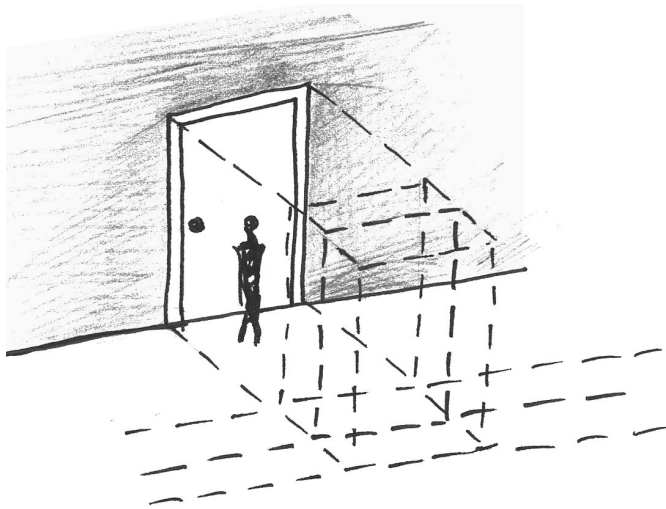


Places of belonging

An investigation into places of belonging of
displaced people in the Netherlands



PLACES OF BELONGING

An investigation into places of belonging of displaced people in the Netherlands.

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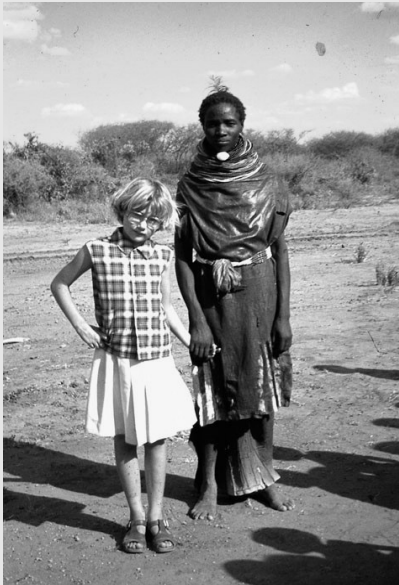
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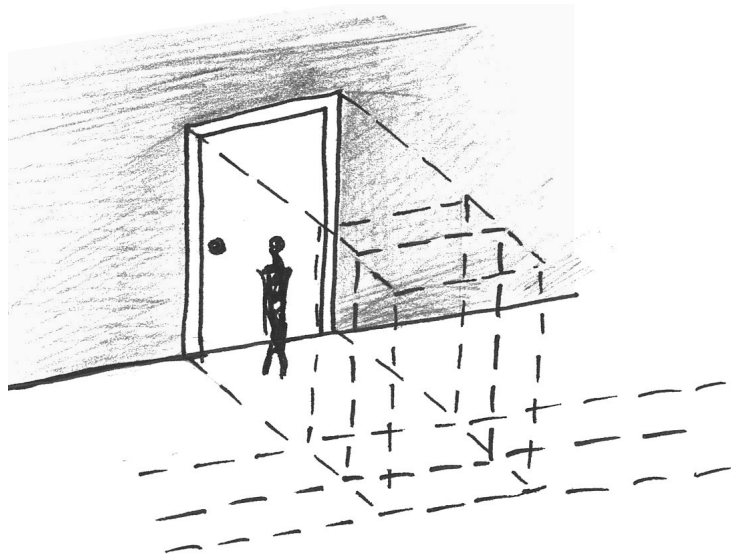


Simone and Roza holding each others hands. *Digitized dia* taken by Hans Visser, Eldoret Kenya, 1979.

Preface

In the image on the left, you see a young girl holding the hands of a woman from Turkana, a region in Kenya. This young girl is my mother. She grew up in Kenya. My granddad was an anthropologist researching a group of people in this region. The woman standing next to my mother, Roza, helped the family in the house with cleaning and caring for the children. Even though Roza's culture and appearance were entirely different from my mother and her family, my mother felt safe and comfortable with her. She belonged to my mother's place and sense of home. At the age of ten, my mother and her family moved back to the Netherlands. However, on returning to her home country, my mother felt displaced. The Dutch culture and habits were different from what she was used to.

This story sparked my fascination with what it means to belong somewhere. When you look at the definition of belonging from the individual's perspective, the focus is often on the experience of belonging, described as a 'sense of belonging' or 'place attachment' (Gilmartin, 2017). However, how do you achieve this sense of belonging in a threshold space between two worlds, your old and new life? This research dives into that question by exploring places of belonging for displaced people in the Netherlands.



Liminality. Line drawing on paper created by the author, 2022.

INTRODUCTION

Central in this work are displaced people in the Netherlands. As shown in the foreword, feeling displaced is something everyone can experience. However, this work focuses on the displaced forced to leave their home country due to war, persecution, natural disasters, the political situation etc. (Oxford Dictionary, 2023). Synonyms for the displaced people in this book are refugees, asylum seekers, status holders and newcomers. However, during this research, I learned that each word is only correct for a specific moment in the procedure. Therefore I used the more general term displaced people.

The life of a displaced person takes place on the threshold between two worlds; the country of origin and the country they hope to settle in. This threshold can be defined as a liminal phase. A liminal phase is a transitional phase in which a person has been separated from their former context but has not been rooted into a new structure or place (Turner, 1967). Within the liminal phase, there is an interaction between aspirations and opportunities to move in a new set of social-spatial structures (Kleinhans et al., 2022). In the case of displaced people, it is uncertain if these aspirations and opportunities become real and, if so, when. The door to the former life has been closed, but the prospect of a new life is still vague and uncertain (figure on the left).

This book investigates displaced people's places of belonging during this liminal phase. At this moment, there are around half a million people in the asylum procedure in the Netherlands. What exactly does this asylum procedure look like? In which places do people live during each part of the procedure, and what elements hinder or support people's feeling of belonging somewhere? With the help of these questions, this research answers the question, 'How do displaced people in the Netherlands create a sense of belonging in the places they live?'

The book is a portrait of eight liminal spaces of displaced people: eight places of residence of people for people somewhere in the asylum procedure. The locations are placed in order of how someone goes through the procedure. The first two locations in the book are locations that asylum applicants go to when they arrive in the Netherlands, the Juridical Centre in Schiphol and the application centre in Ter Apel. The second two locations are spaces that would ideally not exist; they are emergency shelters created to fill the gap between needed and available shelter spaces. The following two locations are examples of asylum seekers centres, and the last two locations show where people at the end of the procedure could live.



Map of the Netherlands showing where the researched locations are.
Created by author, 2022.

Besides documentation of these eight spaces, this work contains short texts about different subjects connected to displacement and the asylum procedure. The first short essay defines home or the feeling of belonging in general. After that, there is a brief overview of the asylum procedure. At the end of the book, you can find a comprehensive overview. From then on, short texts and conclusions are interwoven between the different locations to thoroughly understand displaced people's lives in the Netherlands.

The research builds mainly from an ethnographical approach. This means that the relationship between a specific group of people and their physical enclosure was researched. Fieldwork and semi-structured interviews were the two main methods in this ethnographical research. I conducted fieldwork on six of the eight locations. The choice of locations was partly based on accessibility for me and partly on its role in the process. I chose four of the eight locations because I knew somebody that lived or worked there, and two locations were found by researching other places or visiting events for refugees. The first two locations in this book are essential for a complete image of the procedure because every asylum applicant in the Netherlands passes through one or both. Unfortunately, I could not visit these two spaces. I created drawings, took photographs, and wrote descriptions to document these locations. No people are portrayed in the visual documentation of the spaces due to privacy reasons. Besides that, I think that the way these threshold spaces look and are designed and used stands separate from the specific person living there. I conducted semi-structured interviews (six in total) with residents of these locations; in some locations, I also had informal conversations. The goal of these interviews was to gather personal stories and interpretations.

Literature studies were conducted to supplement the ethnographic research. It provided information and context about the asylum procedure and the current refugee situation in the Netherlands. Besides papers and books about displacement, sources like podcasts, documentaries and news articles were used.

So the structure of the work that unfolds after this introduction consists of a short essay about the feeling of belonging, followed by the documentation of the eight different locations along the timeline of the asylum procedure. They are divided into four themes to organise the locations: 'The Process,' 'Shelter without Shelter,' 'Living in Liminality' and 'Moving On'. Interwoven between the documentation of the locations are short texts that complement the investigation into places of belonging of displaced people in the Netherlands. The book concludes with a coda, which consists of a conclusion and a reflection on the theme of displacement. As an appendix to the book, you can find an overview that combines the locations with the procedure. You can see this overview as a summary of the places a displaced person in the Netherlands lives.

The importance of Home

“What does it mean, to live in a room? Is to live in a place to take possession of it? What does taking possession of a place mean? As from when does somewhere become truly yours? Is it when you’ve put your three pairs of socks to soak in a pink plastic bowl? Is it when you’ve heated up your spaghetti over a camping-gaz? Is it when you’ve used up all the non-matching hangers in the cupboard?”

(Perec 1997, p. 24)



In this short text, George Perec questions what it means to live in a room. It shows that a roof over your head does not give the feeling of home by itself. But what does? It is hard to clearly define the 'feeling of home' or the 'sense of belonging' since everyone has a different perception of it, shaped by experience and ideology. This chapter explores the definition of the feeling of home or the sense of belonging and explains why it is essential to feel at home somewhere.

It is difficult to explain exactly what the feeling of belonging or, in Dutch, 'het 'Thuisgevoel' means. According to the dictionary, to feel at home somewhere means to feel comfortable and relaxed (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023). Nonetheless, this definition does not cover the meaning of the feeling of belonging entirely. Duyvendak, a Dutch

sociologist, does research into the feeling of belonging. According to him, the feeling of home somewhere is a so-called 'speechless' or 'silent' emotion. With this, he means that it is an emotion that is difficult to explain for most individuals (Duyvendak, 2009). The word 'home' is easier to define; it is the house or place where someone lives, especially with their family (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023). Dutch dictionary adds that a home is where a person feels good (Prisma, 2017).

Even though it is hard to define what it means to feel at home somewhere, it is essential to take this emotion seriously. Duyvendak states that when we place the word 'not' in a sentence (not feeling at home or not belonging somewhere), we get a powerful emotion that we can explain (2009). The feeling of belonging is an existential need for everyone. We need it daily

but only notice this when the sense of belonging is missing (Pek, 2015). Besides that, different studies show that there is a positive connection between feeling at home somewhere and people's mental and physical health. When people feel like they belong somewhere, they are more relaxed, have more positive emotions and feel safer. When people do not feel at home or feel that they do not belong somewhere, they perform less well and have to deal with mental health problems like depression more often (NAAM, in podcast klaarwakker).

Many factors influence the feeling of belonging to a place. During the rest of this book, conclusions will be made about what elements do and do not help in getting a feeling of belonging in places of residence of displaced people.

THE PROCEDURE

The first two locations in this book are described best by the theme 'the process'. In both places, asylum applicants must undergo several steps to decide if they can stay in the Netherlands. Most asylum seekers that arrive in the Netherlands travel over land. In that case, they ask for protection at the application centre in Ter Apel (location 2). However, people who arrive over outside borders, meaning by plane or overseas, ask for protection at the Juridical Center Schiphol (location 1). The name for these two locations is Centrale Opvang Locatie (COL) [Central Asylum Location]. The COL is where the asylum procedure starts.

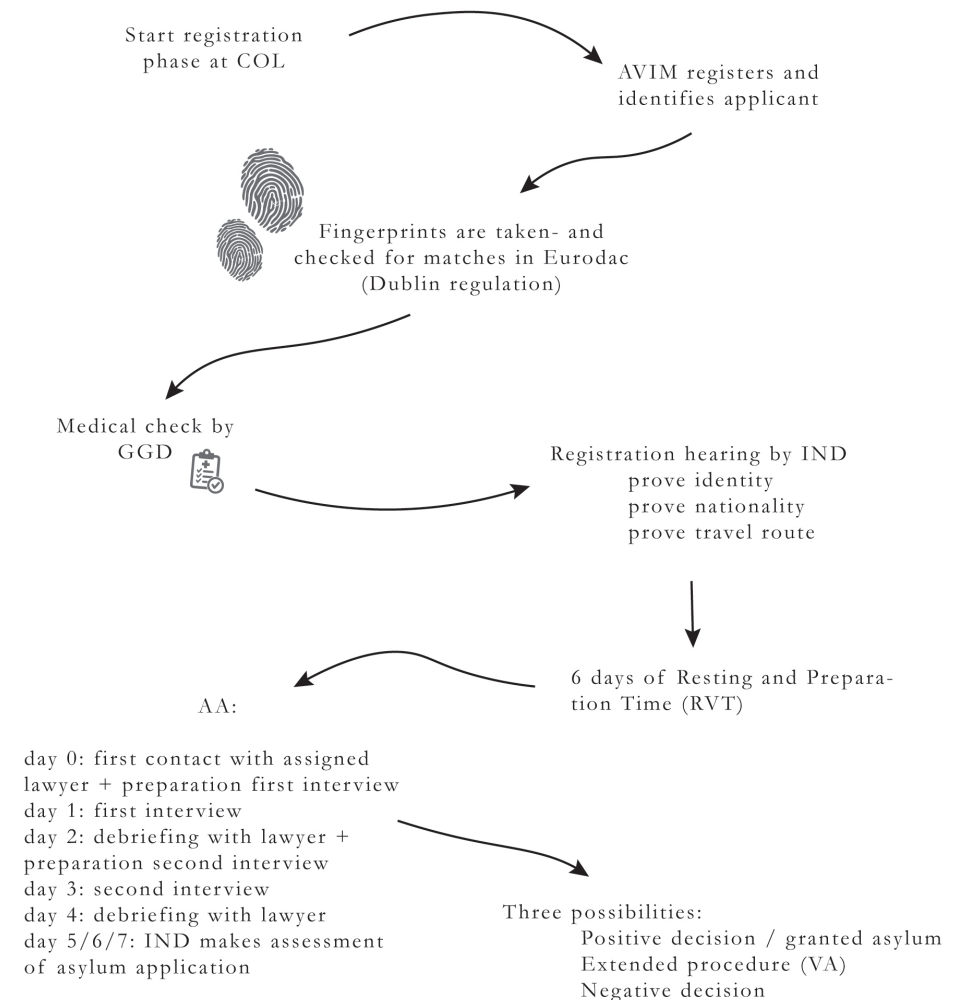
Here the Afdeling Vreemdelingenpolitie, Identificatie en Mensenhandel (AVIM) [Department of Aliens Police, Identification and Human Trafficking] registers and identifies the applicant. For this, the AVIM checks applicants' fingerprints for matches in Eurodac to supervise the Dublin Agreement. The Dublin Agreement is an agreement that decides which country is responsible for the asylum procedure of a specific person. Since the agreement was revised in 2014, it states that refugees may only request asylum in one European country, the first country they arrive in. If the AVIM finds a fingerprint match, they send the applicant back to the country where they are registered first (Amnesty, n.d.). The Dublin Agreement expires 18 months after the first registration in a country. Some people stay in countries illegally until they can start a new

procedure.


The next step in the process is the medical check by the Gemeenschappelijke Gezondheidsdienst (GGD) [municipal health service] followed by the registration hearing from the Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst (IND) [immigration and naturalisation service]. During this registration hearing, the IND checks if someone can prove his identity, nationality and travel route. After this, the asylum applicant gets six days of Rust- en Voorbereidingstijd (RVT) [resting and preparation time], before moving to the Algemene Asielprocedure (AA) [General Asylum procedure]. A lawyer is assigned to the applicant during the AA. They will help the applicant prepare for the two interviews that follow. After five to seven days, the IND makes a decision.

The three possible decisions are: 1. Positive, the applicant is granted an asylum residence permit for a certain period, mostly five years. The applicant moves to an asylum seekers centre (AZC) (locations 5 and 6)) and stays there until the municipality offers them a house. 2. The IND needs more time to make a decision. The applicant goes into the Verlengde Asielprocedure (VA) [Extended Asylum procedure]. The applicant moves to an AZC. 3. The application is rejected. In that case, the assigned lawyer can write a statement to go into higher appeal. If the decision is still negative, the IND will help financially to get the applicant back to the country of origin.

The procedure



**Justitieel Complex
Schiphol**

A photograph of a snowy forest. The ground is covered in a layer of snow, and numerous thin, bare trees stand in rows. The trees have light-colored bark and dark, intricate branch structures. The background is a dense wall of similar trees, creating a sense of depth and repetition.

State of Being, Surroundings of the Detention centre Schiphol. *Photograph taken by Aniek Stekete, 2017.*



State of Being,
Detention centre
Schiphol. *Photograph
taken by Anoeke Steke-
tee, 2017.*

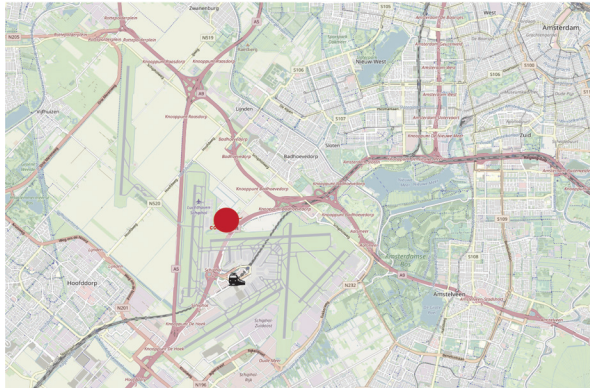


State of Being,
Detention centre
Schiphol. *Photograph
taken by Anoeke Steke-
tee, 2017.*

Asylum applicants from outside Dutch national borders start their application procedure at the Justitieel Complex Schiphol (JCS). The government places them in detention; the asylum applicant is not yet officially admitted to the Schengen-territory. Only after going through the border procedure does the IND decide whether they get access to the Netherlands. People that arrive from another Schengen country, underaged children, families with children, and sometimes vulnerable people are directly sent to Ter Apel for the procedure. (Reesink and Bruin 2013)

When someone seeks asylum at the JCS, they will be registered. After that, the RVT starts, followed by the AA. If the asylum application is accepted, the applicant receives a temporary residence permit and moves from the JCS to an AZC (locations 5 & 6). However, if the asylum application gets rejected, the applicant is transferred to another section of the building for deportation. Sometimes, it can take up to a year for the outcome of their appeal process or final deportation. (Blankevoort and van Driel 2016)

The JCS opened in December 2012. In this building, drug criminals (*bolletjesslikkers*) are locked up after security detains them at Schiphol airport's custom control. However, in a different but identical-looking section of the building, asylum applicants and



Location JCS on the map. *Image created by author, 2022.*



Air photo from JCS. *Photograph, unknown, 2016.*

people whose applications got rejected or outlawed people are held. The only difference in the treatment of the asylum seekers and delinquents is that the regime is slightly more flexible: they are allowed to leave their cells more often and have more rights to "airing" outside. Besides that, sometimes activities are organised for them (Glas & Llorens, 2020).

All asylum seekers that come to the Netherlands via Schiphol airport go through the asylum procedure in captivity, meaning they are not allowed to move freely through the complex. Nobody knows how long they have to stay here. It can be two days, three weeks or seven months. From 9.30 pm until 8 am, the inmates are locked in their rooms. Most cells are designed for two people. The cells are well-lit and clean but furnished sober. The only thing in the room is a bunk bed with a mattress and pillow; both lined with a stretchy fabric that is easy to clean. Sometimes, there is a small desk with a chair as well. (Glas and Llorens 2020)

Freedom is one of the most elementary rights in our existence. According to the Dutch Constitution, one shall not be further limited in freedom than strictly necessary. (Artikel 15: Vrijheidsontneming - Nederlandse Grondwet, n.d.) Within criminal law, detention is even considered the heaviest sanction that can be applied. However, asylum applicants have broken no law; they have done nothing wrong. These people are simply people without Dutch citizenship. However, detention is applied by default to asylum applicants that arrive via Schiphol.



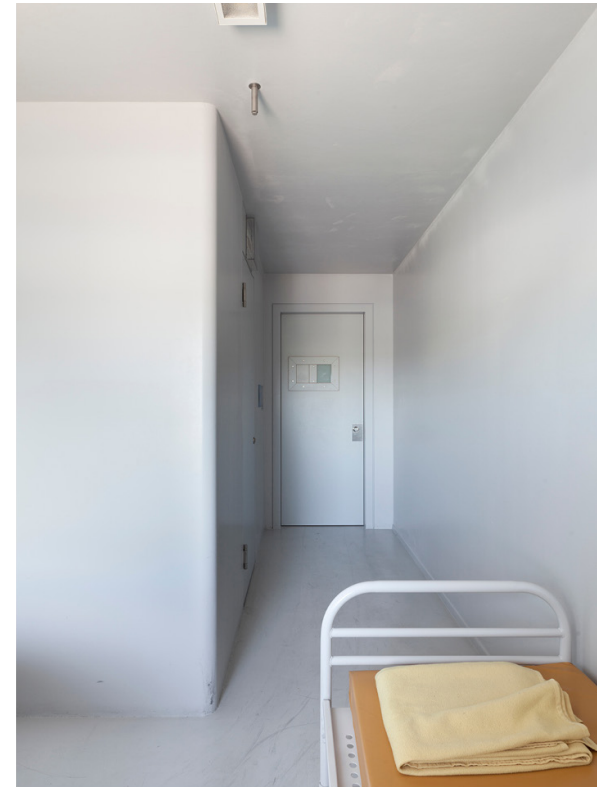
Refugee Detention
Center 'air cage'.
*Photograph taken
by Robert Glas in
Justitieel Complex
Schiphol, 2015.*



Refugee Detention
Center 'air cage'.
*Photograph taken
by Robert Glas in
Justitieel Complex
Schiphol, 2015.*



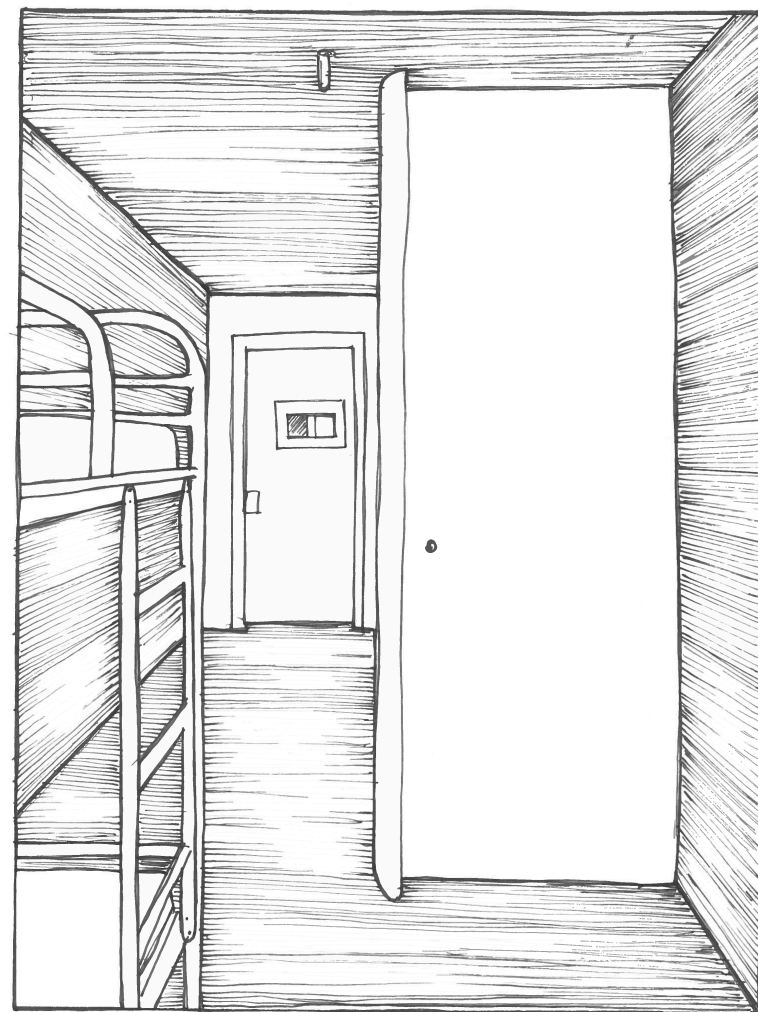
Refugee Detention Center 'cell for solitary confinement'. *Photograph taken by Robert Glas in Justitieel Complex Schiphol, 2015.*



Refugee Detention Center 'cell for solitary confinement'. *Photograph taken by Robert Glas in Justitieel Complex Schiphol, 2015.*

“Het ritme tussen deze muren is anders dan dat van het leven buiten. Alles is vertraagd. De kleur van dit betonnen fort met de bewolkte lucht erboven schijnt als een grijze lamp op alles wat we doen. Alleen wanneer de zon heel even doorbreekt of als het nieuws rondgaat dat iemand in contact wist te komen met een verloren gewaand familielid, schiet er een sprankje hoop door de gevangenis.”
 - Alejandra Orteç, pagina 31

The rhythm inbetween these walls is different than from life outside. Everythings is slowed down. The colours of this concrete fort with the cloudy sky above it, shines on us as a grey lamp, on everything we do. Only when the sun breaks through or when news is going around that somebody found contact with a lost family member, a glimmer of hope emerges through the prison.
 - Alejandra Orteç (translated by the author)



Interior of cell in detention Center Schiphol. Line drawing on tracing paper created by the author, 2022.

Aanmeldcentrum Ter Apel



Staircase of Application Centre Ter Apel. Photograph taken by Christian Richters, 2001.

When the number of asylum applicants in the 1990s grew, the length of the application procedure also increased. Therefore application centres came to life. The goal of these places is to make a first shift in the number of applications and to prevent people who have no chance of being accepted from living in uncertainty for a long time (Wortmann, 2002). The last remaining application centre (AC) is the AC in Ter Apel. Anyone seeking asylum in Ter Apel and stepping over the AC's threshold becomes a voluntary prisoner. They accept that different institutions will help them but also will control and check them. The final verdict decides the asylum applicants' future and can be drastic. At the same time, arrival in Ter Apel means a chance for a life in the Netherlands (Wortmann, 2002).

In the AC in Ter Apel, the so-called 48-hour procedure takes place. The procedure consists of several steps to decide if the asylum application can succeed. This 48 hours procedure consists of three phases that are strictly separated from each other to prevent reciprocal information transfer from happening. Besides waiting rooms and dormitories for asylum seekers, the application centre consists of interrogation rooms, offices and rooms for jurists, translators and security. The building typology is between a courthouse, a waiting room and a shelter (Havik, 2001).



Ter Apelervenen –
Portrait of a road.
*Photograph taken by
Frank Penders, 2010.*



Ter Apelervenens –
Portrait of a road.
*Photograph taken by
Frank Penders, 2010.*



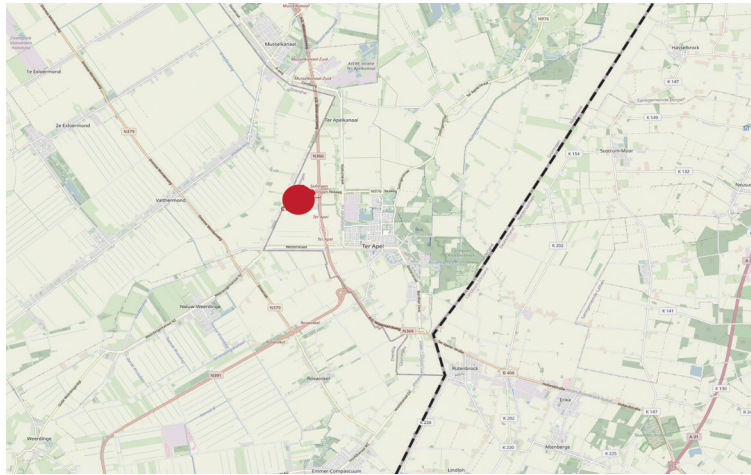
Ter Apelervenens –
Portrait of a road.
*Photograph taken by
Frank Penders, 2010.*



Ter Apelervenen –
Portrait of a road.
*Photograph taken by
Frank Penders, 2010.*



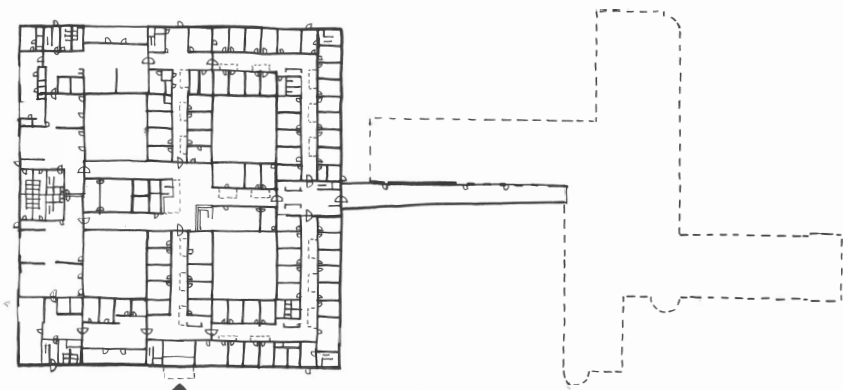
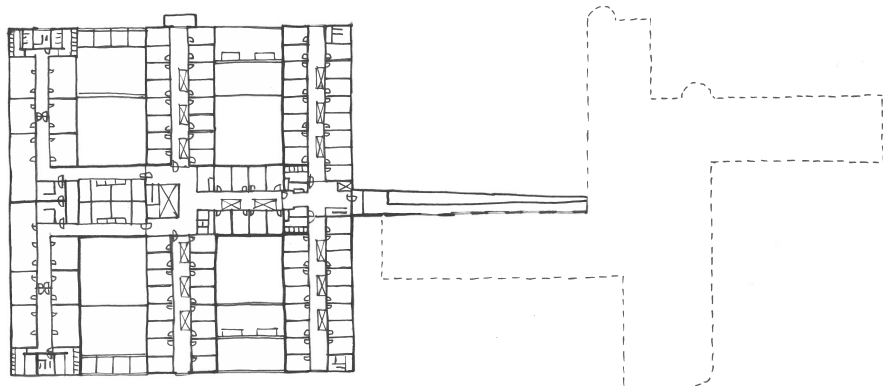
Ter Apelervenen –
Portrait of a road.
*Photograph taken by
Frank Penders, 2010.*



Location AC Ter
Apel on the map.
*Image created by
author, 2022.*

The AC is settled on remote peatlands on the furthest corner of the Eastern border area of Groningen and Drenthe. The application centre stands on former NAVO grounds far from the built environment. It is a more than 20-minute long walk from the nearest bus stop to the AC. The road to the building is long, barely maintained, and so narrow that cars must pull over to pass each other. (Penders, 2010) The photo series of Frank Penders' 'Ter Apelervenens – Portrait of a road' depicts the unpredictable stream of pedestrians along this lonely stretch of asphalt.

The building is strongly oriented inwards—the long stretched facades on the exterior show little of the processes behind them. The application centre was designed in 1999 as a monastery typology with four large courtyards. These courtyards provide the building with the needed exterior space and daylight so that there is no need for an asylum applicant to leave the building for several days. The dormitories above the waiting rooms were divided into small units to avoid large-scale bedrooms. It is striking that you can find the warmest colours and materials in the corridors between the waiting and interrogation rooms. The building should not give hope but provide a safe shelter for the short application time.



Floorplans AC Ter Apel. Pen drawings on tracing paper created by author, 2022.



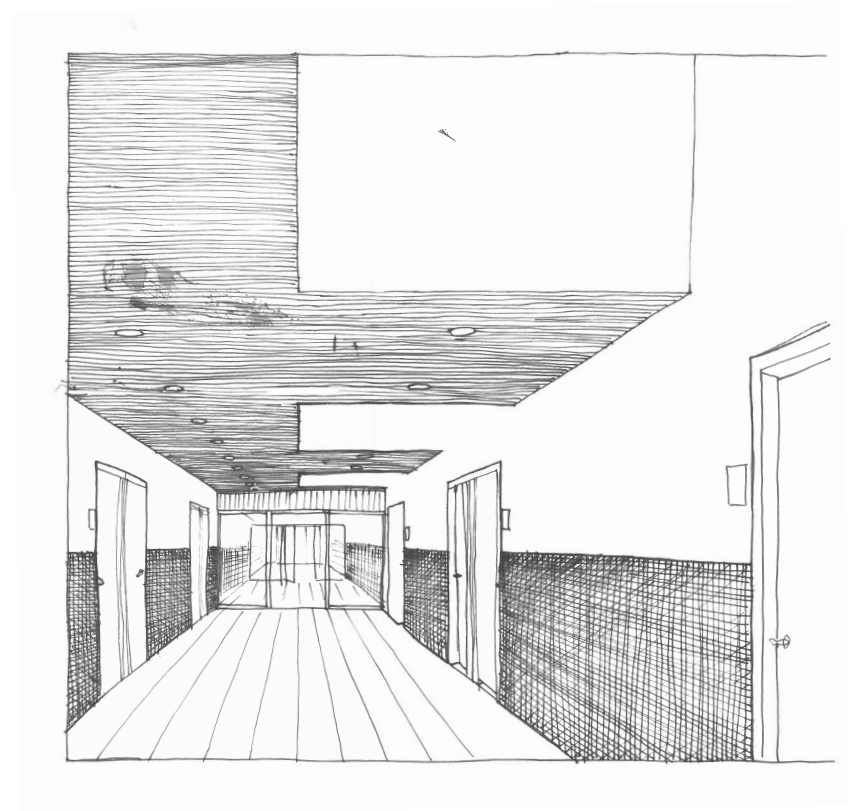
State of Being,
Hearing room,
Immigration
Service, Ter Apel.
*Photograph taken
by Aniek Steketee,
2017.*



State of Being,
Waiting room,
Immigration
Service, Ter Apel.
*Photograph taken
by Aniek Steketee,
2017.*

“Choosing to go to Ter Apel was really hard for me, but there I was treated just like a number”

- Woman (28) living on refugee boat



Interior AC Ter Apel.
*Pen drawing on tracing paper
created by author, 2022.*

CONCLUSION

It is hard to feel at home in the JCS and the AC of Ter Apel. Somehow, you could say this is logical because these spaces were not designed to feel like home; they were created to support the first steps of the application process. The places radiate that the emphasis is on the practicalities of the process instead of humanity. In most cases, asylum applicants only stay in these locations briefly, after which they are transferred to an AZC anywhere else in the Netherlands. Knowing that they will only stay in these locations for a short time and the hope that they can provide them with a chance to live in the Netherlands makes it more bearable to stay where they do not feel comfortable.

There is a connection between how easily you can leave a place and how comfortable you feel there (Pek, 2015). In both buildings, people are not allowed to move freely. This can give people the feeling of being trapped and that they are no longer in control

over their own lives. In the AC in Ter Apel, applicants move through the building with each step of the process; every night, they sleep in a different room in another part of the building. Because of this, people cannot set up a space for themselves. They must repack their belongings every time, making it hard to get familiar with the place.

Predictability is another factor that helps in the feeling of belonging; understanding your environment and the possibility to familiarise yourself with a place helps to get a sense of belonging (Van Balken & Staal, 2020). The number of abbreviations stands out during this phase of the procedure. COL, GGD, VWN and IND are just examples of all the three-letter words asylum seekers come across during their first days in the application process. You can imagine that these three-letter words only provoke uncertainty and confusion and do not help understand the space and, thus, the sense of belonging here.

“The message seems to be that whoever comes here has not arrived yet in the Netherlands, but in a transition zone, a threshold space, a kind of no-man’s land”. (Wortmann, p 41, 2002)

shelter without shelter

In the Summer of 2022, shelter places for asylum seekers were extremely scarce. Because of this, people had to sleep in front of the gates of Ter Apel. On the worst nights, 300 people slept outside. Without tents, without blankets, without anything to cover them. To solve this problem, the government of the Netherlands asked all municipalities to create temporary emergency shelters to host refugees for a short period. At first, the government asked to provide only the basics; a bed, bath and bread, meaning a sleeping place, a place to shower and three meals a day.

The municipalities responded to the demand by placing beds in empty factory buildings, renting

cruise ships, putting tents on festival fields etc. The following two locations are examples of these emergency shelters; one in Culemborg and one in Almere. People stay in these emergency shelters before their official procedure starts; from here, they have to go to the AC in Ter Apel again. The living conditions in these spaces are pretty basic. When they opened, this seemed like the right idea because the mandate of the emergency shelters was to be only open for a maximum of three months. During this period, the government would find a better solution.

However, the difficulty is that more than six months later, these locations are still open and needed more than ever. The government has not provided any solutions yet. At the same time, many of the locations have to close down somewhere in the coming months. As Spring is coming up, the festival fields are needed again for festivals, and boats are needed again for cruises in Summer. At the same time, new refugees arrived in the Netherlands. The problem is not solved yet and has only become more serious (Middel, 2023).

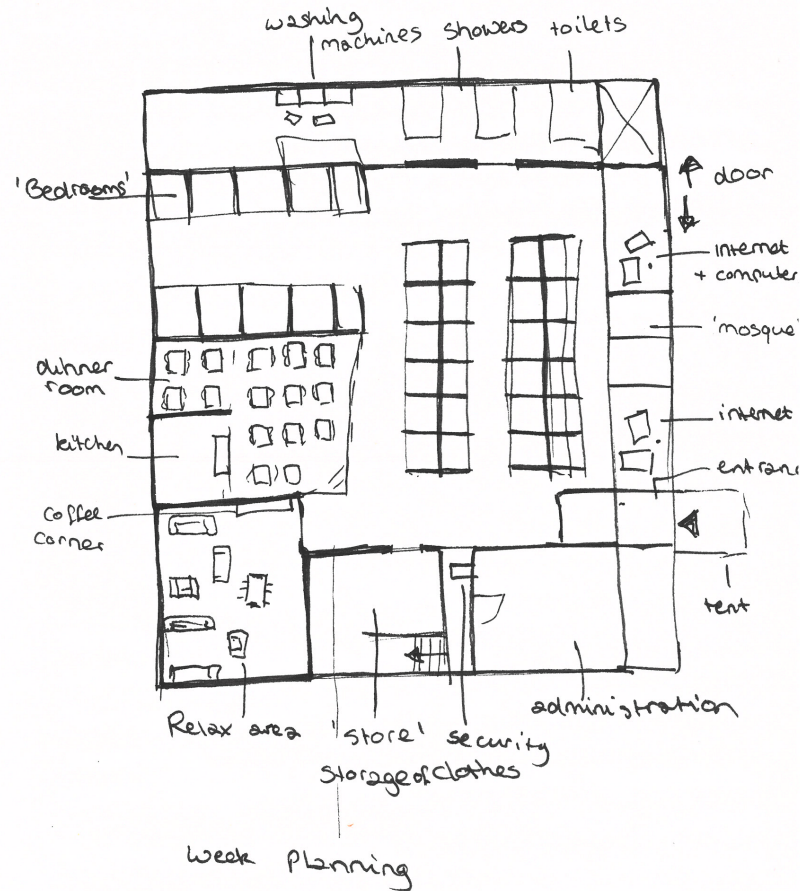


People sleeping outside in Ter Apel. *Photographs retrieved from NOS, Summer 2022.*

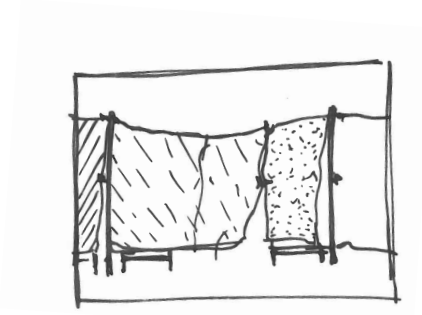
Emergency shelter Culemborg



Laundry 'room' in emergency shelter in Culemborg. *Photograph taken by author, 2022.*



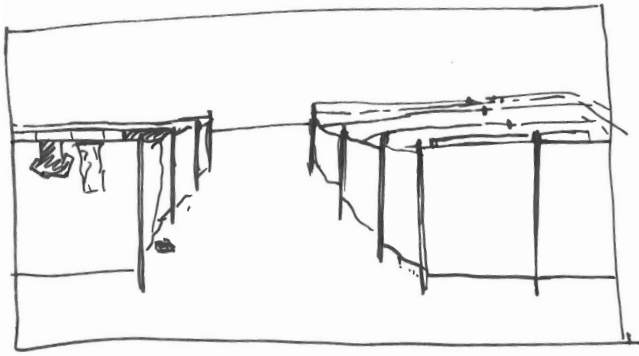
Sketch of floorplan emergency shelter
Culemborg. Pen drawing on paper created
by the author, 2022.



Blankets in front of
'rooms' to create more
privacy. Pen drawing on
tracing paper, created by the
author, 2022.

During the Summer of 2022, the municipality of Culemborg opened the emergency shelter at the Bellweg. The building consists of one big hall with some smaller office spaces connected to it. The total surface of the building is 906 m². Racupack, a company that produces packaging materials, commissioned the building in 2007. The building contained the offices and production spaces of the company. Because of the use of bubble deck flooring, a large open hall could be created, providing the building with flexibility. (van Kessel Bouw, n.d.)

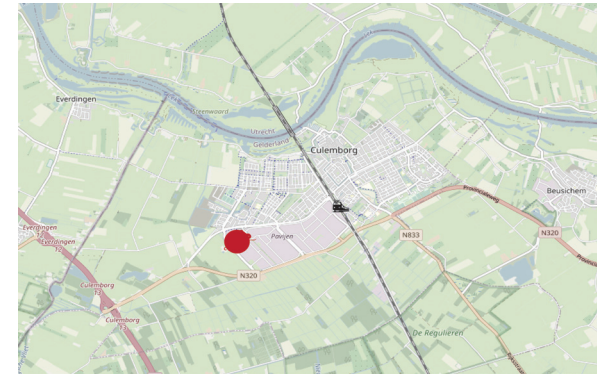
That the building is flexible has been proven. After the building became vacant, the GGD used the location for Covid tests and vaccinations. When the Covid pandemic weakened, the building was empty again, just in time to be equipped as a shelter. According to the destination plan, the building is a place for industry. Nevertheless, apparently, when it is temporary, it can also be a place where people live. At the shelter's opening in July 2022, the municipality of Culemborg set some conditions: medical healthcare and security should be provided, and people can stay here for a maximum of two weeks as "the space is not eligible for more than that" (van Schaik, 2022). In January 2023, six months later, the same people still live in the shelter without the prospect of change.



Blankets in front of 'rooms' to create more privacy. *Pen drawing on tracing paper, created by the author, 2022.*

At the moment, about 200 people live in the large hall. They come from different, often Arab countries. There are many families with young children and older men and women. Tiny rooms of about three by two meters are created inside the hall. Every room contains three bunk beds and a small block with lockers. The rooms are without a roof and door; they are enclosed on three sides by fences. Big pieces of cloth and old curtains are hung on the entrance to create privacy. In the beginning, this was not allowed because of fire safety. However, they found an agreement to give people some privacy; blankets to close rooms are permitted, but only if they start at least 50 cm above the floor. It is never silent in the hall, not even at night.

The residents do not have access to private living spaces or cooking facilities. Besides the big hall, they share one 'living room' with a big television, couches and a tennis table. This living room has a small counter for coffee and tea. A catering service provides breakfast, lunch and dinner three times a day. At these moments, volunteers come to help out as well.



Location emergency shelter in Culemborg on the map. *Image created by author, 2022.*

Even though the provided space is limiting and restricting, people have found ways to appropriate, adapt and inhabit the space. They created a computer area in the corridor to the right after entering, with a few tables, an internet router and power strips next to it. Besides the computer area is a small space used as a mosque. It is secluded from the rest of the hall with panels. Here people can take a moment for themselves to pray. In the corridor in the middle, a few men sit on chairs, watching tv on their smartphones, playing the sound from small Bluetooth speakers. Young children use the last corridor to play.

Residents are not detained in the shelter; they can come and go whenever they want. At the entrance of the building, asylum applicants have to show a wristband when they come in. It is half an hour's walk to the train station, and it takes about forty minutes to get to the city centre. The most significant part of the walk is along a busy road and the industrial area.



Drawing made by the children in the shelter. The drawing is placed on the fence that separates the dinner room from the rest of the hall. *Photograph taken by the author, 2022.*



Boxes containing clothes and shoes for the asylum seekers. Everything is ordered by size. *Photograph taken by the author, 2022.*



Wifi router standing in the dinner hall. *Photograph taken by the author, 2022.*



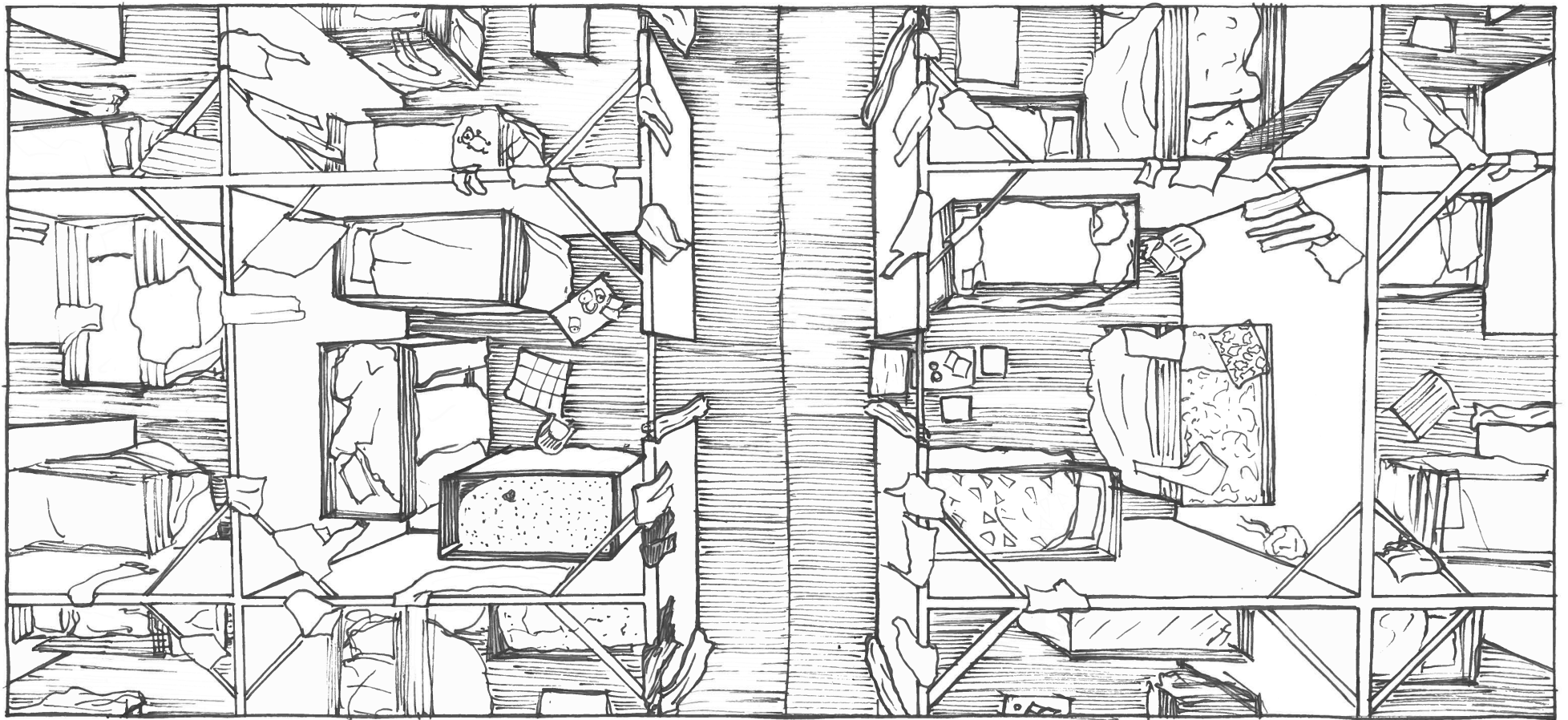
Rules and mealtimes. Everything is translated in multiple languages. *Photograph taken by the author, 2022.*



'Mosque' in the emergency shelter
in Culemborg. *Photograph taken by
Klaas Eikelboom, 2022.*




Bins in the dinner room. *Photograph
taken by the author, 2022.*



Top view of emergency shelter in
Culemborg. *Pen drawing on tracing paper*
created by the author, 2022.

without a roof, without a door
you always hear people talking, coughing, breathing
you always hear people doing whatever they do
it is never silent

Emergency shelter Almere

A photograph showing the interior of a long, empty corridor in an emergency shelter. The floor is covered in grey carpeting. The walls are light-colored, and the ceiling features a complex network of metal beams and pipes. At the end of the corridor, there is a set of double glass doors with a sign above them that reads "EMERGENCY EXIT ONLY". To the left of the doors, there is a white staircase. The lighting is bright and even.

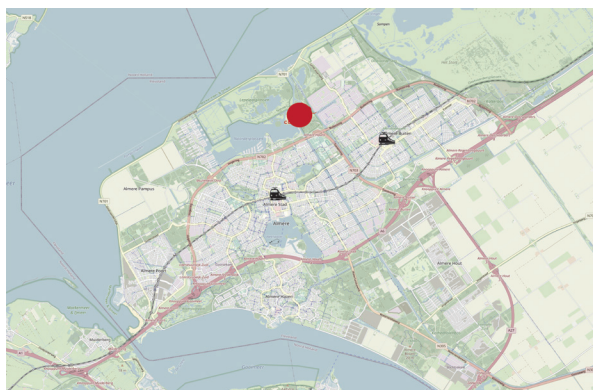
Interior of a corridor of the emergency shelter in Almere. *Photograph taken by author, 2022.*



At first, the shelter only existed of tents. *Photograph, unknown, October 2021.*



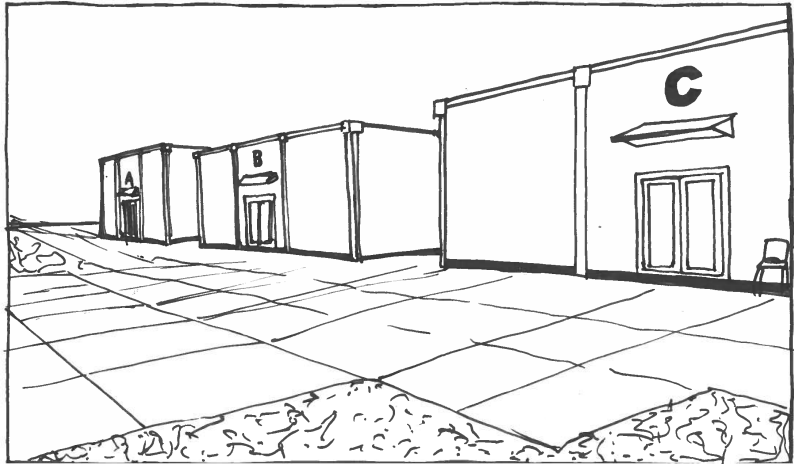
Emergency shelter now (in the back). In the front you see the regular AZC. *Photograph, unknown, November 2022.*



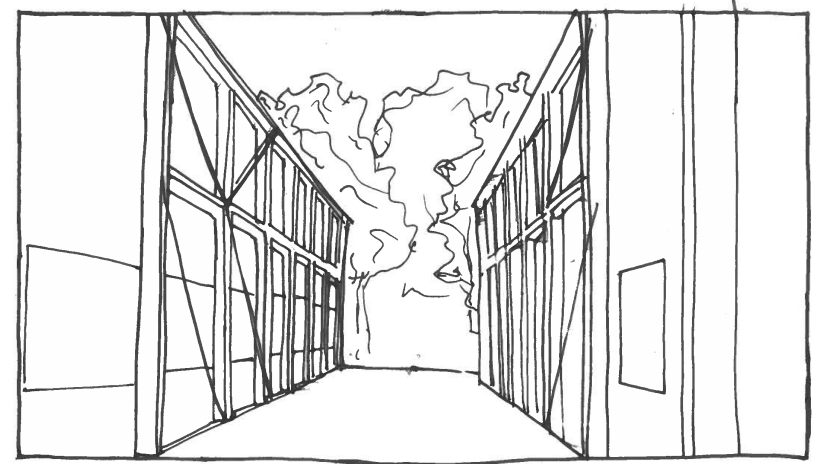
Location of the emergency shelter (and AZC) on the map. *Image created by author, 2022.*

In October 2021, the municipality of Almere opened an emergency shelter next to the regular Asylum Seekers Centre at the sporting parc Fanny Blankers-Koen. In the first place, the shelter existed of tents and was only meant to stay here for 12 months. However, those shelter places were needed more than ever as time passed. The shelter is still in use. However, fortunately, the tent structures have been replaced with more permanent settlements. The emergency shelter can host up to four hundred people.

The shelter consists of seven buildings named A up to F. The absence of proper names for the different buildings is only one indication of how much care and consideration was put into the design of the place. Buildings A, B, C and D are precisely the same and consist of bedrooms. All rooms are furnished the same; four bunk beds (eight beds in total), four cabinets with two parts that can be locked, two small tables, eight blue plastic chairs and one bin. Building E has supporting facilities like showers, toilets and a room with washing machines. Building F is the communal building. Here there is a big kitchen where people can cook for themselves, tables, chairs, couches and some entertainment like television and table tennis table. In building G administration and the COA (Central Organ for Asylum Seekers) has their offices.



The residential buildings of the emergency shelter. *Pencil on tracing paper created by the author, 2022.*



The space between the residential buildings. *Pencil on tracing paper created by the author, 2022.*



Laundry room. There is no space to sort your laundry or to hang it to dry. *Photograph taken by author, 2022.*



Kitchen. There are no personal belongings in the kitchen. *Photograph taken by the author, 2022.*



Bedroom. You can not look out of the window. People tried to create privacy by putting up blankets on their beds. *Photograph taken by the author, 2022.*



Bedroom. People put a fridge, stove and microwave inside their room so that they can cook for themselves. *Photograph taken by the author, 2022.*

The overall design of the shelter is desolate and empty. The laundry room has no space to sort your laundry or hang your clothes to dry. There is no place in the bedrooms to display your belongings except for the table you have to share with seven other people. The bed is the only two square meters of personal space. People tried to create more privacy with the help of curtains and blankets. The kitchen is only furnished with electric stoves on an aluminium counter. Low-cost and easy to clean. The kitchen is not equipped with pans to cook in. There are no plates, no cups, and no personal belongings of anyone.

All people living in these kinds of shelters deal with the situation differently. Some stay in bed or are in front of the television for most of the day to kill time. Exceptional in this location is that several people created small businesses. People hang mirrors on the wall in some corridors and the corner of the communal buildings. For five euros you can have your hair cut here. One man sells falafel and other Syrian food at the kitchen counter. Officially, the creation of small businesses like these is not allowed. However, the guards of this location tolerate it as they can also see that it helps some people keep hope.

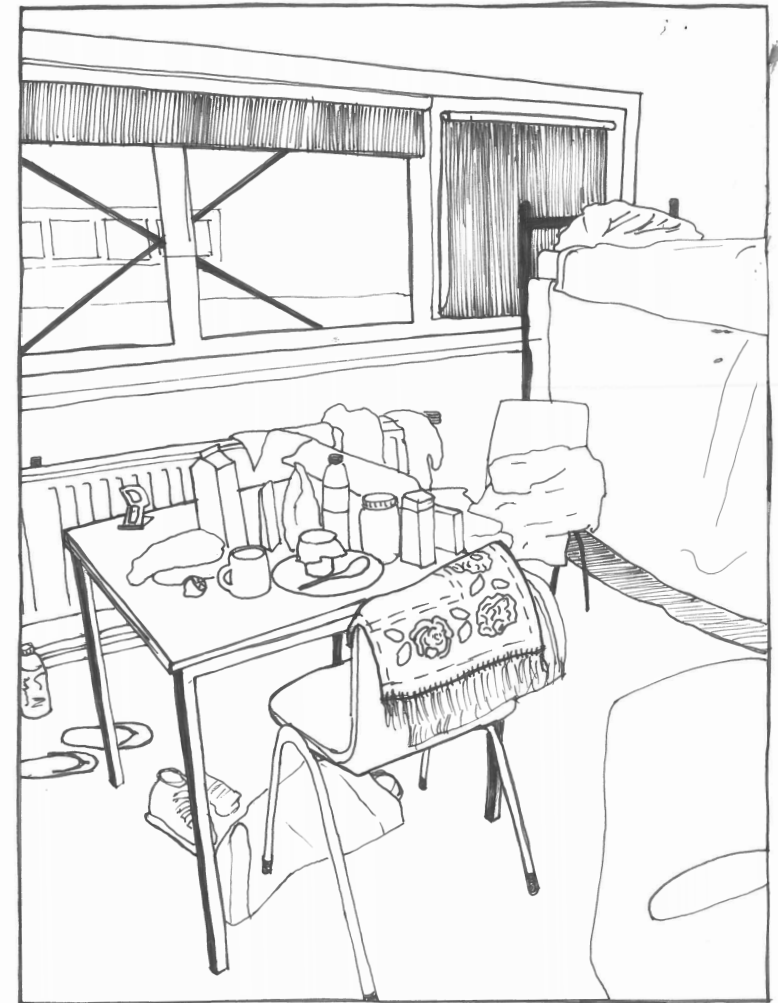


Table in bedroom in emergency shelter in Almere. *Pen drawing on tracing paper created by the author, 2022.*

Jenny Rumohr: “Not every empty building is designed to host people period.” (Breeze and Scott-Smith 2020)

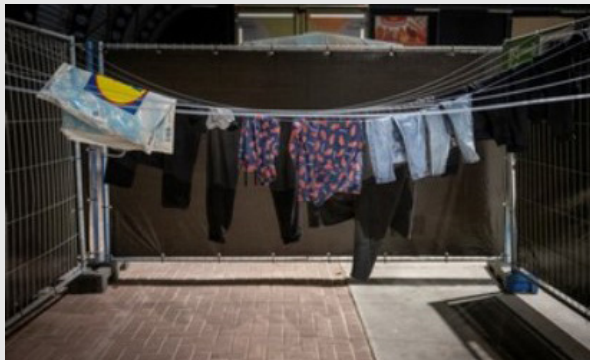
CONCLUSION

As mentioned, both locations were set up as temporary solutions. Even though this temporary turned out to be not so temporary, the places were not much improved. The locations are designed and furnished with little care on a pragmatic and large scale. That the different buildings in Almere are not named properly is only one demonstration of this. In both locations, there is only one laundry room, one common room and one kitchen or dining room, all to be shared by two hundred or four hundred people. Because there are only big spaces, it is difficult to create smaller communities with their customs and rules within the whole. Creating customs and rules with a group of people helps people feel belonging; feeling at home is a shared responsibility (Van der Ham, 2016).

Intimate and confined spaces provide a sense of protection and privacy and help in the feeling of belonging to a place (Van Balken & Staal, 2020 (p26)). In both of these locations, it is difficult to find privacy. The only place someone can withdraw from the people around them is the two square meters of their bed. And even that bed is in a room shared with at least seven, but in some cases, two hundred people.

However, despite the limited space, people in these locations try to make the best of it. People appropriate personal spaces and create a small amount of privacy with fabrics and blankets. Some people keep themselves busy by creating small businesses for food and hairdressers. At the Bellweg in Culemborg, a man started to teach English to other refugees in a spare corner of the hall. Most people living in these shelters keep the hope alive that after this, the process will go faster. Besides that, they are relieved that there is at least a roof over their head.

“The first moment my new roommate entered the space we were placed to live in, he tried to create an environment of privacy for himself. He took his bed to the end of the room and placed cupboards to separate us so that he feels that he has something private that belongs to him.” (Bembnista and Dalal 2021)



Images of emergency shelters in the Netherlands. *Unknown, 2022.*

living in liminality

When an asylum applicant passes through the application process in Ter Apel or the JCS, they are transferred to an AZC somewhere in the Netherlands. The Central Organ for Asylum Seekers (COA) provides and hosts most of these places. More than half of all municipalities have a shelter location for displaced people, with emergency shelters included even more. Even though there are so many shelter locations, they seem invisible if you do not actively look for them.

Refugee shelters and, with them, displaced people are hidden in the shadows of the cities. They are positioned on remote peatlands on borders like the application centre in Ter Apel. They are created inside empty factory buildings on industrial sites like the emergency shelter in Culemborg or behind highways and sports fields in Almere.

This phase of the asylum procedure can be seen as the liminal phase even more than the other phases. In an AZC, people are waiting for a decision about whether they can stay in the Netherlands. Or in the case that they received a positive decision already, they are waiting for the municipality to find them a house. During this phase, people are not allowed to work. They will only get access to Dutch lessons after they receive a positive decision. In this phase, people are on the threshold between having passed all the procedural steps and being able to start a life.

The following two locations are two examples of AZCs. They are an AZC in Almere and a refugee boat in Rotterdam.

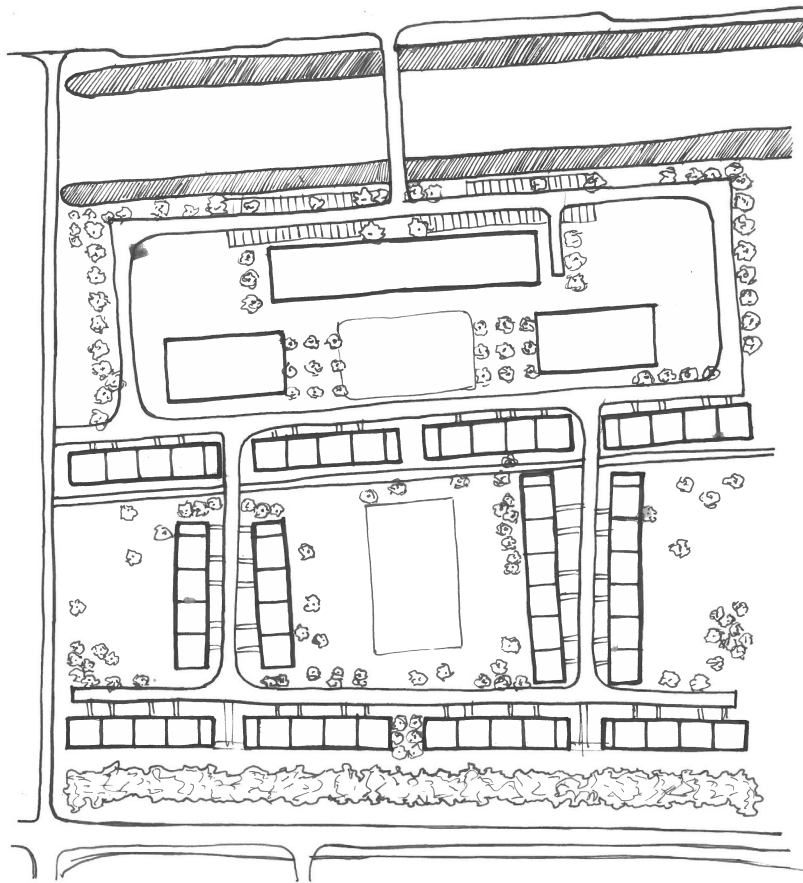
“After the process in Ter Apel, I thought it was done. However, then the endless waiting started. I am trying to keep hope but, at the same time, not allowed to do anything... I live an existence that is characterised by uncertainty, temporality and waiting without a perspective.”

– Woman (28) on refugee boat

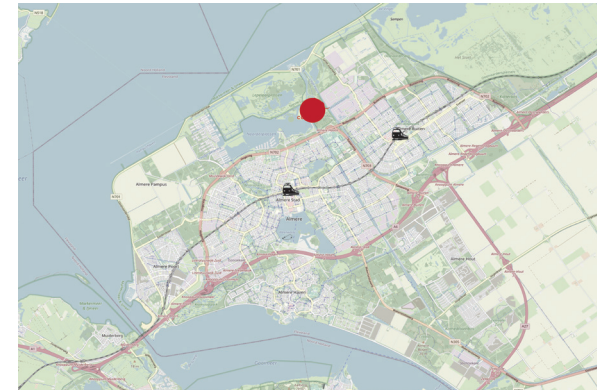
AZC Almere



Exterior of AZC in Almere.
Photograph taken by the author,
2022.



Plan of AZC in Almere. The three buildings at the top are the 'communal facilities'. All the other buildings are residences. *Pen drawing on paper created by author, 2022.*



Map showing where the AZC (and emergency shelter), are located in Almere. *Created by author, 2022.*

The asylum seekers centre in Almere opened in 2000. Between 2006 and 2010, the COA rented the spaces to different social organisations. At that time, few refugees were in the Netherlands, so the building was empty. The complex comprises twelve residential buildings and three other buildings around a small square. In these other buildings, offices of the COA, a library, some shared rooms and classrooms are located. In total, eight hundred people can live in this AZC. However, at this moment, an emergency shelter (location 4) is placed next to this AZC.

The residential buildings are two stories high and have apartments on the ground and first floors. You can reach the apartments on the first floor by a gallery. The exterior of the buildings looks clean. The facades are covered with brown panels. They look like timber boards from a distance, but they are made from plastic, a material that is resilient for a long time. In front of the residences are bike racks full of bikes of different sizes.



Square of AZC on the left and residences on the right. *Photograph taken by author, 2022.*

Het AZC is als een dorpje. De muren tussen de kamers zijn zo dun dat ze oren hebben. Niets blijft hier geheim. Vooral niet op een lentedag wanneer iedereen buiten is. Vandaag is het ook nog dinsdag, dus het kamp is vol.

- Alejandra Ortiz (p 173)

The AZC is like a little village. The walls inbetween the rooms are so thin that they have ears. Nothing stays a secret here. Especially not on days in Spring, when everyone is outside. Today it is Tuesday, so the camp is full.

- Alejandra Ortiz (translated by the author)

Every apartment houses eight people. Two people share a bedroom. When stepping into the apartment, it feels like you step into a temporary shed for construction workers; the thin floors and walls sound hollow. The radiator is working overtime, but at the same time, the window is open even though it is freezing outside. The kitchen smells like smoke, and the only things standing there are four plastic chairs and a small table with a few dirty cups.

Even though this location is meant for asylum seekers, most are status holders. Status holders are people who received a positive decision and are waiting for more permanent accommodation provided by the municipality. A lot of these status holders have been living in the Netherlands for a longer time. Meanwhile, they created a network of friends and family living outside the AZCs. Residents of an AZC are obliged to report themselves at the AZC once a week. If they do not, they lose the right to housing. Many people only visit the AZC once a week to get their stamp and live with friends or family for the rest of the week. This results in many rooms being empty most of the time while, at the same time, shelter locations are needed more than ever.

In the AZC, you have two types of people. Some people try to make the place their own by displaying their belongings and putting things on the walls. Other people treat the place as a stopover. Those people are already busy with their departure from the moment they arrive here. Why would you make the place feel more at home if you hope to leave tomorrow?



Main square of the AZC. Behind the square is the office building of the COA. *Photograph taken by author, 2022.*

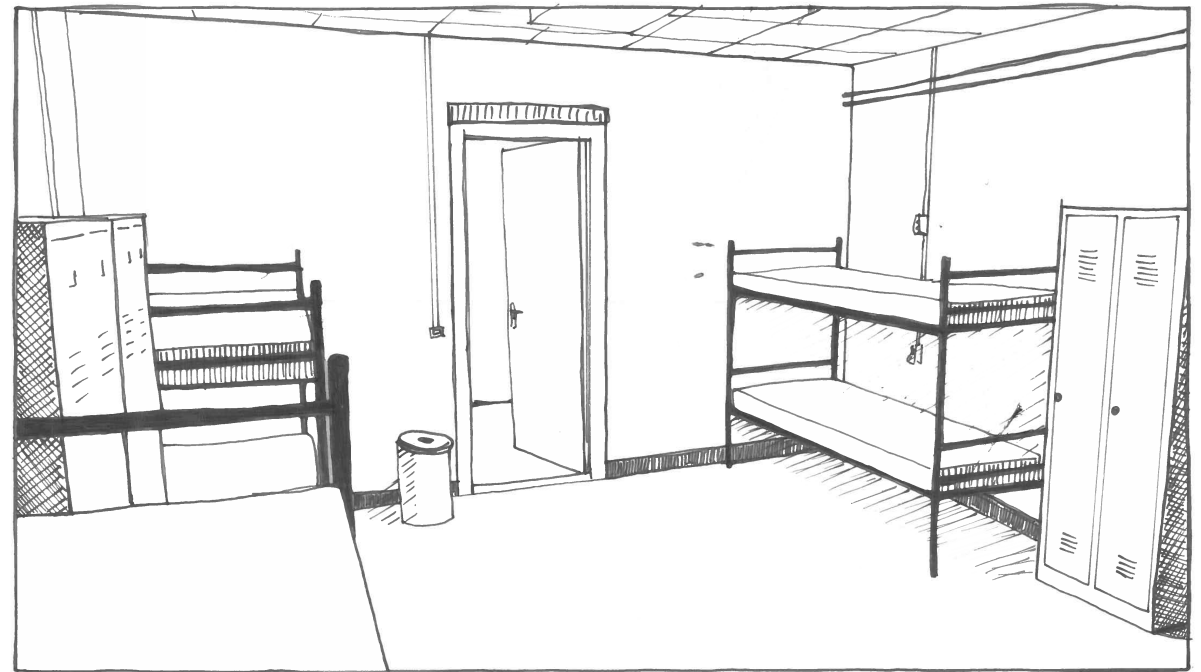


Residences with bike racks in front. *Photograph taken by author, 2022.*

"Alle AZC's zagen er precies hetzelfde uit, vanbinnen dan.. Dezelfde 2 stoelen, dezelfde vierkante tafel, dezelfde stalen lockers en stapelbedden. Dat kan ik me herinneren. Dat ik naar binnen stapte en dat we dan opnieuw het proces moeten herhalen van deze kamer eigen maken, soort van. Mijn vader en mijn tante zorgden ervoor dat deze plekken weer als thuis voelden. Mijn tante was heel erg van bepaalde stofjes, bepaalde specerijen op display"
 – Parwana (22) in podcast 'bestemming onbekend'

"All AZCs looked exactly the same, from the inside. The same two chairs, the same rectangular table, the same steel lockers and bunk beds. That is what I remember, that I stepped into the space and that again we would have to go through the process of making the space our own, sort of. My dad and aunt made sure that these spaces felt like home. My aunt liked specific fabrics and put specific spices on display.

- Parwana (22)



A room in an AZC. Pen on tracing paper created by the author, 2022.



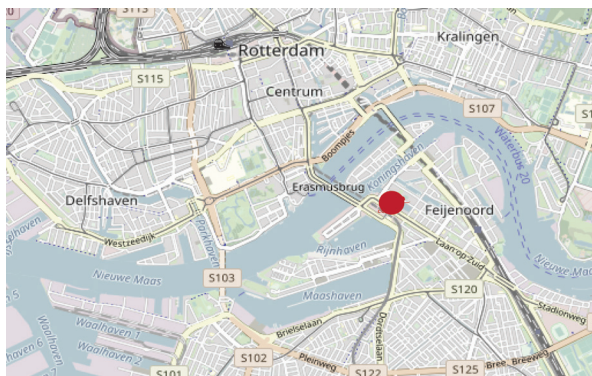
Refugee boat Rotterdam

Exterior of refugee boat in Rotterdam.
Photograph taken by author, 2022.



Arriving at the
refugee boat
in Rotterdam.

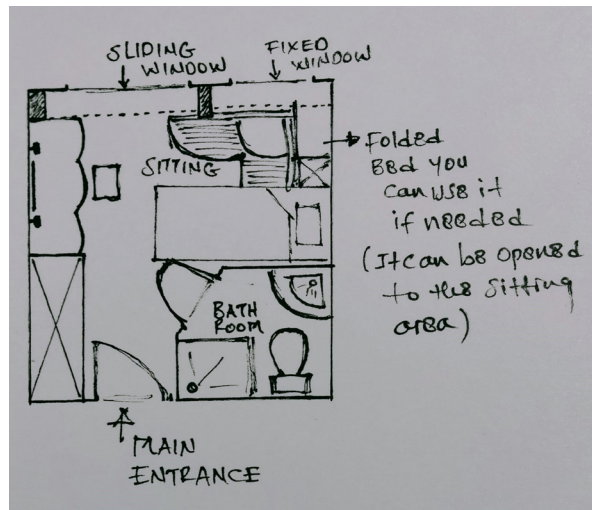
*Photograph taken by
author, 2022.*



Map showing
where the boat is
located in Rotter-
dam. *Created by the
author, 2022.*

In Rotterdam, five cruise ships are temporally transformed into refugee boats. The boats are located at the Maashaven, Parkhaven, Delfshavense Schie, Spoorweghaven and the Schiehaven, all nearby or in the city centre of Rotterdam. On some of these boats, only asylum applicants live. They act as a replacement for AZCs. On other ships, live mainly status holders waiting for the municipality to find them a house. The boat in this chapter is at the Spoorweghaven, which is most in the city centre. The residents of this boat are women and couples.

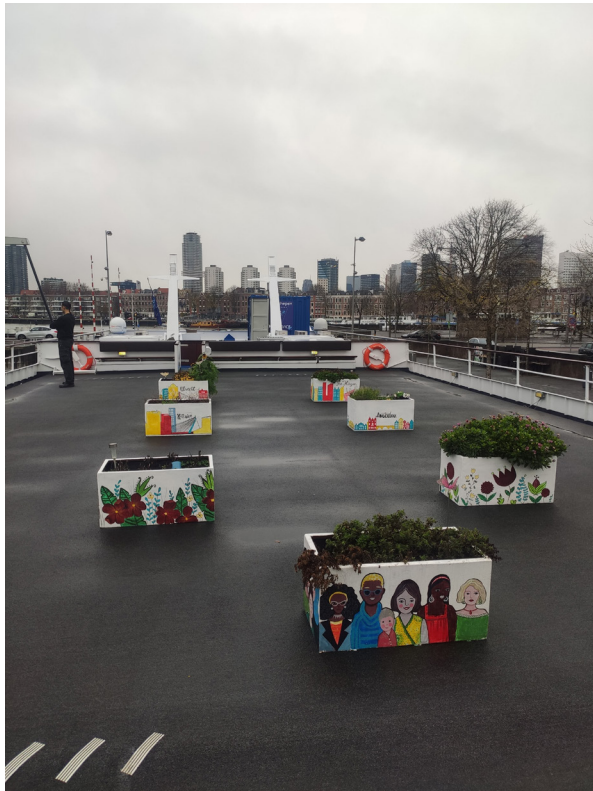
The boat was placed in the Spoorweghaven in January 2022 by the municipality of Rotterdam. The de municipality also managed the location for the first half year. After that, the COA took it over. There live about eighty people on the boat. The group changes over time. Last week a group of women from Syria arrived, but some people have lived here for almost a year.



Sketch of the floorplan of a bedroom. *Line drawing created by interviewee, 2022.*

There are two floors with sleeping cabins. Both are below ground level, just above the water. On one side of the boat, the rooms look towards the quay. Couples have to share a room on the ship, but the others have their own. Every room has a personal bathroom, a tiny desk and two foldable beds. The gap between the two beds is only 15 cm when folded out, which is why only one person is placed in a room unless it is a couple. 15 cm is too close to sleep near someone you do not know. Having your room gives you privacy and the opportunity to withdraw yourself if you would like that.

On the ground level is a living room and dining room. The room is comfortable and cosy with red velvet floors and big soft chairs. The ceiling is just a bit higher than two meters, which can feel oppressive to people. Even though the space feels cosy and comfortable, getting a sense of belonging is hard. This is because there are no possibilities to change the furniture or the place to suit your needs. Everything is fixed to its place.



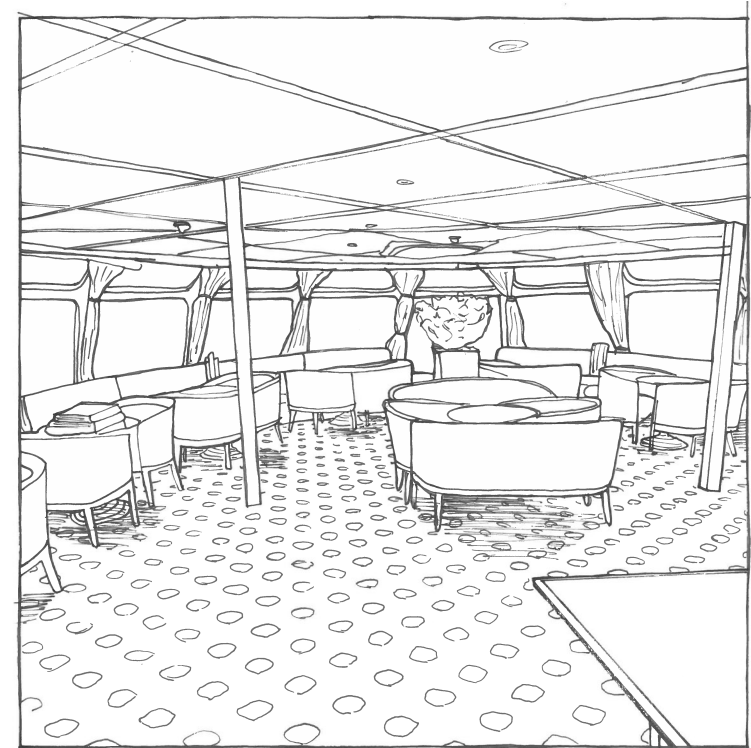
Top deck of the boat. Last Summer the plant boxes were painted by the residents.
Photograph taken by the author, 2022.



Laundry room, this is located on the deck of the boat. *Photograph taken by the author, 2022.*

When the municipality managed the location, the boat's atmosphere was positive. Besides the practical things that have to be done, the social workers also organised extra evening activities and a course to learn Dutch. The social workers were concerned with the inhabitants of the ship. For example, if they would not see someone at the activities for some days, they would go to the room to check up on them. If it were someone's birthday, they would organise something extra for this person. This helped in creating a good atmosphere and a feeling of belonging.

However, this changed when the COA took over the management of the location. No extra activities were organised, and no social workers or Dutch courses anymore. They levelled the facilities out with other COA locations to keep it fair, which is legitimate because they do not receive enough money from the government to provide those extra things for every AZC. However, this also resulted in the feeling of belonging being reduced.



Living room of the refugee boat in Rotterdam.
Pen on tracing paper created by author, 2022.

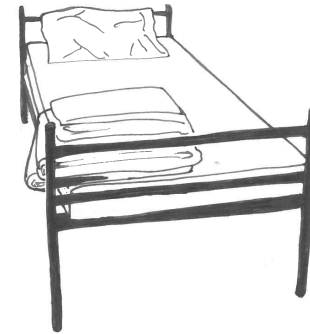
CONCLUSION

Depending on the AZC and the people living and working there, people can get a sense of belonging in these places to a greater or lesser extent. People feel more at home and connected when they can develop their own chosen activities (Duyvendak, 2009). This was the case when the municipality of Rotterdam managed the refugee boat in the Schiehaven. The social workers had attention to each individual and arranged different kinds of activities for different types of people. This helped in the feeling of belonging with the inhabitants of the boat. Sadly, this changed when the municipality of Rotterdam was no longer in charge of the management.

Most AZCs are furnished the same; in every room are cold steel bunk beds, a few plastic blue chairs and a locker. Photo artist Ribal asks, 'Are you in control of your own life if you are not even allowed to have a

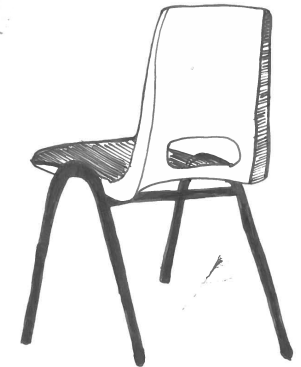
say about the furniture in your room' (Ribal in interview with VWN). Being able to appropriate or change the space to your needs contributes to the feeling of belonging (van Balken & Staal, 2020). It is not possible to do this in the AZC in Almere. However, even on the refugee boat in Rotterdam, where the furniture differs from standard, there are only a few possibilities to personalise the space.

The most challenging part of this liminal phase in the asylum procedure is the uncertainty about how long it will last. "It is not only that you have to wait. It is that you do not know for how long. It is this waiting in uncertainty that is the most difficult part to handle; it causes pressure that increases anxiety because the person going through the process does not have control. This process can slowly break down any healthy human being. This system drives people crazy." (Urbano 2020)

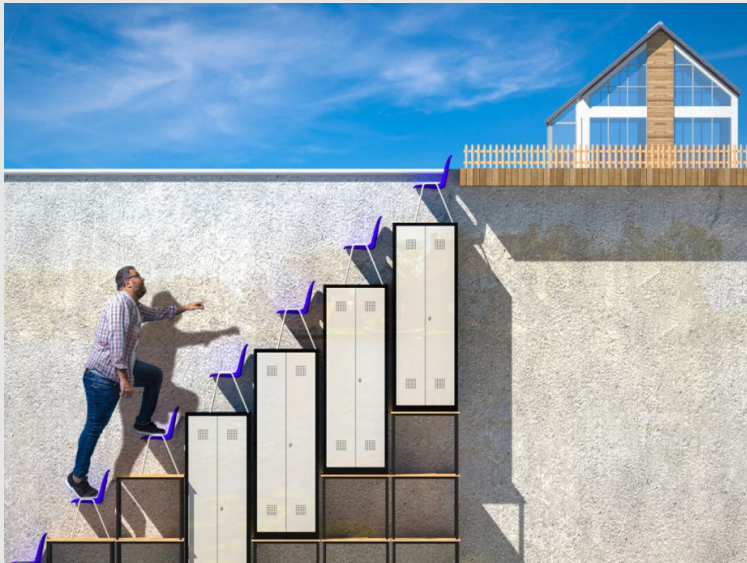


"Memories are created on these chairs, not only in Ter Apel but throughout the country every day again. People close the same curtains to sleep on the same beds to end the same days of waiting. For 35 years since the first asylum seekers centre opened, some people's lives in the Netherlands start in such places." (Etemad and el Khatib, 2022)

"Herinneringen ontstaan op die stoelelen. Niet alleen in Ter Apel, maar door het gehele land, elke dag weer. Mensen doen dezelfde soort gordijnen dicht, om op dezelfde type bedden dezelfde soort dagen van wachten af te sluiten. Al 35 jaar, sinds het eerste asielzoekerscentrum opende, begint het leven van sommige mensen in Nederland op zulke plekken." (Etemad and el Khatib 2022)



Furniture of an AZC. Pen on tracing paper created by author, 2022.



“Dromen van Vrijheid” (Dreaming of freedom).
Artwork by Ribal (an artist living in AZCs).



“Niemandslaan” (Nobody’s land).
Artwork by Ribal (an artist living in AZCs).

m o v i n g o n

At this moment in the process, people have received a positive decision and are so-called status holders. Status holders are allowed to stay in the Netherlands for at least three years if the IND thinks that it will be safe to return back after this period, or five years. After that period, the situation will be looked upon again. The last two locations portrayed in this book are more permanent places. The first location is a temporary living project in which status holders live together with Dutch people. The last location is the house of a Dutch woman living together with her partner, a refugee from Pakistan.

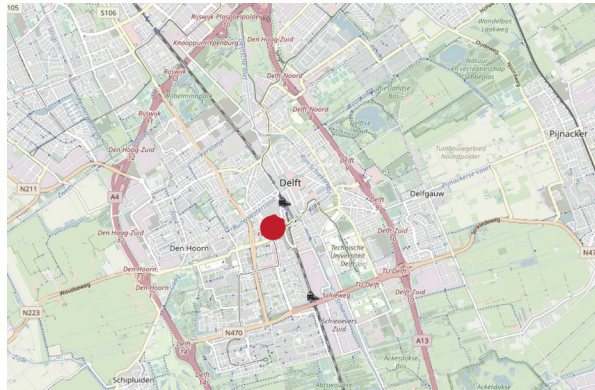
Het hebben van een huis, gaat niet alleen om het hebben van een verblijfsvergunning. Het is daarnaast ook het recht op het hebben van een menswaardig bestaan. Het is meer dan alleen onderdak, het is een schuilplaats die de mens niet alleen beschermt tegen de regen uit de lucht, maar ook tegen de storm van het leven en het geweld van de wereld. Een plek waar het geheugen tot rust kan komen, waar angsten kunnen schuilen en waar je in aan de toekomst durft te denken en te werken. Een plek die de mens zichtbaar maakt voor de wereld. Het heeft een zekere intimiteit.

Owning or living in your own house is not only about having a residence permit. It is the right to a human existence. It is more than only a roof over your head. It is a shelter that protects the human not only from the rain, but also from the storm of life and the violence of the world. It is a place in which the mind can come to rest, where fears can hide and in which you are allowed to think about the future. It is a place that has a certain intimacy but makes also makes the world visible to the person.

Woondiversiteit Delft



Posters created by the residents of woondiversiteit Delft. *Photograph taken by the author, 2022.*



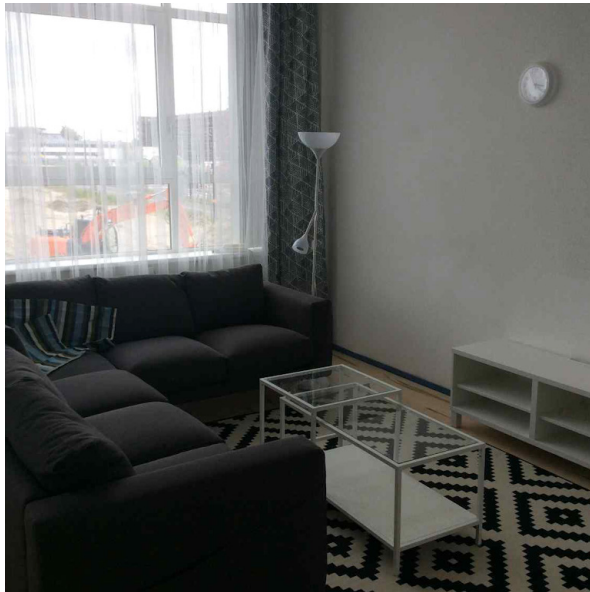
Map showing where Woondiversiteit is located in Delft. *Created by the author, 2022.*



Entrance of the building. *Photograph taken by the author, 2022.*

Woondiversiteit Delft (residential diversity Delft) is a mixed housing project in Delft. This project involves different groups of people living together and undertaking activities together. (Davelaar e.a. 2018, p. 12). In this project, young adults live together with status holders, primarily men. In total, there are 46 residents living in the building, of which 17 are status holders. The residents all have their own bedroom but share a kitchen, toilets and showers. The project's primary goal is that the inhabitants support each other by living together and doing things together. In practice, especially the status holders are helped by the Dutch residents in finding their way in Dutch society, learning the Dutch language and creating a network in the neighbourhood.

At first sight, the interior of the building looks like a regular student residence. Christmas lights light the kitchen, and there is a pile of just finished dishes on the counter, and names are written on the cabinets with chalk to show who the owner of the cabinet is. However, by some things, you can notice that there are living people from different cultures here. On one of the walls in the living room are self-made posters from all the roommates with dates of birth and countries of origin. On top of the kitchen cabinets stand a tajine and a hookah. The living room smells like smoke, and an empty coffee cup is used as an ashtray. The bedrooms all are furnished differently, portraying the different people that live here.



Bedroom. *Photograph taken by the author, 2022.*

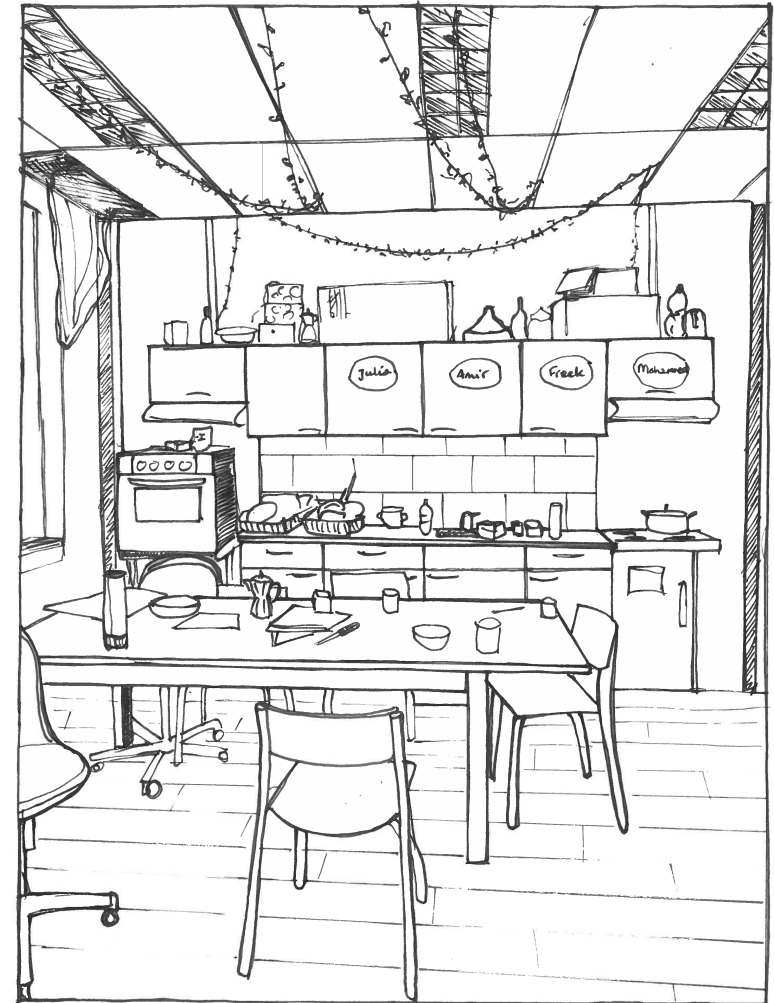


Bedroom. *Photograph taken by IndeBuurt Delft, 2020.*

The feeling of belonging in the place varies due to different reasons. Residents are most involved in the starting phase of living there. This is especially the case for the Dutch students. When they move into the building, they are motivated to help the status holders fill out forms and organise activities. However, since the status holders live only temporarily in the building until the municipality of Delft finds them a house, they switch often. Sometimes they already leave after three months. Therefore, building a good relationship between the status holders and the Dutch students is challenging. Besides that, it is hard to make agreements on things like cleaning and noise due to differences in culture and habits. Every few months, new status holders come to live here, draining the energy of the Dutch residents.


The status holders are, on some levels, happy with the building and, on some, not so much. The building is poorly maintained by the owner of the building, resulting in leaks and moulds in different places in the building. However, they like it more than living in AZCs and enjoy the company of other people. Often, people return to the Woondiversiteit after they have moved out, and you can find them in the living rooms. This is possible because of an open-door policy; as soon as you pass the front door, you can move freely throughout the building. Sometimes status holders invite friends who still live in an AZC to live with them in their room. The Dutch residents sometimes find it hard to remark on this.

It is not easy to create a network in the de neighbourhood. Even though the city centre of Delft is only a 15-minute walk, the building feels segregated from other people. It is settled in a vacant property along the railway zone in Delft, an area being redeveloped and, therefore, under construction all the time. On the other side of the building are office buildings. However, they are closed during the evenings and weekends, making you hardly meet any people from the neighbourhood.



*Kitchen. Pen on tracing paper created
by the author, 2022.*

A Permanent place



Living room apartment in Passau. *Photograph taken by interviewee, 2023.*

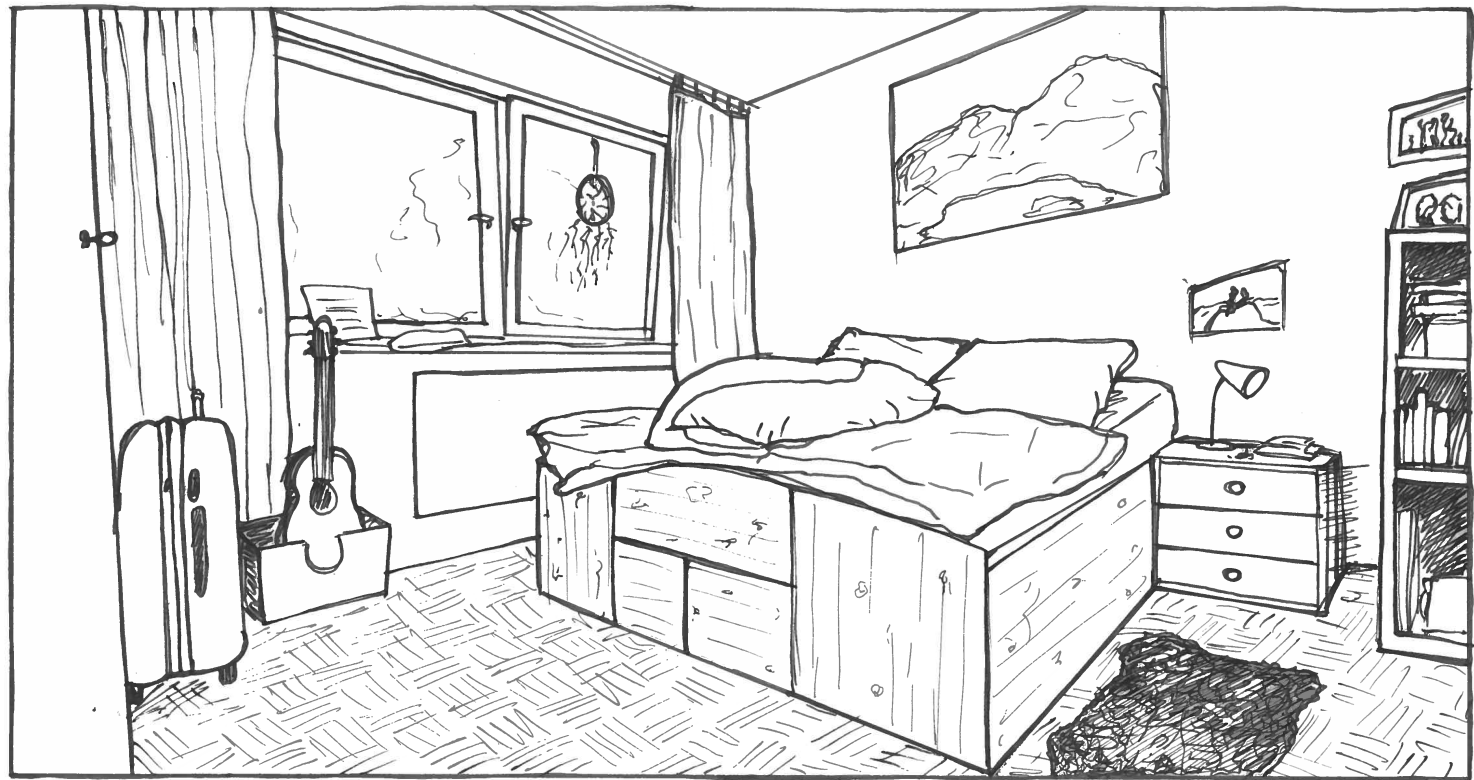
This last location in this book is an example of a permanent place. A Dutch woman and a status holder from Pakistan own the place. They live together in this place in Passau, Germany. It, however, could be anywhere. At this moment, they have been living here for four years. Over time slight changes have been made to the interior of the apartment.

The apartment is about 60m² and has a living room, kitchen, bathroom and bedroom. Upon entering, you come across a small corridor connecting all those spaces. Inside this corridor is a coat rack, a cabinet to store shoes and a pile of plastic shopping bags. When you walk straight, you enter the living room in which an oversized couch is central.

Before, they had a dinner table in the living room. 'We threw it out because we were only using it when my parents came over. We mostly sit on the couch.' It is important to them that they have

a space for themselves and are allowed to furnish it as they want. 'When you live with many people from different cultures, you are limited to your desire, and you have to respect the boundaries of the others.'

It is important for people to have something tangible from their past or from where they come from. (Etemad and el Khatib 2022). In the room, you can find family pictures of both of them. On one of the walls is a calendar with photo stock images of the mountains in Pakistan. 'she got it once for my birthday. Even though this is not how the mountains in Pakistan look, it reminds me of being there and still makes me happy.'



"It is like day and night difference between the culture here and where I come from. I come from a place where every neighbour and every kid on the street knows you. But you will adopt the culture once you start living in a new environment. Now, this also feels like home to me."

Bedroom of a permanent place.
*Pen on tracing paper, created by author,
2023.*

CONCLUSION

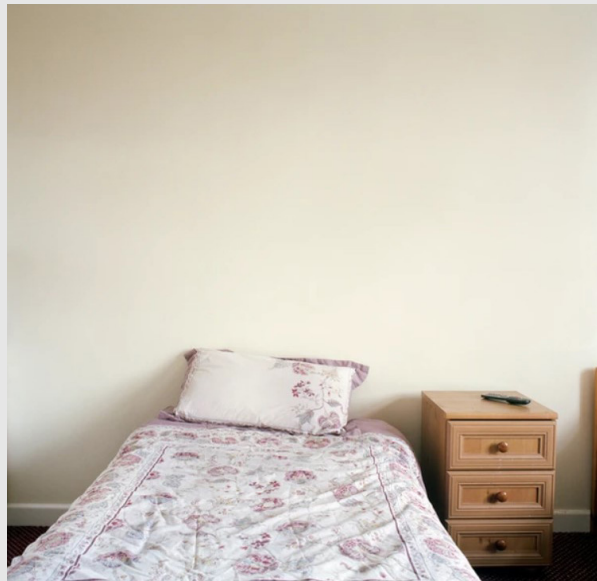
These last two locations are examples of places where people live that are more certain; they now know they are allowed to stay in the Netherlands. From this point onwards, people can focus on creating a place of belonging. When a person receives a status, they are connected to a municipality and will stay in one city. The fact that they stay in one place from now on makes creating a network of like-minded people around you possible. This helps in the feeling of belonging (Van der Ham, 2016).

As seen in the woondiversiteit Delft and the apartment in Passau, people find it important to share their norms and values with the people they live with but also portray where they come from.

However, even though, in principle, status holders know that they can stay here, it is not self-evident that they feel like they belong here. This is because they often feel like they must adapt to the new culture and leave their own behind. They have to navigate between two worlds. Still, they are in the liminal space. Joanne Mullin took the photographs on the following pages. They are from her project 'Refuge' and show that it can still feel empty despite the attempts to make a place feel like home.



Refuge, photo series.
*Photographs taken by
Joanne Mullin, 2013.*



Refuge, photo series.
*Photographs taken by
Joanne Mullin, 2013.*



or not. outlawed

However, it can also end less rosy. The IND can reject your asylum application at many moments in the process. As an asylum seeker, you have a right to appeal. But if the judge upholds the decision made by the IND, you are required to leave the Netherlands within a certain period. The government wants you to return to your country of origin, and they even pay for a flight back for you. However, in most cases, returning to your country of origin does not feel like an option. Often those people stay in the Netherlands illegally and live at the margins of society. However, they can be deported at any moment by the Marechaussee or the Aliens Police. In the Netherlands live an estimated amount of more than 10.000 rejected, non-deportable refugees.

The exact numbers are, however, unknown. These people are not recognised as Dutch citizens and therefore do not possess the same rights as Dutch citizens (Outlawed - Documentary 2014). Without these documents, simple things like renting a house, studying, taking out health insurance, opening a bank account and working legally are simply not possible (Steketee 2017). These outlawed people do not want to return to their country of origin, and sometimes it is not even possible. However, these people are still people that drive in our society. (Niemandtsverdiët and Adèr 2022)

The only protection rejected asylum applicants can hope for is from Dutch municipalities that provide shelter through the municipal 'bed, bath, and bread' arrangement. (Versteegh 2016) The policy on these 'bed, bath and bread' facilities differs per municipality and lies outside the control of the national government. This results in the government not knowing which rejected asylum seekers are homeless and who stay in municipal shelters. (Versteegh 2016, 364)

Although these rejected refugees may be detained and deported at any moment and are not allowed to work, they mostly do work. They may participate in institutions such as schools, churches, ethnic community groups and political associations. Undocumented migrants live, work, shop, walk and drive among the rest of the Dutch population. (Garcés-Mascareñas and Chauvin 2016)

C O D A

Many displaced people are living in the Netherlands. However, you do not come in contact with these people if you do not actively look for them. However, what do their lives look like? And in what kind of places do they live? These questions led to the main research question, 'How do displaced people in the Netherlands create a sense of belonging in the places they live?'. This book investigated this question by portraying eight different places of residence along the timeline of the procedure of a displaced person.

You can conclude that it is not easy for people in the asylum procedure to create a feeling of belonging in the places they live for several reasons. One of those reasons is, for example, a lack of privacy in most of these places. In some places, a person's only private space is the two square meters of their bed. Even though creating a sense of belonging in the spaces that exist now is difficult, I would like to highlight a few aspects that help create a sense of belonging.

Predictability and accessibility. When your environment is easy to understand, and you can familiarise yourself with a place, it is easier to get a sense of belonging. Besides that, you feel more comfortable when you know you can leave the place when you want. This is also related to the accessibility of a place to pedestrians and how a place is connected to public transport. The first two locations, the JCS and the AC in Ter Apel, demonstrated this because, in those locations, the opposite was the case: asylum applicants are taken through the process and the building step by step, and they do not have a say over when they can leave again.

Private and intimate spaces. In most of the researched locations, private and intimate spaces were missing. You can see that people appropriate space to create more privacy. Especially in emergency shelters like Culemborg and Almere, private spaces were improvised by hanging blankets in front of beds. In the location in Culemborg, residents of the shelter were struggling to find an intimate space to do their prayers. The solution to this was shielding a corner of the hall with panels and covering the floor with rugs. Still, this is not a suitable quiet place to do your daily prayers.

Control. Being in control is essential for the feeling of belonging in different aspects. Firstly, for example, is choosing your own furniture in your room. As mentioned in part 3, most AZCs are furnished the same. Moreover, even when there is an exception, like on the refugee boat in Rotterdam, people still do not have a choice in how the space is furnished.

However, besides being allowed to have a say over the furniture in your space, being in control is also about being able to create rules and routines with a group. This helps to establish a community feeling. The community feeling can be enhanced when there are smaller spaces where different groups can unfold their chosen activities. This is something that is often not the case in the researched locations. Sometimes facilities have to be shared by 400 people.

To share culture and background. The last two locations show that displaced people often feel pressure to adapt to the Dutch culture. This can make it difficult to talk about your past. To be able to share your own culture and background with people from your own culture, but also being free to talk about your own culture and background with other people, helps in the feeling of belonging. Besides that, sharing your culture and background with people helps establish the feeling of a community.

With this research, I tried to form a complete overview of what the life of a displaced person in the Netherlands looks like. All aspects mentioned above can help design a place of belonging for displaced people in the Netherlands. I hope this project inspires architects and other people to consider these aspects when designing for displaced people and people in general. Because as said at the beginning of the book, the feeling of belonging is essential for every human being.

Definitions

AA Algemene Asielprocedure. (general asylum procedure)

AC Aanmeld Centrum. (Application Centre)

AVIM Afdeling Vreemdelingenpolitie, Identificatie en Mensenhandel. (Department of Aliens Police, Identification and Human Trafficking)

AZC Asielzoekers centrum. (Asylum Seekers Centre)

COA Centrale Opvang Asielzoekers. (Central Organ for Asylum Seekers)

COL Centrale Opvang Locatie (Central Asylum Location)

GGD Gemeenschappelijke Gezondheidsdienst. (Municipal Health service)

IND Immigratie en Naturalisatiedienst. (Immigration and naturalisation service)

JCS Justitieel Complex Schiphol. (Judicial Complex Schiphol)

RVT Rust- en Voorbereidingstijd. (Resting and preparation time)

VA Verlengde Asielprocedure (extended asylum procedure)

VWN Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland. (Dutch Council for Refugees)

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