Living in displacement:

(De)construction of social capital among undocumented refugees living in the city of Nijmegen

Abstract

Over the years, creating insights in the lives of undocumented refugees is something that gained salience in both scientific research, as contemporary politics. Living an undocumented life might suggest an immobile and uncertain life, since this group is unable to find legal work, housing, or get an insurance. Moreover, access to healthcare is limited. Nonetheless – as this masters' thesis tries to argue – providing insights into the social capital of undocumented refugees demonstrates how many of these refugees are still able to find their way in society. Being in contact with organizations brings daily routines and chances for social connectivity. The social capital of undocumented refugees is highly dynamic; being easily constructed, but also deconstructed. Social capital helps to receive the required social, juridical, medical, and financial support. However, the positions of undocumented refugees are still unstable in society, which makes their social capital very fragile; the slightest changes in one's life might deconstruct the whole network. This research focusses on these different notions of social capital by approaching the concept as something which is not cumulative, but rather as something dynamic.

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Mats Jansen (s4496418)

Supervision: Dr. Joris Schapendonk

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SNOV (Emergency shelter for refugees in Nijmegen)

Radboud University

Preface

This is my master's thesis, called '*Living in displacement: (De)construction of social capital among undocumented refugees living in the city of Nijmegen'*. I conducted this research as part of the master specialisation 'Globalisation, Migration and Development' of the master program 'Human Geography', at the Management Faculty of the Radboud University in Nijmegen.

From the end of November 2018, I worked as a volunteer and researcher at the emergency shelter for undocumented refugees in Nijmegen (SNOV). Conducting qualitative research among the residents of the shelter was an interesting, beautiful and sometimes mentally challenging experience. Throughout the months, I started to love my work as a volunteer and Dutch language 'teacher' in the shelter, and I was lucky enough to develop beautiful friendships. I want to thank SNOV – but especially coordinator Marten Hoogsteder – for giving me the opportunity and freedom to develop my research.

I want to thank dr. Joris Schapendonk – my supervisor – for sharing his ideas, thoughts, and especially his research expertise among undocumented refugees. I appreciate his guidance throughout whole the process, and the conversations we had about my encounters and research findings.

Furthermore, I want to thank my parents, girlfriend, sister, and closest friends for their endless support. Reading my writings, giving me feedback, but especially the mental support I received during mentally challenging moments helped me writing this thesis.

Special thanks go to all the residents of the shelter. During the months, they opened up to me and welcomed me in their livelihoods. We had countless conversations about life, and all the ups and downs that come with it. They introduced me to their friends and family, told me about their situation, we played hours of table tennis, but above all, they showed me how to be optimistic and positive during difficult times in life:

'Tomorrow is better than today. Today is better than yesterday.'

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

'In the Netherlands, especially in Nijmegen, I have many friends. I have been living here for almost three years, so I know everybody and everybody knows me. That is very nice. I have a lot of friends in the shelter, and all the volunteers like you. I know many guys who lived in the AZC[1] with me, and I see them very often in the city, or here at Gezellig. In the rest of the Netherlands, my contacts are limited. Due to losing and breaking my phone […]' (Informant 1, 22 years old, Afghanistan).

1.1 Introduction

As a refugee, coming to a new country is entangled with various problems and daily struggles: a new language, culture and society which functions in a different way than one is used to. Refugees can possibly have troubles with all the paperwork, asylum procedures, the waiting that comes with these procedures, and different social norms and values. These problems may become more complex when refugees are denied access to a refugee status. The Dutch government aims for voluntary return to the country of origin after a denied asylum application, but this rarely happens. Some people can possibly end up in a limbo; not being able to re-migrate (due to various reasons), but also lacking the rights and documents to build a life in the Netherlands. This undocumented group of refugees ends up on the streets, with a limited perspective on a future in the Netherlands. Most of these people faced traumatic experiences in their migration trajectories and it is problematic that they become homeless without a legal status and the needed support. These issues have been picked up by multiple organizations (e.g. Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland, Stichting Gast, SNOV Nijmegen) that try to help this vulnerable group. These organizations provide juridical, financial, medical and social support.

Both in politics and public opinion, irregular migration is repeatedly only linked to political power and its restrictions (Cvajner & Sciortino, 2010). Therefore, undocumented migrants would be at the bottom of the political hierarchy, being excluded from important institutions. This involves the denial of access to the labour market, education, housing and

[1] Asielzoekerscentrum (Asylum centre)

healthcare (Broeders & Engbersen, 2007; Broeders, 2010). However, despite these harsh circumstances, there are still thousands of undocumented migrants who are able to make a living without access to these institutions. In other words, their inclusion in society goes beyond political and institutional boundaries (Cvajner & Sciortino, 2010). The increasing repression and surveillance on these migrants lead to an increasing importance of informal networks (Broeders & Engbersen, 2007). Connecting the limitations of being undocumented with the importance of social ties, this master thesis is focused on the dynamics of useful social networks: social capital.

I conducted fieldwork among undocumented men living in the SNOV *Bed, Bath, Bread* facility (BBB) in Nijmegen. This organization provides night shelter for a group of approximately 17 men without a refugee status. As I already addressed, these men live in a situation with limited future prospects. My interests lie in the ways in which these men still try to give meaning to their daily life, despite their formal exclusion. I argue that the informal networks and social capital are crucial in order to create survival strategies while being excluded from legal features of Dutch society. How social capital is constructed or deconstructed is still an important question which needs more in-depth research. Living together in the BBB is the first place that creates social networks which might help to navigate these undocumented refugees through Dutch society. During daytime, these men are in contact with other refugees and organizations that might broaden their network. Still, these networks might also be deconstructed when a client loses his access to the BBB facility (e.g. due to violation of rules, not using the bed or deportation).

In this introducing chapter, I elaborate on societal and scientific relevance of researching the dynamics of social capital of undocumented refugees. This is followed by framing the research objective and its core questions. Chapter 2 provides a contextual framework of the BBB shelter: how it operates, its residents, and the work of volunteers. Chapter 3 is a theoretical framework and delivers a detailed analysis on the social capital as a concept and how it relates to undocumented migration. The way I conducted this intensive fieldwork is defined in chapter 4. It does not merely delve into the methodological choices I made, but also provides room for reflection on how personal experiences during my research influenced me as a researcher. Chapter 5 is the first empirical chapter, and explains the daily routines and dynamics of the BBB residents. Chapter 6 delves into different sources for social capital, and how they influence the lives of the residents of the BBB. Chapter 7 emphasizes on

the undertheorized side of social capital: deconstruction. Different ruptures and difficulties influence the daily lives of undocumented refugees, which problematizes the access to social capital. Chapter 8 concludes this research with closing remarks, and recommendations for both scholars and policymakers.

1.2 Societal relevance

Since the refugee 'crisis' in 2015, there has been ample discussion on how to deal with incoming flows of people. To gain the right documents and a permit to live in the Netherlands, refugees need to have an interview with the IND (Immigration and Naturalization Agency). In this interview, one needs to prove to be in direct danger because of their ethnicity, religion, political opinion or the social group they belong to. When the IND is not convinced or someone fails to deliver the right facts, the IND rejects the asylum request. At this point, the Dutch government requests that refugees should voluntarily return to their countries of origin (Besselsen, 2015). This is very often not the case; some people choose to stay, others are also rejected by their home countries. This results in many refugees ending on the streets without the right documents to earn money or have access to healthcare and other social services (Cvajner & Sciortino, 2010).

I argue that – in this situation – social capital is essential in order to cope with the difficulties in daily life. This is because undocumented refugees are formally excluded from society. Informal inclusion becomes of paramount importance since these informal social networks facilitate other ways to earn money, receive health care, and mental support. (Chauvin & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014; Cvajner & Sciortino, 2010). On the other hand, restrictive policies as formulated by the Dutch government could also make it hard for refugees to maintain their social capital. I reason that refugee organizations like the BBB facility are crucial in the process of inclusion and maintenance of social capital, because they provide the space to meet new people that face similar struggles. Nonetheless, this research will not specifically be focused on organizations. The BBB will be the starting point of understanding the dynamics of undocumented refugees and their networks in daily life experiences (Lems, 2016; Schapendonk, 2015). Following these dynamic networks and their functional aspects brought me to various other spaces (e.g. voluntary organizations, parks, libraries, meeting points, refugee organizations).

Moreover, there needs to be awareness that the lives of undocumented refugees are not only characterized by cumulative expansion of social capital. Organizations, restrictive policies and relational changes (Schapendonk, 2015) could also create destruction of the social capital of refugees. For example, when a refugee loses his bed in the BBB facility, he is forced to live on the streets or at friends and family, which might be problematic on the long run. The aim of this research is to create more knowledge on how social capital is both constructed and deconstructed among these undocumented refugees, in order to create a different understanding of the importance of informal networks. In my conversations the coordinator of SNOV, there was interest in my research and the fact that it develops a different understanding of how refugees use the contacts they make and what role the BBB can possibly play in the construction – and most importantly – the maintenance of social capital among refugees.

In short, with this research I attempt to create a better understanding in the survival strategies of undocumented refugees and the important of informal social network when there is no formal inclusion in society. Social networks are not static, but dynamic. Constantly being constructed and deconstructed at different moments in time.

1.3 Scientific relevance

In scientific literature, much has been written about social capital. Scholars like Bourdieu, Putnam and Granovetter devoted a lot of their work on the concept, providing detailed analysis. Social capital is conceptualized to be the durable social network someone has, formed by mutual acquaintance and recognition. For the people involved in this particular network, the contact is beneficial in multiple ways (Bourdieu, 1986). Thus, social capital cannot be seen as a social network alone; it has a certain mutual functional aspect (*Ibid*.) Nonetheless, this conceptualization of social capital is often only partly grasped by scholars (Schapendonk, 2015). Linking to the 'durable' aspects of this network, social capital is predominantly understood to be a static concept. However, a more comprehensive analysis on the work of Bourdieu (1986) suggests otherwise; social capital must be maintained (Schapendonk 2015). Having to maintain social capital makes the concept more dynamic, with not only the ability to construct capital, but also the risk of deconstruction. '[W]ithin social networks, rules of reciprocity apply. An individual who fails to return a favor can get excluded

from social networks. Moreover, an internal hierarchy of power and social stratification characterizes social networks, which causes rivalry and forms of exploitation to arise' (Van Meeteren, Engbersen, & Van San, 2009, p. 885). Consequently, social capital can be a vague concept, because it is constantly changing, and involves different experiences over time.

However, it is not surprising why many scholars have neglected these notions; Bourdieu (1986) had a more dominant focus on dynamic relations between other forms of capital (economic- and cultural capital). Therefore, network dynamics, and the rise and fall of social capital are undertheorized in his work (Schapendonk, 2015). This has resulted in a misinterpretation of how the concept of social capital should be analysed.

As argued by Ryan, Sales, Tilki, and Siara (2008, p. 685), 'the focus on social capital within communities and local neighbourhoods fails to capture the dynamism, diversity and spatial dispersion of migrants' social networks.' This research pays attention to a more detailed analysis on social capital. Providing more knowledge on the undertheorized dynamics of social capital among undocumented refugees in Nijmegen will help to understand that social capital is not a static, nor a cumulative concept. It has relational aspects that are constantly changing and can be even more vulnerable for undocumented refugees (Pathirage & Collyer, 2011). During their lives, people gain more social contacts which they can use to navigate through society, but looking at undocumented refugees in particular, I question this construction bias which affects many scholars in their work. Undocumented refugees are formally excluded from society and social capital is therefore crucial. How this is maintained changes over time, and connections can disappear as fast as they were formed. Striving to gain insight in the construction as well as deconstruction of social capital of refugees might provide broader knowledge on the dynamic social networks of this group which is often very vulnerable.

1.4 Research objective and research questions

With this thesis, I seek to contribute to the notion that social capital is more fluid and dynamic than often thought in the first place. It is a kind of network that is constantly changing and should be actively maintained by its members. Undocumented refugees are a vulnerable group within (Dutch) society, and I reason their social capital is crucial in creating successful informal survival strategies. The BBB facility will be a key space in my research, because it is

the place where 17 undocumented men meet every day. From there, I followed their trajectories through Nijmegen, investigating where other social contacts are made. My objective is to provide in-depth analysis in both the construction as the deconstruction of social capital among undocumented refugees, in order to develop a deeper understanding around the dynamics of social capital as a concept. If policymakers become increasingly aware of the fact that social capital is dynamic and that it is a valuable way for inclusive strategies, I hope this might lead to improved and more humane policies on undocumented refugees. On the other hand, these same refugees might become more aware of the opportunities their social capital entails. The leading questions in this research are as follows:

How is social capital (de)constructed among undocumented refugees in the spaces of Nijmegen?

- *Where do undocumented refugees in Nijmegen make social contact and how are these spaces different during this process?*
- *What role does social capital play in the daily lives of undocumented migrants in Nijmegen?*
- *When is social capital being (de)constructed?*
- *What thoughts and emotions are connected to changing social capital?*

Chapter 2 – The Bed, Bath, Bread Shelter (BBB) in Nijmegen

'I love the guys in the BBB, but I do not want to see them every day! I always tell them: 'I hope we will all have a normal situation in the future, and then we can meet every week, we can help each other and contribute'. But in here, every day you see the same guys, the same Mats![2]' (Informant 5, 33 years old, Iran).

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will dive deeper into the *Bed, Bath Bread* (BBB) organization, and how it fits within my research objective. First, I will start with a detailed analysis of the BBB organization that organizes the night shelter for my informants. I will elaborate on their ideology, the goal of the organization and how this influenced the BBB, following the work of former Human Geography student and coordinator Thomas Noten (2016), reports about-, and by SNOV and my own experience as both researcher and volunteer. Second, the shelter knows rules and regulations which will also be described. These rules have a major influence on the daily lives of the residents of the shelter, which will be defined in chapter 5. Third, the residents (and my informants) of the shelter will be introduced. In order to ensure the rules – and create a safe, peaceful and efficient way of providing shelter – the presence of volunteers is essential. The last paragraph of this chapter will describe how volunteers operate and what their role is within the BBB. I will also describe my own role as a volunteer in the shelter.

2.2 The ideology of SNOV

The BBB facility was established in 2014, after the decision of the European Court that the Netherlands had to develop active policies around undocumented- and homeless migrants[3]. SNOV (Foundation for Emergency shelter for Refugees)[4] – under supervision and financial support of the municipality – is in charge of the BBB since 2014. Last year, the WODC and Pro-Facto (Winter, Bex-Reimert, Geertema, & Krol, 2018) published a paper on how organizations

[2] Original Dutch quote: 'Ik hou van de jongens, maar ik wil ze niet elke dag zien! Ik zeg altijd tegen de jongens: "ik hoop dat we allemaal een normale situatie krijgen, dan kunnen we elkaar elke week opzoeken, elkaar helpen, iets betekenen." Maar hier, elke ochtend dezelfde [namen], dezelfde Mats! [Lacht]'
[3] http://snovnijmegen.nl/organisatie
[4] *Stichting Noodopvang Vluchtelingen Nijmegen*

like the BBB facility influence return migration after asylum applications have been denied. One section is specifically focused on Nijmegen. The BBB facility in Nijmegen has been established because of inclusive reasons (no one should be excluded from society), and the municipality argues it remains important to support those in need, even if they are not allowed to stay in the Netherlands (also see SNOV, 2018). The aim of SNOV is to ensure equality, tolerance and respect among the residents. Moreover, the employees and volunteers are actively supporting participation in society outside the shelter. Cooperation with 'Gezellig' (see chapter 5) where most of the men are spending their afternoons, plays an important role in this participation (SNOV, 2018).

In the beginning – apart from the board – the BBB was coordinated by volunteers, but this appeared to be insufficient. Soon, a subsidized coordinator was assigned in order to make the shelter work efficient. The coordinator is responsible for general tasks, assigning and supporting new volunteers, conducting intake-interviews with potential new clients, and developing the shelter. There have been three coordinators over the years, of whom Thomas Noten (2016) was the second, after conducting his master research within the shelter. The coordinator is supported by another employee, who is responsible for maintenance of the different locations. He is also actively supporting the residents by driving them to the doctor, the dentist, second hand shops and other organizations.

When I started my research in December 2018, there were two locations. One for 17 men (night shelter), the other one for 8 women (with day- and night shelter). During my research, I only worked for the male shelter, and therefore this thesis will only address the male residents of the BBB (this choice will be explained in chapter 4). Within the first months of my fieldwork, the male shelter was moved to another location, and the men had to split up into two locations (one in Nijmegen, and one in Lent) a few weeks later. How this happened, and how this influenced the daily lives of the men will be elaborated on in chapter 7.

2.3 Rules and regulations

The BBB and its residents are influenced by various rules and procedures. For undocumented refugees, it already starts before having the intake with the coordinator. The municipality does not want too many people in the shelter (because of limited space and economic resources), and therefore many people are placed on a waiting list. After a period of waiting, one is invited

for the intake. This intake mainly revolves around the background of the client, reasons for applying, and the rules in the shelter. The coordinator needs to make sure the new client will not affect the wellbeing of other residents. Moreover, rules need to be explained and the client has to prove that he has some kind of connection with the region of Nijmegen (SNOV, 2018).

If the client is accepted, he receives a personal SNOV card with a picture and date of birth. The card is used for basic identification and guarantees that the client has a place to sleep. This helps them when identification is demanded by authorities. Most men carry the card all the time, because they are aware of the risks when they do not carry the card.

The residents of the shelter are subordinate to time regulations imposed by the municipality. The BBB is a night-shelter, which means that the men are only allowed to be in the building between 6 PM and 10 AM on the next day. Two of the oldest residents (in their sixties), are allowed to stay 24 hours a day due to their physical condition. As the words *bed, bath, bread* suggest, the BBB residents are provided with the daily basics. Every resident has his or her own bed with some storage for belongings. Every shelter has a shower, and the (male)residents are offered two meals a day. In the morning, there is breakfast with coffee, tea, bread, toppings (jelly, peanut butter, honey, feta cheese, boiled eggs). Three times a week (once every two days), *Wereldvrouwenhuis*[5] delivers cooked food for two days. On Saturdays, the men have to buy their own dinner (SNOV, 2018).

Once every two days, two men are demanded to stay and clean the house when the rest of the residents leave the shelter. Every resident has to clean two times a month, and everyone checks if someone has done his chores. When someone does not stay to clean, discussions start or others refuse to clean as well. This is where the 'janitor'[6] comes in, and he has to make sure this conflict is solved and people do their chores. In the shelter, there are three men[7] who are entitled as janitor. One is a janitor for seven days in a row before the next janitor starts his shift, and the janitors earn ten euros per day. During the mornings, it is the task of the janitor to wake up early, prepare breakfast, check the provisions, and clean the dishes. The janitor is supported by the volunteer that is present. The volunteer has to wake everyone up, but when there is no volunteer, this is also the task of the janitor. At the end of

[5] https://wereldvrouwenhuis.nl/public/
[6] Everyone in the shelter says 'concierge'.
[7] Informant 1, 3 and 11 have the role as janitor.

the day, the janitor is allowed to enter the house at 5 PM in order to receive the food that is delivered. Another important task of the janitor is to ensure a relaxed atmosphere without conflict. The men see this as a real duty, and sometimes creates stress: informant 5 stopped being a janitor after a few months during my fieldwork. He argued that he had to work on his own problems, and that the responsibility to help others became too much for him. That is when he decided to quit.

Other struggles surrounding the janitors were also acknowledged by Noten (2016). He elaborated on situations in which the janitors had a conflict among themselves, because expectations of certain duties varied. Despite the fact that the research of Noten (2016) took place three years ago – currently other men have the task of the janitor – I also witnessed some sort of conflict. Around January 2019, informant 1 became a janitor, but he struggled to wake up in time. On multiple occasions informant 1 was still sleeping on the couch when I entered the shelter at 8 AM. Most of the time, people made jokes about him slacking on his duty as a janitor, but some residents made a problem out of it when they had to leave early for work. For them it was annoying to see that the breakfast was not prepared when they woke up.

There are differences between the observations of Noten (2016) and mine, three years later. Noten describes rather strict rules, whereas I have observed how rules are fluid (or even ignored). Noten explains how everyone had to be out of bed at 9 AM. During my fieldwork, volunteers (or the janitors) make the first round through the house at 9 AM. It is very common that some residents do not leave their bed before 9:55 AM. In rather exceptional situations, some residents are still having breakfast at 10:15 AM.

2.4 Residents of the BBB

The male department of the SNOV BBB has 17 residents. The youngest resident is only 18 years old, and the oldest is in his late 60's. However, most of the residents are in their mid-twenties. 11 residents live in Nijmegen, six others moved to Lent. In Lent, almost everyone is from Iran (5), the other resident is from Syria. The shelter in Nijmegen has people from Eritrea (2), Ethiopia (1), El Salvador (1), Afghanistan (2), Russia (1), Iran (3) and Palestine (1).

Since nationalities in the shelter are very diverse, conflicts do occur, but these differences also create opportunities to learn from each other. Cultural diversity and all its

dynamics are prominently visible. Language is the most visible way of how the men differ. Everyone speaks another language and also the quality of Dutch-speaking skills vary (Noten, 2016). The men from the Arab world are able to communicate in different languages and teach each other some extra when needed. Also, the residents from Eritrea and Ethiopia are able to communicate with them, because they exchanged words in Arab, Farsi, Pasjtoe, Dutch or English. Cultural differences sometimes lead to exclusion, which is experienced by informant 3 from El Salvador, being the only one from Latin America. He does not listen to the same music, he does not have the same friends and he is unable to speak the languages most men speak. His Dutch language skills are very limited, and therefore he is only able to communicate in English. However, he managed to teach other residents some funny words in Spanish, and this sometimes leads to hilarious situations and a lot of laughing.

The duration of the period the residents live in the shelter is also very diverse. Some men have been living in the Netherlands for over ten years, and they have stayed in the shelter for more than four. Others are rather new and just entered the shelter, and I was able to see how they made friends (just as I had to make friends) during their stay. While conducting my fieldwork, a few men have left the shelter. One North-African residents was missing for a few months, until he reached the coordinator, telling him that he travelled to Canada and that they gave him a permit to stay. Another resident, from Armenia, was fed up with his life in the Netherlands and how he had remained in limbo for years. He decided to move back to Armenia. Nonetheless, there are rumours that he is still living in Nijmegen.

2.5 Volunteers working at the BBB

The shelter is depending on the work of volunteers, and their presence is crucial. There are two shifts a day, from 8 to 10 AM, and from 8 to 10 PM. During the morning shift, the volunteer has to support the janitor in his work. One helps with preparing the breakfast, and waking up the residents. During the two-hour shift in the morning, the core activity is just talking and drinking coffee. The volunteer has to activate and motivate people for a new day, and this is sometimes hard. As some residents leave early for work, others have little activities and they prefer to stay in bed. However, everyone gets up because they are aware that staying inside after 10 AM has financial consequences. Shifts in the evening are different and more relaxed, because there are no time regulations involved. Again, talking and drinking coffee is a core

activity. The volunteer is offering emotional support and is actively trying to contribute to a relaxed atmosphere in the shelter. He or she watches television with the residents, or activates people to play games.

At the moment, there are nine active volunteers. Two of them are in their sixties and retired, yet very active around the residents. One of them often drives the men around to appointments, and he also uses his address to send and receive packages. He offers support when the men want to send medicine of money to their family in their country of origin. The other volunteers are all students in their mid-twenties. There is one Russian student who is recruited in order to support the Russian resident, the rest of the volunteers are all Dutch.

Every week, I work two morning- and two evening shifts. During the first months as a volunteer, I had a lot of conversations with the residents about their wish to learn Dutch. They addressed that is was very hard for them to find a good organization that could teach them. Some of them tried to go to *Taalcafe* in the central library in the centre of Nijmegen, but these free lessons had a large focus on the lives of expats and other migrants with a legal status. This created stress and the residents stopped following the course. I decided to start teaching Dutch to the men myself, also because I thought it would be a valuable way to contribute on the one hand, and gain trust on the other. Every Tuesday and Thursday from 8 to 9 PM, I teach Dutch in the BBB shelter to those who are interested. I focus on practical linguistic problems the residents face on a daily basis (e.g. asking the way to a stranger, how to communicate with the doctor) and I always ask them for advice on what they want me to learn them. As I have witnessed in the past months, every volunteer is looking for his or her own way to contribute to the development of the residents. Some bring traditional food, some send packages, some provide second hand phones or laptops, and others organize dancing evenings.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have elaborated on the daily reality in which my research took place. The male locations of the BBB are dynamic places, inhabited by residents with various backgrounds, ages and stages in life. These differences sometimes create conflict, but also enable valuable conversations and encounters and among the residents, sometimes being hilarious to observe. The rules and regulations as imposed by the municipality and the SNOV

board have a decisive influence on a large part of the lives of the residents[8]. The role of the janitors and the volunteers is important to let the shelter function as decent as possible and relieve daily stress, struggles and anxieties among its residents.

The BBB shelter is a valuable place within the framework of my research objective, because it is the place my informants spend most of their mornings, evenings and nights. It enables me to observe everyday dynamics around how friendships are formed and maintained on the one hand, but also how conflicts influence social connectivity on the other. The BBB as a starting point, allowed me to form valuable friendships with some of my informants – in which they opened up to me – introducing me to their social network outside of the shelter.

[8] This will be elaborated on in full detail in chapter 5

Chapter 3 – Theoretical framework

3.1 Introduction

In order to clarify how social capital is (de)constructed among undocumented refugees in Nijmegen – and while being focused on all its dynamics – it is important to first give some insights into the core concepts of this research. I start with a reflection on key thinkers Bourdieu and Putnam, followed by explaining the differences between social capital and social networks. Second – as means of introduction – I will elaborate on irregular migration and how one becomes undocumented. Third, social capital will be linked to strategies for inclusion as used by undocumented refugees. Fourth, social capital of migrants will be linked with space. After doing this, social capital is placed in a transnational context. This chapter will be finished with a conceptual framework that visualizes the dynamics that are intertwined with the (de)construction of social capital of undocumented refugees.

3.2 Social capital

Social capital is a concept that has been elaborated on for many years and by many scholars. Pierre Bourdieu (1986) is seen as one of the key thinkers on the construction of capital. In his work, he makes the distinction between economic, cultural and social capital. It is important to note that these three aspects of capital are linked. Economic capital is related to economic resources that provide access to certain opportunities and networks. Cultural capital can be translated into educational skills that could result in economic capital. The focus in this research will be on social capital. Bourdieu argues that

> [s]ocial capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each for its members with the backing of the collectivity – owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 51).

The volume of social capital depends on two factors. The first factor is the size of the network that can be mobilized and the second factor is related to the volume of other forms of capital that flow out of these connections. This highlights that social capital is also linked to economic and cultural ways of capital (Bourdieu, 1986). However, cultural capital is very different, because it has little meaning without the social group. Economic- and cultural capital have exchangeable traits (e.g. land, money, minerals, knowledge) that can be used for market purposes (Goulbourne, Reynolds, Solomos, & Zontini, 2010).

The definition of social capital as recited above is popular among scholars. However, the definition needs nuancing remarks. The phrase 'durable network' would suggest a static, long term relationship. As argued by Schapendonk (2015), further analyses of the conceptualization would suggest this is not what Bourdieu proposed. Bourdieu (1986, p. 51) also highlights 'that these relationships may exist only in the practical state in material and/or symbolic exchanges which help to maintain them.' This would suggest that social capital cannot simply be seen as something given and static: networks are maintained (Schapendonk, 2015). In his research, Bourdieu pays more attention to the relation between different categories of capital as stated above. Therefore, the dynamic aspects of social capital remain undertheorized. The existence of social capital is not something given, it is the product of constant effort (Bourdieu, 1986; Pathirage & Collyer, 2011; Schapendonk, 2015). Most migrant groups are aware of the fact that social capital should be maintained in order to generate positive outcomes. However, restrictive policies have major impact on social capital of migrants: as it becomes more fragile, migrants have to work harder to maintain it (Pathirage & Collyer, 2011).

Another scholar that tried to conceptualize this comprehensive and dynamic concept is Robert Putnam (1993). He argued that social capital is vital in situations where other types of capital are limited:

> [S]ocial capital serves as a kind of collateral, but it is available to those who have no access to ordinary credit markets. Lacking physical assets to offer as surety, the participants in effect pledge their social connections. Thus, social capital is leveraged to expand the credit facilities available in these communities and to improve the efficiency with which markets operate there (Putnam, 1993, p. 196).

The use of social capital is often rotated among members of social networks, based on the idea of reciprocity. Working together operates as an insurance; this time you help me, the next time I help you. Putnam connects to the ideas of Bourdieu (1986) by arguing that trust is a crucial aspect of social capital, and networks of social capital can deconstruct when feelings of trust decrease. The members of networks need to maintain these feelings of trust in order to keep the mutual functionality social capital provides (Putnam, 1993). The presence of civic organizations, such as sports clubs and neighbourhood centres are vital to enlarge social connectivity and trust building. This develops into social capital with mutual functionalities for members of these networks (*Ibid.*). In societies with active civic organizations, networks of social capital are hardly deconstructed: 'Stocks of social capital, such as trust, norms, and networks, tend to be self-reinforcing and cumulative' (Putnam, 1993, p. 177). However – as will be clear in this research – this observation becomes problematic for people who are excluded from the majority of society, such as undocumented refugees: 'Putnam's account is […] society-centred and therefore neglects the ways in which social capital can be created (and destroyed) by structural forces and institutions' (Mohan & Mohan, 2002, p. 195). More criticism from Mohan and Mohan (2002) argues that Putnam fails to provide a clear understanding of how social capital is actually constructed within these civic organizations.

It is important to note that social capital is not the same as a social network; it is a social network with functional aspects. It is the investment in social relations, with expected returns. People – in this case refugees - engage in social interactions and networks in order to find profit for themselves. This may either be some kind of information (e.g. to navigate through the Dutch bureaucratic system), gain in agency (e.g. enlarging job opportunities), social credentials (e.g. the network as your backpack) or addition to one's identity or recognition (Lin, 2017). Focussing on this functional aspect of the concept also adds complexity, because '… the realization of its usevalue is observable only where the individual or the group taps into it to produce or attain desired or beneficial results' (Goulbourne et al., 2010, p. 28). This makes the concept highly instrumental, flexible or even vague to observe and identify. However, the outcomes of social capital are significant (Goulbourne et al., 2010).

Mark Granovetter (1973) conceptualized the importance of social networks. He connects the concept with integration by making a distinction between 'weak' and 'strong' ties. Strong ties are the people you connect with on a micro-scale, individual level. Think about kin or people with the same ethnicity as you have. Strong ties are helpful in creating a sense

of identity and belonging, but are restrictive when it comes to integration in society as a whole. Weak ties are linkages between different groups. Although you are not as close to these people as with kin and friends, these are the people that bring you further in the process of integration. Putnam (2001, p. 8) connects to this vision by summarizing that strong ties are good for 'getting by', and that weak – or bridging – ties are crucial for 'getting ahead'. Ryan (2011) criticizes this view on different ties, by arguing that the dichotomy is too simplistic. One the one hand, she argues that shared ethnicity is not a guarantee for constructing strong ties. On the other, not all weak ties are valuable in the light of 'bridging'. The existence – and success – of these ties relies on the possible resources flowing out of these connections.

Granovetter (1973) argues that strong ties possibly create social fragmentation, because the focus lies on individual ties. Granovetter is aware of the fact that networks are relational, and its success depends on multiple actors who are willing to cooperate (Schapendonk, 2015). These networks, or ties (Granovetter, 1973), could become social capital when gaining mutual functional aspects.

3.3 Irregular migration

The concepts 'irregularity' and 'being undocumented' and their negative connotations are rather new within the migration debate. In the 1960s and 1970s, irregular migration was seen as a side effect of guest worker arrangements in Europe. Many of them arrived on tourist visas and overstayed its validity. The influx of immigrants was seen as essential in post-war Europe, in order to rebuild economies and industries (Broeders, 2010). However, with the emergence of 'Fortress Europe' over the past decades, immigration was increasingly framed as a burden, rather than a gift. This has resulted in complex debates in European politics, and how to reduce irregular migration became more salient (Castles, De Haas & Miller, 2014; Cvajner & Sciortino, 2010). Not only the physical, external European borders became higher and more dangerous, also paper walls (visa documents and obtaining legal status) turned out to be harder to cross (Broeders, 2010). In other words, the political concern to manage unwanted flows op people has always been present in history. However, linking these flows to abstract and restrictive regulations is rather new (Cvajner & Sciortino, 2010). The irregularity of migrants should not be focussed on the action of the migrant, but on the policies that made these actions illegal (Chauvin & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014). Despite all the heated discussions

on irregular migration in contemporary politics and public opinion, Cvajner and Sciortino (2010) argue that this group of migrants is heavily under-theorized in research. In order to theorize undocumented migrants in society, it is crucial to understand how irregular migratory flows are created in the first place. It can be claimed that irregular flows emerge whenever there is a divergence between the social and political circumstances for migration:

> In the sending context, there must be a mismatch between widespread social expectations […] and the capacity of local government to satisfy or repress them. In the receiving context, there must be a mismatch between the internal preconditions for migration […] and their interpretation within the political system […] Irregular migration systems may be in fact defined as an adaptive answer to these mismatches (Cvajner & Sciortino, 2010, p. 394).

In that way, the irregular influx is not only the outcome of failing border policies by the receiving state or region; it is also connected to the ability of sending states to create an environment in which the expectations of people are satisfied. As a critical note, personal choices and circumstances should not be neglected in the process of migrants' decision-making (Castles et al., 2014).

The increasing repression against irregular migration (in public debate often negatively framed as 'illegal immigration') has resulted in increasing deportation of migration to their countries of origin, or to states of first arrival in the European Union. However, most of the migrants that were rejected in their application for legal residence, are not deported. They often remain in the country of application and end up living a life without legal documents, which results in economic and political exclusion. Also, the fear of being deported is a daily struggle for many migrants, which sustains their vulnerability; every minor violation can lead to prosecution and deportation (Chauvin & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014).

3.4 Undocumented refugees and social capital: informality as a strategy for inclusion

As argued by Van Meeteren et al. (2009), undocumented refugees must not be conceptualized as being victims alone. Despite the restrictions that undocumented migrants have to deal with, there are useful ways to still live a meaningful life, without the access to formal organizations. Their inclusion in society is more than political and institutional boundaries alone (Cvajner & Sciortino, 2010). Social capital is vital in the lives of undocumented refugees, and different ties provide the needed support (Van Meeteren et al., 2009). Close ties – as already grasped upon – bring comfort to undocumented refugees, and it helps them to get along in daily life. Weaker ties provide resources that flow out of connections with people outside their group of peers, or family (e.g. migrant organizations, or Dutch citizens, volunteers). Social capital creates the needed resources for undocumented refugees while being excluded from the largest part of society (*Ibid.*).

Differentiation theory, as described by Cvajner and Sciortino (2010), can be valuable to create understanding around irregular migration and how undocumented refugees are able to feel more included. This theory discusses how contemporary western societies have no head, no base and no centre, but that it is divided into different subsystems (e.g. transnational-, political-, economic-, cultural-, formal- and informal subsystems). These subsystems have their own codes, values and regulative means. These subsystems operate autonomously but can also choose to be connected with each other. Some subsystems might be restrictive towards undocumented migrants, whereas others are supportive. Linking this to migratory movements, it is important to note that the scale and scope of subsystems matter. Subsystems that enable international migratory flows have a transnational scope, whereas restrictive subsystems are far more internally territorialized, because they want to protect external borders to decline the inflow of migrants. This shows that societies are complex, and in order to understand a certain subsystem, one also needs to take other systems into account (Cvajner & Sciortino, 2010).

Acknowledging this complexity can explain how undocumented migrants develop inclusive strategies in daily life (Chauvin & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014; Cvajner & Sciortino, 2010). Being framed as 'undocumented' has different meanings in daily life, creating possibilities or limits. In some situations – buying groceries, talking to people on the street,

using public transport – being undocumented is not always a significant problem, as long as one sticks to the rules. However, restrictions appear when it comes to building a future (no access to legal housing, the labour market or political rights) (Cvajner & Sciortino, 2010). This discrepancy is very interesting because of 'the evidence it provides about the possibilities of being fully excluded from the political system and still being able to carry on a great deal of social interactions' (*Ibid.*, p. 398).

The passiveness of political institutions creates an importance for civic participation and assistance by non-governmental, humanitarian organizations. Also, the way information and assistance are provided among fellow migrants is crucial (Chauvin & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014). Reflecting on Dutch (or even European) society, with all its different subsystems has a positive outcome for many refugees. Daily activities by undocumented refugees in public space are 'camouflaged' by diversity, because being undocumented cannot be appointed through physical traits. It makes undocumented migrants undetectable in normal, daily situations while riding a bike, walking in the streets, and visiting shops. It Is a certain way of 'invisibility within visibility' (Chauvin & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014, p. 425).

Undocumented refugees are able to generate income through paid work, find (temporary) options for housing and find a partner. They make use of social resources – their social capital – to make up for their lack of formal inclusion. Therefore, the investment in informal networks is crucial in order to develop survival strategies. Creating informal networks lowers the risk of being detected and deported, and sharing information can create benefits for housing and paid (irregular) day labour with payment after completion (Cvajner & Sciortino, 2010). It is important to note the size of the informal economy within society decides what type of labour is carried out. Societies with a rather large informal economy will create lots of informal jobs. In societies with a large formal economy (western societies), undocumented migrants will hold formal jobs, but in an informal way (Chauvin & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014).

Yet, some nuance is needed here. We should not neglect the economic influence on the access to strategies for inclusion. People that are willing to help, take a big risk by providing housing and paid work, and this has economic consequences: rents can be more expensive, wages are lower. Therefore, 'an irregular status does not always mean exclusion, but can also be inclusion at a higher price' (Cvajner & Sciortino, 2010, p. 400). Despite the risks and costs, the help of these informal networks enables people to receive the needed services and

documents which decreases their vulnerability and help them deal with formal exclusive measures (Chauvin & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014).

3.5 Social capital and space

Social capital is an economic, sociological, political *and* geographical concept. How social capital is being executed is different from place to place and is influenced by context (Mohan & Mohan, 2002). The construction of social capital and its maintenance is closely linked to proximity and space (Bourdieu, 1986). Annika Lems (2016) connects to this idea. She argues that space is always different, even in cases in which people are displaced because of certain policies. Migrants always have to deal with issues of being in- and out of place, and this is connected to the emergence of different strategies that help to create a sense of belonging. 'Turning the focus on one individual's acts of doing, placemaking and storying allows for a more nuanced understanding of displacement – one that takes the groundedness of social life more seriously and one that works towards a deeper understanding of the ways place and displacement intersect (Lems, 2016, p. 317). This is strongly connected to community building on a local level, but also has transnational ties (Lems, 2016).

Different spaces facilitate social capital and this highlights the importance of organizations that provide shelter for refugees, because it creates a space in which people make useful connections. Space, and other factors can also result in the deconstruction of social capital. A critical view on the deconstruction of social capital, and especially linked to space, is made by Zetter, Griffiths and Sigona (2005). They problematize the influence of Refugee Community Organizations (RCO's) in the United Kingdom on social capital and integration. The results assume that RCO's are no longer mediators in the process of integration of refugees, because of dispersal; they fail to provide help and knowledge that is needed, because recently arrived refugees lack a certain kind of infrastructure to contact RCO's.

3.6 Social capital within a transnational field

At the end of last century, there has been a mobility turn in social sciences and other related disciplines such as human geography. Scholars acknowledged the mobile aspects of our world and the dynamic flows of people connected to it (Schapendonk & Steel, 2014). In the light of

these changes, social capital should not only be seen on a local scale, but should also be connected to transnational characteristics (Pathirage & Collyer, 2011). Migrants use their social capital in order to cope with the new environment they live in, and this will help them face multiple struggles. Transnational social capital is important, because it provides the needed information in order to make trajectories and placemaking more likely to succeed (*Ibid*.). 'It is well researched that transnational social networks in particular influence migration in many ways through the exchange of information and (financial) resources' (Wissink, Düvell, & Van Eerdewijk, 2013, p. 1093).

Yet, these transnational ties can of course have negative outcomes for those who are excluded (Pathirage & Collyer, 2011). As argued by Wissink et al. (2013), migrants' social capital fluctuates through embeddedness in socio-institutional environments (e.g. both local and transnational networks). Being focussed on transnational networks, the migrant is engaged with what happens in the country of origin. This may lead to failing inclusion and an increasing feeling of being displaced. In some cases, having strong transnational social capital is a driving force behind return migration (Goulbourne et al., 2010).

The fragility of transnational social capital sometimes becomes visible during migration trajectories. Being away from family in one's country of origin, social capital is being maintained by the use of internet; it enables communication over distance. However, this form of social capital can be deconstructed when a phone or laptop gets broken, or captured by authorities (Wissink et al., 2013).

3.7 Conclusion

Conceptualizing the notion of cultural capital as dynamic, rather than static and cumulative is the backbone throughout the process of this research. Studying undocumented refugees is a useful way to shine another light upon the concept of social capital, since the lives of undocumented refugees are often very fragile and subject of constant change. Keeping this in mind, together with the understanding of social capital, and how it should be maintained, as defined by Bourdieu (1986) – rather than being taken-for-granted – allows for more valuable insights in both the construction, as the deconstruction of the concept.

Chapter 4 – Working in the field: methods and reflections

4.1 Introduction

Conducting research among undocumented migrants is an activity which is complex and entails vulnerable informants. Therefore, this particular research population demands careful approaches, building trust and constant ethical reflection (Van Liempt & Bilger, 2012). In this chapter, I elaborate on the choices made throughout my research period. Studying the dynamics around social capital of undocumented refugees demands a rather dynamic approach by the researcher. Together with the voluntary work I fulfil, this comes with spending many hours with the residents in the mornings and evenings, but also meeting them on the streets and at other organizations.

First, I provide a methodological discussion on ethnographic research, which is followed by a discussion on different methodologies and perspectives on how to conduct ethnographic research among (undocumented) migrants. Second, there are ethical dilemmas relating to my research population that require further explanation. Tackling these dilemmas played a crucial role during the whole length of my research: from gaining trust, to writing about my informants. Third, the different methods used during the research are explained. Fourth, I describe how the analysis of data was executed. This chapter is concluded with personal reflections on the fieldwork that was conducted.

4.2 Conducting ethnographic research

In order to gain valuable insights in the livelihoods and the social capital of undocumented migrants in Nijmegen, I conducted ethnographic fieldwork. To begin with, one of the most important features of an ethnography is that it is conducted through intensive fieldwork (Gobo, 2008; O'Reilly, 2008).

> Ethnography is the study of people in naturally occurring settings or "fields" by means of methods which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not also the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner but without meaning being imposed on them externally (Brewer, 2000, p. 10).

The main objective of ethnographic research is to understand other ways of life from the perspective of the research population at hand (Spradley, 1980). *Participant observation* is a core method, and enables the researcher to develop a close relationship with his or her informants. Staying in the field for a longer period creates the chance to observe and describe everyday routines, rituals, mobilities, behaviour and communication (Gobo, 2008).

Ethnographic research goes hand in hand with conducting interviews and studying other sources (e.g. diaries, letters, articles, photographs). However, its core activity is participant observation, because it allows the researcher to discover the difference between what is said during the interviews, and what people actually do (*Ibid*.). The value of combining these different methods is that it creates a holistic approach to the field and its agents. This results in a valuable combination of detailed stories, analysis of other research, and reflections by the author on the research done (O'Reilly, 2008).

As argued by Blommaert and Dong (2010), ethnographic research is often seen as a method, rather than a methodology. It is occasionally referred to as a way of description. However, ethnographic research is more than this. Interpretation and analysis of different socio-cultural environments have always been present in ethnographies. This idea is essential within the methodological and empirical framework of my research; I will not only describe the dynamics of social capital among undocumented migrants, they will also be interpreted in order to create more awareness around the outcomes of these dynamics.

There are different ways to conduct ethnographic fieldwork among (undocumented) migrants in a mobile and transnational perspective. Within the methodology of ethnography, the most common way of conducting fieldwork used to be with a focus on a single site[9] (Falzon, 2016; Marcus, 1995). Researching migrants from this 'single-site perspective' allows the researcher to start in a rather intimate sphere (e.g. the house of the migrant), and start looking outwards to all the transnational experiences and emotions that influenced this particular place. A relational ethnography of the migrant house could have a focus on how the country of origin and the 'new' country are linked. Investigating emotions and experiences of migrants could perfectly be explored within the migrant house, because the domestic sphere is where people feel most comfortable and free. Single-site ethnographies are not limited to

[9] For example, think about the fieldwork by Malinowski, Boas and Evans-Pritchard

the house alone; they allow the researcher to use the home as a starting point for mobility and transnational networks that go beyond the house (Gielis, 2011).

However, with different parts of the world getting more intertwined and mobile, it is not always clever to limit ethnographic fieldwork to a single site. Especially when researching migrants and their networks, a 'multi-sited perspective' could be of more valuable (Marcus, 1995). Multi-sited ethnographies look beyond the usual idea of a single field when conducting fieldwork: the (transnational) network of informants is the starting point within this methodology, so there are multiple fields. '[T]he essence of multi-sited research is to follow people, connections, associations, and relationships across space' (Falzon, 2016, p. 1). In an ideal situation – taking the migrant network as an example – the researcher would map the whole network, and conduct research in every hub that is connected with this network. This means that the researcher is constantly travelling between different places, which might be physically and socially challenging (Hage, 2005).

A methodology that overlaps with a multi-sited perspective, but also places critical notes on both methodological lenses as described above, is a 'trajectory approach' on migration (Schapendonk & Steel, 2014; Schapendonk, 2015). The core idea of this perspective is that networks are not something stable. Both single- and multi-sited approaches are accentuating existing networks – or other types of relations – whereas a trajectory approach acknowledges the fact that networks are constantly changing. As a researcher, this demands flexibility, since the field is constantly changing. Following migrant trajectories does not only highlight different mobilities, but also shines upon moments of immobility (Schapendonk & Steel, 2014). Migration is not just a movement from place A to place B; it is dynamic with multiple periods of waiting (Bendixen & Eriksen, 2018) and being in a limbo (Schapendonk & Steel, 2014).

A combination of these different visions on ethnographic research are very useful. I define the fieldwork that I conducted as single-sited, combined with a mobility frame. I used the idea of a single-sited ethnography (Gielis, 2011) as a starting point of my research. It enabled me to focus on the BBB and its residents. However, getting to know my informants and their networks, I started to look outside the BBB. Friends, family, and other organizations that play a role in the lives of my informants became visible as I went to visit my informants at different locations. Since I focus on dynamics of social capital, the trajectory approach on migrant networks as presented by Schapendonk and Steel (2014) became vital. My informants

often experience their situation as static and immobile. Yet, Schapendonk and Steel (2014) argue that this does not always mean that nothing happens; their situation is constantly changing. Even though I did not follow the trajectories of my informants, the dynamics of their social capital can be seen as some sort of social trajectory (e.g. family members died, friendships were made, but also broken, people being arrested).

4.3 Gaining access: the informants and ethical issues

As became clear by now, the male residents of the BBB in Nijmegen are the research population within this thesis. I chose to limit my focus on the men, because the residents are vulnerable and access would already be hard. Also conducting research among the female residents would be even more complicated, since it also adds a gender difference (O'Reilly, 2008). Before entering the field, I was aware of the fact that entering their lives could be problematic, and that it would take some time to be able to collect valuable data. Therefore, I contacted SNOV around November 2018; four months before starting my research. After some calls and emails, the board showed interest in my research and I was invited for an interview with the coordinator. While talking about my research objective, and some ethical considerations, I was accepted as a volunteer. This was the first threshold I passed: physical access to the starting point of my research (Gobo, 2008).

The next threshold – and even more complicated – was about achieving social access (Gobo, 2008). The lives of undocumented refugees are in many cases determined by mistrust and suspicion. Not only do these refugees mistrust authorities and other people, they are also very often mistrusted by others. Undocumented refugees are a vulnerable group to conduct research on, and it is therefore vital to take away mistrust between researcher and informant (Van Liempt & Bilger, 2012). Building mutual trust is essential in doing ethical research (Hay, 2016). The researchers own background and other personal aspects like gender, ethnicity, age and religion can have a large influence on access to the field and research population (Gobo, 2008; O'Reilly, 2008).

Within ethnographic and geographical research, ethical questions emerge. Nonetheless, answers to these questions are never clear-cut (Düvell, Triandafyllidou, & Vollmer, 2010; Spradley, 1980). The researcher should constantly reflect on the question if the research that was conducted is *just* (Spradley, 1980). 'Why do we actually need this type

of research and is it necessary to collect data on every single aspect? These questions will, if carefully thought through, mitigate ethical tension throughout the research process' (Van Liempt & Bilger, 2012, p. 463). This was also crucial during my fieldwork, and my research can only be seen ethical and useful if it positively benefits my informants, and will not create any form of harm (Hay, 2016). With this, it is thus also important to think about how to articulate the reasons behind my research to the men in the BBB shelter (Gobo, 2008; Spradley, 1980). Since the men are undocumented – and have limited trust in authorities – I calculated that they would be sceptical about my appearance as a researcher. Therefore, I spent many hours with them in the shelter – and other places in the city – helped them move to the new location, and I started giving Dutch language lessons. With that, I started to feel comfortable among the men, and they started to trust me. When carefully starting to introduce my research and objectives with my closest informants, I noticed that they were positive towards the idea of helping me with my interviews.

It is crucial to guarantee informants that what they say is processed anonymously and confidential (Gobo, 2008; Hay, 2016; Spradley, 1980; Van Liempt & Bilger, 2012). In order to ensure the anonymity of my informants, I made an informant list[10], giving them numbers instead of names (e.g. referring to my informants as 'Informant 1' or 'Informant 9'). Using numbers instead of fake names or nicknames might seem rather bizarre and absurd. However, the lives of my informants are absurd in many ways. Referring to my informants by using numbers will underscore this absurdity of their daily lives. This does not mean my approach to them was detached and faceless; in this research, I tried to articulate their stories with full appreciation and personality by using lively quotes and passages from numerous conversations I had with my informants.

The anonymity of the residents of the BBB goes further than processing my data anonymously. Researching undocumented refugees comes with continuous reflection, since their lives are most prominently framed as 'illegal' (Spradley, 1980). 'In general, qualitative interviews and participant observation usually produce highly personal and confidential data […]' (Düvell et al., 2010, p. 228), and therefore, some interviews have not been completely transcribed. Some information was just too confidential, and I did not feel comfortable writing

[10] See Annex 1.

down its content. After those conversations, I only transcribed data that was relevant for my research.

Moreover, since undocumented migrants often have to cope with mental issues (e.g. trauma, PTSD, stress, anxieties) (Düvell et al., 2010; Teunissen, Sherally, Van den Muijsenbergh, Dowrick, Van Weel-Baumgarten, & Van Weel, 2014), it is of major importance to check how your informants feel about talking about certain issues and themes. Before starting my research and all the methods involved, I always asked for informed consent among the residents of the BBB (Düvell et al., 2010; Van Liempt & Bilger, 2012).

4.4 Collecting data: qualitative methods

While doing ethnographic fieldwork, I tried to grasp the different dynamics around the social capital of the residents of the BBB. Before actually executing these methods, I delved into different documents on how the shelter operates and what the drivers are behind the BBB shelter.[11] The leading ethnographic methods during the period of fieldwork were participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and writing memos (Gobo, 2008).

4.4.1 Participant observation

Being both a volunteer and a researcher enabled (but sometimes also obliged) me to constantly participate. Participant observation enables the researcher to follow his or her migrants in activities and daily routines, and is therefore valuable within my research (Spradley, 1980). Spradley articulates a difference between multiple levels of participation. Observation without any participation means that the researcher just sits down and watches. For example, one can learn much from watching certain activities at the beach or at a football game without any form of participation. When, for example starting to sell soda at a football game while observing, the level of participation rises. Complete participation is the highest level of participation by the observer *(Ibid.)*. For me, this would have resulted in a situation in which I actually started to live among my informants, with the goal to become an insider. I ended up somewhere in the middle: entering the shelter approximately four times a week and meeting the residents at various other places in Nijmegen on a daily basis. Not completely participating allowed me to leave the field whenever I wanted, so I was still able to take a step

[11] This was analysed in chapter 2.

back and reflect on my observations. The importance and the value of participant observation was captured by Lems (2016):

> I told her [her informant] that in anthropology, the act of sharing people's everyday life, of becoming acquainted with their daily routines and struggles, is the most important research tool. I explained that the life stories in my research could only come to life if I got glimpses into the everyday lives of the people who shared them with me (Lems, 2016, p. 163).

The openness towards her informants is something I value in the work of Lems, and I tried to follow this while conducting different methods. Participant observation has taken place at many moments, and everything I observed has been captured in my memos. In the beginning of my fieldwork – when I was still building trustworthy relationships with my informants – participant observation was focussed on the morning and evening routines inside the shelter. After a few weeks, I was able to help them move and do chores, give emotional support or meet the men at other locations (e.g. Gezellig, the library, sport centres, memorial ceremonies, on the streets). At these places, I was able to observe social connectivity that went beyond the shelter. Moreover, the Dutch language course I started with the residents facilitated me in further observations. During the lessons, we discussed various themes (also around friends and family) and these themes sometimes created chances for further discussion, developing in some sort of focus group discussion.

4.4.2 Semi-structured interviews

Not every resident in the BBB was suitable to conduct an interview with, and I decided not to conduct interviews with those residents. For some, this had to do with the fact that we did not speak a shared language (Dutch or English), for others this was related with mental or physical issues. However, conducting smalltalk during my fieldwork assisted me to speak to all the men, and therefore also collect some interesting data without a planned interview. Thus, before is explained how I conducted semi-structured interviews, the importance of smalltalk requires further explanation.

Within ethnographic fieldwork, smalltalk is often seen as something taken-for-granted. Smalltalk must be seen as a serious method in ethnographic research and it should be

reflected on more often (Driessen & Jansen, 2013). While researching social capital of the residents of the BBB, I engaged in countless hours of smalltalk. Smalltalk took place at the shelter, on the streets, at Gezellig, and various other locations where I had spontaneous encounters with the BBB residents. While having light conversations with my informants, I learned what was important in their lives, and what grinds their gears. Smalltalk is never scheduled, and therefore results in relaxed situations in which my informants were just chitchatting with me, or other residents around. Interviews do rarely happen without planning, and a planned conversation comes with other expectations from both researcher and informant (*Ibid*.).

I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews, because my informants (and their lives) are very diverse. A semi-structured interview allowed me to come up with themes and questions I wanted to discuss – which gave me a valuable predetermined order during the interview – but also the required flexibility (Longhurst, 2016). Having room for improvisation, rather than having a list of fixed questions made the interview more informal, which contributed to the quality of the data.

Before conducting the actual interview, I asked for informed consent (Van Liempt & Bilger, 2012) in order to record the conversation. One informant did not want me to record his voice, and I wrote down his stories during the interview. In order to be as detailed as possible, I gave more detail to the stories directly after the interview, and I checked with my informant when I was uncertain about some answers.

The semi-structured interviews were focused on the individual thoughts of these men and how they see their social network. Before conducting the interviews, I developed an interview guide[12] in both English and Dutch. The interview guide is divided into five themes. The first theme was focussed on an introduction on the life of the informant. The questions I formulated were aiming to get a clear idea of where the informant comes from, and what his social network looks like. I tested if my informants were aware of the fact what a social network is, and explained what I meant with the term when needed. As way of introduction, I made my informants also draw a 'concentric circle map'[13] (Herz & Olivier, 2012). Concentric circle mapping is a way social network analysis, and is focused on an ego-centred perspective. This means the informant has all the freedom to fill in the map. The informant – the ego – is

[12] See Annex 4 for the English version of the interview guide.
[13] See Annex 5 for the visualization of the concentric circle.

in the middle of the map, and he has to fill the actors within his social network as detailed as possible. The different layers of the circle enable the informant to not only think about social actors in physical proximity, but also about transnational connections. It is preferable that the researcher does not interfere in this process, which results in very different maps (*Ibid.*). The second theme in the interview guide was aimed on the city of Nijmegen. I aimed to get a grasp of how my informant think about the city, and how they ended up in the shelter. The third theme has a focus on social capital in daily life and aims to identify different locations that contribute to (or problematize) growing social capital. Focussing on daily lives enabled me to identify routines and how they influence social connectivity. Theme four had a focus on deconstruction of social capital. Together with my informants, we identified moments when social connections were ruptured. The last theme fixated on emotional experiences that are entangled with a dynamic social capital. As argued by Winter et al. (2018), the future prospects of undocumented refugees are often limited. However – during the first months – I observed how this statement needs some nuance, since many of the residents are, in fact, working on their future. Some are waiting for a second procedure, others are learning Dutch, or they work in order to learn a particular skill. Therefore, I concluded the interviews with questions about future prospects, in order to create a more nuanced view. Moreover, I asked how the social network could contribute to the future prospects of my informants.

For me, it was important to think about where to conduct my interviews. Having interviews at neutral and informal places positively contributes the quality of the conversation (Longhurst, 2016). Therefore, I contacted 'Gezellig' – the place they where they spend their afternoons – and arranged a spare room or office for me to conduct my interviews, because this is a place where the men feel comfortable, and making appointments with the residents is easy (because they are there most of the time anyway).

4.4.3 Memo writing

In order to follow your research process, it is important to write down memos (or fieldnotes). Writing down what you see and hear enables you to look back, and reflect on your fieldwork (Gobo, 2008; Spradley, 1980). When I experienced something interesting for my research, or gave me new insights for interviews, I immediately wrote down what happened. I organized my memos by making a difference between observational-, methodological-, theoretical- and emotional memos (Gobo, 2008). Observational memos go hand in hand with participant

observation, and form the backbone of the observations as described in this research. I used *thick description* (Geertz, 1973 – mentioned in Gobo, 2008) to make observations as detailed as possible. Important is that interpretation by the researcher is limited. However, since I participated in the field, I also included my own actions if required. Methodological memos are questions and reflections that came up during the process. These memos are predominantly created after participant observations and interviews, and they enabled me to follow my thoughts back to November, 2018. Theoretical memos were often written down after my voluntary shifts, after having various moments of smalltalk. They are mostly ideas that popped up in my head. Reading my theoretical memos show how ideas developed throughout the past months. Emotional memos are focussed on the relationship with my informants most of the time. Whenever I heard shocking stories, I wrote down my thoughts. On the one hand, to reflect on my feelings. On the other, it sometimes also helped me to get it out of my head (*Ibid.*).

The use of language in memos is something that should be considered carefully, because writing down an experience is automatically interpreted by the researcher (Spradley, 1980). In order to stay as close to the reality as possible, I separated my thoughts from things that had actually happened or said. When I wrote down the words of my informants, I cited them as accurate as possible.

4.5 Data analysis

After collecting a vast range of data during the fieldwork period, it is important to start analysis right after (Cope & Kurz, 2016). According to Charmaz (1996), grounded theory is essential in qualitative research, because it allows for an in-depth view on the researched phenomena. Especially the making of memo's and codes during your research are essential in order for good and efficient writing. The observations, worked out in my memos, have mostly been used as way of description and explanation of what has been said during the interviews. With the different observations, I attempted to make the different stories of my informants more alive. Grounded theory analysis also has some disadvantages. Since grounded theory is highly specific and focused, it rarely leads to theory making. The goal is not to create more extensive theories, but to give more comprehensive analysis in lived experiences. This makes this kind of research still important and influential (*Ibid.*). Also, grounded theory often fails to recognize

the embeddedness of the researcher. This results in problems around interpretation of the data (Olesen, 2007). As a qualitative researcher it is hard to be fully objective, and I do not think it is fully necessary. However, constant reflection on your positionality as a researcher is vital. When being aware of your position, a close relationship with your informants can even positively contribute.

After conducting the interviews, the first step towards analysis was immediate reflection on the conversation (Longhurst, 2016). Before transcribing the audio files, I wrote an overview of the content and overall ambiance of the interview. Was the informant open enough? Did he understand my questions? What was interesting or new to me? These overviews were even more useful for interviews and conversations that were not recorded. Also, the concentric circles were directly analysed after the interview and helped me to reflect on how networks are encountered. For example, some informants gave detailed insights in their network. Others, with a more negative view on their situation only wrote 'Nijmegen' on the paper, to underscore that the people in the city is all they have.

After transcribing the audio files, I used the program Atlas.ti for analysis. All the transcriptions (and written interviews) were imported into the Atlas.ti project which enabled me to code the data. Codes enable the researcher to see important categories and practises within your research (Cope & Kurz, 2016). First, I separated the texts in different quotations with overlapping themes, giving them descriptive codes. Second, I used more analytical codes to give meaning to what was said. In order to make the analysis clear and more organized, I used axis coding (Cope & Kurz, 2016; Gobo, 2008). These codes were used as labels, under which descriptive and analytical codes have been categorized. Interrelated codes have been grouped together[14]. Also, different code networks[15] have been formed, which visualized the analysis of different codes and how they influence each other. One of these networks became the backbone of this thesis.

[14] See Annex 3 for the different code groups.
[15] See Annex 2 for the code network on social capital and its (de)construction.

4.6 Reflection: becoming the network

In conducting ethnographic fieldwork, ceaseless reflection on how the fieldwork was conducted and how the position of the researcher has influenced the process is something essential. *Reflexivity* is the term that is often used and can be seen as

> [T]he self-aware analysis of the dynamics between researcher and participants, the critical capacity to make explicit the position assumed by the observer in the field, and the way in which the researcher's positioning impacts on the research process (Gobo, 2008, p. 43).

For my position as a researcher was highly participative and close to my informants, reflection has been important right from the start. I followed the definition above, focussing on my position within the research process, and the methods conducted.

As argued by Spradley (1980), the researcher is both insider and outsider when conducting participant observation. As a volunteer – particularly in the beginning – I never became a 'real' insider, because I did not live in the shelter, and I was able to leave the shelter at every moment. Noten (2016) shared this observation, and the way he reflects on his position as both volunteer and researcher was valuable during my first encounters with the shelter: I am not only there to ask questions, I should also help preparing breakfast!

However, with the months passing by, some men started to trust me and this made me an insider during the largest part of my fieldwork. Especially starting the Dutch language course made me able to connect with my informants, and show that I was not just there to wake them up in the morning, and ask them all kinds of serious questions. During all the encounters and conversations with the men, I barely 'played' the role of a researcher. As argued by Gobo (2008, p. 122): 'whatever the ethnographer does in the group or organization, he or she is forced to *assume a role*.' For me, this meant the role of a volunteer (Noten, 2016). When showing interest in the lives of my informants, they started inviting me to other places outside of the shelter, and sometimes the role of volunteer switched to a more friendship-like position, which meant that my informants started telling me things that they would not tell to officials or organizations. When researching their social networks, I therefore became part of their social network. This was valuable for my research, but at many moments also mentally challenging. Hearing detailed, shocking, and emotional stories often had me breathless, and

sometimes I was scared to get too emotionally involved. Also, my abilities to help my informants with practicalities was sometimes limited. Every now and then, I got medical questions or questions concerning juridical or procedural substance. Just like not being a 'real teacher', I have always been clear about my limits.

The necessary reflections on positionality during participant observation are clear by now. However, the struggles around language during the interviews also require some explanation, since everyone has other backgrounds. Most men speak English, which made it easy for me to communicate during smalltalk. Some men even speak Dutch rather well, and the combination with English made me able to have good, in-depth conversations. During the interviews, I detected that the meaning of terms and words like 'social network', 'influence' and 'future' are often unknown among my informants. There were some moments in which the informants appeared to understand the question, but follow-up questions identified that they did not. This made me constantly explain what I meant, and it also challenged me to simplify my questions on the spot.

Chapter 5 – Daily routines around social interaction

'It is all of the best for me. Where I go… the library, I read some… I learn. When I come in Gezellig, I have contact with people. When I go in the street I see many people. When I go to the BBB, I sleep in there. And then I sleep with them, all the people that live with me' (Informant 11, 31 years old, Eritrea).

5.1 Introduction

For the undocumented migrants who stay in the BBB shelter, there is some kind of daily rhythm that comes with the time regulations that are implemented at the night shelter. Daily routines are heavily influenced by the time regimes as implemented by the municipality of Nijmegen. The BBB residents can enjoy shelter between 6 PM and 10 AM, which means the majority of their day is spend outside. Almost every day starts with a volunteer walking around the house trying to wake everyone up, getting them ready for a new day. A new day on the streets of Nijmegen starts around 10 AM and it is up to the BBB residents what their day will bring. During my time as a volunteer, I have witnessed many morning- and evening routines. In order to create an image of how the rest of the days are filled in – besides having many conversations about daily routines – I visited my informants at multiple places and organizations where they like to hang out.

This chapter focusses on what an average day of my informants looks like, and all the social dynamics that are interrelated with these routines. I follow the vision of Annika Lems (2016) while having a focus on the everyday encounters and routines of my informants. She argues that anthropologist and other social scientists need to develop a focus on the lived experience of migrants while being displaced. Within the frame of my own fieldwork, this particular observation is valuable to describe both the daily routines as the struggles and conflicts that come with these life experiences.

First, the mornings in the shelter are described by following my own experience as a volunteer. Second, I elaborate on the life on the streets between 10 AM and 6 PM, and the role of one majorly important location: 'Gezellig'. Third, evening routines are analysed, and I reflect on my role as a Dutch teacher. This chapter is concluded with a more detailed analysis

on waiting and how this seemingly passive situation might be more active and dynamic than expected.

5.2 Good morning at the BBB

My morning shift as a volunteer starts at 8 AM, two hours before the men have to leave the house. As the front door has already been opened by one of the janitors (or had not even been locked during the night), I enter the hallway. In the entrance and hallway, there is a staircase going up, to the bedrooms. The kitchen is located at the rare end of the hallway. The kitchen is small and does not have a stove, because food is delivered every two days. This food is prepared by women from another SNOV BBB location in Nijmegen. Nonetheless, there is a microwave, a boiler and two fridges and freezers. Also, there are some cabinets with regular supplies for breakfast. The fridges are packed with large containers of food, cans with feta cheese, 'Dutch' cheese (as the men call it), butter and products bought by some men themselves (e.g. lettuce, cucumber, mayonnaise). In the kitchen, there is the entrance to a small and paved garden. This is the only place the men are allowed to smoke cigarettes. Next to the kitchen, there is an area that is used as a bathroom, with two showers and a washing machine. The shower doors – made of opaque glass – are covered with blankets because the residents still fear being watched while showering. Walking through this area leads to the living room, although the living room can also be reached by going left at the beginning of the hallway. The living room is rather large and has an area with couches and chairs, enough for around 12 people to sit at once. It includes an old tv and a whiteboard (which I use to give my Dutch lessons). The other part of the room has a large table and a smaller one in the middle of the room. Breakfast is being served at the large table.

When I enter the shelter in the morning, one of the janitors is already up. The table is set most of the time, but when it isn't, I provide help. When this is done, there is time to drink some coffee or tea and have a chat with the janitor (Informants 1, 3 and 11). I check how many men are present and if there have been any struggles. The janitors are the first ones to have contact with and they are aware of what is going on among the men. I try to keep the conversations light, because no one wants to have complex or emotional conversations at 8 in the morning. However, sometimes we talk about family, friends and future aspirations. Among the residents, there a few who need to get up really early to get to work. They

managed to get (informal) jobs to earn some money. For example, informant 16 is working as a handyman and informant 3 (one of the janitors) works in different gardens of people who opened up to him.

At 9 AM – when almost everyone is still asleep – I make my first trip through the house to make sure everyone wakes up. There are four rooms both the first and the second floor. These rooms used to be occupied by two to three men, but since the group has been split up (with six men moving to a new location in Lent), almost everyone has a private room. Only informants 4, 11 and 12 chose to sleep in the same room, just because they preferred it that way. While making my rounds along the rooms, I knock on every door before I enter and greet the sleeping men. Most of the time, everyone is still sleeping and it takes a while for everyone to respond to my call. Some people are really hard to wake up; some have sleeping issues and will not sleep before 5 in the morning. I make my second round between 9.15 and 9.30. At this moment, most of the men are up, yet there are two or three sleeping again. I wake them up and start a little conversation to make sure they will not sleep immediately after greeting them. I make my final round at 9.45, only 15 minutes before the men have to leave the house. People who go out of bed at this time skip breakfast most of the time.

Everyone has a different morning routine, yet all influenced by the time regime as implemented by the municipality. For me it is important that I talk to everyone, so I greet everyone with a handshake, asking them how they are doing. As soon as the living room is filling up with (sleepy) men, conversations are starting, although very little. Everyone wishes each other a good morning, in Dutch, English or another shared language. It is clear that men who speak the same language are connecting more than with others. There is a clear group of east Africans and a group of people from the middle east. Nonetheless, most people talk, laugh and joke with everyone. Between 9 and 10, people are taking a shower, eating breakfast, smoking cigarettes in the garden. As more people are getting ready, the couches start filling up with men wearing jackets and bags. There are socially fixed groups (mostly based on language) who wait for each other before leaving the shelter. During my time as a volunteer, I have never seen an empty shelter at 10 AM. The men leave between 10 and 10.15; there is no hurry. Before they leave, they shake my hand, wishing me and the others a '*fijne dag*'.

Mornings can be hectic with a lot of talking, laughing, discussion or conflict, but they can also be relaxed and quiet. Sometimes, every bed is occupied, and sometimes the house is rather empty and quiet. There are around 7 residents who spend every night in the shelter.

They have a relatively small social network, and are therefore more dependent on the facilities of the BBB. The rest – with a larger social network – also spends some nights a week at friends or family. When I asked my informants what they thought about the fact that not everyone is using their bed every night, I received mixed opinions. Some residents argued that they thought it was inacceptable to leave a bed untouched for a night, because many of their undocumented fellows are still sleeping in the streets or in parks. Contrastingly, other informants argued that is it okay to stay with friends every now and then: 'We have had this conversation before in the shelter. Everyone was there. Guys who go to other places are also welcome, because then they still have a place to go' (Informant 5, Iran)[16].

5.3 Places to go

After 10 AM, the men are activated to leave the shelter. After a few weeks, I was able to identify two groups among the men. One group – also the group that does not sleep in the BBB every night – tends to be rather mobile. They visit friends in Amsterdam, Utrecht, Rotterdam, Arnhem. Some leave early to go to their (informal) jobs. The other group can be seen as less mobile. Their network is a lot smaller and they stay closer to Nijmegen. For them, their daily routines are less dynamic and some of them argued that every day is the same. Despite the fact that an irregular existence is far from static (Bendixen & Eriksen, 2018), most of the residents of the BBB shelter argue that they are in limbo, and that their future prospects are limited. Realizing this situation without legal papers creates a lot of stress.

5.3.1 Mornings before 1 PM

Mornings after leaving the shelter are very often the same. When the sun is shining and temperatures are pleasant, most of the BBB residents spend their mornings in different parks in Nijmegen. They try to get some more sleep after having another rather sleepless night, they smoke cigarettes, or just hang out with friends. When the weather outside is less enjoyable, the library in the city centre is another popular place to go to. My informants use the place to practice their Dutch skills. The library provides free Dutch lessons every Wednesday morning between 10 and 12, but the participation of my informants is rather low. In the beginning of

[16] Original Dutch quote: 'We hebben dit gesprek eerder gehad in de nachtopvang. Iedereen was daarbij. Jongens die naar andere plekken gaan, zijn ook welkom. Zodat ze alsnog een plek hebben.'

my work as a volunteer, I wanted to activate them to go to these lessons, because they can be valuable for their development. These attempts mostly failed; talking to both the teachers and my informants why they did not like these lessons, I was told that the different themes were not interesting to the men, or even created stress. For example, themes around expensive clothing, money and going to restaurants are themes that are not very applicable to the lives of undocumented migrants, who lack the economic resources. Overall, the Dutch lessons in the library are attended by expats and status holders who are in a better socioeconomical position than the residents of the BBB. This gave me the impulse to create my own Dutch 'course' for the men in the shelter.

5.3.2 'Gezellig'

Within the first minutes of my work as a volunteer, I found out that Gezellig is the most popular place to go to during daytime. Located in the city centre and rather close to the shelter, Gezellig describes itself as being a meeting point for new inhabitants of Nijmegen and people who are already familiar with the city. The place is decorated as a large living room with multiple areas to sit on couches, sit at a table, or participate in various activities. Coffee and tea are provided, and every once in a while, people are making delicious food in the large kitchen. The goal of Gezellig is to create an environment in which people feel safe and comfortable, facilitating the opportunities for good conversations, the creation of new friendships and having mutual respect towards each other. Also, guests are invited to organize events and activities. The facility is opened from Monday to Friday (1-5 PM), therefore creating the perfect place to spend the cold Dutch days.[17]

While creating a more friendship-like connection with my informants from the BBB facility, they started to invite me to visit them at Gezellig. They explained me where it was and I remember feeling very happy that they wanted to hang out with me there. I entered the building that same afternoon around 2 PM and the place was packed with people. The street was filled with bikes and I could barely park mine in front of the building. In front of the entrance some men were smoking cigarettes and they kindly smiled at me as I walked past. I entered a little corridor with a different entrance to *Vluchtelingenwerk*. This organization

[17] http://gezellignijmegen.nl

provides medical, social and juridical support to undocumented migrants, and it is very useful for my informants that this type of support is just a few meters away.

Following the corridor to the right, I entered the living room of Gezellig. The large room was very crowded at the time I walked in. Arab music was playing from a stereo that was connected to a laptop. Close to the door, on the right side, there were three couches and a table. They were claimed by a few of my informants and some other men. I walked towards them, and shook all of their hands and introduced myself to the other guys that were sitting with them. They told me they lived in the asylum centre in Nijmegen and that they visit Gezellig on a daily basis.

Picture 1: Gezellig Nijmegen (Source: https://www.nijmegenstadvancompassie.nl/gezellig-nijmegen/)

As picture 1 and 2 show, Gezellig has multiple areas to sit; comfortable couches and tables. There is a table for table tennis, table football and 'sjoelen'. Gezellig also has a kitchen, which is used to make coffee and tea. Besides that, the kitchen is often used to organize dinners with traditional food from the variety of nationalities. One of my first observations was that people are constantly walking in and out, which is accompanied by constant greeting and shaking hands. Some people drop by for a few minutes, or just to drink tea. Others – especially the men from the BBB – spend the largest part of their afternoons at Gezellig.

Observation: table tennis

After looking around, informant 1 came to me and asked: 'Do you wanna play table tennis? I am very good!'. I was happy he asked and we walked to the table. We played for several minutes, and he did not lie any word about his qualities as a table tennis player. 'You should compete at the Olympic games!', I joked. He laughed: 'No one has ever beaten me here. I play every day, so that is why I became so good.' We played for a long time, and after that I played with one of his

best friends, Informant 2. He was also very good, and I was surprised how professional the match looked when the two played against each other. Later, an older man in his sixties came towards the table asking if informant 1 wanted to play a game. The man was wearing special table tennis gloves. They played for a while and I was astonished to see how focused and talented the older man was. Most of the men that visit Gezellig every day play many games. After my first day in Gezellig I concluded that playing table tennis was a serious activity for many of the guests at Gezellig.

The visitors at Gezellig are diverse. There is a mixture between Dutch people (mostly volunteers), residents of the BBB shelter and residents of asylum centres. Connecting Gezellig to my research and the dynamics around social capital of undocumented migrants, I argue that this place is crucial for daily encounters between my informants and other people. First, my informants are able to meet Dutch people who are willing to help them learning Dutch, or who can introduce them to new contacts. Second, most of my informants have spent some time in asylum centres and made multiple friends while being there. Gezellig enables them to maintain these social contacts. Finally, the connection between Gezellig and *Vluchtelingenwerk* is very useful, overcoming possible thresholds for medical, juridical and social support. Playing table tennis is one of the core activities for the guests at Gezellig and this creates an environment in which making the first contact is very easy. People constantly engage in smalltalk while playing and laughing together.

Picture 2: Gezellig Nijmegen (Source: http://gezellignijmegen.nl)

5.4 Evenings in the BBB

The evenings in the shelter are a lot different than the early mornings. The janitor is allowed to enter the shelter at 5 PM, in order to collect the food that is delivered. The rest of the men are welcome after 6 PM. This does not mean that everyone is passively waiting for that moment; some people will enter the shelter around 11 PM after spending the night with

friends elsewhere. Everyone eats dinner whenever he likes; some eat together, and some eat later in the night. As I experienced, the men are more relaxed during the night; they can stay until the next morning. The main activity is watching television together, and especially watching football matches is very popular. The atmosphere tends to be very positive overall, people are joking with each other, watching movies or playing games. Also, being on your own is very important for most men, and some of them spend the night in their room. This is a place they can have (skype)calls with friends and family. One Eritrean resident spends a lot of his time talking to his three-year-old son, whom he has never met before. Working phones and a working internet connection seems to be top priority to many of the residents. When we just arrived in the shelter (after moving out of the old one), the router had to be connected immediately. Continuing struggles with the quality and reach of the internet connection throughout the house was topic of discussion for many weeks.

On Tuesday and Thursday night, I teach Dutch to those who are interested. So far, most men seem motivated to learn Dutch. Since I am not a 'real' teacher, I am constantly reflecting on my position and the quality of my classes. This is intensified by the fact that my informants always introduce me as their 'docent', when I meet new people at Gezellig or other places. Sometimes I tell them that I am not a real teacher, because I do not want to let them down if their progression is limited.

During the lessons (between 8-9 PM), I observe how the social interactions are being performed among the men. Those who speak the same language make sure they sit next to each other, in order to help each other and translate when needed. Overall, the men are very supportive and patient towards those who are struggling with the language. When someone is struggling and manages to come up with a right answer or pronunciation, the men are cheering each other up: 'Good job! Perfect!'. When I gave my first lesson, almost everyone was there. After some weeks, the number of participants declined. Nonetheless, the course I give is a success, comparing to the Dutch course in the library. Every lesson is attended by around 8 to 10 men who really need (and want!) to learn the language, so they are very motivated. During the first weeks, I received a lot of constructive feedback from one of my Eritrean informants (Informant 11) on how to improve the lessons for those who struggle the most. For some, the lessons have been a start to learning more Dutch outside the shelter. One

of them had the opportunity to follow Dutch language courses on Wednesdays at Step[18], an organization that provides language courses. These impulses seem to be rather motivational towards some other residents of the shelter.

5.5 Waiting for what?

As pictured by the daily routines formed by the time regimes, it could be argued that the lives of the BBB residents are predominantly characterized by waiting. During interviews and smalltalk, the men shared their frustrations and fears with me, together with the fact that the time they spend on waiting feels like wasting time. During my time as a volunteer and researcher, I tried to look beyond this seemingly passive situation, following the words of Ehn and Löfgren (2010, p. 4): 'When nothing seems to happen, a lot is nevertheless going on – but what?' The process of waiting is more than just sitting and doing nothing. Undocumented migrants are waiting for a new answer to their asylum procedure, or other chances that increase future prospects (e.g. paid labour, individual housing, mental healthcare or learning the Dutch language). The period that people have to wait for something new to happen could vary from days to months, or even years. A lot can happen in the meantime when daily activities and routines fill most of the time. Therefore, waiting is more than a passive liminal phase (Bendixen & Eriksen, 2018). Looking at the BBB shelter as a space of waiting, it could create both stress and comfort among its residents. The men are constantly confronted with the fact that they do not have a place of their own; they have to share it with undocumented peers. Contrastingly, this could also create comfort, because group waiting feels shorter than solo waits (Ehn & Löfren, 2010). Most residents have no idea when their waiting will be over, and being able to meet peers on a daily basis at both the shelter and other locations as Gezellig creates (temporary) communities and friendships in order to cope with shared stress and anxiety that comes with this uncertainty.

"Waiting can be goal-oriented and meaningful" (*Ibid*., 36), and most residents of the shelter engage in various daily activities trying to make their waiting as useful as possible. Hope for a better future is an aspect of life that keeps people going, and helps them invest in the future (Bendixen & Eriksen, 2018). Some people follow Dutch language classes, have paid jobs, go to voluntary work, work out in the gym, go running, or partying. In June,

[18] https://stepnijmegen.nl

Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland organized 'De Nacht van de Vluchteling'. This is a 40-kilometre walking event in multiple cities in the Netherlands, raising money for refugees worldwide. Together with some friends, I decided to participate. During the event, I met multiple residents from the BBB shelter who also decided to join (or even participated for the fifth time). They participated as together with many other refugees in order to speak up and send a message. Moreover, in the house, some men spend a lot of time decorating their rooms with posters and flowers, just to make it look less temporary. Informant 3, who works as a gardener, decided that the boring and paved garden needed a make-over, so he planted fruits and beautiful flowers. Every time I enter the shelter, he changed something in the garden; new plants, stones, lights. As a way of decoration, he even formed the initials of the Bed, Bath, Bread 'B.B.B.' with little stones in the sand.

5.7 Conclusion

The daily life experiences as described in this chapter visualize the importance of social networks and social contact in daily routines. The amount of social contact influence mental health and diversity of daily activities. The mornings in the shelter are very diverse; not one day is the same. Social contact in the morning is mostly based on activating everyone to start a new day, with as little stress as possible. Of course, this does not always work. As some of my informants have the opportunity to work or do voluntary service, most men have limited things to do. They visit parks, the library and the 'Gezellig' facility. These places – especially Gezellig – are crucial in order to maintain social connections. Gezellig combines social support with the accessibility to organizations that are able to provide legal and medical support. Hanging out, playing games, and meeting friends on a daily basis releases stress and anxiety (Lindert, Schouler-Ocak, Heinz, & Priebe, 2008). However, spending every afternoon at Gezellig also creates stress, because it sometimes reminds my informants of their static and problematic situation. Every night, my informants come together in the shelter. The evenings filled with watching television, talking to volunteers and the other residents, or calling friends and family on the phone. Routines are accompanied by periods of waiting and uncertainty. As I tried to analyse, these moments are far from passive and static. The residents of the BBB search for different ways to give meaning to their time in the Netherlands. Creating and

maintaining social connections, decorating, gardening, working and learning Dutch are strategies to make the waiting more meaningful.

Chapter 6 – Social capital: sources for support

'You cannot change anything on your own. Everyone together, that brings the real change'[19] (Informant 5, 33 years old, Iran).

6.1 Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, the residents of the BBB have numerous encounters with different people during their daily routines. Within Nijmegen and the Netherlands, my informants established large networks, that are often useful. The BBB itself provides a place in which one can meet fellow refugees with similar struggles. Moreover, the men are in contact with other organizations (Stichting Gast, Vluchtelingenwerk) which provide a network outside of the BBB-facility. The social capital of most men is not limited to the Netherlands alone; there is a transnational scope attached to it. Understandably, the connections or relations the men have are diverse and entail different connotations.

This chapter delves into four social groups that together make up the largest part of the social capital of the undocumented refugees living in the BBB. The different functionalities around these connections are analysed, and differences between these groups will be clarified. Since the men are heavily influenced by organizations in daily life, this is the first source for social capital that will be elaborated on. Second, I delve into social capital that flows out of contact with volunteers. Third, the role of friends is examined. Fourth, (transnational) family functionalities are unravelled. This chapter concludes with an explanation of how the future is perceived, and how social capital could contribute to these ideas.

6.2 Organizations

The influence of organizations is omnipresent from the first moments of arrival in the Netherlands. When entering, most migrants are directly transferred to Ter Apel, which is the central location for housing new incoming migrants. Ter Apel is the place where the first steps are made towards asylum procedures, and while awaiting an answer to their status application, migrants are transferred to other asylum centres spread over the rest of the

[19] Original Dutch quote: 'In je eentje kan je niks veranderen. Iedereen bij elkaar, dan komen echte veranderingen.'

country. When one receives a negative reply to this application, the migrant has to leave the asylum centre. At first glance, this appears to be the start of a life outside state regulations and bureaucratic procedures, which also entails losing contact with organizations and their support. However, it might be argued that the role of – and the social capital attached to – migrant organizations become even more important for those who become undocumented (Chauvin & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014). As I have witnessed, migrant organizations provide a vast range of sources for support for my informants around juridical, financial, medical, and mental issues.

6.2.1 Juridical support

When becoming undocumented, most people are sent to Vluchtelingenwerk or Stichting Gast, which pairs them with a contact person, who helps them executing further steps and decisions. This was not the case for informant 3, who overstayed his tourist visa after leaving El Salvador. He lived on the streets – spending the nights in parks – for many months without anyone noticing him. After a significant time, he met a girl who knew the BBB shelter, and she contacted the former coordinator about the situation of informant 3. Having a slightly different beginning in the Netherlands than others in the shelter, he also received a contact person.

When not being able to speak Dutch – let alone knowing your way in the Dutch bureaucratic system – this contact person is essential for most of the residents of the BBB. Vluchtelingenwerk and Stichting Gast are vital in further juridical procedures; they provide knowledge about the Dutch system, and help contacting lawyers. Stichting Gast also offers housing for undocumented refugees in problematic situations. Refugees without direct urgency are sent to SNOV. 'First, I went to Stichting Gast. Gast send me to [*name*], that is my contact person. She added me to the list, and then I had good contact with her. So, she asked [the SNOV coordinator]. He called me and then I went to him and he asked me questions. Then I could join the BBB' (Informant 11, 31 years old, Eritrea). Before entering the BBB, most clients are placed on a waiting list, with at least 25 others waiting. However, the coordinator of SNOV has to judge every individual situation. For example, informant 2 just turned 18 when he had to leave the asylum centre. He was immediately placed in the shelter, so he did not have to live in the streets.

The residents of the shelter receive a lot of support by the employees of SNOV. The coordinator and the people around him are aware of the situation of most of the men. Some men are supported in preparing a second status application. They are allowed to stay inside the shelter to prepare for the interviews, and the coordinator helps to collect the needed documents for the interview. In many cases, the residents are not aware of their rights, and what documents can be used as proof. The role of the coordinator is very important for these men, and the coordinator is able to contact other organizations when needed.

6.2.2 Financial support

Every month, the residents of the BBB receive fifty euros for basic needs like clothing, food or cigarettes. Receiving this money is important for the residents, but it sometimes also creates feelings of shame, because it generates a form of dependence. Therefore, some men work at different organizations as a volunteer, some even able to earn some extra money. It creates the feeling of being useful and more independent. As already stressed, informant 1, 3, and 11 have the role as janitor, earning 10 euros a day when it is their shift. One shift takes seven days, so working as a janitor means over 70 euros extra every month.

Outside the shelter, other residents are also able to work thanks to the connections they have at different organizations. Informant 3 works as a gardener two times a week at the gardens of Stichting Gast. Informant 10 works at the House of Compassion[20] a few times a week as a cleaner, and he helps preparing coffee and tea at events. Moreover, he also helps at a monthly dancing event, organized by a SNOV volunteer. Informant 16 is always working, and I barely run into him in the morning, because he always leaves around 7:45 am. He follows a carpenter training, and he always tells me how he loves this job. Informant 1, 2, and 11 do not have permanent jobs, but their contacts allow them to earn money with small chores. For example, when a volunteer at Gezellig moved to another house, she asked the men for some extra help. Informant 1 has been busy for a few weeks helping to paint a new house, Informant 2 helped renovating a house, and informant 11 cleaned toilets at a party venue during the Four-Day-Marches in Nijmegen.

[20] 'Het Huis van Compassie' is a location in Nijmegen which is a meeting place for people in vulnerable positions in society. It offers support, different activities, and (language) courses. It also houses different organizations, such as SNOV. The board of SNOV has an office in this building, and the House of Compassion is also where volunteer meetings are located (http://www.huisvancompassienijmegen.nl).

Examples like these show how important contacts at organizations are in order to generate extra financial resources. Employing someone who is undocumented comes with risks for the employer, and therefore the opportunity to work for the residents of the BBB is highly dependent on the employer's willingness to take risks (Cvajner & Sciortino, 2010). Being able to work is vital in the lives of the residents, and 'being faithful to one's employer with a view to future sponsorship; keeping the same constructed identity over time […]; being in contact with institutional third parties that may act as grantors and guarantors of deservingness, whether by signing certificates of good conduct or by providing "proofs of presence" to be included in legalization applications' (Chauvin & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014, p. 426), are crucial in trying to receive a status.

6.2.3 Medical support

In the Netherlands, everyone has the right to basic healthcare. This is also applicable in the case of undocumented refugees, despite of the fact that undocumented refugees lack insurance. If one is excluded from the insurance system, there is still the right to receive care if necessary. The doctor or specialist has to decide if the situation is serious enough before providing care (Biswas, Toebes, Hjern, Ascher, & Norredam 2012). However, access can be problematic as '[p]ractical hurdles occur due to language problems, inadequate referral systems, general practitioners refusing to provide necessary care, and a lack of recognition of specific health (Biswas et al., 2012, p. 53).

Reflecting on my own experience with the residents in the shelter, there is a distance between the refugees and the accessibility of many organizations around healthcare, and lacking insurance often has the result that the residents have to wait a long time in order to receive care. For Dutch citizens, it is easy to go to the dentist when feeling pain. Some of my informants had to cope with toothache for weeks before receiving help.

In Nijmegen there seems to be a large network of organizations that try to increase accessibility to healthcare. This starts with SNOV itself, which is always trying to arrange appointments with doctors and dentist when needed, but sometimes mental issues remain unseen. A vital, and very approachable initiative is called *Zorgcafé*[21], organized by *Dokters van de Wereld*[22]. Organized twice a week at Gezellig, the Zorgcafé, creates the opportunity for

[21] https://www.nijmegenstadvancompassie.nl/zorgcafe-nijmegen-dokters-van-de-wereld/ (English: Care Café)
[22] https://doktersvandewereld.org (English: Doctors of the World'

(undocumented) refugees and other visitors of Gezellig to ask questions about health issues. The people working for Zorgcafé have (basic) medical knowledge and have direct links to professional healthcare organizations. For refugees, Zorgcafé is useful, because it enables people to receive advice without making an appointment with a doctor. When further help is needed, the people of Zorgcafé are able to discuss and explain further steps.

Another initiative, also organized by Dokters van de Wereld, was a national dentist campaign. A group of dentists drove through the Netherlands in a mobile dentist facility – also visiting Nijmegen for a few days – and they offered free check-ups for homeless people and refugees without money and insurance. SNOV was also on the list, and around eight men in the shelter were allowed to go. Some only went for a check-up, others got teeth removed or had other treatments. The project was a great success, and many of my informants were really thankful to have this opportunity, especially because some of them had been walking around with pain or broken teeth for months.

6.2.4 Social and mental support

When reflecting on the conversations I had with organizations and volunteers on the one hand, and undocumented refugees on the other, I argue that receiving social support is crucial for many residents. Having someone to listen to your stories, and having the ability to empty your heart enabled my informants to feel less stressed. Organizations like Gezellig and SNOV are important to my informants. Gezellig generates a comfortable atmosphere in which most BBB residents find daily relief of stress, just because they can relax in a couch, drink tea or coffee, and talk to (old) friends from the asylum centre in which many used to live. It is a place in which everyone engages in smalltalk.

As I already addressed, the employees and the board of SNOV are constantly busy, trying to be updated about the situation of every resident in the BBB. For the residents, being able to live in the shelter brings a lot of support and understanding from the organization, and most men feel comfortable to address daily problems to the coordinator and others. However, during my fieldwork I have witnessed how issues around mental health are barely discussed. Most residents face trauma and other mental struggles, but there seems to be some kind of shame around certain issues. As Teunissen et al. (2014) concluded, in many cases there is a

> […] stigma and taboo around mental health problems and the UM's [Undocumented migrants'] assumption that their mental health problems are caused by external factors, namely their illegal status, seem to be the main barriers why UMs do not ask for help for their mental health problems when they are in contact with a GP [General practitioner]. This is a problem of main concern, as professional help can be effective (Teunissen et al., 2014, p. 11).

All people that work at the shelter are aware of this situation, and both the coordinator and the board try to activate volunteers to talk to the residents about their problems. Occasionally, this works out successfully, and SNOV is able to contact organizations like Pro Persona[23]. The psychiatrists working at this organization have the expertise to help with trauma, PTSD, sleeping disorders and depression: issues that are common among the residents in the BBB. Pro Persona provides the needed advice – and medication – and therefore they are able to deliver more adequate mental help than SNOV is able to.

6.3 Volunteers

Associated with the importance of having connections with different organizations, is the role of volunteers. Most organizations – such as SNOV, Vluchtelingenwerk and Stichting Gast – are depending on the work of volunteers, since economic resources are limited. Besides being around fellow undocumented refugees, my informants spend many hours in presence of volunteers; they are woken up by a volunteer at the BBB, they are welcomed by volunteers in Gezellig, or they meet volunteers at activities at Stichting Gast. The residents of the BBB share the idea that the presence of volunteers is preferable. For some, talking to volunteers in the mornings and evenings in the shelter is seen as an important social activity. For the residents of the BBB, being in contact with volunteers comes with multiple functionalities.

First, volunteers are often seen as the first step in making connections with Dutch people, which is something highly valued among my informants, because they want to integrate in the city of Nijmegen. During an interview, informant 5 (33 years old, Iran) told me: 'I live in the night shelter. You want to talk to me, but who could I talk to before I lived here?

[23] https://www.propersona.nl

You are all new … but the past years … nobody wanted to talk to us.'[24] He constantly reflected on the importance of talking to Dutch people, and how it helped him, because Dutch people are able to teach how to deal with different procedures. I would argue that volunteers can sometimes be more flexible than employees of migrant organizations, since they are less restricted by rules, regulations, and tasks as described by the organization they work for. When looking at the volunteers working at the BBB, I observed how everyone has his or her own way to contribute. For example, some drive the residents around to appointments (e.g. to the hospital, the dentist, Vluchtelingenwerk), help sending packages to family, and help placing and receiving online orders. These examples demonstrate how volunteers can help undocumented refugees to navigate through different systems in Dutch society. These systems (around healthcare, sending and receiving packages, access to bureaucratic organizations) are often very complex, but familiar for Dutch citizens.

Second, volunteers are sometimes able to help finding work, by giving advice and creating new connections. The residents are aware of these opportunities:

> I cannot find work now. But when I need it, I can ask anyone who comes to the house. When they have something for me, they tell me. They search for me. But now it is difficult for me to work […] When I need something, I ask you. And you can help me search. You can ask other people. And then you can tell me when you find something and I come with you (Informant 11, 31 years old, Eritrea).

The case of informant 3 can be seen as an example how refugee-volunteer connections are rewarding (44 years old, El Salvador). Informant 3 was talking to some volunteers in Gezellig, and they told him that there would be some kind of educational program about gardening. Informant 3 was very interested, and he immediately signed up. While following this program, he learned a lot about growing flowers and vegetables, and he is still working in the garden two times a week. '[Name of a volunteer] told me I am one of the best in the garden!' (Informant 3). The positive feedback on his work even resulted in the opportunity for him to

[24] Original Dutch quote: 'Ik woon in de nachtopvang, jij wil praten met mij, maar met wie moest ik praten in de jaren voordat ik in de nachtopvang zat? Jullie zijn nieuw, maar de afgelopen jaren, niemand wilde met ons praten.'

teach others how to work as a gardener, and volunteers he meets in the garden sometimes ask him to work in their own garden, or in the garden of friends and family. They pay him for the work he does, and he is allowed to take as many vegetables and fruits from the garden as he wants.

Finally – besides the practical benefits of being in contact with volunteers – there are also mental benefits for most of my informants. Whereas connections with organizations are on a more professional basis (e.g. talking to psychiatrists, the SNOV board or contact persons at Vluchtelingenwerk), relationships with volunteers seem to be far more informal. When having problems, thoughts or doubts, the step to contact an organization is considered be rather large. Having close contact with volunteers can be valuable in these situations. Some residents are very open to the volunteers in the BBB, and from my own experience, I have witnessed how just listening to stories and thoughts relieves a lot of stress and anxiety. Volunteers are able to share their thoughts and reflections on these problems, and give advice about what to do next. Sometimes, the residents are encouraged to contact professional help, and occasionally giving basic advice is more than enough.

6.4 Friends

For migrants, creating communities of friends is crucial in daily life, and 'the role of friendship networks and community organizations should not be overlooked' (Goulbourne et al., 2010, p. 91). These networks are mostly formed around people that are in a similar situation, or with shared ethnicity or cultural backgrounds (Goulbourne et al., 2010). Most of my informants have no relatives living in the Netherlands, and contact with family members is sometimes scarce, because communication mainly occurs by phone calls or WhatsApp conversations. As a result, being around peers becomes vital for undocumented refugees.

6.4.1 Friendship scales

My informants have friends in different places. When arriving in the Netherlands, the first friendships are formed in the different asylum centres around the country. Especially those who stayed in asylum centres around Nijmegen are able to meet their friends in the city centre and Gezellig on a daily basis. Friends who received a Dutch status also visit Gezellig on a regular basis. Sometimes, friends from the asylum centre also become undocumented, and they

receive a bed in the BBB. For example, when informant 12 entered the shelter, he already knew informant 2, because they used to be neighbours in the asylum centre. All the residents of the BBB meet each other multiple times a day, at various locations. This creates close bonds between some of them; sharing a room, leaving the shelter together in the morning, going to Gezellig together, and coming home together.

Friendships are not limited to the borders of Nijmegen. The residents have been to many asylum centres all over the country, and therefore many friendship communities are dispersed. This might suggest that a network automatically deconstructs, yet this is not always the case. Many of the residents of the BBB are constantly busy with planning visits in Amsterdam, Arnhem, Doetinchem, Den Bosch etc. Nonetheless, going to cities in other parts of the Netherlands brings high risks for my informants. While having limited economic resources, the men are forced to buy tickets for public transportation, because taking the risk of not buying a ticket could have immense consequences. The high prices of tickets result in the fact that travelling to another city needs full consideration. Also carrying a SNOV card is crucial, and not being able to identify could lead to detention.

Although limited, there are a number of residents who have contacts with friends outside of the Netherlands. Some have friends living in Germany, Spain, Canada, or in the country of origin. Informant 15 met his best friends during his military service in Iran. The three of them became close, but his friends stayed in Iran. They have contact by phone or skype on a regular basis. Yet – as will be clear in chapter 7 – maintaining transnational contacts can be difficult, because the quality of contact is depending on the availability of internet and mobile technology of both the BBB residents, as their friends (living in remote villages in some cases).

Observation: dealing with loss

One day in July, the importance of heaving friends became very clear to me. I just finished giving a Dutch language class, and informant 10 (in his 30's, from Palestine) came to me, looking a bit stressed. 'Can I talk to you about something?', he asked me. We walked to a quiet place, and I saw his face changed to sadness: 'My father died three days ago'. I was shocked by this news. We talked about what happened and how he felt about the whole situation. I also asked if he shared any of this with other residents or volunteers, since he already heard about this three days ago. This was not the case, and he had kept it all by himself. However, he was organizing a

> dinner to honour his father at the House of Compassion, and he invited me to come. I told him that I would come, and that he should share his situation with more people, but he ensured me that he was already planning to do so, because he wanted to invite more people. Three days later, I walked into the House of Compassion and witnessed how the large room filled up with at least 60 other people. There were different volunteers from the BBB, but also from Gezellig, many other Palestine men, women, and children. Also, informants 1, 2, 3, 11, 14, and 16 were there; they told me they were happy to come and support informant 10 in processing the death of his father. Together with one of his closest friends he met in the asylum centre, and some volunteers at the House of Compassion, they prepared delicious food for everyone. The atmosphere was very relaxed; people were laughing and joking, enjoying the food, and informant 10 looked very happy to have all these people around. The days after the event, I could see the stress on his face had dropped, and he told me that he was able to sleep again.

6.4.2 Friendships functionalities

While I was around my informants, I observed how feelings are barely discussed. First, I thought this might have been because of my presence, but when asking about this observation during interviews, my informants confirmed this. 'We don't talk about that, problems and stuff. […] Sometimes, I feel sad. Then I tell them: "Today I feel sad"[25]' (Informant 2, 19 years old, Afghanistan). Informant 1 (22 years old, Afghanistan) summarized:

> Friends and family are very important. I am always positive to everyone, I don't want problems. When you are positive towards others, they will also return the positivity. Having no friends is very lonely and bad for your health. I am always together with friends: walking through the city centre, going to the park, talking. […] Like I said, everyone has problems for himself. All my problems are in my head and that is why I don't sleep. But yeah, I need to stay positive.

For most of the residents it is hard to talk about feelings, and they are aware of the fact that everyone has his own problems. So, why bother anyone else with more troubles? When beginning my fieldwork, I thought talking about feelings would be the most important aspect

[25] Original Dutch quote: 'Nee daar praten wij niet over problemen of zo, nee. […] Soms ben ik verdrietig, dan vertel ik het wel hoor; "vandaag ben ik verdrietig".'

of friendships among the men, but these observations made me question this. I tried to identify other functionalities linked to building friendships as an undocumented refugee.

The first thing that I learned from the friendships of the residents – also visible in the observation above – was the fact that friendship is mostly understood as 'being there' for each other. Of course, this might seem obvious, but it is not so much about conversations about feelings, but rather about doing things for others. There are functional aspects (Bourdieu, 1987) attached to social ties. Within the shelter, some residents have an active role in trying to make everyone feel happy by offering to make food for them, offering a smoke, or providing basic medicine when someone is feeling off. Especially in the evenings, the residents sometimes engage in watching tv together. The atmosphere is relaxed most of the times, with the residents constantly joking and playing around with each other.

Having friends outside the shelter is very important for the residents, because it creates a safety net when staying in the shelter is problematic. Especially friends with a status are of major importance, because they provide some kind of stability when needed. When one has a conflict with another resident, needs a silent environment, or experiences stress due to construction work inside the house, friends with an own house or apartment enable most residents to stay there for a few nights. These strategies are constantly used by the residents, and some residents use the shelter for only a few nights a week. Of course, this resulted in multiple discussions about when a resident should give up his bed in the shelter, because the waiting list is so long. This is a peculiar situation; having too much social capital leads to discussions about whether or not someone deserves a place in the shelter. Some residents think one should give up his bed, because they have seen how many people – with little social capital – have to sleep on the streets. Others stress the fact that it is impossible to sleep at a friend's place every night. They feel happy for those who have a large network, welcoming them whenever they return to the shelter. The board of SNOV is also aware of these dynamics, and when someone is barely coming to the shelter after some amount of time, he is asked to leave.

When friends – inside or outside the shelter – run short on money, some residents told me that they support each other financially. This economic support has a reciprocal approach; the residents give each other money, based on the idea that help is also given when they need it. However – as I have observed – the residents of the BBB prefer to be independent. They constantly stress that they want to work for their own money, and not rely on others.

Informant 11 told me about a friend he met in Switzerland. They both lived in the asylum centre. Informant 11 and his friend both became undocumented, but his friend chose to stay in Switzerland. They have contact on the phone on a regular basis, and they talk about their shared struggles. For informant 11, it is sometimes hard, because his friend is in the same position as he is, also with limited economic resources. However, he constantly wants to support informant 11, and sometimes even sends him money.

As became clear by now, the meaning of having friends predominantly lies in the fact that it makes daily life more bearable. It is based on supporting each other with practical things, and just hanging out and laughing is crucial. Just being able to have people around and talk is something that releases daily stress and thoughts. However, I noticed that having friends within the shelter sometimes entails other sources for support. Unless the fact that volunteers are very active within the shelter, the residents are amongst each other – without having a volunteer around – most of the times. This means that volunteers cannot always see what is happening, what conflicts emerge, or what personal problems there are. Nevertheless, everyone working for SNOV (also the volunteers) are seen as important when it comes to solving problems. Occasionally, residents feel worried about someone else who lives in the shelter. Instead of talking to them their selves – and asking what is wrong – most residents contact a volunteer during his or her voluntary shift. For example, informant 11 was worried about the mental health of informant 3, so he came up to me to share his thoughts. He wanted me to go talk to him, or maybe contact the coordinator about it. This happens to other volunteers as well, and contacting a volunteer is used as a way to receive more adequate support for their peers in the shelter.

When asking my informants about what it feels like to have friends, I noticed that it was sometimes hard to explain for some. Nonetheless, some were able to share what it feels like to have friends. Informant 15 had a really clear idea about friendship: 'Having two or three really close friends is the most important thing in the world. Friendship can be closer than family ties' (Informant 15, 31 years old, Iran). Informant 11 constantly reflected on the fact that having friends around is very important in life, and that it helps him to feel more positive. Mutual respect is a core aspect of friendship for him.

> One person is one person. I have respect. When I have respect, they give me respect. So, that is my way of thinking […] When you have respect you can have contact with

> each other. When you don't have respect, they cannot contact. […] So, when another person comes [in the shelter] … a new guy … first, I think what does he need, how can I help him? I have respect for him. And then he respects me. What I do for him, so he thinks about me good or not good. He thinks negative or positive about me (Informant 11, 31 years old, Eritrea).

Informant 5 (33 years old, Iran) connects to this vision: 'I have good relations with people, and that helps me. We are human beings, and we need each other in order to survive. I help them, they help me.'[26]. He explained his vision by telling about a good friend. Sometimes they meet at the river, or they go for a run, and they talk about problems. He has positive experiences with the advice of his friend, and this really helps him. In order to return the favour, he helped him during the reconstruction of his friends' house. Others, like informant 2, highlight the fact that having friends entails some kind of stability in life. Having little activities on a daily basis, being around friends takes away stress and anxiety: 'Friendship is good for me […] Yes, when you have friends, you feel happy, we go outside, hanging out or something […] Then, I feel good and relaxed'[27] (Informant 2, 19 years old, Afghanistan).

6.5 Family

As shown in the previous paragraph, friendships are predominantly focused on dealing with daily life situations. Since family members live far away in most cases, these relationships have other connotations. Informant 11 provided an explanation of how he perceives the differences between friends and family:

> When I talk to friends, I talk about how I live today. In here. […] [When I talk to my brother, I talk about] how I can live in here. How I have friends in here. My brother is also like that, he also finds friends. So, we talk about that (Informant 11, 31 years old, Eritrea).

[26] Original Dutch quote: 'Ik heb goede relaties met mensen en dat helpt mij. We zijn mensen en we hebben elkaar nodig om te blijven leven. Ik help hen, zij helpen mij.'
[27] Original Dutch quote: 'Vriendschap is goed voor mij […] Ja… als je vrienden hebt dan ben je blij, dan ga ik met ze naar buiten… samen chillen of zo […] Dan voel ik me goed en rustig.'

He talks to his family about what his plans are in the Netherlands, and what decisions he should make.

The role of family is very important in the lives of my informants. Some of my informants have relatives living in the Netherlands, or even in Nijmegen. This creates important opportunities for them, because some relatives have a Dutch status. Therefore, they spend nights with family on a regular basis. However, most informants have no family in the Netherlands, and therefore contact takes place over the phone in most cases. These transnational networks (Wissink et al., 2013) influence the lives and wellbeing of my informants in many cases, and 'those who maintain transnational relationships are generally better able to sustain their livelihoods' (Wissink et al., 2013, p. 1098). Talking to family creates comfort, but it could also help them in their procedure, since relatives in the country of origin might have access to needed documents for further status applications.

In chapter 5, I analysed the daily routines of my informants. Contact with relatives predominantly takes place during the evening. Most residents spend some time in the living room to have dinner, follow the language course, or have a chat with other residents or the volunteer that is around. After some time, most residents go back to their rooms, or put in headphones: time to call family. As I have noticed in many situations, the residents are more relaxed when they have contact with family on a regular basis. I have seen how people mentally changed when contact with family increased. When the residents know their family is doing well, they tell me they are able to sleep better, and feel more relaxed during the day. Informant 11 told me how he contacts his brothers: 'I have contact with my brother in Germany. I also have contact with my brothers in Israel and Canada. I can speak with them with the internet. Good technology. Good network' (Informant 11, 31 years old, Eritrea). Meanwhile, his wife and son live in Ethiopia, and the network is not always working. Yet, he still manages to call them on a daily basis: 'I call them every day at night, but I miss them. Because I don't know my son. Only by photo. When I came here, my wife was three months pregnant'. I asked him if he could describe how he feels when he sees the face of his son on Skype, and he told me that it made him really happy, but that it was very difficult at the same time.

Next to emotional outcomes, social capital around transnational relationships with relatives is also connected to both receiving, and sending goods. The mother of informant 3 lives in the United States, and she was able to send him a brand-new iPhone, and expensive

sunglasses. Sometimes, the residents receive some money by relatives who are able to afford it. From time to time, residents also send something to their family. For example, the mother of informant 15 was sick, and therefore he asked some volunteers to help him selecting the right medication (available at a basic drugstore). Informant 11 was able to send clothes and basic aspirin to his wife and son in Ethiopia. One of the volunteers supports sending and receiving packages most of the time, by using his address for shipping because it is more reliable.

6.6 The network and the future

During my interviews, and also during shifts as a volunteer, I asked my informants how they perceive the future on the one hand, and how their social capital could help them to reach this future on the other. I tried to obtain more nuanced insights on the conclusions of Winter et al. (2018), who argued that the undocumented refugees living in the organization are rather passive when it comes to thinking about future plans, and that the focus lies on staying in the Netherlands. The latter is true, and most residents are actively trying to reach a Dutch status. Only some of them, especially the older residents gave up the fight, and they accepted a life without legal documents. Other residents are awaiting procedures, answers from lawyers, or they wait until they receive new proof-documents in order to start a second status application.

Even though some have been living in the Netherlands for less than a year, most residents created a rather large network of people around them, and Nijmegen feels like their home. This makes it easy for the residents to argue that this is the place they want to continue living. However, when asking about their future plans, it is hard to give a detailed answer to this question, because life is highly unstable.

Informant 2 is still young and has a lot of dreams. When I asked him about his plans he told me he wanted to start studying in order to become a dentist or an engineer. He was certain about that this would work out. His close friend, informant 1, is more sceptical. Although he really wants to stay in Nijmegen, he noticed: 'The future is dark. I got no future here, really. I cannot go for further application, because I have no new evidence. Or I have to lie that I am gay or that I want to be Christian. I cannot lie. And religion only creates war and destruction. That is a problem. When I was just a kid, I had dreams. I wanted to be doctor or whatever' (Informant 1, 22 years old, Afghanistan). When talking about meeting people with

a status in Gezellig, he told me that this annoys him at times, because these people are allowed to work and earn money. Yet, they still come to Gezellig every day, doing nothing.

Most of the residents argue that they just want a stable life, without problems. Some argue that their life is already better than it used to be, because there is no violence or war in the Netherlands. As argued by informant 5, the next step for them would be to get a paper, start working and doing something in return for society. Informant 3 told me that he feels confident about receiving a Dutch status someday, and that his dream is to also start working as a volunteer, in order to help people that are facing the same problems that he is facing today.

When I asked about how their social network could support their future goals, I noticed that this was a difficult question. The general reaction was that having contacts could of course be beneficial on the long run, but that everyone needs to pursue their own personal goals. 'In the end I have to do things myself, but I really need people around me in order to build a stable life. Good contact with friends and family gives me comfort and it makes me a happy person' (Informant 1, 22 years old, Afghanistan). Informant 11 connects to this view, but also emphasizes the importance of learning the Dutch language and having Dutch connections:

> First… I learn Nederlands. Then, I need good contact with Dutch people. When I have good contact, it is the best. […] [A] good future is when I can work. I cannot sit, I work hard. […] When I work, it helps me. I want to help the Dutch regels [Dutch system], and they can help me. When I need work, I ask you, you can give me information on how to find work (Informant 11, 31 years old, Eritrea).

Informant 3 also connects to the importance of having Dutch people around, and he claimed that the people at SNOV could help him organize his life before taking further steps.

6.7 Conclusion

Despite of being undocumented, the residents of the BBB have various sources for social capital. Their lives are heavily influenced by different organizations with a broad range of knowledge and expertise. Some organizations provide juridical support; this delivers the residents the needed advice and coaching during further procedures. Financial support is

mostly provided by SNOV, but some organizations also provide space to do paid work, which contributes to a feeling of independence among the residents. Access to medical support is problematic in many cases. However, approachable organizations like SNOV and Dokters van de Wereld are constantly trying to set up health care when needed. Moreover, social and mental support is also provided by organizations in many cases. This is linked to basic conversations with professionals, but also more detailed support by psychiatrists.

Sometimes, contacting the support of organizations is seen as a big step. This is where the importance of volunteers comes in. Volunteers – especially those working for SNOV and Gezellig – are very approachable for my informants, and in many cases, they are the first ones to hear what is going on in the minds and lives of the residents. Volunteers are able to tackle a lot of problems, without needing to contact professionals. However, when problems are more serious and complex, they are able to reach out to other organizations such as Stichting Gast, Vluchtelingenwerk or Pro Persona.

Social capital that flow out of friendship have other connotations. The residents meet a lot of refugees in the same situation in both the shelter as elsewhere. Being around friends is crucial for the wellbeing of my informants, because it provides them with basic daily support. Having basic conversations, or being able to exchange things like cigarettes, money, or food is something that helps them a lot during their daily routines. Moreover, friends are there to tackle small problems, or contact volunteers they trust when they think more help is needed when one of their friends feels bad.

Another source of social capital that creates mental stability is regular contact with relatives. Having family in Nijmegen helps some of the residents to escape the daily reality of the shelter and sleep somewhere else. However, most residents are limited to Skype-calls and WhatsApp conversations. Trying to contact family is a core activity in the evenings, and the residents are sometimes able to send or receive goods.

During my fieldwork, I sometimes doubted if the residents of the BBB are aware of all the contacts they have established in their lives. Future prospects are rather limited, yet all residents try to obtain a stable and peaceful life. It is understood that good contact with Dutch citizens is something that might bring them further in life, and therefore learning Dutch is important for many. This chapter focussed on all the sources of social capital that are influencing their lives. However, the availability of these sources was disrupted at various times during my fieldwork. The next chapter will delve into this.

Chapter 7 – Dynamic ties: deconstruction of social capital

'[During my asylum procedure] I was constantly moving back and forth, without having anything to say. […] Every time a new place. I just had enough time to make friends and new contacts, and then we were separated again. So, there are only a few people left from that time with who I still have contact. That was very hard and lonely for me' (Informant 1, 22 years old, Afghanistan).

7.1 Introduction

So far, the focus of this thesis has been on the dynamics of social capital of undocumented refugees, and how diverse contacts can be. However, problematic connections, and the deconstruction of social capital has yet not been grasped. Despite all the connections and dynamics described, social capital highly fluctuates at different moments in time. Most of my informants arrived in the Netherlands, without actually having the goal to end up in this country. Some wanted to go to the United Kingdom, Sweden, or they did not have a clue about where they wanted to go. As a consequence, most of them entered a country in which they had no (or limited) contacts. Having limited social and economic capital make undocumented refugees 'rely in their survival strategies on philanthropic institutions and random encounters' (Cvajner & Sciortino, 2010, p. 397).

As I demonstrated in previous chapters, informants who have been living in the Netherlands for a longer period have been able to build social capital, and also newcomers have different ways to create ties. However, social capital is not something cumulative, and the networks of undocumented are very dynamic, and even highly fragile. The daily routines as described in chapter 5 might seem stable, yet, the residents face multiple struggles during their day, which have a rather large influence on their lives. Routines are the base of human life, and are often only noticed when they suddenly change or break down (Ehn & Löfgren, 2010). This chapter will delve into these different ruptures around social capital and what influence they have on the social capital of the residents of the BBB. First, re-locational ruptures due to restrictive policies are discussed. Second, the notion of deportability (fear of being deported) is analysed, since it haunts many of my informants in their daily routines, and it limits their social capital. Third, technological ruptures are described, because these

ruptures have major influence on how contacts are maintained. Fourth, the experiences of shifting friendships are examined. Finally, I emphasize how close ties (Granovetter, 1973) sometimes limit the lives of undocumented refugees.

7.2 Re-locational ruptures

During the asylum procedures my informants went through, some were relocated all the time. Some residents described how, in a few months, they were moved to more than six asylum centres. Every time my informants got used to a place, they had to move to another asylum centre.

> Well, from Ter Apel they transferred me to Wassenaar. I spend some weeks in some kind of bungalow park. After that, I went to an AZC in Budel. I lived there for a few months. Then, I was sent to AZC Geldermalsen, because I had a few interviews at the IND in Den Bosch. They took me there by bus multiple times. After my interviews I stayed in AZC Drachten for a few months, then back to Ter Apel for a few months, back to Geldermalsen for new interviews. Then I was sent to another bungalow park in Waalwijk. It was so crowded there. […] I was constantly moving back and forth, without having anything to say. I know those are the rules, but yeah… Every time a new place. I just had enough time to make friends and new contacts, and then we were separated again. So, there are only a few people left from that time with whom I still have contact. That was very hard and lonely for me. Also, my lawyer was in Amsterdam and from the different AZC's I had no idea how to go to Amsterdam (Informant 1, 22 years old, Afghanistan).

Circumstances as described by informant 1 make friendships hard to form and maintain, and asylum procedures are therefore lonely times for many. After becoming undocumented, these limiting systems by authorities did not decrease; the SNOV shelter too has to deal with these issues.

Rules and regulations – defined by the municipality – have major influence on how the BBB shelter operates. Within five months, the shelter had to move twice. The first time the shelter had to move was in December 2018. The building was planned to be demolished, so

the municipality allocated another location, in the middle of a rather crowded neighbourhood with families and student housing. At first, my informants thought it was no problem to move; they were used to constantly being displaced and relocated. However, when the move was scheduled to take place, some problems occurred. When entering the new building with all the residents and their belongings, the municipality decided that the building was not safe enough for 17 men. They were not allowed to stay before the house was completely fire proof, with new doors and an emergency system. This process would take around two weeks, in which the men were asked to spend their nights on the streets. This was inacceptable for the coordinator and the board of the BBB and they put pressure on the municipality: that night, the 17 men could take some rest in the Mercury Hotel. For the following two weeks, there was a sports hall in which the men could spend their nights. Some were very happy, and some fled to friends and family (one former resident even went to friends in Germany), because of traumatic associations with sleeping in sport halls. So, for these informants, the support of a social network was crucial. The weeks of waiting and uncertainty were experienced as difficult and emotionally hectic. Even when the move was complete, new problems occurred. The neighbourhood was not happy hearing a shelter for undocumented migrants would settle down in their street. Having 17 men in one house, together with all the noise and constant walking in- and out of the residents was seen as highly problematic. This went on and on for a few months, but the negative opinion gradually changed thanks to information sessions with neighbours, hosted by the SNOV board and coordinator.

Despite this positive change, the municipality and neighbours still thought 17 residents in one house was too much; 6 men had to move to a new location in Lent. This created a lot of tension among the men, because no one wanted to move out. Lent, on the other side of the Waal river, was seen by the men as an unbridgeable distance between the house and the centre of Nijmegen. My informants argued that this would make it impossible for them to meet their friends in Nijmegen. A few weeks later, informant 11 talked to me and explained why he did not want to move: 'When I would move to Lent, I would not see my friends as much as I do now. I know it is not that far, but in Lent there are no volunteers coming in the mornings and at night, and most of my friends live in here now. I would have been alone!' After many discussions, the coordinator had to choose the best 6 candidates for the new shelter. Informants 5, 8, 9, 13, 14 and 17 (all from Iran, except informant 14) were obligated to move to Lent. Together with some other volunteers, I offered to help the men with cleaning

the new location, because the house was rather dirty and old. On that day, all men argued that they could not help, because they felt sick. However, with some pressure, two agreed to help anyway. Arriving at the house, the men were shocked and surprised: the house was really nice! It is detached from other surrounding houses, with lots of land around the house and a great view on Nijmegen. We spend two days of cleaning and painting before the men moved in. Informant 14 was not seen from then, he was too scared to move.

A few weeks later, I had an encounter with informant 5 in the city centre. 'The house looks really nice, thank you for your support! In two weeks, we will host a party for all the men in the other BBB location, the volunteers, and everyone who helped us!', he said to me. It was an incredible night. Informant 5 welcomed me and showed me around the house, because it had been transformed since the last time I was there. All the walls were painted, they made a nice living room, and they transformed the garden into a yard with potatoes, watermelon, pumpkins, eggplant and lots of other vegetables. The men prepared a table for around 30 people and spend the whole day cooking and preparing food. It made me happy to see how they were doing and all the effort they had put in the party. There was beer, wine, soda, Iranian food, and music. It appeared to me that this was the first time in a while for them to feel how it is to have an own household. They turned a negative situation into something positive.

During the summer, at the location in Nijmegen, the municipality decided that the house needed more drastic rebuilding. The ceiling needed to be reconstructed, which was also paired with yet another fire installation. Also, the doors would be changed. At first this was communicated to take a few weeks. Yet, after bad communication between the municipality, the company who did the construction, and SNOV, the reconstruction would take the rest of the year. From time to time, without notification beforehand, the sleeping rooms needed to be emptied at 8 am, which created a lot of tension amongst the men. Difficulties like these happen all the time, and ask patience from the residents, because it constantly limits them in creating a real home.

7.3 Deportability

As described, despite the fact that undocumented refugees are demanded to go back to their country of origin, most of them choose to stay. This entails multiple consequences that

influence daily life. As argued by De Genova (2002, 439), '[m]igrant "illegality" is lived through a palpable sense of deportability, which is to say, the possibility of being removed from the space of the nation-state.' The fear of being deported is a daily struggle for many undocumented migrants, which sustains their vulnerability; every minor violation can lead to prosecution and deportation (Chauvin & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014; Bendixen & Eriksen, 2018).

It occurred a few times that people in the network of my informants got arrested by the police. A cousin of informant 2 was arrested after going to the police for a statement about his stolen wallet. Instead of providing support, the police arrested him and send him to prison in Rotterdam. The police were not allowed to do this, so he was released a few weeks after. That same period, informant 4 went to Arnhem to visit friends, but he forgot his SNOV card. The police arrested him because he was not able to identify himself. This – together with a lack of Dutch and English language skills – made it impossible to defend himself. At this moment, he is still in Rotterdam. His lawyer told us that he will not be released for at least three to nine months (which will be most probably somewhere in 2020). During the weeks after informant 4 was arrested, many residents in the BBB asked me if I had any news about the insecure future of their friend. Me and all the other volunteers knew as much as the residents, so we could not provide any detailed information about an exact release date. I told them to be patient and that it is up to the judge to decide what happens next.

For some residents, there have been moments in which people they trusted have betrayed them, or made their status application more difficult. In the Netherlands, becoming Christian enlarges the chance for a Dutch status, and therefore, informant 5 started to help at a church in Nijmegen. He showed his ambition to become a Christian and they started the whole process. However, at the end of this process – on the day he would be baptised – the priest told him that it would not happen: 'He reacted really bad. He created problems so I would not be able to stay in Nijmegen. It was someone from the church, who was helping with my status application. […] He just laughed at me and said I was not allowed to stay in Nijmegen'[28] (Informant 5, 33 years old, Iran). During the interview, the informant became very

[28] Original Dutch quote: 'Hij reageerde heel slecht. Hij heeft voor problemen gezorgd zodat ik niet in Nijmegen kan blijven wonen. Was iemand van de kerk. Was eigenlijk iemand die hielp bij mijn procedure. […] Hij lachte mij uit en zei tegen mij dat ik niet in Nijmegen mocht blijven.'

emotional and told me that this created trust issues which he still has today. It destroyed his chances for a Dutch status.

Informant 3 faced a similar situation at the IND. During his application process, he was invited to another interview with the IND. The employee was holding all his files and documents that delivered proof for his background. Without any reason, the employee threw it in the bin. Lacking useful knowledge about his rights as a refugee, informant 3 had no idea how to defend himself in an absurd situation like this.

Stories like these decrease trust in police, authorities and governmental policies for many undocumented migrants (Winter et al., 2018). Linking to deportability, my informants addressed the fact that they often get very nervous when they see the police, so they walk or run away. This fear of being arrested is a large part of their lives.

7.4 Technological ruptures

So far, I described how rules deconstruct social capital of undocumented migrants. However, there are more circumstances that decompose the functionalities of social ties. As argued by Ehn and Löfgren (2010), waiting is often accompanied by material importance. Obviously, money is important, and becomes problematic when one becomes undocumented. Transnational contacts are a vital economic resource (Wissink et al., 2013), but having a bank account is impossible in most cases, and this makes it very hard for the residents to receive money from family and friends if they need it. However, despite the limited economic resources (and because of the fact that most are able to earn some cash), the residents take care of flowers in the garden, they decorate their room or buy luxury products (such as iPhones, headphones, Adidas sneakers, and watches). Grasping on to materials is a way of creating comfort, but also has thorough consequences when material brake, get lost or stolen. Only in a few months, I have witnessed how some men lost multiple phones, money, and laptops.

Leaving the country of origin also means leaving people behind. These contacts are maintained by using a mobile phone for (video)calling, social media, or chatting. Additionally, during the migratory trajectories, new contacts are established. This continues in the Netherlands, during long-lasting asylum procedures. My informants met a lot of people in the various asylum centres during these periods of waiting. Considering the fact that the lives of

my informants are unstable and characterized by having limited economic resources, losing one's phone has far reaching effects. When asking my informants if they ever lost social contacts, most of them mentioned that it was caused by the fact that their phone got lost or broken. Informant 1 told me that he lost a lot of contacts due to losing his phone, and that this sometimes influences the relationships with friends he has today: 'I lost some friends while constantly moving around, losing or breaking my phone. […] Sometimes I feel a lot of stress, and I start arguing with those who are closest to me: my friends' (Informant 1, 22 years old, Afghanistan). He also addressed that he always wants to stay positive towards people, so he immediately apologizes after arguing.

One day, someone stole the new iPhone that informant 3 received from his mother, together with 20 euros. The phone was hidden is his room, so till today it is a mystery who did it, and how the phone was found. Losing the phone was bad, but since it was sent from the United States, the phone was blocked and unable to use. Especially the fact that the money was stolen was devastating for informant 3. This money is crucial for him to put money on his sim-card in order to contact his mother. A few weeks later, the laptop (provided by the shelter) of informant 10 was also stolen. This created a lot of stress and tension among the men. The residents started to distrust others in the shelter.

Proximity of friends and relatives has influence on the importance of technological devices, and how connections are maintained: 'I have been living here for eight years. I also spend two years in Delfzijl, Groningen, Zuid-Holland, I had friends there. I was sleeping there, but all these contacts are gone. My Facebook profile was blocked, I broke my phone a few times. I also lost your number. But I still see you, so then I am able to ask your number again'[29] (Informant 5, 33 years old, Iran). The struggles around proximity and technology are shared by informant 2, with family living in a remote village in Afghanistan. He is only able to communicate with his mother and siblings when they travel to the nearest city, because that is the only place with a phone connection. This only happens once every three months. Not being able to contact family has influences the wellbeing of the residents of the BBB.

[29] Original Dutch quote: 'Ik woon 8 jaar hier. Ik was ook 2 jaar in Delfzijl, Groningen, Zuid-Holland, daar had ik vrienden. Ik logeerde daar, maar alle contacten zijn weg. Facebook blokkeerde… telefoon heb ik een paar keer gebroken. Ik had jouw nummer ook niet meer! Nu nieuw nummer. Ik zie jou, dus dan krijg ik je nummer!'

> I talk to my mother via Emo. It is like WhatsApp. The internet connection in Kabul is not that good, so we only use video-chat every once in a while. But sometimes you just want to see your mothers face, you know? A few weeks ago, I had a really bad dream about my mother. We were in a Taliban attack in Kabul, but I could not find her. When I called my sister the next day, my mother could not be on the video-chat with me, because suddenly she was laying in the hospital. Not seeing her face really stressed me out. That week I slept a total of 4 hours. I smoked a lot of weed in order to forget about my struggles. […] That was so hard (Informant 1, 22 years old, Afghanistan).

Situations like described in this paragraph happen frequently. Being able to connect to friends and family that live far away bring comfort to the residents. However, mental health issues emerge when contact is limited.

7.5 Fragile friendships

As I have witnessed, friendship ties both inside and outside the shelter can be rather unpredictable. At first, some residents seem to get along really well, and a week later they could completely ignore each other. Additionally, residents sometimes tell me about how much they like certain people at other organizations. Informant 3, for example, told me that he made a friend at the garden where he does voluntary work. He seemed very enthusiastic when he told me that he was going to meet her during the weekend, and that she would prepare dinner for him. For a few weeks, this seemed to go really well. She also gave him a better phone, a mobile DVD-player, and some sort of translator machine. However, connecting to the previous paragraph, all of those gifts were stolen within two weeks. Informant 3 was too scared to tell that they were stolen, so he said that he lost them somewhere in the city centre. She became really mad, and informant 3 was annoyed that she was angry. This friendship broke down.

Some residents of the BBB have limited friends within the shelter. Predominantly, this is connected to having different cultural backgrounds. There seems to be a real division between people from East-Africa, Iran, and other countries from the Middle-East. Informant 3, being from El Salvador has to cope with the largest cultural differences, and this occasionally leads to conflict. However, this does not mean that people do not talk with each other. During

the day, the residents greet each other and talk. Conversely, these seemingly friendly encounters are deconstructed when someone feels mentally unhappy due to various things going on in life. I saw this happening with informant 15, who had contact with many people in the shelter when I started my fieldwork. This changed during the months, and he became more silent, and he neglected most social contact and smalltalk. Even though there are multiple men from Iran, with similar cultural backgrounds, he is unable to connect with them. He argued that they were only focused on their own, and not on other people. A similar situation is identified by informant 11. He used to be rather close with informant 12, who is 15 years younger. They once told me that their friendship feels like being brothers. However, informant 12 experienced increasing stress due to all the waiting before starting a second asylum procedure. He became more silent over the weeks, and he did not use the bed in the shelter as much as he used to do. Informant 11 shared his concerns with me about why he is not talking to him anymore.

7.6 Limitations of close ties

The dynamics around different social ties of the residents of the BBB can be linked to the work of Granovetter (1973), as described in the theoretical framework. Granovetter described that social networks can be split up between strong and weak ties. The strong ties of my informants can be understood as links with other refugees, or friends and family from the same country of origin. Weak ties are connections with people that have connections with other social networks; volunteers and other Dutch connections for example. Informant 12, from Eritrea, explained how these different ties have different outcomes for his life in Nijmegen. I asked him if he had any Eritrean friends in the Netherlands. He told me he has a vast range of friends in Nijmegen, and that it is good to see them so often, but he also pointed the fact that it slows his integration down. When he is around them, he is only speaking Tigrinya, and therefore he is not learning to speak Dutch. 'I have been living here for three years. If I only had Dutch people around me, my Dutch would be fluid around now. And here we are, still talking English' (Informant 12, 18 years old, Eritrea).

Having contact with close ties, such as family and friend in the country of origin, is often related to feelings of shame. Shame is something which heavily influences family relationships of some of my informants. On the one hand, this is attached to the fact that one

is not able to earn his own money, but is relying on the help of others. On the other hand, some informants told me about how relatives stopped the contact because they felt ashamed of the fact that he left the country of origin, or failed in his migration process. Therefore, some residents are not completely honest about their situation towards family members.

Not telling the truth can also have other root causes. Informant 1 has been living in the Netherlands for around 4 years, and he has a mother, a brother and a sister in Afghanistan. Both his sister and mother are in bad health, and informant 1 feels very stressed about the fact that he is not around to take care of them. Feeling scared that they would also feel worried about his undocumented life in the Netherlands – and that their sickness would get worse – he decided to tell them his situation is just fine.

> I only have contact with my mother and my little sister sometimes. My father and big brother have been executed by the Taliban… I still have nightmares about it and I only sleep a few hours a night because of it. I also cannot sleep in the dark. Both my mother and sister have poor health and I am constantly worrying about them. I try to contact my mother as much as possible, because it will make her condition worse when I don't update her about my life. Nonetheless, I don't tell my family about my situation. They just think I have a normal life with a job and stuff (Informant 1, 22 years old, Afghanistan).

Dishonesty towards relatives creates stress and anxiety, which occasionally results in sleeping issues. So, in these cases, family relations do not bring sources for mental or financial support as described in the previous chapter; instead these forms of social capital are deconstructed.

7.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, different moments of disrupting social connections were identified. Being able to maintain social contacts is occasionally disrupted by policies and regulations. Being forced to move within the Netherlands disables undocumented refugees to maintain friendships. Moreover, decisions about housing, as taken by the municipality disrupt placemaking and create tension and stress. Moving to other locations (with Lent being seen as 'very far away') created the fear of a deconstructing social network. Together with this, the daily routines of

my informants are heavily influenced by an omnipresent fear of being arrested and deported. Witnessing how peers of my informants are being arrested, or having other problematic experiences with authorities disrupts trust-building. A constant fear of deportation limits the residents of the BBB to feel mobile in the Netherlands. Technological availability is crucial in the lives of undocumented refugees, since it enables them to communicate with friends and relatives in the country of origin. When connectivity is disturbed – due to broken or stolen phones, social media being blocked, absence of internet connections, or family living in remote places – my informants addressed that stress increases.

What I described in this chapter creates mental issues, which influences the ability to maintain friendships with friends in- and around Nijmegen. Stress is a driver behind arguments and fights, or social segregation. Thus, breaking ties create mental struggles, but mental struggles can also create breaking ties. The social networks of undocumented migrants are important for mental support, since access to professional (mental) healthcare is often limited (Teunissen et al., 2014). When social capital is limited, there is almost no one to talk to. However, too much contact with people one is close with can also limit personal development (e.g. learning the Dutch language).

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Chapter 8 – Conclusion and recommendations

8.1 Conclusion

In this research, I conducted qualitative ethnographic fieldwork among undocumented refugees living in the *Bed, Bath, Bread* (BBB) shelter in Nijmegen. During the intensive period of fieldwork, I had daily encounters with the men in- and outside the BBB shelter, in order to create new insights on the dynamics of social capital. Together with participant observation, conducting semi-structured interviews, and constant reflection, I developed a vast range of data. The notion of social capital is occasionally misunderstood in the way that it is seen as a cumulative concept. When I asked myself the research question: **'How is social capital (de)constructed among undocumented refugees in the spaces of Nijmegen?'**, I developed other understandings of social capital along the way of my fieldwork. While following the daily lives and routines of undocumented refugees in Nijmegen, it becomes clear that social capital is more fluid that thought of in the first place.

Being a resident of the BBB shelter does not only mean that one has a place to sleep; there are various rules and regulations – defined by the municipality – that limit the residents. Time regulations create some sort of rhythm to their day. Due to the fact that the residents have to leave the shelter at 10 AM, they are obligated to spend the largest part of the day at other places and organizations. My research can be defined as single-sited, having the BBB as a starting point. However, using a mobility lens allowed me to follow the residents during their 'trajectories' in- and around Nijmegen. During their daily routines, I was able to visit different places that are valuable in the lives of my informants, and that provide room for social connectivity. First, all days start and end in the BBB shelter. Most of the time, the atmosphere is relaxed, and residents seem to get along with each other. Mornings are slow, with every resident woken up by a volunteer, who tries to activate everyone for a new day. In the evenings, there is time and space to make family calls, drink coffee, watch tv, learn the Dutch language, or just lie in bed. Second, mornings after 10 AM are often spent in parks around the city. The residents sit with each other, or they meet friends. Others go to the library to practise their Dutch skills, or read magazines. People with larger social capital had the opportunity to find paid jobs at various places. Some of them work every day, some have a job every once-in-a-while. Third, in the

afternoon, places like 'Gezellig' provide daily shelter for asylum seekers, undocumented refugees and other people who are interested. It is the perfect place for daily encounters between my informants and their friends or other acquaintances. Playing games, drinking coffee together or smoking cigarettes allow for an accessible way of engaging in smalltalk among all the guests. The availability of spaces as mentioned in this research are crucial for social connectivity and the maintenance of social networks.

The residents of the BBB have a diverse range of sources for social capital. The largest part of their lives is influenced by organizations and rules, but not only in a negative way. Organizations as Vluchtelingenwerk, Stichting Gast, SNOV, Dokters van de Wereld and Pro Persona provide vital juridical, financial, medical, and mental support. However, access to some organizations might be difficult due to feelings of shame. Having volunteers as social capital is therefore vital, because contact is more informal. Volunteers play an important role in the contact between the residents and organizations, because they have the eyes and ears to identify possible struggles and they know their way in Dutch society. The residents of the BBB are among friends for the largest part of their day. Being among friends is not so much focussed on talking about feelings, but rather about supporting each other in other ways. This can be just talking and joking, or preparing food, sharing cigarettes, playing games or sharing money with others. Talking about feelings is hard, but when problems are identified, the residents often contact a volunteer to help their friend. Having friends has a large mental and emotional impact on the lives of undocumented refugees, as it brings stability and comfort during mentally challenging times. Being able to connect with family members is also vital for mental health, although contact takes place over a larger distance in most cases. Making phone calls with family is an important daily activity for most of the residents. On the one hand, talking to relatives in the country of origin brings comfort to the residents, talking to relatives in other places of the world (also having experience as a migrant) enables the residents to ask for advice.

Yet, these different sources for support are very often ruptured, which demonstrates how dynamic social capital actually is. First, constant movement and re-locating as enforced by authorities limits undocumented refugees to maintain contacts they made in different asylum centres and cities around the Netherlands. Combined with a constant awareness lacking the right documents and its consequences, the feeling of being deported creates a lot of stress, anxiety and fear for authorities (e.g. police officers,

the IND). This is increased when friends being captured by the police belongs to the daily reality of the residents. In many cases, social capital is being deconstructed by technological ruptures. The men have limited economic resources, so losing a phone or connection to the internet means a deconstruction of all (transnational) contact. Numbers of old friends, who might live in remote villages – or other European countries – are gone, almost impossible to regain. Stress often has the result that the residents find it difficult to open up to other residents. I have observed that friendships are sometimes very present, with a lot of talking, laughing and spending time together. However, the next day, these same residents can be ignoring each other, or one closes emotionally due to stress and anxiety. Another aspect that can be argued as a downside of social capital – or even a limitation of developing further social capital – is the role of close ties. On the one hand, some residents argued that being around peers too much, disables personal development, because it is not an environment in which one can practice his Dutch language skills. On the other, talking with family and other close ties is paired with feelings of shame. In some cases, relatives have stopped having contact. In others, my residents lie about their lives in the Netherlands because they fear the consequences when their family finds out how they actually live.

Observing the absurd realties of undocumented refugees in the Netherlands illustrates that social capital is highly dynamic. It is a vital source for support, yet also hard to maintain for those who lack other resources, and for those whose lives are never the same. Every day is different, and full of risks for undocumented refugees, which has a significant influence on their mental wellbeing. Sometimes, this is a downward spiral: not being feeling well mentally decreases social connectivity even further.

During my fieldwork, my informants provided me with valuable insights and lessons about their lives and abilities to be included in society. These lessons are articulated into different recommendations.

8.2 Recommendations

Based on the various conversations and observations I had during my fieldwork – linking to the conclusions of my research – I was able to draw some recommendations that are valuable for future encounters with the notion of undocumentedness and social capital. On the one

hand, I formulated recommendations for future research on these concepts. On the other, I articulated advice for policymakers in the field, who struggle to produce adequate policies on this diverse and dynamic group.

For scholars	Social capital must be seen as highly dynamic. In scientific research, the dynamics of social capital are often only implicitly described. However, studying the lives of marginal groups and their social connections teaches us that a more explicit approach to these dynamics are valuable in future research. Investigating the social capital of marginal groups – such as undocumented refugees – shows that the availability of social capital can change from day to day, and that the concept can be very fragile.
	Do not encounter 'being' undocumented as something static. Undocumented refugees are very mobile within society, and they work together to navigate more effectively, find work, or get housing.
For policymakers	Constant displacement and moving between asylum centres do not benefit the mental health of (undocumented) refugees. Waiting for answers, or the chance for a new procedure bring enough insecurities, if refugees are located elsewhere (far away from the place they are used to, or even in jail). This results in breaking social ties, which entails a lot of stress. I would suggest that this will cost money for Dutch state as well, because depressions and stress increase, and these refugees need mental healthcare.
	Refugee organizations – and other spaces around marginal groups – must be aware of the facilitative role they play in the construction and maintenance of social capital. Inclusion for everyone is crucial, so the availability and accessibility of these organizations must be guaranteed at all times.
	Shelters for undocumented refugees are essential, because they are a source for social connectivity, and provide some sort of stability. Moreover, it gives undocumented refugees a roof over their head,

	instead of letting them sleep in the streets of different cities. The lives of undocumented refugees are already characterized by insecurity and waiting, and more bureaucratic practices will enlarge these struggles. Moving around, or constant construction work inside the shelter create stress among its residents. The frequency of rehousing and construction work is in many cases unnecessary, and can be solved with better communication between different organizational structures. More adequate – and direct – communication between municipality, construction companies, and the shelter will both release stress among the residents of the shelter, as decline the costs that are made by the municipality.

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Summary

In this master research, I conducted qualitative fieldwork among the residents of the *Bed, Bath, Bread* (BBB) facility in Nijmegen. The BBB is organized by an organization that provides night shelter for undocumented refugees (SNOV[30]). The shelter is open from 6 PM, to 10 AM the next morning, and was established for humanitarian reasons. I worked during the mornings and evenings as a volunteer and researcher, trying to answer the question: *How is social capital (de)constructed among undocumented refugees in the spaces of Nijmegen?* Social capital is defined and researched by many scholars, and during my fieldwork, I reflected on the conceptualization by Pierre Bourdieu (1886). He argued that social capital is conceptualized to be the durable social network someone has, formed by mutual acquaintance and recognition. For the people involved in this particular network, the contact has functional aspects and is beneficial in multiple ways (Bourdieu, 1986). Moreover, Bourdieu (1986) advocates that these ties of social capital should be maintained. However, the latter is undertheorized in contemporary research. Social capital is often theorized as something cumulative and taken-for-granted. While studying the lives of undocumented refugees and their social capital, it becomes clear that the concept is way more dynamic, as the lives of undocumented refugees are often very fragile and subject of constant change. Keeping this in mind – together with the understanding of social capital, and how it should be maintained – allows for more valuable insights in both the construction, and the deconstruction of the concept.

I performed qualitative fieldwork among the residents of the BBB shelter by conducting participative observation during my shifts as a volunteer, but also by visiting my informants at various locations in the city of Nijmegen. Moreover, I conducted semi-structured interviews and reflected on my findings by memo-writing. The BBB shelter has been the starting point of my research, but while trying to identify different social networks and the dynamics around social capital, I started to combine this single-sited approach with a mobility lens. This gave me detailed insights into the daily routines of my informants, both inside the shelter, as outside on the streets of Nijmegen.

Since the men are forced by the municipality to leave the shelter in the morning, most of their time takes place outside the BBB. Daily routines and contact with organizations at other places in the city are crucial in the construction and maintenance of social capital. The amount of social contact influences mental health and the diversity of daily activities. The mornings in the shelter are very diverse; not one day is the same. Social contact in the morning is mostly based on activating everyone to start a new day, with as little stress as possible. As some of my informants have the opportunity to

[30] Stichting Noodopvang Vluchtelingen Nijmegen

work or do voluntary service, most men have limited things to do. They visit parks, the library and the 'Gezellig' facility. These places – especially Gezellig – are crucial in order to maintain social connections. Gezellig combines social support with the accessibility to organizations that are able to provide legal and medical support. Hanging out, playing games, and meeting friends on a daily basis releases stress and anxiety (Lindert, Schouler-Ocak, Heinz, & Priebe, 2008). Every night, my informants come together in the shelter. The evenings filled with watching television, talking to volunteers and the other residents, or calling friends and family on the phone. Routines are accompanied by periods of waiting and uncertainty. These moments are far from passive and static. The residents of the BBB search for different ways to give meaning to their time in the Netherlands. Creating and maintaining social connections, decorating, gardening, working and learning Dutch are strategies to make the waiting more meaningful.

Connecting to these daily routines and all the people and organizations my informants have daily encounters with, it becomes visible that the men have various sources for social capital. First, the lives of the residents are heavily influenced by different organizations with a broad range of knowledge and expertise. Some organizations provide juridical support; this delivers the residents the needed advice and coaching during further procedures. Financial support is mostly provided by SNOV, but some organizations also provide space to do paid work, which contributes to a feeling of independence among the residents. Access to medical support is problematic in many cases. However, approachable organizations like SNOV and Dokters van de Wereld are constantly trying to set up health care when needed. Moreover, social and mental support is also provided by organizations in many cases. This is linked to basic conversations with professionals, but also more detailed support by psychiatrists. A second source of social capital can be found around volunteers. They tend to be more approachable than organizations, and they are able to provide the residents with advice, or help contacting other organizations when needed. Third, having friends is a third source for social capital. The residents meet a lot of refugees in the same situation in both the shelter as elsewhere. Being around friends is crucial for the wellbeing of my informants, because it provides them with basic daily support. Having basic conversations, or being able to exchange materials or money is something that helps them a lot during their daily routines. Moreover, friends are there to tackle small problems, or contact volunteers they trust when they think more help is needed when one of their friends feels bad. Finally, the social capital that flows out of contact with relatives must not be neglected. Being in daily (transnational) contact with relatives is essential for mental stability of the residents. Having family in Nijmegen helps some of the residents to escape the daily reality of the shelter and sleep somewhere else. However, most residents are limited to Skype-calls and WhatsApp conversations due to large distances. Trying to contact family is a core activity in the evenings, and the residents are sometimes able to send or receive goods.

Nevertheless, these sources for social capital are highly unstable and subject of constant change. Being able to maintain social contacts is occasionally disrupted by policies and regulations. Being forced to move within the Netherlands disables undocumented refugees to maintain friendships. Moreover, decisions about housing, as taken by the municipality disrupt placemaking and create tension and stress. Moving to other locations sometimes creates the fear of a deconstructing social network. Together with this, the daily routines of my informants are heavily influenced by an omnipresent fear of being arrested and deported. Witnessing how peers of my informants are being arrested, or having other problematic experiences with authorities disrupts trust-building. Also, technological availability is crucial in the lives of undocumented refugees, since it enables them to communicate with friends and relatives in the country of origin. When connectivity is disturbed – due to broken or stolen phones, social media being blocked, absence of internet connections, or family living in remote places – my informants addressed that stress increases. Stress is a driver behind arguments and fights, or social segregation. Since the mental state of some residents change by day, friendships are also fragile and, in some situations, I saw how residents started to isolate themselves socially. On the other hand, having a strong network of friends or family with the same language can also bring limitations to personal development and integration.

Observing the absurd realties of undocumented refugees in the Netherlands illustrates that social capital is highly dynamic. It is a vital source for support, yet also hard to maintain for those who lack other resources, and for those whose lives are unstable. Every day is different, and full of risks for undocumented refugees, which has a significant influence on their mental wellbeing. Sometimes, this is a downward spiral: not being feeling well mentally decreases social connectivity even further.

The dynamics of social capital are often only implicitly described. However – as a core recommendation – studying the lives of undocumented refugees and their social connections teaches us that a more explicit approach to these dynamics are valuable in future research. Investigating the social capital of undocumented refugees shows that the availability of social capital can change from day to day, and that the concept can be very fragile. Moreover, it is crucial that organizations are aware of the facilitative role they play around the construction of social capital. Policymakers must be aware of the outcomes of constant re-locating of this vulnerable group of migrants, and the outcomes this has on their mental health. More adequate communication among different organizations could tackle most of these problems.

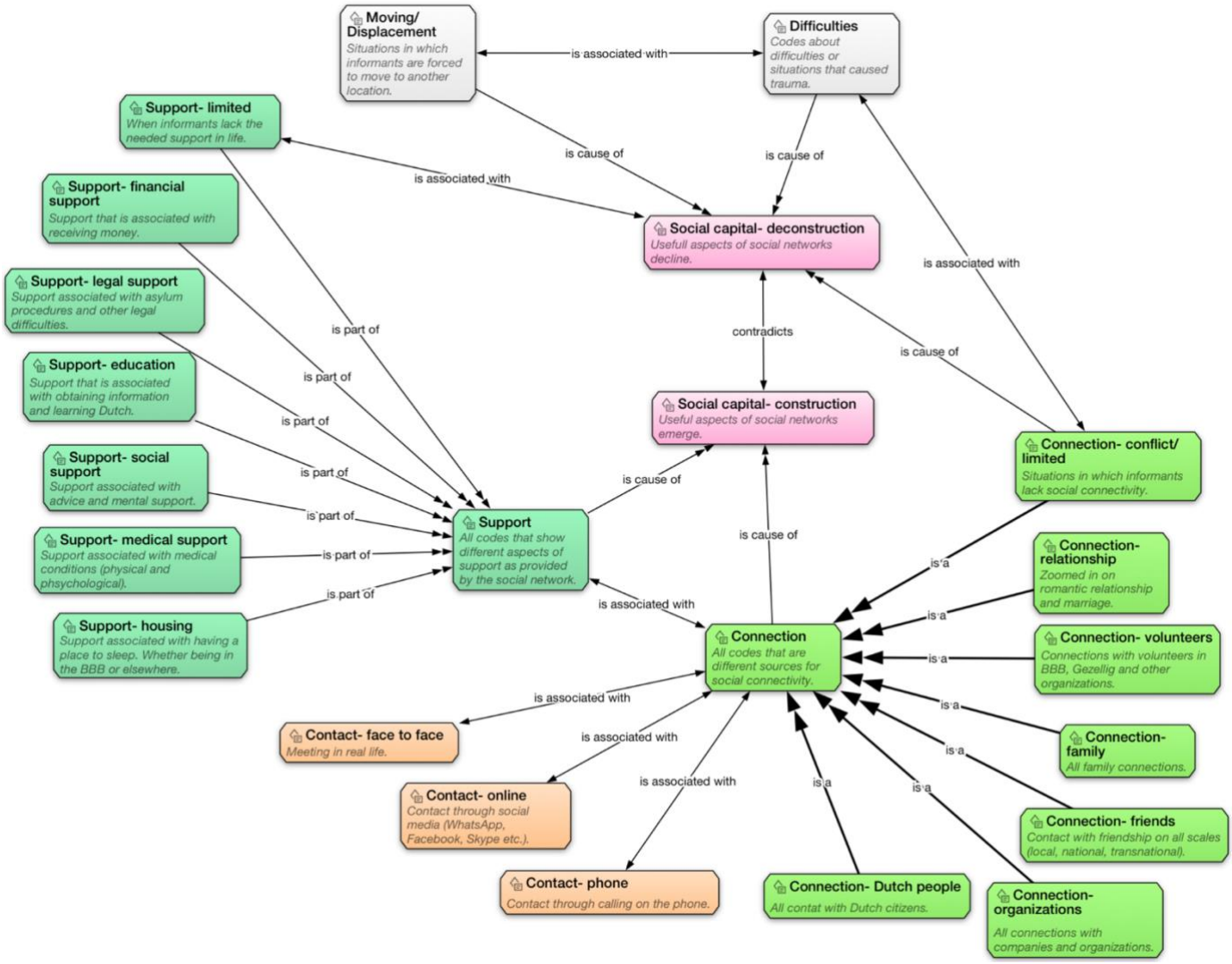
Annex

Annex 1: List of informants[31]

Number	Gender	Age	Country of Origin
1	Male	22	Afghanistan
2	Male	19	Afghanistan
3	Male	44	El Salvador
4	Male	19	Ethiopia
5	Male	33	Iran
6	Male	Late 60's	Iran
7	Male	66	Russia
8	Male	Late 20's	Iran
9	Male	26	Iran
10	Male	Early 30's	Palestine
11	Male	31	Eritrea
12	Male	18	Eritrea
13	Male	Late 30's	Iran
14	Male	26	Syria
15	Male	31	Iran
16	Male	Early 30's	Albania
17	Male	Early 70's	Iran

[31] Due to ethical reasons and in order to guarantee the anonymity of my informants, I decided not to publish the research data through the Radboud University. The transcriptions, audio files and Atlas.ti documents are exclusively shared with my supervisor.

Annex 2: Code network on social capital and its (de)construction



Annex 3: Atlas.ti code groups

ATLAS.ti Report

Social Capital among Undocumented Migrants

Code groups

Report created by Mats Jansen on 29 Jul 2019

Communication

Members:

- Contact- face to face
- Contact- online
- Contact- phone
- Language
- Respect

Comment:

All codes that are connected to means of communication, language and values to each other.

Connections

Members:

● Connection- conflict/limited ● Connection- Dutch people ● Connection- family ● Connection- friends ● Connection- organizations ● Connection- relationship ● Connection- volunteers

Comment:

All codes that are connected to social connections between informants and their social network/social capital

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Emotions and experiences

Members:

● Emotion- happy ● Emotion- optimism ● Emotion- pessimism ● Emotion- sad ○ Negative status application ● Nijmegen- negative ● Nijmegen- positive ○ Passive situation ○ Reflection- past vs now ○ Respect

Comment:

All codes that have to do with feelings, thoughts and values

Locations

Members:

○ Country of origin ● Location- AZC ● Location- BBB ● Location- Gezellig ● Location- Library ● Location- Park ● Location- Waalkade ○ Moving/ Displacement ● Nijmegen- negative ● Nijmegen- positive ○ Ter Apel

Comment:

All codes that mention locations in the quotations

Social capital

Members:

● Social capital- construction ● Social capital- deconstruction ● Support- education ● Support- financial support ● Support- legal support ● Support- medical support ● Support- social support

Comment:

All codes that are connected with the useful aspects of social networks.

Annex 4: Interview guide

Notes:

- Although my research is focused on social capital, I will refer to '(social) networks' during the interviews. This will be more understandable for my informants. However, the questions I ask will also have a focus on the functionality of these contacts.
- Since the quality of Dutch differs among the residents in the shelter, I constructed both a Dutch and an English version. The Dutch version is not included in this annex.
- During the interviews, my informants will draw an ego-centred network map[32]. Along the questions I would ask them to make the map more detailed.

Interview guide: English version

Introduction for informant, before the start of the interview: *As you might know, I am currently researching the social networks of refugees in the Netherlands. During the past months, I learned about your situation and I would like to have a conversation about this. I am curious how your social network plays a role in daily life in the Netherlands (and elsewhere). I formulated some questions, and I expect our conversation to take like an hour. The goal of my research is to address how important the social network is in daily life of undocumented refugees. I hope this results in another approach to the way policymakers deal with you and fellow migrants. If you feel uncomfortable about certain issues and themes during the interview you can always let me know and I'll change the subject. Also, I would like to record the audio of the interview in order to hear it again. Afterwards it will be deleted and I won't mention your name in the research. Do you have any questions before we start?*

Theme 1: Introduction (*Before the start of the interview, I would like to ask some questions about you in general)*

- *Can you tell me something about yourself?*
    - Name, Age, Trajectories, Reasons, Family.
- *What do you understand to be a social network?*
    - Also explain how I conceptualize social networks.

[32] See Chapter 4: Working in the field: methods and reflections

- *Whom do you consider to be part of your social network? Why?*
    - Construct a concentric circle map*

Theme 2: Nijmegen (*I would like to ask some questions about your connection to Nijmegen)*. Note: having a connection with Nijmegen is one of the conditions to receive a bed in the shelter).

- *For how long have you been living in Nijmegen?*
    - How did you end up in Nijmegen? → influenced by others?
- *How do you like Nijmegen?*
    - *Where does/doesn't the informant feel comfortable*?
    - *Can you explain why you feel that way about place A, B, C?*
- *How did you end up in the BBB?*
- *What do you think of this place? What would you change?*
- *Are there any people living in the shelter you have met before? Where and when?*
    - Ask about the functions of these different locations.

Theme 3: Social capital in daily life (*The next questions will be about you and your social network. I am mostly interested about the role these networks play in your daily life.)*

- *What do your social networks mean to you?*
- *When is are your social networks important to you? When are they less important?*
    - Labour options, support, information about the Netherlands etc.
- *In what ways are the social networks you are connected to different?*
    - Think about networks within the Netherlands, or more transnational (Europe or country of origin).
    - Who are you able to see on a daily basis? Who is more distant or hard to reach?
    - Different ways of communication: skype or face-to-face?
- *Where do you meet people who are part of your social network?*
    - Are there any other places apart from 'Gezellig' and the BBB?
- *In what way does your social network influence you as a person? Do you take any decisions because others do so? Why?*

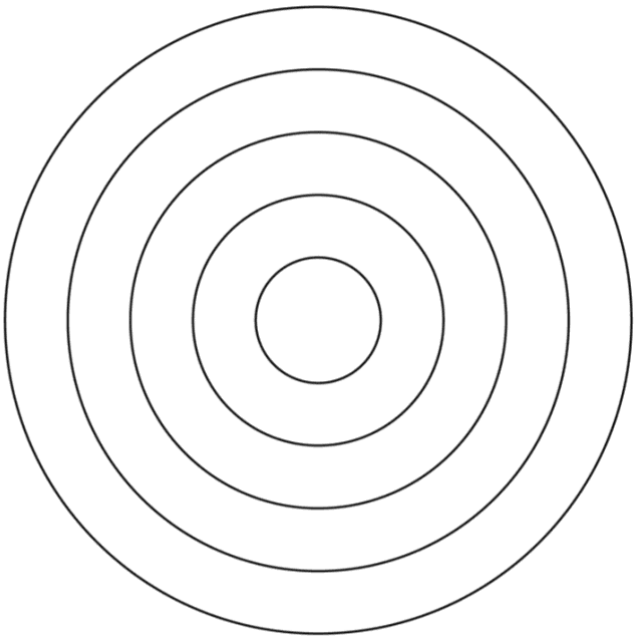
- *The social connections you have can contribute to more optional places to sleep. What do you think about the fact that someone loses their place to sleep in the shelter because he barely uses it?*
    - When is this (not) justified?
- *When the shelter was moved a few months ago, you and the others had to spend some nights in a sport centre. Where you there as well or did you spend those nights somewhere else?*
    - *If yes: how did you experience this?* (Why did you not go to your network?)
    - *If no: why? Did your social network have any influence?*

Theme 4: Moments of (de)construction *(We have mostly been talking about your existing networks and connections during this interview. At this moment, I want to talk about how these networks where formed, but also about how others have been possibly deconstructed)*

- Ask about the multiple social networks that have been mentioned before: *Can you explain how this social network was formed?* (These can be singular networks, but there may be overlap between them)
    - Who, what, where, when, how, why?
- *When did you lose social networks and connections? Why did it happen?*
    - Who was this connection?
    - When did this happen?
    - Was there a reason for this?

Theme 5: Emotions and experiences *(We have been talking about your social networks and how roles and positions may change over time. I would like to talk about how this has affected you emotionally.)*

- *Thinking about social networks, what is your opinion about them?*
    - *What does it feel like to be part of a social network or group?*
- *Can you tell me about how it feels to lose friends or connections?*
- *When is this a bad thing?*
- *When is this not a problem?*
- *How do you see the future? How can your social networks contribute to this?*
    - *Are there any limitations or thresholds?*

These were my questions. I want to thank you for your time and effort. Do you have any further questions or comments about the interview? Are there any aspects I forgot to ask, or that you want to give more comments on?

Annex 5: Concentric circle map (Herz & Olivier, 2012)