ON THE BORDER

LIFE IN TRANSIT AT THE FRENCH-BRITISH BORDER

SURVEY REPORT

WITH PEOPLE STRANDED ON THE DOORSTEP OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

MARTA LOTTO

MIGRANT SUPPORT PLATFORM (PSM)

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SEPTEMBER 2021

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Hélène Petit

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ACRONYMS

GM: General Meeting

CAES: Centres for Reception and Reviewing Situations of Asylum Seekers

CAO: Reception and Orientation Centre

ECHR: European Court of Human Rights

CMP: Medical-psychological centres

CNCDH: French National Consultative Commission on Human Rights

CRS: Republican Security Companies

CAMO: Ouistreham Migrant Aid Collective

COMEDE: Committee for the Health of Exiles

DDETS: Departmental Directorate for Employment, Labour and Solidarity

DPAR: Return assistance preparation system

GAV: Custody

HRO: Human Rights Observers

HUDA: Emergency accommodation for asylum seekers

MdM: Médecins du Monde

UFM: Unaccompanied foreign minors

UAM: Unaccompanied minors

MRS: Mobile Refugees Support

MSF: Médecins Sans Frontières

OFII: French Office for Immigration and Integration

PSM: Migrant Support Platform

RAF: Royal Air Force

PAF: Border Police

PASS: All-day healthcare centre

SAO: Reception and orientation service

SAMU: Emergency medical service

SIAO: Information exchange system between integrated reception and orientation services

AC: Administrative Court

PREAMBLE

This survey was conducted in the first half of 2021, among people stranded on the northern coast in transit to the UK. This research project was driven by a desire to hear from the primary people involved and their perspective on the situation and their living conditions at the border.

As we will see, despite the uniqueness of each of the individuals who contributed to the survey, whether in terms of their backgrounds, life plans, gender, age and nationality, people stranded in transit at the French-British border all share the experience of being in transit at the border and therefore the direct consequences of the public policies implemented there. In this sense, these people form a "community of experience".

And it is with this community and in light of this experience, and based on it, that we wanted to collect perceptions, analyses and reflections on their living conditions in this transit situation at the border. We also wanted to better understand the demands, denunciations and proposals from those who have first-hand experiences of migration policies.

This is why although the people interviewed in this survey have, for the most part, continued their migratory journeys and, therefore, the people actually present at the beginning of 2022 are not the same, nor are their unique stories and pathways, the public policies in force remain the same. The events that interviewees have experienced, as well as those that have taken place since the end of the drafting of this report, are the result of the rhetoric and systemic political practices implemented at the border for the past 30 years. Thus, while this report constitutes a kind of "snapshot" of the situation at a given time and takes into account multiple situations and profiles, it nevertheless remains a collection of the words of an entire community, which is stuck in the same transit situation, and which, as long as the public policies implemented at the border are the same, will experience more or less the same violence and violations of fundamental rights.

Lastly, we have decided to focus our attention on the condition of these people in transit rather than on the status they can obtain in France or elsewhere, or on the main motivations for leaving their country of origin or on the suffering caused by their departure. Throughout this report, we therefore use the term "people in transit[1]" rather than "refugees", "asylum seekers", "economic migrants", "exiles" or others, so as not to reduce people to a category that cannot represent them as a whole and with the intention of reflecting as accurately as possible the situation of these people at this particular point in their lives.

1. The transit situation refers to the mobility practices associated with "step-by-step migration" and a pathway that is defined and redefined day after day. It highlights the instability of their presence in the territories crossed (Lotto 2021).

INTRODUCTION

THE FRENCH-BRITISH BORDER

Thirty-four kilometres separate the French coast from the English coast and, on clear days, it is possible to see the English coastline from France with the naked eye, and vice versa.

Over the past thirty years, various bilateral agreements and conventions have strengthened this border, further impeding the crossing of persons to whom this right is not granted. Border surveillance systems are deployed along the coast, from the Channel to the North Sea. This is demonstrated by the Eurotunnel and the ports connecting France to the United Kingdom, which are surrounded by kilometres and kilometres of barriers, four-metre fences (lined and topped with barbed wire), infrared detection systems, CCTV cameras and light projectors. Police presence and patrols have increased along the coast, using drones to detect any attempted crossings.

The development of these control systems creates a secure and militarised landscape, and is also characterised by the persistent presence of people in transit situations in the public space: wandering, waiting and constantly trying to find a way to get over this security wall that now constitutes the border.

Many people in transit try to cross the Channel on a daily basis: they hide in lorries, on ferries, in Eurotunnel carriages and shuttles or pile into small boats taking to the sea[2].

This comes at a human cost: the increasing number of constraints and obstacles to crossing this border is pushing people to take ever greater risks, putting their lives in danger. There were 302 deaths recorded between 1999 and May 2021 due to this border security policy[3,4]. During the many attempts to thwart the controls, people in transit were electrocuted, crushed, overturned, hit by vehicles or trains, killed by falling lorries, suffocated in vans or drowned at sea. Others died because of conditions in the camps, stabbings or untreated illnesses.

Despite the risks, bans and police surveillance, many people from Brittany to the Nord/Pas-de-Calais regions are waiting for the opportunity to cross this border. Many of them end up in Calais, the region's main port, from which millions of lorries and passengers cross the border each year (3.5 million lorries and more than 30 million passengers in 2017)[5]. Others are scattered along the coast and in northern France, from Dunkirk to Saint-Malo. They settle around the main crossing points near the ports – such as Le Havre, Ouistreham, Dieppe, Cherbourg – as well as at service stations, car parks and motorway areas used by lorries that provide links to Great Britain. But more recently, people settle near areas where attempts to cross by *small boat*, kayak or canoe are organised.

2. During the health crisis, attempts to cross by sea increased, perhaps because of the decrease in crossings by truck and ferry. In 2019, 4,000 attempted crossings were recorded, compared with 5,000 in the first eight months of 2020 (Galisson 2020: 10).
3. At the time of writing this report, over the space of several months the list grew to almost 337 deaths as at 30 December 2021.
4. https://neocarto.github.io/calais/; Galisson, Pettit and Timberlake (2021); Gisti/Institute of Race Relations (IRR) and Permanent Peoples' Tribunal (PPT) 2020.
5. Speech by the President of the French Republic to the forces mobilised in Calais, 16 January 2018 https://www.elysee.fr/front/pdf/elysee-module-860-fr.pdf.

Since the 1990s, many informal camps[6] have been set up close to these crossing points. Some are recent, while others are well-established and firmly rooted in the region. They are inhabited by people from the same country or by "the whole world", as described by a young person met in the spring of 2021 on the roundabout of one of the largest camps in Calais at the time. They bring together people who share a common experience: that of a border, whose legal crossing is refused to them.

These camps are the target of repressive policies, which are determined to impose, by means of recurring police operations, a *zero fixation point* strategy. It is from these living spaces, and by gathering the accounts of their inhabitants, that it is possible to better understand the needs and living conditions of these people, and to also understand what characterises and underpins these places.

INFORMAL LIVING SPACES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

Informal camps around borders are an ancient phenomenon that are very visible at the main gateways and junctions of migratory routes. They can be seen, for example, on the hills adjacent to the Spanish enclave of Melilla, as well as near the iron curtains of Ceuta, around the port of Patras in Greece, in the Subotica countryside on the Serbian-Hungarian border[7] or on the beaches and under the viaducts of Ventimiglia in Italy. Camps pop up where controls are exacerbated and crossing points are concentrated. The number of their inhabitants varies depending on the different migratory trajectories and routes or on the intensity of the migratory pressure. It is quite rare for camps to disappear; often they move or, as is the case on the northern coast, they disperse across the territory in line with the evictions and different transit networks.

Camps inhabited by people in transit are not unique to northern France, but rather a material consequence of the dead ends produced by migration policies that restrict the mobility and movement of people. Northern France represents the last part of the continent of the Schengen area, where people who want or are obliged to leave France are concentrated, in an attempt to reach the United Kingdom[8].

Extensive literature[9] on coastal camps and land settlements has shown that this phenomenon has been ongoing since the 1990s. These informal living spaces have resisted and continue to resist repression and deterrence policies. They continue to exist regardless of evictions, the destruction of shelters, and the uprooting of tents. This phenomenon is due to a general non-reception policy, which combines a lack of alternatives in terms of accommodation solutions for people in transit and a systematic operation to destroy any makeshift shelters, but also a border that increases the obstacles to its crossing.

6. The term "camp" refers to those transit and living areas that are "self-established when crossing the border" (Djigo 2016: 10).
7. See, for example: Caloz-Tschopp 2004; Coureau 2007; Migreurop 2007, Fedele 2014.
8. Although most of the people we interviewed mention "England", we have chosen to use the word "United Kingdom" to reflect the reality of the pathways that emerge after having crossed the Channel.
9. Gourdeau 2019; Agier 2018; Guénebeaud 2017; Djigo 2016; Thomas 2011.

Informal camps are, in a way, just the tip of the iceberg, as they provide a condensed view of the unique but shared situation of a group of people.

As you travel the roads along the border, the first thing you notice are silhouettes meandering through the city, bodies that carry the smell of smoke from the fires they use to warm themselves and cook. When the associations distribute provisions, dozens of men leave the woods, hills and forests to converge where they can find food or material assistance. The tents are located on the outskirts of the cities, hidden from view, under bridges, in ditches, on the edge of fields or wasteland. They also shelter in dilapidated and dangerous hangars, as evidenced by the fire that occurred in Grande-Synthe in a disused drying plant, which was home to hundreds of people[10]. The geography of the camps shows a forced and constant displacement of these fragile shelters, pushed ever further from the sites where the crossings are attempted and, above all, out of sight of the city's inhabitants.

In an area where weather conditions, depending on the season, are very hostile to outdoor life, these places are mostly unsanitary and liable to flooding at the first rain. They often do not have drinking water points or sanitary facilities.

In 2019, during a visit to Calais and Grande-Synthe, the United Nations Special Rapporteur stated that she was "deeply concerned about the housing and living conditions of refugees and migrants in the Hauts-de-France region near Calais (...)" She called on the State "to act urgently to rectify the situation, in accordance with international human rights standards"[11]. Since then, conditions of indignity and violence, and a policy imposing the inhumane and degrading treatment of people in transit, have persisted.

The living conditions of the inhabitants of these many camps are at the centre of this report.

PEOPLE IN TRANSIT

France's northern coastline, from Grande-Synthe to Cherbourg, has historically been a place of passage, transit and waiting for a crossing to Great Britain. Thousands of men and women have passed through it, with diverse migratory pathways, origins and stories.

Even today, people are trying to take the same path to find a better life, a "normal life" they tell us, after fleeing wars, personal problems, poverty and lack of opportunities. These are men and women who have come close to death by breaking into the borders. They have had dramatic experiences when travelling by sea or by lorry and some have even spent time in the prisons of Libya, Croatia or Malta. They have been subjected to a great deal of violence by the different forms of police within the countries travelled.

10. When interviews were collected on 22 April 2021 no injuries were reported.
11. Report by Ms Leilani Farha, UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing, issued on 12 April 2019.

These people have been subject to the implementation of European migration policies. Some of them initiated procedures to obtain documents enabling them to settle in the European Union, which, for the most part, have been refused. Sometimes, they only found out later that the system governed by the Dublin Regulation and the deposit of their fingerprints constrains their freedom of movement and their choice of destination.

Among the people who live in these informal places, in early 2021, we mainly met young men from Pakistan, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Iraqi Kurdistan. Men from sub-Saharan Africa, Egypt, Algeria, Albania and Iran are also present, but remain in the minority. There are a large number of minors[12] and, from April, we observed an increase in the number of women and families with young children.

While there are a range of diverse nationalities in Calais, in other coastal territories, highly regulated camps are run by very specific national communities.

The global health crisis did not prevent people from attempting the crossing and during the first COVID-19 confinement period, people were still present on the coast. Between April and June 2020 in Calais, the associations estimated that 1,200 exiles were living on the streets, approximately 400 in Grande-Synthe and a hundred in the other sites visited. By early spring 2021, the number of people travelling to the UK continued to rise.

A SURVEY OF CAMP RESIDENTS

This report is the outcome of research conducted from March to August 2021, during the health crisis caused by COVID-19. It was produced in collaboration with many community players present on the coast.

The purpose of this survey is to contribute to a reflection on the tools, systems and demands that could improve the daily lives of those surviving at the border. The aim is to better understand the living conditions of people in transit in France in order to, *at the very least*, find ways to make daily life less arduous for these men and women who are temporarily in France and to design, based on their information, solutions that are more respectful of fundamental rights.

To do this, this report mobilises elements on the ground, and has as its starting point the direct exchange and collection of accounts of the most affected: the people who live in these informal camps in northern France, stranded on the threshold of the French-British border.

These exchanges took place on multiple sites corresponding to the main living spaces, in Calais and Grande-Synthe in particular, then mainly in Ouistreham and Cherbourg.

This text aims to give an overview of the living conditions of these people in transit, their unique profiles and stories, their experiences of the places in which they shelter and their experiences of support, solidarity but also hostilities that they encounter within these territories.

12. See Paton E., Boittiaux, C. 2020, RRE, Left out in the cold, Autumn 2019: https://refugee-rights.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RRE_LeftOutInTheCold.pdf; Human Rights Watch, "C'est comme vivre en enfer: Abus policiers à Calais contre les migrants enfants et adultes" ["It's like living in hell: Police abuse in Calais against child and adult migrants".]

This research work was therefore designed to be a personal exchange of information, based on the life stories and the words of the people concerned in order to identify their needs, violations, hopes and despair.

We therefore want to provide food for thought, give a recent overview and reflect on the various interventions to which the associations that are involved daily in this field can give substance.

The report aims to capture the scattered words and unique experiences of people living at the border, while highlighting the situation they share. A collection of both qualitative and quantitative data meets the dual requirement of showing trends and recurrences in the daily lives of people in these informal living spaces, but also, and sometimes through the stories of people living on this border, without making their unique and subjective lives, anecdotes and experiences "invisible".

Each part of this report describes a dimension of the existence of the people in transit stranded at this border, based on the experiences of the people we interviewed, and also relies on the observations and expertise of associations, organisations and collectives present within the territory. It ends with elements of reflection, denunciation and demand expressed by the people in transit we met, regarding the conditions on this border.

The first chapter presents the approach of this research, through which we have collected the data that are presented in this report. We describe the phases for developing an interview grid, identifying inclusion criteria, recruiting interviewees and conducting the survey collectively. Subsequently, we present the profiles of the interviewees, in particular their socio-demographic characteristics, and propose a contextualisation of their presence in northern France.

In the second chapter, the aim is to present the pathways of the people in transit we interviewed. This presentation is intended to be preliminary in order to provide a perspective on the migratory trajectories that have led these people to France. In fact, we will discuss the countries through which the interviewees have travelled – both within and outside Europe – by reporting on the difficulties encountered and the forms of insecurity experienced. This part gives us some insight into why they are stranded in northern France. Which brings us to the third chapter, which discusses the reasons why the people we interviewed want to cross the Channel and reach the UK. We identified three groups with different reasons. The first group consists of people yearning to reach the UK to be with relatives or people who have always aimed for this country. For the second group, the desire to reach the UK is the result of a comparative analysis of costs and benefits in countries that would offer them a better life. For the third group, the UK was chosen by default and represents a constrained solution due to the complexity or avoidance of European migration policies. The chapter concludes with a review of the evolution of risks that people take in various attempts to cross the Channel.

The following two chapters focus on the analysis of concrete living conditions at the border. First, we describe the opportunities, practices and constraints of the forms of shelter to which this transit population has access. On the one hand, in Chapter 4, we first present life in informal camps in northern France, which are significantly impacted by frequent evictions. We then explore the possibilities of institutional accommodation from the perspective of people in transit. Finally, we address the forms of reception offered by volunteers, community structures or squats.

Chapter 5 focuses on the daily lives of people in transit, examining access to food, water, the city and security. In this regard, we highlight initiatives and services that alleviate the difficulties experienced on a daily basis and respond to the most fundamental rights.

The concluding chapter addresses the issue of health, with a focus on the physical and mental health of the people interviewed. It also discusses access to healthcare, treatment and referral to existing healthcare structures. Lastly, it explores interviewees' perceptions of the coronavirus pandemic.

The report's conclusion opens up concrete proposals for change, which we hope will form a basis for dialogue, a means of reflection with the people who live on the border and who are confronted with its violence, difficulties and contradictions on a daily basis.

As such, this report is aimed at those who live at the border, those who have passed through it and those who have a sense of what is happening there. It is aimed at people who suffer the effects of the border in their cities and who live alongside people in transit on a daily basis. It was written for people who are sensitive to and question how the border is managed locally and the effects of migration policies on people's lives. This report is also aimed at those who, at other migratory transit points, observe similar situations. The aim of this work is to demonstrate, albeit in a very short time, the situation in northern France based on the experiences of the people most affected.

CHAPTER 1

THE SURVEY

CHAPTER 1: THE SURVEY

The research was supported by a working group composed of actors from different associations involved around the French-British border: in particular, Secours Catholique, Médecins du monde, PSM, CAMO, La Cimade, Project Play, Choose Love, Utopia 56 and the Refugee Women's Centre.

This report was created by conducting a multi-site survey on people in transit situations and by meeting, exchanging and coordinating community players present along the border (from the Nord/Pas-de-Calais region to Lower Normandy). The survey focuses on the situation at the border during the first half of 2021. During the six short months of the mission, the research was structured in three stages. The first stage consisted of developing an interview grid, visiting the camps and living spaces of people in transit all along the coast and meeting with community players involved in the territory. During the second stage, from 29 March to 11 June 2021, we conducted interviews with residents of informal camps. Finally, July, August and September were devoted to analysing the data collected and writing this report.

The aim of the mission was to carry out an investigation into the living conditions of people in transit at the French-British border and to support the development of alternative proposals to current policies based on the first-hand experiences of the people affected. To do this, we set up a survey system consisting of interviews, both structured and semi-structured. The aim was twofold: on the one hand, to collect information that can be analysed quantitatively and, on the other hand, to receive the words, experience and perceptions of the interviewees. In addition to interviews with people in transit, this report is also based on the collection of observations, secondary data, grey literature (relationships, reports, summaries, collections of testimonies and monitoring carried out in the associative context) and interviews with activists and community volunteers.

This chapter is organised into two parts: firstly, we will present the research methodology and, secondly, we will present the profiles of the survey participants.

METHODOLOGY

Community players, coordinated by Marta Lotto – an anthropologist and in charge of this mission – were involved in the creation and collection of interviews. In order to guide the interviewers in their interviews, we opted for a structured and precise interview grid (Annex 1). This made it possible to have consistent data collected rigorously. Interviewers were often asked to tick off options, although many questions were asked openly, allowing the interviewee to answer freely. This facilitated the analysis and coding phase. However, for all questions, the interviewers were asked to take notes and the verbatim responses given by the interviewees. These interview snippets provide rich data.

INTERVIEW CONTENT

The interview consists of six thematic sections (Annex 1).

The first section aims to collect information on the people (age, level of education, marital status, origin) in order to better define the sociological profile of people living in the camps.

The second section is devoted to the very presence of people in northern France. We asked them about their arrival at the border and, if necessary, about their movements in France prior to this. We looked at why they are here, what their plans are and how they perceive the UK.

Next, the third section, the most comprehensive and in-depth, deals with the living conditions of displaced persons. We listened to their concerns, the difficulties they encountered, emergencies and needs they felt were essential. Interviewees were invited to talk about their daily lives. We suggested, for example, that they talk to us about the conditions in which they sleep, the dangers they face and their relationship with the police.

These many questions are, for the most part, open-ended in order to better understand the experiences and thoughts specific to each person according to their own view of the situation and to better understand their needs afterwards. The responses thus enabled us to outline comparative approaches between the conditions of the different living spaces on the coast and to highlight experiences to be valued or denounced. In addition, this section makes it possible to take stock of the violations of some of the most fundamental rights and to understand the adequacy or inadequacy of existing structures and systems.

The fourth section is devoted to physical and mental health. It focuses on the health of interviewees and their access to care. In addition, it explores ways in which services and interventions might be useful.

The fifth section deals with administrative situations. This section provides an overview of the status, rights and facilities that interviewees have or have not had access to. This section also makes it possible to explore the plans for migration to the United Kingdom. It also provides evidence to investigate the adequacy (or otherwise) of State proposals and the risks people may encounter during police checks.

Finally, one last section focuses on migratory pathways. It concerns both the difficulties of settling and moving around. We are particularly interested in transit times, the reasons why the interviewees left each country in their journey and their living conditions throughout their journeys. This section broadens our view of international migration policies and the experience of migration. It focuses on the prolonged and recurring difficulties encountered at each stage of the journey.

A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

On the ground, 23 people from various associations conducted at least one interview. This is a special collective approach that deserves special attention. Indeed, about half of the interviews were conducted by anthropologist Marta Lotto, while the others were conducted, almost always in pairs, by community players. They were familiar with the contexts in which the interviews took place.

The aim was to promote and enrich the field and local work of community activists. Their knowledge of the field and their links to those present represented an added value capable of creating a trusting environment that enabled interviews to be conducted. On the one hand, this made it possible to access categories and profiles that were more difficult to approach, and on the other hand it prevented power dynamics that may have been present in the camps from being reinforced. For example, their expertise made it easier to meet unaccompanied minors or women in more suitable, neutral and protected contexts, in order to ensure good conditions for speech collection.

Equally, when the interviews were not conducted by community players, their support in accessing the field greatly facilitated collection. This collective approach undoubtedly contributed to the high quality of the interviews.

Secondly, the survey process also met the objective of enabling the associations involved to speak directly with the people living in the camp about their needs and thus to better understand them and obtain critical feedback on the situation in order to reflect on new action strategies.

This participatory approach certainly has advantages, but at the same time it posed several difficulties.

With regard to the positive aspects, for some associations, the survey proved to be a tool for intervention and reflexivity. The interviews were an opportunity to provide useful information to the interviewees and to refer them to existing services. For example, it was at the end of an interview that we were able to explain to a minor the steps involved in his care and put him in contact with a social worker who follows the pathways and procedures for minors; in another case, we were able to inform a person with healthcare needs about the services available to them. One association has widely discussed the need for an interpreter, especially during the medical consultations it offers.

As for the difficulties, in an emergency, some associations found it difficult to find time to conduct the interviews. Moreover, some found it difficult to position themselves in the survey and to justify such an approach. Community players refused to adopt an interrogative approach and were uncomfortable or opposed to the practice of asking questions that they considered intimate. Their role as caregivers on the ground made them feel concerned that interviewees would feel compelled to return a service to them by answering their questions.

The non-horizontal nature of the sociological interview was perhaps not the most appropriate means for associative approaches.

This survey is the first step in the collective exploration of action strategies designed to improve living conditions at the border.

LANGUAGE ISSUES: TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING

The main difficulty in this type of survey is the language barrier. How do you conduct interviews with people of different origins who speak different languages? Our approach pays particular attention to inclusiveness, emphasising the importance of allowing everyone to express themselves in their mother tongue, if they so wish. The research therefore relied on interpreters, volunteers and bilingual community activists and the interpreting service of the association *ISM Interprétariat*. The latter provides a telephone service offering the flexibility of having, by telephone and whilst respecting confidentiality, an interpreter in the mother tongue of our contacts.

The interviews therefore took place in several languages with a translation between the language of the interviewee and that of the interviewer. Five interpreters accompanied the interviewers on the ground, translating mainly from Vietnamese, Arabic and Sorani Kurdish. ISM was used for approximately 1/5 of the interviews. A trusted person provided a translation by telephone and a person present in a living space who spoke different languages translated during the interview. The rest of the interviews were conducted by interviewers proficient in the following languages: Arabic, German, English and French.

German	English	Arabic	French	Dari	Kurdish	Pashto	Vietnamese
2	13	19	3	1	15	4	1

Table 1: Languages in which the interviews were conducted

The opportunity to express oneself in a desired language has allowed the inclusion of people who are usually under-represented. Most daily exchanges with community activists, or other actors on the ground, happen in English, which tends to automatically exclude people who do not know this language from these interactions. On the contrary, the approach centred on interpretation and translation, proposed as part of this survey, allowed twenty-six people who do not speak English at all to be interviewed.

However, translation is not without its drawbacks. One of the first limitations was the length of the interviews, which was increased by the need for translation, and which some people found too long. A second limitation was the availability of interpreters; in fact, we had to give up on conducting interviews with people who were interested in the approach at least three times due to non-availability and the lack of interpreters at the border. Lastly, one of the final limitations is that the transcription of the interviews was carried out directly on site by the interviewer, so any verbatim accounts were reviewed by a third party, with all the biases that this entails. Indeed, although the *verbatim accounts* have been transcribed in a faithful manner on the interview grid, translation involves mediation and linguistic and cultural interpretation, and if the words are maintained, the way in which they are expressed and their meaning may be altered or modified.

CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS: INCLUDING A VARIETY OF LOCATIONS AND PROFILES

The two criteria for inclusion in the interview were: having lived in an informal camp on the coast and not having left this border area. We decided to exclude people who have successfully reached the United Kingdom and who have moved on to a new stage in their migratory journeys.

We wanted to interview as many people as possible, seeking to include as many different profiles as possible (gender, age, origin) and diverse living spaces.

The interviewers conducted fifty-nine interviews that lasted between thirty minutes and one hour and fifty minutes. These were conducted in the following cities: Calais, Grande-Synthe, Ouistreham, Cherbourg, St. Hilaire Cottes, Caen, Ranville and Herzeele. They were carried out in twenty-two living spaces inhabited by people in transit at the border.

In particular, these living spaces consisted of twelve informal camps, a squat, four day centres, a community space, two houses from community hosts and, lastly, two community accommodation structures.

Map 1: Cities where interviews were conducted.

The data collected is used to examine a wide range of experiences and perspectives and to identify common recurrences and situations. We sought to include a variety of living spaces and profiles to examine the difficulties and experiences that people in transit may have in common on the coast. Based on the unique stories and experiences of each person, we address a shared situation: that of life at the border.

This work is not exhaustive of the various living spaces occupied by people in transit. Due to time constraints, we mainly focused on the places most frequented by the associations that are members of the PSM network. This final report is therefore neither a true picture of the living conditions in all coastal camps nor of the people who inhabit them. Instead, it is a multi-location overview of the French-British border at a given moment which takes into account multiple situations and profiles.

It is a rigorous study that responds to the desire to encounter a variety of living spaces in a changing context involving people whose words are invisible but whose bodies are highly visible in the media.

With regard to the procedures for carrying out the interviews, we found that in the various living spaces, the concentration of individuals is high and the interactions are intense. It was therefore not always easy to find a place to conduct an hour-long interview without interruption. Various strategies were adopted to ensure confidentiality and peace of mind. Where possible, we suggested moving away from eavesdropping and distractions. Within the camps, we suggested moving away from communal spaces and conducting interviews in less frequented areas. In some cases, we had a lorry available to carry out the interviews in a protected space. This did not prevent interruptions and intrusions. For example, during one interview, a 15-year-old was called out of the lorry by two camp residents.

During interviews in enclosed spaces, we were able to use offices or empty rooms. We also found that some people only agreed to be interviewed in the presence of one or more relatives, which enriched some responses but made it more difficult to approach more intimate topics. However, we do not consider these interview conditions to have compromised the reliability of the responses given.

We offered the interview randomly, to people present in living spaces, trying to ensure a variety of profiles, in particular with regard to age and origin. In a minority of cases, the community players knew and already had an established relationship of trust with the interviewees.

In some areas, it was difficult to find people available for interviews. We received refusals for various reasons. Refusals to participate were justified by the strict organisation of time. For example, distribution times, the monitoring of tents and belongings, and ferry times posed time constraints that prevented us from conducting interviews with people who were otherwise willing to be interviewed. Scheduling meetings is not a viable strategy in areas such as this, characterised by the precariousness and uncertainty of tomorrow and affected by emergencies and difficulties that need to be prioritised.

Apart from the lack of availability, people expressed their disapproval of our approach. In discussions with them, they expressed their disillusionment with communication about their living conditions and disenchantment with any action intended to improve the situation at the border. Others justified their refusals with mistrust. In this regard, we also stress that the interviews were not recorded and transcribed because, in an exploratory phase, the interviewees shared their concerns with us about this practice. Faced with this mistrust, we decided to prioritise taking notes. The decision to abandon the dictaphones seems, to us, to have allowed for greater freedom of expression. In addition, the time

required for translation allowed the interviewer to take more notes, making it easier to transcribe what was said. This method of recording speech also signals to the interviewee that there is an interest in his or her responses.

However, it also had some drawbacks: it prevented a detailed analysis of the discourse because, even when we made the effort to transcribe words in full, we inevitably lost some information.

PROFILES OF THE PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

Gender

During the interviews, we met fifty-nine people defining themselves as in transit. They were mostly men. We interviewed only five women. The lack of female participation in the survey is explained by an over-representation of men in informal coastal camps. Some camps are exclusively male, while the composition of some living spaces in Calais and Grande-Synthe is mixed, although the presence of women is marginal. We observed an increasing number of women with the arrival of spring, when weather conditions become less severe.

The women we met were twenty, twenty-six, twenty-nine, thirty and thirty-four years old. They all had children present with them at the border, with the exception of one of them, whose children remained in their country of origin. Of these five women: one was divorced, one was separated, another was married – her husband was with her – and the last two were single.

We met them in living spaces and via services dedicated to them. Indeed, associations such as Refugee Women's Centre, Secours Catholique and Project Play and community organisations such as Maison Sésame and Maria Skobtsova House have specific initiatives aimed at women.

Age

The fifty-nine people we met were all between fourteen and forty-three years old, with an average age of twenty-five years. A quarter of them were under nineteen years old and the remaining three quarters were under twenty-nine years old. The young ages of the people we met is consistent with people's perception of their age as observers of the inhabitants of the camps. To confirm this, the oldest person (43 years old) we interviewed told us that they felt quite isolated because of their age. As far as younger people are concerned, we met thirteen minors. Unaccompanied minors (UAM)[13] are indeed widely present in northern France.

13. This concept refers to the French Family and Social Action Code, which focuses on the deprivation of child protection when no adult is legally responsible for them or takes care of them permanently. Associations often use the term "unaccompanied foreign minors" (UFM) to highlight the factual condition of isolation and the specificity of the migratory condition, instead of insisting on the legal framework.

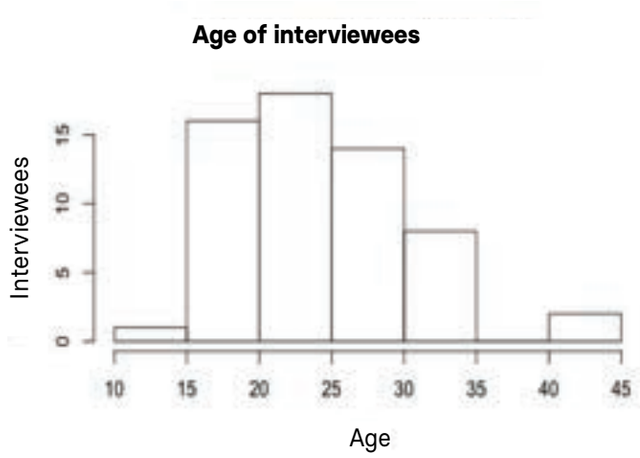


Figure 1: age of interviewees.

Since 2015, a growing number of minors have arrived on European shores[14] and this is also reflected at this border. During 2016, the association Trajectoires and UNICEF recorded at least 500 UAM based on a survey on living conditions in northern France. In the first half of 2021, unaccompanied foreign minors were also very prevalent in the various camps. Utopia 56 had met 289 new UAM in Grande-Synthe and the RYS15 had met, on average, 100 new UAM in Calais each month. We also met minors in Ouistreham and Cherbourg. The associations that care for them – including the Red Cross, Médecins du monde and the RYS – denounce the shortcomings of the State, which manifest themselves in a lack of intervention measures, their unsuitability or even their non-existence in violation of the international Convention on the Rights of the Child. In addition, most of the measures are conditional on participation in integration projects in France, and do not respond to the situations of minors in transit who do not wish to remain in France.

The age of people at the border is a very significant variable in analysing the discourse of the people we met. In exchanges, it is often mentioned by people in their diagnoses of the present and in their projections for the future. Indeed, the people interviewed widely referred to this variable when discussing their plans. They show their impatience to study, to work, to settle down in order to lead a "normal life" one day. The question of time emerges as a central theme, in a context in which people are waiting, suspended in the space-time continuum of a border to be crossed[16]. In the section of the interview that addresses potential dangers, living conditions and the perception of context – which we will present on the following pages – the question of youth and age comes up a great deal. Reflections on youth are so prevalent in the accounts that thinking about presence in terms of youth in transit would shift the focus onto the desire and expectations of an age group.

The youth of the interviewed population is also reflected in family situations. During the interviews, we observed that the people we met were mainly single, 85% of whom were not married. The expectation of finding a country in which to settle carries with it the desire to lead "a normal life" as mentioned by many, to work and to one day marry.

14. Peyroux, Le Clève, Masson Diez 2016: 5.

15. Refugee Youth Service.

16. Lotto 2021: 6.

Eight interviewees had children in their care, six of whom had them with them. This creates additional difficulties in daily life, particularly for the three single women who care for their children in this context of transit at the border. Most of the people we met did not have their family with them, apart from two young people - one of whom was a minor - who arrived on the coast with a cousin.

Origin

The origins of the people we interviewed partly reflect the national populations in the study territory. As a criterion for inclusion in the survey, we opted for the greatest variability in living spaces. Consequently, the origins of the interviewees represent the nationalities most present at the different sites. Some camps and living spaces are frequented or inhabited by a single national community, such as the Sudanese community in Ouistreham. Other living spaces are home to several communities, one of which is often the majority. This is the case for Kurdish Iraqis who have historically settled in Grande-Synthe and who share this space with other communities – particularly those from Pakistan and Vietnam.

In the twenty-two living spaces in which we conducted the interviews, we met: twenty-three people from Sudan, seventeen people born in Iraq, seven Afghan people, four Eritreans, four Ethiopians, two Iranians, one Vietnamese and one Nigerian.

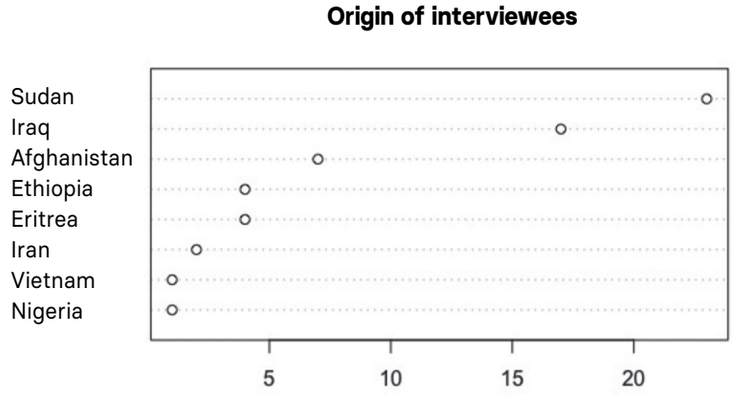


Figure 2: Number of migrants interviewed by country of origin.
Reading note: 23 people are from Sudan, 17 from Iraq.

We did not try to ensure that every nationality on the ground was represented. We had informal exchanges, for example, with people from Pakistan, Albania, Egypt, Syria and Algeria, which we regret that we were unable to include in the study due to time constraints.

The interviews conducted are not representative of all inhabitants of the camps and they do not reflect the ratio of the different nationalities present at the camps. There are no nationality-based censuses of the people inhabiting the living spaces due to the rapidly changing context and the informal nature of these settlements. However, we interviewed people from the countries we found most frequently in the camps in the first half of 2021, i.e. people from Sudan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Socio-cultural elements

The people we met were mostly young adults who often left the country they grew up in at a young age. 50% of them left their countries of origin before their twenties. As a result, most of them had not studied for very long. Only four people continued their studies beyond their twenties. The desire to start or resume studies and train for a profession remains among the future plans most talked about by the young people we met.

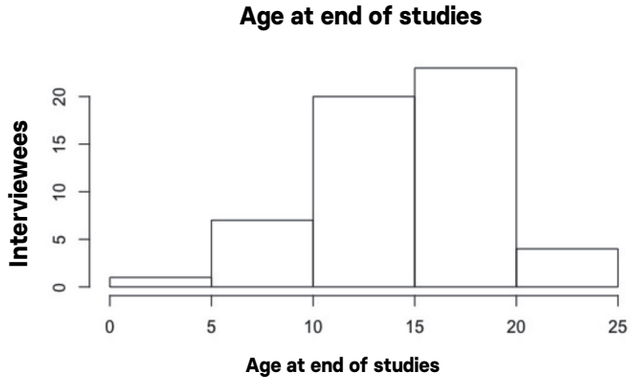


Figure 3: Age at the end of studies. Respondents: 55 people

Reading note: 7 people left school between the ages of 5 and 10.

Around 40% of those interviewed said they had not been trained in a profession. Of those who responded, most received training to practice professions, often manual, not only in the country of origin but also in the country of immigration.

Professional training sector	
Agriculture/Livestock farming	7
Building	6
Trades (electrician, joiner, blacksmith, mechanic, welder, decorator)	6
Services (hairdressers, garment tailor, gardener, estate agent, dental assistant, butcher)	6
Catering	5
Marketing/sales	2
Business management	1
Computer engineering	1
Veterinarian	1

Table 2: Sectors in which interviewees received training. 35 respondents

The different transit times in northern France

One final piece of information that should be considered before reading the following chapters, which makes it possible to better understand the situation at the border, is how long the people interviewed had been on the coast of northern France.

Almost all respondents provided a very precise answer to this question, as if they were keeping track of each day that passed. The only people who were hesitant about the date of their arrival were young people staying with local residents. They tried to find the answer, taking the time to look back over the past few months.

25% of the interviewees had been in the city where we met them for less than two weeks, 50% had been there for less than two and a half months and the remaining 25% had been there for more than five months. Five people had been there for more than one year. Not to mention the fact that some had already spent weeks or even months trying to cross the Channel from other sites in northern France or Belgium.

Days spent in camps at the French-British border	Number of people	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Less than a week	8	13.6	13.6
8-15 days	9	15.3	25.4
16 days – 1 month	8	13.6	42.4
1 month – 3 months	11	18.6	61
3 months – 6 months	15	25.4	86.4
6 months – 1 year	4	6.8	93.2
1 year – 1 and a half years	4	6.8	100
Total	**59**	**100.1**	

Table 3: Cumulative frequency of time spent in northern cities.

The distribution of our sample seems to be a good representation of the heterogeneity of the inhabitants living in the camps. On the ground, the community players report back to us on the arrival of newcomers, the departure of former inhabitants and the existence of people who cannot cross the border and who have been at this impasse for a long time. Living spaces are thus plagued by the uncertainty of the future.

Who will be here tomorrow? The transient nature of the people present leads to these survival spaces being organised in a specific way. In relation to changes in residents, community structures are constantly confronted with the need to adapt services.

CHAPTER 2

DIVERSE PATHWAYS AND SHARED EXPERIENCES

CHAPTER 2: DIVERSE PATHWAYS AND SHARED EXPERIENCES

People who live in camps are often identified and described based on their past, where they came from and why they moved.

To describe or present people camped around border areas, we often refer to reasons that may have caused them to leave. Addressing these reasons is undoubtedly essential to better understanding the different profiles, the motivations of people who have come so far, who are putting their own lives at risk and bypassing the bans on movement, transit and settlement.

However, we have chosen not to focus solely on the reasons for leaving countries of origin, which are widely reported by the press and institutions.

The reasons for leaving are, in fact, of primary importance because it is on these reasons that the possibility of being granted refugee status is often based.

In this survey, we decided to focus more on what happens in the period between leaving the country of origin and arriving in northern France to give ourselves the means to think about the time spent migrating by not "invisibilising" any stage of the different pathways. Thus, we started listening with the aim of reporting on the diversions, the singularities, the parentheses, the time for settling in a certain country before leaving again, the rugged routes, the instability, the waiting, the uncertainty, the refusals, the rejections and the exclusion and, lastly, the violence due to the individuals' inability to move freely.

In this report, this approach echoes the desire to reflect on the conditions of these men and women who are still in transit, travelling and who are stranded - as they have been in different ways elsewhere - on this stretch of land that separates them from the United Kingdom. At this point in their journey they are hopeful that the United Kingdom could be the final destination in a migratory route that has been fraught with difficulties, transforming people, their objectives and their motivations. However, there is no guarantee that they will even get there.

In this chapter, we will focus on and explore the different stages of migration, and northern France is one of them. Indeed, more than half of the people we met left where they were born more than four years ago. Since their departure, they have had a bumpy ride, with experiences they had neither planned nor imagined.

We met people who had experienced many obstacles on their journeys, as well as people who had had to "go back to square one" in their countries of immigration. We spoke to people who have lived on the streets in cities and border areas in different countries for years, who have experienced both the violence of prisons and different detention centres, the violence of border police and the general hostility of the various countries in which they repeatedly said they did not feel safe. From these accounts we gain a better understanding of what people have to endure during this final stage of their journeys.

The northern coastline is considered the final dead end of a difficult journey. For example, the migrants we met referred to and compared their current situation with other transit areas: for example, Ulagarech, a young man from Ethiopia, described his daily life by stating that "Calais is the Sahara of Europe".

To explore migration times, and the different stages and trajectories of the journeys, we asked for a list of the countries in which the interviewees had spent time and the reasons for which they returned to the road. In addition, we asked about the living conditions and, in particular, the accommodation facilities to which they had access in each of these countries.

In this chapter, we will first present the reasons for leaving. We identified two different profiles among interviewee: firstly, individuals who left in the hope of a better future and who keep their objectives in mind and, secondly, people who fled their country to find safety and protection elsewhere. We will then present the duration of migratory journeys, which sometimes take more than several years.

Next we will clarify the difficulties and living conditions encountered, focusing initially on living conditions at the gates of Europe, particularly in Turkey and Libya, before focusing our attention on obstacles to movement within Europe.

We will outline the conditions of reception, particularly in Italy, Greece and Malta, and the constraints and obstacles to movement within the European territory.

Finally, we will present the obstacles to settling in Europe, highlighting the attempts people have made and the rejections they have suffered.

We will then present the situation in France and the demands and denunciations relating to migration policies that emerged from the testimonies.

REASONS FOR DEPARTURE

We decided to ask the survey participants, without insisting and only if they were willing to respond, to explain to us the main reason why they set out on their migratory journeys.

Many were evasive on this topic. Seven people mentioned problems without further defining these problems. We respected the fact that they were not obliged to explain or justify the intimate reasons why, at some point, they chose to abandon or were forced to abandon the people they love, their ways of life, and places they were familiar with to go elsewhere.

Among the thirty-one people who decided to share with us the reasons for their departure, we can identify two profiles. On the one hand, people whose reasons for departure are based on taking proactive action, oriented towards the future and the desire to build their own future and, on the other hand, people who told us about situations they wanted to escape. These are the positive or negative arguments that can reveal the

different approaches to making the decision to emigrate and going through with it. A third mentioned the desire for a future with more freedom and opportunities: "I wanted more control over my own life," Nebila told us, a young woman who left at the age of 16. Three other young people wanted to study, to have more opportunities and to give themselves the resources to succeed. For two young people, migration was an economic decision, sometimes motivated by their families, which also highlights the economic, social and political conditions of their countries.

The second profile consists of people who expressed a desire to escape from a specific situation: eleven people stated that they left because of war. They told us their experiences of acts of war, which triggered their decisions to leave the country. For example, they told us about the fire in their own village, threats to the family, the loss of one or more relatives in bloody civil wars. Insecurity within the country of origin was cited by three people. Insecurity within the country of origin was cited by three people. Opposition to the current regimes was also raised by six people. For example, they fled their country of origin to avoid unlimited military service.

Finally, a minority of the interviewees told us that family or religious problems were the reason for their departure.

There were not enough people interviewed for each country to make comparisons, but it is safe to say that the conditions in the countries of origin obviously influence the reasons for leaving: for example, all the Eritreans mentioned the military dictatorship, while for the Sudanese, war and insecurity were the main reasons for leaving.

YEARS MIGRATING

For various reasons, the people we met had left at a very young age: half of them were between twelve and twenty years old when they left their country of origin. Twenty-one people left their country of origin when still minors, and twelve were still minors at the time of this survey. They had spent many years migrating.

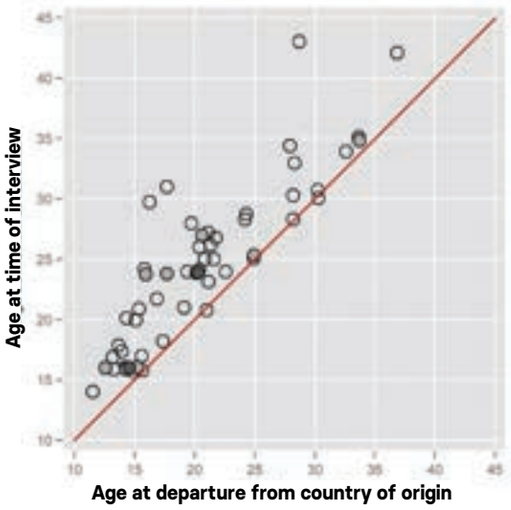


Figure 4: Years migrating. Total population: 55 people. Graph of data correlating age at departure with age at interview

Reading note: where dots are on the diagonal, the person has been on the road for up to 12 months. The further the dots are from the diagonal, the longer the person has spent in migration.

The graph above shows the age of the people at the time of their departure and at the time we met them in northern France. The graph therefore illustrates what proportion of their lives has been spent migrating. For a quarter of them, the journey lasted up to a year. Half of the people reached the coast after three years of wandering, increasing difficulties, and attempts to settle somewhere. For the remaining interviewees, the time was even longer. For the latter, the experience of immigration lasted between four and fourteen years.

After so many years away from home, they are still waiting to cross the Channel and build a life in the UK. They have been forced to spend a substantial part of their lives in transit. We can also observe the years spent migrating in the graph below (Figure 5), which makes the duration of these journeys more explicit.

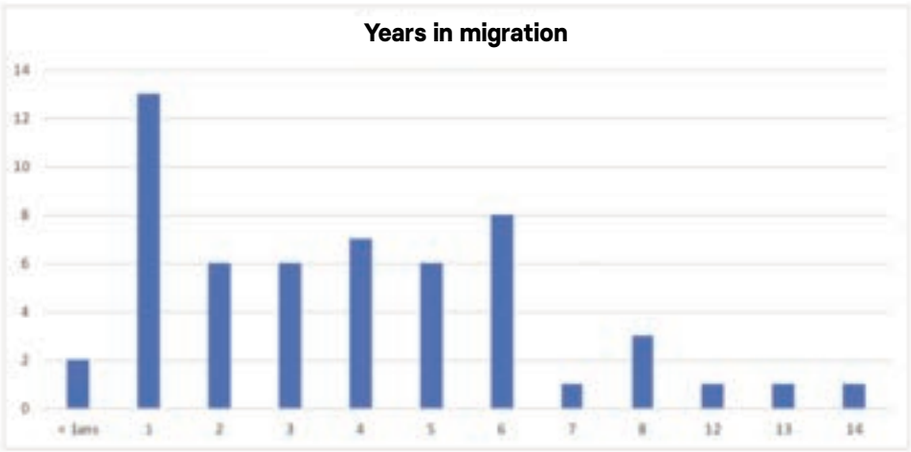


Figure 5: Duration of migration in years. Total population of 55 people.

Reading note: During the interview, 2 people stated that they had left their country of origin less than 12 months previously.

We also collected some accounts of very linear migratory routes, from people who had the means to mobilise a well-organised network of mobility support and who had a well-defined migration plan. This is the case, for example, of Zaki, a sixteen-year-old Afghan, whose migration history is very unclear. Indeed, he said he could not remember the names of all the countries he had passed through. He left at the age of 15, pushed by his family, and went to Iran before driving through many countries without stopping. He remembered Macedonia and Bulgaria where he slept in a forest camp and in a squat.

But fast routes are not without their obstacles. For example, we met a Kurdish man from Iraq whose journey lasted seven months and fifteen days. He stayed in rented accommodation in Turkey for two months before the opportunity arose to go to Greece, a country where, he said: "They don't respect refugees." In Greece he stayed in a hotel room for about two months and then moved to Italy. On the border with France, he tells us that he was hidden for fifteen or twenty days in an abandoned house in the mountains before finally reaching France. Although his journey was among the fastest, he risked imprisonment and lived in hiding in difficult conditions. He has now been stranded on the French-British border for three and a half months.

Of the people we met, only two took less than a year to reach northern France. For others – and even those who had left only a year previously – accounts of obstacles, waiting, living on the streets and imprisonment are growing.

Throughout the migration process, 39% of the people interviewed, i.e. 23 of the 59 interviewed, were detained in prisons or detention centres because of their irregular administrative situation and without having committed any crime. Half of those detained were minors or barely adults at the time of imprisonment.

Most of the testimonies describe migratory routes that get longer over time. This is the case for Razi, a twenty-four year old Afghan, who explained that he left his country at the age of eighteen to join members of his family, who are now beginning to doubt whether they will ever see him again. When we met him, he had been trying to complete his journey, day and night, for a month and a half. Here is his journey:

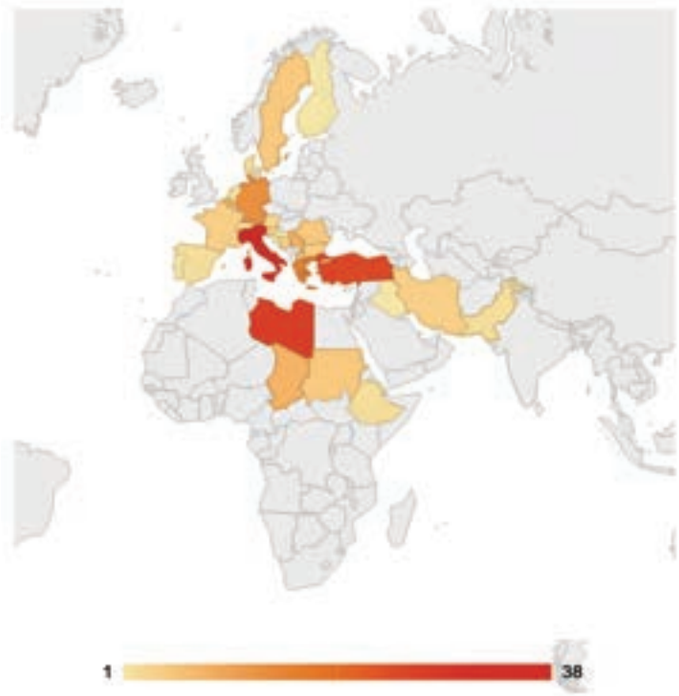
Razi spent three years in Pakistan working and securing the means to undertake the journey. He then lived in Iran for almost a year before moving to Turkey, where he spent four months waiting for the right opportunity to enter Europe through Greece. In this country he rented a room with friends. They spent three months planning how to reach northern Europe and they set off: they crossed Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia to reach Italy. This part of the journey was very difficult; they had to place a lot of trust in the people who helped them cross these territories. He explained that the police in Croatia are particularly dangerous. He then thought about giving up on his migration plans. But with his friends, having crossed all of these countries, sleeping outside in informal or institutional camps and risking his life, he decided not to backtrack and to continue the journey. He had been in France for three months when we met him. He was able to regain his strength at a friend's house in Paris, before heading to northern France for this final stretch. He confirmed that he was exhausted by the six-year journey.

The interviews, feedback and feelings of the interviewers – their anger and emotion at hearing about the hardships that people have had to endure – has led us to believe that all accounts deserve to be reported.

In the accounts, the injustices and violence that people witness are so severe and, at the same time, ordinary that we fear the risk of trivialising them.

The information given to us by the interviewees depicts unique stories, but which, once accumulated, reveal the systematic difficulties and dead ends that migrants face. In this text, we have therefore chosen to present trends and recurrences to give an overall picture, while providing readers with a few testimonies that we consider illustrative.

The people we met shared their routes with us. Some reported that they had spent time in as many as nine countries, sometimes just for a few days, but for many of them, these stays lasted for months or even years. The map below shows the countries through which the people we met passed.



Map 2: Transit countries. 56 people gave accounts of their experiences.
Reading note: 38 people passed through Italy and 26 through Libya.

OBSTACLES AND TIME SPENT WAITING AT THE GATES OF EUROPE

Thirty-one transit countries were commonly cited by interviewees, as many followed the same migratory routes. People from Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea often passed through Libya; people from Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan passed through Turkey. Therefore, the countries outside Europe in which people most commonly made stops were Turkey (43% of interviewees) and Libya (47% of interviewees).

In Turkey, transit conditions are less severe than elsewhere: people had spent an average of five weeks there, with the exception of two people who had lived in the country for several years. The latter planned to stay there but eventually left due to the difficulties of settling. This was the case for Sayd. He explained: "I had found a job in tourism. I speak English, Pashto, Farsi, Urdu, Turkish and Punjabi! I was working in a hostel but I wanted documents to feel safe and it seemed impossible, so I went to Europe. I stayed in Turkey for almost three years." Although migrants report mistreatment, living conditions in Turkey are described as less difficult than elsewhere. Indeed, it is a transit country in which almost all the people were accommodated by friends, family, the person in charge of crossing borders or in hotels.

A very different story is told about Libya. More than half of those who travelled through Libya spent at least twenty-two months there, almost two years.

41% said they decided to leave the country because of the political situation, because of the war but also because of the treatment of migrants. Hatim, now twenty-six, lived in Tripoli for six years. He thought he would stay there permanently, but fled the country because of the lack of security caused by the civil war.

For everyone else, from the moment they entered the region, Libya was only to be a transit country. The long transit time in this country can be explained by the need to work, in order to earn enough money to pay for the journey to Europe. The working conditions described to us often involve exploitation and difficult living environments. Some told us that they slept in their workplace, in camps or in abandoned houses with other workers.

Abuse, racism and the operation of prisons dedicated to migrants are widely documented[17], while European countries continue to make deals, providing military funding and development aid programmes to transit countries to control migratory movements. The many complaints about the detention camps for migrants, in which mainly people from Africa are held, have caused a scandal, but these agreements are still being signed today between European countries and non-democratic regimes that violate human rights.

In fact, half of the people who passed through Libya told us that they had been in prison, and subjected to torture and violence.

Faris, a young man who was in Libya at the age of fifteen, told us he was imprisoned for eight months. When he left, he just wanted to find money to flee the country. He still bears the signs of the torture he suffered in detention: several scars, burns and pain in his back. He is convinced that the muscles on the right side of his back have been torn.

A third of those jailed are minors. Majdi, for example, was between fourteen and fifteen years of age at the time of his detention. He told us he was taken to prison by militias after demanding a salary from his boss while working as a mechanic for months without receiving any pay. Another man, Asam, told us of a similar experience. He ended up in detention following a compensation claim against his boss. After seven months of imprisonment in a kind of camp, he was forced to pay to be released. He asked his family for the money needed. Lastly, Hatim, who spent 4 years in Libya, when asked why he left the country, exclaimed: "They torture us there, they arrest us all the time. I was in prison three times!"

WHAT EUROPE? THE SERIES OF DIFFICULTIES

The strengthening of Fortress Europe is reflected in the explosion of routes and entry points into this continent. Increased controls do not prevent immigration: they lead to the diversion of migratory routes - towards the east of the Mediterranean, towards Greece and Turkey by sea and by land, towards Bulgaria, Hungary, Croatia and Slovenia – which increases the danger, the financial cost and the need to go through intermediaries. Alternatively, the routes switch between Italy, Malta and Spain, involving the crossing of the Mediterranean Sea, with all the risks that this entails.

17. Ceccorulli 2014; Segre and Yimer 2008.

The number of human lives lost along these borders is huge. From 1993 to June 2021, there were more than 44,764 deaths of men and women migrating to Europe[18], whose disappearance did not cause any outrage, except for a few widely publicised major tragedies. These data represent only the submerged part of the iceberg because missing persons do not appear in this calculation.

The countries of entry into Europe are mainly Italy and Greece. 44% of the people we met entered via Italy and 27% via Greece, 13% via Malta and 11% via one of the following countries: Slovenia, Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria[19].

Italy is either the first country of entry into Europe or a transit territory within the European area. Indeed, 38 of the people interviewed spent at least a few days in this country. Half of these people spent up to three weeks there, while the remaining half stayed on the Italian peninsula for between one month and a year.

Only five interviewees thought of staying in Italy, but finally left, as the economic conditions in the country made it impossible to consider settling there. Rafiq, a young Kurdish restaurant worker, explained: "Conditions are difficult, there is no future in Italy." Other people who spent time in Italy reported racism and mistreatment, particularly in accommodation centres[20]. While in Italy, nine people were accommodated in reception facilities, two of whom were forced to stay there during the confinement. Two others were held in quarantine for two to three weeks on a ship because of the measures put in place to combat COVID-19.

In the various European countries through which people have travelled, there is great insecurity and living conditions are harsh. Most people sleep on the streets for weeks, even months. In Eastern Europe, border police are criticised for their violence against migrants, with people hiding and often sleeping in the forest or on the street, if not arrested. One person told us about their detention in Bulgaria, another in Croatia. Felek, a thirty-year-old Iraqi, was jailed for six months, after which he was moved and released in Bosnia. A 16-year-old Afghan boy, Zafar, told us that after spending 15 nights in the woods in Bulgaria, he managed to reach Romania. Several hours later, he was caught by police, beaten and seriously injured. He was kept in a container for seven days without a toilet or food. He was then forced to give his fingerprints, before being brought back to a reception centre for confinement. Similarly, a third of the interviewees who travelled through Greece were locked up for several months before being able to move on.

Malta is another major crossing point. Those who passed through the country said they were placed in either a prison, detention centre or accommodation centre. Faris, whose torture during his eight-month detention in Libya, while still a minor, we have already described, was detained again in Malta.He spent seven and a half months there. The prison he describes is located on a military base where living conditions are disgraceful: many migrants are crammed into it. He witnessed numerous bids to escape and a lot of suicide attempts. He showed us his hand with an amputated finger: it was trapped when security forces closed a door; he received no care.

18. United, "List of Refugee Deaths" Campaign: http://unitedagainstrefugeedeaths.eu/map/. See, for example, the films: Crouzillat, Tura 2014, Dionisio 2015, Maggiore 2013.

19. Out of a total of 55 people who answered the question.

20. Conditions in accommodation centres are, for example, described in the film: Frigo 2013 or Seymour *et al.* 2020.

The people who passed through this island had to stay there for several months while their travel was organised. Indeed, they told us that it was from Malta that they were distributed to various countries without being able to give their opinion on the destination.

Once in Europe, borders only multiply for those who have managed to enter. Those who want to reach other European countries soon find themselves facing borders that are also internal – contradicting the idea of a European area of "free movement." The time it takes to move from one country to another also increases. The migrants y then find themselves living on the streets or in abandoned houses along the roads, while the financial costs of these trips increase. They are forced to rely on networks of smugglers who add to the difficulties and hardships they have to overcome.

Borders lead to dead ends along the way. The interviewees told us about their time waiting in the forests of Eastern Europe or the situation in Vintimille, where they were repeatedly sent back to Italy. They also told us about camps in Belgium from which they attempted to cross into the United Kingdom. Asam, for example, spent a year in Belgium before reaching France. He slept at a friend's house at weekends and during the week lived in a camp next to a car park to try to get into lorries en route to the UK.[21]

People spend months or even years on the streets, in squats or informal settlements unless they've been locked up in prison, in detention centres or sheltered in accommodation centres. 32% of those interviewed spent at least a few days in the centres that hosted them. At these structures, they were sorted and sent to third countries, forced into confinement or were able to apply for asylum. One exception seems to be Greece, where people claim to have been able to shelter in rented accommodation, with friends[22], family or smugglers[23]. Conversely, in other countries, only three out of all the people interviewed stayed, for a short time, with a friend or relative.

MULTIPLE ATTEMPTS TO SETTLE IN EUROPE

During the interviews, some survey participants told us that they had tried to settle in the countries they had passed through. Indeed, some of them did settle, stopping to prepare for their next departure. However, this happens less frequently in non-European countries and is largely a feature of European countries. Looking at *Map 2* presented earlier, it can be observed that the coloured countries are not only those on a direct route from the country of origin to northern France as the final crossing point. On the contrary, we met people who had lived in European countries such as Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland and who are now trying to reach the UK. These people tried to settle, but decided to get back on the road mainly because of economic difficulties, mistreatment or administrative refusal of their application for asylum.

21. See, for example: Deaglio 2015 and D'Alife 2020.

22. See, for example, the film by Bakhtiari, 2013.

23. These results reflect the practices of the communities encountered. The "living" conditions along the migratory route in Greece and Turkey are largely influenced by the existence of networks that can help people in transit.

Sometimes, the inability to guarantee a sufficient income or an income in line with their expectations and sacrifices pushed them to start again, to get back on the road. This was the case for Muhammad, an Iraqi who left home at twenty-eight due to family problems and who stayed for four years in Greece to work, before making the decision to leave again. Like many young Greeks, he took to the road to seek better pay and work opportunities. He now wants to join his wife who is waiting for him in the UK. Similarly, in Italy, as we mentioned, five people considered staying: they spent several months looking for a job before leaving, denouncing the lack of work, the situation for refugees living on the street, the conditions of exploitation and the racism to which they were subjected.

Beyond economic conditions, we found that administrative statutory issues are the main cause of prolonged wandering.

Indeed, migration policies restrict both the movement of those who were not born in rich countries on the one hand and the possibility of staying somewhere on the other. Lives and plans then remain precarious when it is impossible to attain a status or a permit granting the right to stay and to work regularly and legally in a territory. Because of this, plans and daily life are at risk of being suddenly thrown into disarray by an order to leave a territory or by the many obstacles associated with administrative irregularity.

Some would have liked to have been able to stay in a European country where they had spent part of their lives. 42% of the fifty-seven people who answered the question said they had applied for papers in a European country. Three quarters of them had applied for political asylum.

Ten people applied in France and the remaining fourteen in countries such as Germany (seven people), Belgium, Finland, Greece, Italy, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands and Switzerland. Four people pointed out that they had submitted more than one application and three preferred not to provide this information.

All received negative responses, except for one person who was granted refugee status and lost it following a return to their home country and two people who were still waiting for a response - one of whom, meanwhile, is trying to cross. Thirteen people were rejected and for the others, the Dublin procedures were applied. In this case, they should be deported to the European country that first registered their presence on European territory.

Looking at these routes reveals that these people remained in these different countries while waiting for answers. After applying for papers, some waited for a final verdict, putting their lives on hold for several months, and sometimes for a year or longer. These people did not, for example, learn the language of the country. On the contrary, others were invested: they found work and accommodation. They “built a life”. Once rejected, some left; others decided to try to live in an “irregular” situation. They then spent several years there, until the condition of irregularity became unbearable to them or until they were discovered by the police and risked being deported to their countries of origin. For example, Nebila spent ten years in Belgium, hoping to one day regularise her situation; Georges lived for almost thirteen years in a country in northern Europe which he asks us not to reveal; Nima, twenty-six, and Bhrane, twenty-seven, lived for two and a half years in Germany before heading back on the road. They all speak the languages of these countries very well, however, they have been forced to leave because of the impossibility of obtaining an administrative status.

Simon, a twenty-four-year-old from Eritrea, illustrates the difficulties in finding a place in which to settle. We decided to report on his story.

Simon has been living in Calais for six months in the hope of finding stability in his life after eight years of migration and setbacks. He speaks French and English perfectly. His family offered hospitality and shelter to people travelling to Ethiopia. These experiences in his home gave him the idea and desire to leave his village and leave Eritrea when his family was threatened by the army. He recalled that Eritrea was a dictatorship. He felt he had no future. He left his family and studies. He was sixteen. He reached Ethiopia; the environment was very tough: he lived in a camp, there was no work and he did not feel free. Almost a year later, he then returned to the road, heading for Sudan. He stayed there for three months where he rented an apartment, but he observed a lot of racism and exploitation towards migrants around him. For this reason he decided to cross the desert by lorry. He spent twenty-one days on the road to Libya. He did not want to stay in Libya. For a month and a half he looked for a way to cross the sea. He arrived in Europe via Lampedusa, a small Sicilian island. He was housed in a migrant centre and relocated to Rome. He quickly learned that there was not much work in Italy and that it would be better to leave. Three weeks later, he arrived in Switzerland where he applied for political asylum and sought work. Without papers, he could not hope to obtain a long-term employment contract; time passed. He was invested in "making a life": he joined sports teams to make friends, he learned French. After six years, he was faced with the impossibility of settling in the long term; he was tired of living in a precarious situation. He arrived in Calais with the intention of moving to the United Kingdom to give himself a new chance of stability and integration. Faced with the difficult conditions of crossing and living in the camps, he decided to apply for asylum to stay in France. His application was rejected because of the Dublin regulations. Since then, his only hope has been to cross the Channel. He is very worried about his future, which affects his sleep and his mental health, which he describes as bad, testifying to the stress and sadness that have taken hold of him.

Simon's account is by no means unique; the survey participants told us about their attempts to settle, their disappointment and their decision to leave. Some point to the Dublin regulations as the cause of these difficulties. The Dublin Convention established in 1990 and the Dublin II (2003) and III (2014) regulations were designed to harmonise asylum law at Community level. The aim is to share the responsibility for processing asylum applications between EU member states. Applications for asylum may only be made in the country in which the application was filed for the first time or where there is evidence of the applicant's first entry into Europe, with the exception of the possibility of applying for family reunification, the conditions of which are very strict.

In concrete terms, when a person has passed through an EU State and there is evidence of this, they can be sent back to that country. In particular, fingerprints are recorded in the Eurodac file for this purpose. They are sometimes obtained by force, as many of our interviewees confirmed.

These regulations, which have been widely criticised, have been repeatedly reformed in a bid to meet the need to balance the distribution of people in exile among the various countries rather than to meet the demands of people who want to be free to settle wherever they wish.

Our contacts reported that they felt trapped into having to apply for papers in countries in which they do not want to stay for a variety of reasons. Among the reasons mentioned, they refer above all to the procedures, the waiting time for a response and the chances of obtaining papers. They then discussed living conditions, specifically employment conditions in the different countries. Finally, they talked about their desires and the resources available to them in the country they want to reach. They recalled being able to benefit from family support or a knowledge network and having, in some Countries, language support that will enable them to integrate satisfactorily into the social and economic fabric of the country.

For example, Tarik, who has been in Europe for four and a half years, described to us his experience of forced wandering in search of a place to "find stability and live decently and in peace". Here is his testimony:

Tarik speaks French, English and Italian in addition to his mother tongue. He left Sudan in 2016; his village was attacked, and he was imprisoned and wounded. Upon his release, he left Sudan to get to Libya and then lived in abandoned housing for three months. He was caught up in the war in Libya, which is why he left to head for Europe. Upon arriving on the Italian coast, he immediately encountered racism. He saw how people abused exiles in the country. It took him fourteen days after landing to reach France. He applied for papers in France, but nine months later he was ordered to return to Italy - the country that led him to apply. Due to his bad experience in Italy, he no longer wanted to return. Unaware of how the reception system works in Europe, he left for Germany, where he spent ten months, after which he realised that the only way to obtain papers was to apply for them in Italy. Feeling deflated, he returned to Italy. He spent ten months there during which time his initial impression of the country was confirmed: it was a racist country. The authorities refused his request, and he returned to France in the hope that France would this time accept his request, and grant him the right to stay. He has been in France for two years. He wants to stay there but, tired of waiting for an answer, he moved to Calais, where he has been for fourteen months, in the hope of reaching England.

Although Tarik is coping psychologically and told us that he is quite well, he says that he has trouble sleeping because of his anxieties and negative thoughts. His past, his daily life and his future prospects keep him awake and he believes he is drinking too much alcohol to get to sleep, defying time and avoiding the anxiety about his situation.

Listening to the testimonies, one wonders what effects this accumulation of rejections could have on individuals, on their relationships with others. Hearing these accounts raises questions. In the report "The Law of the Jungle" (2008), the authors criticised a lack of willingness to "take stock of the effects of a European regulation that results in the endless wandering of thousands of human beings[24]." The observation is that the situation, after thirteen years, has not improved for these men and women who are looking for a place to live with dignity. An analysis of the consequences of national laws and international conventions on respect for human rights and the social, psychological and physical lives of the actors concerned is still not a priority for political decision-makers.

24. The Law of the Jungle, 2008: 10.

FRANCE, A TRANSIT COUNTRY

In this context, the continued presence of people waiting to cross the border in northern France and in transit in France are an integral part of these migratory pathways. We have seen how, among the people we met, some had just arrived in France, while others had arrived several months previously and had been trying to get to the UK for a long time.

Among the people on the French coast, it can be seen that 61%25 arrived directly on the coast, with the desire to reach the United Kingdom. Six of them spent several days in other cities before travelling to northern France. This is the case for Hatim, who slept at the Porte de la Chapelle camp in Paris for several nights, where he tells us he felt unsafe. It was winter, Parisian winter, and he told us that people drank a lot and it was dangerous. He met young Sudanese people who were arranging a departure for Ouistreham to try to get to England. He then decided to follow them, and it was at this point that he heard for the first time about Ouistreham, where he would spend five months. He explained: "As I didn't understand the language, it was very difficult in Paris, so I did like the others and once I arrived in Ouistreham, I realised that everything was difficult. People said it was better in England, but I didn't know."

39% of survey participants, on the other hand, spent several months in other cities in France before reaching the coast – in Paris, but also in Lille, Bayonne, Lyon and Marseille.

Most of them talked about living on the streets or in camps. Four people were accommodated by friends or family members and only three people lived in an accommodation centre in France – in Paris, Lille and Valence – before reaching the coast. Two young people were accommodated while their asylum applications were being reviewed, one of whom left before the end of the procedure. He described the psychological distress and loneliness he felt at this centre. It was because of this that he left the structure and returned to the road to join family and friends in England. In another example, a woman and her children were housed for a month in an emergency accommodation centre when they arrived in France. Then, thanks to confinement, they were able to stay in the structure for six months, but once the emergency health measures were announced, they had to move on (again).

For the people we met, and for those who have tried to settle there, without success, France, like the other countries presented so far, is yet another transit country. At the time of the interview, half of the people we met had been camping and trying to cross the Channel for more than two months, and a third of them had been there for more than five months. They therefore lived in these camps both in winter and when strict confinement measures were in place between 30 October and 15 December 2020 and from 3 April to 3 May 2021.

25. 51 respondents.

DENOUNCING VIOLENCE AND TIME WASTING AND RECLAIMING THE FUTURE

We hear the effects of migration policies in the stories, we see the scars on the skin and bodies of the people we met in all the living spaces along the coast. The testimonies are all very similar: violence, precariousness and expectation create a shared experience, common to the people we interviewed. It transcends the differences in origin and living spaces in which people live. The recurrence of these harrowing experiences in the narratives is proof that this is not a rare phenomenon.

With regard to their migratory past, the people we met confided in us about where they had been: their testimonies recalled the mistreatment, the risks involved, the impossibility of remaining, the forced displacement, the abandonment and the desire to rebuild a life elsewhere.

Reading these testimonies makes one want to demand the freedom to arrive in Europe in safety without having to go through all these experiences, to demand the respect of human rights, at least in Europe, to demand the end of agreements with countries like Libya, to question the Dublin procedures.

An activist from an association that has been involved in supporting residents of the camps for more than twenty years reports the words of their daughter. Their daughter suggested demanding a humanitarian residence permit for people in transit to provide stability to people who have experienced difficult trajectories because of borders. It is a demand capable of highlighting the contradictions between the repression and controls of migration policies and the respect of human rights. This proposal could be seen as a provocation, as it bears witness to the violence caused by migration policies and the effects of bans on movement and stability for people in transit.

Listening to these journeys highlights the determination, hopes and despair of people who want to cross the Channel. This chapter sheds light on the human costs, in addition to the financial costs, of these journeys. This chapter is therefore essential for further reading of this report, as it provides a better insight into what drives people to live in camps in northern France, where they are exposed to rain, wind and, for many of them, constant harassment by police.

For the people we interviewed, the demands are more forward-looking. The past is behind them. Some say it clearly and directly, “Let us pass”, which was also the slogan chanted on the night of 11 June 2015 in Ventimiglia[26] as a way to voice frustration at the checks at the French-Italian border. Or "Let us settle, give us papers."

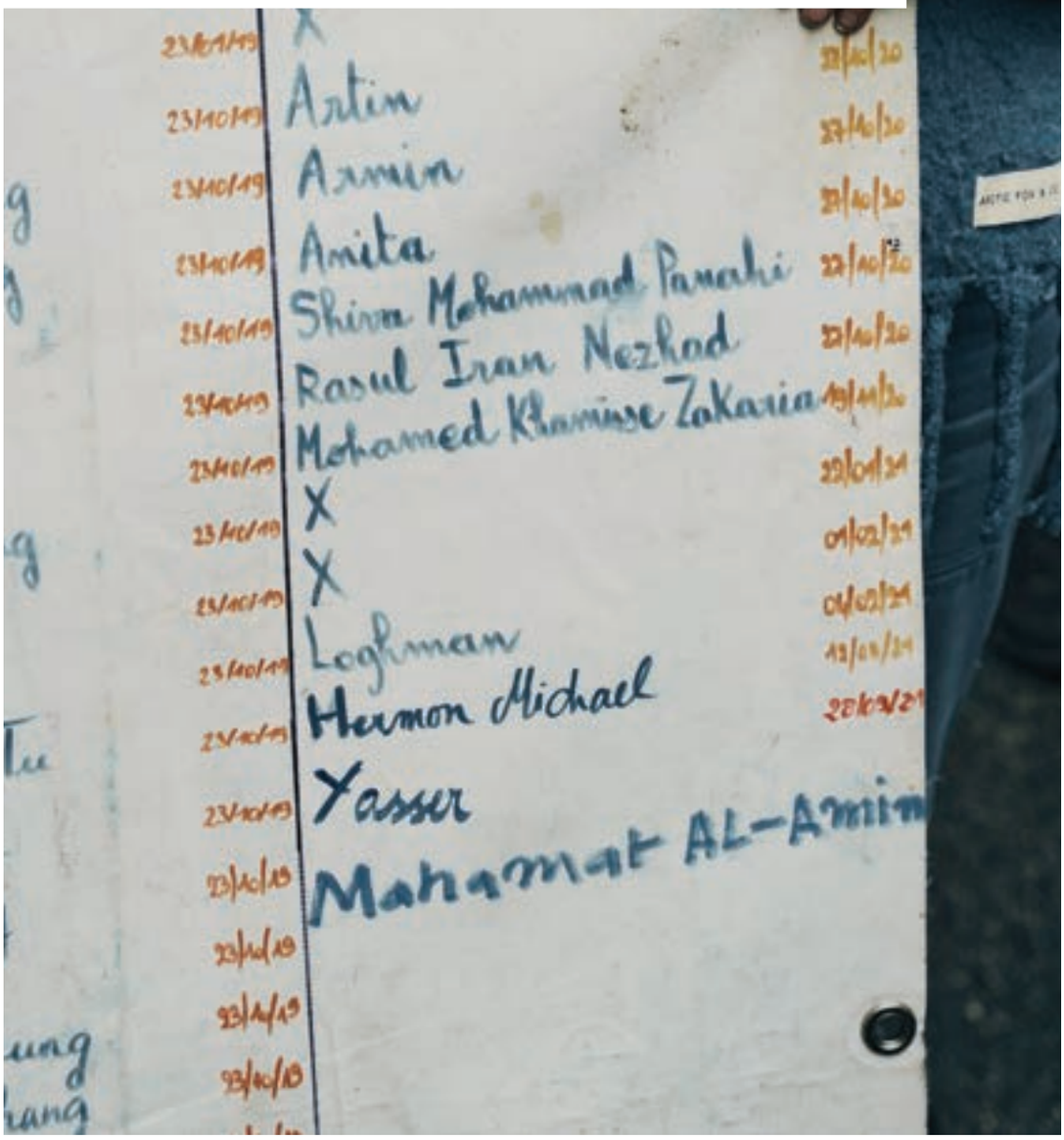
During the interview, when asked the open question “What are the three most important/urgent things that will make things better for you here?”, some people did not respond by naming physical emergencies, but affirmed the urgency of having papers and being able to move freely. For example, Ewin, a young Kurd, explained that there is “one urgent thing: finding a solution for refugees," while Ulagarech said, "Tell us where we can live with dignity. Life is already difficult enough...”

26 This has given rise to long-term campaigns calling for freedom of movement. See: Deaglio 2015.

One complaint that comes up repeatedly throughout this report is the frustration with all the "lost time" during migration. During the interview, Razi exclaimed: “We're wasting time, we're wasting our youth!” Indeed, there are several references to time as the stories unfold. Wandering and waiting are difficult to accept for young people who have plans and are eager to have “a normal life”. These people endure months of waiting for procedures, as well as days spent trying to cross or days spent in detention. The precision with which people count the days spent migrating tells us how important time is. These times also represent physically and psychologically challenging ordeals, which create both frustrations and exhaustion as well as resilience, which we shall touch upon later.

CHAPTER 3

THE "UK PROJECT": A VARIETY OF MOTIVATIONS AND A DANGEROUS CROSSING



CHAPTER 3: THE "UK PROJECT": A VARIETY OF MOTIVATIONS AND A DANGEROUS CROSSING

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE AND DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE PAST

Northern France is just one stage of a long and tiring journey during which people face multiple experiences of rejection, exclusion, hostility and violence.

When people living in the camps are asked why they are there, the answer is simple: to go to the UK.[27]

The UK is a highly attractive destination because it represents either the final objective of a migration project loaded with sacrifices and difficulties, or the ultimate hope of finding a place that would finally allow them to settle, live in peace and security and find some stability.

The plan to reach the UK brings, in itself, a tension between the future – the way to – and the past – the way from. We are leaving, but we are also going somewhere. Reactive and active motivations intermingle. Although for some people the "UK project" was decided long ago and from a long way away, for most, it was a destination that became necessary during their journey. They hope to find in this country what they have not found elsewhere, or what they have been denied: it is a default option. To do so, they are prepared to face many dangers because the crossing is not without risk and becomes, as we will see, increasingly deadly as security policies become entrenched in the border region.

In the discourse, despair and hope intertwine. Accounts of the UK reinforce a fantasy of a country that is more welcoming, or less hostile, than the countries crossed. The UK therefore seems to offer an alternative to their own lived experiences in Europe. These elements of understanding are often absent from public and institutional discourse.

In the speech of the President of the Republic, Emmanuel Macron, delivered in 2018 to the police forces mobilised in Calais, he refers only to the motivations of those who aspire to reach the United Kingdom for proactive professional and study reasons, who are motivated by the individual resources they have at their disposal. Here is an excerpt from this speech:

"The reason tens of thousands of migrants have come here over the last two decades is because the UK was their final destination. Be they refugees, exiles or economic migrants, the same determination drives them to the British Isles. Because they have family, friends, a community network to welcome them, or perhaps sometimes a professional or study related goal, in the vast majority of cases, the migrants present in Calais often do not want to stay in France.

27. Two people want to get to Ireland and one person is in Calais because they think it is easier to access accommodation there.

For them, our country is only a passageway, as were so many other countries before ours. But what was supposed to be a passageway turns into a dead end, often resulting in deep distress. Because the border is closed to illegal crossings [...]"[28]

Based on what we observed in spring 2021, this description may correspond to 1/3 of the people we met. For others, it is not entirely accurate and lacks context and precision. Among the motivations mentioned by the people living in the camps, we observed a high number of references to the European context and to the rejection experienced or perceived. Structural issues, such as the difficulties of settling somewhere in Europe, are the basic framework of a decision – that of wanting to cross – which becomes necessary. Most of the people we met want to go to the UK after experiencing these difficulties or after hearing the accounts of their fellow travellers about the obstacles to obtaining documents and working in Europe. These people then put all their hopes beyond the Schengen Area. And, as President of the Republic Emmanuel Macron says, they are at a dead end because they cannot cross.

In our survey, the UK is therefore an integral part of the collective imagination and discourse, and is portrayed as the country in which people can find their place: a country in which residence permits would be easier to obtain, work easier to find, security and human rights respected. What does this tell us about the desire to settle, about the hostility experienced in Europe, about the effect of the Dublin Regulation, about the time spent waiting for an asylum application to be processed, about the need to dream of a life elsewhere that would somehow justify daily life and the violent and painful migratory experience they are living today?

In this chapter, we will examine the reasons for which the people we met want to cross the Channel. We have identified three different approaches towards the desire to reach the UK. First of all, we will present the motivations of those who left their country of origin with the aim of reaching the UK and who have experienced difficult journeys and daily life in order to do so. We will then outline the approach that sees the "UK project" as the result of a comparative analysis – sometimes based on incomplete information – that leads them to believe that the British Isles offer better living conditions to migrants. Lastly, we will present the third approach, in which the choice is imposed by default. This is the case for people who want to move to the UK because they feel it is the only way to avoid the risk of deportation or because they find it unbearable to live in conditions that they consider unacceptable in other European countries.

28. Speech by President of the Republic Emmanuel Macron to the forces mobilised in Calais, delivered on 16 January 2018: https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2018/01/16/discours-devant-les-forces-de-securite-a-calais.

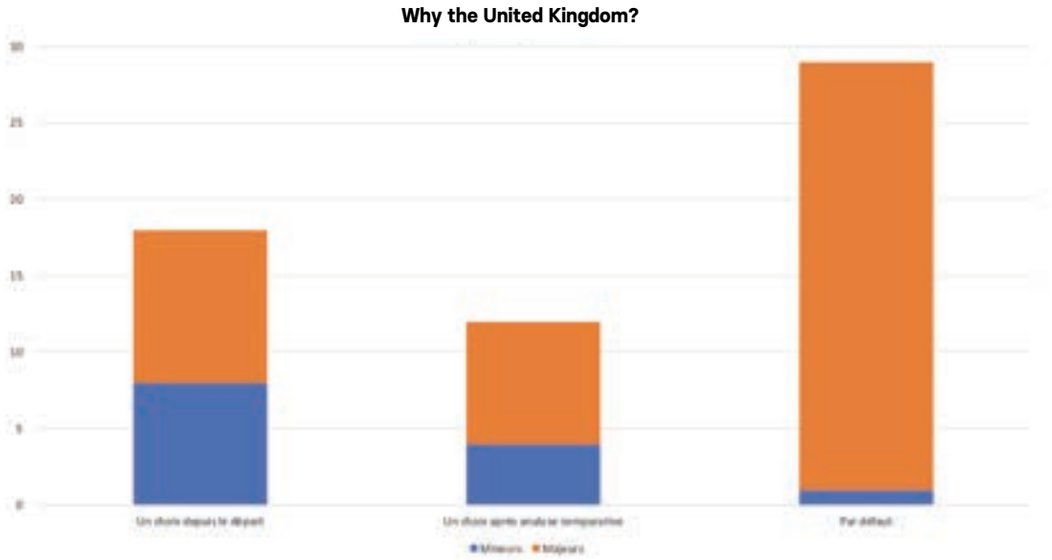


Figure 6: Attitudes towards the UK. Categories based on the reasons why people aspire to move to the UK. On the y-axis, we find the number of cases.

Reading note: Eighteen people chose the UK as the final destination from their country of origin. Of these, seven are minors.

We will continue this chapter by outlining the risks people take when trying to reach the UK. The motivations are so powerful that people are willing to risk their lives to achieve the goal of reaching the UK. We will first present the dangers involved in attempting to board lorries. Then we will present the risks of sea crossings, which is a relatively new phenomenon. Indeed, since 2018, as a result of successive border security measures, small boat crossings, sometimes using flip-flops for paddles, have been steadily increasing. Lastly, we will discuss what happens when people are intercepted in an attempt to cross.

To conclude this chapter, we will outline the elements of denunciation and advocacy that people informed us about during the interviews.

THE UK: DECIDED FROM THE START

For some of the people we met, the "UK project" had existed since their departure. All of the countries they passed through were only transit countries because ever since leaving their country of origin, their objective has been to reach the United Kingdom. As a result, those determined to reach Britain did not apply for residence permits in EU countries. Of the reasons why they want to cross the Channel, the difficulties of settling elsewhere were not mentioned. This was the case for 31% of the people we interviewed. They have often known about the sites where we met them (Calais, Ouistreham, Grande-Synthe, Cherbourg), since they left their country of origin. “Everyone in Kurdistan knows Calais and the jungle,” says Nuri, who is from Iraqi Kurdistan.

Within this category, we can identify two different profiles: on the one hand those who mention family ties and, on the other hand, those who affirm, without hesitation, a preference for the United Kingdom and a resolute life choice to go there.

Family reasons

In the first sub-group, we identified ten people (17% of the people we met). They plan to come to the UK because they have family waiting for them who can help them settle or, for a minority of them, it is a plan set out by their families in their country of origin. Often, they plan to return to school. Most of them do not have any English: only three people speak it.

A striking feature of the people who make up this sub-group is the sheer uncertainty they have about the residence permits they think they can obtain in the UK. Most say they do not know. Some interviewees put forward tentative hypotheses: Alan, for example, hazards a guess: “Maybe taken as a refugee like the family over there,” while Zafar replies, “Whatever they [the English] want! ” explaining that this is not a concern for him.

The origins and time frames of migration are very diverse, which prevents us from identifying any unifying features, apart from their youth: of the ten people, seven of them were minors and none of the ten was older than eighteen when they left their country of origin.

Hussein, twenty-four years old, eight of them spent in transit, lived through these years with the goal of reaching England. He worked in Chad for two years to earn enough money to resume the trip. He stayed in tents next to the mines. He then spent three years in Libya working to pay for the Mediterranean crossing. In Libya he also camped in tents with six or seven people employed with him. He then lived in the shops of the fellow citizens he worked for. He was locked up for a year in prison and upon his release he moved to Italy where he worked for nine months, illegally, before leaving. And now he has found himself stranded at this umpteenth border for a year and several months. 200 kilometres of sea separate him from the country in which he wants to live quietly and join his sister and cousin. He assured us that one day he will: “I want to live quietly in England, play basketball, do things with my family, have a normal life.”

By contrast, Zaki, a sixteen-year-old Afghan, has no family waiting for him in England, but his family encouraged him to emigrate so that he could build a future.

Some are uncompromising about their plans, no questioning is possible, whereas others, faced with the impasse of the crossing, question themselves and consider changing their objective, changing their strategy, changing their project. Thus, faced with the difficulties of the crossing, a different option becomes a possibility. Two minors said that they are willing to change their minds. Seventeen-year-old Ahmed explained that his plan was to go to England. However, he said: “I will settle in the first country that gives me papers,” though he has never applied for them anywhere to give himself a better chance of joining his family in the UK. When we asked him if, during these five months of failed crossing attempts, he had ever thought about applying for papers in France, he replied "...I would, if it gave me protection! ” and he continued, “We left the war, we have lots of dreams, finding things, working to help our parents. Here in France, they told me that it takes 3-4 years to get papers, time passes with no stability, that's the biggest difficulty”. The dead end at which he has found himself is putting him under a lot of stress and has lead him

to consider changing his project. However, he admitted that he lacks information and that in England things would probably be easier for him: he can get by in English, he has family to fall back on and he thinks that getting a residence permit and a job should be easier. As a minor in France, he is entitled to protection until he is eighteen. At the time of the interview, he was unaware of this possibility.

Similarly, Waleed has left the door open for a change of strategy, although his eyes twinkled when he spoke about England. He lifted his head for the first time during the interview, his eyes sparkled and a big smile spread across his face. Waleed is sixteen. He has been trying to cross for two months. He arrived in Europe without any family. He made his way to Libya with his older brother to reach Europe and then England. They left the same evening by sea. They were separated in two inflatable boats. They left one after the other. His boat got torn. It had to turn back. The other boat continued. It sank in the sea. There were more than 120 people on board. Only three people were rescued and survived; his brother was not one of them. Waleed is still planning to go to England on his own. After 4 months in Libya, he left again. He left Sudan because of the war, to seek peace and security. He then wanted to reach England to study. When asked why he chose England, he replied that he did not know, that he thought France was a beautiful country: "It could be here, but I would prefer England." He does not speak English and does not know anyone there. Later in the interview, when discussing minors' rights to be taken care of in France, Waleed seemed interested. He asked what happens once the child reaches the age of majority and asked for additional information.

On the contrary, Abdel and Zafar, also minors, will not change their plans. Abdel, although aware of his rights, does not intend to give up his plan to migrate to the UK. He said that he regularly visits a reception centre for minors. He goes there for some rest. However, he wants to reach England and his family there to continue his education. Zafar is even more determined. He does not accept any form of accommodation, as he believes the only way to cross the border is to stay in the woods and not get distracted from your goal. He is not aware of nor interested in being cared for by the public authorities. He told us that he knows a lady who insists that he stay in France, but with no family in France, he wants to cross the border at all costs.

The issue of minors deserves further investigation: we met a large number of unaccompanied minors aged between fifteen and seventeen on all sites. However, younger people also live in informal camps. According to our analysis, it is mainly minors who have a fixed objective, which raises questions about the systems available to them. Faced with the clear motivations for wanting to reach the UK, how can we manage the tension between child protection, the desires of minors and the failures of public authorities to offer them life opportunities that can make them change their plans? How can we prevent minors from becoming vulnerable, risking their lives and living in extreme conditions? How can family reunification with relatives in the UK be facilitated for minors or for young people in a broader sense?

More generally, given the existence of family support in the UK, these young people are demanding to be reunited with family members who can guide and help them. These family relationships and support networks represent a material and social resource that should be explored and considered more in migration policies.

A long-standing aspiration and a friendly network waiting for them

The other sub-group we identified among those intending to reach the UK from their countries of origin is composed of eight people (14%). It is a fairly uniform group, with the exception of a Sudanese minor, Souleymane, who wants to get to England because it has colonised his country. Indeed, this group is made up of people we met in Grande-Synthe, who are from Iraq and arrived in northern France at the end of a journey of a little over a year at most. Bihar explained that in Kurdistan, human rights are not respected and that he did not see a future for himself there. So, four or five years ago he thought about leaving for the UK. He waited until he was twenty and left. He was twenty-one when we met him in the woods of Puythouck. Similarly, Adil, also a Kurd, insisted that his goal has always been the UK: "because I love England," he stated. Two Kurdish men, who had their wives and children with them, were also determined to reach the UK to secure a future for their children. One thing these people have in common is that they have a network of friends, not family, in England who they can rely on when they arrive.

THE UK: A CHOICE AFTER COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

In most cases, various motivations are intertwined between subjective preference and rational calculation. The common goal is to live a normal life, in decent conditions and not to be deported. Between the individual desire and the practicality of settling somewhere without being deported to their country of origin, some people are afraid of making the wrong decisions with fatal repercussions on their chances of staying in Europe. The United Kingdom was a rational choice for many of the people we interviewed in order to avoid "wasting time" elsewhere in Europe. Indeed, the UK was not the only option for these individuals when they left their country of origin. They expressed a desire to go to the UK, as it appeared to be the country in which it would be easier to obtain papers, work and access a better life. In addition to individual experience, the social and relational dimension is essential in defining this objective. The accounts of fellow travellers combined with observations on the implementation of migration policies offer insights to be able to reflect pragmatically on the best strategy to obtain the best possible chance of achieving the goal of settling somewhere under good conditions.

Twelve people had this approach, i.e. 21% of the people we met, including four minors. The profiles are very diverse. They expressed their motivations using comparative language: "it's easier", "it's faster", "there are more". The comparison itself reflects negatively on the other countries through which these people have passed or in which they may have lived.

Easier to obtain the right to stay?

For example, Garang, a young Sudanese man of just eighteen years of age, said: “I imagined staying in France, but once I arrived in Paris, I saw everyone under the bridges and then I decided it was better not to stay in France. I decided to leave, to go to England, to seek asylum there.”

In their discourses, the word “we” is widely used, representing a collective subject, a shared experience consisting of people in transit seeking a better life.

Richard, a twenty-three-year-old who had been trying to board a lorry every day for 4 months, explained that he is only in Calais “because in Europe they reject us.” He continued: “Rejection rates are very high. A lot of people are rejected. I know people in Germany who decided to stay and after months they were rejected. It’s hard for them. I'm not going to stay here to hang around and wait! I know people who went to give their fingerprints all over, only to get rejections! In Italy, there is no support: people live on the streets. I am now obliged to leave Europe [...] In England, there are more facilities, and they don’t focus on the issue of papers, you can progress even without papers.” It is the personal experience of long-term migration that alerts him to the passing of time and the need to settle somewhere. On his journey, he left Sudan at the age of fifteen because of the war. He arrived in Europe, after living in Libya for six years. He imagined staying there permanently because he worked and had a home. It was because of the civil war and the militias in Tripoli that he took to the road again. Today, his desire is to work and live with dignity. This is why he did not apply for papers in Europe or give his fingerprints. He is careful not to make a wrong move and believes England is the best possible option.

The expertise on the situation in Europe that emerges from this and many other testimonies is the result of experience and discussions between people in transit. Camps and reception centres, where people with painful experiences meet, are prime places to share information and decipher migration policies and settlement opportunities. The sharing of similar narratives and experiences within different countries produces a narrative about Europe and its migration policies that leaves no doubt: it's better to go! The fantasy regarding the United Kingdom then feeds in opposition to the difficulties encountered or heard around them.

In this group, the United Kingdom is the country they dream of and has characteristics that contrast with those experienced in their daily lives in Europe. Therefore, young Sudanese people aged 16 and 17 say that they want to reach England because, "England gives papers, in England you don't sleep outside and the police in England are good, they are not like in France! ” However, the two young people, as well as half of the people who use these arguments, do not know anyone living in the United Kingdom.

This fantasy about the United Kingdom is a common theme in the testimonies and is used as a motivation to prevent migrants from falling into despair and to help them cope with the living conditions that we will describe later. The people we identify in this category have put everything into the UK. This group has very clear ideas about the need to apply for papers once they arrive on English soil. Most aspire to political asylum. As a result,

Sayd said that as soon as he arrives at the port in the United Kingdom, he will declare himself to the police and ask for political asylum. Two people said that their objective is to obtain English nationality. “Without papers, there is no project! ,” said Alghaliy, a Sudanese minor, after explaining that the reason for choosing England is based on a gamble that the documents are easier to obtain there than in Europe.

Easier conditions for accessing the labour market?

All of the people who fall into this category emphasised the importance of obtaining papers, except for two people for whom the comparison concerns conditions of employability: the question of work prevails as the main motivation. For Hoài, a young Vietnamese man, it is economic difficulties that drive him from one country to the next. His story is as follows: he left Vietnam at 19, 4 years ago. Born into a poor family in a rather wealthy region, Hoài was unable to get an education, so he left to earn enough money to build a future for himself when he returned to Vietnam. He got an official employment contract to go to Romania, but wages were very low and after a year he moved to Germany. He stayed there for almost 3 years. He worked in construction, catering and retail, but COVID 19 prevented him from working. He told us: "The papers are not my problem, my goal is not to stay there, I just want to work, make money and then go home, I am the youngest in the family, I left to work," he said. After analysing the management of healthcare services in the various countries, he decided to head to the United Kingdom. He believes he can work in England without the risk of being unemployed or confined.

Similarly, other interviewees argued that in the UK it is easier to study and train for a profession.

These people share a clear analysis of the opportunities in Europe and hope to find in the UK what they think will be difficult to get in Europe: papers or work.

THE UK: BY DEFAULT

For others we met, the UK is a last resort, a default choice, an escape route from Europe that denies them the right to stay in the country of their choice.

50% of the people we met are included in this category. We will first present the perspective of those who were refused residence in the European countries in which they wished to live (thirteen people, or 45%). We will then describe the experiences and reasons for departure of those who applied for asylum in France and were subject to the Dublin Regulation (eleven people, i.e. 38%) and, finally, we will present the perspectives of those who, because they have given their fingerprints, are afraid to apply for asylum, at the risk of being obliged to return to the country through which they entered Europe (five people, i.e. 17%).

Denied the right to stay

Most people in this group have been denied a residence permit or are undergoing the Dublin procedure. As we have already seen, 42% of the fifty-seven people who responded applied for a residence permit or refugee status somewhere in Europe. The refusal they face – they told us – forces them to leave either because life as irregulars becomes unbearable, or because they do not want to risk being forcibly deported to their country of origin or to the country through which they entered Europe (notably Italy, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Croatia), countries in which they do not wish to live because of the socio-economic conditions and the treatment of migrants.

For these people, their irregular status in the territory becomes very onerous and even unbearable after some time, because it leads to situations of professional exploitation and the impossibility of settling and being able to "live normally". Some also mentioned the risk of deportation as a trigger for their choice to leave, to try their luck outside the European Union, in the United Kingdom. Nebila, a young woman in her thirties, spent ten years in Belgium. She decided to leave the country because she was undocumented. She is fed up with this situation: "I want papers, I don't have a life, I want friends, I don't want to sit hidden inside the house. It is for my children that I want to go to England and get papers," she explained. Another young man, in the same situation, stated: "I want to go to England, because my life is difficult, I want to have papers, because at the moment I don't have a life.

The UK then seems to be the only solution to break the deadlock, to escape the stranglehold of European migration policies. Whether or not it is true that the opportunities in the UK are more advantageous, in this historic moment of uncertainty about post-Brexit regulations and practices, the people we met are hopeful that the UK will be a welcoming place.

This is what Manute, a 24-year-old from Sudan, told us: "I applied for asylum in Germany, it was refused, I waited two years for a negative response!" Germany was not his choice: in Malta he spent two months in an accommodation centre. One day they made the inhabitants "board legal boats". He recalled: "They distributed us all over Europe, me in Germany, my friends in France." The friends sent to France have already left for the UK following refusal of residence. He waited for the outcome of his procedure with hope. When Manute's asylum application was rejected, he called the last of his friends still in France. He explained: "They told me to go there and that we'll try to get to England together." He said he had to leave in order to obtain papers and to be able to undergo training. He hopes the procedures in England will be easier and quicker.

This is also the situation for Faris, whose abuse in Libya and Malta we have already described (see Chapter 2). He blames Europe and its migration policies with desperation: "Before we left Sudan, we imagined that Europe was safe: our dreams were shattered." After his imprisonment in Malta, he was sent to Germany. In Germany, he considered settling down to work and get papers, but after a year and a half his application was rejected. He asked the interpreter to explain why it was rejected: she replied that it was the German system that was wrong, not his situation. He has thought about applying for

papers in France, but he is afraid of rejection and he thinks that because of what happened in Germany, all the doors to Europe are closed. He is therefore forced to try England; he does not want to return to Sudan after these 4 years and having lived through all this. He left his family, he wants to study, his family is relying on him.

We would like to be able to tell all the individual stories of this large group of people (twenty-nine people) who are fleeing Europe because they have not been able to settle legally elsewhere. Not all the people in this group have been rejected, some want to leave Europe after discovering that they have been "dublined", as they refuse to be forced to have their asylum claim assessed in countries where they have had bad experiences or where they feel that the living conditions are poor.

Dubliners

Asam is a young Eritrean. He spent seven months in Calais trying to cross, and then moved further afield to a small camp, more than 50 kilometres from Calais. Police harassment here is less common and living conditions are better. However, he has been trying for more than a year to board lorries on their way to England that stop in car parks along the motorway. Unsuccessfully. He had previously tried for a year to reach England via Belgium. He explained that it is a question of luck: some people make the crossing very quickly, but he has not succeeded and time is ticking. The situation is very stressful for him; he would like to forget about England and settle in France, but he told us that he has been “dublined” in Italy. When he was en route to England, he was forced to seek asylum in Germany. Three months later, the authorities informed him that he was dublined: Italy was responsible for his application. In Italy, in Sicily, he refused to apply for asylum because he was aware of the employment difficulties. However, the police forced him to give his fingerprints, the only way he could be released from detention. He had no idea of the consequences. Initially his objective was to go to England because he spoke English. He imagined there would be better work opportunities and life would be less difficult for him there. But his motivations have changed in the meantime: today, he claims that it is because of the Dublin Regulation that he is leaving. Otherwise, he would remain in France. Asam is therefore stranded, stuck in limbo between the compulsion and prohibition to leave and between the compulsion and prohibition to stay.

Felek, a Kurdish man in his thirties who came to Europe to continue his studies, has the same motivation. During his journey, he was detained for nine months in Croatia and then moved to Bosnia. When he arrived in Germany, it was only after a year that he discovered he would have to be sent back to Croatia, where they first took his fingerprints in Europe. Felek then fled Germany, heading for France, to reach the United Kingdom because he feared that France and all other European countries could send him back to Croatia. The UK is now the only country in which he hopes to be able to resume his studies and find work consistent with his ambitions and training.

People who gave their fingerprints without applying for asylum

Amongst those who feel compelled to leave Europe, we also met those who fear being sent back to the country where they have given their fingerprints and who have never tried to apply for asylum in Europe because of this. The information they have gathered about asylum procedures in Europe makes them worry that once they have given their

fingerprints in the country of entry they will not be able to settle elsewhere. They are concerned about the Dublin procedures. The accounts of fellow travellers alerted them to this. Therefore, they avoid wasting time by filing applications. They then say that they are fleeing the Dublin regulation. "It's hard to live in the forest, but there's no solution, we have to leave... I want to leave because even the friends who asked for asylum are in the same situation as us. Nothing is moving forward," said Luol, who gave his fingerprints in Italy. However, he is open to changing his mind if it becomes possible to stay in France.

In 2019-2020, around 30% of those who filed an asylum application in France were the responsibility of another state. "The number of Dublin transfers made by France more than quadrupled between 2016 and 2019 and the transfer rate doubled. These results demonstrate the mobilisation of the prefectures in the implementation of this procedure and the results produced by the implementation in 2018 of the Dublin regional hubs."[29] This reflects the strong commitment of the French authorities to make Dublin transfers effective.

Almost everyone we met had already been registered somewhere, sometimes by force or as a condition for release from detention. Manute told us that he was aware that he should not give his fingerprints when he arrived in Europe – which reminds us of the protests in Italy to refuse the registration of fingerprints[30]. But he admits, laughing: "Malta, I didn't even know it was Europe, I didn't realise Europe was like that and so I gave my fingerprints!"

Ultimately, we note that among those considering going to the UK by default, the fantasy is as strong as the feelings of resentment. Expectations of the UK seem to be the mirror image of Europe. Travelling through many countries and the lack of time to be able to understand the codes and the context has led to the build-up of bad experiences. Forty-two-year-old Kaleb told us: "I want to go anywhere where I can live in peace and democracy." Lastly, he explained that the only solution for him is England. There is hope, but also a disenchantment with what he has seen so far.

Thirty-one-year-old Omar painted us a picture of England that is just the flip side of his experience in Europe. He explained: "I'm here to go to England because I don't like Europe because they don't respect human rights. The English give you rights. If you have problems, the English will help you, both the civilians and the government. England gives you a life." Omar, living in Calais, told us about his dream: to attend drama school to become an actor. When we asked him what he thinks he can have as documents in England, he replied that he does not know, but that he thinks and hopes to meet an English woman, get married and have children with her. He spoke of England as an otherworldly place, distant from the daily life he had lived and experienced during his ten years in Europe, exacerbated by his experience in Calais, where he criticised the actions of the police. He currently has problems with his legs and eyes following an altercation with the police. This reinforces his sense of danger. In fact, he was robbed and beaten up in the night. Since then, he has felt in constant danger and condemns the collusion "between crime and the police", he said.

29. Ministry of the Interior, 2021: 12

30. Lendaro 2015.

Yet in this group of people who choose the UK by default, experiences elsewhere are leading some to redefine their image of the UK. Some people, while hoping to find a home, are aware that the obstacles will not go away in the UK. For example, not everyone thinks they will have access to papers. Some are aware of the difficulties they will face. "It is not guaranteed that we will get papers in England either," explained Abdelaziz and others who also said that they were uncertain about obtaining documents.

For this group, as well as for the previous ones, the linguistic dimension was one of the motivations presented. Many of them already speak English or believe that English is easier to learn than other languages. Living in England would reduce the difficulties of integration and the strain of starting a new life, especially for those who have a long migratory journey behind them and who have already learned various languages: Italian, German, Swedish or Dutch, for example. According to Bhrane, who has been in Calais for a month after spending five years in Germany: "I have already lived in Germany for a long time, learned the language, the culture. I already speak English and German, it would take too long to learn another language and culture."

We have presented the motivations that were described to us and for which these people find themselves defying the bans on movement and wanting to cross the Channel. These same reasons, combined with living conditions on the coast (which will be explored in the following chapters), drive these men and women to take deadly risks in order to cross the border separating them from the UK. In this final part of the chapter, we offer an insight into the dangers that these people face when crossing the Channel.

AN INCREASINGLY DANGEROUS CROSSING

Throughout the migration process, people encounter dangers. Of the 44,764 people[31] who were found to have died as a result of crossing borders on their way to Europe and the UK, some of them also lost their lives when crossing the Channel. When attempting to cross, people risk being electrocuted, crushed, overturned, hit by vehicles or trains, suffocated in lorries, crushed by falling goods, beaten by lorry drivers or security forces. They may fall from lorries or trains, drown during sea crossings or die from hypothermia. They expose themselves to death[32], but also to injuries that are sometimes irreversible.

During the course of this investigation, a twenty-year-old boy had one foot severed and another injured while attempting to board a moving freight train in Calais.

According to our survey, 38 people, or 66% of those we met, said they considered their lives or bodies to be at risk during attempts to cross the Channel. "It's dangerous, we're aware of that, but we have no choice," said Muhammad, who is thirty-three and has been in Grande-Synthe for two weeks.

31. United, "List of Refugee Deaths" Campaign: http://unitedagainstrefugeedeaths.eu/map/

32. Gisti/Institute of Race Relations (IRR) and Permanent Peoples' Tribunal (PPT), Deadly Crossings and the Militarisation of Britain's Borders, November 2020.

Of those interviewed, 35% have been injured since arriving in northern France. The main causes are lorry crashes and injuries from double barbed wire that protect ports. They have foot, knee or arm injuries, burns and hand injuries. For example, Simon showed us his hand and told us that it was lacerated on the barbed wire when climbing a fence.

In this paragraph, we will present the dangers faced by people when attempting to board trucks. Then, we will present the risks of sea crossings to finally address what happens when people are intercepted during an attempted crossing.

By lorry

The strategy for crossing the Channel, the one we heard most about from the people we met, is to try to hide on the lorries that are going to board a ferry to the UK. People try to hide by climbing into lorries in car parks or at petrol stations, around ports, but also far from the coast, in car parks on the motorway leading to northern France. Those who are willing to take bigger risks take advantage of the red lights and traffic jams on the motorway slips roads, waiting for a good opportunity to board a moving lorry. For example, in the vicinity of the port of Ouistreham, shadows can be seen waiting for the right moment to jump into a lorry.

The practice of hiding and boarding lorries is dangerous in itself. We will now present the many dangers that people are exposed to.

The first danger comes from approaching moving lorries and risking being hit. Danger can also lie in the driver's reaction when he realises that a person is hidden in his vehicle, as Rafiq explained: “I fought with a lorry driver, I wanted to get on his lorry to go to England, he caught me, I had to fight, look, I have injuries.” He is not alone; others also reported injuries following violent altercations with lorry drivers.

A flyer on the risks of crossing on board a lorry, distributed by an association to people in transit, warns of moving mechanical parts that can injure or crush a person - including between the cab and trailer, axles, wheels and engine. These parts can also heat up and cause burns. One young person told us that he discovered that he could hide in spaces that he had never imagined he would be able to fit in. Even with gloves, these operations can cause injuries, especially to the hands. The hospital in Calais has to take care of many young people with serious injuries. The team at Utopia 56 – an association within the territory that, among other functions, works to establish a link with hospital services – is seeing a large influx, particularly of minors, in the emergency department for hand injuries.

Another risk is the lack of air in lorries. After several hours, there may not be enough air, which can lead to asphyxiation. Worse still, people locked in refrigerated lorries for a long time without proper clothing can develop hypothermia.

The death of thirty-nine Vietnamese people in a refrigerated lorry in 2019 was perhaps the most memorable event. It was Hoài who mentioned this when asked about the dangers of crossing: “People dying in a lorry is unusual , it shouldn’t happen like that... We are afraid, but in life if you are stopped by fear, you won't do anything! ” he told us.

The feeling of putting oneself in danger was very common in the people we met. Those who have been trying to cross for longer described a feeling of fear and said that they are aware of the risks they face.

Asam's story alerted us to the need to risk more and more to increase the chances of crossing. He told us: “I feel unsafe, especially in the car park and when hiding on the lorries. Attempts are dangerous in themselves, for example, it can be very dangerous to hide in fridges.” He then explained that there are things that younger people do that he doesn't do, because he is aware of the dangers he would be exposing himself to. He told us that it is perhaps for this reason that he is at a dead end and cannot cross the Channel. It has been two and a half years since he tried to cross without success, and yet he has encountered many people who have succeeded by taking more risks.

Indeed, the evolution and multiplication of sophisticated and dissuasive surveillance measures are pushing people towards increasingly dangerous and deadly journeys. Therefore, to avoid controls or to thwart techniques capable of detecting human presence, people must hide themselves even better, putting their own lives at risk. To counter these attempts, controls and surveillance and deterrence measures are regularly reinforced.

For example, the motorway to the port of Calais has been transformed into a kind of track surrounded by high security fences and floodlights. All efforts are made to prevent the intrusion of people all along the final straight before entering the ferry terminal.

Ports are inaccessible. High-security double iron curtains, barbed wire, infrared detection and police surveillance have transformed them into fortresses. Sixteen-year-old Waleed told us: “Every time we approach the port, the police gas us, they attack us, they tell us ‘You stay in your woods!’ We can't get near the port, it's very protected. As soon as they see us, they send us away and the gas causes allergic reactions for guys who have asthma.”

Car parks are also increasingly secured. This makes it increasingly risky for people to attempt to enter vehicles from these car parks, as they have to climb over walls, fences and barbed wire to get in, damaging their shoes, clothes and causing many injuries.

The police patrol the car parks and try to deter these attempts. “If the police find us in the car park, they take us into custody overnight,” said Asam. Fourteen-year-old Mahmud told us that for three days in a row, the police sprayed tear gas in the lorry park to disperse people hiding inside.

Many car parks have been closed to prevent people from hiding in lorries. This has led people to move further and further away, to look for less well monitored car parks. This is the case, for example, for a group of people who live hidden in Orne near a motorway area more than 100 kilometres from the first port of the English Channel and who are trying to enter lorries from there. It is often neighbours who notice the presence of small groups of people in transit and forge relationships with them after discovering the situation of these people who are looking for strategies to bypass the controls and repression of the most popular crossing places.

The use of lorries to reach the UK, which can also be an individual strategy that does not require the mediation of organised territorial networks in exchange for considerable sums of money, is increasingly being thwarted by controls. Surveillance systems have become increasingly sophisticated and lorry traffic has been impacted by healthcare measures. "With COVID, there are fewer lorries and fewer chances of getting to England, but we will get there and forget all that," said Manute, after ten months of daily attempts to board a lorry. Fewer lorries mean that the time spent at the border and the difficulties in finding ways to cross are increasing. To give some idea, in 2019, 24,000 migrants were detected in lorries being loaded to pass through the Eurotunnel or in the port of Calais.[33]

By small boat

An increase in obstacles to cross not only leads to the search for alternatives, but also to an increase in risk-taking. This is why sea crossings have increased since 2018.

Sea crossings on small boats, often semi-rigid, were a rare occurrence until 2019, when they started to increase, becoming one of the main means of crossing and thereby multiplying departure sites on the coast[34]. Small boat arrivals in the UK increased from 539 in 2018 to 1,844 in 2019, to 8,400 in 2020[35] and more than 6,000 in the first six months of 2021. Abi Tierney, Director General of the UK Visas and Immigration Department, in a hearing before the UK Parliamentary Select Committee, reported that from January to September 2020, 2,480 unaccompanied minors arrived in the UK on small boats[36], suggesting the scale of the phenomenon. And this is without taking into account all the boats intercepted upon their departure and the boats rescued at sea or forced to turn back.

Crossing the Channel is very dangerous. The United Kingdom seems close, but the crossing time can be long, the water temperature is very cold, the wind can be strong as well. In 2020, more than 120 people were recorded as having hypothermia[37].

The Channel is very busy: large ships pass through it day and night and they do not see small boats. The waves they produce can be lethal for small boats in the vicinity; the fog can make the crossing, often made at night, even more difficult. The Channel is characterised by strong currents and large waves, making it almost impossible to cross without an engine.

With the rise of this crossing strategy, rescue operations are becoming increasingly common. Although there is information about emergency numbers - 999 and 196 - and an explanation for finding GPS coordinates to ask for help, many of those leaving do not know what to do if they find themselves in danger.

33. https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2020/09/11/migrants-la-perspective-du-brexit-pese-sur-la-fragile-collaboration-franco-britannique_6051829_3224.html. In Torondel 2021: 51.

34. For further information on the subject, see the very detailed and in-depth report by Loan Torondel (2021).

35. www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-kent-55501123 in Corporate Watch et Watch the Channel 2021.

36. https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/1310/pdf/ in Torondel, op. cit., p. 28.

37. Torondel, op. cit, p. 84.

While the semi-rigid boats often used to cross are not easy to intercept, this makes them difficult for rescue services to locate in the event of engine failure or other problems requiring a rescue operation.

One person we spoke to told us about her greatest concern. During her last attempt to cross, there were no life jackets and she can't swim. In this regard, Human Rights Observers (HRO), a human rights monitoring team, particularly during police evictions from camps, has already observed the presence of life jackets in migrant living spaces. People buy them for crossings[38].

We have mainly described the physical risks when attempting to cross into the UK; we now also want to highlight what happens when migrants are intercepted by police when they try to cross.

Controls and repression

When attempts are made, people in transit are subject to checks and detention at police stations. 47% of the people we met had been taken into custody – sometimes for several hours, but often for twenty-four hours. Most were taken into custody after being caught by police attempting to cross in a lorry or following a shipwreck or failed sea crossing.

In Calais and Grande-Synthe, the atmosphere of tension and conflict produces tense interactions with the police during detention and custody, as Abdel explained: "They were shouting at me." Felek also told us: "They stopped me when I was trying to get through, they asked me for papers, and because I didn't have any they locked me in a room that looked like a toilet, they laughed at me. Then they took me to the police station, I stayed there for 24 hours and they knocked on the door every hour to stop me from sleeping". Hiner, a twenty-five-year-old Kurdish man, reported being held in custody without a meal for thirteen hours. Ulagarech told us that after an accident on the makeshift boat in which he had attempted to cross, the police came to get them. They were wet and cold and the police were laughing at them. In English, Ulagarech asked them why they were laughing at them. They took him into custody, into a room that "looked like a toilet." He had to stay there until morning, wet and without water or food: "I questioned whether I was in Libya or France! " he said. As this story was being told, a person sitting next to us intervened in the conversation to report seeing the same treatment for a pregnant woman. Nuri reported that he threatened to commit suicide in order to be released, which shows the tension and distress of these people in such situations.

Furthermore, it is sometimes the incomprehension of certain procedures that makes people perceive them as discriminatory and contemptuous: for example, a young Kurd, Kaveh, told of the humiliation and his incomprehension when asked to remove the laces from his shoes and the threat to cut them off if he did not obey. A father recalled the desperation and tears of his five- and eight-year-old children, already scared by the shipwreck, who were separated from him while in custody.

38. Torondel, op. cit, p. 110.

In a less tense context, Asam, after being caught in a lorry, refused to give his fingerprints and answer questions. The police were not violent, they offered him an interpreter, but when he did not want to give his fingerprints in the presence of the latter, they raised their voices using “swear words” to make him speak. However, after several hours they released him.

Richard believes that the guards are trying to put pressure on them whereas Hussein believes that the police are also overwhelmed by the situation and do not know what to do with them. The situation is paradoxical, he believes. He continued his analysis by explaining that migration policies are challenged by the reality on the ground, because in reality people are arrested and released immediately. He told us that once they took him to a detention centre, he was very scared, they kept him for six days and then they released him and he said sarcastically: "I asked to be sent back to Sudan and then they let me go.”

Some of the people we met were very anxious about these interactions with the police. Faris admitted to being scared: “Every time I meet a police officer, I am afraid that they will send me back to my country, I am always afraid. And when I try to cross, when the police catch me, I feel really unsafe.” However, he explained that the police in France are not violent like those he encountered in Germany and Malta. He does not fear the police themselves, but rather the deportation procedures they may initiate, following a control or detention.

In addition to the police, security personnel at ports and car parks are also actors representing a danger for people in transit attempting to cross. Abdelaziz, a twenty-seven-year-old Sudanese man, was surprised: “I left a place with no security and here it is the same, there is no security because of the security guards.” He described the arbitrariness with which security guards can terrorise and injure to enforce the ban on access to certain areas. Several people told us about a security guard in the port of Cherbourg who sends his guard dog after them. In a context in which they claim that police conduct their work respectfully, they condemn security guards. Zafar explained: “At the port there's a guard with a dog, he sets it on us when we get over the fences: the dog's mouth is metallic, it's got something on its mouth to avoid nipping, to stop it from biting, but this metal thing hurts our legs and injures us.” The issue of violence by private security guards against individuals is a topic that should be discussed further.

We also want to highlight the difficulties that these attempts to cross into the UK create to the lives of people in transit. Indeed, crossing attempts are challenging and require considerable discipline and physical fitness. Obstacles to the crossing, poor weather that prevents departures by sea, and frequent checks force people to live very strenuous lives, and to repeat attempts to cross. Most people said that they try to cross every day, which determines the organisation of their daily life: trying to cross also means staying awake at night, walking a lot, skipping meals, taking risks. Rafiq stated: “My back is getting worse and worse. Since I've been here I've been walking a lot. It takes me four hours to go and try to cross, I do this almost every night, and then I have to walk back to camp, during the night, even if I have no energy.” One young person told us he had trouble eating and sleeping because of the timing of crossing attempts, which are incompatible with the times when food is distributed. Moreover, when he returns to sleep in the early hours of the morning, the police evict the camps where people are sleeping. We will describe these difficult living conditions in slightly more detail.

DEMANDS AND DENUNCIATIONS. FREEDOM TO MOVE AND SETTLE.

In this chapter we have shown the responsibility of European migration policies in producing migratory pressure on this part of the border of northern France. Rather than just thinking about the simple desire of migrants to reach the UK, it is important to account for the reasons why many of them are forced or willing to leave the European Union. For some, it is a question of escaping the nightmare of finding themselves back at square one or at intermediary points in their migratory journey; for others, it is ultimately a question of finding a place to settle down in decent conditions.

What we heard during our investigation was a dark, suffocating, oppressive situation and not the story of the desire or the vision of a bright future. Indeed, the "UK project" seems to us to largely be a criticism of Europe and its migration policies.

Faced with this imposed wandering, with time perceived as lost, with instability and precariousness, the people we met shared with us their resentment, a feeling of injustice, pain, but also hope for a better life, a desire to leave behind the past and this present, as we mentioned a few lines earlier: "We'll get there and forget all that." For Majdi, the most urgent and important things he needs are: "(1) the opportunity to live a dignified life with rights as a human being, (2) to have papers, (3) to live well and be able to forget the past, and, for example, be able to marry and live a normal life."

When describing their reasons for crossing the Channel, many participants in the survey mentioned that they wanted to turn over a new leaf and find a country where they could "live a normal life". After painful and dangerous migratory journeys, "living a normal life" is a necessity for the people we met. They then rely on the hope that conditions elsewhere could be better and that the process of transit and wandering will be behind them.

Although the UK has launched deterrence campaigns that try to discourage departures, the hope of finding a better life fuels the imagination, allowing for the circulation of information that ignores the changes in legislation and increasingly restrictive migration policies. As such, departures were already taking place before Brexit, although there were agreements in place that ensured cooperation between France and the United Kingdom for the transfer of Dublin procedures. Whether it was the Sandhurst Treaty signed in 2018, increased collaboration between these two countries or the joint French-British plan of 24 January 2019, which ruled on measures for returning migrants, the people we met were unaware of these two agreements.

Moreover, it is noteworthy that in the testimonies there is no evidence of any interest in the functioning of British immigration policies. This leads us to believe that the UK is fulfilling a desire to find what has not been found before. People want to go and see it with their own eyes, to give themselves a chance to try it. They rely on their desire to find better facilities elsewhere, which is reassuring in the face of a present and past fraught with difficulties. This reinforces fantasies filled with hope about the other side of the Channel.

Among some people, we also noted a lack of information on the possibilities of staying in Europe. Many of the interviewees expressed a desire to better understand the opportunities and constraints of settling in Europe and France, and were open to changing their mind if they saw opportunities to settle legally in France. They mentioned the need to better understand how migration policies work in Europe. They complained that the consequences of registering their fingerprints were not clear, that the rules were opaque and complex, that they did not understand the reasons why they or their companions had been rejected, and that the length of the procedures was unknown. All of the above is the subject of denunciations and contributes to the feeling of instability, precariousness and the difficulty of considering informed strategies to access a normal life.

Most of the expertise is based on real-life experiences and on a bric-a-brac of incomplete information.

Faced with obstacles to crossing and uncertainty regarding European protection systems and mechanisms, some people are wondering, for example, about the effects, risks and chances of applying for papers in France. This is the case for Majdi, who we interviewed even though he no longer lived in the camp. Majdi decided to apply for papers in France after living in a camp for a year and a half. He told us he was afraid to board the lorries, aware of the danger. He was fed up with not being able to cross the border, with checks and living conditions. He was stressed for a long time about the possibility of applying for papers in France. He had his fingerprints registered in Italy, a country where he had lived for three months and to which he did not want to return. He explained that in Italy: "Life [is] too complicated because of the unfavourable conditions for foreigners." He had gone through a reception centre that was "too dirty", where "there was no food, no humane conditions." However, feeling exhausted several months ago, he made the decision to submit an application in France, at which point he discovered that his fingerprints had not been recorded on the Eurodac file. His fears of returning to Italy faded. However, this fear was the cause of two years of suffering and his reluctance to apply for asylum in France for several months.

In the camps, we therefore saw the benefit of changing plans if opportunities to settle legally opened up. So, to the question "Are you thinking about applying for papers in France? ", 30% of interviewees responded in the affirmative, to which four people can be added who applied for papers in France, two of whom are dublined, one of whom has been rejected and another of whom has given up due to long waiting times. Moreover, as we have seen, the expectation, the perception of losing one's youth, and the passing of time are heavy psychological burdens that are very often referred to. Abdelaziz confirmed this in his interview in which he said he had applied for asylum. He applied in September 2019 and was summoned for an interview in February 2021. In May, he was still waiting for a response from OFPRA, and still living in camps with no accommodation provided.

We can thus see that the will to settle in Europe does exist among the majority. Only 37% of the people we met did not consider applying for papers in France or elsewhere in Europe. This means that if Europe offered integration opportunities and administrative recognition to these people, regardless of their unique histories, the tension at the French-British border would be greatly reduced.

The people we met strongly demanded an end to the Dublin procedures and the opportunity to apply for residence permits in order to study, work and easily join family members. We recall that, among the people interviewed, more than a third told us of the violence of leaving countries in which they had invested their energies, forged links, learned a language and a culture.

On these pages we have highlighted the presence of a large number of minors on the coast, which merits further study. To end, we will therefore focus on their specific cases and their demands. Rethinking child protection and the rights that minors can exercise is essential, particularly with the changes caused by Brexit. The “Dubs” amendment, which allowed the transfer of unaccompanied minors without family ties from Europe, has ceased to exist since May 2020. It had allowed the transfer of fewer than 500 minors[39], but it represented a possible legal route. Similarly, family reunification and transfer under the “Dublin III” regulation, which could allow a minor to enter the country if they had a parent, brother or sister, grandparent or even uncle or aunt, ended with Brexit. Currently, only the UK family reunification procedure, which has very restrictive criteria, can be applied.

For their part, the minors we met mostly said that they want to join their families or build a future. This is a strong claim for which institutional responses do not seem appropriate. To achieve this goal, we have seen to what extent they risk their lives on a daily basis.

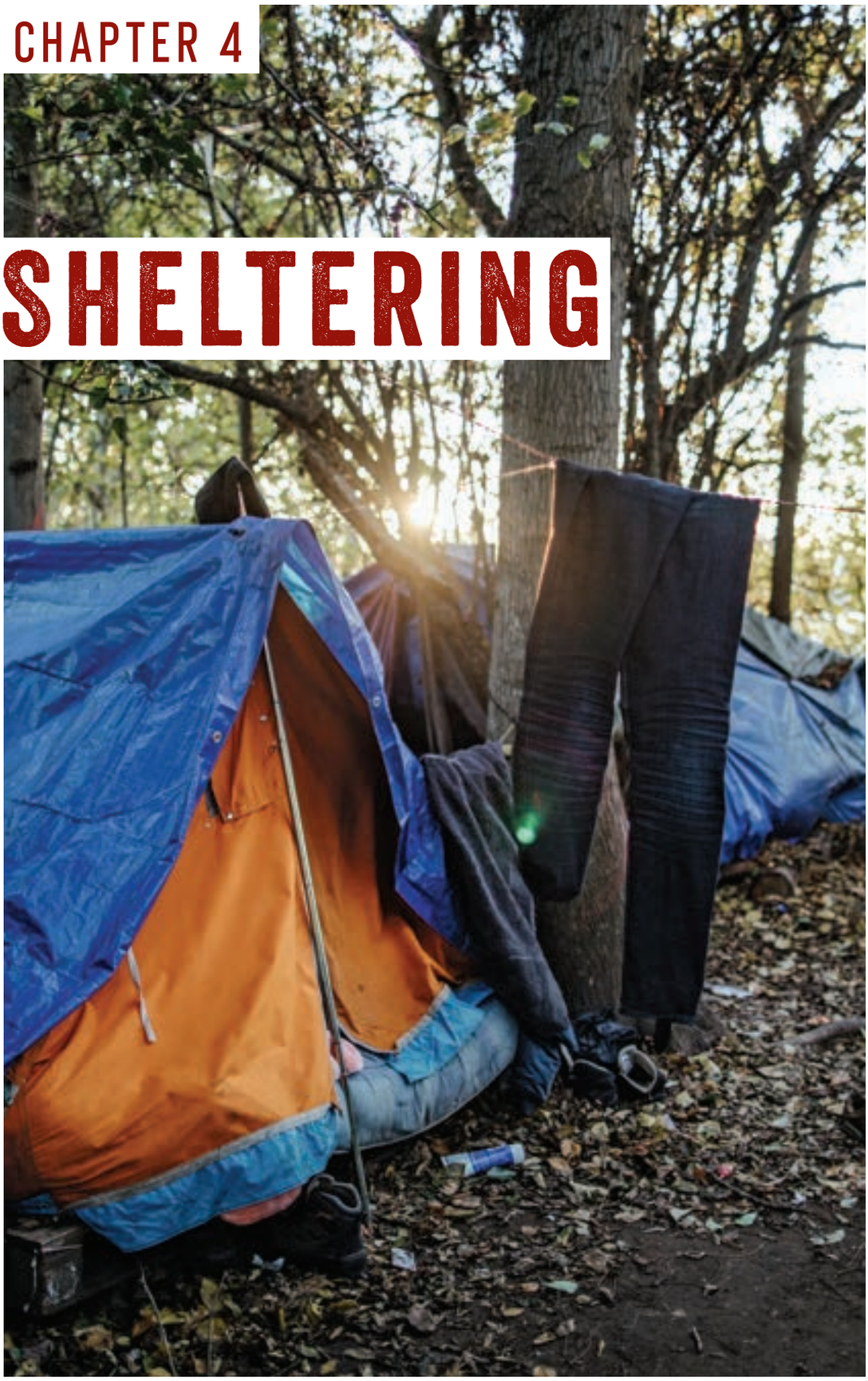
In conclusion, it is interesting to note that this report was written when, in Brussels, in the Church of Beguinag, at the Free University and at the Vrije Universiteit, 450 undocumented migrants carried out a hunger strike that would last fifty-nine days, in order to obtain residence permits. This protest is a testament to the violence of the ban on staying in the territory, violence that people can inflict on their bodies. To observe so many people on the coast risking their lives to cross a border in the hope of being able to live a "normal life" brings us back to the same observation: to fight against the ban on moving or staying, they are willing to risk their lives.

In the face of the “UK project”, and for all the different reasons discussed in this chapter, the forms of control and deterrence through surveillance that have made the border highly secure and controlled have only resulted in longer times at the border and more dangerous attempts to cross. As a result, people in transit are taking more and more risks to reach the UK and are finding themselves trapped in survival situations which we will present to you in the following pages.

39. https://www.france-terre-asile.org/veille-europe-articles-archives/du-15-janvier-au-31-janvier-2021/royaume-uni-une-porte-se-ferme-pour-les-mineurs-isoles-etrangers

CHAPTER 4

SHELTERING



CHAPTER 4: SHELTERING

The presence of people in transit at the border and the UK's rejection of these people who seek to go to the UK go hand in hand. From the 1990s, first in Calais[40] and later in other ports, there were signs of action by the local population to welcome, shelter or help these people. However, the local newspapers reported on these informal settlements long before these solidarity actions with collectives and associations began, resulting in the continuation of these undignified situations.

Over the past thirty years, informal settlements have appeared and disappeared in a variety of places: occupying forgotten spaces in the corners of cities, abandoned boat holds, World War II blockhouses, disused buildings, sheds and factories, patches of forest, roundabouts, ditches, dunes, public parks, and pavements under bridges... For those who do not know this story, very few traces exist. In fact, where the squats were demolished, esplanades remain and new buildings are constructed. Old camps in the woods are now wasteland; trees are felled so no one can find shelter there. In other cases, bricks, cement and fences block the doors and windows of buildings, suggesting past evictions. Barbed wire and fences surround the land. Large stones spill over roundabouts and wasteland to prevent people setting up tents. It is only the recollections of the inhabitants that can tell the story of the change in a territory that has become inhospitable and monitored. That is what keeps the memory of living spaces that no longer exist alive. A researcher who lived through the era of the so-called "Great Jungle" camp told us that in the Dunes area of Calais, the local inhabitants now avert their gaze from an enormous piece of wasteland on which, until its eviction in 2016, a town of almost 10,000 inhabitants stood, and of which no trace remains today[41].

Today, as in the past, people in transit who are attempting to cross are looking for shelter and mainly find themselves in informal camps. These living spaces, or rather survival spaces, gather men, women and children who protect themselves from the cold and bad weather under tents, who cook and warm themselves around fires. The precariousness of shelters depends on the tolerance granted to them by the prefecture and the municipality. This is how some camps have existed for months or even years, while others are evicted almost every day under the guidance of the Republican Security Companies (CRS), the gendarmerie, the National Police and the Border Police (PAF), only to reappear a few minutes later, sometimes even before the police have left, or a few hours later in the same place or a little further away. There is a big difference between the cities of Calais and Grande-Synthe and the camps along the North Sea coast, the Channel and inland. In the first two, repressive policies and the visibility of this fortress border are exacerbated and, for several years now, evictions have been occurring on a weekly or even daily basis. Elsewhere, camps may have certain “advantages”, including fewer evictions and more local support for groups of inhabitants.

40. Clochard and Pian 2008: 16.

41. See the documentary on the eviction of the jungle in October 2016: Levivier A., *Regarde ailleurs* [Look Elsewhere], 2018.

All the people we met had one thing in common: they lived or had lived in these informal settlements. They have all slept in tents in northern France. Just three households were exceptions: a father and his children who took shelter in an abandoned building for additional protection, and two young men who, at the time of the interview, had not yet managed to obtain tents. The latter, who had arrived in Grande-Synthe three and fifteen days previously, were sleeping outside without any form of protection. It was April. Temperatures ranged from 5 to 10 degrees maximum and were accompanied by freezing wind.

Tents protect people from the hostile weather conditions of this coast. From the North to Normandy, the climate[42] is characterised by low temperatures, with average humidity levels in winter and spring above 80%. The sky is often covered with clouds, rainfall is heavy and – especially in Calais and Grande-Synthe – a cold wind blows almost relentlessly. Between January and the end of April 2021, the average temperatures in Calais, Grande-Synthe and Ouistreham were 6-7° with, in the first two locations, a wind that reached a maximum of 3 degrees. Our focus here is on the climate of this area because more than half[43] of the people we met felt unsafe due to the harsh weather conditions, especially the rain and cold.

In addition, 62% of interviewees explained that they had been forced to sleep, for at least one day since reaching the northern coast of France, without the protection of a tent in these weather conditions. There were several reasons for this: they had just arrived, their tent had been confiscated by the police, it had been stolen, or they were sharing it with friends and there was not enough room for everyone.

Similarly, 43% of the people we met only found out about informal settlements as a place to find shelter after they had arrived in northern France. Around two thirds of them had arrived less than one month previously.

Finally, 57% of our contacts indicated that they had also found refuge in private homes, facilities opened at the initiative of solidarity associations, squats, hotels or even in migrant or emergency accommodation centres. However, these solutions were short-lived, providing most people with relief for only a few nights.

Where have you slept since arriving in northern France?					
At a private individual's house (or a community structure)	In an abandoned building or house	In a tent	Outside without a tent	In a hotel room	In an accommodation centre for migrants or homeless people.
26%	16%	95%	62%	16%	34%
15	9	55	36	9	20

Table 4: 58 respondents, several answers possible.

42. www.historique-meteo.net.

43. 70% of the 46 people who told us about the dangers they faced in northern France.

In this chapter, we first focus on those places where all the people we met lived and spent almost all their nights. First of all, we describe the informal camps we observed, and then we examine the repression they face, in particular by analysing the so-called "zero fixation point" policy and its application on the ground. Then, we discuss how the inhabitants of these camps perceive and experience the continuous evictions from their living spaces. Secondly, we focus our analysis on the possibilities of sheltering outside the camps. To describe them, we start with the direct experiences of the interviewees. Firstly, we present the perceptions that these people have of accommodation structures such as the CAESs, the winter facilities centres or the containment centres set up following the COVID-19 epidemic. Secondly, we discuss the reception of homeless people in emergency accommodation. Lastly, we take a look at the support offered by supportive people, through open houses at the initiative of solidarity associations, and within squats. We will end the chapter with some elements of demand and denunciation expressed by the interviewees and which relate to the conditions for real shelter.

INFORMAL CAMPS

This is among the most precarious modes of housing, a tent and a sleeping bag being the only way to protect yourself.

Living in camps is often the only option for people in transit faced with the almost non-existence of reception structures and unconditional shelter on the coast. Moreover, the fight against squats, launched by the public authorities, has considerably reduced the opportunity to find a roof under which to shelter[44].

The living spaces in which we met the people we interviewed for this research are often referred to as "jungles" by activists, volunteers and the people who live there. Initially, people of Afghan origin referred to the forest in which they lived as "jungle" in Pashto. This term has become a generic way to describe a specific type of settlement. On the ground, we hear the term "jungle" used for living spaces that are not necessarily vegetated and that vary widely. The camps we visited differ in terms of their level of precariousness, the degree of tolerance shown towards them by the public authorities, the community organisation that regulates them and the territories in which they are located.

The places where informal camps are set up are, in most cases, hidden from view in wooded areas or on low-traffic sites. Near the camps, water points are sometimes installed by state-run associations and as a result of long battles, particularly legal ones, waged by non-mandated associations. Where state-run associations do not intervene, solidarity associations have set up water points. Neither showers nor - with rare exceptions - toilets are found in the vicinity of these living areas.

Access to water, as well as the type of shelter, varies by city and local government, and by the tolerance granted to camps.

44. Caillaux and Henriot 2021.

Their dimensions vary greatly. Camps may be an accumulation of tents and tarpaulins scattered over a vast territory, like the hospital jungle in Calais or the area around the Jesuits' farm in Grande-Synthe, or, conversely, they may be very limited to a rather defined perimeter, very densely inhabited, as is the case with "BMX" in Calais or the camp in Ouistreham. The landscape can change from week to week depending on where the camps are located.

In Calais, as in Grande-Synthe, police harassment against any form of long-term settlement results in camps being very precarious and temporary. Tents are often small, easy to dismantle and reassemble. The comfort of a mattress is a very rare luxury.

The more you move away from the city, the more tolerance there seems to be for this type of housing. Provided that the camps and their inhabitants remain discreet, the police control them, without necessarily intervening regularly. Residents can then strengthen the construction of tents to better protect themselves from the rain. Communal living spaces can then be created; sofas, chairs and tarpaulins can produce shared spaces.

Common living spaces vary according to the precariousness of the camps. They are more fragile where everything is done to ensure that the social life is not structured. However, their existence also depends on the profiles and organisation of the inhabitants.

In some camps, particularly those inhabited by people of the same origin, forms of community management are being put in place, with the desire to maintain an organisation that simplifies communal life within the camp.

On the contrary, other places present themselves as sites that gather a large number of people from various national or linguistic communities in search of shelter. Here, organisation is achieved, in particular, by affinity, by small groups of friends, fellow citizens or travelling companions.

Here are two descriptions from field notes that describe two very diverse camps.

This camp is the most stable and organised we have visited. At the edge of the city, the car taking us starts to drive up a road. After several turns, we arrive in a car park where the City council has provided a water point. A very fast climb gets us into the wood, pallets pushed into the ground become steps to stop us from slipping on the mud of this well-laid path. Under powerful beech trees rising into the sky, a line of tents extends across a small earthworks. Self-built tents reinforced by wooden structures are covered with dark-grey tarpaulins, secured with nets and pieces of ribbon. Tinkered with, reinforced and attached to large trees, they are a testament to the stability of this camp. Insulated from the ground by pallets, which protect them from moisture and mud, they have the same architecture and aesthetics, which shows a collective effort to construct them and make improvements. A young resident explained: "They gave us the tents and we made them by hand, with plastic. It's to protect us better, we did some DIY to have enough space and to be able to sleep in the shelter. Every time someone leaves, they leave their place for someone else." These tents provide resting places, where mattresses are packed together. "The only problem is scabies, it's itchy and harmful to the body," the young Afghan continued. The tents follow one after the other; the entrances are opened downstream, onto a passage that leads to communal living spaces: a prayer room and a kitchen area. An Afghan flag indicating the nationality of the inhabitants of this camp is raised six meters high on two strong branches. We meet Tajiks as well as Pashtuns. The people we meet tell us that they are about forty. They try not to be too many because they want to stay discreet and succeed in leaving. In the kitchen, a transformer allows them to have electricity and light and to charge their phones.

It was given to them by the association which, for years, has been working alongside people attempting to cross who live in the woods. A black plastic tarpaulin attached at the top dominates this living space to protect it from rain. In the centre, a fire is lit for heating and cooking, a fridge detached from the electrical outlet, sofas and chairs make this space welcoming. This is where we were able to conduct our interview.

In most informal settlements, repeated evictions prevent the formation of such a welcoming and organised space. Here is a description of another living space.

The camp is not visible from the main road. You have to walk a good mile on a path next to the fields to see it. The air is heavy with pollution from nearby factories, we can see them at the bottom of the wood; fences mark the beginning of the land on which they are located in this industrial port city. As we move along this path, we meet more and more people. A clearing contains some lorries belonging to associations, and the inhabitants of the camp are scrambling around them. An association offers electricity and lots of phone cables cling to a board with many extension leads attached. An association distributes clothes, a disorderly crowd surrounds it and a final association prepares to distribute food: a precise line forms. In this space, a water point allows young people to wash their faces, while others wait to fill bottles. When returning to the area containing the tents, the land does not absorb water from the rainfall and leaves puddles of water and mud on this path which have been there for several days. It is necessary to make a detour into the woods. Blocks of tents are scattered between the trees. Clothes dry on branches. People are sitting around fires. We reach a clearing larger than a football field. Dozens of tents are clustered around the perimeter of this field: small tents for one or two people or larger tents are shared. People camp in front of them with fires burning, a group chopping wood, children playing. At the centre of this field, the various members of an association team mandated by the prefecture to direct people to the CAES are talking to each other. Around the tents, waste is piled up: materials for shelter and clothes mingle with mud; plastic bags are swept away by the wind. Continuing on, a banner hoisted on a gazebo signals that it is mainly Kurds who live here. Alongside it is a sort of informal shop selling energy drinks and a kiosk full of men that appears to be a makeshift café. Continuing along the path, we encounter two other water points, with many people around it, and an electricity point. Under a tarpaulin, people can be seen charging phones and a large speaker for music. Turning our gaze towards the woods, we see tents everywhere on this land that houses at least 400 people. Two policemen walk past, looking at the tents.

Life in the camp is described as extremely distressing. Eighteen-year-old Amir explains: "It's hard, even if you are used to the hard life in Sudan." Despite this, during the interviews, there were also indications that this type of housing was valued as the only way to attempt to cross the border. Among the younger people, it is a form of collective housing. Amir goes on, stating: "The most important thing is to feel like a family, to make a family with friends." With regard to daily life and the living conditions within these camps, we will return to this in the next chapter. In this chapter, we want to highlight the difficulties that these people face in sheltering because the policy on eviction from camps combined only with public policies for asylum seekers via CAOs and CAESs does not take into account the profiles and motivations of the people who live in the camps.

THE SO-CALLED "ZERO FIXATION POINT" POLICY

"[...] Under no circumstances will we allow a jungle or an illegal occupation of the territory to be rebuilt here,"[45] confirmed Emmanuel Macron in Calais in 2018. To this end, the public authorities adopt a so-called "zero fixation point" security policy, particularly in cities where the number of people in transit is seen as high. This policy, officially announced the day after the eviction of the Great Jungle of Calais in October 2016, has intensified over the last three to four years[46], particularly in Calais and Grande-Synthe, and to a lesser extent also in Ouistreham. On the contrary, in other less frequented sites whose populations are regulated by people in transit situations themselves, there is a greater tolerance. The discreet nature of small camps allows for a less confrontational but still tense relationship with local public authorities. Observers in the territory noted "an increase in dismantling operations since 10 July 2020, at the same time as the appointment of Gérald Darmanin as Minister of the Interior."[47] This is particularly evident in Calais, the city subject to the most media coverage regarding the presence of people in transit at the French-British border.

On the ground, this policy results in frequent evictions, dismantling, confiscation and destruction of the shelters of people in transit. The public authorities want to prevent any form of "hard" construction.

Finally, the aim is to produce a barrier to the settlement of people attempting to cross from the coast. In particular, this policy prevents them from settling and resting. Through this policy, the authorities try to deter people in transit from crossing the border, and the message is clear: they are not tolerated in this territory.

These evictions therefore constitute a practice of harassment and deterrence, seeking to exhaust people, both physically and mentally. However, as Luol, a young camp resident, said: "They can kick us out, but we're coming back anyway." Indeed, the evictions do not change the "UK project", nor do they make it go away. This abuse has the effect of breaking people psychologically and physically, and increases the risks they take in crossing on a daily basis. We see this in the tensions between groups just trying to survive, in the loss of self-esteem, self-destructive behaviour, trauma and the harmful consequences they also trigger in children[48], which the field associations report.

Forty-six interviewees experienced at least one eviction, i.e. 79% of interviewees.

In 2020[49], every living space in Calais was destroyed every 48 hours. In the first half of 2021, some sites were evicted at an even more intense pace.

45. Speech by President of the Republic Emmanuel Macron, Calais, 16 January 2018.

46. Caillaux and Henriot 2021: 20

47 HRO's observations on the city of Calais: http://www.laubergedesmigrants.fr/fr/lassociation/collectif-hro/publications-hro/.

48. "Les expulsions des pratiques qui bafouent le droit des enfants à la frontière franco-brittanique" ["Expulsions: practices that violate the rights of children at the French-British border"], Project Play, 2020. Click here to read the full report.

49. From 1 January to 6 November 2020: 973 evictions were carried out in Calais and 71 eviction operations were carried out in Grande-Synthe (Paton E., Boittiaux C. 2020).

Over the first half of 2021, the teams of the association Human Rights Observers (HRO)[50] observed 593 evictions in the city of Calais, including eight large-scale dismantling operations that sometimes affected several camps at the same time. During these major operations, the inhabitants of these living spaces were forced to board buses to be brought to centres outside Calais[51]. In Grande-Synthe, thirty-four evictions took place in a very large area of woodland where several small living spaces were present. In addition, two large-scale evictions were carried out, one with the obligation to move and remove by bus and the other implemented by municipal officials in order to force inhabitants to change site and move to a less visible site in the woods. In Ouistreham, although these operations are less frequent, seven of the ten people interviewed said they had experienced evictions.

There are two types of eviction. Some evictions are the result of an order from the court or the administrative court and are, at the same time, the subject of a so-called "sheltering" proposal (in Calais, this represented 3% of operations in 2020 according to HRO), which is forced in many cases. Other operations are carried out by the police on the instructions of the public prosecutor for the "illegal occupation of land in flagrante delicto" after a complaint is lodged with the owner. These account for 97% of evictions in Calais, and constitute a diversion from the criminal procedure for flagrancy.

The latter are more common and involve preventing the establishment of stable structures. During these evictions, either the police ask the residents present on the ground to move their belongings and camps several metres, or a "cleaning" team is present to destroy the camp and seize tents and personal belongings. Often, even before the operation is completed, people relocate to the same area. Harassment is one of the major tools of the "zero fixation point" policy.

Evictions by order of the administrative judge, meanwhile, constitute larger eviction operations, during which people are mostly forced to board buses and are taken far away from the city in which the camp is located. Following such evictions, the police monitor the site, which is often cleared, encroached or fenced to prevent further settlement. In these cases, people are forced to find another space to settle - often even further away from roads and homes.

The observation of the movements of the camps on the territory outlines the geography of major dismantling operations and the prevention of resettlement, which have pushed the camps further and further away from inhabited areas, therefore causing them to become less and less visible. These large-scale operations should provide real shelter, but those who have been subjected to them told us instead that they were taken a considerable distance from the former camp, often several hours' drive, only to have to return a few days later (with sheltering for more than 48 hours being conditional on submitting an asylum application in many cases).

50 Human Rights Observers is a collective whose mission is to observe and document human rights violations on a daily basis at the French-British border, which produces tremendous field work. Teams available 365 days a year, following strict observation and annotation protocols, collect detailed testimonies of these evictions. For a precise and in-depth report on the eviction procedures and testimonies and observations collected during 2018-2019, see the HRO report: Jenowein, Whitaker, Lindner 2019.

51. The data collected on evictions can be viewed on the website http://www.laubergedesmigrants.fr/fr/lassociation/collectif-hro/publications-hro/.

One event in particular deserves our attention to understand how these two types of eviction are coordinated. During the months of this investigation, the municipality of Calais requested the evacuation of approximately one hundred and eighty people living on wasteland in Calais. The associations La Cabane Juridique, Utopia 56 and Médecins du monde asked the administrative court to reject this request. Therefore, the judge ruled (on 26 March 2021) that there were no emergency conditions to order the evacuation of the occupants without title and rejected the request submitted by the municipality of Calais[52].

However, after the victory at the Lille Administrative Court against this eviction, La Cabane Juridique explained that in flagrante delicto evictions from this living space continued to occur every 48 hours. A community activist explained: "Since the community in this living space is particularly well organised, flagrant evictions that take place during normal hours (in the morning between 8.30 a.m. and 12 p.m.) rarely lead to the seizure of personal effects (or, in most cases, no seizures at all) since people move all of their belongings before the convoy arrives. However, on 6 April 2021, the authorities decided to carry out a "surprise" fragrant eviction in the middle of the afternoon. This eviction led to the seizure of many personal belongings and shelters of the people in this camp, thus having a disruptive effect similar to the eviction that would have taken place if the municipality had not lost the summary proceedings of 26 March." This shows that flagrant evictions can be used as a tool for revenge and harassment.

Another aspect of the so-called "zero fixation point" policy is that of receiving and sheltering people in exile on the condition that they apply for asylum. The CAESs (Centres for Reception and Reviewing Situations) offer to "redirect" people to other structures responsible for their asylum application. Places are always available within this system. Asylum seekers can be taken care of, but what about those who do not fit or do not want to fit into this category? They are discharged, on average, after 48 hours.

In addition, deportations to countries responsible for asylum claims for '"dubliners" is increasing and in 2021 the Ministry of the Interior renewed its commitment to deporting failed asylum seekers. Beyond the health situation, the "mobilisation of land and air carriers" for returns remains in force and is being stepped up. Furthermore, 1,300 additional places were created in 2021 within the return preparation (DPAR) system to support voluntary returns[53].

However, none of the people we met wished to return either to their country of origin or to the country responsible for their asylum application.

Lastly, the so-called "zero fixation point" policy is based on an insufficient and volatile humanitarian foundation as well as obstacles to associations[54].

52. Lille Administrative Court, Order of 26 March 2021 no. 21011928.

53. Ministry of the Interior, "Schéma national d'accueil des demandeurs d'asile et d'intégration des réfugiés 2021-2023" ["National scheme for the reception of asylum seekers and the integration of refugees 2021-2023"], 2021: 11.

54. Amnesty International 2019.

EVICTIONS FROM CAMPS EXPERIENCED BY THEIR RESIDENTS

"Following the CNCDH's third visit to Calais and Grande-Synthe on 15 and 16 December 2020 to meet exiled people, public authorities and associations, the Commission advises the public authorities to put an end to the so-called "zero fixation point" security policy, which has disastrous consequences for exiles and their supporters". This was the conclusion to the CNCDH report published in February 2021.

During our investigation, the people we met were largely exposed to deportations and denounced these practices. Dozens of accounts converge on this.

In this section, we will first present the frequency of evictions and the practices of the police when carrying out these evictions. We will then describe the impact that these operations have on the organisation of the daily life of the camps' inhabitants, focusing on the hours of sleep lost and on the need to find material to shelter and a new place to settle. Lastly, we will describe people's feelings towards these operations and towards police action, before concluding with their thoughts on the proposals for sheltering.

People living in the camps have experienced so many evictions for such a long time that they cannot count them. Some people reported that they are a daily occurrence whose procedures may change depending on the police team taking care of it. Sometimes the people we met were present at the site during the eviction operations and were able to collect their belongings. Other times, the methods were more aggressive and people were forced to leave the camp very quickly.

A mother of three, Leyla, said she was woken three times by police. On one occasion she was given ten minutes to take her belongings and leave, while another time the family were unable to salvage anything. Her daughter was crying and screaming because she had to leave her favourite toy behind. The people interviewed also denounced the confiscation of memorabilia, telephones, papers, glasses or even medication during evictions.

Our investigation confirms this point: 77%[55] of the people we met had personal effects confiscated or damaged during evictions from living spaces. This was the case for Rafiq, who, when he found out that the police were carrying out an eviction where he was sleeping in the Puythouck wood, ran to join the camp. He told us: "I arrived too late and the police didn't let me into the jungle. They told me to wait for two hours but by that time all my belongings were gone." Adan, who also lives in the Grande-Synthe camp, explained: "I saw my tent burn," as Osman confirmed: "They arrive, they take, tear and burn the tents and there is no possibility to recover the stuff in the tents", as did Bihar: "I was in my tent when the police tore it down, I was still inside! "

Some of these testimonies portray violent practices. HRO denounces the practices of National Police teams tearing down tents with people still inside using knives, as was the case in Grande-Synthe. One father, Ibrahim, told us that he is always vigilant and always ready, in anticipation of the possible arrival of the police.

55. Out of 57 respondents.

Some people are caught in their tents at the time of the evictions, while others are informed beforehand by other residents or anticipate these operations. Evictions often happen at the same time, but not always. This causes anxiety and psychological exhaustion. A young Eritrean told us that he and his friends ensure that one of them is always present at the camp to protect their belongings from seizure.

Although many evictions are carried out from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m., they should be considered in relation to the rest and sleep time specific to life in these camps. Some residents tell us that the morning is the time when they can rest: "I hadn't slept at all for two nights in an attempt to cross and the night I managed to sleep, the police woke me up straight away and told me to get out", Kaveh told us. Many people explained that they can only sleep for a few hours in the morning. They told us about their evenings: insomnia for some, the privileged moment to attempt to cross for others. Or some stay awake because of the cold or because there is not enough space in the tent, which is managed in rotation meaning that they have to wait for their turn to sleep.

Repeated evictions are then an additional difficulty that people have to deal with in terms of the organisation of time, the opportunity to sleep and stress. At the very least, eviction means removing the tent and waiting a few hours before it can be put back up, but it can also mean that people have to go looking for a new place to stay. As 21-year-old Dlawar explained: “Every time I get evicted, I move somewhere else, it takes time.” This frequent occurrence affects life and increases fatigue, as Felek reported: “Day after day it gets worse. It's no life, twice a week there's an eviction by the police.”

How people organise their time is influenced by these events: in the case of seizures during ordinary evictions, people have to find things to protect themselves at night. During major operations, the whole day is devoted to finding shelter and material elsewhere and peoples’ entire lives need to be reorganised. For example, Ibrahim, a father of two children aged five and eight, told us about the difficulty of scavenging for food on eviction days: “When there is an eviction, the children don't eat until the evening,” he told us. Indeed, associations are hindered in their activities by the police, who prevent them from accessing living spaces; they must therefore change their organisation.

Associations that distribute tents to people in need (Collective Aid, Mobile Refugee Support, Solidarity Border, Utopia 56, the Refugee Women’s Centre, among others) are in particular demand on eviction days. Tents are central to the daily lives of the people we met. This temporary accommodation is essential to their survival. However, 62% of those we met had spent nights without a tent. In the face of daily destruction, a tent is never enough.

Moreover, in this period of the health crisis, Collective Aid, for example, which previously recovered the tents left behind at music festivals, must now, in light of the cancellations of cultural events, buy them to meet their needs. In the first half of 2021, the association alone distributed 2,247 tents and 2,408 tarpaulins as well as 5,371 duvets and blankets in Calais and Dunkirk[56]. It was forced to stop distributing them at the end of April, suspending distribution until the first chills of autumn. This decision was made to guarantee that stocks were available in the winter months, when tents and sleeping bags become a vital necessity. This was a very difficult decision for the volunteers of the association, whose action is essential to the lives of people in the camps. Replenishing stocks and managing

56. Data from the Collective Aid inventory.

the distribution of tents is a never-ending struggle due to the constant number of requests following evictions and the daily seizures made by the police. In the first half of 2021, HRO recorded that there were 3,521 tents or tarpaulins seized by the police during evictions in Calais and 2,610 in Grande-Synthe[57], in addition to the seizure of sleeping bags and blankets. In Grande-Synthe, a cleaning services excavator is used to empty the area of people's belongings. In Calais, complaints about these seizures led to the opening of a service at the "Ressourcerie", where clean-up teams bring in some of the seized goods so that the inhabitants of the camps can recover some of their belongings[58]. However, none of the interviewees mentioned this.

The people directly affected by these evictions described a multitude of feelings and thoughts about these operations. As Majdi explained: “It’s very difficult because tents are our only protection against rain and wind, they are essential.” Despite this, he told us that after a few evictions he became rather indifferent to this practice, because the associations bring them new tents "And it's the same thing all the time, all the time... You get used to it". He explained that reactions at the camp vary, “depending on each person's temperament. Some get angry every time,” and others accept it.

In the sample of interviewees, 39% of the forty-six people who had experienced evictions were angry, and 24% felt sad. Some reported emotional reactions such as shock or disappointment; four people felt humiliated, two people felt fear. In addition, people shared with us their resignation, disgust, unease, and the difficulty of coping with this and living with a feeling of being constantly on edge.

Finally, 22% of those interviewed also mentioned indifference towards these practices, which over time become "normal", because "it is at the request of governments that the police respond", said a young Sudanese. Several people thus showed feelings of acceptance or rather resignation in the face of these practices. Alghaliy put it this way: “We have no choice, if you don't have papers, you can't say anything.” Residents justify and understand the police officers responsible for seizing the tents: “It’s their job.” Manute explained: “Once they evicted us, they took our tents and blankets, for me it's normal, I didn't feel unsafe, I think it's normal that they don't want people on the streets. In any case we are in a peaceful country, I am not afraid.”

A mother who lived through these operations with her daughter said she felt sad, but also somehow indifferent to the police practices she found normal. She told us this, adding that a policeman shouted at them to leave and pushed her in front of her daughter when she tried to retrieve her bag. And again Muhammad told us: “I'm sad, but we don't have a choice, the police come in, tear down the tents, it's been like this since I came here... we can't get things back, they come in and we have to clear off.”

57. http://www.laubergedesmigrants.fr/fr/lassociation/collectif-hro/publications-hro/

58. Belongings in good condition collected by the cleaning team could then be recovered from August 2018 at the Ressourcerie in Calais. However, this system put in place by the sub-prefecture is dysfunctional, HRO reports, due to the volume of seizures, the impossibility of sorting them and the recovery procedure (support by associations and eight days after confiscation) and does not really allow the items to be recovered. (Jenowein, Whitaker, Lindner, 2019).

Some inhabitants, upon analysing the situation, commented that it is because of migration policies that they experience this. Faris would like the police to be on their side: "It's annoying, but we know that [the police] are representatives of the State. We feel that we can't do anything, we want them [the police] to be more humane, it's up to them to support us." For other people, the work of the police is criticised, especially in Calais where relations with the police are much more strained. A young Sudanese man, Tarik, who had been in Calais for fourteen months, saw conditions in the camps deteriorate due to police action. He reported that police have evicted his living space "too many times": "They come in in the morning, they scream to wake us up, they hit the tents, they tear them down, they jump on tents while people are inside," he said. He described his feelings: he felt angry, but also said he is shocked and disappointed by such treatment. Dlawar blames police practices: "It's sad and tough, the police don't see us as humans, it makes us sad... for example, during the last eviction people managed to get their belongings back, others didn't and they watched the police rip things up before their eyes." Fear and outrage over police actions depend on each person's experiences. Hoài explained: "They're just doing their job, if you don't bother them, they don't bother you." This young Vietnamese man told us that in Germany, on the contrary, relations with the police were more difficult. For example, others told us, in particular, about the violence of border police in Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia.

However, evictions in the north of France can be violent: often the inhabitants told us about the use of tear gas. In June 2021, in Calais, HRO observed a "disproportionate use of force and violence by the police" during an eviction. Following the eviction, the team found: "13 bullets for defensive bullet launchers, 6 dispersal grenades (...) and a colossal number of propellant tanks of tear gas delay propulsion devices: white (range 100 m), black (range 50 m) and green (range 40 m)."[59]

For some, eviction also meant forced sheltering: "they came in very early, we were sleeping, they confiscated our belongings and they took us very, very far away, to a hotel... the next day we went back to Calais, we were really far away! The next time they started an eviction I ran to avoid being taken somewhere far away from here." These words were spoken by a seventeen-year-old, Ahmed, to whom no one had explained his rights during the "sheltering" operation, even though an explanation in English, which he speaks fluently, could easily have been given.

During our search of the informal camps, we only met people who wanted to stay there to attempt the crossing. We did not interview anyone who was able to find guidance and shelter in accommodation centres.

The testimonies of the interviewees are unambiguous: they did not know where they were going at the time of the "sheltering" operations and these were a waste of time for all interviewees. As described by Hoài: "'They took us two hours by bus from here and then it took us three hours by train to come back the next day." Ahmed confirmed this: "Once they picked everyone up, I was sleeping in a friend's tent, they picked up the others, but after a few days they all returned."

59. http://www.laubergedesmigrants.fr/fr/lassociation/collectif-hro/publications-hro/

INSTITUTIONAL ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES

The public authorities emphasise in their speeches that shelters are offered to asylum seekers, which in a way justifies evictions and the "zero fixation point" policy. However, for the people interviewed who live in the camps, this system is inadequate or – *at least* – there are several shortcomings: a lack of communication on these opportunities, on their operation and on the criteria for accessing them and the obligations imposed on them.

34% of interviewees had spent at least one night in an accommodation centre; these were mainly people who had been on the coast for a longer period of time and in most cases had experienced an eviction (seven people). Four people were in a centre where they were able to rest without any conditions, three others were in a centre for minors, four in 115 emergency accommodation centres and two in reception centres where they stayed for some time before leaving because they found living conditions there to be unbearable. In this case, these two people lamented both the loneliness and the obligation to leave the premises throughout the day.

A minority of them (seven people) had spent more than a few days in these shelters.

We will first present the accommodation in the CAESs, looking at people's analyses of them. Then we will consider people's perceptions with regard to 115 emergency accommodation centres intended for homeless people and we will also discuss centres that accommodate people during cold periods or during the health crisis. Lastly, the accommodation options offered to minors will be outlined.

Those who experienced eviction with sheltering were taken by bus to CAESs or to emergency accommodation facilities. Some of them were forced to do so without previously knowing the location of these centres, which were often a long distance from the coast. They returned to coastal towns the next day. No one was able to give us precise explanations as to the type of structure that accommodated them overnight.

For the State, the humanitarian response that would justify the eviction from the camps consists of the reception in CAESs offered to people wishing to apply for asylum[60]. These structures were created in August 2017. Their purpose is to temporarily house people in order to examine their administrative situations and redirect them to other centres. These structures do not take into account the needs or wishes of people on the coast. They intend to cross the Channel; they do not want or cannot apply for asylum or be transferred to the country responsible for their asylum procedures, let alone be deported to their countries of origin. The CAESs represent a system that is aimed, in particular, at people who want or can apply for asylum in France and who are willing to be relocated elsewhere in France.

For this reason, camps continue to exist throughout the different territories at the border. Although the public authorities refer to these housing proposals as a sheltering solution, information about access to them is very opaque and severely limits the willingness of people to go to these structures.

60. For a map of CAESs, see: https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=15D6-OZaB3VJG4ZWPJ5uCAzcx9_E&ll=50.18816210722056%2C2.9888701931014072&z=8

Those who have experienced sheltering only stayed there for a day, while acknowledging the benefits of staying warm and being able to wash. This was the case for a father who said he spent only one night there, enjoying the warmth of a night away, while noting that the place was unsuitable for children - with no play areas or suitable food. However, the decision made by these seven people was to return to the camps in an attempt to cross into the UK. "In a tent you're free, you can do whatever you want," stated Asam, explaining that living in a centre is incompatible with the desire to cross the Channel.

Twenty-nine people then explained to us why they had never been to a centre. 52% of them said that they did not want to go there because they wanted to be able to cross the border at any time, they refused this accommodation opportunity because their only objective was to reach the UK. And among the reasons why they do not want to go, they mentioned: the location of centres being very far from the coast and their determination not to ask for help and protection from France, or the impossibility of doing so. For example, Richard admitted: "I'm not interested because the accommodation centres are far away, you have to take the train to get back here. It's better to stay here if you want to try to cross. Plus, we have food here. " Lastly, these people often think that: "The only way to cross is to stay in the woods," as Sayd recalled.

48% of respondents instead underlined a lack of information and understanding of how the centres operate. This explains why this sheltering option was never considered. Among them, two people were denied accommodation because of a lack of places and because of age (he was an adult). Information and knowledge about how the centres operate is unclear. Many people are unaware of them because no one has told them what they are for and where they are. Added to this is the fear that the police will access these centres, which reinforces the decision to stay away from them.

Accommodation in the 115 emergency accommodation centres for homeless people is an alternative to CAESs, open to all, and is not conditional on the examination of a person's administrative situation.

Four people told us they had spent several days in a room provided by the 115 emergency hotline. However, this emergency solution did not last long. Access conditions change from city to city depending on availability and demand. It is often difficult to get a place, especially if you are not considered to belong to one of the most vulnerable categories - as is the case in certain cities. Nevertheless, this service is not well known by the people living in the camps and remains very difficult to apply for. Among those who had access to this sheltering facility, Nebila said that she stayed there for thirteen days, after which she had to leave the facility because she had finished her allowance and did not want to go to a CAES. Ulagarech denounced the fact that in these centres, management asks for papers. He suggested that they work for the police and was surprised that they ask people to leave the premises in the morning, which does not give them enough time to regain their strength. He also explained that there is a whole, very time-consuming, procedure to follow: you have to call them then wait without being sure that you have a place. Access to facilities is often through associations. One example is that of a young woman who, with her husband and four-year-old child, had been taken in by the 115 for two months, thanks to the help of an association, after having spent six months in the jungle. This example seems exceptional, since compared to other French cities the 115 services are often saturated, and there are quotas for the number of nights people can spend there (sometimes no more than ten).

Another shelter option available in the territories is the opportunity to be housed in the structures set up as part of the "extreme cold plan". Finally, there was an extension of the possibility of being accommodated in a “centre de desserrement” [accommodation centre for COVID-19 patients in precarious situations] during the confinements caused by the COVID-19 health crisis. However, these were rarely mentioned in the interviews.

Temporary reception facilities were introduced for exceptional circumstances: under prefectural decision in the event of a health emergency (with COVID-19), or in the event of particularly critical weather conditions (below –5° Celsius or during storms). If the temperature is very low (cold weather monitoring), additional emergency accommodation spaces can be opened all along the coast, but are subject to the discretion of the prefect. Currently, the health crisis and the “extreme cold plans” are the *sine qua non* conditions for the State to offer unconditional shelter to migrants who live in the camps, regardless of their plans or their administrative status.

However, in locations such as Calais and Dunkirk, the opening of additional places is not solely linked to weather conditions, as the presence of places still vacant in the CAESs justifies the lack of action to shelter people. In this way, this *de facto* denies the existence of almost all of the people we met who do not want or cannot apply for asylum in France and who do not want to go to a CAES. As such, there is no provision to protect them from the winter cold.

The note from the Préfecture du Nord, which announced the opening of additional accommodation spaces in the face of a sharp drop in temperatures in February 2021, makes this clear: “The Prefect would like to point out that these emergency decisions are not a sustainable solution for migrants who, with the support of the State, can benefit from long-term care more suited to their individual situation in the context of asylum[61].”

We therefore observe that the prefecture does not take into account the existence in the camps of people who are not asylum seekers or aspiring asylum seekers. And this is in contradiction to Article 345-2-2 of the Social Action and Family Code, which states that “any homeless person in a situation of medical, psychological and social distress shall have access to an emergency facility at any time”.

However, an interesting exception should be mentioned, namely the experiment conducted in Tailleville, Normandy which offered unconditional accommodation to people living in the Ouistreham camp regardless of their administrative situation. Under the responsibility of the Departmental Directorate for Employment, Labour and Solidarity (DDETS), this centre opened on 20 March 2020, during confinement; it closed in the summer, to reopen in November to protect migrants from cold and bad weather until the end of May. Everyone is welcomed into a building of the Tailleville manor without administrative conditions.

The extension of the opening of this centre has enabled its operators to gain the trust of the inhabitants of the Ouistreham camp through significant field work focused on communication and access to this system. It was thus able to improve the living conditions of some of the people living at Ouistreham.

61. Préfecture du Nord, press release dated 07/02/2021 Littoral: *amplification des mises à l’abri des personnes migrantes [The coastal area: increasing the number of shelters for migrants].*

Indeed, this opportunity was recognised as valuable by the people who were able to take shelter from the cold in this welcoming structure.

Four people we met had visited this place, which is located about thirteen kilometres from the camp. They had the opportunity to recharge, sleep, shower and get information about their rights and access to healthcare. This structure also provided guidance on the rights of minors and kept them informed of the option of being taken care of.

The minors we met expressed the importance of having had access to this facility, even beyond their immediate choices, as Souleymane said: "It interests me, but I'd prefer to try the crossing, afterwards if I don't succeed, I'll think about it. Twenty-six-year-old Hatim arrived at the camp and discovered the centre. He stayed there for six months. He told us that he had met some very kind people, adding that, "it was finally an opportunity for him to understand things about Europe, about how procedures work." He then applied for asylum.

However, some migrants in the informal settlement continue to resist moving to the centre, as their sole aim is to cross to the UK. Sixteen-year-old Waleed explained: "There is a centre in Tailleville for us, which allows people to sleep, take showers, wash clothes. But I am here because I have a goal: to go to England and I will stay here until I go to England. I'm not going to waste my time there."

As for the thirteen minors we met along the coast, half went through structures suitable for unaccompanied minors. Of those who had never been to a centre, five said they had chosen not to because they wanted to make the crossing as quickly as possible, and one did not know that they existed. The associations supporting minors (the French Red Cross, the Refugee Youth Service, Utopia 56, Médecins du monde, etc.) are working to build relationships of trust with minors in order to facilitate access to rights. This activity is made extremely difficult by the precariousness of these young people, their determination to leave and the lack of clarity regarding the opportunities to obtain papers once they are of age, explained one association.

Of the other minors interviewed, two had been in emergency accommodation and at the time of the interview had never heard of the opportunity to be protected as a minor.

Three of them had been in the reception and support establishment for foreign unaccompanied minors in Saint-Omer in the Pas-de-Calais, one of whom had been forced there by the police after being arrested during an attempted crossing, while two sixteen-year-old friends, Mansour and Abdel, told us that they sleep there regularly. They appreciate the provision of games like a table football in these premises, but they complain of sleeping badly and that the staff are not welcoming. Two minors who had never been there told us that they heard that it is far away, noisy and dirty.

To conclude, on the ground, we observe that the institutional accommodation facilities are insufficient and out of touch with the needs of the people present in the camps. Solidarity therefore offers additional solutions for sheltering people in transit, outside of the state system. We will now discuss supported accommodation in private homes, accommodation in community facilities, and support and shelter that can be found in a squat.

SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION, WITHIN A COMMUNITY STRUCTURE OR IN A SQUAT

An alternative to the response of the public authorities is solidarity initiatives led by activists or solidarity associations. Thus, 26% of the people interviewed stated that they had been accommodated in a private home or in associations outside the state system.

We will first analyse the experiences of accommodation with local people, then we will discuss the role of the community structures that offer accommodation to vulnerable people and, finally, we will explore the support offered within the squats.

Some citizens offer the inhabitants of the camps a sofa or a room in their homes for a few days, time to rest.

Accommodation can be provided by fellow citizens of residents of the camps, friends of their friends or distant relatives who have settled close to the border points. A former camp resident, now living in the city, told us that he sometimes allows residents of the camp to use his flat for showers and also allows exhausted friends living in the camp to rest there. This type of support can also be provided by individuals who live in the vicinity of the camps and who are involved with migrants.

Some of these hosts have organised themselves into networks, such as Migr'action 59, a collective of citizens of Lille, which hosts people from camps for a weekend, taking care to pick them up and bring them back to Calais. Researcher Camille Gourdeau conducted participatory research with the CAMO (Collectif d'Aide aux Migrants d'Ouistreham) on the reception of migrants in citizens' homes in Ouistreham. They analysed the experience of seventy-five people in this group who had welcomed people into their homes[62]. Sometimes an encounter in the camp motivates people to offer accommodation to camp inhabitants with whom they have established links.

We met five people who were housed in private homes. In small camps, outside large sites, the links between people in transit and their supporters can be established more easily and become stronger over time. For example, Asam told us about his experience. He has been living with eleven fellow migrants in a small camp for five months. They take care to ensure that the camp does not exceed a dozen inhabitants, on the one hand, to avoid too much competition in attempts to cross and, on the other hand, for the opportunity to receive help from the solidarity collective. Indeed, they are largely supported by a local collective, which offers them accommodation over the weekend so that they can rest. The camp empties for a few days a week when everyone goes to live "with their family" in order to recharge their batteries.

Luol, too, said that he sleeps in the camp but has occasionally benefited from accommodation from a kind person. He goes to her house for company and to charge his phone.

62. 2020 Gurney; *id.* 2019.

Three young people also reported that they were staying with the chaplain of Secours Catholique, in a collective setting, in a private house in which around ten people were hosted and shared living spaces. They told us: "Before coming here, everything was difficult, there were no showers, it was raining, we didn't have clothes to stay clean and dry, since we've been here we've had everything! Everything has improved."

There are also attempts to provide accommodation through voluntary organisations, but these are in the minority, and are aimed at the most vulnerable people, giving priority to women and families with children. People in transit and social workers live together in a communal way. The aim is to provide a place of respite in a house where people leaving the camps can feel confident and supported by the volunteers and workers who share their life with them. Three of the people we met lived in two community structures, offering them shelter, a dignified living environment and the opportunity to rest. These were the Maria Skobtsova House of Hospitality[63] in Calais and the Maison Sésame[64] in Herzeele, about twenty-five kilometres from Grande-Synthe. These structures make it possible to accommodate a small number of people, thus maintaining a welcoming and secure family environment. These structures merit a more in-depth analysis to better understand how they work, the criteria chosen for access and the obstacles they are subjected to.

Two women we interviewed, who were accommodated at these structures, confirmed that this experience has significantly changed their daily lives. Leyla, a mother of three, described this opportunity: "I spent twenty-five days in the jungle with my children, I was worried day and night, I wasn't sleeping, I was watching them all the time, I was scared for them, I was scared that someone would kidnap them, they're five to eleven years old. I was scared. It was also difficult to go to the toilet during the night, there were people everywhere (...) For a woman it is very difficult, fortunately there is the Refugee Women's Centre and Project Play, you feel safe with them, you can talk to them." She continued: "Now I'm at Maison Sésame, they're good people, I've been able to relax, I hadn't slept for almost a month, but here I've been able to rest, I can go to my room, rest and let the kids play because I can trust them, I finally feel safe, I'm not afraid. If I need a doctor, someone here will help me, I can shower, eat. This is not a minor thing when you come from the jungle. In the jungle you have rain, noise throughout the night, cold wind, it's hard, you never rest, whereas as soon as I'm here my head hits the pillow and I'm fast asleep."

One last experience to highlight is that of reception in squats. Indeed, some squats can provide a support point for the inhabitants of the camps. These experiences of occupation can provide a protected shelter for showering, resting, and washing clothes. As eighteen-year-old Amir, who we met in a busy house, explained: "It's much better to be able to rest in this house sometimes"; Faris also explained: "The opening of these two houses has been a relief for us, for two weeks now we have had a place to rest, to change clothes, to wash them... it is possible to sleep there. I prefer to go back to the woods, but I can still come here to rest when necessary." The existence of an inhabited building, while precarious, proves to be a safe haven[65] for the inhabitants of the camp and also helps them meet people in transit and activists[66].

63. https://www.refugeehousecalais.org/about-us

64. https://maisonsesame.org/qui-sommes-nous/

65. Caillaux and Henriot 2021: 20.

66. See the documentary on the experience of the Marais squat which sheltered and enabled the mutual assistance and organisation of more than 250 migrants in Caen: Cézard, Taquard, Gathy 2020 or on the resources that squats can represent for migrants, Lotto 2017.

However, this practice and those who claim its political and practical legitimacy are repressed. The fight against squats has resulted in the eviction and closure of almost all of these spaces, with the exception of the GM against the evictions in Caen, created in 2013 in response to the evictions of emergency accommodation centres (115), which still publicly supports this form of action and demands its existence.

Beyond the experiences of squats supported by activist groups, some people in transit find refuge in abandoned hangars, factories or buildings in which living conditions can be dangerous[67].

These squats remain hidden and most solidarity associations and collectives avoid coming close to these discreet and "secret" settlements, so as not to harm them. Indeed, drawing too much attention to these places would make them visible and increase the risk of evictions.

To conclude, we can observe that, notwithstanding the efforts of supportive citizens, associations and activists to provide solutions to resettle and accommodate people in camps, these proposals remain limited and may be aimed at a minority of inhabitants. We then asked people in transit what they think of this lack of opportunity for shelter.

67. Two people also expressed their concern about these living spaces, revealing their fear that empty houses, as abandoned places, could be possessed by evil spirits.

SHELTERING WITH DIGNITY: MULTIPLE DEMANDS

As a conclusion, we will first highlight the main difficulties encountered by the interviewees with regard to living (surviving) outside. Then, in the second part we will recount the words of two people who denounce the living conditions at the French-British border.

When we asked people living in camps about the major difficulties they were experiencing on the coast, housing conditions emerged as one of the most prominent concerns.

Twenty-four people referred to the difficulties of living and sleeping outside. “Living in the jungle”, “getting to sleep when you sleep outside”, “not having a home”, “not having a place in which to sleep”, “life in the woods” are some of the answers given to us.

On the one hand, people denounced the material difficulties they have to face in camps: problems such as scabies due to the crowded and dirty conditions in tents, but also cracked and chapped skin due to cold nights spent outside.

Among the most urgent things that could improve daily life, some of the interviewees mentioned the opportunity to have access to accommodation and most demanded access to services and conditions that would make life in camps more dignified. Most of the demands related to basic needs associated with the very precarious living conditions in these camps: getting access to water, toilets, the possibility of washing themselves and their belongings. They also highlighted the need for materials to shelter (tents, tarpaulins, sleeping bags, fires to warm up).

On the other hand, police harassment and the impossibility of finding a place to stay for more than 24 hours, even outside, without having to move continuously, were the most common complaints. Twelve people complained about the evictions and demanded that they stop. They denounced: “Evictions, we must always move, find tents”, “the confiscation of tents by the police”, “the constant threat of eviction”, “the police during evictions who make us feel insecure”. Claims against the State in terms of reception and accommodation were not in the majority. Above all, there is a desire to find a dignified place to live and living conditions that would make everyday life less difficult. The demand to be able to shelter without being chased away proved to be the most important complaint against the state and was also directed at the police and the municipality.

Some people demanded their autonomy and said that they do not need help, pointing out that their objective is to cross the border and that the situation they are in is transitional. They stressed that they were organised enough to deal with the situation. On the other hand, others criticised the French public authorities' lack of commitment to sheltering people. Fifteen people declared the urgent need for accommodation, a roof or a camp. An example of this position is the testimony of Ulagarech, who told us about the violence he faces, his astonishment that this could happen in France and the lack of understanding of the absence of unconditional accommodation opportunities. Here is a long interview excerpt.

Ulagarech, who was in his thirties, did not have a dream of moving to Europe; he arrived to work and live in a safe *place. In his country he had everything. He gave up a good job and a home. He would never have imagined living like this in Europe. He left thinking he would stay for a few years, looking for a place to settle down and work: "I had not decided where I wanted to live, so I changed my plans as I went along." He went to Brussels and it was there that people he met advised him to go to England, telling him that working and living conditions would be better and that it would be easier to work in his field of study. He speaks very good English. He said he, "suffers a lot from the living conditions in Calais," and denounced the lack of structures where he can spend the nights, places in which he can wash himself and his clothes. He compared Calais to Belgium. He explained that in Belgium there were accommodation centres where it was possible to stay for up to forty-five days, without any obligation.*

He said that accommodation centres it easier for people to forget about their trauma and stress, to turn over a new leaf with more ease. He watched people go crazy in the Jungle because there is a lot of frustration. He explained: "In the camp the situation is extremely harsh and dangerous: everyone is together, there are no toilets, showers, water. The whole world lives in the Jungle: Bengalis, Albanians, there are people from all over the world in this shameful place, people of all nationalities except the French! There are people who are in distress, people with no hope who have been rejected everywhere, especially in Germany, people who have experienced wars, who are not doing well. People who used to have a job and never could have imagined that they would be here." "You have to have the strength to hold on," he told us. He continued: "How can we sleep in these conditions?! We are in a tent that has already been used, sometimes I prefer to sleep outside. Three of us sleep in it, it doesn't even cross our minds to think about the risk of COVID. We have bigger problems. We don't even have mattresses, we put our anoraks under our backs. It would only take one reception centre to improve our lives. Never, NEVER would I have imagined finding this in France, which is among the most developed countries in the world!"

His friend, who had been in France for a few months, was sitting nearby and interrupted our conversation to describe the situation. He assured us that when he is in England he will write a book about the conditions in which migrants live in France. His anger is political; he repeatedly asserted that he does not hate Europe, but rather European policies towards them: "We are the victims of this system and I want to fight so that the next ones do not live in the same conditions as us." He highlighted the fact that single men are more often rejected and everywhere. He explained that he had lived in Germany where he applied to enrol in school. They "even", he said, refused to let him study. "This system is made so that you lose your time, your hopes, your best years, it's so unfair... We are perceived as criminals, we are treated like dogs. Now there are elections coming up and so they make us leave more often. The police come to check us almost daily. It's not human, they take our stuff, they're racist, it's their way of getting the message out that they don't want us. It's not human! Tell me where I can go to live with dignity! " he exclaimed and continued: "They don't know where we can go either, nobody wants us. We are paying too high a price. Why? Why? Why can't we stay anywhere in Europe? "

This testimony thus highlights the rejections experienced in Europe, presented in the previous chapter, and emphasises how the brutality of living conditions in northern France makes them feel even more disappointed and angry with the migration policies.

In conclusion, this chapter has focused on the difficulties that people face in meeting their basic need for a safe place to live. Reception associated with administrative statuses proved to be unsuitable for almost all the people we met because of their plans and their statutory situations. On the contrary, the opportunities for unconditional, state, associative and informal shelter are facilities that, according to the testimonies of people who have had access to them, significantly improve their daily lives.

In the history of this border, there have been numerous attempts to provide temporary reception facilities for people in transit, without asking migrants to register and without examining their situation (the Hangar Bore in 1999 in Calais, the Léonie Chaptal centre again in 1999, Sangatte 1999-2002, the centre de la Lisière are examples). For various reasons that would be interesting to explore, these attempts came to an end. The current repressive approach to immigration policies provides no room for such experiments. However, in the territories furthest from the spotlight, we can highlight local attempts to tolerate camps and to implement different services pragmatically. Provided that these places are discreet and not very visible, local administrations seem to be willing to guarantee a minimum level of dignity and respect for the most basic human rights.

CHAPTER 5

SURVIVING THE DAY-TO-DAY

CHAPTER 5: SURVIVING THE DAY-TO-DAY

"This is not a good place for human beings," stated Dlawar during the interview when we discuss the difficulties of living in the camps. We have previously focused on housing and the essential need to find shelter to sleep. This chapter looks at other aspects of camp life including material necessities and difficulties people encounter on a daily basis. How do these people eat, move around, keep safe, access sanitary facilities, shower or even wash their own belongings?

These are basic needs, which are far from being met in this environment.

These living spaces bring together individuals who share similar needs and difficulties. On the one hand, they offer the opportunity for a collective solution, through the organisation and solidarity that is created within this community of "experience" and by sharing the same living space. On the other hand, this same community seeks the support of external actors. This can be seen in the growing number of charitable, political and social associations. They are committed to helping people meet their basic needs on a daily basis, thereby making survival conditions less unbearable. They also advocate for access to and respect for fundamental rights. They denounce the failings of the state, which they have to compensate for to a large extent, and fight to ensure that the state meets a minimum of its obligations. For example, in Calais, it was following a conviction of the State and the Calais city council by the Council of State in 2017[68] that the outline of a minimum "humanitarian base" consisting of the establishment of water and shower facilities financed by the State and entrusted to mandated associations were defined[69]. In 2018, the President of the Republic went one step further by indicating that the state would also distribute meals, a task entrusted to the same state provider as access to water.

This chapter looks at the daily needs and difficulties that the interviewees wanted to draw attention to. It explores the responses provided by individuals, but also by associations and activists, or by public authorities.

We will address access to food and services, including forms of food distribution. Afterwards, we will explore the issue of access to water. We will then highlight the elements that favour or, on the contrary, hinder access to the city and its spaces. We will follow up with security issues and people's feelings of insecurity, be it during interactions with the police, with people who are hostile to the presence of migrants or with other camp residents. We will analyse forms of support, interventions or services on the ground and within day centres. To conclude, we will examine the denunciations and claims that emerge from the difficulties mentioned by the people.

68. Decision No. 412125, 412171. https://www.conseil-etat.fr/ressources/decisions-contentieuses/dernieres-decisions-importantes/conseil-d-etat-31-juillet-2017-commune-de-calais-ministre-d-etat-ministre-de-l-interieur.

69. CNCDH 2021: 13. However, these arrangements do not meet the needs on the ground and independent associations continue to be essential.

EATING

Access to food is a basic human need and a fundamental right.

During the interviews, we asked the interviewees if they had gone to bed in the last week without having eaten enough. 35% of them said this was the case for them several times during the week or almost always. 24% answered "sometimes" and only 41% of people interviewed said it never happened to them[70].

We note three possible responses to this need: the first response in terms of meals consists of autonomous and collective organisation; the second and third responses involve external support, and people in transit are, in these cases, dependent on food distributions from third parties. The answers are then differentiated by their forms of support: the distribution of food to be cooked and food ready to eat.

First of all, we met certain groups that are fairly organised and have the means to meet their food needs. As a result, people organise themselves to cook and source food[71].

According to our observations, this is a minority. One exceptional case among the people we met was that of a Vietnamese person, Hoài. He proudly explained that, in his current camp, they have access to electricity and water, which he believes is the only essential need. For the rest they manage themselves; they have a machine to cook rice and, while we are talking during the interview, they keep an eye on the five kilos of rice that are cooking. With a group of fellow travellers, they always do the cooking themselves. He smiled as he told us that they have an almost military organisation so they are effective, each has a role: there is one person who washes, one who cooks, one who buys things, one who does the dishes, each giving a helping hand. He laughed, saying that they just lack a few spices to make good Vietnamese dishes. This testimony remains exceptional among the people we met and can be explained by one of the limitations of our research approach, which was not to interview the most isolated people and those furthest away from support, thus biasing the representativeness of the response methods on these questions related to food needs.

For almost all of the people we met, we observed that their living situations result in a lack of self-sufficiency with regard to food. To cope with this, food distributions are provided by the public authorities in certain places, but also and above all, in most cases, by independent associations. They guarantee hot meals and food and supply wood to groups of people who need to warm themselves and cook with fire.

70. Percentages out of 54 respondents.

71. In this regard, the documentary directed by Dima El-Khouri, Christine Raout, Esfandyar Torkaman Rad, 2015, on preparing a meal in a squat in the city of Caen is a valuable testimony on the subject: https://www.unicaen.fr/recherche/mrsh/forge/4415.

Secondly, the first type of food distribution is organised by the associations and collectives that provide dry food so that people can cook it themselves. This support requires a certain stability within the camp: the possibility of storing food, having cutlery and stoves and having the time and weather conditions to cook it. Associations and support groups for people in transit also distribute wood to all sites so that the inhabitants can warm themselves up and cook during the day and night[72].

In this regard, Luol explained the difficulties of cooking the food that is brought to them. He explained that they often have to cook the food urgently because the expiry dates have often already passed, and in the precarious conditions in which they live, "it is not easy to cook all the time," especially in the evening when it rains. These distributions are appreciated and appropriate where the collective is tight-knit and organised and evictions infrequent.

Thirdly, the second type of food distribution is hot meals or basket meals.

Independent associations have created semi-, or even, professional kitchens to make full meals. These meals are distributed during the day at fixed times, at distribution sites around the camps. Many people pointed out that these distributions are essential to their survival. The queues that sometimes form when the lorry arrives attest to their necessity[73], as Ibrahim explained: "Food distributions are important. My goal is to go to England, the food allows me to stay there for that time, the time it takes me to leave."

In the city of Cherbourg, the association la Chaudière offers a canteen for vulnerable people, part of which is dedicated to the inhabitants of the camp. This provides the opportunity to eat a meal and sit in the warm. Interesting in this respect is the practice of a Caen association, Sos Chai, which brings tables and chairs during distributions, transforming the public space into an open-air pop-up canteen.

Some of the people we spoke to during our interviews said that it was difficult to follow the distribution timetable, due to the limited time available and the many unforeseen events (attempts to cross the border which can be prolonged, police custody, the need to watch over the tents, etc.). Fourteen-year-old Mahmud said that he is often hungry, as he returns late after attempting to cross and routinely misses distribution times. Another young minor, Alan, told us that in the previous week he had not eaten for two days because he did not arrive at the right time for food distributions.

Some people pointed out that the collective dimension of the living spaces promotes forms of solidarity and sharing to ensure that food is made available to those who need it most. This is the case, in particular, in the most tightly knit communities. Simon told us: "There's a lot of people here, there are maybe three hundred people, and for example, last night I didn't eat because there were new arrivals and we shared the food with them." Thus, we also noted practices of collecting meal baskets to share, if necessary.

72. For example, the association Calais WoodYard is responsible for cutting and distributing wood to Calais and Grande-Synthe. From November 2020 to May 2021, it distributed a total of 208,648 kg of wood.

73. The importance that these distributions have for migrants is also revealed by the practice of the prefecture, for example in Calais, of prohibiting food distributions in order to push the camps present in certain areas to move elsewhere. Thus, since September 2020, there have been successive prefectural orders (the eleventh was signed in June 2021) that prohibit the distribution of meals in a large part of the city centre, forcing, for example, the 150 people who still live in the city centre to leave.

By taking a closer look at the profiles of people who said they had not eaten enough, we note that neither the living space, age, gender or time spent at the border seem to explain and influence this inability to eat enough. This leads us to assume that this is a problem common to people in transit and widespread along the coast. Thus, the already impressive efforts of some organisations to ensure better access to food are still a challenge and deserve further investigation in order to devise more appropriate and inclusive distribution arrangements.

ACCESSING DRINKING WATER AND SANITARY FACILITIES

During the interviews, the subject of access to water was extensively listed among the daily difficulties that people encounter. 38% of those interviewed stated that access to water, toilets and showers are among the three most urgent things they need.

Across the different sites, people mainly complain about the distance from the water points. These can be quite far from the camps, requiring a whole logistics of trolleys filled with jerrycans, bottles and containers to serve the camps.

In one living space, we observed the opening of fire hydrants to obtain water. This practice of self-management can lead to the deterioration of these safety devices.

To reduce these difficulties and prevent people from rationing water, associations across all territories are fighting for access to drinking water in camps.

For example, at the initiative of the associations, in June 2020, Solidarités internationales was tasked[74] with compiling a diagnostic report on access to drinking water, hygiene and sanitation in Grande-Synthe. It described a disastrous situation. Since then, at the new site, where most people have been moved, three "drinking troughs" with taps have been installed.

If we go back further in time, in June 2017, then the following year in July 2018 in Calais, ten associations filed "freedom" referrals before the administrative judge to force the authorities to open water points to provide people with minimum hygiene conditions. The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation filed a third intervention for the 2018 referral. He denounced the violations of Article 3 of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) for inhuman and degrading treatment and violation of the right to water, recognised as a fundamental right. On 26 June 2017, the administrative judge ordered the prefecture and the city council to create, in places easily accessible to migrants, several water points allowing them to drink, wash and wash their clothes, as well as latrines; and to organise, in conjunction with the requesting associations, a system for accessing showers. On 31 July 2018, the administrative judge ordered the prefecture and the town hall to set up latrines, create two water fountains, buy jerrycans to transport water, trays for washing clothes and a third water tank[75].

74. Lecuyot B., Gallego M. 2020.

75. This information can be found in the summary presented by the PSM on the history of disputes from 2015-2020 entitled "Access to water for exiled persons".

Yet these directives have never been fully respected by the State. And the few initiatives are constantly hampered, on some sites, by eviction operations. In fact, where access to water is provided, evictions and constant harassment of living spaces each time push residents away from the systems and services put in place, forcing associations to restart an inquiry to readjust the systems and have new ones set up so that people have access to them. Meanwhile, the associations are focused on providing water and installing water tanks where possible. On some sites, recurrent evictions have resulted in the seizure or destruction of containers, or even water tanks. The *Calais Food Collective* association, for example, filed a complaint in spring 2021 for the theft of water tanks following an eviction, during which the tanks were seized.

Lastly, having no access to water makes it impossible to wash your clothes. Abdo is sixteen and talked about the difficulties of living outdoors. He spoke about dirty clothes and the need to wash them. In some camps, clothes can be seen drying as soon as there is a sunny day. However, weather conditions and difficulties accessing water on some sites do not allow this practice. As a result, volunteers and community-based activists offer to do laundry at their homes and day centre structures also provide washing machines. Although inadequate, these services are widely used by the interviewees.

The issue of toilets is also difficult to address. Many of the people affected criticise this failure; some use the services of shopping centres and public toilets, not without tensions with security guards. The sanitary units that have been set up near certain sites are insufficient and inadequate, they told us. Women, in particular, highlighted the difficulties of not having access to secure sanitary facilities. Leyla explained that during the day she does not know where to hide because the camp is overcrowded and there are people everywhere in the undergrowth. Moreover, at night, she is very afraid to move away from the tents.

The lack of showers is the problem most cited by interviewees. Very few showers are available to people, and they are often located in places far from living spaces and difficult to access. For example, one of the initial difficulties that Martha mentioned is the road to get there. Amanuel explained that in Calais, although a bus is available to go to the showers, in the camp there are 300 people and the bus has 60 seats.

Richard said, "We don't have enough water to drink where we are and now [following the last eviction] access to showers is very difficult, we can go from 8 am to 11 am but there are too many people. Even if we arrive in the early hours we have to wait, it's very difficult, they don't give us tickets and the time to be able to take a shower is too short. They don't give us enough time to wash properly." At another site, Zafar mentioned, among other difficulties, the lack of access to a place to wash near the camps. He pointed out that the only site that provides them with showers is so far away that when they go, they have to give up trying to cross the border for half a day.

Razi, for his part, did not only comment on the difficult access to showers but also on the rules for using them. He elaborated: "There is not enough time for everyone to take a shower, you have to hurry, you have ten minutes to undress, shower and get dressed" and he also mentioned not having good products to wash with. Indeed, among the material needs that emerge during interviews, hygiene products, as well as shoes, were the most cited (eleven people mentioned them).

In conclusion, basic services, such as access to food or water, are rare and are not necessarily available in camps. Some services, such as showers or day centres, are located outside living spaces and scattered throughout the territory. We then heard from people in transit about the obstacles they face in moving around the territory.

ACCESSING THE CITY

During the interviews, people talked about the difficulties of accessing the city and its spaces.

Community practices and systems put in place by local administrations promote free mobility. The free buses in Calais and Grande-Synthe make travel and access to services throughout the country extremely easy. They also reduce the need for bicycles, which are a valuable resource on camps least served by public transport.

Some associations, to avoid the "invisibilisation" and exclusion of people in transit, then direct people to registered services in the heart of the city. On the one hand, this broadens their autonomy, avoiding total dependence on the associations that engage with them, and, on the other hand, it allows their difficulties and needs to be more widely visible and of greater concern to public institutions. So, referrals to a collective canteen in a district of Cherbourg or to a day-care service for precarious people, the SAO, located in the city, are part of this movement of decompartmentalising inhabitants from their living areas.

As soon as people leave the camps, they become visible in the public space. However, their movements in the city are often discouraged by police intimidation, particularly in the cities of Calais and Ouistreham.

Accounts present us with practices that are perceived as discriminatory and aimed at exclusion.

A young man, Bhrane, denounced the fact that in the city of Calais some, "CRSs station themselves along the route into the city and threaten us with gas and force us to turn back, it's really threatening. They see us as animals. It is the CRSs, not the police as a whole, that behave like children," he told us.

The people interviewed in Calais told us about checks, the unjustified use of tear gas to bring them into the camps and senseless acts of hostility. Faris, a young minor, told us that the inhabitants of the camp do not have access to the beaches and that some police officers tell them to go home: "They attack us when we leave the forest." Although this survey was conducted during the health crisis, when there were many restrictions, the controls and restrictions on movement were not always related to the curfews and confinements imposed on all citizens [76]and existed long before the health crisis. They are perceived by the interviewees as unfair limitations associated with their status as people in transit. In some cases, the regulations related to the health crisis have, moreover, accentuated the usual discrimination. Amir described the effects that restrictions related to

76. Between 17 March and 11 May 2020, and then between 30 October 2020 and 20 June 2021, curfews and confinement justified by the health crisis restricted the mobility of the entire French population, offering a legal framework for checks, custody and arrests in the event of non-compliance with the provisions.

the health crisis have on their daily lives, in terms of limiting mobility, controls, difficulties in charging phones and accessing most services.

The climate of police hostility and the restrictions due to COVID-19 are also associated with discrimination in accessing private spaces. For example, in Grande-Synthe, residents of the camp near a supermarket denounced arbitrary and race-based checks at the entrance to the supermarket. Thus, Hiner noted: "The police prevent us from buying things from Auchan. They ask us for our papers and if we don't have them we can't go into the store until they leave, it's not fair!"

Discriminatory practices, carried out by supermarket security guards, private sector businesses and services and public transport are, indeed, denounced by associations and citizens[77].

AN ENVIRONMENT RIFE WITH UNCERTAINTY

We asked the interviewees if they felt unsafe in their daily lives. A minority of them, i.e. 17%, responded negatively, stressing that France is a safe country and comparing it to other countries.

Most said they had felt unsafe since arriving in northern France. 55% of interviewees told us they felt like this "sometimes", 12% "often" and 16% answered "all the time"[78].

As shown in the table below, by delving into the causes that people associate with the perception of danger, we see that the risks involved in attempting to cross are the main cause of concern (79%), followed by the cold (67%) and police action (54%). The perception of danger in the face of hostile attitudes from local residents and the apprehension linked to the tensions that arise within the camps must be added to this.

Due to cold/rain	When attempting to cross	Because of the police	Because of people who don't want migrants	Because of people who live around you in the camp
32	38	26	15	11
67%	79%	54%	31%	23%

Table 5: Respondents: 48 people. Answer to the question: "what made you feel unsafe". 10 people said that they never felt unsafe. Multiple answers are possible.

77. Le Berre C., Michelet L. 2021

78. Out of 58 respondents.

The concept of safety and danger has not been defined; it refers to a feeling, determined subjectively. For some it is the danger of death that is mentioned, for others it is more broadly the risk of injuries or even that of being psychologically affected.

In previous chapters, we have already presented the climatic characteristics of this region and the dangers involved in attempting to cross the Channel. We will now focus on interactions with the police, other camp residents and people hostile to their presence.

Interactions with the police

In terms of interactions between people in transit and the police, we have already discussed the issue before with the perceptions of those interviewed during evictions, regarding access to the city, and attempts to reach the UK. We note confrontational relationships in all coastal living spaces covered by this survey, except in Cherbourg where the inhabitants spoke about mutual respect.

Looking more closely at the table below regarding the interactions experienced, we can see that the majority of people have had their belongings seized or broken by the police.In addition, half of those interviewed have already experienced the firing of tear gas and a quarter have experienced physical or verbal abuse. On the contrary, 11 people were helped by police.

The police...						
Seized or broke items belonging to you	Used tear gas on you	Insulted you	Beat or pushed you violently	Stepped in to protect or help you	Used a baton on you	Used a taser on you
36	28	17	15	11	6	3
63%	49%	30%	26%	19%	10%	5%

Table 6: Interaction with police in northern France. 57 people responded.

These data refer to individual experiences. But during the interviews, many people recalled and referred to the existence of a collective experience, composed of experiences lived by companions. Some told us about situations they took part in as observers, or stories told in camps.

When asked if the police had ever helped them or intervened to protect them, some looked at us questioningly as if we were not able to understand the situation, Waleed exclaimed: "That is impossible! " However, 19% of the people we met responded positively. The police had intervened to protect them or help them, as was the case for Nuri, who told us that the police thankfully intervened to stop the violence from a lorry driver during a failed crossing attempt. Kaveh told us that he was rescued by the police when he was struggling on a zodiac and Asam, for example, told us that police intervention helped put an end to a violent fight between two communities. The police intervened to help the interviewees, particularly in towns where tension and the presence of people in transit are very high (Calais and Grande-Synthe). We also noted that among the profiles of people protected and supported by the police, the most vulnerable (women and minors) are over-represented.

Interactions inside and outside camps

Relationships with others can be a source of danger, as well as a source of support and solidarity. Some of the people who said they felt in danger were concerned about people around them, either people from outside the camps who were hostile to their presence (31%) or people living in the camps (23%).

Among the difficulties that camp residents encounter on a daily basis, they told us about incidences they consider hostile, even racist. In an informal camp, in the middle of the fields, Asam told us that lately there are increasing numbers of racists who come and, when some residents are absent from the camps, destroy their belongings. When they return, they find broken plates and spilled water. They have never caught the perpetrators in the act, so they do not know whether, in the event of an altercation, these people might be violent towards them.

Similarly, farmers who have land near the camp do not want them there. However, there are only twelve people at this camp and they do not pose any problems, Asam assured us. Recently, the police came to see them twice; they had not had any visits for five months. The City council also requested that the road to the small camp be made inaccessible to the cars of supporters. This whole situation causes them stress and concern.

In another town, a young man, Razi, sadly told us that next to the informal settlement there is a school and that the schoolchildren insult them and look down on them: “They're teenagers, they're a little nasty,” Razi said. He explained that he believes that the language barrier, not being able to talk with them, makes the hostility greater because if they could talk with them, they would be able to explain why they live in the woods. Razi is convinced that the source of hostility is the impossibility of communicating.

On larger sites, intolerance towards people in transit is more tangible, and interviewees experience it on a daily basis. They shared accounts of insults, rude gestures and contemptuous glares.

It is not only the local residents who are hostile to the people in transit who can create tensions and feelings of insecurity among these people. Indeed, within the camps themselves there are also feelings of insecurity among the residents. This is particularly true for Calais within the large unstructured camps, with inhabitants from different national communities, but also in Grande-Synthe. Eleven people in these camps had feelings of insecurity associated with other residents. Great tensions erupt in these living spaces where solidarity, sharing and mutual assistance exist as well as violence, oppression and exploitation. There have been episodes of violence with injured people, said Dlawar, who told us that he, “has been afraid of people sleeping here. At night when I sleep in my tent I'm afraid someone will come and hurt me or steal from me," he admitted. Omar told us that he was robbed and beaten during the night, without police intervening. Leyla is frightened by life in the camp, and is very worried, especially for her children, which causes her a great deal of stress. Ulagarech pointed out that there are many different problems in the jungle: people are all together, some are not well and there is not enough light, there is no surveillance and no access to emergency help.

To counter these forms of insecurity, strong cohesion within these groups seems to be a response. In fact, a little earlier in this report we discussed how community organisation can make it possible to reduce difficulties, to pool efforts and to protect oneself (cooking and keeping warm collectively, sharing shelters, keeping watch of others' belongings, exchanging and building expertise, *etc.*). Amir affirmed the importance of living as a family with friends, to help and support each other through it all. He continued: "As long as I'm with my friends, I'm not afraid of anything." It is often the younger people who emphasise the importance of friendship in these contexts, having arrived with others and having strengthened their friendships with those around them. This can be a great strength for dealing with all of the difficulties, including insecurity; for example, Waleed told us, "In the face of aggression [...], the best thing we can do is to stay close to each other." On the other hand, the most vulnerable people we met, who feel more insecure, mentioned a feeling of isolation.

As for relationships with individuals outside the camps, people also told us about relationships they have with community activists, volunteers or social workers who are committed to improving people's daily lives. In the interviews, the importance of these relationships and the services they provide, both through purely material support, and psychologically to break the climate of hostility, was stressed. Several people pointed out that they distinguish between European policies and Europeans, some of whom, on the contrary, are "nice and not racist". Ewin agreed with this: "It's nice to see the associations, we feel good, it's nice that they take care of us."

Many interviewees mentioned that the role played by the associations is a source of relief in the face of all the difficulties they experience on a daily basis. At the very least, associations improve their daily lives and, even in some cases, prove essential on a daily basis, as Manute stated: "Essential things, we have them all thanks to associations."

In the interview grid, one question was aimed at finding out what had improved the situation of those interviewed on the northern coast. The answer was unanimous: the role of associations. Thirty-one people mentioned the importance of associations in their daily lives[79]. Georges, the oldest person we interviewed, said: "The associations that I have seen here, I have not seen them elsewhere in Europe, it is incredible what they do for us."

Some mentioned the names of organisations that help them, but also the first names of individuals who are particularly active and attentive. They talked about the importance of their material support, but also the trust they have in them. Activists and volunteers become points of reference when needed. Bihar mentioned the name of a volunteer, highlighting this person's commitment: "Whether it's cold or hot, he comes, he's like a brother." These relationships have a real impact, for example, on providing guidance on people's health issues. We will expand on this subject in the next chapter.

79. Perhaps this result is biased by the fact that the research approach was associative and that a proportion of the interviews were conducted by community players.

DIFFERENT FORMS OF SUPPORT

Associations that work with people in transit mainly operate at three levels: direct intervention on the ground (in camps), in day centres or at accommodation facilities. This last level has just been presented in the previous chapter. As we have seen, the structures that offer accommodation also offer their inhabitants a combination of forms of support and access to a support network. Unfortunately, these accommodation structures are limited and have very few places.

In this section, we will therefore focus on interventions on the ground and at day centres.

Direct intervention on the ground has the advantage of *reaching out* to people, of having the opportunity to make contact with those furthest from support, of observing and "testing the water" in living spaces, of understanding needs, of supporting people in transit. Many associations therefore operate in all territories, including with people for whom, for the various reasons already discussed, the filing of an application for asylum is not possible in France. They are responsible for distributing food, providing electricity, wood, clothing and material to make shelters, as well as first aid and medical guidance. In addition, they provide information on existing rights and services. Lastly, they offer support to families by offering activities for children. For example, Ibrahim, a father with two children aged 5 and 8, who had been dealing with the hardship of life in Grande-Synthe for a week, said he was touched by the support he found for his children in the camp: "The games, the toys for the children that the association brings... As soon as they see the *Project Play* lorry, the children are happy! They even forget about their parents! It makes us happy, it is very, very touching that these people come to play with the kids." Indeed, the living conditions for children are described by their parents as very difficult. This work on the ground, on the one hand, provides relief and allows both parents to breathe a little and the children to forget the living conditions through play and, on the other hand, encourages the forging of links between community players and parents.

Day centres are a support facility that exist in some cities. The people we interviewed told us about three different structures: one managed by Secours Catholique and open three afternoons a week; one managed by the association Itinérance Cherbourg, open every day; and one, an SAO (Reception and Guidance Service) managed by ADSEAM[80], still in Cherbourg, for use by any vulnerable person. These places, which are very popular with people in transit, offer a place to rest in the warmth, but also toilets and the opportunity to drink coffee and tea and to do laundry. Camp inhabitants are welcome to charge their phones and access the internet there. They can also obtain information about their rights and services and can contact community players or professionals. These structures can act as a catalyst for services and resources that become potential points of reference for people in transit, where they can find support and help. The advantage of these structures is that they are the only reception spaces open to everyone. These experiences thus enable people who are looking to change their plans to get in touch with people who can help and guide them.

80. Association départementale pour la sauvegarde de l'enfant à l'adulte de la Manche

These three forms of support provide different responses, but can work in synergy and interact with each other. What we observe on the different sites is the existence of a practice of listening to needs. Over the years, associations have set up new services based on the needs they identify. For example, the Red Cross in Calais offers the opportunity for camp residents to call their families, which is mentioned as a need by two young people from other cities, in which this service does not exist. Secours Catholique in Calais offers a repair service for damaged clothes, while in another city someone told us that they have clothes that have been punctured and torn by the barbed wire and they don't know where to repair them. Many associations provide laundry and phone charging facilities, recognising a widely expressed need.

WATER AND SAFETY: LEVERS FOR ACTION

This chapter therefore discusses needs, sources of concern and the existence of forms of protection and support. This is perhaps the area to which associations and local administrations have made the greatest contribution to date.

The demand for access to water and sanitary facilities as well as the denunciation of a daily life characterised by insecurity are the most common concerns in the testimonies of those interviewed. They illustrate urgent problems for which it is possible to imagine alternatives.

Access to showers, in particular, is a priority in requests to local authorities and in the search for suitable solutions. This is a widespread problem across all sites and requires a response that caters to the number of people in transit, without accommodation, present in the territories.

The emergency solutions, which are far away from living spaces, with limited opening hours and an insufficient number of places, are unsatisfactory and prove to be inadequate, as highlighted by the interviewees. The need for clean, accessible public sanitary facilities that are open every day is a priority so long as accommodation facilities are not able to include everyone unconditionally regardless of their administrative status.

Insecurity was also a highly cited source of concern. Accounts of denunciation, particularly of "disrespectful and violent police", fuel demands for change in the situation.

The people in the camps, especially the most vulnerable – women and isolated people – illustrate the everyday dangers they perceive. They told us about many forms of insecurity that they must face and protect themselves from. They therefore implied a broad definition of security. They therefore implied a broad definition of security. This includes the possibility to feed oneself, to protect oneself from the cold and rain, to stay clean, to be in good mental and physical health, to not be subject to – on the part of the police, institutions, camp inhabitants and citizens – treatment that impacts their bodies and their relationship with themselves.

CHAPTER 6

HEALTH

CHAPTER 6: HEALTH

Observing the state of health of people stranded at the border reveals the prolonged effects that migratory journeys and the living conditions described above have on bodies and minds.

The results of the survey in this respect lead us to think about the health of people in transit in a global way, by analysing the effects of all the health determinants discussed so far, and in particular the violence experienced in the countries of origin, during the migration process and throughout this last stretch of the route. The people we met face difficult situations and live in a hostile environment characterised by extreme precariousness that affects their physical and mental health.

In this chapter, we will focus on describing the health status of people at the border, taking a comprehensive approach that takes into account health with all of its physical, mental and social components. We will discuss the effects on the body of the extreme living conditions in which these people find themselves and will focus on two of the main causes of their misery and psychological suffering: the need to wait and the refusals experienced.

Secondly, we will focus on access to healthcare, the reluctance that these people feel to receiving care and the policy actions put in place to facilitate access to care.

We will then address the interviewees' perceptions of Coronavirus, before finally concluding the chapter with an analysis of the demands and denunciations that the people have made in terms of health and that have emerged from the interviews.

BODIES PUT TO THE TEST

We have observed that health deteriorates during the years of immigration. We will therefore describe how the interviewees perceive their health to highlight the impact of the living conditions and migration on the bodies of this population in transit.

The inability to undergo treatment

The interviewees are very young and some of them emphasised this when asked about their physical health. During the interviews, 56% of them replied that their bodies are doing well or very well. 19% responded with quite well and the remaining 25% said they were doing badly or very badly[81]. Ten of the fifty-six people interviewed have long-term illnesses that require treatment or medication, and six of them said they were doing badly or very badly. Indeed, people with bad health conditions are particularly at risk in the context of life at the border. Of these, only two people told us that they were managing to take their treatments. One lives in the camp, the other told us that it was only when she went to an accommodation centre that she started taking medication. Others had to stop taking

81. Out of 57 respondents.

their treatments. They explained to us: either they have finished the medication and have not returned to a doctor, or they are not able to be consistent in taking the treatment because of the lack of stability in their lives. The living conditions we have described are certainly not conducive to receiving care and support.

Increasing pathologies and pain

Beyond chronic diseases, people develop other pathologies or pains that weaken them and impact their daily lives. 41% of those interviewed told us about a malaise that has worsened over time[82].

Upon analysing the data, we can see that as time spent on the coast increases so do feelings of suffering. Thus, the five people who had been living in northern France for more than a year complained of a "worsening illness." These include dermatological problems (2 people describe their symptoms); stomach pain (5 people); pain due to torture, particularly in Libya (2 people); pain in limbs injured during attempted crossings (2 people); and back pain (3 people). All of these ailments are aggravated by living conditions, including inadequate hygiene, an unbalanced diet, lack of mattresses and general poor sleep conditions.

Moreover, the teams of health professionals on the ground, among the problems they list, highlight their difficulty in convincing people to keep taking treatment. They find that these people struggle to follow their treatments when the medication does not produce an immediate effect to alleviate the pain or discomfort.

Similarly, in the case of injuries, the rest and care necessary for recovery often cannot be respected and the injured limbs are put under stress too quickly, leading to complications. It should be added that the risk of injury in these living conditions is high, with 35% of the people we met having been injured since arriving in the north. The accidents occurred during attempts to cross, for example when getting into a truck, from barbed wire, or during violent interactions with the police, with truck drivers, or during fights within the camp.

This data from our survey echoes the observations of teams of volunteers and professionals in the field. For example, the CAMO, which has converted a former ambulance and whose team of health professionals is present two nights a week at the service of the camp inhabitants, told us that it receives many young injured people. Attempts to board lorries are the cause of most of these injuries.

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82. Out of 54 respondents

Increasing suffering of the most vulnerable

The living conditions in the camps, we have described, are harsh, and therefore the most vulnerable people suffer twice as much when they experience physical pain.

Older people or those from minority ethnicities or nationalities appear to be more isolated and in difficulty, and this also seems to have an impact on their health. A 43-year-old Iraqi, Georges, told us he is marginalised : “I wanted to sleep next to the fire because I'm very cold but they didn't want me to. ” He continues, “I'm the oldest here, and I'm the most tired. ” He then explained that his health is very poor: “I have heart problems that get worse with stress and I don't think I have enough blood in my body. I get very, very cold at night, I can put four sleeping bags on me and I can't warm up.” This interview took place in mid-April; the temperature was around five degrees. George was very concerned about his health. Similarly, in Cherbourg, volunteers from the association Itinérance told us that they were concerned about the presence of an older gentleman who seemed to be side-lined and suffering more and more.

We see how vulnerabilities stack up, adding additional challenges that make everyday life even more difficult.

Those interviewed who claimed to be physically unwell, with worsening pain and long-term illnesses, were mostly from Sudan and Iraq. This in itself demonstrates nothing, given the representation bias of our sample. On the other hand, it would be interesting to further explore and question the role that cultural relationships play in the expression of illness and health.

CLOSELY INTERTWINED PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

During the interviews, the people questioned told us about their exhaustion, stress and somatisations. The line between the physical and the mental is permeable and people focussed on describing their state of mind and the consequences of their precarious life and transit situation. These testimonies intertwine with physical pain and accounts of their past and present.

Several people referred to physical pain, which seemed to take the form of somatisation and which would require, in order to be treated, a global approach to care.

For example, Georges, once again has pain that gets worse over time, especially in the heart and lungs. Sometimes he cannot breathe, he told us: “I went to the hospital a week ago, they did all the tests on my heart and lungs. It went well, they told me there's nothing wrong, but I'm in pain... When he told us about his stress, he elaborated: “I think a lot, I haven't seen my family for fourteen years. I have been a foreigner for all these years, life is not easy for me,” he explained that he was doing very badly, and that he can’t sleep because he is anxious about the future, his present and his past and because of the cold that his body cannot bear. He continued: “I try to calm down to sleep, but it’s not easy with the stress of this situation.”

This is also the case for thirty-four-year-old, Leyla, who explained that she went to the doctor because she felt very unwell and like she was going to faint. She felt so weak and had recurring headaches and nausea. At the hospital they did a lot of tests, concluding that her symptoms were probably stress reactions. She then confirmed that she was very stressed, worried about the future, worried about her children and her personal problems. In addition, she had barely rested for a month while in the jungle. She was living in a house where she felt safe, but since her arrival she had not been physically well.

Her case is not unusual; it is common for people who have experienced very stressful and violent situations to break down psychologically or present with physical disorders when they are, finally, in a more reassuring situation[83].

Nebila, a mother of two young children, recognised stress as the source of her physical ailments. She lamented her very poor psychological state, "stress, I can hear it in my head," she told us. She has very severe headaches and since she has been in Calais, she has started having sleep disorders caused by her anxiety about her future and current situation. She left her country at the age of sixteen, she is now thirty.

The testimonies gathered during the interviews very clearly express the daily stress and anxiety, sleep disorders and exhaustion experienced by people in transit.

The CAMO team explained that they often attend to people with skin problems, stomach problems or those who say they have pain everywhere. They say these are often psychosomatic reactions. In addition, young people often ask them for medication without actually knowing the source of their discomfort. The team would like to offer consultations with psychologists, but they are not sure how to set up such a service with a population in transit.

We will therefore address the issue of mental health in this specific context.

EFFECTS ON MENTAL HEALTH

"Representations of mental health vary depending on the country, culture and people: it is therefore difficult to offer a single definition. We can cite various terms that describe it: 'psychological health', 'mental health', 'mind health', 'head health' or 'soul health'. Essentially, it is about what happens in our head, our mind, our thoughts. However, even if it is 'in our head', our mental health is highly influenced by our environment," explains the practical guide on mental health for people in precarious situations produced by the national observatory on mental health and vulnerability issues (Orspere-Samdarre 2021).

During interviews, we asked interviewees to assess the state of their own mental health. 43% of people felt that they were doing very well or well, 17% said that they were doing quite well and 40% reported being unwell. For some people, the physical state and mental state seem to be related, but for most the link does not exist: they can be well physically but unwell mentally, as can be seen in the table below.

83. Métraux 2011.

Health status	Physically good	Quite good	Poor
Mentally good	15	5	3
Quite good	6	1	2
Poor	10	4	7

Table 7: Correlated data on perceptions of physical and mental health. 53 respondents.

Without asking anything, the interviewers listened to those who, at their own initiative, discussed the sources of their misery and the symptoms that they felt. They expressed their stress, sadness, depression and fatigue. For example, Rafiq told us that he is emotionally unstable: he gets angry or laughs at nothing, while Hiner cries every night.

The brutality of the border, administrative insecurity, unmet basic needs, multiple forms of violence, inhuman and degrading living conditions, shattered hopes, insurmountable obstacles and daily risks are mentioned among the causes of a state of psychological suffering. We have identified two of the main sources of the misery that has been described to us: on the one hand, uncertainty about the future, the prolonged wait and the concern associated with the multiple obstacles hindering the completion of life plans; and on the other hand, the experience of rejection, exclusion and contempt suffered in the past and in the present.

Long periods of waiting

The people interviewed displayed a sense of apprehension about the future. The many obstacles to having “a normal life”, as many of them told us, are not only in the past, but also in the present. They are aware that other obstacles await them. Indeed, the proliferation of obstacles already faced and those still to be faced on a daily basis suggest that new obstacles are still to come. This makes it difficult for them to imagine themselves in the future and creates a feeling of stagnation, of living in a suspended time, in an endless wait. Seventeen-year-old Ahmed said that he is in a poor mental state because he is stressed about the passing of time and is afraid that he won't be able to achieve his goal. Every day, he is determined to stick to his plans, to attempt to cross the Channel, because "I will be miserable as long as I don't realise my dream", he confided. Faris expressed the same anxiety. He explained: “I left my family, I want to study and my family is counting on me.” Being obstructed by frustration and anxiety. Similarly, this daily uncertainty was described to us by Luol. He told us: “I am not at peace because it’s impossible to make plans.” It is the strain of waiting that causes anxiety, stress and depression. He then described his state of mind in the face of the insurmountable obstacles that prevent him from getting past this dead end and crossing the Channel. He stated the action of the police and border controls as causes of this stagnant situation. Osman, too, shared with us his concern and anguish at not being able to reach England because he does not have enough money to pay for the crossing: he has five children with him and that limits opportunities to cross. Another father, Ibrahim, told us that his wife spends the days crying in the tent.

However, some interviewees, despite the stress, said that they focus on their goals. Plans make it possible to keep going. For example, eighteen-year-old Amir told us that his only goal is to become a footballer, and when asked if he uses alcohol or drugs, he replied: "At the moment no, I'm taking care of my health. I plan to become a footballer and that doesn't work with alcohol!" He continued, "Here not only are you on the streets, but there is racist abuse, the police do not help you and sometimes they also take your phone chargers (...) we are not treated like human beings (...) I put up with these conditions because they are temporary. Because I have a goal I hope to achieve!" However, prolonged waiting can turn a transitory situation into an dead end in which the temporary becomes more permanent.

Experience of rejection

People in transit also associate their unhappiness with undignified living conditions and the experience of rejection, exclusion and contempt suffered in the past and present. This is particularly true for individuals with diametrically opposed expectations. For example, Ulagarech finds it unbearable to think that he left his home environment to live in these inhuman conditions. Sayd said that he is depressed because he never thought he would be living like this. For many of the people we spoke to, it is above all this situation of rejection in Europe, which we presented in chapters two and three, that they say causes feelings of fatigue and depression. In this regard, here is the story of Kaveh, a young Kurd who presents his journey dotted with attempts to settle in Europe.

Kaveh speaks seven languages, he has worked in restaurants, hotels, pizzerias. He explains that he is in northern France because of the Dublin regulations. With his fingerprints taken in Europe, Kaveh has only one option left: to reach England. He hopes to get a residence permit and work there.

He defines his mental state as very bad. He almost never sleeps and as soon as there is a noise he wakes up feeling worried. He is very anxious about his future, and suffers from his condition because, he explains: "Since 2015, Europe has not seen me as a normal person. I don't see any equality." He points out that he is twenty-four years old, that he is "a kind person [...] I am like the people who are members of associations," thus highlighting the inequality of opportunities among people of the same age. He tried to settle in three European countries, where he applied for papers, without success. His fingerprints were recorded in five European countries, which is why he does not want to start proceedings in France, aware that he will be refused again.

He left when he was eighteen, travelled through Turkey, continued in Greece, then Macedonia, Serbia, Hungary, Slovenia, Austria, Germany, Denmark and finally reached Sweden, where he spent almost four years. After living in a camp, he found accommodation and a job. And so he applied for papers. He was refused and banned from staying in the country, given just four weeks to leave. He then tried to settle in Denmark. He was sent back to Sweden after forty-five days and ended up in detention, where he tried again to take steps to stay. He stayed there for a year, before the papers were again refused. He then left for Italy. In Italy, he lived on the streets and took steps to obtain papers. After five

months, he was accepted into social housing for asylum seekers. He learned the language. He was banned from leaving Italy. He settled, but after several months his application was rejected due to the Dublin regulations, because he had been registered in Sweden. When we met him, he had been trying to cross the Channel by lorry and boat for a month.

We listened to the stories of his many attempts to settle which, when brutally confronted with refusals, residence bans and hostile migratory policies, gradually became wandering paths. When migration routes, fraught with dangers, very difficult conditions for surviving on the streets, arrests, injustices and hurtful interactions, are combined with numerous refusals to settle, it takes its toll on people's mental health. Our interviewees talked about their sadness, depression and disappointment.

They also told us about the causes of their misery, the contempt they suffer, the day-to-day treatment and/or migration policies that treat them like “dogs”, “terrorists” and “offenders”.

There is a correlation between applying for papers and mental health status. Of those who have not applied for papers, 56% are doing well, 10% say they are doing quite well and 34% say they are in a bad state of mental health.

While for those who have applied for residence, it is the opposite trend: 29% are doing well, 25% say they are doing quite well and 46% are not doing well.

These data reinforce the qualitative observations presented previously about wandering and rejection. These experiences affect people's morale. By also observing the typology that we have proposed concerning the motivations for which the people we met want to go to the United Kingdom (Chapter 3), we find the same result. People in the first “UK by choice” sub-group are mostly doing well, while most people who are not doing well are from the “UK by default” sub-groups, of which only 32% say they are doing well.

The diagnosis on the state of mental and somatic health shows a close relationship between this state of health and the obstacles to movement and settlement imposed by European policies. Hearing about and acknowledging the violence experienced and identifying the causes of suffering and psycho-somatic reactions means going back to the painful experiences shared by these people, which break bodies and minds.

Acknowledging, by listening, that migration policies have adverse effects on the health of individuals was crucial to our investigation.

The testimonies were very difficult for the interviewers to listen to, especially when confronted with the effects of political choices in the countries in which they grew up and live.

Twenty-seven-year-old Abdelaziz said that, psychologically, he is in a bad way: “We’re alive, but we're not OK, it's survival. I have no appetite for life.” He smiles as he speaks to volunteers he knows well. He has lived in camps for a year and a half; he was previously in Calais before moving to Ouistreham. Later in the interview, he said he was not afraid of COVID-19: “On the contrary, the best thing would be to have it and die from it rather than to have thoughts that constantly torment me,” he said. He just wants to go to the UK “to study, to find out what might suit him.”

Mental suffering can cause serious mental disorders. The study published by the Committee for the Health of Exiles (Comede) of Bicêtre Hospital in September 2017 addresses the progressive damage to the mental health of people migrating. "Of the 16,095 people who completed a health check at the Comede care centre between 2007 and 2016, the overall prevalence of serious mental disorders was 16.6%." Women and young adults (between the ages of 20 and 25) were the most affected[84]. The results of the Primo Levi – Médecins du Monde report are consistent with these results, noting that the difficult, non-existent and even hindered reception conditions reserved for migrants can aggravate, reactivate or produce psychological suffering, somatic pain and depression[85].

This research was carried out at the time of the suicide of Moussa Balde in a detention centre in Italy. Fifteen days beforehand, he had been brutally beaten by strangers on the streets of Ventimiglia. A few years ago, he agreed to a television interview in which he said he wanted to stay in Italy, "because in this country I discovered that life can be beautiful," he said. This dramatic episode echoes the violence observed in northern France, and this survey alerts us to the deteriorating health of this population in transit at the French-British border.

Shared misery

Since the results of our survey emerged, mental suffering on the coast has been palpable. On several occasions, the people we spoke to told us that those around them were not doing well. In this regard, one young man, Waleed, observing the state of unease around him, derisively stated that: "I feel that my mental health is good, but I don't know how others see me."

Moreover, the mental health of others impacts the environment in which the inhabitants of the camps evolve and with which they interact. Bihar said that the biggest challenge for him is living in an environment where, "people are tired and tired of life." Everyone's mood drops with the cold, Hatim explained. Kaveh shared with us his concern for those around him who have become "crazy" due to their situations and living conditions.

We heard several accounts of support among camp residents who take care of each other. For example, an employee of an association told us about a group of young people who, before undertaking the Channel crossing, had gone to an association that was distributing food to ask the volunteers to take care of a young person of another nationality, whose psychological state was critical and whom they had taken care of until that point.

84. Veïsse 2017: 410.

85. Levi MdM 2018: 12.

Sleep disorders

Above all, we explored everyday living conditions, associated with or affected by reactive forms of suffering. We also asked individuals about their sleep disorders and their use of mind-altering substances.

Sleep was strongly impacted by the living conditions and journeys of the people we met.

Almost a quarter of those interviewed reported having no sleep problems or difficulty in falling asleep. Some told us they are so tired because of the intensity of their days that they fall asleep as soon as they can - which does not necessarily mean that they are getting enough sleep.

For 20% of those interviewed, sleep difficulties were a minor problem that occurs occasionally. But 59% reported having significant difficulties, with 34% reporting that they always or almost always have problems sleeping[86].

One in three people had not been able to get through the night without experiencing sleep problems since arriving in the north, which is a significant indicator of the living conditions of people at the border.

People attributed two causes to these disorders: on the one hand, the material and logistical conditions that prevent sleep and, on the other, the psychological conditions that disrupt nights.

83% of people identified the conditions in which they sleep as one of the main causes of their sleep disorders.

Cold and rain are the major causes of sleep deprivation. “When it's too cold, you think you're going to freeze to death because the blankets aren't enough and when there's a lot of rain, you fear for your health,” Waleed said.

Overcrowding in the camps also makes it difficult to have a peaceful night’s sleep. This is partly due to the lack of space in the tents, as Majdi explained. He told us that at one point they were a fairly large group of friends and they took turns sleeping in the tent. They alternated between staying around the fire while the others slept. On the other hand, in camps, the presence of many people results in a continuous movement of bodies that wake up, leave, return, keep watch, make noise and prevent people from sleeping because they tell us they are always on alert.

Indeed, as we wrote above, attempts to cross are more likely to succeed at night. As a result, not only are camps continually disturbed by people on the move, but the people who inhabit them also reduce their hours of sleep to increase their opportunities to cross. Zafar then told us that he sleeps during the day because during the night he tries to hide in lorries: “To cross, you have to make the effort to go there at night as well, there is not much time to sleep, our sleep is not regular,” he explains. By delving into the issue of sleep, we can better understand the low level of participation in morning distributions, the despondency when, in emergency accommodation centres, they have to leave the premises in the morning. We can also better envisage the difficulties caused by morning evictions.

86. Out of 53 respondents.

People in camps also cited their physical and psychological conditions as the cause of their sleep disorders. Some cited back pain, scabies and dermatological problems. But beyond physical issues, most people we met said that their restless nights could be attributed to their thoughts and anxieties. 63% said that they cannot sleep or fall asleep because they are thinking about the future. Uncertainty about the crossing, the opportunities and obstacles they will encounter is indeed a source of concern. The same percentage of people who sleep poorly attribute their sleep disorders to their current situation. Thoughts about everyday difficulties and the situation they find themselves in are bubbling in their heads. Luol told us: "I sleep for two to three hours a night, I'm not at peace with the situation I'm in."

49% attribute their difficulty falling asleep and sleeping to thoughts about their past. Whereas 37% of people attribute the reasons for poor sleep to feelings of insecurity.

In most cases, all of these factors prevent sleep. Sleepless nights make daily life even more difficult for people at the border, increasing risks during crossings, irritability, fatigue and negative feelings.

Some told us that they consume alcohol from time to time in order to sleep better and relax. However, alcohol consumption remains a rare practice among the people we met, with only three people claiming to consume a significant amount of alcohol. Drinking, they claimed, makes it easier for them to sleep, not feel the cold, "relax your head" and reduce anxiety. No one mentioned drug addiction.

ACCESS TO CARE

Associations and common law

Resources exist, which are accessible to people in transit and allow them to be cared for, treated and listened to in all countries. However, the question of orientation, mediation and, quite simply, access, requires work in the field which is carried out by the associations, activists and volunteers who work with these people.

The Emergency Medical Service (SAMU), the emergency services, all-day healthcare centres (PASS) and the medical-psychological centres (CMP) are public schemes providing unconditional access to healthcare.

Several community teams are involved in the various camps and offer referrals to these public healthcare systems. The Red Cross teams and the CAMO, for example, offer a service in the camps by positioning themselves at the distribution sites. Other teams such as Utopia 56 and Médecins du Monde give people advice during marauds or organise their care.

These services are appreciated by the people in transit we met, for whom these teams are points of reference with regard to everyday safety.

These associations are in demand and represent a real support for camp residents. In Calais, for example, between January and June 2021, Médecins du Monde and the Red Cross carried out more than 382 medical and care consultations. Teams from the Red Cross, Médecins du Monde and Utopia 56 accompanied at least 733 people to the PASS and 88 to the hospital. Similarly, in Grande-Synthe, Médecins du Monde and the Red Cross carried out 648 medical consultations, accompanied 231 people to the PASS, referred 5 people to hospital[87]. In addition to this support, the volunteers and professionals who work with these people also offer referrals to the PASS. These data on the two largest sites attest to the usefulness of the health missions offered in the camps by the associations and alert us to the health, care and treatment needs of these people in transit.

Most of the people we interviewed had been seen by a doctor in the last few months, 47% of the forty-five people who responded had been to a doctor in the last month, 69% in the last six months. Four people said they had never visited a doctor and four others had not seen a doctor in a long time. Comparing these data with on-call times in the north of France, 21 people consulted a doctor in the north of France and almost all of them consulted a doctor after leaving their country of origin. These data, on the one hand, inform us about the significant healthcare needs of people in transit and living under the conditions described so far at the border, and they show, on the other hand, the ability of volunteer field teams and territorial services to offer some access to healthcare.

Obstacles to accessing physical healthcare

During consultations, health professionals, in particular, carry out a huge amount of mediation and guidance work, but also sometimes help people overcome their fears and reluctance to access common law healthcare structures. They reassure and inform people about their rights, and in some cases they try to raise awareness and warn about the severity of certain diseases. All of these exchanges are impossible without the support of interpreters and mediators. The Ouistreham CAMO healthcare team confirms that when they had a nurse who spoke Arabic, people whose mother tongue was Arabic or who spoke Arabic came to see them more. Healthcare actors are well aware that language is an significant barrier to accessing the care they offer and to referring people.

Indeed, when the teams do not have the capacity to intervene directly with consultations in the field, they have difficulty convincing people to access existing mainstream services, for example at the PASS of the various cities, whose opening hours are often limited. The associations observe that when they make appointments to facilitate access to services (at the PASS or at a doctor's office) and to support people who have presented them with specific problems, these people often miss the appointment and disappear.

87. These data represent interventions registered on an inter-association database. However, they under-represent the reality, because not all associations enter the figures for their interventions every month.

To better understand the reluctance to access common law services, we asked, during the interviews, if the interviewee had ever not visited a doctor since arriving in France, even though he or she had needed one. To this question, 41% of the people interviewed told us that this had indeed happened[88]. Of the ten people who said they had a serious illness that required treatment, eight said they did not go to a doctor when they needed it.

If we analyse this question in more detail, among those reluctant to use the services of the French healthcare system (41%), the issue of papers and the fear that the healthcare services could call the police and denounce their status are the main sources of concern. Indeed, 46% of them declared that this apprehension was the reason for not seeing a doctor. For example, Mustafa, who is thirty-four years old and lives in Calais, confessed to us that he was afraid that they could have detained him in hospital and sent him back to Malta because he is dublined there.

A lack of knowledge of the healthcare structures at their disposal and language barriers are other sources of concern that keep this vulnerable crowd away from healthcare opportunities. 42% of people explained that they did not know where to go, or how to get there or said that they did not understand the French healthcare system. 38% of people were afraid of not understanding and not being able to express themselves because of their lack of knowledge of the French language. Of these people, only one spoke English; the others were not proficient in either English or French.

On the other hand, 19% of people stated that they did not use health professionals due to economic concerns. With little or no money, they gave up because they feared the health consultation would be expensive. In addition, 19% of people did not go to the doctor because they did not have the time, caught up in the urgency of everyday life, and therefore risked waiting until the last moment to be treated.

It is important to note that the transit and waiting conditions, as well as the living conditions on the coast, consequently push them to delay when they seek treatment and care while waiting for greater stability elsewhere. Many of the interviewees told us that they would go to see a doctor or go to the hospital only for serious problems.

And finally, three people told us about bad experiences in hospital, which made them distrust these structures. For example, Asam explained that he lost confidence following a consultation during which they took blood without asking him if he agreed or explaining what they were doing. He explained: "If I'm in a lot of pain, I go to the hospital or to the doctor, but I really think about it, especially in Calais. I prefer not to go there anymore because last time they took too much blood! Too much blood! I'd rather be ill!" Two people also spoke of the fear that their problem could be more serious.

To a certain extent, the associations present in the camps, in the day reception centres and in the accommodation facilities make it possible to remedy the mistrust shown by people towards common law healthcare structures. They offer this very vulnerable population the opportunity to consult doctors and nurses, to be listened to, even for minor problems for which people would never have crossed the threshold of the PASS or a hospital. Associations on the ground, volunteers and social operators who are in direct contact with people are essential resources for access to healthcare.

88. Out of 54 respondents

This is also evident from the responses to the question: "What do you do if you are sick or injured here?" To which, 42% of people replied[89] that they would call upon an association, volunteers, people from associations they trust or operators of accommodation structures in which they have spent a few nights. Associations are thus considered to be an essential link to the common law healthcare system and the only point of reference in the event of an emergency.

Among the other people interviewed, 16% of them would call the emergency services, the fire brigade, the police or go to the hospital, four people replied that they would go to the PASS, five to a doctor in the vicinity of the camps. Five did not know what they would do, including one person who expressed concern that she could not communicate in a language known to the health services.

22% of people stressed that they would prefer not to go to hospital or ask for help. Half of them would only do so in the event of a serious emergency, while the other half replied: "I treat myself", "I pray", "I wait for it to pass", "I stay calm until I heal" and "I can't do anything".

However, even when access to medical consultations is guaranteed and put in place, care remains a challenge for this population, which does not necessarily speak French and English, is extremely precarious and is subject to various daily priorities and emergencies.

Waleed's testimony gives us a good account of the urgency of health problems and the obstacles to their treatment. Waleed is sixteen years old and among the major difficulties he told us he faces in his daily life he first mentions: health problems. He has an allergy that escalates and gets worse over time. Because of the reactions on his skin, he cannot stay in the sun nor can he get close to the fire. He remains cold. Sometimes he fears he will die from the cold. He cannot sleep because of this allergy, he explained: "At night, as soon as I get hot, the allergy comes back, I leave the tent, I walk, I take a bike; the police, then, check me and tell me to go back to bed, I explain to them that I cannot sleep, I wake up at least twenty times every night, the allergy becomes unbearable." He is reluctant to go to the hospital because he is convinced he does not have the right to do so as he does not have identity documents. He consulted doctors at the camp who gave him allergy relief. He continued: "You can't solve health problems, you don't have time here, you can't deal with these problems for people on the streets, you don't know if you'll be there in a few days."

In conclusion, guidance is essential, although not sufficient, for healthcare and to overcome the reluctance to access common law services. Similarly, the work of associations, in terms of reporting, providing information and making referrals is essential throughout the territory to ensure effective access to care. Volunteers are at the forefront of living spaces and, in the event of infectious diseases, they are the first to implement rapid interventions to prevent their transmission. Thus, in the first half of 2021, a team from Médecins du Monde discovered contagious tuberculosis among the inhabitants of a small camp of twelve people on land 80 km from Calais. It was thanks to their intervention on the ground that these people were treated and cared for.

89. 50 people answered the question

Access to mental healthcare

In an interview published in 2021 in the magazine Plein Droit, Lou Einhorn, a former mental health adviser for Médecins du Monde's North Coast programme, explained the lack of access to mental healthcare among people in transit. She outlined the existing systems from 2012 to today and noted the difficulty of implementing interventions at the border, going beyond emergency responses. Indeed, care and support for people in distress, i.e. two methods that would anticipate the onset of crises, do not exist, and the services present are unsuited to the specific needs of people stranded at the border[2].

This echoes the observations made in Cherbourg by a field team working on the psychological suffering of the people we met who were living in precarious situations. She shared with us the great difficulty in including people in transit from the camps in their programme, due to the volatility of their presence and essentially the impossibility of speaking to them in their native languages.

An example of a structure able to offer psychological consultations to people in transit was tested in 2015 in the large Calais Jungle. Since then, it seems to us that very few such structures exist in the territories. This is due, in particular, to the instability of the camps and people: two young people we interviewed told us that they had been able to meet a psychologist and that they had been taken care of when they were in stable camps managed by humanitarian workers in other countries along their route. But since they arrived on the coast, no follow-up has been possible.

This is also the case for a young Afghan who met psychologists in camps in Serbia and Bosnia but has since found no one to turn to. His account is as follows:

> *Sayd admitted that he did not think the trip would be so difficult. He said that psychologically he is doing quite badly, because it is hard to be in the jungle, to go through everything. He is scared of dying and often has panic attacks during which he is breathless and unable to breathe. It was in Serbia and Bosnia that he discovered that these were panic attacks. He often experienced them and he then saw a psychologist in the camp he was in. It was a camp composed of containers in which living conditions were very difficult. During the interview, he told us that he was a bit depressed. He explained that he left when he was twenty and now he is twenty-four and nothing has changed. He is still "illegal", he told us. Moreover, he did not know how long it would take him to return to a normal life. He told us: "I'm wasting my young life, I've already wasted a lot of time."*

Another young person told us that his medical follow-ups have been hampered because he couldn't access papers in Germany. Here's his story:

> *Dlawar is twenty-one years old. He reveals he has a mental illness. In Germany he saw a psychologist who gave him medication while he was in an accommodation centre. One day he learned that he was going to be deported to Bulgaria. He had spent twenty-five days there while in transit to Germany and never intended to return. Upon this announcement, and to avoid deportation, he decided to head to France, where he stopped taking his treatment. In France, he found himself in an accommodation centre, where he was given the opportunity to see a psychologist, but refused for fear they would tell him he was not well. He told us about getting better, especially since his decision to leave for the UK and join some of his family and friends.*

These two examples illustrate the difficulties experienced by people in transit in obtaining follow-ups.

In France, various reports – the report of the Observatoire du SamuSocial of Paris of 2018 or the 2018 Primo Levi report of Médecins du Monde, for example – deplore the lack of resources devoted to mental health. They note that it remains a blind spot. They denounce "a lack of human resources, long waiting times, lack of interpretation and almost non-existent or inappropriate information [which] make the mental healthcare structures present on the coast inaccessible."[90]

Furthermore, appropriate systems should be designed specifically for people in transit. This is due, in particular, to the specific characteristics of these populations (high *turnover*, the limited availability of time for people in transit, among others) and their repercussions in terms of medical follow-up. Lou Einhorn stresses the need to take into account the fact that "people are in between", they are stuck between two countries. One possible intervention would be to "support them in their movements, to support them by trying to relieve their symptoms"[91].

COVID-19 CONCERNS

This survey was conducted during the months of containment and curfews, when the epidemic was killing hundreds of people and intensive care units in hospitals were overwhelmed.

We have seen that several accommodation facilities were opened during this period[92]. However, the people we met – with the exception of four people who went to Tailleville in Normandy – were not provided with accommodation in order to comply with government restrictions and protect themselves from the Coronavirus. During this period, some were locked up in structures, or even quarantined boats, before reaching France.

From a public health perspective, camps represent a health aberration in the fight against the spread of COVID-19. These are places where people live in extremely crowded conditions, without access to water to wash their hands and where barrier gestures cannot be respected. People almost never have masks and when food, clothing or healthcare is distributed, the distances necessary to protect against the COVID-19 contagion are not respected. There has been very little (if any) implementation of COVID screening measures. This is why it is not possible to detect *cluster* traces within living spaces.

We observed some people practising self-protection of their community, with a desire to reduce interactions outside the group. This was the case, for example, among the inhabitants of the Ouistreham camp, who, in March, when the figures for COVID cases were skyrocketing, had spread the word that it could be dangerous to go to the Tailleville centre because part of the structure had been designed for COVID-19 patients. All of the inhabitants of the camp refused to go there. One resident explained that it was safer to stay with each other and in the camp. Similarly, Hoài said that they are very careful, they

90. Levi MdM 2018: 22

91. Einhorn, 2021: 33.

92. For example, in Calais, during the COVID-19 crisis, in April 2020, the prefecture offered 623 accommodation places: 323 migrants agreed to go (Paton E., Boittiaux C. 2020: 13)

stay together with a group of friends, they know each other and they trust each other. They do not go to town and use masks when they leave the camp. Shaker, who lives in a camp in Calais, explained that he does not have any masks and finds it very dangerous not to be able to protect himself; as for Gloria, she confirmed that her major concern is the risk of contracting the virus when she takes the bus.

Associations, such as Secours Catholique or the CAMO, among others, distribute masks, which are mainly used to on buses and in supermarkets.

28% of those interviewed[93] said they were concerned about the risk of infection, especially outside the camp, except Kaleb and Amanuel, who live in Calais, and who said that they are afraid of contracting the disease from within the Jungle because "there are too many people" and because, "if someone catches it, there are a lot of people here and it is dangerous."

About a third of the people we met were not afraid of the effects of the disease, but by the socio-economic effects of the health crisis. COVID-19 has undoubtedly caused a critical situation for people who are vulnerable and in transit,

as Simon told us: "I'm not afraid of Corona, but the pandemic has worsened the situation in Calais." Indeed, containment, mobility restrictions and increased police checks have made life harder for those stranded at the border. Amir also told us: "I'm not worried about the virus itself, but about containment, and especially the curfew: it's become difficult to move, even just to charge phones when it's dark. There's a lot more police questioning in these circumstances."

In addition, lorry and ferry traffic has been drastically impacted by the pandemic, reducing crossing opportunities for people and thus extending waiting times in northern France.

Richard stated: "COVID is here, but what worries me about this is that it impacts traffic! We are stuck here because there is almost no traffic!" Hussein added: "The lorries are blocked because of Corona. We have to take more risks to try to cross." Asam, from another city, explained that the health crisis has resulted in fewer lorries, fewer trains and more checks in public spaces. "I want COVID to stop!" he exclaimed. However, he admitted that one small consolation is that the health crisis has allowed them to have continued support and food, because the people who help them have not gone on holiday.

Moreover, the bans due to confinements and closures of services have further emphasised the essential role played by the support associations. For example, the closure of all shops meant that newly arrived people in transit, or those whose possessions had been seized or destroyed (during evictions, which did not cease during the period of confinement), were unable to buy basic necessities such as shoes, bags and blankets. The associations were able to meet these needs with existing stocks. However, they faced numerous obstacles from the police when carrying out their activities. Community activists were subjected to abusive and arbitrary fines and verbalisations and their actions were reduced on most sites, partly due to a lack of volunteers.

93. 38 people answered the question: What concerns you most about COVID? This question was added after the first round of interviews.

Another group of the people we met told us that they had more serious problems and that COVID concerns remained insignificant. Leyla responded: "COVID doesn't worry me, I have more insidious viruses to fight against: the border, the Dublin regulations and my husband! "

Three people pointed out that they had little information about the evolution of the pandemic and almost half of the people we met said they were not concerned about the severity of the symptoms and after-effects of the disease. They argued that Coronavirus is not very dangerous; this was the case for Adil, who was infected when he was in Turkey. This reassured him, since he knows the effects on his body and he is no longer afraid of it. Some were doubtful about the existence of this pandemic. Mahmud wondered why he had not met anyone who had been infected around him. Zafar also wondered why he didn't know anyone who had had it, either here or in Afghanistan. All minors fall into the latter subgroup for whom COVID does not represent a risk.

PEOPLE IN TRANSIT:WHAT DEMANDS, WHAT DENUNCIATIONS?

We can observe that there are almost no direct claims or denunciations from the people living in the camps about issues related to access to healthcare.

Among the difficulties identified by the interviewees, only two people mentioned health. They have serious illnesses, unmonitored diabetes and a serious skin condition, and demanded health protection: "We have health conditions that require real medical consultations," Waleed explained.

It is therefore from the analysis of the situation, the observations and the information that people have given us on the subject that we can deduce that the main needs in this area are: the presence of mediator-interpreters during medical consultations or upstream, during referrals, with a view to improving people's care. This would improve both people's confidence in common law structures, but also in obtaining a better understanding and information about the existing rights and arrangements available to them. It would also ensure the effective care and better protection of people's overall health.

Denunciations and demands mainly regard psychological suffering. In the testimonies given to us, the stress and fatigue linked to the situation and the dead end at which people find themselves are, in fact, cited by several camp inhabitants as the greatest difficulties encountered.

In our exchanges, the question of using a psychologist emerged only with two people. Others mentioned different solutions to remedy their current poor psycho-physical health: getting better means having the opportunity to leave France without having to risk your own life to cross; it is the end of the Dublin regulations; it is the opportunity to be accepted somewhere and to be allowed to live a normal life. These demands for better mental health therefore overlap with the demands presented in the previous chapters. For example, Abdelaziz declared: "I was hoping for a normal life," when asked what the biggest difficulties he is experiencing are. Their main concerns therefore relate to the causes of stress and fatigue.

It is worth remembering that the conditions for better health require respect for fundamental rights: access to shelter, respect for human dignity and integrity, including freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment, adequate food and the opportunity to wash are essential prerequisites for good physical and mental health.

Every aspect of life is strictly related to health, and in this report, health cannot be considered without assessing and understanding the elements that shape the existence and daily lives of people at the border. People's quality of life, their physical and mental states, is directly influenced by their living conditions and interactions with others. The latter are often characterised by contempt, rejection and exclusion. We have addressed the issue of health last because we found that migration policies and living conditions at the border have harmful effects on both bodies and minds, as well as on physical and mental health.

During the interviews, the people we met told us about their individual difficulties, but the testimonies taken as a whole show that once again, their origins or the causes of their aggravations are, and reveal the extent of, the environment of insecurity, precariousness and exclusion in which people in transit live. This environment is largely shaped by migration policies and obstacles to movement and settlement in Europe and living conditions at the French-British border.

CONCLUSIONS

BREAKING THE DEADLOCK. CONCRETE PROPOSALS

CONCLUSIONS - BREAKING THE DEADLOCK. CONCRETE PROPOSALS

This report presents a snapshot of the situation at the border at a given time – the first half of 2021. It is not an exhaustive description of the profiles and experiences that people have in these hostile territories. It is, however, an analytical report on the major themes that emerge as shared conditions and shared experiences of a population in transit that finds itself blocked from crossing the border. "I would like the associations to tell the Government what we have experienced and about our living conditions," Faris requested.

We can, indeed, consider this "we" mentioned by Faris, and many others, as a community of experience based both on the shared experience of migration from a country in which passports do not provide the opportunity to travel legally to the desired countries and on the shared experience of denied movement as well as on stability after arriving in Europe. This community of experience also shares similar living conditions across the coastline, although there are differences depending on, for example, where people live, whether they belong to a community, a tightly knit and organised national network, or whether they have accumulated certain vulnerabilities.

One of the aims of this research work is to establish, from the voice of the people concerned, the common living conditions, difficulties and needs, without invisibilising the unique lives, reflections and experiences of the people we have met. In other words, we have tried to better understand these people at the border and their daily lives by listening to them. But that's not all. This work also aims to listen directly to the people concerned, to consider their reflections or questions with a view to improving - here and now - the living conditions of these people blocked at the French-British border and to find solutions that respect fundamental rights. To respond to this initial mission of the associations, we have tried to develop potential avenues for responses.

In conclusion, we decided to propose some ideas and suggestions for future actions based on the voices of the people concerned.

LISTENING TO NEEDS

Although almost all of the people we met emphasised that their sole aim was to reach the UK, we asked them to identify the most important and urgent things they would need to improve their lives where they are on the border. The answers focus on the various areas where they believe there may be room for change. By collecting their responses according to major themes, eleven avenues emerged.

Firstly, people insist on access to water, food, shelter and security. Secondly, the comments focus on the need for material goods and the need to stay connected with the world, to be able to communicate and connect to the internet. Lastly, they concern the need for administrative recognition, minimum conditions for good health and the ability to cross national borders legally. The avenues listed by the inhabitants of the camps also concern the possibility of carrying out activities (training or work) and other aspects of daily life such as the right to privacy, the opportunity to support each other collectively and to live in a clean place.

Below is a table that summarises and maps the priorities we were given.

WATER	**25**
Showers	**13**
Access to water	**7**
Access to toilets	**3**
Cleanliness of toilets	**1**
Washing machines	**1**
FOOD	**24**
More food	**17**
Good food	**4**
Distribution of dinners, too	**1**
Child-friendly food	**1**
Wood for cooking	**1**
SHELTERS	**22**
Materials for shelter (tents, tarpaulins, sleeping bags, etc.)	**7**
A camp or place to stay/sleep	**4**
Having or having access to housing	**5**
A roof	**2**
Shelter for everyone	**1**
A reception centre for sleeping	**1**
A solution for refugees to live with dignity	**1**
Access to hotels	**1**
Wood for heating	**1**
SAFETY	**16**
Increased safety	**4**
Being treated well by the police and other people	**2**
Stop police harassment	**2**
A safe place for children to stay and a safe place for women to talk and get help	**2**
Having the police leave us alone, and not waking us up so early	**2**
Kind police / no more police violence	**2**
Having the police let us move on	**1**
Fewer humiliating and aggressive police	**1**

GOODS	15
Clothing and underwear	9
Shoes	4
Nappies for children	2
TELECOMMUNICATION	**9**
Charge phones	3
Wi-Fi internet, television (for world news, videos, music, operating info and services in France)	2
Mobile phones	2
Possibility of calling the family	1
SIM cards	1
DOCUMENTS	**8**
Residence permits	6
Help applying for papers	1
Information about where we can live with dignity	1
HEALTH	**6**
Ability to rest/sleep	4
Access to healthcare	1
Health protection	1
DAILY LIFE	**5**
Cleanliness of living spaces	1
Making a family with friends	1
Living well and forgetting the past	1
Outside you need everything	1
Privacy	1
FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT	**4**
Entering England	2
Leaving here	2
ACTIVITY	**3**
Study	2
Work	1
NO NEEDS	**5**
We have everything we need	5

Table 8: 56 people responded to the question "What are the three most important or urgent things you need to have a better life here? " This table takes into account all of the answers given. Some interviewees gave one answer, others more than one.

Alternatives to the current state of affairs are very diverse. They are positioned at different levels: on the one hand at a local level and, on the other, at a national or even international level. They range from very material and pragmatic demands, such as the need for shelter materials, to challenging the barriers to free movement, and demanding "free passage" to

the UK or regularisation of people's situations. For example, according to Richard: "Ensuring that migrants are allowed to stay legally," is the simple solution, which would prevent people from continuing to live in the current conditions along the French-British border. He explained that this was obvious to him and that it would be enough for the right to stay to be granted to everyone to avoid people being subjected to these living conditions.

Some of the avenues outlined remain attached to the existing system, including access to services and rights or the simple possibility of not being expelled, hunted or harassed by police.

We observed that some refused to make demands, or to engage in individualistic discourse, and paid particular attention to including others, the whole community of experience. Some people spoke for others who they considered to be "more vulnerable", such as Martha, who expressed the need for children to have better tents and age-appropriate food. Yet her child is not with her; he has remained in his country of origin. During our research on the ground, we observed the isolation of the most vulnerable, but also forms of solidarity and attention to them.

PROPOSALS

Associations have been wondering for a long time about what actions could be taken to improve living conditions at the border. They have set up services, opened structures, day centre spaces, prepared litigation, advocacy actions and demonstrations. They have also carried out analyses, collected testimonies, taken legal action and questioned the authorities. These actions improve the daily lives of all those who live in the camps.

We asked the people we met what actions should be taken. We asked them: "What would make life easier here? What could be done to improve your daily life? Do you have any ideas? "

Forty-one people gave us their opinion, while the others told us they had no ideas because, as some explained: "When you live with daily difficulties, it is not necessarily easy to imagine an alternative situation."

Waleed explained: "I don't know. I have no idea because I've lived on the streets for a long time. Apart from going to England and being able to make a living, I don't know what could improve life here, I can't imagine anything else."

Two people mentioned that the associations make life less difficult for them and that they cannot do better. Sindis, who had been in Grande-Synthe for a month, told us: "We dare not ask here," which is why he does not seek to imagine systems, solutions, services, changes that could improve his daily life, much less the respect of his rights.

Some replied that it was not their job to think about this, as their aim was to leave the north of France as soon as possible. Amir explained: "We support your plans, we get help from associations, that's good, but our goal is not this [improving the situation at the border]."

Dlawar said that the only important thing for him is to get to England. He stated: "The only thing that could improve the situation here would be to bring people to England. If I have one thing to say to those who arrive here after me, it's just: 'Good luck crossing, try every day.'"

It therefore seems that the interests and priorities of the associations and people in transit are not the same, nor do they have the same time frame. This makes it difficult to imagine joint actions, projects and mobilisations that are not only occasional and urgent. As people in transit, whose lives in the north are perceived as transient and temporary, it is rare for people to want to commit themselves to changing a situation that, for them, represents a chapter in life they would readily draw a line under. We note that people's projects focus solely on the prospect of a better future elsewhere.

As such, people in transit's power to act is deployed much more in terms of resistance to migration policies, to which they respond with their own bodies, rather than in terms of demands and proposals that respect their fundamental rights. Their horizon for action is revealed in their determination not to give in to all of the obstacles and barriers to their presence and to organise themselves to resist them as best as possible, both collectively and individually. People can testify, be outraged, find collective or individual solutions to survive in this context, but often they do not have the power and proposals to change the present. It is therefore important to listen to them in order to understand and contextualise the situation.

Moreover, this attraction to the future implies relative indifference to the prospects of change in the present. This could be counterbalanced by mobilising the voices of people who have crossed the Channel. Indeed, we wondered whether this was not a question to ask those who had reached the United Kingdom and who, in hindsight, would want to speak out once they had overcome the daily crises and this transit situation. This avenue, although potentially of great interest, could not be explored further in the context of this research but warrants further study.

Nevertheless, forty-one people gave their opinions, sharing with us the actions that they believe could be carried out to improve the living conditions of those stranded at the border. We have summarised their responses according to the following areas of intervention: changing migration policies, improving existing ones, creating new services and opening up accommodation spaces.

Changing migration policies	Number of people
Stop police actions against us (disturbance, destruction, custody if found in car parks, evacuations)	**7**
Be able to go to England	**4**
Stop the Dublin regulation, turn the North into a tourist spot	**1**
Be provided with papers to be able to work	**1**
Stability and papers	**1**
Right to stay legally	**1**
Get asylum	**1**

Changing migration policies	
Improve toilets, provide cleaners	**1**
Improve access to water: permanent taps	**1**
Continue to entertain our children, play with them	**1**
Coordinate the distribution of associations and have people who speak our language	**1**
Phones so that everyone is independent and can give the family news	**1**
The right size in clothing	**1**
There are many associations, but sometimes there is not enough food for everyone	**1**
Increased safety	**1**
Be able to work	**1**
Simplify people's lives	**1**
Fewer humiliating and aggressive police	**1**
Opening new services	
Facilitate access to the law, administrative requests are difficult	**3**
Help to cross	**3**
Learn French to understand what is happening around us	**2**
Improve English, study	**1**
Training in professions and languages to pass the time	**1**
Provide information on settlement opportunities in Europe	**1**
Explain to people what associations do	**1**
Open a camp or a place to sit and be able to take your mind off things	**1**
Creating accommodation spaces	
Accommodation with water and showers/warm shelter to take refuge	**3**
Camp closed to be safe at night	**2**
Have a quiet place to shelter	**1**
Reception centre modelled on those in Belgium	**1**
Houses like here for everyone [at a host's house]	**1**
A bigger tent, to be more comfortable	**1**
Facilitate access to shelters	**1**
Shelter for everyone	**1**
Create well-maintained camps that respect the environment	**1**

Table 9: 41 people answered the question "What would make life easier here? What could be done to improve daily life? Do you have any ideas? "

Let's look at some proposals. First of all, we are going to look at challenging migration policies and, in particular, the Dublin regulations which, as we have seen, are causing men and women to attempt to reach the UK. Then we will look at suggestions of activities that could provide additional resources for people, to cope, on the one hand, with the legislative jungle and, on the other hand, to train. Lastly, we will complete the chapter with solutions that would respond to various needs thanks to the creation of multi-purpose camps or structures.

CHANGING MIGRATION POLICIES

We have seen that for many people the UK is their last chance to avoid being forced to return to their long lost country of origin, after having been repeatedly rejected in Europe. "It would be enough to allow people to settle in Europe where they could work and be comfortable or allow them to cross the Channel, so the camps in northern France would disappear," they told us.

For example, Leyla highlighted the senseless situation in northern France: "Lots of people are in the Jungle because of [this] Dublin [regulation]. If they put a stop to the Dublin regulation, the Jungle would end, there would be almost no one left because there wouldn't be all the people whose only option is to go to the UK. If no one had given their fingerprints, we wouldn't be here. Puythouck wood is beautiful, it could become a tourist attraction! There, with all the people crammed into these conditions, it's dirty. In addition, people say 'What is happening in France? ' It's not great advertising for France. It's very sad, it could be different! Removing the Dublin regulation would change the situation! "

STRENGTHENING EXISTING SERVICES

Without calling into question the underlying policy framework, people are thinking about services that could improve their daily lives. They are aimed in particular at associations and public authorities, proposing to reinforce or streamline existing services, such as the setting up of water points or the coordination of food distributions. Interviewees put forward proposals for services that could be useful to them, such as assistance with access to rights or training. Most of these services already exist to some extent, associations already offer them, but the people we met were unaware of this.

Generally speaking, we noted the lack of information on how access to rights works in Europe. One young person, Shaker, said that it would be important to have a service that facilitates access to the law, telling us: "Because it's difficult for us, the administrative procedures are complicated." He applied for asylum, which he was denied, and understood that it was better to go to England, but wondered if this was the only solution. As we saw in the second chapter, the strategic calculation that many interviewees make about the countries in which they are most likely to settle often lacks information about the rights and risks they face.

On several occasions, we heard these young people who have been stranded at the border for months complain of "wasting time". Four of them suggested setting up flexible training open to all to learn French, to improve English or "to learn something", so that they didn't feel that their time in northern France was wasted. Faris, a seventeen-year-old who has spent more than six months in northern camps, first in Calais and then in Ouistreham, offers workshops "to prepare for England". He then suggested organising training courses to learn, for example, a profession or languages, as he explained: "to pass the time, to better use the time spent here." Learning the basics of French is essential for Hatim, who said, "Everyone should be able to speak French. It's really a language problem. People are suffering because they don't understand what's happening here in France." The difficulties of accessing care due to language barriers and the frustration of not understanding exchanges with others, with police for example, were mentioned.

Training and courses could also be an opportunity to meet other young people, and to forge links. This is the observation made by the *Refugee Youth Service*, which organises English classes in Calais.

The services offered to people are often designed to respond to a very significant emergency. Yet upon listening to the interviewees, hearing them talk about the wait – as Ahmed says, "I waste my time, I do nothing useful with my day" – we believe that services that go beyond urgency could be of interest to some young people.

The question of time passing, of time lost, is very present and relates to the age of the people we met. Creating relationships and training opportunities could then mitigate the endless wait to attempt to cross. For people who have been in northern France for a long time, schools offering French and English lessons and other training could prove to be opportunities for mental escape to occupy those who feel trapped. The aim is to create space to accommodate and guide people who are at odds with the urgency and routine of life at the border.

Furthermore, according to the testimonies, the total dependence on the services offered to them can become a source of suffering for people whose wait extends over time. This is the case for Asam, who told us that initially it was bearable, because it was temporary. However, failure to cross the border has been reflected in the stress and frustration of being dependent on associations. The possibility of including those camp residents who are tired of the constant attempts to cross in the associations could become an opportunity that might be of interest to a small minority of people.

In this way, the meeting points provided by the associations supporting people in transit could act as a reference point for a possible change of trajectory or as an anchoring point.

MULTI-PURPOSE STRUCTURES - ISLANDS OF SOLIDARITY

A final set of proposals concerns living spaces in which it is possible to stay and access services, namely the possibility of a warm shelter or access to showers and toilets.

Leyla told us her idea: "We would have to organise a camp, a clean camp, which would be good for people, but also for the environment, and which would allow us to care for the external environment. It's dirty here, because associations donate, because we need clothes for example. But then there is no place to wash things so people throw everything away as soon as it's dirty. With a camp or a centre, it would be different. When I spent six months in an accommodation centre, I could clean everything up, I had nothing to throw away. The same goes for food, because if you don't have a place to store it, a fridge, you have to throw away whatever you don't eat at the meal."

In Chapter 3, we described the reluctance to focus on closed structures managed by the State, and the need to come up with more open solutions. For example, a twenty-four-year-old Sudanese man, Manute, who lives in a camp in a city where there is no day centre, told us: "The biggest difficulty is being outside all the time, all the time: the weather is changing, it's raining, it's cold, the associations come to give us things to eat, but it's always the same living conditions, always being outside in the rain, with just a tent to protect us, that's what's hard. But having housing is out of the question because it's the State that manages that, so we're in the way, we do not want and we do not hope to be in a centre." Later in the interview, he said he had no idea what could be done to improve his life because, "the essential things are there." He mentioned the existence of, "a nearby building where they can shower, wash clothes and even sleep if needed." This is another avenue that is being explored through day centres, squats and some accommodation with local residents. Therefore, structures scattered over the coastal territories, sort of support centres and landmarks which leave autonomy to the people and constitute islands of solidarity, could represent a possible way to respond to many of the needs and emergencies mentioned.

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ANNEX 1

List of people interviewed

First name	Department	Date	Gender	Age	Country of origin
Richard	Pas-de-Calais	21-Apr	M	20	Sudan
Ahmed	Pas-de-Calais	28-Apr	M	17	Sudan
Martha	Pas-de-Calais	20-May	F	29	Ethiopia
Nebila	Pas-de-Calais	19-May	F	30	Ethiopia
Tarik	Pas-de-Calais	12-May	M	29	Sudan
Nima	Pas-de-Calais	18-May	F	26	Iran
Bhrane	Pas-de-Calais	17-May	M	27	Eritrea
Kamal	Pas-de-Calais	14-May	M	17	Sudan
Abdo	Pas-de-Calais	14-May	M	16	Sudan
Ulagarech	Pas-de-Calais	31-May	M	30	Ethiopia
Omar	Pas-de-Calais	15-May	M	31	Iraq
Shaker	Pas-de-Calais	16-May	M	25	Sudan
Mustafa	Pas-de-Calais	31-May	M	34	Sudan
Gloria	Pas-de-Calais	25-May	F	20	Nigeria
Kaleb	Pas-de-Calais	26-May	M	42	Ethiopia
Alghaliy	Pas-de-Calais	24-Apr	M	16	Sudan
Garang	Pas-de-Calais	22-Apr	M	18	Sudan
Asam	Pas-de-Calais	22-Apr	M	22	Eritrea
Simon	Pas-de-Calais	15-May	M	24	Eritrea
Amanuel	Pas-de-Calais	17-May	M	21	Eritrea
Zaki	Pas-de-Calais	18-May	M	16	Afghanistan
Tayeb	Pas-de-Calais	05-Jun	M	24	Sudan
Mansour	Pas-de-Calais	09-Jun	M	16	Sudan
Ali	Pas-de-Calais	08-Jun	M	23	Afghanistan
Mahmud	Pas-de-Calais	11-Jun	M	14	Sudan
Abdel	Pas-de-Calais	09-Jun	M	16	Sudan
Ewin	Nord	12-Apr	M	28	Iraq
Sindis	Nord	12-Apr	M	28	Iraq
Adan	Nord	12-Apr	M	35	Iran
Bihar	Nord	12-Apr	M	21	Iraq
Rafiq	Nord	14-Apr	M	27	Iraq
Osman	Nord	14-Apr	M	35	Iraq
Nuri	Nord	14-Apr	M	31	Iraq
Muhammad	Nord	17-Apr	M	33	Iraq
Ibrahim	Nord	17-Apr	M	34	Iraq
Kaveh	Nord	17-Apr	M	24	Iraq
Sivan	Nord	15-Apr	M	24	Iraq
Georges	Nord	15-Apr	M	43	Iraq
Dlawar	Nord	15-Apr	M	21	Iraq
Felek	Nord	15-Apr	M	30	Iraq
Adil	Nord	29-Apr	M	25	Iraq
Hiner	Nord	29-Apr	M	25	Iraq
Leyla	Nord	21-May	F	34	Iraq

First name	Department	Date	Gender	Age	Country of origin
Hoài	Nord	02-Jun	M	24	Vietnam
Sami	Manche	24-May	M	30	Afghanistan
Zafar	Manche	24-May	M	16	Afghanistan
Sayd	Manche	25-May	M	24	Afghanistan
Osman	Nord	14-Apr	M	35	Iraq
Nuri	Nord	14-Apr	M	31	Iraq
Muhammad	Nord	17-Apr	M	33	Iraq
Ibrahim	Nord	17-Apr	M	34	Iraq
Kaveh	Nord	17-Apr	M	24	Iraq
Sivan	Nord	15-Apr	M	24	Iraq
Georges	Nord	15-Apr	M	43	Iraq
Dlawar	Nord	15-Apr	M	21	Iraq
Felek	Nord	15-Apr	M	30	Iraq
Adil	Nord	29-Apr	M	25	Iraq
Georges	Nord	15-Apr	M	43	Iraq
Dlawar	Nord	15-Apr	M	21	Iraq
Felek	Nord	15-Apr	M	30	Iraq
Adil	Nord	29-Apr	M	25	Iraq
Hiner	Nord	29-Apr	M	25	Iraq
Leyla	Nord	21-May	F	34	Iraq
Hoài	Nord	02-Jun	M	24	Vietnam
Sami	Manche	24-May	M	30	Afghanistan
Zafar	Manche	24-May	M	16	Afghanistan
Sayd	Manche	25-May	M	24	Afghanistan
Razi	Manche	25-May	M	24	Afghanistan
Alan	Manche	25-May	M	16	Afghanistan
Manute	Calvados	11-May	M	24	Sudan
Waleed	Calvados	11-May	M	16	Sudan
Amir	Calvados	12-May	M	18	Sudan
Faris	Calvados	13-May	M	17	Sudan
Hussein	Calvados	13-May	M	24	Sudan
Luol	Calvados	21-May	M	25	Sudan
Abdelaziz	Calvados	21-May	M	27	Sudan
Souleymane	Calvados	31-May	M	16	Sudan
Hatim	Calvados	01-Jun	M	26	Sudan
Majdi	Calvados	29-Mar	M	28	Sudan

ANNEX 2

The interview grid

Date of interview: _ _ / _ _ / _ _

Location of interview: _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Questionnaire number _ _

Name of interviewer: _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Gender of interviewee: ____

Language of interview: _ _ _

☐ ISM ☐ with translator ☐ without translation

PART 1: PROFILE
→ FIRST OF ALL, WE WOULD LIKE TO ASK FOR SOME INFORMATION ABOUT YOURSELF.

1. How old are you?

_ _

2. What is your nationality?

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ ☐ stateless

[*If he/she specifies a region, an ethnic group or a minority:*] _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

3. What languages do you speak? [*List all known languages, including dialects, at any level. Tick the boxes and add any missing ones*]

FRENCH	ENGLISH	ARABIC	PASHTO			
ITALIAN	GERMAN	KURDISH	FARSI			

4. Between what ages were you at school or in education?
[*If he/she has not been to school, write from age 0 to age 0*]

From _ _ years to _ _ years

5. Have you been trained in a profession? If so, which?
[*Also indicate whether he/she mentions a diploma or qualification obtained*]

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

6. Are you married?

☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Do you have any children? [*If yes*] ***How many?*** [*If no, write zero and go to Question 10*]

_ _ [number]

8. How old are they? [*If more than 4 children, ask for the age of the youngest and eldest*]

_ _ years; _ _ years; _ _ years ; _ _ years or They are between _ _ years and _ _ years

9. Where are they? [NOTE: *Let the person answer freely, tick the relevant options, several options are possible*]

☐ Country of birth ☐ Another country outside of Europe

☐ Another country in Europe ☐ With the interviewee ☐ Missing

10. Is anyone else [*if they have children with them*] **from your family here with you?**

☐ Yes-> **Who?** _ _ _ ☐ No

PART 2: PRESENCE ON THE COAST
→ WE WILL NOW ASK YOU SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR PRESENCE HERE.

11. How long have you been here? [*Circle the unit*]

_ _ Days weeks months

12. Before you came here, what city were you in?

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

13. In which cities in France have you been?

[*Show them the map, circle and add the cities mentioned by the interviewee*]

14. Why are you here?

15. Where were you when you first heard about *Grande-Synthe/Calais/ Ouistreham/……* ?

__ __ __ __ __

16. [*If he/she mentioned England in his/her motivations*] [*If he/she did not mention England, start by asking if he/she wants to go to England*] **Why England?**

Why England? [*Summarise the answer*]	**Do you know people in England?**		**What work do you plan to do in England?**	**What papers do you think you will get in England?**
	☐ Yes	☐ No		
	Who are they? [NOTE: *Let them answer freely*] ☐ Family ☐ Friends ☐ People you met on your migratory journey ☐ People from your country of origin.			

PART 3: LIVING CONDITIONS
→ WE WILL NOW ASK YOU ABOUT YOUR DAILY LIFE HERE AT THE BORDER.

17. What are the major challenges you are experiencing here?
[*List the difficulties mentioned*]

18. What are the three most important/urgent things that will make things better for you here?[*If the person has difficulty answering, please do not suggest answers, only offer the following suggestions:* services, items, structures, aids]

1. _ _ _

2. _ _ _

3. _ _ _

19. [*If the person does not mention material needs*] **Do you have any specific material needs (hygiene products, food, items, etc.)?**

20. Since you came here, until today, has anything improved your daily life? If so, what is it? [*Service, purpose, meeting with a group/association, change of living space, etc.?*]

21. What would make life easier here? What could be done to improve daily life here? Do you have any ideas?

22. We would like to know where you have slept since arriving in northern France [*show map*]. **I will read you a list. Please tell me if you have slept there or not** [*Read ALL options again*]

Have you slept at someone's house?		**In an abandoned house or depot (squat)?**		**Have you slept outside in a tent/ shelter?**		**Outside: without a tent or shelter?**		**Have you slept in a hotel?**		**Have you ever slept in an accommodation centre?**	
☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No

23. In France, have you spent <u>at least one night</u> in an accommodation centre?
[*A facility where you can sleep*]

☐ Yes

[If he/she has already been in an accommodation centre]

Do you remember the name of the centre or the city and the address?

Did you choose to go there or were you obliged to go there? [NOTE: *Let them answer freely*]

☐ Chose to go ☐ Brought there with no info ☐ Obliged

Why are you no longer there?

Give us one positive and one negative aspect of your time spent at this centre

- Positive:

- Negative:

☐ No

[If he/she has never been to a centre]

Why have you never been to an accommodation centre?

[NOTE: *If minor*] **Did you know that in France as a minor, up to the age of 18 years, you are entitled to stay in France, to be housed and fed and to go to school?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

Does this interest you?

☐ Yes ☐ No, **why?**

[NOTE: *If he/she answers yes to both questions*] **Have you ever asked to stay in France, to be fed and housed? What happened?**

[*If unwilling to respond or confused, try to understand:*
- if there has been a request for care
☐ *Yes* ☐ *No*
- if a medical examination has been performed
☐ *Yes* ☐ *No*
- if he/she has presented documents that make it possible to establish his/her minority status
☐ *Yes* ☐ *No]*

24. Since you have been here, in….. , have you felt unsafe? [*If the answer is "no", ask whether he/she has been concerned about things that may put him/her in danger. NOTE: Let the person answer and interpret his/her reaction by choosing from the options, ask for confirmation*]

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

25. [*If yes*] **Why (did you feel unsafe)?**

26. [*NOTE: Complete the response by offering all options and a free choice of "others"*]

Have you ever felt unsafe due to the cold/rain		**When trying to cross the border**		**Because of people who don't want migrants**		**Because of the people who live around you**		**Because of yourself (you may do things that put you at risk)**		**Because of the action of the police**	
☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No

27. [*If the person has children with him/her*] **What are your fears for your children?**

28. With regard to the police here, have any of the following ever happened to you...

a) Have the police ever made you leave from where you were sleeping? ☐ Yes ☐ No	**b)** [*If yes*] **How did this make you feel? Did you feel humiliated, angry, sad, left indifferent?** [*More options are possible*]				
	☐ Humiliated	☐ Angry	☐ Sad	☐ Indifferent	☐ Other:

[*If yes*] **How many times has this happened since you have been here? _ _ _**

Can you give an example of what you experienced?

a) Have you been subject to any police checks here in northern France? ☐ Yes ☐ No

b) [*If yes*] **Can you tell us what happened to you during the check(s)?**

a) Have you been detained since being in northern France? ☐ Yes ☐ No

	b) Where?			
	☐ Prison	☐ Immigration detention centre	☐ At the police station	☐ Other:

c) [*If yes*] **What happened?**

29. Here in northern France, have the police ever:

- ☐ intervened to protect you or helped you
- ☐ used a taser on you
- ☐ used a stick/baton on you
- ☐ used gas on you that burns the eyes
- ☐ beat you or pushed you violently
- ☐ insulted you
- ☐ taken or broken your personal belongings (tents, phones, glasses, etc.)
- ☐ torn/ripped up your papers

PART 4: HEALTH → I WILL NOW ASK YOU QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR HEALTH. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR US TO ASK YOU THESE QUESTIONS SO THAT WE CAN CONSIDER THE APPROPRIATE SERVICES.

30. How would you currently describe your physical health/how is your body?
[NOTE: *Let the person answer. Interpret the response and request confirmation*]

☐ very good/well ☐ good/well ☐ quite good/well ☐ bad ☐ very bad

31. In the past week, have you ever gone to bed hungry and not had enough to eat?
[NOTE: *Let the person answer and mention the options if necessary*]

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ On several days ☐ Almost always

32. Do you have long-term illnesses that require treatment/medication?

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">☐ No</td><td colspan="2">☐ Yes
Are you taking the treatment/medication?</td></tr>
<tr><td>☐ Yes</td><td>☐ Sometimes or Never.
Why do you (sometimes) not take it?</td></tr>
</table>

33. Do you have an ailment that is getting worse over time?

☐ Yes -> **Since when?** _ _ _ _
☐ No

34. Since you've been here, have you hurt/injured yourself?

☐ Yes -> **How did it happen?** _ _ _
☐ No

35. When was the last time you were seen by a doctor?
[*It's OK if the person answers with a location*]

_ _ _ _ _ _

36. Since being in France, have you ever NOT visited a doctor even if you needed to?

☐ No (this has never happened).
☐ Yes -> **Why?** [NOTE: *Listen to the answer and also propose all the other options*]

37. [NOTE: *complete the response by proposing all options*]

You didn't go because you didn't know where to go		**Because you thought they wouldn't understand you (because of the language barrier)**		**You didn't go because you thought they'd ask you for money**		**Because they could ask to see your papers or call the police**		**Because you were scared they would tell you that your illness was serious?**		**Because you had previously had a bad experience with a doctor**		**You had other concerns and no time.**		**Other**
☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No	

38. What do you do if you're sick or injured here?

39. How would you describe your mental health/how are you feeling?[NOTE: *Let the person answer. Interpret the response and request confirmation*]

☐ Very good/well ☐ Good/well ☐ Quite good/well ☐ Bad ☐ Very bad

[NOTE*: If the person mentions symptoms, specify them*] .....

40. Since you've been here, have you had trouble sleeping or falling asleep?

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes/rarely ☐ On several days ☐ Almost always/always

41. [*If yes*] **Why?** [*Let them answer and enquire about the other options*]

Do you have anxious thoughts about the future?		**Do you have anxious thoughts about your situation here?**		**Do you think about your past?**		**Do you feel unsafe/ Fear that something bad will happen to you?**		**Due to cold/ hunger or rain**		**For another reason (please specify)** _ _ _
☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No	

42. Do you use alcohol, substances or drugs?
Often, sometimes or a lot? Or too much?

☐ I do not use them ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ A lot ☐ Too much

43. [*If the answers are affirmative*] **You believe that alcohol/drugs are useful for.. .**
[*read all options, multiple answers possible*]

☐ Sleeping better
☐ Having the courage to do dangerous things
☐ Passing the time
☐ Taking your mind off things, reducing anxiety

44. When did you start drinking alcohol/taking drugs?
[*any response is accepted (year, location or situation)*]

_ _ _

45. What are you most concerned about with regard to COVID?

PART 5: ADMINISTRATIVE SITUATION
→ WE WILL NOW ASK YOU SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR ADMINISTRATIVE SITUATION

46. Have you applied for a residence permit/papers in Europe or France?

☐ Yes -> **For which permit?** ☐ family reunification ☐ work ☐ study ☐ healthcare ☐ political asylum ☐ other **Where?** **Have you had a response?** ☐ No -> **Why?** [NOTE: *Let them answer and tick the option*] ☐ The application is being reviewed ☐ I did not go to appointments ☐ I am not aware of it ☐ Other: ..... ☐ Yes -> **What was the outcome?** [NOTE: *Let them answer*] ☐ Refusal-rejected ☐ Dublin Procedure ☐ Other (specify)...	☐ No, **why?**

47. [*If applying for asylum in France*] **When did you apply for asylum and did they** [*OFII*] **offer you accommodation?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

48. Have you had your fingerprints taken in Europe?

☐ Yes -> **When and in which country?**	☐ No

49. Are you thinking about applying for papers in France?

☐ Yes ☐ No

PART 6: JOURNEY → LAST THING, WE WILL NOW ASK YOU QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR JOURNEY

50. Can you tell us about the stages of your migration/displacement, from where you were born to where you are today? We can go through the countries you have been to together. We will ask you the questions for each country.

In which country were you born?	**When did you leave?** Age _ _ or Year _ _	**Why did you leave?** _ _ _ _ _ _	
1) Then, which country did you go to? _ _ _ [*Ask these questions for each country travelled through before arriving in France]*	**How long** **did you stay there?** _ _ Days Months Years [*Indicate the number and circle the corresponding time unit*]	**Why did you leave this country?** [NOTE: *Let them answer, do not read the options, tick if the answer refers to an option or summarise the answer*] ☐ Because you were just passing through, you wanted to go somewhere else ☐ Because there was no work ☐ Due to war or the political situation ☐ Because they mistreat migrants there (exploitation, racism) ☐ Because you had the opportunity to leave ☐ Because it was difficult to practice your religion ☐ Because you don't feel free ☐ Other:	**I will read you different options regarding your accommodation in this country. Please answer yes or no.** [NOTE: Tick all answers that apply] **In this country, have you ever lived...?** ☐ on the streets ☐ in a camp ☐ in abandoned housing without paying ☐ in purchased/rented accommodation ☐ with family/friends ☐ with people from your country of origin ☐ in a prison/immigration detention centre ☐ in a hotel/rented room ☐ in an accommodation centre
[*if he/she passed through other countries before France, provide the answer in an annex*]! LAST ONE! **Finally, which country did you go to?** FRANCE	**How long have you been there?** _ _ Days Month Years [*Indicate the number and circle the corresponding time unit*]	**Do you want to leave?** ☐ Yes ☐ No [*If yes*] **Why do you want to leave?** ☐ Because you are just passing through - in transit, you want to go somewhere else ☐ Because there is no work ☐ Because of the political situation ☐ Because migrants are treated badly here (exploitation, racism) ☐ Because you have the opportunity to leave ☐ Because it is difficult to practice your religion ☐ Because you don't feel free ☐ Other:	**In France, have you ever lived...?** ☐ on the streets ☐ in a camp ☐ in abandoned housing without paying ☐ in purchased/rented accommodation ☐ with family/friends ☐ with people from your country of origin ☐ in a prison/immigration detention centre ☐ in a hotel/rented room ☐ in an accommodation centre

51. Do you have anything to add that we did not discuss during this interview?

52. [*Only if the person is very forthcoming and you feel they still want to talk*] **Can you describe a typical day here at the border?What does a typical day look like for you?**

The Migrant Support Platform (PSM) supports a network of associations present throughout the "Grand Nord" region, from Cherbourg to Dunkerque, which work to assist exiles at the French-British border.

The PSM was created to help associations improve dialogue and coordination between them in order to pool experiences, resources and skills and thus better defend the rights of exiled people.

This report is the result of a research mission, commissioned by the PSM, in the framework of its "Advocacy Commission", and as part of a process of "Thinking and acting differently to achieve a policy along the French-British border that respects rights".

Since 2019, the members of the network have met as part of the "advocacy commission" in order to work together on an advocacy strategy to ensure that the fundamental rights and dignity of exiles are respected at the border.

Today, it is not a campaign plan with well-defined final demands that this advocacy commission has adopted, but rather a methodology, implying a real change of mindset. It is based on three main aspects: survey work with people in transit; a critical analysis of public policies - the result of which is this report; and the creation of citizens' alliances on the subject with the intention of developing solutions that respect fundamental rights at the French-British border.

MIGRANT SUPPORT PLATFORM (PSM)