Introduction
People Sleeping Rough at the Gare du Nord

Walter's legs were impressive. They looked young, almost hairless – as is the case for many old men – but very muscular. Whenever I saw him, he would be wearing shorts; was he proud of his legs? The muscles were the result of walking around all day. 'Sometimes I walk 20 km per day. Always up and down and back and forth and in this or that direction.'

Walter came to Paris from the Netherlands and was in his early seventies when I met him at the Gare du Nord, Europe's biggest train station. He had travelled a lot during his life and had worked in Germany for a while. It was easy for us to communicate as we shared a common language. When I first started going to the day centre for homeless people, Freedom, just a stone's throw from the station, I spent a lot of time with Walter because I was the only person he could talk to. I quickly learnt that Walter had originally come from the Netherlands with a woman; they had met in the Netherlands, but she was half German and half Dutch. Neither of them had a job; they lived together on the streets of Paris for almost two years, but, in May 2015, she left him for an Algerian man. Walter was not inclined to admit his sadness; he never complained, instead moving forward, he explained, just as he kept on walking.

He was a rather quiet character, a silent mountain. I never saw him getting angry. He liked the street and slept on benches in the 10th arrondissement during the time when we saw each other regularly. Sometimes I found him at République, sometimes on the Boulevard Magenta leading from the station down to the big plaza. He wasn't ready for a room of his own yet ('There are too many rules. I don't need one. There is no freedom') and preferred his active life of walking all day, every day. But he was full of hope, despite all the problems in his life.

And Walter had good reason to be hopeful: he was nearing his official retirement age and, having worked for a significant amount of his life, he could expect a decent pension from the Dutch government. He already had a Dutch identity card, the first step towards being able to claim the money. His head was shaved in the picture, which had been taken only a couple of years previous, and his face was not hidden by a massive, wild grey beard, as it was when we met. The card was his insurance, as he told me, and his way out: 'Yeah, they [the French police]

checked me three times. If you don't have a card they take you to their office and ask you questions. And I need the card to get the money.'

He came to the day centre most days and checked in with his *assistant social* [social worker] almost every week: 'When can we go to the bank and get my money?' He only needed a French bank account to resume communication with the Dutch government about his pension; with his identity card and the address that Freedom provided for him in the form of a pigeonhole, the matter could progress quickly. Walter was very keen indeed: 'When I get the money, I can leave.' However, he was dependent on the help of his *assistant social* in order to reopen the bank account. Months passed during which we waited for the right document to arrive from the Netherlands, confirming Walter's pension payments. He grew increasingly impatient and annoyed with the 'system' and its representatives – but he wouldn't give up; he relentlessly chased me and whoever else he could get hold of at Freedom's day centre – volunteers and staff alike.

Just as Walter's days were filled with continuous walking, his struggle to get his money involved continuous hustling, perpetual asking, demanding and trying. Eventually, it paid off. I was with him and his *assistant social* when the letter arrived from the Netherlands – he was to be paid €900 per month until the end of his life – and when his bank account was reopened, allowing him to receive the payments.

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Like Walter, many of the people I encountered on the streets of Paris during my two years of ethnographic fieldwork between 2014 and 2016 were actively struggling, trying to achieve small goals, such as getting an appointment with their *assistants sociaux* to go to the bank, or bigger and more future-oriented ones, such as accessing their pensions. Although, according to official statistics,[1] the majority of the approximately 30,000 homeless people in Paris were living in temporary accommodation (e.g. hostels, hotels, emergency shelters), most of my informants were roofless according to the ETHOS (European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion) categorization of the European Federation of National Organizations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA): 'people living rough [with] no access to 24h accommodation / no abode' and 'people staying in a night shelter' (Edgar et al. 2004; FEANTSA 2006: 1). In France, this sub-group of homeless people is called *sans-abris* [without shelter]. These people have neither a permanent shelter nor an income; they are most affected by mental health issues and drug and alcohol addiction and they are least supported and engaged with by charities and other sources of help (Laporte et al. 2015; Laporte and Chauvin 2010; Grinman et al. 2010; Hodder, Teesson and Buhrich 1998). In early 2019, about 3,600 people were identified as *sans-abris* in Paris.[2]

Following on from my London investigations, I studied the daily lives of a loose group of about thirty *sans-abris* on the streets of Paris, following a core group of informants in a variety of different contexts. Unlike earlier work on

homelessness in general (Jencks 1995; McNaughton 2008; Desjarlais 1997; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009) and homelessness in Paris and France in particular (Declerck 2003; Garnier-Muller 2000; Zeneidi-Henry 2002), I found that my informants were actively struggling along (Desjarlais 1994), driven by the hope for a better life. Joel Robbins (2013, 2015) argues that anthropology in recent decades has involved a lot of what he calls an analysis of the 'suffering slot'. Within this 'anthropology of suffering', homeless people have been described as half-dead zombies affected by illness – both physical and mental[3] – as 'the useless' (Garnier-Muller 2000) and as 'dopefiends' (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009). Often, these descriptions seek to understand the reasons for homelessness, marginalization and exclusion through the lenses of inequality, structural violence and social suffering (Singer 2006; Bourgois 2002; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009). In *Naufragés*, the most prominent French example of this genre, ethnologist and psychoanalyst Patrick Declerck describes the 'clochardisation' [immiseration] of people on the streets of Paris in the 1980s and 1990s and the impossibility of their reintegration into any kind of mainstream society. My observations in Paris mirror many of these findings: although heterogeneous, homelessness is very much the product of a structural malfunction of the social, economic and welfare system – producing inequality and poverty, as well as a lack of affordable housing – paired with various events on the individual level – mental or physical disease and/or personal and family issues, such as divorce, death or domestic violence.[4]

But my aim in this monograph is not to follow this tradition, which has given rise to many important research documents and fostered understanding of the reasons for homelessness and the conditions homeless people endure on the street. I believe that focusing solely on the structural suffering, exclusions and marginalisations of the people thus affected is of limited value for at least two reasons: firstly, and most importantly, the people I met on the street did often not conceive of their situation as one of suffering. Paul Ricœur defines suffering as 'the reduction, even the destruction of the capacity for acting, of being-able-to-act' (Ricœur 1992: 190). I found that my informants were heavily invested in actions rather than being passively affected and pacified by structures. It is these active practices that I will describe in this monograph, following my informants' trajectory from living *sans abri* on the street through various institutions – day centres, needle exchanges, homeless shelters. Secondly, focusing on the negative aspects of the lives of people on the street naturally produces an incomplete picture. Homeless people, like recovering alcoholics, people affected by HIV or people suffering from poverty and restructuring programmes in developing countries, are not always consumed by their lack of resources, shelter, relationships and intimacy (Zigon 2005; Farmer 2005; Ferguson 2015). They do not even necessarily lack all of the above (e.g. Lenhard 2014; Lenhard 2017). I conclude from my two years of observations among homeless people in Paris that re-ascribing agency to them is crucial; they are, individually and in groups, independently and with the support of different kinds of *assistants sociaux*, actively striving to survive.

They use techniques of the self – practices that 'permit individuals to effect … operations on the[mselves] … so as to transform themselves … to attain a certain state of … happiness' (Foucault 1997b: 177) – to create better lives for themselves. While some of these struggles are focused on short-term survival (Part II), others are future-focused and longer term (Part III). This monograph is about these different practices and techniques.

Mapping on to Jonathan Parry and Maurice Bloch's (1989) classic distinction between short- and long-term transactional orders, I observed my informants engaging in two distinct but related sets of processes of home-making in different settings. The two spheres are differentiated by two temporally distinct affects of hope. On the one hand, almost all of the homeless people I met wanted to leave the street behind in the long term: to return to their families, find jobs, become French citizens. On the other hand, they were dependent on short-term, immediate survival on a day-to-day basis. As a result, they engaged in short-term, daily home-making activities, such as the labour of begging (chapter 1), the work of shelter-making (chapter 2) and drug taking (chapter 3). These shorter-term practices and processes are the focus in Part II of this volume.

But not all of these activities focused on immediate survival contributed to their long-term desires, plans and hopes. At times, 'the individual will become so embroiled in the short-term cycle that he will ignore the demands of the long cycle' (Parry and Bloch 1989: 27) – for instance, through an effect of addiction that I call 'drug time'. However, I describe these activities as part of the non-linear trajectory towards what my informants considered a better life, both now and in the future. In Part III, we follow my informants along this imagined longer-term trajectory or pathway, leaving the street often with the aid of different institutions. From the help they receive in harm-reduction facilities for substance users (chapter 4) and day centres (chapter 5) to arriving in mid-term accommodation (chapter 6), I will focus on how their longer-term hopes are unearthed, reflected upon and worked towards, mostly aided by different *assistants sociaux.*

This shift in focus to the activity, agency and 'techniques of the self' (Foucault 1997) of homeless people, as opposed to their suffering, is significant because the alternative observations I offer could inform policy decisions. I am providing a starting point for supporting people in their own practices and devising creative ways of dealing with homelessness. While I understand the often politically motivated decisions of earlier scholars of homelessness to portray the deeply negative aspects of living on the street, I am complementing that picture with glimpses of hope amid the suffering. As Cheryl Mattingly writes, with reference to her research on chronically ill people in the United States: 'Hope as an existential problem takes cultural and structural root as it is shaped by the poverty, racism and bodily suffering' (Mattingly 2010: 6). She goes on to argue that 'hope emerges as a paradoxical temporal practice and a strenuous moral project' and 'involves the practice of creating, or trying to create, lives worth living even in the midst of suffering' (ibid.).

In the following chapters, I will describe how my informants, such as Alex from Germany, Barut from Bulgaria or François from France, 'struggle along', in Robert Desjarlais's words, in Paris, unpacking what Mattingly calls practices of hope (Desjarlais 1994). Accompanying these individuals on the street and following them through the institutional landscapes of soup kitchens, drop-in centres, government institutions and homeless shelters, I will describe how they make choices that influence whether they have a better and freer life on and ultimately also off the street.

Street-Level Ethnography at the Gare du Nord

I spent two years in Paris between September 2014 and 2016 doing fieldwork with a loose group of about thirty homeless[5] people. Unlike most other ethnographic studies of homelessness both in France (Garnier-Muller 2000; Declerck 2003) and internationally (Desjarlais 1997; Hall 2003), my starting point was the street; thus, my research mostly concerns people who are roofless and sleeping rough. I identified the Gare du Nord – Europe's busiest railway station, with more than 700,000 passengers per day – as my main field site for three interrelated reasons: it is a central site for homeless people both during the day and at night in Paris (APUR 2011); it is the first point of arrival (and departure) for many immigrants (Kleinman 2012, 2019); and the large number of travellers and tourists constitute a good source of begging money for homeless people (see chapter 1). A 2011 study by the Atelier Parisien d'Urbanisme (APUR) describes the homeless population at the Gare du Nord as highly diverse, but also a good approximation of the population captured by the national statistical study (APUR 2011; Yaouancq and Duée 2013): among the 600 people counted by APUR, many were immigrants from Iraq, Afghanistan and India, but there were also Roma; many had alcohol problems and struggled with *toxicomanie* [drug addiction]; most were single men.

For the first three months of my fieldwork, I spent my days and evenings walking around the area between Gare du Magenta in the east, Barbès in the west, Place de la République in the south and Stalingrad in the north, observing people whom I at first assumed and later confirmed were homeless. I only slowly started speaking to people whom I had seen several times at 'their spots', in part because my French was only just developing. My first contacts were members of a group that had formed around Natasha, a woman of Algerian descent in her sixties who had managed to amass an array of varied followers. When I first arrived, Natasha and her mostly male companions would always sit in the same spot opposite the main entrance to the Gare du Nord, just in front of the *Quick* fast-food restaurant. Natasha was one of the maternal figures I encountered in my fieldwork; over the course of two years, she introduced me to many other individuals, including Sabal, a Punjabi who became one of my main informants.

By following people like Natasha and Sabal on their 'mobility paths' (Wolch and Rowe 1992) through the city, I extended not only my network of informants, but also my field site beyond the direct vicinity of the station. It was also through Natasha that I first learnt about Freedom, the homeless institution running several drop-in centres, street tours and a homeless hostel, at which I spent many days volunteering during my two years. Although I got to know Carl, as well as other informants of mine, on the street, I followed him on a long trajectory: I observed him begging (chapter 1), but we also spent many hours at Freedom's day centre (chapter 5) and at a drop-in facility for people with alcohol problems (chapter 4). I even visited him during the winter of 2015 in his hotel room, sponsored by the city of Paris, and went with him on his first day at a new shelter in early 2016 (chapter 6).

My approach to the field as a fluid site that was defined by the routines and daily processes in which my informants engaged produced a varied image of what homelessness looks like in Paris. I observed what rooflessness is – being, and particularly sleeping, on the street – but also how people were dependent on working *with* institutions such as Freedom – in day centres, on street tours, in vans distributing risk-reduction material to drug users – and what being on the *inside* of institutions does to people in, for instance, homeless shelters (chapter 6). However, this fluidity also came with certain problems. On the one hand, the lack of structure in my approach to the field left some parts of it undiscovered. I had only very little contact with women on the street; only three of my core group of around thirty informants were female. Not only do women often navigate the social care system more quickly, but there are also more institutions focusing on supporting women in their efforts to move away from the street (Passaro 1996; Russell 2011). In France, only about 5 per cent of *sans-abris* were women in 2016 (Seuret 2016). On the other hand, like children – often called 'jeunes en errance' [wandering youngsters] (Pimor 2014) – homeless women are more likely to be invisible and inaccessible on the street, making them harder to include in ethnographic research.[6] For similar reasons, I was not able to engage with Roma people, who are very prevalent on the streets of Paris; the language barrier made communicating with them complicated and they were mostly part of closed social groups, unwilling to engage with outsiders (Messing 2014). To address the question of language briefly, I spoke a mixture of French, German and English with my informants. In this monograph, I sometimes quote the original language used for clarity, but I always provide my own translation. All my field notes were taken either in English or in French, which I translated into English for my field journal as soon as possible. While many of my informants were (at least originally) migrants, I did not engage with many Syrian, Iraqi, Afghan or other more recent refugees (Sanyal 2017; Freedman 2017). Their geographies of daily life, as well as the support they received, differed widely from the ones I was engaged in with my homeless informants. Different NGOs and government institutions to the ones with which I volunteered were involved in helping refugees, mainly with their legal and health problems.

The fluidity of my own role[7] in the field – anthropologist, friend, volunteer – also gave rise to uncertainty. Negotiating transparency and my own position while constantly switching between different roles further complicated my responsibility to protect marginalized research participants (Lee 1993; Power 2002). On the one hand, my position as a volunteer for several organizations gave me credibility beyond the volunteering context, making it easier to engage people; on the other hand, I had to be careful to make my position clear in order not to abuse the trust of my informants. As social workers and volunteers often act as gatekeepers for research on vulnerable populations, it was beneficial for me to become such a gatekeeper (Goode 2000). But I deemed it important to avoid what might be described as semi-covert research[8] and repeatedly informed the people I engaged with of my identity as an information-gathering researcher.[9]

The equal treatment, anonymity and security of my informants were always of the greatest importance. I observed many criminal acts – the sale and consumption of drugs, the theft of goods, violence – that made it particularly important for me to protect the identities of the people I worked with (Lee 1993; Denzin 2009). For that reason, I never filmed anything, nor did I take audio recordings of any of the homeless people I encountered (Esterberg 2001: 73). Only the interviews with experts – mainly social work professionals at the institutions in which I volunteered – were recorded and transcribed. Notes were my main form of data generation; they were usually taken 'after the fact', with the result that many of my quotes are not verbatim (ibid.). In addition, I have given all of my informants pseudonyms and some of their biographies have been changed slightly in order to protect their identities further. To guard my own personal safety in the field, I made sure to mostly stay in public spaces with my informants, to not get involved in any criminal activities myself and to mostly avoid being with high or aggressively drunk people. For the same reasons, I never slept outside or on the street.

Homelessness (Research) in France: Definition Problems

André Gueslin's historical overview helps to put homelessness in France into its wider historical context (Gueslin 2013). The original idea of the *pauvres errants* [poor wanderers] dates back to the Middle Ages, when homeless people were demonized and mainly received only religious aid. From the fifteenth century onwards, a repressive penal system centred on what were called *hôpitaux généraux* [mental and poor people hospitals] not only labelled *vagabonds* and *mendiants* [beggars] as delinquent, but also made it easier to institutionally exclude them. The 'good poor' were those who wanted to work. Poverty became a crime in the legal statutes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially with the penal code of 1810. A *vagabond* could go to prison for ten to thirty days if he (or she) was without home, work and

resources. The notion of the *sans domicile fixe* (SDF) first arose in the nine-teenth century, but became commonplace in the 1980s after the establishment of an even stricter and more comprehensive system of restricting homeless people through the BAPSA (*brigade d'assistance aux personnes sans-abri* [assistance unit for homeless people]) and early homeless shelters, such as Nanterre, which is described in Declerck's (2003) famous ethnographical study. SDF were defined as people who sleep on the street or privatized public space and are dependent on assistance (Gueslin 2013: 407).

Only in 1994, with the change of the legal code, is there evidence of a radical rethinking of how to deal with homelessness in France. Begging and *vagabondage* were removed from the list of crimes; they could no longer be punished with imprisonment. But homelessness has continued to be seen as a phenomenon that needs to be pushed into the suburbs and away from city centres on the basis of excuses such as health risks. Around the time the legal code was changed, however, media and public awareness shifted, giving rise to a wealth of NGOs and organizations, such as the Restaurants du Cœur and Emmaüs, which support the population of SDF. In the early 2000s, the govern-ment followed suit and introduced its own financial support system. The RMA (*Revenu minimum d'activité*), the RSA (*Revenu de solidarité active*) and the RMI (*Revenu minimum d'insertion*), established in 2003, 2008 and 1988 respectively, provided a minimum, regular income to long-term unemployed people for the first time. These changes in how homelessness is viewed in France slowly influenced how homelessness was defined.

Today, the official definition for a homeless person provided by the French statistical institute (INSEE) is based solely on the person's shelter the previous night: a person's status as homeless, according to the 2016 INSEE definition, is based on their being in a temporary hostel or a space that is not supposed to be inhabited (the street, emergency accommodation).[10] Similarly, in 2008, the UN Statistical Division defined two categories of homelessness, roughly mapping onto the differentiation between roofless (people on the street) and homeless (people living in shelters or temporary accommodation) (OHCHR 2008). Even the European homeless organization FEANTSA's lauded and widely adapted ETHOS definition ultimately only includes thirteen different types of inadequate housing, from roofless to overcrowded situations, and does not take into account any other circumstance of homelessness beyond the sleeping location (FEANTSA 2006).

The definitions above – which are mostly focused on the absence of some-thing – mirror Edwin Heathcote's description of life on the street as the ulti-mate absence of home: 'we fear the idea of homelessness, it means a life on the streets, of not having a place to sleep, to eat, to be. Our home is our base, a place that roots us to the earth, to the city or the landscape; it gives us perma-nence and stability and allows us to build a life around it and within it' (Heathcote 2012: 7).[11] Instead of focusing on place alone, I propose the idea of home and subsequently homelessness as connected to a continuous process of the *making* of home.

In reference to her research on students establishing their first homes after leaving their parents' houses, Irene Cieraad conceives of home as exactly this kind of ongoing process:

> reinventing home is an ongoing process of linking the present to the past and the future. It entails not only remembering past homes but also projecting future homes. Away from home, whether traveling, migrating or living in lodgings, one becomes more aware of the main of the home one has left behind, temporarily or for good. (Cieraad 2006: 99; 2010)

Also introducing a temporal dimension that I will further develop in subsequent chapters (chapters 1 and 6), I follow Cieraad by emphasizing home-making. The focus on activity, routine and practice is more in line with an anthropology of the good as distinct from the suffering. Seconding critiques of home as defined solely by its functions and standardized, socially defined structure (Douglas 1991; Veness 1993), the notion of home as a process allows me to zoom in on the active struggles to make a home – such as the act of shelter-making (chapter 2) or the act of earning money by begging (chapter 1). It allows us rethink and enrich the category by providing ethnographic examples of home (making) on the street as a creative activity (rather than passive suffering).

It was only in 2015 that the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) admitted the problems I outlined above regarding the purely negative definition of homelessness as the lack of (adequate) housing (Human Rights Council 2015: 4, 5). The inclusion of the more positive view of homelessness as also involving being active and surviving, 'work[ing] hard to establish and build homes', as the HRC puts it, coincides with my observations on the streets of Paris and provides another anchor and motivation for the complementary view I seek to establish in this monograph.[12]

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The historical lack of attention paid to certain aspects of homelessness is not confined to the abstract, international level of bureaucracy, but is also evident in accounts of homelessness in France. More narrative-based accounts such as Ann Webb's or Hubert Prolongeau's provide a vivid picture of a single homeless life in Paris (Webb 2012; Prolongeau 1993). Webb, for instance, describes in detail issues that my informants struggled with, too: accepting one's homelessness (chapter 1), the influence of the social worker (chapter 5) or the prevalence of drug and alcohol issues on the street (chapter 3). Like George Orwell's (2001) classic work, however, they are neither analytic nor structured; rather, they are merely anecdotal and, as such, are only of limited value for academic scholarship.

An important canon of work focuses on attitudes towards homeless people and the relationship between homeless people, the public and the state. Most recently, Marie Loison-Leruste (2014) and Stéphane Rullac (2005) considered

the idea of a 'culture of homelessness' in France and – on the basis of deviant studies – the exclusion of homeless people from public space and opinion. Rullac (2005) goes on to explore ethnographically the Samu Social, the biggest support provider for homeless people in Paris. As I mentioned before, such institutional – as opposed to street-based – studies are very common in France.

Declerck's classic account of the emergency shelter at Nanterre is only the most well-known example of such a study. Yann Benoist (2009) updated Declerck's study twenty years later, focusing particularly on how the groups of visitors have changed and comparing the shelter to a total institution (Goffman 1991). More medically influenced – and often policy-driven – work has been conducted on mental health institutions for homeless people, particularly in Paris (Marpsat 2007; Kovess and Lazarus 2001). Pascal Noblet (2014) studied the Enfants de Don Quichotte, another organization that specializes in providing support for homeless people; Corinne Chaput-Le Bars and Arnaud Morange (2014) recently examined the successes and problems associated with the French variant of housing first (*lodgement d'abord*), comparing it to its Canadian predecessor; Pascale Pichon (2014) conducted a study of the SIAO, something every applicant for temporary housing has to go through, comparing it with the equivalent systems in the UK and Switzerland (see chapter 5).

I depart from the above studies in at least two respects: firstly, my initial focus was the street; the institutions included in this study – the day centre, the 'drug van', the homeless shelter – were part of my informants' daily geography, accessed mostly while continuing to sleep rough. Secondly, I was mainly interested in the activeness of my informants, rather than institutional intricacies. Institutions only feature insofar as they have a crucial impact on my informants' practices. In the French literature, two studies, in particular, served as starting points for me: Djemila Zeneidi-Henry's elaboration of how homeless people make 'their' city in Bordeaux and Anne Garnier-Muller's study of homeless people making a life in Paris (Zeneidi-Henry 2002; Garnier-Muller 2000). In both studies – despite their often more geographical focus – the ethnography of the street plays a strong role. The guiding question for both authors seems to have been similar to my own: how do homeless people actually survive?

The common thesis in most of the French accounts – as well as in the most prominent international accounts of homelessness – is that homeless people want to leave the street behind because they suffer. What I observed in Paris supports this thesis, but also adds an important dimension that I describe as the focus on home-making. Most of my informants were working – to different degrees – on leaving the street in the longer term, but the prospect of and hope for this eventuality was supplemented by shorter-term daily home-making activities on the street. As I will describe in detail in the next chapter, 'Frame', which links hopes and home both in the long and short term, my informants were, in Desjarlais's words, 'struggling along', that is, approximating certain aspects of home on the street on a daily basis and also taking small steps towards the bigger hope of leaving the street.

Many of these activities are related to a view of life on the street not only as one of suffering but also as one of creative engagement with one's surrounding and conscious strategizing, in Mattingly's sense.[13] As Mark W. Flanagan argues with reference to his homeless informants with addiction problems, many 'viscerally experienced hope … hope was experienced in deeply emotional ways and thus assigned meaning' beyond the pessimistic 'creature living' usually assigned with living on the street (Flanagan 2012: 57). It is in this sense that my informants were working on creating a better life.

A Better Life on the Street

Robbins (2013) characterizes anthropology since 1980 as focused on the 'suffering slot'. Reframing the commonplace earlier analyses of the anthropological subject as 'other' or 'savage', new studies of trauma, violence and colonization brought an understanding of the universal experience of suffering to the fore (ibid.: 453). The anthropology of social suffering also extends to medical anthropology, where narratives of individual chronic pain, loss, trauma and structural violence are linked to problems in the collective structure of society (e.g. Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2003; Farmer 2004; Biehl 2005). In the literature on homelessness, similar issues come to the fore in accounts such as Declerck's *Naufragés* and Philippe Bourgois and Jeff Schonberg's *Righteous Dopefiend*. Bourgois and Schonberg explicitly describe the symbolic violence of public health outreach as unfair; the physical suffering of 'being cold, wet, filthy, hungry, and exhausted' through detailed ethnographic accounts; the gendered suffering of, for instance, mothers of homeless children; the de facto apartheid in the American labour market and the influence on children of the lack of a father, to give just a few examples.[14] These descriptions, although graphic at times, are subtle and don't have an air of pornographic voyeurism to them; however, they often stop there, with the suffering.

C. Jason Throop (2015) deals with the issues associated with writing about suffering slightly differently in his ethnography of the Yapese communities of Micronesia. While the Yapese are struggling with historical suppression by various forms of colonial rule – struggling to overcome past suffering (*gaafgow*) – their daily life also revolves around trying to be happy (*falfalaen'*): 'Suffering was thus generally deemed virtuous by local standards to the extent that it helped to orient individuals, families, and communities to future horizons of possibility and past legacies of effortful sacrifice. In so doing, suffering defines extended horizons of experience, and accordingly gives rise to possibilities for hope' (ibid.: 57). For the Yapese, happiness and suffering ebb and flow, often appear in quick succession and are both always limited and precarious, for instance, during hard work.[15]

It is this kind of synthesis and the sensitivity to both sides of the coin – suffering and efforts to be better – that I document in this volume, too. In his analysis, Robbins points out a tripartite way forward in what he calls the

anthropology of the good: new studies advancing this agenda could either focus on value, morality and well-being (Laidlaw 2014; Zigon 2011; Lambek 2010; Robbins 2007); empathy, care and the gift (Throop 2007; Mol 2008; Winance 2010) or time, future and hope (Bear 2014; Crapanzano 2003; Green 2012; Mattingly 2010; Miyazaki 2006). The chapters in this volume can be related to these three fields, but first and foremost follow the logic of what is often called the 'homeless pathway' (Clapham 2003; Clapham et al. 2014), from surviving on the street to moving into longer-term housing, supported by various institutions along the way. Although this path was not linear for most of my informants, many did see it as a motivation for achieving their own hopes. The clear and structured way forward, as presented, for instance, by their *assistant social*, was part of my informants' narrative of hope regarding a longer-term home.

Starting with the theoretically grounded 'Frame' chapter, the question of how people 'successfully create a good beyond what is presently given in their lives' (Robbins 2013: 458) is a thread that runs through the chapters in this monograph. Part of Robbins's third categorization of the new 'anthropology of the good' – time, change, hope – the question of how to create a better situation over time becomes central, particularly in my informants' dealings with support institutions. Mirroring what Jonathan Lear describes as radical hope or 'hope for revival' (Lear 2006: 95), my informants were forced to experience a different kind of hope, more immediate and short term, geared towards survival. Lear describes – mostly from a philosophical point of view based on certain historical and ethnographic snippets – how the North American Indigenous tribe the Crow lost every idea of sense – and the good life – when they were confined to reservations and when buffalos were going extinct in their territory. Based on a conception of happiness and value that centred on being courageous, their structure in life lost all sense when being courageous – hunting, defending one's territory, etc. – lost its meaning. Lear describes how the Crow went on to 'find new ways' (ibid.: 64), 'giv[ing] up almost everything they understand about the good life' (ibid.: 92).

For my informants, a somewhat comparable situation arose on the street. Having lost almost everything – social relations, material stability, employment, often also the familiar context of a home country or city – a reorientation was necessary in order to survive. In the short term, the radically new environment of being roofless on the streets of Paris – in a different country, for many – demanded the generation of a similarly radical hope. I describe the great significance of daily and short-term home-making activities – home as a process – in the lives of my informants.

At the same time – and here my account differs from Lear's – most of my informants had hopes about their (future) home, which were often connected to memories of an idealized past home country. They were hoping for a future remaking of their remembered home. These hopes often fitted into collectively perceived (and idealized) ideas of home as my informants would have known it in the past. In this sense, their long-term hope was not radical, but

conformed with a life off the street, a life that many of them had previously known. This kind of hope was based on an often nostalgic longing for an idealized past, but was further encouraged in the various institutions, described in Part III, that figured strongly in my informants' lives.

In Part II (chapters 1, 2 and 3), directly related to Robbins's first field of value, morality and wellbeing, I focus on daily short-term home-making practices as part of the project to create a better life. It is this part of my observations that relates most to a better understanding of ordinary ethics (Lambek 2010; Das 2012). How exactly do people earn money through begging and accessing the infrastructure of the city? Chapter 1 is concerned with the particularities of what I call, following Hannah Arendt (1998), the labour of begging: being visible and invisible at the right moments, flipping the script of one's narrative (Carr 2011), performing neediness and deservingness and building up networks of regulars are all part of the hopeful labour of making money through begging. Like begging, shelter-making can in this sense be described as an often reflected-upon (hence ethical) act of daily home-making. Thinking through the ideal location, the complications arising from the securitization of public space ('anti-homeless architecture'), the actual making of different types of open and closed shelters – from *abri ouvert* and *abri couvert* to *abri fermé* (Pichon 2002) and ultimately also the competition for space – were all part of the processual (and often cyclical) character of shelter-making for my informants.

Chapter 3 and 4 focus on the role of drugs in my informants' lives. I portray what are perceived at times to be the positive effects of drugs and alcohol – forgetting, the perception of control – as part of my informants' daily, short-term home-making activities. As I described elsewhere, drugs are often seen as *giving* something while demanding a big sacrifice from the user (Lenhard 2017). For people like Barut, the substances were initially a means of taking back control over their minds and hence part of their short-term home-making. Only in the longer term did the negative influence mostly associated with addiction develop. All three of these activities – begging, shelter-making and taking drugs – can be described by what I will theorize as 'short-term hopes for' and 'practices of' home-making marking in Part II. These activities are more relevant to immediate survival than a long-term project, while also being necessary for the possibility of the latter, which was formed more directly in the institutional context to which the attention shifts in the third part of the volume.

The observation of everyday home-making practices also permeates chapters 4–6, in which Robbins's second axis – care and the gift – plays a more important role. Starting in chapter 4, institutions and their care-giving functionality become more prominent. Through long-term fieldwork with both a needle-exchange organization, which also provides heroin substitutes and other medication, and a drop-in centre for homeless people with alcohol addiction run by Freedom, I observed the flip side of the short-term focus on drug-taking for my informants. The care provided in both these institutions often came in the form of physical care – for the body – as well as the mental

space for and exercise of thinking (reflectively and consciously) about the future. It is here that I first observed my informants giving in to support and switching their focus from the short to the longer term.

In chapter 5, I describe the ways in which my informants engage with a homeless day centre run by the Catholic organization Freedom through various core activities: street tours, activities in the *salle* [main room in the drop-in centre], using the showers and washing machines and the crucial one-to-one social work encounters. While the street tours – classical outreach work, following the same route every week, visiting homeless people at their spots – were carried out with *mains nues* (empty hands) as an almost free (but imperfect) gift, accessing the drop-in centre, with its coffee, physical warmth and security and the playing of games, followed a logic of 'silent' sharing (Widlok 2013). Taking a shower was reserved for the most destitute and using the washing machine was restricted to a handful of people per day – here, conditionality was stricter. The sought-after one-to-one social work was really only provided to those who demonstrated a willingness to engage and change (Mauss 2001; Sahlins 2004). In these encounters, a *projet de vie*, a concrete way forward, was formulated that provided guidance towards a better future.

However, even being admitted to temporary shelters, such as Valley of Hope (VoH) – the primary focus of my sixth and last chapter – did not guarantee that a better future would materialize. Drawing mainly on ethnographic observations from three months of living at the *centre d'hébergement de stabilisation* that I call VoH, the structures and routines proposed by staff and *bénévoles* constituted what Morgan Clarke recently called rules as technologies of the self (Clarke 2015, following Foucault 1997). Intricate rules – no drinking inside the centre, how to clean the bathroom, how to use the bins, when and where to shop, when to eat together – were often implemented by signs and meetings. In this sense, the environment of the shelter was, in Clarke's words, 'ruly'. Following rules and repeating routines established a practical project aimed towards achieving the good life (leaving the street context behind, advancing on the ladder towards independent housing). The idea was that the rules became part of the person by being learnt or relearnt. Conflicts occurred, however, as a result of the tension between 'being a good shelter resident' and other desires related to drinking and socializing. For some inhabitants, learning the rules of *habiter ensemble* [living together] at Freedom's shelter Valley of Hope was not easy – or wasn't desirable – so that the project of the good life achieved through the rules as techniques of the self often collapsed anew. Hence, many of my informants went backwards on their pathways, at times back on to the streets, where their struggles would mostly continue.

The aim of moving through the different contexts within this volume, whilst always remaining aware of the ambiguities of the practices, routines and techniques both used by my informants and proposed by members of staff and volunteers in institutional contexts, is to complement the idea of homelessness often exclusively described in terms of suffering. I am presenting a version of how my informants, aided by various kinds of *assistants sociaux*, struggled

towards a better life both in the short and longer term. As Robbins claims, the 'nature of the good lives is different in different places' (Robbins 2015: 229). In this book, I am describing its nature in a place where no good life is expected at all.

Notes

1. In 2012, 28,800 people in Paris were officially defined as *sans domicile* [homeless] by the French statistical agency, an increase of 84 per cent from 2001 (Pierre-Marie et al. 2014). Most of these people were male (59 per cent), single (67 per cent) and foreign (55 per cent) (ibid.: 2). The large majority (>85 per cent) lived in temporary accommodation (30 per cent in hotels, 15 per cent in social apartments, 41 per cent in homeless shelters (Yaouancq and Duée 2013).
2. Paris.fr 2019; this number is likely comparable to the number of *sans-abris* when I conducted my research between 2014 and 2016.
3. See Declerck 2003, particularly his own illustrations and drawings.
4. See Neale 1997, Peressini 2009, Fitzpatrick 2005.
5. Henceforth, I will use 'homeless' and 'roofless' interchangeably, as most of my informants belonged to the wider category of homelessness, as well as the narrower one of rooflessness.
6. See Fournier 2017, Herschkorn-Barnu 2014. This quasi-absence of women also resulted in me being more or less unable to observe gender relations and sexuality. None of my main informants – to my knowledge – engaged in any kind of partnership or had regular sexual interactions. Sex work – despite being known as a common form of money-making on the street – was not visible to me during my fieldwork.
7. I am further reflecting on the boundaries of these different roles in a book chapter in *Home* (Lenhard and Samanani 2019), with a particular focus on my home-making as a researcher.
8. Ward (2008) uses this term.
9. Denzin 1968; Israel and Hay 2006; since illegal activities – such as drug dealing and theft – were only a marginal focus of my study, I was able to avoid covert methods of obtaining data.
10. INSEE 2016: 'une personne est qualifiée de "sans-domicile" un jour donné si la nuit précédente elle a eu recours à un service d'hébergement ou si elle a dormi dans un lieu non prévu pour l'habitation (*rue, abri de fortune*)'.
11. See also see Seele 2011: 108.
12. By focusing on this, however, I am importantly not implying that my informants were *not* homeless, but merely stressing their activeness and agency in a situation of poverty and desolation.
13. Through notions of, for instance, resistance and endurance, certain studies of (social) suffering think this activeness through at least partly (see Kleinman, Das and Lock 1997). They usually stop short of going beyond the notion of suffering and the role (globalized) institutions have in this.
14. See specifically in Bourgois and Schonberg 2016: 107, 113ff, 135, 159ff, 188ff.
15. See also Hage 2003: 20.