allowed to them is the distribution of food three times a day by humanitarian organizations. Dinner is organized by an organization called Salam. This is where I found my way into the whole lot of organizations, in itself representing a jungle to any newcomer. For a week, and later that year for a longer period, I joined the organizations in their attempt to ease the lives of the migrants that are living on the streets of Calais. Next to Salam, I went to Calais Migrant Solidarity, Secours Catholique, La Belle Etoile and L'Auberge des Migrants.

De Heksenketel took me to Calais for the first time. This Dutch spiritual organization has been driving back and forth to Calais almost every Saturday for some years now. They do so to hand out plastic bags stuffed with food, drinks and cigarettes. After some hesitation from their side, I was welcome to join them (travel diary: 30th of

January, 8th of May). The actual distribution of the plastic bags takes place on Saturdays during the 18.00h food distribution by a French organization, Salam. Lena, one of the volunteers from De Heksenketel, introduced me to the volunteers of Salam.

Salam did not mind me helping them preparing food the next day, and many days after as well. I both prepared food in Rue Fulton and helped them with the actual distribution in Rue de Moscou. The preparation is a good way to get in touch with volunteers, the distribution to get in touch with migrants.



Picture 1. Salam preparing diner. Photo by Gonzague Cuvelier.

Calais Migrant Solidarity is a left-wing organization that advocates open borders. It is closely connected to the No Border network, and in Calais most people simply speak of “les No Bordeurs” instead of Calais Migrant Solidarity. In Calais, they monitor police activity in order to prevent offences against migrants, they organize discussions and protests and they provide migrants with information about their legal rights and knowledge on the English language. I have helped them with moving from one place to another (travel diary: 3rd of February). In this turbulent period, they were moving into a hangar which was soon after to be closed again by the police.

Secours Catholique is a Catholic organization that provides the showers and distributes clothes and tea to the migrants. They too were very welcoming; I could help them out with both the showers (travel diary: 3rd of May) and the clothes distribution (travel diary: 5th of May). This gave me some interesting new insights, and a much better look into the lives of the migrants and the vast scale of the voluntary operation that accompanies it.

La Belle Etoile is another humanitarian organization providing food to the migrants. They offer the 13.00 o'clock lunches during the week. I helped them preparing the meals (travel diary: 2nd of February), and visited the distribution more often than that.

L'Auberge des Migrants is also a humanitarian organization distributing food among the migrants, namely at lunch time during the weekends. I helped them with these distributions, and got in touch with a couple of volunteers that provided me with in-depth information (travel diary: 1st and 2nd of May). I could not help them with the preparations, since these take place somewhere outside the city.

Conversations.

As already said, participatory observation is one of the main pillars of this thesis. Conversations, however, are at least as important. Both are fitting the situation under which I had to conduct my research extremely well. The main reason for this is the fact that neither participatory observation nor the *open or qualitative interviews* (Merriam, 1998) that I used needs to be thought out perfectly in advance. This was very important, since I hardly knew what to expect in Calais. Only after my first journey I understood that I was witnessing three broad forms of treatment that I later described as dehumanization, criminalization and exploitation. I could only reach this point by being highly flexible. The open interview, next to the participatory observation, allows the researcher to use this flexibility in his/her advantage. Standardization of the methodology would hinder this ('t Hart, Boeije & Hox, 2005).

The strategy that I used to talk to migrants worked out perfectly. Through helping out the organizations, a certain trust was generated between me, the researcher, and the migrant, the subject of my thesis. What might be more important even is the way one behaves during these activities. Although the migrants are in a subordinate position during the distributions, dependent on the food that the organizations distribute to them, one should emphasize these power relations solely when it is necessary to do so (for example to guarantee order during the distribution). In cases in which power relations are of no importance, it is my experience that it is preferable to act as if one is a visitor, guest, researcher, depending on the situation. Although the situation surely didn't allow it all the time, smiling and laughing were key concepts. Since many volunteers have been doing this kind of work for years, they are often rather silently handing out the food. A cheerful 'How are you?' or 'Ça va?' makes people respond more friendly. Those who react in a friendly way are often willing to talk to you about their journeys or about life in their home countries and in Calais. Another form of data gathering used in this thesis is *snowball sampling* (Goodman, 1961). When talking to a certain migrant, his friends often came standing by to listen or add to our conversation. Here again, trust might have played a role. This way it was quite simple to create a large pool of respondents in a matter of days.

In short, starting conversations with migrants turned out to be fairly easy. A bigger problem was the language. Most speak English on a basic level, but more detailed conversations were harder for them. However, especially on my first visit I was lucky enough to find persons from almost all nationalities that had a decent knowledge of the English language. In a couple of days I had a small army of interpreters available to help me out in conversations with people from their own country who did not speak English. Moreover the BCMO, in which many men are residing in one single hall, turned out to be the perfect environment for this kind of practice. It led to many in-depth conversations with and even among migrants possessing different nationalities.

“ ”

(...) I debate with Ampah from Ghana. We talk about international politics and Islam. He's well-informed, and the debate is heated. Mahdi translates into Persian, so that his Iranian friends don't miss a thing. (travel diary: 3rd of February)

So in general, I managed to speak to migrants from all origins. However, there were some differences between nationalities. In general, the large group of Pashto Afghans did not speak English as well as the other ethnic groups or nationalities. On top of that, they were mostly younger than the migrants of other groups, often not even exceeding 18 years. Consequently, many were more interested in playing games and running around, than in talks about their travels or politics. Although I have briefly spoken with many of them, these conversations were often not very in-depth because of their young ages and language problems. Nonetheless, as might be noticed in my travel diary, I did speak to some Pashto with a good knowledge of English and much in-depth information as well (see for example 1st of February).

Migrants with whom I have had conversations on a higher level were from all regions. There were men from Ghana, Iran, Somalia, Ivory Coast, Kurds from Iraq, Sudanese from Darfur, Sudanese from Khartoum, Pashto from Afghanistan and Hazara from Afghanistan. I do not wish to distinguish too much between groups, but

this is what is done by the migrants themselves. Most nationalities or ethnic groups have their own places to sleep, and racism between migrants is not uncommon. On the 6th of May I wrote in my diary:

“ ” *In an environment in which it is hard to trust others, and in which many cannot communicate properly due to differences in language, separation between nationalities is unavoidable and racism predictable. Flore [one of the Salam volunteers, MvN] told me that some boys from Afghanistan asked her “why she talks to black people”. (travel diary: 6th of May)*

Next to conversations with migrants, there are the conversations with volunteers. A well-known problem in France is the language. Although English is momentarily conquering even the most chauvinist countries, some volunteers weren't able to speak it very well. My French is quite poor, but it turned out to be just good enough to have conversations, although the pace had to be decreased. Luckily most of my conversation partners knew how to do that. In sum, a mixture of French and English mostly brought me where I wanted to be.

Non-verbal Experiences.

What should not be forgotten are the non-verbal experiences. Most notably are my visits to buildings inhabited by migrants, the BCMO (cold weather shelter), the Calais Migrant Solidarity office, demonstrations, police activities, the (de)fences of the port of Calais, a visit to the detention centre in Coquelles, and the places of clothes- and food-distributions an sich. However, in most of the cases these non-verbal experiences were also verbalised by speaking to migrants or volunteers about the places.

The buildings inhabited by migrants have been telling me a lot about the lives the migrants live. First, there is the squatted 'Africa-house' (or 'le squat Pagniez') at the end of Rue Garibaldi^{iv}, which I've visited for several evenings in April and May (travel diary). In fact, it consists out of two former manufacturing halls, sheltering approximately 70 or 80 men, mainly Sudanese but also some Eritreans, Somalians and one single person from Ivory Coast when I was there. The holes in the floor are filled with trash, indicating the temporariness of Calaisian life. Most are expecting to leave the place soon and don't mind in which state the next inhabitants will inherit it.



Picture 2. The 'Africa house' or Pagniez squat. Note the holes in the roof.

^{iv} All locations of migrant buildings that are explicitly named in this thesis are already known by the local government, and thus publication poses no threat to my respondents in any way.

On the 8th of May I wrote in my travel diary:

“ ” (...) We bring firewood to the Africa house. Together we lift the wooden pallets over the wall that separates the house from the world outside. A big black rat is eating a baguette between the mess that is covering parts of the floor. (travel diary: 8th of May)

On the other hand, exactly this very same Africa-house makes clear to me that other, unexpected side of Calais: the friendliness and hospitality that is present in even the most unfriendly and inhospitable of environments. Men play domino and talk and laugh a lot, not withstanding the very frequent police raids they have to face:

“ ” When we enter, we find some four groups of African men sitting on the floor and on benches. They are cooking on wood fires. (...) Flore and me, being guests, are invited to join them in this meal. I hesitate, for there might not be enough for everyone, but our hosts insist. About the presence of Flore between the men, one says: “In Sudan, women eat alone, but this is France.” (travel diary: 30th of April)

The fourteenth of June 2010, a month after I left Calais for the second time, the ‘Africa-house’ (see also picture 2) was evicted by the police so that it could be destroyed. All inhabitants were left homeless, but a new squat was found soon after.

Second, there is the ‘House of the Egyptians’. Pictures can be found on page 37 and 38. Although from Africa, the Egyptian migrants do not live together with the other Africans. They prefer to live together with Palestinians in another squatted building nearby, in the Rue des Quatre Coins. This is another conclusion I draw from visiting the buildings alone: the migrant community is starkly divided into nationalities and ethnicities. When I go there for the first time, I note:



“ ” *In contrast to the Africa house, this abandoned building doesn't have just one entrance; it shows more similarities to a honeycomb. The many entrances and exits provide the inhabitants with lots of possibilities to escape in case of police raids. (travel diary: 8th of May)*

To disappoint the readers, the term 'honeycomb' sounds slightly better in the imagination than in the reality of Calais: the old building became a honeycomb when all windows were shattered and large parts of the ceiling and floor came down.

Then there are the 'Jungles'. As I've stated in the introduction, in September 2009 the French police forces have destroyed the large Jungle. Where once hundreds of migrants lived, now only an empty spot remains. Even the woods have been cut down, in order to prevent a new Jungle to arise.



Picture 5. A make-shift house in 'La Jungle' of Calais, September 2009. Copyright Time.com.



Picture 6. The former site of 'La Jungle'. Photo by Eric Giraudet de Boudemange.

Interestingly enough, the reasons for the destruction of the Jungle were, according to the government, humanitarian: the living conditions in the Jungle were too dramatic to maintain. One spokesman even stated that "Ceux qui défendent le maintien des clandestins dans des conditions indignes sont par leur inaction, complices de ces drames humains" [those who defend the maintenance of the migrants in infamous conditions are through their inaction accessory to these human dramas, MvN] (Galaud, 2009).

However, as will be realized after reading this thesis, the French government which now uses the humanitarian perspective to destroy the Jungle, has also been responsible for the coming into being of the subhuman conditions found in Calais. The humanitarian reasons brought forward, are in this sense no more than a good looking cover to hide harsh anti-immigration policies.

Since that time, all make-shift camps have been cleared as soon as possible. Still, many migrants that aren't living in squatted buildings try to make shelters against the rain and the cold, most of them in the dunes East of Calais. I visited the Jungle of the approximately 15 or 20 Hazara Afghani's near the abandoned Hovercraft terminal:

“ ” *What I see is not what I expected: there is nothing more than some windscreens made out of plastic canvas hung up in the branches of little bushes. After they invited me to drink tea, they explain to me that police visits are so frequent that it is impossible to establish anything permanent: it will simply be destroyed during the next police raid. (travel diary: 8th of May)*

This is exactly what I have heard about the larger Pashto Afghani settlements. They are scattered outside in the dunes with no permanent shelters.

The *BCMO/Cold Weather Shelter* is another place I've visited frequently. The BCMO (Bureau Central Main d'Oeuvre) is a gym on Place de Norvège which has been provided by the municipality in case the nights are too cold for migrants to sleep outside. The building is closed during the days, but when temperatures are dropping below 0 degrees Celcius the migrants are allowed to sleep inside. The humanitarian organizations provide them with thin sleeping mats (which form a 'bed' when combined with pieces of cardboard) and blankets. Although the building is crowded and sleeping is hard due to the noise, it is at least not allowed to arrest people inside the building. During my first visit, at the end of January and the beginning of February, I've visited the BCMO frequently and I've spent two nights there (travel diary: 3rd and 4th of February).



Picture 7. The BCMO (cold weather shelter) after the clean up.

When I left again in February, the temperature was increasing and it did not take long before the place was closed until the next winter. Soon after, all migrants were forced to leave the square in front of the building, and when I returned at the end of April there were no migrants to be seen and the outside walls (which were covered with English and Arab texts) were cleaned up.

The *Calais Migrant Solidarity office* was an apartment in Rue de 29 Juillet. Although it was planned to be an office for the No Border/Calais Migrant Solidarity organization, they soon started lodging under-aged migrants as well. When I arrived there for the first time (travel diary: 1st of February) some eight migrants were present, but probably 15 utilized the space as a dormitory. According to the organization, they give them shelter because the under-aged migrants are more

vulnerable on the streets. However, the other inhabitants of the complex complained so that the organization had to move. In the meantime they rented a large hangar in Rue de Cronstadt, which was closed down by the police after a couple of days. More on this in Chapter 3.

Next, there is the *place of the food distributions* in the Rue de Moscou. Here, three times a day the migrants receive food from the humanitarian organizations. The former place of the food distribution in Rue Margollé has been abandoned long before. Now the organizations use a fenced off place of which only they have the key. The volunteers come in through the gate at the Rue de Moscou, the migrants enter through the other gate at Rue Lamy.

During the morning at 10.00 o'clock, breakfast and tea are provided. In the winter, this was done in turns by Salam and La Belle Etoile. They brought breakfast to the BCMO and distributed it inside or even right out the back of the van after the migrants had lined up. After the closure of the BCMO, Salam took over the turns of La Belle Etoile. From then on, breakfast was distributed in front of the entrance to the place of the food distribution. Fewer migrants attended because it is a far walk for most of them.

In the afternoon at 13.00 o'clock, lunch is provided. During the weeks, this is done by the organization La Belle Etoile. They have the key to one of the cabins at the place of the food distribution (see picture), and they serve their meals out of this cabin. During the weekends l'Auberge des Migrants, another humanitarian organization, provides the lunches. They serve from the back of their van.

In the evening it is Salam's turn again. At 18.00 o'clock they facilitate dinner. They serve in front of the other cabin, which is used by them as a small infirmary. A line of migrants awaits dinner when the boxes of food are installed on a table: pasta, bread, fruit and a dessert. Those who have received their food sit on the concrete and start eating.

I've visited the distribution during the evening almost every time, and the distributions in the morning and afternoon very regularly. As said before, it is the perfect opportunity to meet and talk to migrants as well as volunteers.



Picture 8. The place of the food distribution. Photo by Gonzague Cuvelier.

Some of the most interesting non-verbal experiences that will add to this thesis are the experiences with *police activities*. Much of the information about police-activities will be from secondary sources. This can be from (1) migrants themselves; (2) volunteers; or (3) websites, magazines or other textual sources. However, a minor fraction of the police activities that were going on has been witnessed by myself (travel diary: 3rd of February, 4th of May, 7th of May). These are non-verbal experiences, since I have not had in-depth conversations with the police-men themselves because of practical reasons. However, it made me understand the way police activities are carried out, and the impact it has on migrants.

CHAPTER TWO

WHY CALAIS, WHY GREAT-BRITAIN?

Ipse ignotus, egens, Libyae deserta peragro, Europa atque Asia pulsus.

In deserted Libya I now roam, unknown and in need, expelled from Europe and Asia.

(Aeneis, Virgile)

To understand the very existence of Calais, one must understand why people want to come so desperately to The United Kingdom in the first place. Why are migrants not satisfied upon arriving in Europe? They are away from their (possibly) dangerous home countries, so what makes them travel on? Did they not manage to reach the continent of freedom and respect for human rights after their long journeys?

Not exactly, and that is why many travel on to Great-Britain. Although treatment in Europe might be better than in their home countries, it is often far from welcoming. To start with, *Italy* is a country that has received many of the migrants that entered the European Union. After it became harder to reach Spain, due to more severe border controls in the waters between Northern Africa and Spain and the Canary Islands, many tried to reach Italy (Carrera, 2007). Especially the Italian island of Lampedusa, located in between Sicily and Tunisia, became a popular destination. Soon, the Italian government took measures. In August 2008, Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi signed a friendship treaty with Muammar Qaddafi's Libya. Although covered by mediagenic apologies for the colonial era, the treaty was also created to regulate the return of migrants that head to Italy (Ronzitti, 2009). From then on, Italy has sent back many migrants without giving them the chance to claim asylum. This behaviour has been forbidden during the United Nations Refugee Convention: all migrants must be able to claim asylum in a safe country. In not doing so, the chance exists that genuine refugees who have to fear for their lives are being send back to their countries of origin or to countries like Libya where they might be treated badly (Human Rights Watch, 07-05-2009). Libya itself never ratified the Refugee

Convention and is notorious for its abuses of human rights towards migrants. Lately, it emphasized this by expelling the UNHCR, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, from its territory (NRC Handelsblad, 09-06-2010). By sending migrants back to Libya, Italy is ignoring the obligation not to commit *refoulement*, which is “the forced return of people to places where their lives or freedom would be threatened or where they would face a risk of torture or inhuman and degrading treatment.” (Human Rights Watch, 2009) These acts have resulted not only in the remittance of migrants to a hostile regime, but also in the creation of so-called ‘off-shore centres’: migrant prisons in Northern Africa which are partially funded by European Union tax payers (Dietrich, 2004; Ticktin, 2009). In effect, the responsibility for migration is shifted away from EU jurisdiction; migration is “outsourced”, often to countries that are known for their bad treatments of migrants (Soyanova-Yerbrugh, 2008). This is what Didier Bigot and Elspeth Guild call ‘*police à distance*’ (Bigo & Guild, 2005).

Another important country of entrance is Greece, certainly now that the Mediterranean Sea is highly patrolled by naval forces and the coast guard. Greek islands like Lesbos and Kos are situated only kilometres out of the Turkish coast, and many migrants make good use of these geographic remnants of an expansionist history. Also the Maritsa (in English) or Evros (Greek) river between Turkey and Greece is an important place from where to enter the E.U. Many die during the crossing, either in the river or sea or in the minefields that cover the border zones. Many of the survivors are arrested by the Greek police and detained (and often mistreated) immediately. The few pictures that are available show migrants crammed together in ‘reception centres’ under appalling conditions, sleeping in three-layer beds that Europe had hoped to see ‘*nie wieder*’^v. Some of the migrants in Calais claim to be beaten and imprisoned for a long period by the Greek police (travel diary: 30th of January). And since European Union member states under the Dublin II treaty have to send back migrants to the EU country in which they arrived, Greece is having a hard time processing all immigration cases. Less than one percent

^v Video’s from the recently closed Pagani detention centre, Lesbos: see for example <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IP2yT6EjBXo&feature=related> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3oAo6cUkFc> .

of the migrants claiming asylum in the country is accepted (Frelick, 2009), and Amnesty International recently concluded that “Greece fails to provide a full and fair asylum determination procedure” which was reason for them to demand a temporary stop of deportation flights back to Greece (Amnesty International, 2010a). Some Western-European countries have done so. Recently, the EU has been trying to incorporate Turkey by signing a treaty that foresees in the return of migrants that landed in Greece (Migrants Rights Watch, 2010). All in all, the EU is effectively creating a ‘buffer zone’ in sending and transit countries to stem the flow of immigrants, and the way in which this is done has devastating consequences for the individual migrant.

On their way through Europe, these stories of abuse do continue. Migrants that are confirmed ‘illegal’ by a certain state but travel on, are a soft target for wrong-doers. Without adequate housing and with an ever-present fear for the police, they are easily exploitable. Migrant women are in cases forced to work as prostitutes (Patrizi, 2009) and migrant men as slave labourers (Time, 2010). Racism along the way is common (Hooper, 2010) and the victims shouldn’t always hope for police protection (Migreurop, 2010).

When after their often hazardous journey they reach Calais, *France*, hard times do not fade away. Only kilometres away from The United Kingdom police pressure and forms of exploitation continue, as will be shown in the following. Maybe not surprisingly, all the hardships they have faced in Europe add up to the belief they have in The United Kingdom being the Promised Land. There seems to be a causal relationship between the negative experiences of the journey and the positive attitude towards The United Kingdom. There must be something pretty in the end. The extremity of the border controls is in line with this thinking: behind the walls there must be a treasure that needs to be protected, a treasure that could not be found in the rest of Europe. Just as French police is considered by the migrants to be more polite and less aggressive than the Greek police, English police is assumed to be better than their French colleagues (travel diary: 1st of February, 8th of May). Bit by bit

and step by step, the end of all suffering comes in sight. And it is not surprising to notice that not many wish to claim asylum in France, a country that has sent its police after them.

As I have said, all this adds up to their faith in The United Kingdom. The image they have of The United Kingdom is that of a decent treatment and care for migrants. Although this might have been true some years ago, the treatment of migrants now probably equals that of other Western-European countries. Still, many are attracted by these stories. "Everybody is following each other like sheep!", explained one of the Kurds who planned on going back to Iraq (travel diary: 3rd of May).

After the treatment in other European countries, their decision to head for Great-Britain isn't surprising. When racism and exploitation are so common in Italy, and when the percentage of asylum requests approved in Greece doesn't exceed one percent, many will seek refuge somewhere else. No-one would like to live in a hostile environment, and those who are well-informed will not demand asylum in countries like Greece, either because their claim will be rejected or because the economical situation is so much worse than in other places. Due to the Dublin-II agreement, a migrant may ask for asylum only once on EU territory. Logically, a well-informed migrant will do that in a country in which the chance to be accepted will be biggest, or at least in a country that is capable of providing him or her with a fair procedure.

There are other reasons to head for Britain, though. One important reason is the language. This becomes clear in the case of the men who claim to be Afghan interpreters for the NATO forces in Afghanistan (travel diary: 6th and 7th of May). They state that the Taliban insurgents threaten them since they served the Allied forces. Most of the men in Calais speak English, although their knowledge of the language highly differs (see also: Chapter 1, Paragraph 5). What is apparent however, is that almost none of them, except for the ones who decided to stay in France, speak French. A logical outcome of the knowledge of the English language (and no other Western languages) is that most wish to go to The United Kingdom.

This has also been the case with people from the former French colonies in North-East Africa heading for France, the former Dutch colonies in Suriname and Indonesia heading for the Netherlands, etc.

Another reason to pick The United Kingdom as a destination and not any other country in Western-Europe, is the presence of family-members or acquaintances. This turned out to be an important reason for migrating in Calais. Although many told me that they had no relatives whatsoever across the Channel, others were more fortunate. An example is Osman, whose mom *"calls all day to ask when he comes to The United Kingdom"* (travel diary: 4th of May). Fahran is on his way to his fiancée in London (travel diary, 5th of February). This too is an incentive to go to The United Kingdom instead of other countries. Not only do they wish to be with their relatives because of social considerations (that is: for the simple reason of being united again), but also because of economical considerations. The presence of relatives means possible accomodation, and in cases a job in a family-owned shop or restaurant. This provides the migrant with at least a minimum of security when arriving in The United Kingdom.

Though what is at the core of these stories is the inequality between the Western countries and the Third World countries the migrants come from. 'Think of a stretch limousine driving through an urban ghetto', wrote Martin Wolf of the Financial Times, 'inside is the post-industrial world of Western Europe, North America, Australasia, Japan and the emerging Pacific Rim. Outside are all the rest' (Wolf, 2001). Through new means of communication like television and the internet, these global inequalities become more and more visible; not only to citizens in the West, but increasingly so to non-Western citizens. The new communication techniques posses the power, so we could say, to compress time and space (Giddens, 1985): at any time, people can see what is going on in that particular moment on the other side of the world. The new information technology shows a young generation Third World citizens what there is to be gained if one takes the step to embark on the journey to the West. And it makes the stories of migrants that return home less

credible: how is it possible that one returns with empty hands from that area of affluence, human rights and democracy? In the words of one of the Kurds from Iraq:

“ ” *“(…) will people believe me when I come back and tell about life in Calais?”*
(travel diary: 3rd of May).

The ‘Angleterrean dream’ is kept alive in the countries of origin, even though experience indicates otherwise. Reality can be found in Britain and in Britain alone. Only after months of illegality and unchanged bad living conditions people understand that The United Kingdom is not heaven either. The men to whom asylum has been denied and do neither have family there, nor speak the language, are often finding themselves in the same peril as was the case in Calais. From The United Kingdom, some go back to their home countries, others go back to Calais. And from Calais, some return home as well. Especially before and during my second stay in Calais, when police raids were very frequent and the BCMO cold weather shelter (a safe-haven from the cold and the police raids) was closed, some were willing to be sent home (travel diary: 1st, 6th and 7th of May).

“ ” *An Afghan man approaches me, and asks me whether France sends back people to Afghanistan. “Yes”, I tell him carefully “they do that.” His answer surprises me: “Good!” he says, “I don’t want to stay here any longer.”* (travel diary: 7th of May).

To some extent, the French government’s approach seems to be working. Some migrants from Calais are heading home. On top of that, the number of migrants in Calais is diminishing. From an estimated 1500 migrants just before the demolishing of the ‘Jungle’ in September 2009, the number has been brought down to about 400 at the moment.

However, the crackdown on the migrant camps doesn’t mean the actual disappearance of the migrants. As Thomas Suel of the NGO Terre d’Errance said to the media right after the evacuation of the ‘Jungle’: “Most have left for Britain,

Belgium, Holland or Norway, the others have scattered into smaller camps in other ports in the Calais region" (France24, 2009a). There is no guarantee that the diminishing numbers actually mean a decrease in migration; there are strong indications that migrants are only spreading out in the region. In an interview in September 2010, exactly a year after the demolition of the camp, a Secours Catholique worker stated that "les migrants sont (...) dispersés sur tout le littoral, de Cherbourg aux Pays-Bas" [the migrants are dispersed along the coast, from Cherbourg to the Netherlands, MvN] (Bogaert, 2010). And then there is the question to what costs, because only with the toughest measures these 'results' have been obtained. One effect that is certain is that migration is pushed further underground, making people much more vulnerable for abuse. I tried to find out what the measures taken by the French government mean to the immigrants in Calais.

The behaviour I witnessed can be divided into three (partially overlapping) categories, namely (1) the de-humanizing conditions they are forced to face, (2) the criminalization they undergo, and (3) the exploitation which they find. These will be explored in depth for the specific case of Calais in the next chapters.

CHAPTER THREE

DE-HUMANIZING CONDITIONS

To notice that the tools of state-power reduce you to dust is a painful wound.

(A Month and a Day: A Detention Diary, Ken Saro-Wiwa)

'Dehumanizing' could best be described as the process in which a certain person or group of people is denied 'full humanness' (Haslam, 2006). The Other is represented as being barbarians, lacking culture, self-restraint, moral sensibility, and cognitive capacity (Jahoda, 1999). Examples are the qualities of pity, kindness and individuality, and the people lacking these qualities are often perceived as immoral and willing to break the law if necessary. Since these persons are not seen as fully human, they are in some instances likened to animals or children, possessing respectively the same bestiality or patronizing innocence. If that is so, the in-group has the opinion that they are deserving a treatment that is less than human as well (Schwartz and Struch, 1989; Esses, Veenvliet, Hodson & Mihic, 2008). There are many indications that migrants in Calais are treated as being 'less than human'. I will explain these indications below.

Paragraph 1: Living Conditions.

The living conditions differ considerably in the winter from the conditions in the warmer periods. As said in the previous, in the winter migrants are allowed to sleep in the BCMO/Cold Weather Shelter as long as temperatures are below freezing point. Although the gym is crowded and still cold at night, it is safe from police raids. During the time I was there, maybe some 80 to 100 men were sleeping inside. In the evening, they received pieces of cardboard and blankets from the humanitarian organizations. Men are talking and playing cards in all corners. During the night youngsters are switching the lights on and off, and some are playing music on their mobile phones. There is snoring all around, and sleeping is just very difficult (travel diary: 3rd of February). Packed together in one single room, there is no way to escape this orgy of noises and smells. It reminds of a quotation by Milan Kundera in

his novel 'The Unbearable Lightness of Being', stating that a camp is "the total liquidation of privacy" (Kundera, 1988).

When temperatures are increasing, the BCMO is closed as soon as possible. This doesn't mean that the cold is over: the sea wind made me regret that I did not bring my winter coat still in the first days of May. On top of that, the many men that now have to sleep in the streets are unprotected from the rain:

“ ” *One of the Kurds (...) tells me that this morning they woke up with water in their sleeping bags, even though they found a shelter with a roof for the night (travel diary: 2nd of May).*

As said in the Methodologies part, the large group of Afghans (who were the main inhabitants of the BCMO) moved into so-called 'Jungles'. These are situated in the dunes east of the city. Due to the very frequent police raids, there is hardly anything permanent standing (travel diary: 8th of May). Moreover, being driven far outside the city centre, and thus outside public view, means that no-one is able to watch over them. It makes them more vulnerable for harassments, be it by local citizens, fellow migrants or the police (Nord Littoral, 2010a).

What is probably most appalling is the total absence of running water, whether it be in the BCMO, the 'Jungles' or the squatted buildings. Not only are there no taps with running water, there are no toilets and showers either. In Calais, but also in Dunkirk and Loon-Plage, migrants fight a daily 'bataille de l'eau' [battle for water, MvN] (Sabéran, 2010). The BCMO, being a gym, has several showers and toilets but the migrants are withheld to use them, which is even harder to witness. Orders by the municipality keep them locked, although volunteers are allowed to use them. The migrants have to go outside and use the sparse vegetation as toilets. Although only meters away from the BCMO, this means possible arrest and a definite form of shame (Nord Littoral, 2010b).

In the summer things aren't any different. Some use the few public toilets, others go to the big shopping mall, but most have to put up with the bushes and street corners. It is hard to cling to the remains of dignity in Calais:

“ ” *On the way to the tea distribution, Rosie asks me “to prepare the toilet paper.” I have to tear off pieces of toilet paper. She explains me that these are for migrants who ask for it during the distribution. I have to put them in a plastic bag, so that they can be distributed discreetly: many are ashamed to ask for it. (travel diary: 6th of May)*

The situation with the showers is comparable to that of the toilets: hardly anything is provided by the (local) government (Sabéran, 2009). There are two ways in which migrants can take a shower. The first option is to go to the little medical post (PASS) on the outskirts of Calais, which provides free health care to all who cannot afford it. There they have to take a shower before treatment. Furthermore, there are shower facilities set up not too long ago. However, immigration minister Besson ordered it to be put at least 10 kilometres outside of Calais. So every week for three days numerous volunteers of the Secours Catholique organization have to drive to and from Calais with busloads of migrants in need of a shower (Simon, 2009). The simple fact that migrants cannot walk the distance to the showers makes them dependent on the organizations. Only with the greatest effort the organizations can cope with the situation, as might be understood after reading the following experiences of the day I drove with the bus to and from the showers:

“ ” *One time, the car is stormed by some fifteen or twenty men. It takes us ten minutes to get all but seven out. Since we can transport only some forty or fifty per day (that is: maximum 150 persons per week, while there are possibly some 300 migrants in Calais), the pushing in front of the car is understandable. (travel diary: 3rd of May)*



Picture 9. The site of the showers outside Calais. On the right the van.

Those who try to cling to decency are in this and other cases the last ones to receive help. If one would be modestly waiting for a place in the car that will take him to the site of the showers, others would be quicker and thus receive help instead of him. This is not only the case when it comes to the few showers available, but also when it comes to the two-weekly clothes distribution (travel diary: 5th of May). The earlier one comes to the spot, the more clothes he can choose from. This urges people to stand in line for hours, and cheating occurs.



Picture 10. Clothes distribution. Photo by Eric Giraudet de Boudemange.

What we find in Calais is a struggle for showers and clothes. More general, it is an ongoing struggle for human dignity and decency. However, exactly this struggle represents the definite downfall of dignity. This makes the situation painfully paradoxical. Migrants are confronted with two possible options, which both lead to only one outcome. If one clings to decency and thus withholds himself from fighting the daily 'battle' for clothes and showers, he will soon feel dirty and smelly, walking in clothes that are too wide or too thin for the cold weather. However when a migrant does join the daily routine of struggle he might be better off concerning clothes, but he will lose his sense of decency in the struggle itself. Behold the Calaisian explanation of Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* (Heller, [1955] (1990)).

To speak in the words of Primo Levi, I realize that all of this differs highly from the image one normally has of the oppressed, as being people who, if not committing united resistance, at least accept their fates united (Levi, 1987). However, we must understand that the struggle among the migrants is largely an outcome of the difficult circumstances of scarcity and ongoing police pressure in which not many can be trusted. Levi described into detail the struggle for life of people who were 'on the bottom' of human civilization: there is little mercy if it comes to survival. Although Calais is in no way comparable to the horrors of the concentration camps, the same struggle (for food and basic hygiene) is noticeable.

The foregoing is important to keep in mind. The perception of migrants as being criminal or less than human is a grave threat to their rights and dignity. However, the perception of migrants as being so-called 'noble wilds' is a danger as well. Both perceptions are expressions of Orientalism (Said, 1978). In Calais, most migrants own mobile phones and some stand in line for hours just to be the first to take the Nike and Adidas clothes from the distribution. And as said, fighting occurs. It continues to be a genuine challenge to see Others as humans rather than people holding sub- or superhuman qualities. I hope to have avoided both forms of inaccuracy in this thesis.

The consequences of the stacking up of large numbers of people as was the case in the BCMO, combined with the absence of taps, toilets and showers, are not limited to the migrants' psychological well-being. Cases of scabies have been troubling Calais before (Samuel, 2009), and during my visit I have been confronted with it as well (travel diary: 3rd of February). One day, the extra burden that has been placed upon the ones with diseases became apparent:

“ ” *To my surprise I find some people sleeping in front of the BCMO, instead of inside. They explain to me that they have diseases (scabies?), and that they cannot sleep inside because others could possibly get contaminated. Must have been one cold night for them. (travel diary: 4th of February)*

With its lack of privacy and lack of hygiene, Calais could best be labelled a 'camp'. The reason that migrants can be put in these camps, is that they are "morally excluded" from French society. The migrants are placed "outside the boundary in which moral values, rules, and considerations of fairness apply" (Opatow, 1990), which makes that they can be treated differently than the French. This leads the migrants in Calais into a 'state of exception' (Agamben, 1998). The migrant issue is seen as such because they do not come from France, and neither do they want to stay in France (since most prefer to go to The United Kingdom). Along with this comes "the corresponding suspension of the articles of the (...) constitution that guaranteed personal liberties" (Agamben, 1998).

Paragraph 2: The Perception of Migrants by others..

What is interesting to notice is that the way migrants are perceived by others has changed due to the appalling circumstances. On my first trip to Calais, I wrote down the following:

“ ” When I walk at the Boulevard Jacquard, I see three CRS-cops (riot police) running into Parc Saint Pierre. I run after them and witness the arrest of two Africans. They don't even try to run away, and are caught by the officers in full body armour. Although he only briefly grabs one by the shirt, one of the cops immediately washes his hands in front of the boy's eyes. (travel diary: 4th of February)

The simple fact of washing his hands while the 'suspect' is watching is a deed that can be considered dehumanizing. It shows the migrants that they are filthy and that one shouldn't touch them if unnecessary. Often policemen wear gloves when arresting the men.



Picture 11. The arrest of a migrant. Picture by Steven Greaves / www.stevengreaves.com.

This behaviour is not limited to Calais, as an Afghan man told me:

“ ” *They [the Greek police, MvN] wore gloves and masks, and even the women, (“who are normally more sensitive than men”), treated him the same. (travel diary: 1st of February)*

And he concluded:

“ ” *“Both Greek police and civilians treated me as an animal”. (travel diary: 1st of February).*

For two reasons, this behaviour is regrettable. First, the need for continuously washing hands, wearing gloves or even masks is highly exaggerated. In the weeks that I have lived among the migrants I have shaken hundreds of hands and did not feel any worse afterwards. Second, what makes this behaviour into a painful paradox

is that by treating the migrants this way, the police seems to be denying that the filth and lack of hygiene have been created by the French government and police itself. Through closing down or destroying all forms of habitation and sanitation, it is just a matter of time before the men will get dirty or diseases will break out. But now the migrants are treated as being dirty by the same men that are responsible for destroying their make-shift 'houses' in the 'Jungle'. What is even more remarkable is that the state of France has used the dire circumstances in which the migrants live as an argument to destroy their homes (Cherfils, 2009).

Although the state, not the migrants are to blame for most of the unsanitary living conditions and the absence of shelter, the migrants are in some instances treated as if they are *Ungeziefer*. Like Gregor Samsa, the main character in Franz Kafka's novel *Die Verwandlung*, they have been depicted and seen as vermin ever since the day they left their home countries (Kafka, [1915] 2005).

Paragraph 3: The absence of a voice.

Another dehumanizing act is that of denying the migrants a voice. What is at the basis of this is the constant harassment of the migrant population. By severe police pressure, the migrants are successfully disempowered and most of the time kept away from the public. Constantly, more secret sleeping places have to be found in order to avoid arrest. This secrecy also means living out of sight of the public, so that only little interaction between migrants and the public in Calais can take place. Because of the many police chases, they are made into invisible men.^{vi} But opposite of H.G. Wells notion, invisibility in their case doesn't bring along "the mystery, the power, the freedom" (Wells, [1895] 2009). For them it means relative powerlessness and a certain kind of captivity.

The migrant's voice for better living conditions could be divided into two parts. First, there is the direct voice of the migrants during protests or in 'conversations' with police officers. Second, there is the indirect voice of the migrants, namely through the

^{vi} see also 'Les Invisibles de Calais', documentary by Medecins du Monde:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bOzd8UIwgQ>

humanitarian organizations. Both channels are largely ignored or simply silenced by the French government and police. Some examples should be highlighted to make clear the absence of a voice. First, there is the case of the early days of February:

“ ” *[The] gym is only open when temperatures drop below zero, in other cases the migrants have to sleep in the streets. As soon as temperatures rise sufficiently the doors close. This leads to a lot of frustration for both migrants and organizations. Often migrants asked me during the day whether the shelter would be open that same evening, not knowing whether they had to sleep on the streets or not. One morning, we even threw away the old pieces of cardboard on which the migrants had slept for several nights, because we received news that the BCMO would close that night. However, later that day we received the message that the BCMO could stay open for one more night. The migrants could sleep inside, but due to bad communication or a late decision, they had no cardboard to sleep on. (travel diary: 1st of February).*

In this example, it is clear that the migrants, and even the humanitarian organizations, have little say in the policies of the (local) government. Or to be even more clear: the local government can easily rule over the migrants. They have the instant power to decide whether the migrants sleep in the local gym or on the streets that night. The migrants can only obey or squat an old building. According to van Houtum one of the maxims of equality has been violated here, namely that “people should have a say over policy principles that have an effect on them” (van Houtum, 2009). By doing so, France makes a moral distinction between people that are included and excluded from these rights.

Generally speaking, the same is true for the humanitarian organizations. Although regularly protesting against deportation trials (travel diary: 7th of May), dire living conditions (Calais Migrant Solidarity, 2010) or police activity (travel diary: 8th of May), progress is scarce. Three developments seem to make it difficult to aid migrants in the face of their daily suffering.

First, there are divides running through the humanitarian organizations and through the migrant community. The large number of volunteers (and thus the more different personalities and opinions) makes the cooperation between organizations fairly difficult. It often results in tensions, and separated approaches by the different organizations are more rule than exception. Eventually, the divide leads to a weaker position in the dispute with the local government, as might be made clear in the following example. It concerns a demonstration with the intention of questioning the living conditions in general and the police activities in specific:

“ ” *The biggest organization of all, Salam, is not present. They themselves say that they are not invited and thus will not go, the other organizations state that Salam doesn't like to cooperate with them. The march would be significantly larger and more visible, and the message so much louder, when there would be a united voice for more migrant rights. (travel diary: 8th of May)*

Second, not only the migrants but also the organizations are subordinate to the French government. Although they do try to change the fate of the migrants, their motion space is limited. Important to notice is that it is illegal to help people *en situation irrégulière* according to the so-called 'article 622-1' of the French law (Chastand, 2009). This *de jure* illegality of the activities of the humanitarian organizations makes them highly dependent on the government's 'willingness to allow'. More on this in Chapter 4.

Third, it should not be forgotten that large parts of the public are not on the side of the migrants and the humanitarian organizations. Large factions of the French and English electorates are demanding tougher treatment on migrants entering (or trying to enter) their respective countries. The voice of a minority of volunteers and a group of 'illegal aliens' not possessing the right documents is nothing compared to that. And there is not much help to be expected from the inhabitants of Calais, who are in the words of one Kurd 'tired of people sleeping and shitting in the streets' (travel diary: 1st of May). Massive demonstrations are rare:

“ ” *That evening I go with H  l  ne, one of the volunteers of Salam, to a protest in a town somewhat further away. There, the Sudanese who stood trial are locked up. In a desperate attempt, the organizations try to convince the state that expulsions to Darfur are immoral. Not even twenty men and women against the state of France... (travel diary: 7th of May)*

The one organization that manages to attract much attention is the No Border network, to which Calais Migrant Solidarity is closely related. In the summer of 2009 they organized a so-called ‘No Border camp’ in Calais, drawing some hundreds of activist from different countries. Considered to be left-wing radicals, police and media were present in large numbers. Therefore, the attention they drew was significant, but a large fraction of it in negative ways, especially in the United Kingdom. The English newspaper ‘The Telegraph’ understood that the protesters were literally about to “tear down the borders” (Allen, 2009b), and the Daily Mail explained how the protesters threatened to lead “swarms of illegal immigrants” through the Channel tunnel to The United Kingdom (Allen, 2009c). Although these stories seem very unlikely, since literally tearing down the borders is impossible with the Channel between France and Calais still intact, and leading migrants through the tunnel is a one-way ticket to death with the trains constantly riding back and forth, public fear and anger grew bigger. And when the No Border hangar opened at the beginning of February (travel diary: 5th of February), the Daily Mail immediately named it ‘Sangatte II’, referring to the Red Cross camp that was closed years before because of its reputation of attracting migrants to Calais (and thus to Great-Britain) (Allen, 2010). The local No Border group responded by distributing leaflets in which they claimed that the hangar would be used solely as ‘*un lieu de d  bats, d’informations*’ [a place for debates and information, MvN]. Nonetheless, the hangar was soon closed down by the French government, after a day-long occupation.

The combination of taking a stance in the immigration debate that is opposite to that of large parts of the public, plus the gathering of people that are perceived to be far-left, makes it hardly possible for the No Border organization to be understood and give the migrants a voice.

Paragraph 4: The absence of choice.

Another indication of the dehumanizing conditions the migrants find themselves in is the continuous waiting they have to undergo. They have to wait for food and clothes, and at the police station. They have to wait for smugglers and good opportunities to make the crossing to Great-Britain. More in general, they have to wait before they may enter the United Kingdom. All this is wasted time. Or as a volunteer put it: “the best years of all these young men are wasted” (travel diary: 7th of May).

Although the waiting in itself is not the problem, it gives a sense of powerlessness. There is lack of choices for the migrants. The migrants themselves have not much to decide concerning their daily lives, most things are decided for them. It is hardly possible for these men to take their fates into own hands. All that is done to provide them with the necessities of life is done for them, not by them. Jonathan Sacks explains it as follows: “To eat without working was not a boon but an escape from the human situation. Animals *find* sustenance; only mankind *creates* it” (Sacks, 2003 [original emphasis]).

Next to powerlessness, this absence of choice brings along absolute boredom. When I talk to Babur from Afghanistan, this becomes clear:

“ ” *In the evening I go to the food distribution of Salam again. After the distribution I talk to Babur, a young man from Kabul. He attracts my attention because he is always smiling. However, he describes Calais as ‘the boring life’: all the waiting and standing in line take their toll. “No job, no car, no house...” (travel diary: 4th of May)*

Next to an area of extensive police activity and conditions that are sometimes very hard, this is the other side of the coin. In the boring 'Phoney War' that is fought in Calais, police activity is not seldom a welcome distraction from daily life. Although tensions and fear are well-represented in the city, Calais is at the same time one of the 'waiting rooms' filled with migrants that are hoping to reach their destination (van Schapendonk, 2008). For many this waiting has been the case since their departure in the country of origin. They get stuck in Northern Africa before being able to cross the Mediterranean Sea; some are sent back to Libya to be locked up in 'off-shore centres'; others spend months in detention centres throughout Europe; and in the end there is an often very long asylum-procedure awaiting them. All this is waiting time. Jørgen Carling noticed that "our times are characterised by involuntary immobility as much as by large migration flows" (Carling, 2002).

CHAPTER FOUR CRIMINALIZATION

*'The shadows made by the bars / on the walls of my cell and the floor / Seem like visions of
freedom in my eyes / And commands / To make a new start.'*

(Alekos Panagoulis)

Next to the dehumanizing conditions, migrants in Calais face criminalization. This can be described as "the process by which behaviours and individuals are transformed into crime and criminals" (Michalowski, 1985). Often, members of (undesirable) groups are depicted as being involved in criminal activities, thereby causing entire groups to be branded criminal. The media, especially in the United Kingdom, play a key role in the process. The Daily Mail is feeding the sentiment by proclaiming that 'hundreds of illegal immigrants armed with knives and crowbars swarm round Calais trucks heading for Britain' (Rawstorne, 2009). And it warned the U.K. citizen that a 'violent new breed of migrants' is holding the city of Calais under 'siege' (Bracchi, 2009).

In some respect they are right: there are violent incidents in Calais. Migrants have robbed people, threatened truckers or stolen goods. Although exaggerating the situation (for most migrants are very decent men), the English media cannot be blamed for telling the wrong story. However, they could be blamed for not telling the *whole* story. In newspapers like those the focus is on the misbehaviour of the immigrants, but they often refuse to take into account the suffering that has to be faced by the migrants. The police treatment and the dire living conditions remain underexposed. And if they *do* describe the suffering, the reasons for this suffering to come into existence are largely neglected. Therefore, the violence that is committed by (a small fraction of) the migrants seems to be random, while most of it I believe stems from the pure desperation which is a result of the hardships. All the tensions that I have described so far, and that I will describe later on, must at least for some add up to the point of desperation and anomie. I certainly do not wish to explain

away the violent deeds, but it should be seen in its larger context. If the reasons for the violence remain unexplained, and the scale of the violence exaggerated, it gives people like Paul Bracchi the opportunity to name *all* migrants (not only the few who are indeed violent) ‘a violent new breed’; as if the violent behaviour is in the nature of these people.

Not only through the media are migrants criminalized, however. The French government policies and the actual treatment ‘on the ground’ in Calais show stark signs of criminalization as well. Three observations confirm this statement: first, the arbitrary arrests in Calais; second, the imprisonment in detention centres in France and in almost all other countries in Europe; and third, the prohibition of aid to migrants. Each of these will be discussed.

Paragraph 1: Arbitrary arrests.

“ ” *When we drive back [from a protest, MvN], the sun is already setting. On the outskirts of Calais we witness another arrest. This time, the drivers of a white van without sirens on the roof, without signs on the side, arrest two African men. These are police officers using the tactics of surprise. Every white van should be feared from now on, every white van means possible arrest. The vans used by the humanitarian organizations are white. (travel diary: 7th of May)*

Day after day, migrants are arrested in and around Calais. It makes clear the extent to which the state of France can have the migrants on its surface at its disposal. However, after being arrested, most of the migrants are not imprisoned for long. Many migrants claim to be underaged, which means that expulsion out of France is illegal. Or cases are just not tried because of the small capacity of the courts and the difficulties these trials bring along. In most cases, it does not take long before the arrested migrants are released again from the detention centre in Coquelles. Some are even released upon arrival. Two cases on the second and the eight of May may clarify the treatment after being arrested, as well as the arbitrary nature of the arrests:

“ ” Three (...) have been arrested while they were waiting for breakfast in front of the distribution place. Since there is an agreement with the town hall that no-one awaiting meals may be arrested, Rosie, one of the volunteers demands an explanation of the CRS officer in charge. “We don’t take orders from the town hall”, is his answer. All that the Kurds can do is take some extra bread for their arrested friends. Not much later I see them walking: they’ve been arrested, brought to the police station in near-by Coquelles, released upon arrival, after which they had to walk back for two hours in the pouring rain. (travel diary: 2nd of May)

“ ” Two of the men [in the Hazara jungle, MvN] have Italian passports, and thus are legal in Calais due to the Schengen treaty [which allows inhabitants of member states to travel freely to other countries, MvN]. However, during police raids they are taken to the police station in Coquelles just as well. Arriving there, they are released immediately. Still they have to walk back all the way to Calais, no matter the cold, the rain, or the fact that it is in the middle of the night. (travel diary: 8th of May)

The combination of arrests and quick releases is what is typical in the case of Calais. The difficulty of migrant trials and the vast amount of money it costs forces the French state to let go of many of the ‘illegal aliens’. Still, although after years of experience the French government should know that very few of the arrested are tried and even less are deported, the arrests continue. The goal is no longer to expel the ones that are caught. The main aim is to persuade the migrants to leave by making living conditions increasingly hard. An underlying goal might be the dissuasion of would-be migrants in the countries of origin through stories told by the ones that have undergone the hardships of Calais. This is in line with the closure of camps, as well as the placement of showers too far from the city centre, both of which are claimed to attract additional migrants to Calais (The Telegraph, 2002).

To persuade the migrants to leave, they are effectively made ‘illegal’ through continuous police pressure. The simple fact that they may be arrested continuously by the police implies that they are wrong, that they are criminals. Why else would they be arrested? In Europe with its human rights, no-one is arrested without crime.

Paragraph 2: Der Prozeß.

But once in a while, however, some migrants are tried. In May 2010 there was the case of the ten Sudanese. In an attempt to send them back to Darfur, they were taken to court. After an extensive process, three were released with the order to leave the country within ten days (which was in fact everything they wanted to do); the others refused to reveal their identities, or even didn't understand that they had to do so, due to incapable interpreters (travel diary: 6th of May). They remained imprisoned.

The process represents the purest form of criminalization. In court, an institute erected to convict criminals and to restore and maintain law and order, these men are depicted as if they have committed a crime. But what is exactly the crime these migrants have committed? Is it the crime of saying farewell to a country in peril, the crime of seeking better opportunities? Leaving behind friends and family was hard enough, I find out in Calais, but being harassed and locked up in a country that is the home country of *liberté, égalité et fraternité* is something beyond. (travel diary: 4th of May)

It is understandable that the Sudanese feel absolutely innocent. What they did was saying farewell to a region that we all know is highly troubled. While the bloodshed is still lingering on, France is planning on remitting Darfuri's (New York Times, 2010). And even if there is no direct threat to their lives, the minorities in Darfur are marginalized and will have to keep living in deplorable conditions in the near future (Gettleman, 2010). Logically, they consider the process to be punishment without crime. It all reminds of the trial Joseph K. had to undergo in Franz Kafka's novel *Der Prozeß*: "(...) ohne daß er etwas Böses getan hätte, wurde er eines Morgens verhaftet" [without having done anything wrong, he was imprisoned one morning, MvN] (Kafka, [1925] 1963).

Locked up in a country that portrays itself as the founder of human rights. With higher forces of populism putting pressure on the judges, and Great-Britain keeping an eye on the trial, the migrant is maybe not so much the delinquent but rather the

victim. Who could have foreseen (or: who could have believed) that the price for leaving a destitute or war-torn area would be imprisonment or deportation?

Furthermore, criminalization could be a highly dangerous habit. When the state or the media portray a certain group of people as being criminal, it might eventually lead to a shift in perception of this group of people by the citizens of that state. Engbersen and van der Leun concluded that “the perception of the ‘criminal illegal immigrant’ first and foremost reflects the division between wanted and unwanted immigrants, which is the result of the shift towards a restrictive policy” (Leun & Engbersen, 2001). This process of criminalization and the resulting shift in perceptions is uncontrollable, since perceptions might turn into deeds eventually. Or as the French organization Migreurope puts it: “(...) propagating the idea that to exercise one’s right to circulate freely is a crime, is at the roots of recurrent violations of human rights and serves to feed racism and xenophobia” (Migreurope, n.d.).

Paragraph 3: Detention centers.

The way in which countries cope with the influx of migrants is seen more and more as a ‘struggle’ or a ‘fight’ against (‘illegal’) immigration (Carrera, 2007). This terminology is often combined with the act of securitization. Securitization is “an extreme version of politicization that enables the use of extraordinary means in the name of security” (Buzan, Waever & de Wilde, 1998). In this process, migration is portrayed as posing a threat to European security. A surprisingly obvious example of this can be found in the Frontex organization, responsible for the border management of the EU’s external borders. The migration calculations they make are named ‘risk-analyses’, thereby assuming that migration in itself is a risk, a threat, to Europe (Pollak & Slominski, 2009).

Even at the detention centre in Coquelles near Calais, which I visited the 4th of May, signs of securitization can be found. A poster of the Police Aux Frontieres (Border Police) read that *‘votre sécurité est notre priorité’* [‘your security is our priority’, MvN], with one of the main tasks being the *‘lutte contre les trafics d’immigration irrégulière’*

(‘fight against irregular immigration trafficking’, MvN). What this poster implies is that the trafficking or smuggling of immigrants is a direct threat to *‘notre sécurité’*, thereby approving the harsh treatment in Calais. On top of that, the word *‘lutte’* or ‘fight’ implies that the smuggling is in essence violent against which should be fought. What can be noticed is that migration is easily linked to security. The linking together of these two mostly unrelated phenomena is what is called in the literature the ‘migration and security nexus’ (Castles & Miller, 2009).

Two points of critique can be raised to call into question this criminalization-through-securitization habit.

First, the threat migrants pose has often been exaggerated. The economic threat, namely that migrants will take jobs that once belonged to the ‘native’ European population, has been denied by various researchers (for example Ottaviano & Peri, 2006). Some argue that it would even positively influence the economies of both receiving and sending countries (by sending home remittances). The direct threat of the smuggling itself has been exaggerated in the media as well. Although there have been incidents in Calais, several (English) newspapers depict the migrants as consisting largely out of thugs. This is definitely not true.

Second, what seems to be forgotten by the ones practicing securitization is the causality. Although the Police Aux Frontieres and others seem to claim that strict border controls are the result of the danger of smuggling, they tend to forget about the role of border control in creating that phenomenon. To start with: without (controls at) borders, this type of smuggling would not be necessary in the first place. In other words: human smuggling exists partially *due to* the existence of border control. And the might of human smugglers grows at the same speed with which the borders get closed. More on this in Chapter 3.4 which deals with exploitation of migrants.

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Picture 12. PAF poster at the Coquelles detention centre.

A recent development is the use of humanitarian language to defend anti-immigration policies. As already stated in the second chapter, the destruction of the Jungle has been justified by the degrading circumstances in which migrants had to live. It was better for the migrants that the place was destroyed. Besson, the French minister of immigration, announced that “migrants will not be abandoned” and that “humanitarian measures” would be taken (France24, 2009b). None of this was true. The smuggling of migrants across the Channel is misused in the same kind of rhetoric. In the same article of France24, Besson proclaimed that the police operation in the Jungle aimed at finding smugglers^{vii}. However, the ten smugglers that were caught amidst the 200 or so migrants arrested that day were released shortly after. What seems to be forgotten is that the migrants *want* to be smuggled across the Channel. Certainly, the prices to be paid to the smugglers are exorbitant, but the migrants are not helpless people transported to become prostitutes or so. The journey across the Channel is not against their will, and they are free to go upon arrival in The United Kingdom. However, stating that they *are* exploited and misled turns the smuggling of migrants into the crime of trafficking. And against crimes, a government must fight. Changing the act of smuggling into the act of trafficking gives the French government a useful tool to battle migration. It turned out that the ‘humanitarian concerns’ mentioned in the article provided a nice opportunity to break down the Jungle and make life harder instead of easier for the migrants whose ‘houses’ were now destroyed. Or in the words of one of the volunteers from *l’association Salam*: “you don’t bring two bulldozers and skips into the jungle to arrest smugglers” (France24, 2009b).

Although the large majority of migrants are not criminal in the sense that they commit an actual crime other than crossing a border, many are detained for longer periods in detention centres. A June 2010 report by Jesuit Refugee Service Europe showed how much the detention in the EU affects the migrants involved. The longer the detention lasts, the more detainees state that they have a poor health, reaching 72 percent for the ones imprisoned for four to five months. And almost 70 percent says

^{vii} See also: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRePItoaP6Y&NR=1>

that “detention steadily worsens their self-perception.” Since distraction from reality in the form of education, sports or work is highly limited, and 79 percent of the detainees declare that they do not know when they will be released from detention, these results are predictable. Jesuit Refugee Service Europe is thus of the opinion that the “human cost of detention is too high, regardless of the achievability of these ends” (Jesuit Refugee Service, 2010).

The detention of migrants has been condemned in other publications as well. An example is the Amnesty International report *The Netherlands: The detention of Irregular Migrants and Asylum-Seekers* presented on the 27th of June 2008 (Amnesty International, 2008). It concluded that the detention of immigrants in the Netherlands is at odds with international guidelines. Not only the duration of imprisonment was questioned, but also the habit that locking up aliens is the norm, while it should be used as a last resort. An update in 2010 showed that the circumstances had hardly improved, and that migrants were still worse off than genuine criminals (Amnesty International, 2010c).

All in all, the (treatment in) detention doesn't differ that much from that of genuine criminals. As has been shown in the example of Greece, with its crowded detention centers, treatment can even be worse (Amnesty International, 2010b). In Western Europe conditions inside the centers are certainly better, with more movement space and rules that are slightly less strict for migrants than they are for offenders, but still they remain detained. And remarkably, this imprisonment can last for months or even years, often during the juridical attempt to expulse the concerning person. Effectively, this means that severe crimes committed by an EU resident, like physical abuse or otherwise, are often punished with lesser penalties than a non-EU resident's quest for better living opportunities. And whereas criminals know exactly when they will be released, migrants in detention centers do not know the length of their imprisonment, nor do they know whether they will be released or deported.

As said earlier when mentioning the dehumanizing conditions: it seems that migrants have ended up in a state of exception. 'Normal' rules do not seem to apply to the ones that come from elsewhere, nor do considerations of fairness. Therefore the penalties may be totally out of proportion, punishing those who seek better opportunities harder than criminals. And therefore, the treatment may be harsher than that of EU citizens.

Paragraph 4: Delit de Solidarité?

Since years, aid to migrants has been present in Calais. Numerous humanitarian and political organizations and institutions, as well as individuals, have been providing food, shelter and clothes to the migrants. The total number of volunteers must be incredible, certainly if we take into account the fact that the number of migrants in the coastal town of Calais has been three or four times as big as the current number. Providing them with all sorts of aid has been and still is a massive operation that is hard to exaggerate. The vast scale of the operation is illustrated by the groups that come to help the Salam organization with the cooking and distribution of *les repas*, the meals. Although many volunteers come from the region, some come from further away, even as far as Perpignan near Spain (travel diary: 31st of January). Another clear example of the magnitude of the phenomenon 'Calais' is the weekly visit by the Dutch organization De Heksenketel.

However, there have been concerns by the organizations that the aid to migrants will be hampered by new French regulations. On December 12th 2000, the Parliament in Paris ratified so-called *Article L622-1*, which condemns all persons who facilitate "l'entrée, la circulation et le séjour irrégulier d'un étranger" [the entrance, the circulation and the irregular stay of a foreigner, MvN] (Legifrance, 2000). Suddenly, all organizations assisting the migrants were breaking the law; they all helped to facilitate the irregular stay of a foreigner. Protests broke out to reverse the law, and the media spoke of a 'delit de solidarité' [solidarity crime, MvN] (Galliot, 2009).

French immigration minister Eric Besson replied by stating that "Tous ceux qui aident de bonne foi un étranger en situation irrégulière doivent savoir qu'ils ne risquent rien" [all those who aid an irregular foreigner in good faith should know that they risk nothing, MvN] (Chastand, 2009). The law, he said, was developed with the aim to target human smugglers, not the ones aiding the migrants without benefiting from it. The claim that in France there is something as a solidarity crime is a "myth", he stated.

Nonetheless, if we take a closer look, cases of arrests and interrogations based on Article L622-1 do exist, and not only with *passeurs*, human smugglers, as suspects. Numerous cases in which volunteers or individuals have been stopped, questioned and imprisoned have been collected in a report by the organization Statewatch (Statewatch, 2009). And even in the daily life of Calais, implications of this *délit de solidarité* can be observed:

“ ” *Volunteers of Secours Catholique tell me that two days before, the Salam group coming from Bailleul was halted by the police and interrogated. Their offence was that they brought migrants in their car from one place to the other (travel diary: 3rd of May).*

This treatment seems in line with the treatment of the migrants. The primary aim is neither to imprison the migrants, nor their benefactors. Rather, they try to persuade the migrants to leave Calais, for example by obstructing the aid they receive. However, it is far too risky to imprison volunteers, since this could alter the public opinion dramatically. Therefore, the authorities are content with halting and interrogating *an sich*, which will at least intimidate these volunteers. The same is true for the migrants in Calais. Although many are imprisoned and deported, most are 'only' detained for shorter periods and then released. In this way, the French government tries to deter both migrants and those who come to their aid.

Concluding, we can argue that the humanitarian organizations in Calais are performing the tasks which once belonged to the government (van Valkenburg, 2009). Since the government is hardly taking care of the migrants in Calais, the organizations are responsible for their fates. In this sense, those organizations possess so-called biopower (Foucault, [1976] 1998). With their food and clothes distribution, the management of the shower facilities and the medical treatments, the organizations have the power to keep the migrants in (relatively) good conditions. "The humanitarian", so stated Fassin (2005), "can only *reproduce* the isolation of sacred life" [emphasis mine, MvN]. It cannot lift people out of it. Van Valkenburg has a point when she states that the organizations in their turn are highly dependent on the French state's willingness to allow the humanitarian aid to migrants. Indirectly, the French state holds the biopower, which is practised through the humanitarian organizations.

CHAPTER FIVE

EXPLOITATION

"When I look up, I see people cashing in. I don't see heaven, or saints or angels. I see people cashing in on every decent impulse and human tragedy."

(Catch-22, Joseph Heller)

The logical outcome of calling people 'illegal' is their disappearance from formal society (Cohen et al., 2003). Afraid of persecution, imprisonment and deportation, those declared illegal will make their ways into a shady world on the fringes of civilization. Hiding in places unknown, the illegal are unlawful and thus short on health-care, education and jobs. Because of the invisibility and the unlawfulness, abuses may go unnoticed. But now and then, they do surface. An example is the beating up of migrants by skinheads in Calais (De Heksenketel, 2007; La Voix du Nord, 2010). In contrast to this example however, many of the abuses take the form of exploitation. According to Stanford University professor Allen Wood, to exploit something or someone is 'to make use of him, her, or it for your own ends by playing on some weakness or vulnerability in the object of your exploitation' (Wood, 1995). It is especially the vulnerability and, as I will argue, the dependency of migrants which makes them vulnerable for exploitation in the case of Calais. Two forms of exploitation are ever present: sex related abuses, and exploitation by human smugglers. Next to that, the police treatment is worth discussing, although it doesn't come in the form of exploitation.

Paragraph 1: Sex related abuses.

Migrants find themselves in very dependent positions in Calais. The act of illegalizing the migrants contributes to this dependency. And the desperation caused by the hardships of Calais and the difficulty to reach Great-Britain pushes them into the arms of people trying to take advantage of their misery. Since crossing the Channel, the last obstacle to Great-Britain, is extremely difficult, human smugglers demand huge prices in return for their services (as will be explained in the following

paragraph). Many migrants spent all they had on the journey to Calais, and are in desperate need of new money to finance the last length of their journey. The desperation and the dependency sometimes take their toll:

“ ” *Together we [Dareios and me, MvN] eat pizza in a restaurant. I notice that his hands are trembling all the time. The smile that once dominated his face has somewhat faded. He seems weaker than before. No wonder. He tells me how a man has approached him, because he saw in him a future model. Attracted by new clothes, food and a shower, and the appointment to arrange asylum for him, Dareios took the chance. However, when he told other migrants about this man some weeks later, they suspected him from bringing home migrants to have sex with them. He immediately quit all contact, and seems flabbergasted by this event (travel diary: 10th of May).*

As shown in the previous, on their way through Europe migrants face prostitution and forced labour. Forms of exploitation continue throughout Europe into Calais. In an area that is systematically lacking trust, even those who say they come to help may have other intentions. Surprisingly (or not?), deeds that reek of abuse have even infiltrated the humanitarian organizations:

“ ” *After lunch, a volunteer with whom I spoke earlier, invites me to his house. (...) What strikes me is that he tells me that sometimes he sleeps with migrant women (who come to Calais in the summer). The same thing happens within other organizations, he states. As long as the migrants agree on it, he doesn't see the problem. (travel diary: 2nd of May).*

What he didn't take into account is the fact that the power relations between him and the migrant might be completely out of balance. He is a rich, settled Westerner handing out the food, while she is a relatively poor, unemployed and homeless migrant receiving (his) food. Although he claims she 'wants' to sleep with him, it is hard to tell whether this is her free will or rather a reflection of her dependency. It could be that she is hoping to gain advantages from it, whether it be in the form of

money, a shower or food. On the 10th of May, Dareios tells me a similar story that makes clear the shady world of illegality:

“ ” *“All the ones that slept with her”, Dareios tells me, referring to one of the volunteers, a woman with a raw voice and missing teeth, “have made it to The United Kingdom.” Although it seems to me very unrealistic that she actually has any influence on their journeys, it is a myth that migrants cling to. False hope is still hope (travel diary: 10th of May).*

Although some are taking advantage of the bad fate of the migrants of Calais, we must see this behaviour in its wider context. Calais has been a deprived town for years, with high unemployment rates and relative poverty. Some volunteers are needy themselves, or divorced and single. This part of French society, I agree with my Couchsurfing host Benoît, is “an underground world that people like you and me cannot understand” (travel diary: 10th of May).

What laid the foundations for the exploitation of migrants is the practise of illegalizing them. Chasing them away, keeping them out of public view, closing the Sangatte Red Cross camp, destroying their makeshift huts; all this made, and still makes possible the forms of exploitation and abuse that are ever present in Calais. Most places that guarantee shelter and safe-havens are temporary, closed down or destroyed.

Paragraph 2: The power of human smugglers / the story of Dareios.

To some extent, threats to migrants come from other migrants. As said before, in times of scarcity and with heavy burdens put on the shoulders of migrants, mutual distrust is high. Nationalities and even ethnicities live apart from one another. With a bit of luck, the members of the own group can be trusted. Other groups are sometimes considered to be inferior or simply dangerous. Fights among groups do occur:

“ ” Suddenly, the distribution gets interrupted by a fight between migrants. I see a man lying on the ground, surrounded by others who kick him. I run towards them in order to separate the fighting parties. Only with the greatest effort, I and other migrants succeed in this. With blood steadily dripping from his mouth, I lead away the yelling victim. According to other migrants with whom I speak shortly after, this was one of the more or less frequently occurring clashes between nationalities in Calais. Although they have respect for my intervention, I get the advice to be more careful the next time, since sometimes knives are being used in the fighting (travel diary: 30th of April).

The biggest threat to the migrants, however, are the human smugglers. They have great control over the migrants, because they are the ones that (claim to) have the knowledge how to get them into The United Kingdom. Some know the right spots where to board the trucks, others might have bribed truckers to take some of the migrants with them. These are tricks the individual migrants often do not master. However, this knowledge comes at a price that is extraordinarily high, both in a financial and a personal way. The story of Dareios from Iran may explain this into detail:

“ ” After I get to the BCMO, Dareios tells me that he found a smuggler who can bring him to The United Kingdom. He has to pay him 5000 euro, but then his travel will be ‘guaranteed’ (that is: the driver of the lorry is bribed). Dareios has to be ready, because he might receive a call to leave that same evening or the night after (travel diary: 4th of February).

These are the prices people pay to get a one-way ticket into Great-Britain, prices that can reach 300 times the amount E.U. residents pay to get there (which is currently 17 euros). Still when I left Calais some days later, Dareios had not been able to go to The United Kingdom. I sent him a couple of emails, but lost track of him when I returned home. When I came back to Calais in the end of April, I did not see him walking around. I expected him to be either in The United Kingdom or back home, in Iran. However, after a couple of days he came to the food distribution again:

“ ” *Shortly after I left the place [in February, MvN], he went to Dunkirk. He thought that it would be easier to reach The United Kingdom from there. However, the main “smugglers” in Dunkirk were caught by the police just after he had arrived. The new smugglers didn’t have any experience. He lost a large amount of money during a trip in which he was still caught by the police (travel diary: 6th of May).*

“ ” *The ‘Jungle’ in Dunkirk was mainly inhabited by Kurds, Dareios explains. The smugglers terrorized the place, threatening anyone but especially non-Kurds with knives and even pistols. There was only one shower for approximately 50 men, and the Kurds didn’t let him use it too often (travel diary: 6th of May).*

This clearly shows the power of the human smugglers. Just as is the case with the humanitarian organizations providing them with food, migrants are to a large extent dependent on the smugglers to help them reach The United Kingdom. Dareios even claimed that it was impossible to get to The United Kingdom without a smuggler (travel diary: 1st of February). Although this might be an exaggeration, it is at least very difficult to do so.

And just as was the case with the lack of hygiene among the migrants, the causality is reversible. Politicians claim that the smugglers are a kind of evil that should be rooted out by strict border controls and police intervention. They are definitely right in the sense that many of the smugglers are ordinary gangsters. However, what they tend to forget is that these human smugglers exist solely because of the ever increasing strictness at the border. When it gets harder and harder to enter the English territory, the power of the few that know how to get in increases (Fassin, 2005). Less strict border controls would inevitably mean less power to the human smugglers. And, as stated earlier in this thesis, the existence of human smugglers is now being used as an argument to close down camps.

Paragraph 3: Police treatment.

In general, police treatment is relatively friendly in comparison with the treatment in other countries. Although raids on the squats and jungles are a daily routine, the treatment when arrested is generally decent. Nonetheless, this compliment should be interpreted in the context of constant violence which migrants had to face during their journeys. In the first days that I was in Calais, Afrooz explained this to me:

“ ” *The stories about Greece are just like I read before on the internet. They say they've been beaten by the police, and were imprisoned for a long time before being released. No wonder that they consider the French police to be "good police" (travel diary: 30th of January).*

Certainly, in comparison with their Greek (and Lybian, and Turkish, etc.) colleagues, the French police is 'good', even providing breakfast in jail (travel diary: 30th of January). Yet it is also responsible for the cat-and-mouse game of arresting-detaining-releasing. And for the destruction of anything that could be used as shelter against the cold and the rain. Not even the tents provided by the humanitarian organizations are spared; they too are destroyed or taken by the police so that the migrants have to sleep rough in the streets or dunes of Calais (Boyer, 2009; No Border, 2010).

Although it may be true that the French police consists mostly out of 'good police', the tacticts they use are certainly rigid. Arrests can and do occur at any given time and place:

“ ” *I join La Belle Etoile in preparing lunch, and when we return I suddenly see Fahren walking by. Three days earlier he told me that he would take the bus to Dunkirk, so what is he doing still here in Calais? With his soft voice he explains to me how he tried to take the bus both yesterday and the day before. The first time he was caught by the police (and released shortly after), the second time he managed to run away from them before being caught. I tell him that I can bring him to the bus station if he wishes, and together with a friend of him we walk the three hundred meters that seem to be an impossible threshold for migrants to take (travel diary: 5th of February).*

The effect is that migrants are driven out of public view. The secrecy of a spot to stay overnight is of great importance: being caught is not only a stressful experience but also another night no chance of reaching Great-Britain. Migrants are thus forcibly pushed to the outer circles of French civilization, and to the outskirts of Calais, with the result that very few are able to witness the majority of the arrests carried out by the French police. This implies that almost self-evidently possible offences against migrants go unnoticed. The fact that we can't witness these offences, doesn't mean that they do not occur:

“ ” *After the distribution has finished, and the migrants are sent off, people from Salam keep talking together. They are saying that today, a migrant was beaten by the police. His arm was broken. On the day of the clothes distribution I see him walking, and he says that that is the truth. His arm is fastened to his body; there is no way in which he can move it. It must be very difficult to live on the streets if one can use only one hand, certainly when basic hygiene is lacking (travel diary: 3rd of May).*

Although numbers of police violence are not available, it is clear that disrespect among officers is present. As said, they arrest people prior to the food distribution and right outside the BCMO, and they wear gloves during, or wash their hands after arrests to show the men that they are filthy. These are all deeds that are harsh but not punishable. Neither is the following:

“ ” *Then suddenly chaos. I see people running in all directions. No doubt what's going on: another police-raid on the Africa house. In a matter of seconds, all have disappeared except the 20 men that have the right papers. And then there is the CRS [riot police, MvN], one of them with his police bat in hand. Their black boots leave stains on the prayer mats (travel diary: 4th of May).*

I assumed that the policemen walked on the prayer mats out of ignorance, not knowing what these mats were used for. However, on the website of Calais Migrant Solidarity there are more cases reported in which the prayer mats are deliberately

blemished, even after signs had been hung up to ask the police to respect the sacredness of these mats (CMS website, May 15 and May 21). It is clearly a form of disrespect for (the religion of) the migrants, and an obvious example of mistreatment.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

In the first Chapter of my thesis I asked the question: "*What are the consequences of the French government's wish to control immigration for the individual migrant in Calais?*" Time to evaluate.

Without hesitation I must conclude that the consequences are harsh. The actual situation in Western Europe (with Calais as its controversial climax) must be exactly the opposite of what the migrants expected to find in our region. Although European soldiers risk their lives to bring democracy and human rights to Afghanistan and Iraq, many Afghans and Iraqis who come to look for these homelands of human rights are denied entrance, persecuted and deported back to their countries in peril. And the many who have heard about or have seen the affluence and wealth of the West, find out the hard way that there is no place for them at the table of delight.

Paragraph 1: A Migrant's Treatment.

The unwanted Other continuously has to face his or her position. Before entering the European Union, many are already imprisoned in so-called "off-shore centres" by governments that work in close cooperation with the E.U. Then there are the horrific stories of the men and women trying to enter E.U. territory. Many by ship, with high death tolls as a consequence. Other ships are towed back to the notorious country of Libya, without being able to claim asylum in Europe. The journey over land through Europe is marked by exploitation and racism. Claiming asylum is in some countries an almost definite rejection, no matter how dangerous the situation in the home country.

And then Calais.

The living conditions can be called less than human. The French government is not providing the basic needs for survival. On the contrary: it is even actively denying the migrants many of these necessities of life. Food and showers have to be provided by humanitarian organizations, and there is no place to sleep but the streets and ramshackle squatted buildings. Many sleep rough in the parks or other hidden places. Some build makeshift camps or 'jungles' on the outskirts of the city, starkly resembling third world slums: within days, these are destroyed by the police, and its inhabitants chased away or arrested. Others squat old buildings: these are raided on a daily basis by the police, no matter what time of day, and the inhabitants taken to the police station. Regularly, the squatted buildings are destroyed, leaving dozens of men homeless. Only when temperatures drop below freezing point, a gym (the BCMO) is opened to provide the migrants with a roof over their heads. With about a hundred men inside, the gym is crowded, noisy and smelly. And as soon as the temperatures rise, the gym closes and all are left homeless again. None of the buildings (jungles, squats, not even the BCMO) have running water. No showers, no toilets, not even water taps are available inside. Basic hygiene is at best not provided and in the worst cases even made impossible. Only after demonstrations against the bad living conditions showers have been placed, but far outside the city centre, placing an extra burden on the already strained shoulders of the humanitarian associations which now need to bring the migrants back and forth to the site. The appalling conditions are inevitably leading to cases of disease, and are an obvious form of dehumanization.

The dehumanization is (purposely?) worsened by the French police by wearing masks and gloves during physical contact with the migrants. They seem to ignore the fact that they themselves are the ones who continuously destroy all forms of habitation and chase away the migrants day and night, thereby creating the unhealthy hygienic situations which cause them to wear these gloves. The habit of continuously arresting and releasing migrants leads to a stressful and often risky cat-and-mouse game, especially for the numerous unaccompanied minors that are among the migrants in Calais. Furthermore it gives one the sense of powerlessness

and inferiority, since the migrant is at the mercy of the state. The migrant has no say in policies regarding his fate.

On top of that, the daily routine of arrests is an obvious example of the migrant's criminalization, with detention centers and trials representing its controversial climax. Those who have fled poverty or even warfare, those who thought they were on their way to countries of affluence and human rights, now find themselves convicted as if they were criminals. Not many will understand what they've done wrong, and why they have to be sentenced to imprisonment or forced deportation. Furthermore, aiding illegal aliens has been declared forbidden by the French state. And although French immigration minister Besson declared the law would only concern human traffickers, numerous cases show that volunteers of humanitarian organizations have also been targeted. In doing so, the government portrays the migrants as being criminal, and helping them is thus a crime just as well. Some (British) media send out the very same message, by highlighting the wrongs that have been committed by some, and not the suffering that has to be faced by many of the migrants. Ultimately, there is always the threat that in the end, the migrant will be send back to his home country or to another country which he passed on his journey to Calais.

The illegality and dependency that are the result of the French government's policies make the migrant highly vulnerable to exploitation. Sexual abuses occur, even with a migrant population consisting merely out of men. In some cases, the migrant's dependent position is misused by inhabitants of Calais or even members of the humanitarian organizations. On top of that, fellow migrants cannot always be trusted. The situation of relative scarcity of hygiene, decent clothes, and on top of all opportunities, leads to a low level of trust, especially between nationalities and ethnicities. At the top of the ladder are the human smugglers. Now that border controls have rapidly increased in frequency and intensity, the few who have the knowledge how to get to The United Kingdom demand large amounts of money for their services. Although it can be considered a form of exploitation, it should be kept

in mind that human smugglers exist by the grace of border control. Finally, the illegal status of the immigrants, which makes them flee towards places hidden from public view, makes them more vulnerable for possible police brutality. Although it is hard to find evidence of actual violence, since arrests are hardly witnessed, misbehavior among the policemen seems to occur.

Although actual deeds of abuse occur only sporadically, the underlying fear for these acts of brutality is ever-present. An 'illegalized' migrant in Calais, in Europe, needs to be on his or her guard constantly. A moment of inattention can result in less food, no shower, abuse or detention. And although all of these things might be temporary misfortunes, relatively easy to overcome, the fear for deportation is hanging over one's head as a dark cloud. It is "an obsessing fear that gnaws you" (Champion, 1989).

All the measures described here have their implications on the bodies and especially the minds of the migrants. Nonetheless, still many find their ways through the web of laws and controls. But where can the Afghan man go, who has been denied a residence permit, but cannot return to Afghanistan either (travel diary: 8th of May)? What options does Mamadou from Ivory Coast have, whose belongings have been taken by the French police during one of the frequent raids, amongst which his mobile phone with the number of his family back home (travel diary: 6th of May)? How to avoid other under aged boys developing psychological problems and turn to auto mutilation, just like Morad from Afghanistan did (travel diary: 7th of May)? For many, Calais is a necessary halting place on their way to a 'new life' in The United Kingdom or another European destination. For Mamadou, Morad and plenty of others however, Calais itself came to represent this 'new life'. The French government is creating, in the words of Zygmunt Bauman (2004), 'wasted lives' on its own shores.

Paragraph 2: Connecting the dots: the core role of illegalization.

The situation in which migrants find themselves in Calais has been divided into three broad categories: (1) the criminalization; (2) the dehumanizing conditions, and; (3) the exploitation they have to face. The reader that has read this thesis thoroughly will have understood already that these three situations cannot be set apart. Instead they are to a large extent interconnected. Furthermore, there are some direct or indirect relations to be found that can shed a more general light on the implications of Europe's wish to diminish immigration.

The wish of the French government to reduce immigration (to France itself or to The United Kingdom alike) means that larger shares of the migrant population entering the country are *illegalized*. My line of argument is that declaring people illegal means no more than portraying them as doing something criminal, which is what 'illegal' in essence means. Declaring people illegal therefore means that one *criminalizes* a large share of the migratory flows (and thus of the actors of migration: the individual migrants) towards Europe. What this implies is that migrants are treated as being criminal, which might (and in many cases will) eventually result in being treated less than human. They are effectively *dehumanized*. This dehumanization process is resulting in Calais and in wider Europe in forms of *exploitation*. I do not say that those forms of exploitation do not occur without migration, but illegalizing and dehumanizing migrants makes migrants a particularly soft target.

What is important to notice is that the habit of illegalizing migrants is at the heart of the problem. It runs like a red wire through the story, for it has laid the foundations for all other threats that the migrants have to face: from the detention centers to the sometimes dehumanizing police treatment, from the abuses by civilians to the harsh living conditions. All these customs exist by the grace of illegality; because the migrant is pushed underground, out of sight, and in a highly dependent position. Although being on a country's territory, 'illegal' migrants are often refused many of the rights that are granted to the autochthonous citizens of that country. This creates an underclass that is stripped of most rights, or in the words of Ticktin, it results in a

'state of exception' (Ticktin, 2005). It is no more than logical that cases of abuse against migrants will occur in a situation like this: these are the inevitable consequences of depicting migration as being an illegal or criminal deed.

What is at least as important to notice here, is that the reign of abuse and fear in Calais seems to be not so much the *side effect* of the French migration policies, but rather its *aim*. This became clear when I noticed the destruction of all forms of habitation, the location of the showers and the severe police activity. "The suffering imposed on refugees and migrants is deliberate government policy" (Hayter, 2000). Although, relatively few migrants are actually sent back to their home countries, by generating fear among the migrants and maintaining the very tough conditions in Calais some return home 'voluntarily'. And what is more important, maybe all of them (also the ones that reach Great-Britain in the end) will tell family and friends back home about the harsh situation they had to face in France. French policy makers thus seem to use them as mediators to dissuade would-be migrants: the creation of "modern outlaws" (Cohen, 2003) is part of the dissuasion. The individual migrant in Calais is not being treated as a goal in itself, but as a means towards a goal. This is the exact opposite of one of Kant's famous categorical imperatives, which states that people should always be treated as goals in themselves, and never as a means towards it (Goodreau, 2000).

The term 'outlaw' must be taken quite literally here. The description of the circumstances in this thesis makes clear that most of the dangers and difficulties that arise are not due to new rules made by the French government to counter immigration. Rather, they exist because of the *suspension* of the rules. According to Agamben (1998), "The rule applies to the exception in no longer applying, in withdrawing from it". Placing migrants outside the sphere of rules and governance, makes them vulnerable for the abuses and bad living conditions described earlier. By allowing and not preventing these situations, the French government is indirectly making the life of the migrants considerably more difficult, thereby persuading them to leave the country. Here the difference is being made between *zoē* and *bios*. Legal

inhabitants of France are considered to hold 'bios'; they possess political rights and live a full life. Illegal aliens, on the other hand, are reduced to 'zoē', or 'bare life'. They live in great uncertainty and are thus forced to live 'naked' (or 'bare') lives with less rights than the French. Calais is one of the many contemporary places in Europe where this 'state of exception' came to be the rule. What results are 'camps' like the BCMO in Calais, established "when the state of exception begins to become the rule" (Agamben, 1998).

Calais is a clear example of this type of setting. But as said, it is certainly not correct to interpret Calais as being an aggressive-but-local exception to European migration politics. It is rather a clear manifestation of the anxiety with which immigration is approached. From the coast of Asia and Africa on, most migrants have been given a highly unfriendly welcome. And with threats coming from all sides, migrants are plunged into a kind of Hobbesian state of nature on the continent renowned for its human rights (Hobbes, [1651] 2010). If there is one single thing that migrants must have learned in Calais, it is that sometimes, in Sartre's words, '*l'enfer, c'est les autres*' ['hell is other people', MvN]. Although I want to stress like Jean-Paul Sartre himself that these acts of violence and exploitation are all committed by individuals who are fully responsible for their own choices and deeds, illegalizing the migrant has shaped an environment in which these deeds are more likely to flourish. In the words of Dostoevsky, "I do not want to and cannot believe that evil is the normal condition of mankind" (Dostoevsky, [1877] 1986), but this is what happens when people are forced to live in inhuman conditions, stripped from even their most basic rights like shelter and running water. There are no Angels in Calais, for only the Demons created through illegality can scare away the immigrants.

Although plenty that has been said before turned out to be showing the downsides of immigration control, it is not *an sich* a plea for open borders. This for the simple reason that it may have shown the result of the border controls, but not the possible downsides of open borders. In other words: one should compare two (partially)

contradictory world systems in order to find an answer to the question which one of those is the better one. This has never been the aim of my thesis.

However, some general remarks can and should be made, although I am fully aware of the modest scope of the underlying study. Now that the anti-immigration sentiment in Western-Europe is rapidly gaining momentum, other voices are welcome. The quote by Primo Levi with which I opened this thesis explains why. Certainly, democracies like the ones found in Western-Europe are blessings, but that does not mean that they are perfect. The majority can decide to oppress the minority: this is perfectly democratic. Democracies should be monitored constantly to question the errors that will inevitably occur. To do so, a vivid scene of non-governmental organizations and international regulations on human rights is necessary. Way too often in the current immigration debate, the treatment of migrants is seen as something "they deserve" or something "that is necessary". The long-time imprisonment of asylum seekers by Western-European governments for example, is often perceived to be essential. I highly doubt that. Questioning policies that have such grave implications as the inappropriate treatment or the captivity of individuals is necessary to guarantee a lively democracy.

Therefore, I have some remarks that can roughly be divided into two general questions, namely (1) is the wish to control migration useful? and; (2) is the wish to control migration justifiable?

Paragraph 3: The Usefulness of Immigration Control.

First, it is very uncertain that all the expensive measures taken to 'defend' the European Union against migration actually pay off. After increasing the Frontex patrols in the Mediterranean Sea, migration routes have quite easily shifted from this area to Turkey. The main thing it might have done is increasing the length of the journey, thereby boosting the exploitation and human suffering that come along with travels like these. In Calais, I have seen a couple of men returning to their countries of origin because of the hardships which they could not bear any longer. But I have

spoken as many men who have been sent back, and then gave it a second try. Although life for migrants is getting harder and harder in Europe, most expect it to be a temporary pain that will eventually lead to a better existence:

“ ” *After breakfast I see Fahren walking by. He tells me that he plans to get to Dunkirk with a friend that day. I ask him why; there is no BCMO in Dunkirk, he will have to sleep outside. He responds: “I didn’t come all the way for this gym, I come for The United Kingdom” (travel diary: 4th of February).*

Furthermore, one can question the economic impact migration has on the country of arrival. Philippe Legrain, for example, suggests that migrants (both low- and high-skilled) often contribute to a more healthy economy, because they bring diversity and thus innovation (Legrain, 2009). Research by the World Economic Forum suggests that strict asylum policies are bad for an economy’s international competitiveness (Reijn, 2010; Visser, 2010).

As Legrain stated: “the economic case for open borders is as compelling as the moral one” (Lafsky, 2007). Further, if a country tries its hardest to keep out or even send back migrants to their home countries, this will do no good to the integration process of migrants that are allowed to stay eventually. One obviously feels less affiliation with a country after being imprisoned by it.

Paragraph 4: The Morality of Immigration Control.

Then there is the question whether strict migration policies are justifiable in a moral sense.

First, there are statements to be mentioned about *freedom of movement* as a universal good. From a liberal point of view, one could say that the right to migrate is an essential element of freedom. Economist Adam Smith already stated that “every man, as long as he does not violate the laws of justice, is left perfectly free” (in:

Gauthier, 1986). This seems self-evident, but it isn't. Although the advocates of free markets have succeeded in liberalizing trade to a very large extent, they forgot to 'liberalize' the factor that both produces and consumes the commodities that now almost freely roam the planet: the human being. Communication technologies now allow one to hear about European human rights and to see the wealth in which many of us live, but these global images cannot become reality as long as some people themselves are still stuck in the local. Access to globalization turns out to be highly unequally divided among Westerners and non-Westerners. Now that media, capital, products, and Westerners are all playing their role in a globalizing world, it is not surprising that the last of the Mohicans that are deliberately kept unglobalized wish to play along as well. Freedom to move quickly becomes the main stratifying factor of our times (Bauman, 1998). Currently, a global form of Apartheid is maintained in which the rich Westerners do have the right to move freely, while the poor don't (Richmond, 1994). A Westerner can get visa for almost every country, but large shares of the inhabitants of Third World countries will never obtain one to go to Europe (van Houtum, forthcoming). When the official rhetoric is still all about proclaiming human rights and democracy, but the actual practice is about (maintaining) inequality, the outcome is that apparently "all animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others" (Orwell, [1945] 1993). Maybe Adil from Afghanistan was wrong when he cited Bill Gates, saying that *"if you are born poor it's not your mistake; but if you die poor it's your mistake"* (travel diary: 1st of February). His American (or in this case: European) dream is based on a naïve principle, namely that all people can and will get a fair chance to reach their goals. These chances are either not given or not fair in the current circumstances.

In line with this critique is the theoretical argumentation of the philosopher John Rawls (1971), who introduced the 'veil of ignorance'. The argument is as follows: justified is what one would choose to implement when the roles in society would be redistributed and one does not know who he or she will become. Or in the words of Rawls himself, when "(...)no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status; nor does he know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and

abilities, his intelligence and strength, and the like". So one cannot justify slavery, for he might as well become the slave himself.

This argument can be applied to worldwide inequalities. Since we do not know and cannot influence where we will be born before that actually happens, this can be either in the Western world or in an underdeveloped country. We can speak of a world-wide 'lottery of birth'. It was obviously not the choice of the poor people themselves to be born in a Third World country; neither did any of us Westerners have a share in the construction of prosperity in our region before our births. Since we do not influence our place of birth, we could have become Third World citizens just as well. This would have meant that most of us were unable to move out of poverty, due to the restrictions on immigration imposed by the Western countries.

Second, there are statements about *negative duties* that Western countries have towards Third World citizens. This argument is based on the historical and current exploitation of the developing countries by the rich Western states. During the Cold War, both the West and East have aggressively supported (armed) rivaling parties, plunging many countries in civil war and anarchy, and financing the most corrupt and oppressive regimes (Meredith, 2005). Evidence suggests that liberalizing the markets in the Third World has done more bad than good to the economies of these countries, certainly when agricultural subsidies and import tariffs in the West are still standing (Stiglitz, 2006). The structural adjustments that have led to this situation have in many cases been imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on highly indebted countries looking for loans (World Development Movement, 2005). The IMF and World Trade Organization, which have to regulate fair and free trade, are criticized for their intransparency, undemocratic structure, and the power differences between (the lobbies of) rich and poor member states (Held, 1995). Climate change is largely caused by the immense emission of greenhouse gasses in the West, but the results are most noticeable in the poor countries that do not have the money to adapt to these changes (UNDP, 2007). And Western transnational corporations are still in many cases more than willing to do business with

controversial regimes in Third World countries in order to still there hunger for natural resources or cheap labour. Thomas Pogge (2008) points out that helping out the countries that are hit by all the deeds mentioned above should not so much be a case of solidarity, but rather a case of justice. In short, the richer countries have the negative duty to stop treating the poorer countries badly. As long as that doesn't happen, who are we to avoid emigration from these countries? Or in other words: if it is Western governments and Western companies that are partially responsible for the bad fates of people in Third World countries, then what ground do we have to tell them that they are not welcome here?

Paragraph 5: A 'War on Migration'.

The main thing to be investigated (and to which I have hoped to contribute) is the role of human suffering and human flourishing both in a 'protected' Europe, and in an 'open' Europe. So the pros and cons of migration control must be weighed against the pros and cons of open borders. As said before, I managed to clarify the suffering of migrants under strict border controls, but the possible downsides of extensive immigration to Europe are harder to illuminate. It is not yet clear what the results will be when the freedom of movement of all people is guaranteed. No wonder: the main reasons given to bring a halt to immigration are to be found in the future. A genuine 'clash of civilizations'; fraud in the social welfare system; large-scale criminality among migrants: many of the threats that are brought forward to counter migration are futuristic problems. The ongoing scientific debate shows that there is no consensus whatsoever about the implications of migration: some argue that it will be devastating for the Western world, others say it will benefit all parties involved. That implies that there is no certainty that migration will or will not be a major problem in the Western World.

There is certainty, however, on what the will to counter immigration implies for the migrants themselves: it is the underlying story of illegalization, criminalization, dehumanization and exploitation. A story that ends way too often in disillusionment, suffering, or even death. In contrast with the threat of mass immigration, which is no

more than a contested possibility, the way most Western countries are trying to avoid it is very real and violent. For this reason the 'War on Migration' that is currently fought out is somehow comparable to the War on Terror. In both cases, Western governments respond aggressively to an often vague and shady threat. In the War on Terror this was done by means of long-time imprisonment in Guantanamo Bay, using so-called 'enhanced interrogation techniques' like water boarding (Hitchens, 2010). In the 'War on Migration' it is accomplished by, for example, the practises we can currently witness in Calais. In both cases however, the outcome is not as easily controllable as policymakers wish. In the case of migration, it is an illusion that borders can be impermeable, and in the War on Terror the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan could well have increased, instead of decreased, the chance of new attacks on the United States.

The Western world is thus treating people in unreasonable ways, so to prevent something worse from happening. Was it during the War on Terrorism the (sometimes falsely) suspected terrorist who was mistreated to gain information to prevent new attacks, in the 'War on Migration' it is the individual migrant who is treated badly so to avoid a 'tsunami of migration' washing up our shores. This makes me conclude that, since we cannot know the actual outcome of more extensive migration towards the Western world, but we *can* know the direct consequences for the migrants themselves, it is unjust to treat migrants as is currently done in Calais and in many other places around Europe. This behaviour springs from nothing more than a largely ungrounded fear for what we do not know.

The main and most difficult task now lies with the public and the governments of Western states. The public should no longer take for granted what is happening, but question the hardly bearable situations that are imposed in our name by governments and faced by men, women and children that have no criminal intentions whatsoever and wish nothing more than a better life. Certainly, "nothing has proved harder in the history of civilization than to see God, or good, or human dignity in those whose language is not mine, whose skin is a different colour, whose

faith is not my faith and whose truth is not my truth" (Sacks, 2002). But we now have the responsibility, in the words of economist Philippe Legrain, to "set people free" from the fates they didn't deserve (Legrain, 2009). Hereby I mean first and foremost *denouncing* the intolerable conditions in which migrants have to live in the camps of Patras in Greece, in the shanty towns and squats in Calais, in the detention centres in the Netherlands, and in the numerous other sore spots that blemish the EU's appearance. What I also mean is that we at least need to *question* the often so easily held belief that we are in charge of deciding who's in and who's out. Because why does migration occur in the first place?; What will migration really do to Western economies and societies?; Why do we currently allow Western economic policies to harm developing countries, and why are the migrants escaping poverty in these countries not welcome in the West?; Why do Western countries wage wars on developing countries in undemocratic ways in order to install democracy, and why are so few migrants fleeing these wars welcome here?; Why are the global rich blessed with an abundance of opportunities to live freely and move freely, and why do they in so many cases withhold the global poor from doing the same? These are all relevant questions that need to be addressed before more objective decisions can be made on whether or not to choose for free migration. "The burden of proof", states Legrain, "lies with supporters of immigration controls to justify why they think letting people move freely would have such catastrophic consequences" (Lafsky, 2007). "And, frankly," he concluded, "I don't think they can".

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Appendix: Travel diary 1.

Saturday January 30.

Early in the morning I get on the train to Venray. That is where two members of the Heksenketel (<http://www.heksenketel.nl/>) live, the spiritual organization from Ridderkerk that has been bringing food and other commodities to Calais every weekend, for several years now. This time I can join them. The people with whom I can drive to Calais are very friendly, and willing to answer any question. It turns out that a couple of years ago, one of the members of De Heksenketel has met migrants in Calais and convinced the others to take action. So that is why we drive to Calais with a huge load of cookies and plastic bags filled with food and cigarettes for 'the boys'. But isn't it remarkable that four cars from Holland drive all the way to Calais to bring them necessities of life? Where is the state of France?

The man with whom I drove to Calais, tells me that many English people come to Calais to buy commodities that are more expensive in The United Kingdom. Calais as a non-place for tourists, consumers, migrants, organizations? "Pas-de-Calais, espace de liberté" on the back of busses.

Just outside Calais, 'de Heksenketel' has a couple of caravans where they can sleep after they handed out the plastic bags. It takes a couple of hours to get back to Holland, so the organization prefers to stay over for the night rather than going back late in the evening after the bag distribution.

This Saturday, we go to the camping before the distribution of Salam (www.associationsalam.org), during which de Heksenketel will distribute their plastic bags. This gives the organization the time to install everything for the night and have a cup of coffee together. The spiritual organization turns out to be an organization for chain-smokers as well.

At six o'clock in the evening, Salam starts its food distribution in Rue de Moscou, and 'de Heksenketel' joins them with their bags. It's not far from the cold-weather shelter where the migrants sleep when temperatures are dropping below zero. After some shouting ("one line, everyone in one line"), the group of 100+ men is more or less ordered. Since there are too many volunteers tonight, I had the chance to look around a bit. Although it is literally freezing in the January sea wind, the atmosphere is good.

Two young boys wave to me and show me with gestures that they want me to sit next to them on the concrete. We start talking a bit, though their English is not really good. "Please, drink, drink!" So I take a sip of their juice, expired since a couple of days but still good. They're both from Afghanistan, and say they are only sixteen years old. They travelled through Turkey and Greece, before reaching France. The stories about Greece are just like I read before on the internet. They say they've been beaten by the police, and were imprisoned for a long time before being released. No wonder that they consider the French police to be "good police" ("breakfast, breakfast!"). Afrooz (Farsi) seems to be an exceptional guy. Although he's only sixteen, he's behaving older than the other Afghan kids, rather silent and with a modest smile.

I talk to some people of Salam, and they are very welcoming. I can help them the day after with preparing the dinner. They give me an address and ask me to come at 15.00.

Then the guy who drove me to Calais that day, brings me to the railway station. The coming two nights I will sleep in Louches at someone's home who is participating in www.couchsurfing.org. On the way, he tells me that "it doesn't really have an impact on him anymore", referring to the situation with the migrants in Calais. When I ask him why, he tells me that De Heksenketel brought some "boys" to Holland where they could stay at the organization's office. However, instead of leaving again after a

while, these boys started living a lazy life with long nights on the internet. I ask him why he still drives to Calais so often. Somewhat surprised he turns to me and says: "Oh, but I do believe in our work!"

In Louches I went with my host to the birthday of a friend. The family told me that a while ago, they hosted a family of migrants in their home who were asking asylum in France.

The night was bitter cold in the old farmhouse in Louches.

Sunday January 31.

The next day I take the train to explore the city. I see the church where once in two weeks (among which this 30th January) there is a clothes distribution by Secours Catholique. Furthermore I see the park in which some migrants sleep when the BCMO (the cold weather shelter) is closed, according to yesterday's driver. '*Respectez pelouses et plantation*'. After this I go to the sea. I'm able to see the white cliffs of Dover, so close for me but so far away for others.

At 15.00 I go to the kitchen of Salam in Rue Fulton. Here they prepare the meals for the migrants, which will be distributed at 18.00 in Rue de Moscou. Soon I get in touch with a man called Gonzague. He tells me that in Salam, every day another group comes to prepare the meals, from cities nearby but even as far as Perpignan. This group is a Christian group from Lille, and Gonzague is the priest. Soon, about 10 to 15 people are preparing the meal. However, the number of people from Calais is relatively small, so Gonzague tells me, because it is a very poor town. Mathilde, a Parisian Geopolitics student, tells me it's the poorest of all large and semi-large French cities. The core of the organization, however, consists of Calaisians.

At 18.00, after queuing up, dinner starts. I help handing out sweet tea (the way many drink it in eastern countries), and see Afrooz and his friends again. I'm too busy to

talk to him for a longer time, but after dinner he introduces me to some more friends, all Afghan minors. It's a pity that I have to take the last train to the place where I sleep another night, but I ask him to show me the BCMO-shelter the next evening.

Monday February 01.

First I go to the 'office' of the No Border(/Calais Migrant Solidarity <http://calaismigrantsolidarity.wordpress.com/>) organization in Calais. Earlier I got in touch with a man active in the organization, and who is now also in the Anticapitalist Party NPA (Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste, <http://www.npa2009.org/>). In the Rue du Vingt Neuf Juillet I see Pascal sitting in the window smoking a cigarette. When I get in, some 8 young migrants welcome me, together with 3 volunteers. I can help them transporting, because the place in Rue du Vingt Neuf Juillet has to close. Six months this was the 'local office' of No Border, but after they decided to let some minor migrants sleep there, they received complaints of the neighbours. Therefore they now have to move. They obtained a new place, a large hangar in Rue de Cronstadt, located in between the BCMO-shelter on Place de Norvege and the food distribution at Rue de Moscou. However, the police is 24/7 guarding the place so that no migrants can get in. NordLittoral, a regional paper, is stating that No Border wants to open "un nouveau Sangatte"^{viii}, referring to the Red Cross camp that closed in December 2002.

Pascal tells me that he is afraid that the police will find a reason to keep out migrants, referring to earlier events (for example the destroying of La Jungle) "in order to fight the power that smugglers have over migrants". However, these smugglers partly owe their power to the tight border control. Dareios from Iran even claims that it is impossible to get to The United Kingdom without a smuggler.

There are reasons to believe that the French government uses this solely as an excuse to tame resistance, for just before the closure of La Jungle Besson, Minister of

^{viii} http://www.nordlittoral.fr/actualite/la_une/article_1168932.shtml

Immigration, told the press that “Migrants will not be abandoned” and “humanitarian measures” will be taken to assist the hundreds of undocumented workers in Calais. Up to now, both of these measures have not been taken.

Since I have a couple of days to go with Salam, I tell him that I will return that Wednesday to spend a day with the No Border organization.

After this, I go to Benoît and Aude, also from www.couchsurfing.org, where I will stay two nights. They are very much interested in my research, and we talk a lot about it. Just like another Salam volunteer explained to me, Benoît states that Salam is politically inexperienced, and doesn't really try to influence French politics. According to Pascal of No Borders, Salam even cooperates to a large extent with the French government. Later I find out in the thesis of Farah van Valkenburg that Salam receives money from the Calaisian municipality. In being dependent on its money and practising its tasks, Salam might be considered a substitute of the state. Benoît: *“There are no angels in Calais”*.

A couple of days later, Mathilde tells me that there have been troubles between the organizations, splitting them up many times. Therefore, Salam is not a member of the umbrella organization C'SUR, neither is No Border, due to different methods and political goals. However, No Border meets on a regular basis with C'SUR.

I make sure to be at the kitchen of Salam again at 15.00. I walk through the Boulevard de l'égalité to get there. This time, it's much more silent in the kitchen. Instead of 15, just 6 people are preparing the meals. They come from Boulogne. After the preparation we take the Salam-bus to Rue de Moscou again. The distribution is rather chaotic. Two men are fighting and have to be separated by Salam personnel. Younger Afghans tease an old tramp who found his way to the distribution as well. Some migrants take food twice, while others don't get dinner at all. *“There are no angels in Calais”*.

Jonatan (Eritrea): "I will go with you to Holland: van Nistelrooy, van Persie, Robben..."

After the distribution I go to the BCMO-shelter, where the migrants sleep. This gym is only open when temperatures drop below zero, in other cases the migrants have to sleep on the streets. As soon as temperatures rise sufficiently the doors close. This leads to a lot of frustration for both migrants and organizations. Often migrants asked me during the day whether the shelter would be open that same evening, not knowing whether they had to sleep on the streets or not. One morning, we even threw away the old pieces of cardboard on which the migrants had slept for several nights, because we received news that the BCMO would close that night. However, later that day we received the message that the BCMO could stay open for one more night. The migrants could sleep inside, but due to bad communication or a late decision, they had no cardboard to sleep on.

When I arrive in the shelter, I see some 100 persons inside, trying to find a place to sleep. It's pretty messy, and it has in a strange way a boys-camp spirit. The truth comes out in personal communication. That evening I talk to Adil, an Afghan from the Pashtun ethnic group ("Pashtun are a bit narrow-minded, Farsi are more peace loving"). He tells me in good English that he came through Pakistan, Turkey and Greece eventually to France. "Both Greek police and civilians treated me as an animal", he says. They wore gloves and masks, and even the women ("who are normally more sensitive than men") treated him the same. Compared to this, Adil draws the same conclusion as Afrooz and his friends: "French police is good". He tells me that he tried to obtain an asylum status in France, but that he was told to leave the country in three days. I never expected to see an Afghan person quoting Bill Gates, but Adil has it all:

"I am not in competition with anyone but myself. My goal is to beat my last performance."

"If you are born poor it's not your mistake, but if you die poor it's your mistake."

When I read the last sentence that night in my bed, I understand how untrue that is, and how misleading. For people like Adil, there is no place in Europe. Even if he manages to reach The United Kingdom, as long as he stays 'illegal', there is only a slight chance for him to make a reasonable amount of money.

Tuesday February 02.

At 10 o'clock I go to La Belle Etoile, another organization aiding the migrants in Calais. Today they make the lunches. Their kitchen is located at the intersection between Rue de Phalsbourg and Avenue Louis Blériot. We fill bags with pieces of old and new bread, cheese and gateaux. I talk to Eric, a photography student from Lille, in Calais to make a couple of pictures of the situation. He says he's interested in the contrast between the way the Atlantikwall, the German bunkers built during the occupation of France in the second world war, protected the French coast in that time, and the way they are now used by migrants in an attempt to reach The United Kingdom.

After lunch, I see some older men looking at me, smiling. I walk to them and ask them where they come from. Dareios tells me in fluent English that he and 'my friend' (broad smile, but doesn't talk English) came from Iran to Calais "to examine our chances to get to The United Kingdom". Interestingly enough, he "managed to arrange a plane" (probably through bribery) to get to Europe. After what seems a rather tourist-like detour through Europe (during which he never got arrested, which seems to be unique among the migrants), he eventually reached Calais. He shows me pictures on his mobile phone of diverse European cities. Now he wants to pay smugglers "a considerable amount of money, let's say 5000 euro", if they can make sure that he gets to The United Kingdom. He tells me that he is, like most of the +/- 15 Iranians in Calais, an economic migrant.

Dareios: "My friend invites you to drink whiskey with him"

Me: "Didn't you just say that you are Muslims?"

Dareios: "Oh, he has his own interpretation."

"My friend" pulls out a bottle of whiskey and even glasses, carefully wrapped in paper to protect them from breaking. We joke with him that he doesn't need to go to The United Kingdom anymore, for he already possesses the best thing of the country. After the whiskey has warmed us up in the cold sea-breeze, Eric proposes to make a tourist tour through the city. We hop in the car, the three Iranians in the back because it is an illegal act to help migrants in any way, and there is police all around. Some went to jail for this, in what media call a 'délit de solidarité'.

Eric takes us to different places. First we go to the Town Hall, with the famous statue 'les bourgeois de Calais' by Auguste Rodin. The six richest men in town are said to have given their lives for the city, during the siege of Calais by the English. Lately, this turned out not to be true, and the surrender of the city was not heroic at all. That is a pity for Sarkozy, for it could have helped him building a better nation-state^{ix}.

After this we go to the tunnel under the channel ("La Manche"), which is situated in Coquelles, a couple of kilometres from Calais. High fences with barbed wire should make it impossible for migrants to get to the trains.

Afterwards we go to the beach with the bunkers. Except for the cold, they enjoy it a lot and take pictures like Japanese tourists. There is not much to see of desperation or anomie, although The United Kingdom is so close, yet so far away for them. It should be noted that Dareios and his friends are in Calais for only a short period, namely a couple of days. A couple of days later I see them again in desperation.

After the tour, Dareios and his friends treat us on French fries. They insist in a way that English gentleman will have a hard time exceeding.

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http://www.nrc.nl/buitenland/article2479032.ece/Parijs_wil_de_vlag_op_alle_Franse_scholen_laten_wapperen (Dutch).

Dareios tells that a small new jungle arose, after the large one was destroyed last year. When Eric and I ask him whether it is possible to get there with him, he replies that that is impossible. People there don't want their shelter to be known by the police. If Dareios would bring us to the Jungle, he's afraid that smuggler ("mostly Kurds") will hurt him.

At exactly 18.00 we are back at the place of the food distribution, so that Dareios and his friends can get some food, and I join them. After all the experiences of that day, I decide to return to my hosts a bit earlier, so that I can write a bit and let my thoughts rest afterwards.

Wednesday February 03.

From Wednesday on I didn't have a place to sleep. However, I went to the No Border organization in the hope that I could sleep at their office that night. In the mean time I walked into some people from Secours Catholique, who instantly welcomed me in their home. They told me that in contrast to most other organizations (except for No Border) they didn't provide food but clothes, and furthermore they had the task of visiting the migrants in different places. I receive an email address of one of the volunteers for the next time that I will go to Calais.

When I got to No Borders I could help them move. This was the last day that the old place could stay open, so everything had to move to the new hangar in Rue Cronstadt. Luc and I packed everything and cleaned the place. Some blankets and clothes had to be thrown away because there had been cases of scabies^x. This took us half a day, so after a coffee we decide to go to the food distribution by Salam at 18.00, and afterwards to the BCMO-shelter. Here I talk to Fahran, a young guy from Afghanistan with a shy, soft voice, and I debate with Abeeku from Ghana. We talk

^x <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/6017750/Migrants-in-Calais-infected-with-scabies.html>

about international politics and Islam. He's well-informed, and the debate is heated. Dareios translates into Persian, so that his Iranian friends don't miss a thing. Abeeku comes to the point that the difference in power is so overwhelming between "the West and the Rest", taking the invasion in Iraq as an example. It gives him a feeling of powerlessness, because the US will always protect its power status and its own interests. This gives countries like Ghana no way to develop themselves, and when men like Abeeku leave the country they are not accepted anywhere. "Sometimes I feel like I don't exist", he concludes in despair.

On the case of Iran. Abeeku notes that in the recent history, the United States has supported the regime of Saddam Hussein in fighting Iran during the dirty war these countries fought. In an instant, this 'positive' relation can change, and former friends become enemies. This is what happened in Iraq, and to a smaller extent in Afghanistan. According to Abeeku, the USA will do anything to prevent other blocks or countries to become stronger than them. Therefore it is logical that countries like Iran should arm themselves, even with nuclear weapons, so that they can defend themselves from invasions that are often done under a humanitarian flag.

For killing bodies and for saving souls;
This is the patent age of new inventions;
All propagated with the best intentions.
- Lord Byron.

Out of the blue Dareios asks me if I'm getting nervous for Valentine's Day already. Being hopelessly unromantic, I reply with a question mark on my face. Slightly disappointed he tries: "It's a very important day in Iran, you know. Every boy sends something to his girl!" This is very different from the Saudi-Arabian approach: the theocracy oppresses any form of celebrating the day.^{xi}

^{xi} http://www.volkskrant.nl/buitenland/article1348196.ece/Politie_Saudi-Arabie_opent_jacht_op_Valentijnsartikelen (Dutch)

Dareios, Abeeku and Adil, all three very intelligent men, reach the same conclusion: "Am I not human?" They want to be treated as human beings, which includes the abolition of the use of gloves and masks and police chases, and in a broader sense being allowed to enter Western countries.

I tell them that I need to leave to get some food, because there was nothing left at the food distribution. Though before I can get up, they take me by the arms and pull me down again on the floor. Dareios shouts something very Persian, and at that moment all his Iranian friends grab food from their bags, and we have a delicious meal together. Even 'Ahmedinedjad' ("because he has doesn't have a nice-looking face either") seems to enjoy the improvised meal.

Luc and other people from No Border tell me that two nights after one another the so-called 'Africa-house' has been raided by the police. All inhabitants in this squatted building were arrested, but released not much later. And arrested the night after again.

When we go back to the old No Borders place to get some stuff, we find a lonely African man waiting in the dark to charge his mobile phone. We tell him that No Borders is closed, and will not open again at this place; he walks away in a sad mood.

We return to the BCMO to sleep there. All volunteers sleep near the doors, trying to let the night pass orderly. I find a place in the middle of the gym, next to the Iranians, who are already asleep. When I lay down my piece of cardboard and my sleeping bag, Dareios wakes up and insists in giving me a blanket. He shows me the empty mats of those who try their luck tonight. The night is very chilly in the BCMO, and I cannot sleep because of all my thoughts, the Afghan music that is played and the snoring around me. How do these people survive for nights, weeks, months in this situation? Especially the youngsters, with all these unknown men around and their families so far away and the future so uncertain, and on top of that still carrying the

burden of their parents' prospect that they will send money home, how do they stand it?

Thursday February 04.

To my surprise I find some people sleeping in front of the BCMO, instead of inside. They explain to me that they have diseases (scabies?), and that they cannot sleep inside because others could possibly get contaminated. Must have been one cold night for them.

The breakfast that morning is very chaotic. Salam organizes it one day, La Belle Etoile the next. This time it is Salam's turn, they 'serve' from the back of the van. It is hard to get the migrants into one line ("Don't push! Don't push!"), and the result is that some get food twice, some get nothing at all.

After breakfast I see Fahrhan walking by. He tells me that he plans to get to Dunkirk with a friend that day. I ask him why; there is no BCMO in Dunkirk, he will have to sleep outside. He responds: "I didn't come all the way for this gym, I come for The United Kingdom".

The following night will be the last night that the BCMO will be opened, I hear people of Salam saying. Both Salam and Luc (No Border) are afraid that the migrants will not sleep anymore, because they will be chased by the police the whole night. The French police seems eager to show me that this is no fiction. When I walk at the Boulevard Jacquard, I see three CRS-cops (riot police) running into Parc Saint Pierre. I run after them and witness the arrest of two Africans. They don't even try to run away, and are caught by the officers in full body armour. Although he only briefly grabs one by the shirt, one of the cops immediately washes his hands in front of the boy's eyes. I've been shaking hundreds of hands since last Saturday, and I feel better than ever. Furthermore, hygienic problems are *caused* by the French government itself, in not allowing toilets, showers and running water in general to the migrants at

the BCMO. No wonder that I've seen human faeces all around the building. Nord Littoral, a Calaisian newspaper, called this 'le rôle du pompier pyromane' of the French government^{xii}.

At 12 o'clock I meet with Mathilde, the Geopolitics student from Paris, to speak about our theses. We decide to go to the harbour afterwards. There is a lot of security around, and we witness arrests and searches in the middle of the day.

After I get to the BCMO, Dareios tells me that he found a smuggler who can bring him to The United Kingdom. He has to pay him 5000 euro, but then his travel will be 'guaranteed' (that is: the driver of the lorry is bribed). Dareios has to be ready, because he might receive a call to leave that same evening or the night after.

After the food distribution, Farshad from Afghanistan comes to me. I talked with him earlier, always dressed in white, he knows how to maintain this happy laugh in harsh situations. He tells me he has "a problem", pointing toward the hair that is growing on his chin and cheeks. "No water, problem!". Dareios tells me that he hasn't seen a shower in twelve days.

When we walk from the food distribution towards the BCMO, police is all around. Some No Border activists came from The United Kingdom to help opening the new hangar, and they are watched closely by the police. They are 'militant violent d'extrême-gauche', as French immigration minister Besson calls the No Border activists^{xiii}.

The night is better than the night before. Although I sleep practically on the floor of the gym, I'm tired enough to get some hours of rest. The bullying of the old tramp continues, I have a hard time correcting the young Afghan boys who won't stop throwing things at him.

^{xii} http://www.nordlittoral.fr/actualite/Faits_divers/Faits_divers/article_1179326.shtml (French)

^{xiii} <http://www.pscantondebretigny.net/archive/2010/02/09/un-militant-de-no-border-repond-a-besson.html> (French)

Friday February 05.

This morning, La Belle Etoile organizes the breakfast. Instead of outside from the back of the van like Salam, they serve the bread from a table in the hall. After breakfast I talk to Abeeku again. He seems to understand better and better how hard it is to get into The United Kingdom, and that life in The United Kingdom may not be much better than in France. He asks for the ships from Holland to The United Kingdom, for jobs and police in Holland, but I see him getting more desperate by the minute. "I have a wife and a four-year old in Ghana, you see?"

Also Baran, a Kurd from Northern Iraq, seems to be rather pessimistic. For him, the attack of the United States on Iraq is also a matter of oil. At least the Kurds, who live upon these oilfields, see nothing of the money it produces. And it gets more and more dragged into the ethnic turmoil in the rest of Iraq. Baran introduces me to other Kurds, and we talk a while about politics and religion. Most migrants cling to their religions, also in these times of mere survival. One problem, though, is the absence of water. Dareios tells me that a true Muslim must clean him/herself before praying to God. Due to the lack of showers (and water in general), this is made almost impossible. There are some taps at the place of the food distribution, and I see some men praying there. However, this place is open only during food distribution (at lunch and dinner), so praying five times a day is not possible. Dareios is convinced that Allah will forgive him for the moments that it is impossible for him to pray.

When I walk out of the BCMO after cleaning the whole place, I see fire in the distance. I walk towards it, and see that some boys set a container ablaze. I kick out the fire with my shoes, and walk away angry and sad. How can they do this, while the organizations are giving them food and cleaning the mess *they* made inside the BCMO?

I join La Belle Etoile in preparing lunch, and when we return I suddenly see Fahran walking by. Two days earlier he told me that he would take the bus to Dunkirk, so what is he doing still here in Calais? With his soft voice he explains to me how he tried to take the bus both yesterday and the day before that. The first time he was caught by the police (and released shortly after), the second time he managed to run away from them before being caught. I tell him that I can bring him to the bus station if he wishes, and together with a friend of him we walk the three hundred meters that seem to be an impossible threshold for migrants to cross. Together we wait for the bus. Fahran tells me his story, and he looks very much afraid of the police. He tells me that he is going to his fiancée in The United Kingdom, and that he is “eighteen, but in Calais fifteen”. During his travel, he lost track of his dad, who travelled with him, because a smuggler put them on different ships. Now he’s going to Dunkirk with a friend he just made in Calais, they manage to get on the bus this time.

It is clear that the French police is trying to keep them out of the city-life, with some success. Sitting in the park, walking to the bus station, these are reasons to arrest someone in what may be called a police-city. Even ‘going to the toilet’ (which is basically finding a place next to the BCMO, due to the absence of toilets) means possible arrest.

The same is true for No Border activists. In the evening of my departure, when I got back in Holland, an evening of debate in the new No Border hangar was prohibited by the police. Activists and migrants managed to break through the police lines, but soon the building was evacuated and closed^{xiv}. The days when I was in Calais, a process took place against two No Border activists accused of ‘rebellion’ during the No Border camp in June 2009 (February 24th the verdict will be pronounced). When talking to some people of La Belle Etoile, they admit that only No Border is politically oriented, but in their opinion No Border doesn’t have any realisable goals (namely the abolishment of borders).

^{xiv} <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article7018328.ece>

Tired and dirty and mentally disoriented after two nights 'sleeping' at the BCMO among the migrants, I'm very glad that I can sleep at Salam's place for one night. I appreciated the shower more than ever, just as my night rest.

Saturday February 06.

In the morning I get up early to help Salam in preparing breakfast. We drive to the BCMO and hand out the food and tea. There is much commotion, some people walk by five times to get breakfast, but this time there luckily is enough for everyone. However, some youngsters seem to like it to penetrate the line and disturb the distribution.

After breakfast it's time for my departure. I say bye to Afrooz and his friends, the young Afghan boys. He is the only one who managed to save the tent he got from a charity organization. The rest of the tents were shortly after the distribution taken or destroyed by the police^{xv}. Now he and his friends pitched it just outside the BCMO, behind the 'soccer field', so that they have a place for their own. Stumbling over his words he promises me to send me a message as soon as he can write in English.

Then I say goodbye to Dareios. Normally he is looking cheerful, but this time I find him lost in thought and with a concerned expression on his face. He tells me that one of his friends (I think it is "my friend" with the broad smile but impossible name) wants to get back to Iran. The reason is that he paid a smuggler in advance, but the border control opened the truck anyway, and he was caught. He waves me goodbye with the sentence: "please, write about this situation in your thesis".

I see Abeeku standing nearby, and say goodbye to him and the other Ghanaians as well. He shares the message of Dareios: "of course you can quote me in your thesis, do you think I'm not telling the truth?"

^{xv} <http://nobordersbrighton.blogspot.com/2010/01/police-ratchet-up-repression-of.html>

Appendix: Travel diary 2.

Friday April 30.

After some months, I return to Calais. A lot has happened since the beginning of February. The cold-weather shelter (BCMO: Bureau Central Main d'Oeuvre) has been closed shortly after I left the city, not much later the remaining migrants sleeping in front of this safe-haven were driven away from the place. Nothing reminds of the times in the cold winter, a layer of white paint covers the Arabic, Pashtun and Persian signs on the outside of the shelter. No migrant to see in the once so lively area. Hardly any police car is to be seen in the streets. Has the storm finally calmed down? Did the migrants all leave for other places?

Not really. At 18h I go to the food distribution, organized by the organization Salam. The number of migrants has not diminished at all; the waiting line is at least as long as before. However, except for a couple of minors I see only new faces. I'm wondering what has happened to the people I've met before. I know for sure that Fahrhan from Afghanistan managed to reach The United Kingdom, and is momentarily reunited with his family in London. But what has happened to Dareios and his friend from Iran, and what has happened to Abeeku from Ghana..?

Suddenly, the distribution gets interrupted by a fight between migrants. I see a man lying on the ground, surrounded by others who kick him. I run towards them in order to separate the fighting parties. Only with the greatest effort, I and other migrants succeed in this. With blood steadily dripping from his mouth, I lead away the yelling victim. According to other migrants with whom I speak shortly after, this was one of the more or less frequently occurring clashes between nationalities in Calais. Although they have respect for my intervention, I get the advice to be more careful the next time, since sometimes knives are being used in the fighting.

The distribution continues. Accidentally, I hand out two bananas to a person that didn't stand in line, and get cursed on by two volunteers. Since my French is rather poor, or at least not on that level that I can understand the cursing, I have to ask for a translation afterwards. According to another volunteer, their complaints were that I do not respect their orders. Next to cursing, I seem to have a bit of difficulty understanding French orders.

After the distribution, I head for the so-called "Africa-house" with Flore, one of the volunteers of Salam. The Africa-house is a huge empty hall, squatted by African migrants in Calais. Most of them are from Darfur, Sudan, but there are Somalians, Eritreans and one single man from Ivory Coast as well. We have to enter by climbing over a wall. Pallets are used as ladders. When we enter, we find some four groups of African men sitting on the floor and on benches. They are cooking on wood fires. They explain me that the food given by the organizations ("all the time macaroni") doesn't still the hunger for a long time. Instead, they sometimes make dough of corn flour with fish sauce in the Africa-house. Flore and me, being guests, are invited to join them in this meal. I hesitate, for there might not be enough for everyone, but our hosts insist. About the presence of Flore between the men, one says: "In Sudan, women eat alone, but this is France."

Only the day before, the CRS riot-police has raided the place. Matak, a Sudanese 'befriended' (if the temporary and unpredictable situation allows friendship in the first place) with Flore, accordingly asks me the question whether I think that people in Calais like us or not. I answer him that I'm not sure of this. He makes clear that he was thinking the same. Lately he went to the bar, he tells me, to watch a soccer match. He was denied access because he couldn't show a passport. "A passport?" he told the person asking for it, "You are a bartender, not a policeman!"

Saturday May 01.

I go to the food distribution at 13h. During the week, the distribution at lunchtime is organized by La Belle Etoile. During the weekends, this is done by Auberge des Migrants. The organizations in Calais have over time fallen apart and splintered into smaller groups, due to the enormous number of volunteers and thus personalities. Recently, these organizations came together in the umbrella organization C'SUR. However, due to the conflict the largest organization, Salam, is not participating. Furthermore, the far-left No Border group is only marginally involved. As we will see on 08-05, this curtails the force of the migrant rights movement.

I speak with Alain, an Englishman now living in Calais. He is one of the volunteers of Auberge des Migrants. He tells me that some migrants have severe psychological problems. On the other hand, he explains, they have choices: asking asylum in France, or 'voluntary' return to their home country. Regularly, a person comes to the food distribution to inform if there are migrants willing to return home. Surely, this return is not as voluntary as it is depicted. It is a direct consequence of the tight border controls to The United Kingdom and the harsh life in Calais, imposed by Parisian politics.

After lunch I meet Talan, a Kurd from Iraq, in the park. He tells me that the situation in which he finds himself here in Calais is one in which he does not want to live any longer. Therefore he and "most of the Kurds in Calais" have decided to go back to their home country. They are waiting for the possibility to be repatriated. The disbelief to find the Calaisian circumstances right here in the heart of Europe is great. "I understand that people in Calais are tired of people sleeping and shitting in their streets" he says. "However, when Holland would flood, you would all be welcome in Iraq." When he asks which country in Europe still welcomes migrants, I have no answer.

At 15h I walk to the kitchen of Salam in Rue Fulton. This time there is a group from Bailleul preparing the food. I join them in the distribution at 18h. The influx of migrants is greater than on other days, because the Dutch volunteers of De Heksenketel come to bring their plastic bags. These bags are highly popular, not in the last place because they contain cigarettes. The distribution goes by orderly, although there are not enough bags to satisfy everyone.

Afterwards, Flore and I go back to the Africa-house. We have to wait for a friend of Flore, who once lived in Calais, but now owns an apartment in near-by Arras. In the meantime, Flore tells me the story of Morad. This young Afghan boy (15 or 16 years old, probably not more than that), has already been for several years in Calais. He has been placed in a centre for young refugees, and in a guest family, Flore tells me, but he always returned to Calais. Psychologically he is in a bad condition; the organizations presume that this is caused by abuse on his way to France or the absence of the love of parents at his fragile age. Now it seems that every will to change his fate has disappeared. He is not willing to go to The United Kingdom, neither does he have contact with his family in Afghanistan. "Too many junctures in his past", Flore says. He is remaining in Calais.

When we drive to the Africa-house with the friend of Flore, CRS riot-police is driving right in front of us. They are driving straight to the Africa-house, so we stay outside. We wait in front of the house. Not much later, another two, three CRS vans approach the house. "The migrants are arrested, now they come to pick them up" explains the friend of Flore, who had to undergo this treatment before.

Sunday May 02.

At 13h I return to the lunch prepared by l'Auberge des Migrants. The preparation is done somewhere outside the city, so I only help with the actual distribution. It has been raining all day; many migrants are soaked to the bone. And although it should be spring by now, it is very cold. The sea wind further worsens the situation. One of

the Kurds with whom I spoke the day before tells me that this morning they woke up with water in their sleeping bags, even though they found a shelter with a roof for the night. On top of this, there is the ever-present police. Three of his friends have been arrested while they were waiting for breakfast in front of the distribution place. Since there is an agreement with the town hall that no-one awaiting meals may be arrested, Rosie, one of the volunteers, demands an explanation of the CRS officer in charge. "We don't take orders from the town hall", is his answer. All that the Kurds can do is take some extra bread for their arrested friends. Not much later I see them walking: they've been arrested, brought to the police station in near-by Coquelles, released upon arrival, after which they had to walk back for two hours in the pouring rain.

Mamadou from Ivory Coast (or simply "Rastaman" in the words of other migrants, because of his hairstyle) tells me that the day before, some five or six persons were arrested in the Africa-house by the CRS we saw.

After lunch, a volunteer with whom I spoke earlier, invites me to his house. Clearly, he doesn't like other organizations too much. What strikes me is that he tells me that sometimes he sleeps with migrant women (who come to Calais in the summer). The same thing happens within other organizations, he states. As long as the migrants agree on it, he doesn't see the problem. However, I wonder how valid this 'agreement' is with people in such a dependent position.

At 18h I go to the food distribution of Salam. The wind is very strong. Since it has been raining until late in the afternoon it is very cold outside. The night will be even colder. Many come for extra sleeping bags. "Life is crazy sometimes" says Sawfiiq the Somalian, referring to a song of his favourite singer Enrique Iglesias.

It is typical for the rest of the week. The main prophets these migrants seem to worship are Enrique Iglesias and Cristiano Ronaldo, sportsmen and musicians. Mohammed is only present in the background. Not so many people are praying, and

the one person that does his prayers out loud is laughed at. Their 'new religion' seems more materialistic; a nice car, a house and a job.

Monday May 03.

Today I will help with Secours Catholique. A volunteer explains me the main tasks of the organization:

1. Making possible the use of showers by migrants;
2. Providing migrants with the necessary knowledge to claim asylum in France;
3. Bringing coffee to migrants (for example to the Africa-house).

Together with two volunteers, an Afghan boy comes to help. He has been in Calais for a while, but decided to claim asylum in France after falling from a truck and spending some eight months in hospital. For the time being, he lives at the house of the volunteers.

Today is one of the three days in the week that migrants have the possibility to take a shower. However, the cabins are placed far outside the city-centre, so that the migrants have to be picked up by a van and brought to the site. I join the driver in his rides between Calais and the showers. Each time we are spotted, migrants storm in our direction. "Only seven, only seven in the car!!" I shout, but soon eight people are inside. "O.K., *on y va*" says the driver, and he doesn't try to get the last man out of the car. Arrived at the site of the showers, the boys and men first receive towels, soap, razors and clean underwear, and afterwards tea with biscuits. After, we bring them back to the city again.

A volunteer explains me that last December, the showers were set on fire by unknown people. That was just after the opening, during Christmas. That the showers were not welcomed by everyone can be seen in the shattered windows as well.

One time, the car is stormed by some fifteen or twenty men. It takes us ten minutes to get all but seven out. Since we can transport only some forty or fifty per day (that is: maximum 150 persons per week, while there are possibly some 300 migrants in Calais), the pushing in front of the car is understandable. Those who try to cling to decency are in this and other cases the last ones to receive help. This, combined with the absolute boredom of the waiting lines and the absence of own choices, is what marks the downfall of human dignity in Calais. In this Phoney War, the police raids are almost seen as a welcome variation of daily life.

We also take some people from the PAS regional hospital. This is a place where people need to take a shower before they get a free treatment. Therefore, many migrants go there. In order to relieve the hospital a bit, we take seven men in the waiting room with us in the car.

One Iranian takes off his shirt, and what I see is a back full of scars. Numerous large slashes run along his shoulders and further down. He demonstrates me how the police hanged and beat him, wrists tied to the ceiling, after he had taken part in the anti-Ahmedinedjad demonstrations last year.

Volunteers of Secours Catholique tell me that two days before, the Salam group coming from Bailleul was halted by the police and interrogated. Their offence was that they brought migrants in their car from one place to the other.

At 18h I return to the food distribution of Salam. I hand out the bread that goes along with the pasta. Some migrants are really picky: they want other food than what is given to them. It could be that not all of them understand that the food is given to them by (semi-)independent organizations, and not by the French government.

After the meal, some Kurds approach me. They tell me that yesterday, two new Kurds arrived in Calais. Since they didn't have any blankets, they had to share them with the other Kurds. Packed like sardines in a tin, they spent the night. However in

the first instance, they do not receive new blankets, because the volunteers thought that they've seen the men before. For the volunteers it is hard to decide who is telling the truth and who isn't.

When I ask why everybody is coming to Calais, and to The United Kingdom in the end, one of the Kurds states: "Everybody is following each other like sheep!" Furthermore he explains me that they've all seen beautiful things on the television. Through new means of communication like television and the internet, global inequalities become more and more apparent. "But will people believe me when I come back and tell about life in Calais?"

After the distribution has finished, and the migrants are sent off, people from Salam keep talking together. They were saying that that day, a migrant was beaten by the police. His arm was broken. On the day of the clothes distribution I see him walking, and he says that that is the truth. His arm is fastened to his body; there is no way in which he can move it.

Furthermore, we hear that the French government is willing to deport several Sudanese back to Sudan. At the moment they are held in custody in the detention centre in Coquelles. People from Salam make a call to the centre, to inform the Sudanese that they should make appeal directly to call into question the humanitarian grounds for their deportation. Recently, three Sudanese were released after making appeal at the European Court of Human Rights.

Tuesday May 04.

Today, I go to the detention centre in Coquelles with Agathe, a Salam volunteer. A good friend of her is one of the Sudanese possibly facing deportation. He lived with her parents for a year, before turning back to Calais and being arrested.

The detention centre is simply a prison ran by the PAF, the Police Aux Frontieres (border police). One of their main goals is to prevent illegal immigration, according to the posters. "Votre sécurité est notre priorité", is what they say on it. Migration is here directly linked to criminality. Therefore, migrants may be locked up. The migrants' situation behind the walls is only to some extent better than that of ordinary criminals. Before meeting her friend, Agathe is searched with the greatest care.

The way that people who are searching for a better life in Europe are treated, seems very Kafkaian to me. In fact, the Sudanese who are facing deportation have to defend themselves against charges they do not know. What is their crime? Is it the crime of saying farewell to a country in peril, the crime of seeking better opportunities? Leaving behind friends and family was hard enough, I find out in Calais, but being harassed and locked up in a country that is the home country of liberté, égalité and fraternité is something different. In their eyes, this is "punishment without crime".

On the way back, two migrants hop into the bus. However, they cannot pay a ticket to Calais. The bus driver orders them to leave the bus, but they refuse. It is a two hour walk back to the city. After some threatening in French, the bus driver puts the bus in front of the detention centre, out of which they have just been released. The migrants do not wait for the police to come and arrest them, but leave the bus.

In the evening I go to the food distribution of Salam again. After the distribution I talk to Osman, a young man from Kabul. He attracts my attention because he is always smiling. However, he describes Calais as 'the boring life': all the waiting and standing in line take their toll. "No job, no car, no house..." Pointing towards the seagulls flying overhead: "I want to be like them, the birds". He's fed up being woken up by police bats. And he is fed up with the migrants that are impolite towards volunteers. His mom calls all day to ask when he comes to The United Kingdom.

Afterwards, Agathe and I go to the Africa house. Again, we are invited to dine with the inhabitants. A Sudanese starts talking to me about all the thresholds that have arisen around the EU and The United Kingdom specifically to keep out foreigners. "These borders, these walls keep people from living together", is his conclusion.

Then suddenly chaos. I see people running in all directions. No doubt what's going on: another police-raid on the Africa house. In a matter of seconds, all have disappeared except the 20 men that have got papers. And then there is the CRS, one of them with his police bat in hand. Their black boots leave stains on the prayer mats. One man got arrested near the entrance, but the rest managed to escape. Agathe, me and two persons from the No Border group have to show our identity cards. Names are taken, and the organizations for which we work are written down. Then they continue, this time asking the papers of the migrants sitting near the wood fires. All of them except one have the right papers. Although the CRS knows just like us that there are much more migrants in the building, they do not search much further. The building is half-dark and there are numerous holes in the floor, it is easy to get hurt in here. This is known by the migrants as well: after the CRS has left, tens of them appear from the trash-filled holes underneath the floor and the caverns of the old plant. It's getting more and more busy as the migrants return from their safe havens, and the general mood is rather cheerful: this time, they've outran the police. "Life is crazy sometimes", I hear behind me, and I greet Enrique Iglesias, the little dark Somalian with his clear white teeth.

Later that evening I receive the news that the Sudanese will be brought to the court in Boulogne the following day, where will be decided whether they may be deported or not.

Wednesday May 05.

In the morning, I go to the distribution of tea and breakfast by Salam. We are late, because the van broke down.

Afterwards, I head for the clothes distribution organized by Secours Catholique in an old church in the Rue de Croy. Shadows on the wall give away the places where angels once stood. From ten o' clock in the morning people are waiting in line to get their tickets. These tickets divide the migrants in groups of fifteen. From half past two on, these groups are led inside the building. Each group has got some time to pick new clothes, shoes and toiletries. The earlier one is, the better his shoes and his clothes. Therefore, the waiting lines are once again long, and cheating occurs.

I have the task of checking all bags. There is a maximum amount of clothes one may take, but many try to take some more. Two or three Sudanese come and ask me for rucksacks. They have gotten orders to leave the country. Unfortunately, I can only help them with some old suitcases.

Somehow the situation in Calais reminds me of the debate whether torture is allowed in the war against terror or not. George Bush, the former president of the USA, had the opinion that this was allowed to avoid something worse from happening, namely terrorist attacks. In the case of Calais, the bad and probably unethical behaviour of the migrants is seen as a way to stop a potential tsunami/flood/wave of migrants towards Europe. However, both during the war on terror and here in Calais, the threat is rather vague and only potential, while the means to prevent it are very real.

Thursday May 06.

In the morning I go to the morning tea of Salam with Rosie, one of the volunteers. When we arrive, hardly 20 men are awaiting us. I ask some migrants why there are no more than that. The CRS has raided the place just before, they explain. Most of the migrants have fled, I assume, or maybe some are caught. For the men that came back, it is their lucky day. Not only did they escape, now that most have left they are able to eat bananas until they burst.

On the way to the tea distribution, Rosie asks me to “prepare the toilet paper.” I have to tear off pieces of toilet paper. She explains me that these are for migrants who ask for it during the distribution. I have to put them in a plastic bag, so that they can be distributed discreetly: many are ashamed to ask for it.

After breakfast I speak with a man coming from Southern Afghanistan. He speaks English fluently, because of which he became an interpreter for the English forces in the region. Due to the danger he faced working for the Allied forces, and due to the talks he had with the English soldiers, he decided to leave for The United Kingdom. Now, after a long journey only 40 kilometres distanced from his goal, he has decided to return home. He considers the situation in Calais to be unbearable, and applying for asylum in France might take years he is afraid.

In the evening I go to the food distribution of Salam. “Hello”, I hear someone saying behind me. When I turn around, I see him standing there: Dareios the Iranian. I haven’t heard anything of him since I left Calais in the early days of February. I expected him to be in The United Kingdom, or maybe back in Iran. But not in Calais, France, the place he dislikes so much. Bearded, greyer, and obviously slimmer than before, he kindly refuses my invitation to drink something after the distribution. “Not before I’ve shaved”, is his reply. When I ask what has happened to his friend and to Abeeku, he explains me that they couldn’t stand the situation and returned to respectively Iran and Ghana. The French approach works...

This reunion has two sides. I’m very happy to see him again, and being able to talk to him. But on the other hand, I want this intelligent, friendly man to live a decent life. We eat together, and he tells me what has happened in the months in between February and May. Shortly after I left the place, he went to Dunkerque. He thought that it would be easier to reach The United Kingdom from there. However, the main “smugglers” in Dunkerque were caught by the police just after he had arrived. The new smugglers didn’t have any experience. He lost a large amount of money during a trip in which he was still caught by the police. The French government often uses

the power of these smugglers as an excuse to destroy migrants' shelters. However, they are a direct consequence of the tight border controls.

The 'Jungle' in Dunkerque was mainly inhabited by Kurds, Dareios explains. The smugglers terrorized the place, threatening anyone but especially non-Kurds with knives and even pistols. There was only one shower for approximately 50 men, and the Kurds didn't let him use it too often. It is strange to find racism among migrants, but it is not uncommon. Most nationalities live separated from each other. There is a 'Jungle' for the small group of the Hazara tribe from Afghanistan (see also May 8), another one for the large Pashtun community. There is a house for the more southern Africans ('the Africa house', see also May 04), in which Sudanese are the majority (almost all from the Darfur region), but also some Somalians and other nationalities live. Then there is another squatted building in which mostly Egyptians and Palestinians live, just two streets away from the Africa house (see also May 10). The Kurdish people (some ten to fifteen in total), found their own building. For the Iranians the same, "far out of town, undiscovered by the police", Dareios explains.

In an environment in which it is hard to trust others, and in which many cannot communicate properly due to differences in language, separation between nationalities is unavoidable and racism predictable. Flore told me that some boys from Afghanistan asked her "why she talks to black people".

After I left the food distribution, I walk next to the canal on the Quai de la Meuse. Near the water, I see Mamadou sitting on a bench. He's the only person from Ivory Coast in the Africa House, Flora has explained me earlier. He speaks French, but not Arab or English like the rest of the migrants in the Africa House. For him, it is very hard to communicate with them. That's why I see him on his own most of the time. I walk towards him to talk a bit. He tells me about his journey. He went from Ivory Coast to Libya, from which he took a boat to Italy. Halfway, they ran out of gasoline and were floating around helplessly. Finally, a plane recognized the ship in peril, and sent the coast guard which brought them to Italy. There he lived in different cities,

unable to work without a legal status and dependent on charities. Furthermore, the police in Calais have taken all his possessions during one of the frequent raids. One of the things they took was his mobile phone. When I offer him a short call to his parents, he explains me that his parents' phone number was in his phone: for several months he has lost all contact with his family. With hardly any contact with his fellow migrants either, this shy man seems to be abandoned by everything and everyone. To me he is the symbol of Solitude.

For most migrants, Calais represents nothing more than a phase, an unpleasant yet necessary step towards a better future (at least, that's what they expect The United Kingdom to be). For some, however, Calais represents life. These are the abandoned ones, the wasted lives. Mamadou is such a person. Morad as well, for there is no place he can go to. He will not fit in anywhere with his psychological problems, therefore the streets of Calais are home. Dareios doesn't fit into this category, for he still has Hope and if necessary a way back, but how long before life in this place with all its disappointments forces him into it? How long before the strange logic of immigration control makes him mad?

Agathe and people from the No Border group, who attended the trial of the Sudanese from Darfur the day before, explain to me what has happened. Of the ten Sudanese, only three could answer the questions in French, English or Arab. The interpreters couldn't make clear to the rest of them what the lawyers wanted to hear, for there are so many languages in Sudan. Those seven stay another three weeks in prison until the process is continued. The three others (among which Agathe's friend) have to leave the country in ten days, which is in fact everything they want.

When we enter the Africa house that evening, the friend of Agathe is sitting in front of the fire. He has got ten days to leave the country, that is: ten nights to try and reach The United Kingdom.

When I leave the Africa house again somewhat later, Mamadou walks with me to fill some bottles with water. Walking with empty hands, I ask him whether he forgot his bottles at the Africa house. "No I'll get them *là-bas*", is his answer, and he points towards the litter bin.

Friday May 07.

After breakfast, one of the Kurds tells me his new plans. Now that going to The United Kingdom seems too difficult, the procedure for asylum too long and not without the risk of deportation, he turns towards the French Foreign Legion. For this part of the French army, one doesn't need to be a Frenchman. He makes clear that this is not out of love for the army, but solely as a way to get out of Calais. He has to wait several weeks before his application is taken into consideration, and having no place to go he will stay in Calais. To shake off his boredom, he asks if he can help with the organization Salam. However, the organization had to promise the police not to take migrants to their kitchen. One of the volunteers puts it this way: "the best years of all these young men are wasted in the waiting-room that is Calais."

An Afghan man approaches me, and asks me whether France sends back people to Afghanistan. "Yes", I tell him carefully "they do that." His answer surprises me: "Good!", he says "I don't want to stay here any longer." He too claims to be a former interpreter for the Allied forces in Afghanistan.

Afterwards I see how Morad, the young boy from Afghanistan with all his psychological problems, is treated by one of the volunteers for wounds on his arm. It turns out that his entire lower arm is marked with horizontal cuts. Recently he turned to auto mutilation, and he scratches the wounds open all the time. This is not only a sign of the sad state he is in; it could be life threatening in an environment that is seriously lacking hygiene.

The same Morad is the cause of the absence of lunch that day. The organization responsible for it, La Belle Etoile, has cancelled it because he fought with other migrants the day before and was rebellious towards the volunteers. "Why do they punish us for what one person did? Send him back to Afghanistan, but let us be" says one Kurd to me.

In the afternoon I go to the Africa house. The No Border group has started English lessons. Some fifteen men are attending the lessons. They are taught what to say on arrival in The United Kingdom, namely that they want to apply for asylum and that they want to see a lawyer. Next to that, they are taught how to pronounce certain letters, and the names of several types of food. This all goes very well, but the rules of the game of crisscross are not so easy.

That evening I go with H  l  ne, one of the volunteers of Salam, to a protest in a town somewhat further away. There, the Sudanese who stood trial are locked up. In a desperate attempt, the organizations try to convince the state that expulsions to Darfur are immoral. Not even twenty men and women against the state of France...

When we drive back, the sun is already setting. On the outskirts of Calais we witness another arrest. This time, the drivers of a white van without sirens on the roof, without signs on the side, arrest two African men. These are police officers using the tactics of surprise. Every white van should be feared from now on, every white van means possible arrest. The vans used by the humanitarian organizations are white.

For the first time I visit the city centre by night. Together with H  l  ne and her boyfriend we drink a couple of beers and talk French all night. Every third car in the main street of Calais is a police car. When we walk off, I walk into some migrants. They are hanging outside one of the clubs. It reminds me of what one of the Afghans told about his friend: "every night he goes dancing in Calais!" He even managed to show pictures of "his English girlfriend", whom he met in one of the clubs.

Saturday May 08.

This morning I don't feel well, so I sleep through breakfast this time (blame the Belgian beer). However, at 14h a big demonstration is planned in the city centre of Calais. The aim is rather broad, namely improving the living conditions in general and questioning the police activity in specific. "Solidarité avec les Sans-Papiers", reads the first banner. Approximately 60 volunteers and migrants walk from the place of the food distribution to the city hall, shouting "we want no police!" Someone tries to teach them the phrase "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité", but this turns out to be too hard or maybe just too abstract for people facing daily police raids.

The biggest organization of all, Salam, is not present. They themselves say that they are not invited and thus will not go, the other organizations state that Salam doesn't like to cooperate with them. The march would be significantly larger and more visible, and the message so much louder, when there would be a united voice for more migrant rights.

In front of the town hall, the parade comes to a halt. A volunteer briefly speaks in English about the aim of the protest, before switching to a more detailed plea in French. When he asks whether one of the migrants would like to say something, one of them steps forward to get the microphone. "The Afghan people in Calais" are chased too much by the police, he states in broken English, thereby making clear both his complaints and the divisions running through the migrant community itself.

Not long after he has finished, I see the people from the No Border group running off: migrants are being arrested at the place of the food distribution. It's like the police wants to show them that nothing will change, no matter how hard they'll try.

Afterwards I speak with a Hazara boy from Kabul. He has been to The United Kingdom before, but was sent back after a procedure of three years. His case was complicated, because he converted to Christianity in The United Kingdom, and

feared for his life in Afghanistan. That is the reason why he is trying once more to reach the Promised Land. Still, he fears to be deported another time. He is desperate, for he doesn't know where to go now.

In the afternoon, I decide to walk to the Hazara 'Jungle' on my own. The evening before, H el ene has showed me from the car where it should be: not too far from the abandoned hovercraft terminal. Just before I reach the dunes, I walk into a group of volunteers of different humanitarian organizations. They've just brought firewood to the Hazara jungle, and are now on their way to provide it to the Pashtuns. I hop in the car and go with them, before heading to the Hazara jungle. Since the Pashtun live far from the roadside, we park and unload our freight. Some of them come and get it, and they take some blankets as well.

Subsequently we head for the house of the Egyptians. In contrast to the Africa house, this abandoned building doesn't have just one entrance; it shows more similarities to a honeycomb. The many entrances and exits provide the inhabitants with lots of possibilities of escape in case of police raids.

Lastly, we bring firewood to the Africa house. Together we lift the wooden pallets over the wall that separates the house from the world outside. A big black rat is eating a baguette between the mess that is covering parts of the floor.

One of the volunteers brings me back to the Hazara jungle. He has to go the same way, because he plans to talk to some truckers about the situation with the migrants in Calais. Their side of the story should not be forgotten. One of the truckers told him that a colleague has been arrested in The United Kingdom on suspicion of human smuggling, after the border police found several migrants hidden in his lorry. And then there are the stories of migrants who are threatening the truckers after they have been discovered by them.

Just when we want to go, a migrant comes walking our way. It turns out that he has been caught by the police at half past five when he was waiting for the food distribution to begin. It seems that the police want to make clear to migrants that they shouldn't hang around at the place of the food distribution, even if it's only a mere thirty minutes before the actual distribution. We give the boy a lift, and it turns out that he is a Hazara living in the Jungle himself. He guides me into the dunes towards the Jungle. What I see is not what I expected: there is nothing more than some windscreens made out of plastic canvas hung up in the branches of little bushes. After they invited me to drink tea, they explain to me that police visits are so frequent that it is impossible to establish anything permanent: it will simply be destroyed during the next police raid. When I ask where they sleep, they point further into the dunes: "somewhere there, more out of sight." And they add to it: "but sometimes after the police came we sleep in the open air." This is what I've heard about the Pashtun camp as well. What has been a big, permanent camp before September 2009 (with only the inhabitants being not so permanent), is now scattered, temporary and under constant threat.

In this Hazara jungle, only some twenty men live together. Among them, there are two Vietnamese, whom I haven't seen before at the food distributions. They come for better living conditions, they explain to me.

Two of the men have Italian passports, and thus are legal in Calais due to the Schengen treaty. However, during police raids they are taken to the police station in Coquelles just as well. Arriving there, they are released immediately. Still they have to walk back all the way to Calais, no matter the cold, the rain, or the fact that it is in the middle of the night.

One shows me a wound in the palm of his hand. He explains that he ran for the police, in a desperate attempt to escape arrest. Climbing over a fence, he reached into the barbed wire. Another one shows me with a grin his trousers: they are torn by a police dog, after it had discovered him in a truck at the border control. I notice that

when they talk in Farsi among one-another, there is one English word absorbed in it: 'police-station'. One of them managed to reach the English border controls once, and is convinced that the English are in general more polite than their French counterparts.

Another person suddenly starts talking in broken Dutch to me. He has lived in Ghent, Belgium for a while. His asylum claim was rejected, and after being arrested another time he spent three months in a Belgian prison.

Sunday May 09.

In the morning I join Rosie for the morning tea. The Kurds are always among the ones that are there in time. I talk to them, and they invite me to walk with them a bit. We head for Parc Richelieu. Just like everyone, they try their best to kill time. Just by walking around and sitting on the benches while talking. They ask me why they are not legal in Europe. I explain them that people fear for differences in culture between the inhabitants of Western Europe and the Islamic countries. They respond by saying that they wouldn't mind if people from France come to Iraq. We turn towards subjects as (sex before) marriage, women's rights and homosexuality. We do not come to general conclusions, but that there are differences in opinion between us is clear.

When we talk about their fellow migrants, one of the Kurds asks me: "Do you think that these people are poor?" He doesn't believe in it, because most have paid considerable amounts of money in order to travel to Calais. He ends by saying that he probably had a better life in Iraq than we in Europe.

Somewhat later, I walk with Mamadou to the Africa house. Just before arriving, in the Boulevard du Président Wilson, we see the white police van coming, followed by a CRS bus. Three African men are sitting inside. In the Africa house there hasn't been a raid, so probably these men were caught in Parc Saint Pierre. This is a place often

visited by the men from the Africa house, since there is a telephone box and a public water pump to fill bottles.

Inside the Africa house I meet the friend of Agathe again. He didn't manage to cross to The United Kingdom the nights before. Only a week more and he faces months of prison when he gets caught again.

After sleeping for nights at the bedroom above the Salam kitchen, I move to the place of Aude and Benoît, the Couchsurfers who hosted me the last time that I was in Calais as well. I owe them a lot, their hospitality fascinates me. They tell me that they had an under aged migrant over for ten days, not so long ago. It turns out to be Morad, the young Afghan boy with all his problems. Without further introduction he was put into their home. After ten days Morad told them, in the middle of the night, that he couldn't stay, that it was too hard for him. He left immediately, returning to his 'friends' in the streets.

Monday May 10.

After breakfast I go to the house of the Egyptians to take some pictures. Some men are standing on the "balcony" (which is in fact nothing more than a spot where the ceiling has come down), and they invite me to come up. They are washing themselves, and brushing their teeth. Preparing to go to lunch at 13h. They allow me to take some pictures, but only with no people in it.

I walk to the lunch with Shakir and a friend of him. "Most people there are from Palestine now", he explains, pointing at the 'house of the Egyptians'. He himself says to be from Gaza, and he is trying to find a better future in The United Kingdom. He lost his sister due to the conflict between Hamas and Fatah, he says. "Gaza is one big prison camp with 1.5 inhabitants", he explains me as if he is the president of a renowned NGO.

When Dareios finally takes my invitation to drink a coffee with him, he laughs a bit about the story of Shakir. "That's what they all say!" he exclaims, "in fact this Shakir is from Egypt, but he told you his asylum story." Trouble in Palestine is the 'standard story' for Egyptians. For Iranians like Dareios, this is the story that they participated in Mousavi's so-called Green Revolution against president Ahmedinedjad. One can say that many are lying; one can also argue that the current strictness in asylum policies *forces* people to lie about their past. Just explaining that you are from a poorer country without possibilities is not sufficient to gain asylum.

Together we eat pizza in a restaurant. I notice that his hands are trembling all the time. The smile that once dominated his face has somewhat faded. He seems weaker than before. No wonder. He tells me how a man has approached him, because he saw in him a future model. Attracted by new clothes, food and a shower, and the appointment to arrange asylum for him, Dareios took the chance. However, when he told other migrants about this man some weeks later, they suspected him from bringing home migrants to have sex with them. He immediately quit all contact, and seems flabbergasted by this event.

These stories are not uncommon in Calais. According to Dareios, even people from the humanitarian organizations might profit from the weak, dependent position in which migrants in Calais find themselves. "All the ones that slept with her", Dareios tells me, referring to one of the volunteers, a woman with a raw voice and missing teeth, "have made it to The United Kingdom." Although it seems to me very unrealistic that she actually has any influence on their journey, it is a myth that migrants cling to. False hope is still hope. I agree with Benoît that this is "an underground world that people like you and me cannot understand": in this deprived town, many inhabitants (and thus some of the volunteers) are poor, divorced or single. It is not that their behaviour isn't wrong, but we *must* try to understand it in its broader context.

Then there is the story of the Kurds in Parc Richelieu. "That man is gay", one said pointing towards a person walking past. "He comes to find other men, sometimes migrants go with him."

Tuesday May 11.

This morning I will leave Calais again. I go to the morning tea to say goodbye to some people. One of the inhabitants of the Africa house tells me that the police have arrested 23 African men this morning.