

Answering the call of displacement

A case study on how smartphones influence lives and relationships in the trajectory of the contemporary refugee

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Master thesis

TIK Centre for Technology, Innovation and Culture

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Abstract

In this thesis I have investigated how smartphones can influence the lives of refugees. As the global patterns of migration and displacement are increasing in reach and numbers, the need to approach solutions are continually being addressed and sought after, and technology is continually being looked to. Digital technologies such as smartphones as mobile phones have quickly gained the interest of both politicians and humanitarian organizations and thus there is a need to investigate how this influence the lives of those who's lives are being guided by technology. Within the theoretical field of material semiotics I have had an object-oriented approach to the smartphone, looking at the way it plays out as a socio-technical object in the network of displacement. I have taken into consideration the way the technological and social aspects of its script works together in the context of managing the precarity of displacement. The empirical a data of this thesis based on biographic interviews with refugees, conducted at a centre for refugees in Norway. What I have found is that the smartphone, with its flexible script, enables the refugees with providing essential information, vital navigation and meeting of emotional needs. Thus, the smartphone also plays out as a humanitarian technology, influencing how the aspects of humanitarian efforts can be considered and acted out. However, its connectivity can also be a constrain, as the integration of digital and physical life is increasingly intertwined and thus new forms of considerations must be made like that of over-information and digital traces. Hence, in the words of one of the interviewees, it can be considered both “a freedom and a danger-tool”.

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It's not just the end of two educational and unforgettable years with master studies; it is also the end of my time at Blindern campus. It's a feeling of melancholy but I will remember my time here with great joy. Over the years I have met some of my favourite people here, who will continue to be so.

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- Marianne Areng

List of abbreviations

ANT – Actor – Network Theory

GSMA – Global System of Mobile Communications

HTC – High Tech Computer Corporation

IOS – Operating System (of Apple)

NOAS – Norwegian Association for Asylum Seekers

NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data

STS – Science and technology studies

UDI – Norwegian Directorate of Immigration

UN – United Nations

UNHCR – United Nations Refugee Agency

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1 Introduction

This master thesis is about the way technology influence the lives of refugees. The past decade technology has been playing a more significant role in the patterns of displacement and how these challenges are being approached politically and through aid. This attention is both a result of the recognition of the new possibilities it can bring to the table, as well as the opportunities it represents for people in need. Displacement of people on a global level is one of the most pressing humanitarian challenges we face today, and according to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), 65,6 million are currently displaced globally of which 22,5 million are recognised as refugees (2017). The need to provide insight into how this crisis is evolving and how it can be managed is thus of the essence. In this thesis, I investigate how smartphones facilitate new forms of relations in the network of displacement in regards to mobility, care and connectedness. These three categories are also the categories of analysis drawn from the empirical material. I argue, the increasing access to various technological and digital devices are having an effect on how the displaced themselves manage their life situations, and this allows for new relationships and opportunities. At the same time, the change in the relations of this network influences and perhaps redefines situations of humanitarian aid. The emerging of the smartphone as an object of analysis in this thesis is a result of its place in current issues in politics and social change in the last few years. Also, with the smartphone as an object of focus, it can provide a fragment of how technological object both play a part in the lives of many as well as social issues.

To make clear the context of this thesis I will make a short introduction as to how the smartphone emerged as an object of controversy, focusing on three settings in which the phone was enrolled into a discussion on technology and displacement that will structure the arguments of this thesis. I argue these three episodes mark how the smartphone started the “becoming” of political and social contestations and had been guiding in the relevance of a specific technology in contemporary discourses revolving democracy and human rights as well as guiding in the way I have approached the context of this thesis. In many ways, the smartphone has become an indispensable object in the lives of many, in its ability to cater to different needs at the same time. The smartphone has in a short few years moved from being a luxury in the sense that only a small number of people had access to it is one of the most distributed and common technologies we have today.

In 2016, a report featuring data from 88 countries worldwide on smartphone user population penetration concluded that the global smartphone user base would grow from 36% in 2016 to 44% in 2017. The number is said to increase to 58% by 2022 (Sui, 2016). These numbers indicate that approximately half the global population at present in 2017/2018 own or have access to a smartphone. However, the regional penetration rates are far from even with North America and Europe in the leading positions and Africa and the Middle-East regions with the lowest penetration, rate indicating the adaption to an exploration of technologic opportunities related to mobile phones and infrastructure in many countries are still being explored and developed (Poushter, 2016). Many parts of Africa and the Middle East are experiencing rapid social and political changes parallel with the expansion of technological opportunities, this perhaps being one of the reasons technologies such as mobile phones and smartphones are integrated into these changes. The impact of technology on political and social change is not a new phenomenon, but the increasing way digital infrastructures are a part of our lives is something unique to our contemporary. Below I will exemplify the way smartphones, and digital infrastructure has been made into tools for managing political and social issues, starting with the Arab spring.

The smartphone as a political device

Following the popular rebellions of countries in Northern Africa and later the Middle East in 2010 – 2011 nicknamed *The Arab spring*, the use of technology and social media was made noticeable in its ability to have vast political influence, especially in some countries like Egypt and Tunisia (Lerlaand, 2017). In opening for communication between people sharing the same political interests and facilitating extensive networks, information infrastructure and especially mobile phones, is said to have been a causal contributor to social movement success during the Arab spring (Hussain & Howard, 2012, p. 16). The effects of the revolution created political repercussions throughout the Arabic world in particular, escalating from relatively peaceful demonstration to civil war and military coups in countries such as Syria (Areng, 2016, p. 2). The United Nations Association of Norway have described the mobilisation efforts of social media and technology such as cell phones during this conflict to be one of the most important aspects of the public debate (FN-sambandet, 2017).

Internet is said to have had an important effect in all the rebellions of the affected countries because the demonstrators used social media such as Facebook and twitter to coordinate and mobilise the protests. The use of social media on the Internet is one of the things that led to

the attention of international press regarding the demands of the protesters. One of the central stories that is said to mark the beginning of the uprising is the tragic story of Mohammed Bouazizi who set himself on fire after an altercation with local policemen in a city in Tunis. This resonated immediately with the civil society as the act mobilised protests, which were captured by cell phone cameras and shared on the Internet (Fahim, 2011). This tragic event, then, and especially through the exposure on social and conventional media framed the political situations in this and the surrounding area. The current situation in many of the afflicted countries is however not what was to be expected of the revolution. For some countries the demands of the people were heard, but the revolution also became the starting point for one for the more violent and challenging conflicts we are presented with, like the current situation in countries such as Syria (Micallef, 2017). However, the use of Internet and smartphones in the Arab spring represented a shift in what such a device could be and represent in its ability to be used in the managing of precarity, which were also the case for the following escalating conflict in the Middle East.

Managing precarity

The beginning of the year 2015 marked a shift in the conditions of the global displacement patterns and is considered to be the start of the “refugee crisis”. The term refers to the period when a rising number of people began arriving in the countries of the European union, travelling across the Mediterranean Sea or overland through south-east Europe. Soon after the conflict escalated, news articles published stories on refugees taking so-called *selfies* (self-images) on Greek beaches. This aspect of the crisis stirred up questions and opinions on whether or not the crowd of people arriving Europe should actually be considered refugees at all, as they carried advanced technology like smartphones. This was a new side to the dramatic reality of crisis, as it facilitated the ability to communicate and document in real time and to take photos that could be distributed in a wide network of connections in seconds. The initial reactions were in many cases critical and focused on the “luxury” refugees, challenging the narrative of the traditional suffering displaced. However, it soon became clear the phones were considered vital in the managing of the situation. In fact, a new narrative emerged; the smartphone as a “lifeline” as it was even claimed by some that for refugees it was more important than food and water (Teknologirådet, 2016). The crisis also reached other parts of the world, and in Norway the approach to the crisis became a place of debate on the meeting of politics and humanitarianism.

Norway and the crisis

The fall of 2015 was a time in Norway characterised by new political, humanitarian and legal challenges. The reason for these new challenges was the radically growing number of refugees crossing the borders, and with them the nation was faced with a government and system not prepared for the pressure on the existing instances. The public was also divided through a polarised political debate between left and right wing political parties, which eventually resulted in a new line of provisions regarding the Norwegian immigrant laws that work in motion today. In a rapport from 2016, the Norwegian Directorate of immigration evaluates the situation from the year before, stating that much of the instances involved in receiving refugees in Norway at the time of the escalating crisis were affected by an extremely challenging situation that put pressure on the system in every level (Utlendingsdirektoratet, 2016). I was myself standing in the midst of this situation as I worked with emergency housing of refugees that arrived during this period and witnessed the challenges first hand. The situation is likely said to have played a part in the political image of the following parliamentary elections in 2017, resulting in the win of the right wing parties. As such, the Norwegian immigrant politics have been under continued debate, both to the salute and disconcert of the public. NOAS, the Norwegian organisation for Asylum Seekers, have in their yearly status report on the treatment on refugees in Norway, written about what they refer to as a the change of narrative in the Norwegian approach towards refugees, from what they call a “strict but fair” approach now leaning towards a narrative where the nation must be protected from refugees (Austenå, 2018).

One of the ways in which the Norwegian politics have been communicated is through the use of social media such as facebook, in order to reach the refugees. Another specific initiative implemented by the Norwegian government is the process of gathering information from the refugee’s smartphones and digital devices as a part of the application process. This aspect of the process highlights the close integration of the digital, technological and social aspects of the situation and has been one of the cases motivating the continued investigation on this theme. All three of the above mentioned cases illustrates the way the smartphone have, through the last few years, been integrated in political and social situations in a new way, and how it has emerged as an object of controversy and debate. My aim here has been to dive deeper into the aspect of the way smartphones are used by refugees, what this means and how this can say something about the way technology influences social situations and vice versa. Below I will present my research questions that have been guiding the thesis.

1.1 Research questions:

I will investigate how the smartphone, with it being acknowledged as an important tool, impacts the lives of refugees as they move from their home country to Norway. The overarching research question is thus:

How does the smartphone play out in a context of displacement?

This question will be explored by the following two sub-questions:

- 1. What aspect of the smartphones qualities are the most important and why?*
- 2. How does the smartphone influence the way actors in the network of displacement relate to each other?*

In approaching these questions I will look at how the script of the smartphone as a digital device is negotiated by actors in the network and how it in the particular meeting point between refugees or displaced and the political situations, influence the relationship of the objects and people in that particular network. Also I want to investigate how the smartphone can be said to contribute into the debate on humanitarian technology, as I claim the key events of the Arab spring, the escalating refugee-crisis in 2015 and the Norwegian governments decision to include search of smartphones in processing asylum applications have made the smartphone into a humanitarian technology. The aim of this thesis is to contribute to an existing and emerging body of research on the way technology influence contemporary displacement. An important aim of this thesis is to highlight the need for continued research on the current challenges regarding global displacement. In light of this I will elaborate on the emerging debates on humanitarian technology and how the smartphone can be said to contribute into this setting below.

1.2 The smartphones as a humanitarian technology

The approach of humanitarian technology is relevant because it brings together two lines of research that has become increasingly focused on in politics and research, social studies and technology studies. This makes it an appropriate field of study for science and technology studies as it acknowledges the way technology is gradually being integrated into how politics

and social issues are managed. Amnesty international points at how digital technology is going to be an important part of shaping the future of politics, society and human rights (Elsayed-Ali, 2016). In an online article from 2016 Amnesty presents five ways of how technology can contribute to upholding human rights, only showing the tip of the iceberg in how technology is increasingly looked to in order to solve challenging social and humanitarian issues. The United Nations (UN) have declared online freedom a human right, and some states have even declared the access to internet a human right for their citizens. The UN-treaty was developed as a response to the lack of access and suppressive tactics by certain governments, resulting in the United Nations (UN) declaring that "online freedom" is a "human right," and one that must be protected (Sandle, 2016). This is a clear indicator on the way technology has become an invaluable indicator of our quality of life. The positive repercussions connectivity and access to internet can create in a development context is a one recognised by the UN and hence closely tied to the objects of which this connectivity is obtained, in many ways inscribes the phone into the political context as well. In a sense, the potential right to connectivity is also a right to technology. The political processes and the material world is all a part in the making of the humanitarian technologies, some of these of which I want to investigate in this thesis.

The place of technology in humanitarian efforts are increasingly focused on, but the intersection between the two is not new. Developing technologies in relation to health services or communication has been a central part of how humanitarian work is done for decades (Scott-Smith, 2016, pp. 2229–2230). However, the recent years *digital* humanitarianism have become increasingly important in the intersection between aid and politics (Burns, 2014). The focus of this branch of research, mostly within the human geographies, is occupied with the effects and possibilities of spatial data gathering and big data in the context of crisis managements such as earthquakes, floods and other natural disasters. This aspect of aid draws new connection between existing and new concepts such as the concept of *digital* volunteers. Technology function on different levels from the large scale mapping to the ground level interaction of inter-personal communication, in areas such as crowdsourcing, crisis mapping, social media monitoring and remote delegation to others (Burns, 2014, p. 52).

However, there is more to digital humanitarianism and humanitarian technology than big data as the communication and developing of technology on ground level also impact the lives

and the relationship between aid and aided. In their 2014 article Sandvik et. al highlights some central areas in need for further exploration in the field of humanitarian technology in a broad sense (Sandvik, Gabrielsen Jumbert, Karlsrud, & Kaufmann, 2014). They ask questions relating to the possible changes in power-relations, what constitutes as aid, impact of new partnerships, and emergence of new vulnerabilities as the most central questions to be discussed in the context of humanitarian technology. The place of the mobile phone or smartphone is not discussed in depth, but is placed in the debate on the possibilities opened for the beneficiaries of aid in making informed decisions as well as the possibilities it opens for humanitarian workers and aid delivery. This is also the approach of this thesis; to look at the way technology in humanitarian crisis is being integrated by the people affected by the crisis them-selves and thus potentially creating new ways of managing such situations.

The general discourse on humanitarian technology is in large dominated by strong technology optimism, or what Scott-Smith refers to as “neophilia” (Scott-Smith, 2016, p. 2229). This results in the negative or perhaps more complex views on technology in the humanitarian field being neglected or downplayed. I want to draw on these assumptions in investigating how in fact the smartphone plays out as a humanitarian technology, being a technology used by people affected by humanitarian crisis and hopefully provide increased insight into how technology in both positive and negative ways influence this network. Is the smartphone a means to democracy and increase in agency, or can one problematize and remain critical to the impact of technology in humanitarian contexts?

What is often forgotten in our part of the world is the fact that there are still just as many displaced people as during the crisis in 2015, and the numbers only keep growing. Because of the closing of the borders in the south of Europe, most of the people who initially would make the journey to Europe are stranded behind the borders. As the flood of people has decreased, so has the media attention and perhaps the focus of the public. The situation has quieted down, creating the illusion that the crisis is decreasing. This is an aspect referred to by Zigmunt Bauman as “refugee tragedy fatigue” describing the decrease of novelty and stabilising of the situation (Bauman 2016 in Hognestad & Lamark, 2017, p. 10). The crisis is, however, still very much a reality and that is one of the reasons for me wanting to approach this issue. The aspect of the politics of the southern European countries was expressed by some of the people I interviewed, most often related to as problematic in the sense that it made the gap between those who can make the journey and those who can’t increasingly

wide. Only the “lucky” few that can afford plane tickets, smugglers and/or fake identification documents, and even smartphones have the recourses to make it to countries such as Norway. I want to acknowledge the fact that in approaching this thesis with this particular theme, a larger group than those who are represented here are perhaps left out: those who haven’t been able to make the journeys to new countries or those who reside in neighbouring countries of their own homelands, waiting out the wars to be able to return home. Thus, this thesis only touches on a very small fragment of the situation, and can perhaps in itself say to contribute to the focus on the technology paradigm, leaving out the need for focus on other forms of humanitarian relieve. However, the point here is that there is a need to provide increased insight into a growing body of research focusing on the role of technology in humanitarian challenges. Based on current research, the importance of technology, especially the digital aspects are highlighted as important (Sandvik et al., 2014). However, the need for a more critical approach is sought after, and hence I argue STS provides alternative ways of looking at the role of technology in the meeting point between technological objects and human action and how a technological object participates in building and maintaining a specific network, in this case the relationship between displaced people and the smartphone. This process is the meeting-point between technological determinism and social constructivism, because the relationship is both technical and social.

My motivation for approaching this theme was grounded in my own experience in working with an organisation aimed at refugees during the drastically increasing number of refugees arriving in Norway in 2015-2016, and among other things working at the arrival centre in the city of Kirkenes by the Russian border. This experience gave me a unique insight in the lives of a group of people whose lives were determined by precarity and the interest in how they manage their situations emerged. The Norwegian political debate surrounding this period has also been a motivation to the subject of the thesis as Norway’s politics have been one characterised as one of the strictest migration-laws in Europe, making the national debate one that stands out. In addition it has been the most relevant debate to follow as I have gathered my empirical material in Norway. During the period of escalating crisis in Europe the refugee’s use of smartphones emerged as a subject, drawing attention to the use of smartphones as a widely used tool amongst refugees. Some has referred to the increasing flow of refugees in this period as “the first digitally driven mass-migration” emphasising the frequent use of digital devices such as smartphones in this context (Habekuß & Schmitt, 2015).

1.3 Clarification of key terminology

Before moving forward I want to clarify the two most central terms in the thesis, that of the choice of the word “refugee” and that of a smartphone.

“Refugee” or “migrant”

In the political climate on refugees and migration there is an on-going discussion on the defining terms of “refugee” and “migrant”. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency the terms are often used interchangeably but the distinction between the two are important as they have different meanings. “Refugees” are people fleeing armed conflict and persecution as their situation is often so perilous and intolerable they need to seek safety in other countries, thus becoming internationally recognised as “refugees” with access to assistance from States, UNHCR and other organisations (UNHCR, 2016a). They cannot return home because it is too dangerous and need sanctuary elsewhere and for whom denial of asylum has potentially deadly consequences. A migrant is someone choosing to move mainly to improve their lives by finding work, education, through family reunion or other reasons but not facing a direct threat of persecution or death. Unlike refugees, they face no impediment of returning with fear of safety and will potentially continue to receive the protection of their government (UNHCR, 2016a). In the case of the growing number of people moving across the Mediterranean Sea after 2011, UNHCR have categorised the flow of people as consisting of both refugee and migrants as the group of people are so diverse.

The term “forcibly displaced” differs from the term “refugee” as the latter is an officially recognised term by the UN and it comes with certain rights. According to the latest UNHCR Global Trends-rapport on forced displacement the numbers of forcibly displaced people worldwide are record high, having almost been doubled from 33,9 million in 1997 to the current 65,6 million (2017 numbers). Most on this increase was concentrated between 2012 and 2015 due to the Syrian conflict, but also due to other conflicts such as in Iraq, Yemen and Sub-Saharan Africa (UNHCR, 2017, pp. 2–5). This increase in numbers indicates a growing numbers in political and military conflicts as well as new preconditions for mobility. In my case I have chosen to use the term *refugee* or (forcibly) *displaced* as my group of informants consists of people fleeing either war or prosecution and all of them face dangers upon returning home. I will use the term displaced as an overarching description of the group in question, as all refugees are displaced, but not all displaced are considered refugees.

Phones that are smart

When we think of smartphones, many automatically think of Apples iPhone as the originator. However, the emerging of the smartphone, as we know it today, has been long in the making. From the smartphone in the beginning being an object marketed mainly at business people, the emerging of the iPhone in 2007 represented a shift in the distribution of users of smartphones. In combining the features of a Personal Digital Assistant like the Blackberry and a computer, the early smartphones facilitated a wider use through the innovative touchscreen design which facilitated the checking of e-mail, streaming of videos, audio play and browsing the internet with a mobile browser that much like a personal computer loaded full websites (Nguyen, 2017). The unique iOS system from Apple allowed a wide range of intuitive gesture-based commands which eventually could facilitate a rapidly growing warehouse of downloads of third party applications (Nguyen, 2017).

Since Apple first released the iPhone, other competitors have eventually followed in the wake of the iPhone, adopting the same “smart”-features, like Galaxy S or the HTC one. In my empirical investigations I have not made any distinctions between the different kinds of smartphones, but I have found that the prevalence of iPhones are much more present in the countries closer to Europe. Reasons for this could perhaps be seen as an issue of price or function, and that the iPhone market is predominantly focused in western countries. In this thesis I will focus on the definition of a smartphone as a phone with the computing abilities and touch screen. As of now Apple is releasing the iPhone X which will have the home-button completely removed and rely on facial recognition as key to both the phone and a whole set of apps and features (Pierce, 2018). This move can represent a shift into a new technological age, and can perhaps in the long run become a feature that for instance can make the case of identification of refugees more effective. However, as the study of technology shows time and time again, the need for critical thinking is in order and through the implementations of for instance augmented reality other issues such as privacy, the agency of people and technology becomes emerging issues in need of policy and discussion.

Humanitarian technology

I will talk of humanitarian technology in a broad sense, in that it is technology used in a humanitarian crisis context. However I acknowledge the view of it as a technology provided by humanitarian aid organisations, through various organisations and that in this sense can be viewed as technology specifically provided by humanitarian workers. However, in my case I

will focus on the concept of smartphones as humanitarian technology in the sense they are being used within a context where technology relieve precariousness of humanitarian crisis.

1.4 Existing research and the place of STS in approaching humanitarian technologies

The approach of studying the use of mobile technologies such as cell phones in a development context has been a theme mostly approached by social scientists. Here, most of the studies have been focused on the opportunities for empowerment and political resistance cell phones provide for specific communities or groups, like situated empowerment for market women in Kampala (Svensson & Wamala Larsson, 2016) or influence on the political economy and politics in India and Nepal (Jeffrey & Doron, 2012) only to name a few. The increasing flow of refugees in 2015 mobilised the aid communities, as well as the medias attention which soon made it clear many refugees not only had smartphones but it was perceived as a critically important tool, even to the extent many asked for wifi or changers instead of food and water upon arriving in new countries like the shores of Greece.

Researchers like Eide et. al (2017) and Kaufman (2018) within the field of journalism and media and communication studies, have conducted empirical studies on the effect and impact of the mobile phone in connection to refugees. Eide et.al have conducted an empirical study on the importance of the cell phone amongst newly arrived refugees in Norway from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran. Through in-depth interviews with newly arrived refugees at several institutions in Norway, the focus have been on life story accounts from their journeys and the importance and impact of the smartphone in this context. Through the accounts as presented by the interviewees, they have mapped out a series of new meanings ascribed the mobile phone like a “memory bank”, a “family contact”, “comfort” or “navigator”. Eide et.al. 2017 frames the study within the discourses surrounding the political climate of 2015 in Norway and the aftermaths of the political and social events. It is closely tied to central media debates on political conflicts and definitions on what it means to be a refugee.

Within the field of sociology recent research projects have been conducted on the role of social media and the infrastructures and affordances of smartphones in the context of refugees respectively. In one study researchers have focused on specific uses and certain applications, like how refugees make use of social media on their journeys and what

constitutes as trustworthy information as the pending fear of government surveillance can restrict the uses of the smartphones (Dekker, Engbersen, Klaver, & Vonk, 2018, p. 1). In their 2018 research paper Gillespie et. al investigates the role of smartphones in the journeys of Syrian refugees with the focus on risks and possibilities in the passage to Europe (Gillespie, Osseiran, & Cheesman, 2018). Through what they call an infrastructural lens they look at the “dialectical dynamics of opportunity and vulnerability, and the forms of resilience and solidarity, that arise as forced migration and digital connectivity coincide” (Gillespie et al., 2018, p. 1). The study emphasises the positive abilities obtained for refugees through the smartphones connectivity and infrastructure, but also the risks it represents through possible surveillance. In both studies the use of qualitative interviews with refugees highlight the importance of the insight of refugees themselves, an approach I have chosen to adopt myself. I will draw on the above-mentioned articles in my own conclusions of the thesis due to the relevance to my own findings.

Other research projects from the private industry such as one performed by GSMA, an organisation representing the interest of mobile phone operators worldwide, have emphasised the positive opportunities like that of digital tools and platforms that have provided and can continue to be directly aimed at helping refugees, which have been particularly popular with helping- and volunteer organisations (GSMA, 2017). This shows the way technology is increasingly integrated into humanitarian work and provides the need to research how such digital infrastructures influence the field.

1.4.1 Humanitarian technology and STS – a knowledge gap

The way STS have been approaching social issues are often related to contexts where technology is implemented in development contexts, focusing on translations and the social benefits and consequences of technology in new settings like that of adopting technologies from so-called developed countries to less-developed countries as seen in Akrich (1992) or De Laet & Mol (2000). Akrich, with the basis of fieldwork in what she categorises as less developed-countries investigates the implementation of technologies like a photoelectric lighting-kit and electricity infrastructures in African countries. In looking at the scripts of the different technologies in connection to the way users interpret this script, the situations create different effects or “causes” like the production of non-users or situations of moral delegation. Other studies explicitly investigating themes of social relevance have been that of

Winner (1980) focusing on how technology can maintain or constitute certain social structures like racial discrimination. Closely related to the studies of technology in practice is the focus on user- and care studies, deriving from the concept of ANT. Within user studies the focus is on how the users interpret technology and how it plays out through practice. However, the explicit focus on humanitarian technology and humanitarian aid is a theme representing a knowledge gap within the field of STS research. I believe STS and the field of humanitarian technology makes a productive conjugal as the cross-disciplinary approach takes into consideration the complex situation of displacement involving aspects such as politics, social needs and technology. In the context of humanitarian technology one aim of this thesis will thus be that of providing expanded insight in how one can approach the studies of digital objects in the case of displacement and aid.

1.4.2 A matter of urgency

The fall of 2015 marked the beginning of a political and humanitarian crisis globally, in that nations and politicians as well as individuals were faced with a number of growing social challenges relating to the refugee crisis. The sense of urgency within the European communities can be said to be decreasing, as the strain on infrastructure and agenda appears to be taking a political backseat. However, the need to address the issue of how to manage the crisis is very much present. In addition to the global numbers of refugees being record high, the political debate is also changing the scenery. The new political processes and events that have taken part in the last few years related to how we re going to handle global migration are only just opening up the new relationships and constellations between humans and technology.

There have been a number of policy-implementations in many ways focused on closing borders and restricting movement across to the critical European countries. This effect can from some perspectives be viewed as a political attempt at restricting the movement and hence, resulting in the need to address the situation at the place where the refugees actually are residing. One way of approaching the situation is through the use of technologies such as smartphones. One can see the way this mind-set is being implemented into aid, as there are several help organisations dedicated to handing out cellphones and smartphones. In addition there are initiatives in the working like the distribution of digital money, opportunities for education and the general comfort of staying in touch with family and friends that can

provide the refugees with critical recourses, information and knowledge. However, like I have mentioned, there is a need to further investigate how such technologies work on different levels, and remain critical to the not so visible effects and consequences of technology the context of displacement. The questions I wish to address are thus related to how pressing social challenges are being approached, and what role technology plays in this.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is organised in seven chapters. In the introductory chapter I set the context and present the research questions. Chapter two introduces the theoretical framework, focusing on the field of Science and Technology Studies (STS) that make up the scholarly field of which the thesis is inspired. The framework of material semiotics is thus presented with the theories of actor-Network theory, script and fluid technologies. Chapter three presents the methodological approach of how I have gathered my empirical data and how it has been analysed, as well as the process of accessing the field and ethical the following considerations. Chapter four answers the first sub-question on what constitutes the most important aspects of the smartphone and why. The chapter is mainly empirical, and will in short introduce the most central aspects of the data gathered. In addition it raises some preliminary questions regarding the following three analytical chapters, which is focused around the second sub-question, how the actors of the network of displacement relate to each other.

Chapter five focuses on the mobility aspects of the connections in the network of displacement, in regards to the way it considers new preconditions for mobility. The chapter also takes into consideration the aspect of the smartphone as a liminal device, and the trajectory of a refugee as a liminal phase. In chapter six the aspect of care-relations are discussed, both in the sense of meeting the emotional needs of refugees but also how it enables crucial new forms of relationships. In chapter seven considers the aspect of connectivity. Both positive and negative aspects of connectivity are discussed. Chapter eight will tie the empirical and analytical considerations presented in the previous chapters together in a discussion drawing on existing research and current issues related to humanitarian technology. In chapter nine I answer the research questions and comment on the theoretical and policy implications this study contributes to.

2 A theoretical framework for material semiotics

In the introductory chapter I have stated that this thesis will study the use of smartphones in a specific context that I have decided to call the network of displacement. In order to answer the research questions a set of analytical tools are needed to approach the gathering of data, as well as the analysis. Because the approach will be to investigate the way relationships between technological object and actors are formed and changed in this context, a relational framework of material semiotics and theories related to this tradition will be used. The limitations of the framework will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

This thesis is positioned within the field of Science and Technology Studies (STS). I argue STS provides a useful analytical approach in the study of relationships between technological objects and actors in its ability to critically view technologies and their social functionalities and hence contribute to understanding what technologies can do to relationships between actors and objects. Therefore I will start this chapter by introducing the STS-tradition, before moving on to the theoretical framework.

2.1 Science and technology studies – a critical view on technology

Science and technology studies (STS) are a relatively new scholarly field compared to other social sciences like sociology and anthropology. However, in its effort to approach studies of society through a slightly different lens, STS draws extensively on these other more traditional fields. From sociology, it has embraced the constructivist approach and interpretive flexibility of facts and social actions and processes. From anthropology it has adopted the ethnographic methods and historical view on societal development. What STS provides as an interdisciplinary field of research, are studies of science, technology and society and the relationship between them. The STS approach has mainly been occupied with the reciprocal relationship between science, technology and society as in how science and technology actively shape society, as well as how society shape science and technology. A central aspect of STS then is that it moves away from both technology determinism and social constructivism as separate perspectives, but rather accentuates the way science,

technology and society continuously co-produce one another (Jasanoff, 2004). Thus STS explores objects and practices, and in the extension the social processes deriving from these practices. One can claim that STS provides a critical view on technology and technological objects in that it rejects the concept of technology as independent from the social processes of which it is included. It is this critical approach I will draw on in approaching the study of technology in the context of displacement.

2.2 Actor- Network Theory

Deriving from work on actor oriented practice perspective in STS, the terminology and theory related to material semiotics and Actor-network theory (ANT) was further developed. One can say that the framework of ANT is based within a material semiotic line of research where materiality plays the leading role (Skjølsvold, 2015, p. 68).

The emergence of ANT as a framework derived from attempts by researchers such as Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, to understand the processes of science and technology. It is considered a general social theory centred on technoscience rather than just a theory of technoscience. The focus of ANT is the creation of larger and stronger networks of associations motivated by the interests of actors, and how these relate to one another. However, the actors of ANT are heterogeneous in that they include both human and non-human entities, the latter often referred to as actants (Sismondo, 2010, p. 81). The goal of ANT is to explain how humans and non-humans gain agency, how agency circulates in a network and what the actors and actants do or how they act for certain assemblages to arise (Skjølsvold, 2015, p. 91). As a consequence of the focus on the actions of participants in the network creating effects, the concept of “following the actors” tends to guide the methodological approach of research based on ANT. The task of the sociologist is thus to study the connections keeping the network together, and the actors that constitutes, and simultaneously is constituted by networks.

Since the emerging of ANT, however, the use of the concept has remained unfocused and even its developers, like John Law, have among other things, criticised usage in its ability to appear stabilised (Gad & Bruun Jensen, 2007, p. 93). In a so-called post-ANT manner, the approaches have therefore been modified and its empirical objects of analysis have in a greater degree moved from science in the laboratories to society and its complexities as a

whole. As one of the main arguments of ANT is how the world is diverse and complex, its entities, theories included, shift and change from practice to practice (Gad & Bruun Jensen, 2007, p. 94). However, even though ANT is in its intended use fluid, certain principles remain central. The central aspect of material or relational semiotics is the way all things are made meaningful in its relation to other things and thus rejects dualisms such as human/non-human, true/false, micro/macro. This generalised symmetry implicates that the capabilities and characteristics of non-human or human actors are effects of the activities, the performativity, of networks (Callon 1986 in Gad & Bruun Jensen, 2007, pp. 95–96).

In the context of ANT, I will approach the empirical material in this thesis with an assumption of looking at the role of the smartphone as an actor in the network of displacement, that in the meeting with other actors create certain effects that in turn define the network and its opportunities. The symmetric aspect will be a way of looking at the actors and actants in the network not as separate entities, but as mutually dependent in the creation of the relationships it possesses. As ANT can be used both as a theoretical approach and as a method of gathering data, the practical use of the framework differs from study to study. ANT is not considered one thing, but rather a vocabulary and a set of tools that are being used in many different ways (Asdal, Brenna, & Moser, 2001, p. 53). Thus, I have chosen to look at ANT more as a framework and “set of glasses” that governs the view of technology as actors and to use a selection of theoretical terminology deriving from the framework to explain the way they work together.

2.3 Scripted technology

In the co-constructionist STS-tradition of looking at technology, *script* accentuates the fact that technology is not created independently from its surroundings, and that the designers of technology in its creation follow certain preconceived notions about the intended users of the technology. Madeleine Akrich (1992) has in her approach to the concept, focused on the use and context of technology where technology is made to have certain effects in the meeting point between the designers intended or *inscribed* vision of the technology and the actual use of the technology (Akrich, 1992, p. 208). She combines the importance of the inscribed vision, the actual use, the social effect and the way the technology itself is developed through an adjustment process between designers and all users. She states “[it is] the users reactions that give body to the designers project, and the way in which the users real environment is in

part specified by the introduction of a new piece of equipment” (Akrich, 1992, p. 209). However, it is not only productive to analyse the negotiations between the designer and the intended user of the technology. Thus Akrich stresses the process of analysing the relationship between the designer, the intended user, the *actual* user and the so-called *non-user*. This process of gathering inventory and analysing the mechanics of the relation between the form and meaning constituted by a technical object is referred to as de-scription (Akrich, 1992, p. 209). According to Akrich, in the process of negotiation between the intended user and the real user these mechanisms can also, intentionally or unintentionally, produce *non-users* of the technology through exclusion and the inability to use the technology (1992: 208-209). It is only when the designers intended script is acted out, either in conformity to this intended use or not, that an integrated network of technical objects and actors is stabilised (Akrich 1992: 222).

The smartphone, as described in the introduction, can be considered having several different designers and thus a vague and distant design process. As such, I will rather than looking at the designers intentions explicitly, investigate what relationships the smartphone enables. The approach will be looking at it as a technology within a new context as a form of technology transfer where the object and its capabilities are negotiated and certain effects that are essential for the network to function are created. I claim that the most important/distinct capabilities of the smartphone are its flexibility/fluidity and connectivity. I will use script in the sense that I will make some assumptions about the intended script of the smartphone as a flexible, and perhaps democratic device, with certain capabilities that are considered essential in the context of displacement. What I want to investigate is then how the script of the smartphone can be considered humanitarian and what negotiations take place between the objects and the users and what effects these negotiations produce.

2.4 Flexible and fluid technology

In investigating how a technology works in specific contexts one can speak of what makes it an “appropriate” technology, or in other words, what makes the script of the technology a success in the interaction with the users. In their study of the Zimbabwe Bush Pump- B type, De Laet & Mol investigates what makes this technology an appropriate technology (2000). As it turns out, it is the *fluidity* of the Bush-Pump that makes it work in its specific context, in terms of its fluid boundaries, working order and maker. Thus, the authors argue, a flexible

object not too rigorously bound may prove to be stronger than an object that is firm (De Laet & Mol, 2000, p. 225). One of the central aspects they consider is the way the Bush Pump carries out its *actorship* through this fluidity. Its identity is not just one thing; it is a mechanical object, a health promoter and a nation-building apparatus and a hydraulic system all at once and its fluid qualities lies in its ability to move between these identities (De Laet & Mol, 2000, p. 252). In regard to its *workings*, the aspect of whether its activities are successful is not a binary matter. Rather, as it provides water, the pump may not yet bring health as it may provide it during the rain season but not the dry season. However in its fluidity, it also stakes into consideration its own breakdown in the possibility of replacing or deploy alternative components, and sometimes work even if some a bolt falls out (De Laet & Mol, 2000, p. 252).

As a part of their study, De Laet & Mol discusses the normative aspect of the praise of a fluid technology. In their words, the “good” of a technology may not be universal, and thus must be considered dependent on the case of which it is implemented (De Laet & Mol, 2000, p. 253). In the context of this thesis, I argue the concept of “fluid” or flexible technology is appropriate as I argue the smartphone in its own flexibility, like the bush pump, can provide a variety of effects on the relations in the network of displacement. As such I will also take into consideration the normative aspects of this flexibility in the discussion. In my analysis, I will transfer the concept of fluidity onto the situation of the refugees as well as the object in question, the smartphone, as I will focus on the way the refugees themselves can be considered also fluid entities.

2.5 Cyborg

In actualising the theme of digital technology and human relations Donna Haraway’s concept of *cyborg* becomes relevant in its ability to make some pre-notions on how the subject is considered in relation to the interconnectedness of the digital and humans (1984). In the words of Danholt and Kiilerich Madsen, the concept involves a post-humanistic perception where one speaks of a decentralisation of the subject and a shifting in the relationship between humans, technology and society (2007, p. 183) . The concept emphasises how the separation between human and technology is vanishing in contemporary society, and the notion of human and machine as connected, challenging the humanistic understanding of man as an independent subject different from technology and society. I will to some extent draw

on this concept to explain the connections between refugees and smartphones in the sense that they, like many others in present time, are represented as subjects both in themselves and in the technology used, showing how our lives are lived through and also lived in technology. This idea, however, is intended to describe only this context, in delineating the range of analysis for this thesis I will specifically draw on the example of refugees and smartphones.

2.6 Care

In the context of this study I will also make use of the concept of care. In the studies of technology the aspect of how it can make the lives of people easier if often approached. The concept of care is often related to that of welfare technologies and healthcare, but have also been adopted to studies in other academic fields such as sociology, anthropology and geography (Mol, Moser, & Pols, 2010). The concept of warm care is often considered as something other than that of cold technology, in addition the concept of passive receiver and active provider of care is not a relevant approach, but the focus is often at the reciprocal relationship (Mol et al., 2010, p. 16). I will in using the concept of care, not approaching it as a theoretical tradition on the studies of welfare technologies, but rather approach the concept in relation to how technology can contribute to relief and managing the precarious situation of displacement. I also adopt an independent interpretation of the concept in both exploring the *caring offfor* and also that of *taking care*.

2.7 Liminality

In supporting the framework of material semiotics, I will also use the concept of liminality. The concept of marginality or “liminality” can be adopted in the understanding of the way the experience of being in a state of emotional and physical precarity or uncertainty. In the traditional anthropological sense, liminality has been characterised as a part of passage rites, functioning as the phase between separation and re-aggregation (Turner, 1969). In the second phase, the intervening liminal period is characterised by the ritual subject or “passenger” being ambiguous as he passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state. Liminal personae or the liminal phase have certain attributes that are necessarily ambiguous, as they move outside the network of classifications that normally locate state and position in a cultural space (Turner, 1969, p. 95). Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are *betwixt and between* the positions that make up a society like law, custom and convention. I will draw on this concept in order to refer to the ambiguous

situation the displaced move through and the way the process can be a phase of which one is faced with the investigation of ones own place in the social world.

2.8 Summary: A theoretical framework for material semiotics

In this chapter I have presented the theoretical framework for this thesis, focused around material semiotics, drawing on different levels and aspects of objects-human interaction. The main approach will thus be how technological objects constitute and are constituted by science and society, and vice versa.

The field of STS provides analytical recourses that are useful analytical recourses when studying the relationship between technology and the social. I have selected six concepts that will guide analysis in studying technological objects. This framework does not encompass everything that related to the study of technological objects, but it does enable this study as a particular case. These concepts are thus tools for analysing my findings. As the concepts will be relevant in different ways in the analysis, the concepts will however not be used symmetrically and interchangeably in the analysis and the discussion, when relevant. These concepts are script, fluid technologies, and care, liminality and cyborgs.

One aim of this thesis is also to encourage the use of STS theories in the field of humanitarian research and current political agendas tied to the humanitarian field. Since the use of technology is continuing to gain a central place within humanitarian work and politics, the need for existing theory and research on the techno-human relationship is increasingly needed to start answering questions on the impact and development of technology in this field.

I wish to examine the place of technology in the current migratory/refugee context, assuming there is a relevant correlation between how technology is used and the impact it has on the people using it. My approach is a mere fragment in the complex challenges of the global refugee crisis, which is one of the most challenging political, social and humanitarian situations we face today. However, the interdisciplinary focus and flexible theoretical and empirical tradition of STS should, as far as I am concerned be turned to examining precisely these types of challenges as the refugee crisis.

3 Methodological approach

In this chapter I will provide insight and reflect on how the research for this master thesis was carried out. I will describe the choice of case, methods for data collection, analysis, challenges, ethical considerations as well as assessing the quality of the study. The choices of methods have been made based on the research questions as they define what kind of methodological approach is the most appropriate. In line with existing research on the subject, the need for a flexible, open approach have been prioritised as I take into consideration both technical and social elements in looking at a technological device in a specific social setting.

The process of approaching this theme started with an essay in the fall of 2016 based on a short article from Teknologirådet, published in 2016 stating the smartphone can function as a “life-line” for refugees. This resulted in an interest to follow the theme further, and gather my own empirical material. In approaching this thesis more specifically, I have investigated how the smartphone emerged as an important object in the context of humanitarian challenges in following media debates, and have then followed the object further in the meeting with other actors. Before going into more detail on the process of gathering data, I will present the methodological approach of case study.

3.1 Case study research

In its scope a case study is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and in a real-world context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident (Yin, 2014, p. 18). Secondly, the features of the case study encompass many variables triangulating data and the guiding of theoretical propositions in data collection and analysis. In short then, as you use the case study method you investigate a real-world phenomenon, taking into account the contextual conditions as pertinent to your case. The width of the sources, triangulating the data set, and prior theoretical propositions to guide the data are the key features. In approaching studies in STS specifically, the use of case is what Sergio Sismondo in the preface of “An introduction to Science and Technology studies” refers to as “the bread and butter” of the field (Sismondo, 2010). The focus of STS is to draw on practices in the social world to say something about how it is built and the relations in it, and hence the insights of the field grow out of the use

empirically grounded research. Almost all insight in the field of STS grows out of case studies and cases are turned to in order to learn central ideas and as guides to work through problems (Sismondo, 2010, p. viii). Most of the theoretical approaches central to the field derive from empirical studies of real world phenomenon, like that of the laboratory-studies of Latour and Woolgar (Latour & Woolgar, 1986).

In this study I have used an explanatory case study approach. The goal of exploratory case studies is to discover new understandings of a phenomenon in its natural form (Yin, 2014, pp. 5–14). These types of case studies are often pre-studies to bigger research projects and are often open and undetermined before fieldwork and data gathering. I found this approach to be suitable for this study due to my decision to let the empirical material gathered guide the analytical and theoretical decision, although some theoretical decisions were made prior to the fieldwork. This study can thus be used as a premise for further research on this type of theoretical approach and particular topic. Through interviews the aspects of the smartphone, both instrumental and social in the context of use in their home countries, on the journey and in arriving in Norway were explored. Based on these situations, general themes of use and need emerged, and became the basis for the analytic categories. Some of the themes that emerged were that of practical and emotional needs like navigation and contact with family. I will go more into detail on this in the section on analysis.

3.2 Methods for gathering data

The choice of theme was like I have mentioned grounded in the interest of contributing to a field of research where the focus is to gain knowledge of the way technology plays a part in the context of humanitarian crisis such as displacement. The process of gathering data was characterised by an exploratory approach, which allowed me to follow the objects of analysis and thus let the analytical categories grow from the empirical material. My prior knowledge to the field opened for possibilities of access and knowledge about the group of interviewees.

3.2.1 Access

One of the reasons for me to pursue this project was my knowledge of the theme through previous work experience. During this period I became familiar with both processes and individuals in private and the public areas of asylum-work in Norway. This opened up for opportunities of, among others, access to the field and the informants. In my previous work, I

had made acquaintances with administrative employees at an institution working with refugees. In the early stages of the project, I sent an email requesting a meeting where we could discuss my project and a possibly doing interviews with residents at the centre. As the centre has been working with other educational instances, they were inclined to letting me doing interviews with the resident. However as the interviews were to be conducted at the centre, an approval from UDI was required. This aspect, as well as my positionality, will be discussed more in depth in the section on ethical dilemmas. After I got a positive response from the centre, I was required to apply for approval at the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) before I could begin the process of locating potential interviewees. This application, along with my own had to be sent to UDI for administering. The process of getting the approval was set to four to six weeks, which ended up delaying the project and made me realise I should have applied sooner than I did. As a part of this process, the application from NSD had to be revised after the submission, as the sensitive nature of my project required the aspects of privacy further elaborated. Besides, the situation of following up the informants after the project was conducted, needed to be addressed. However, the access was granted both by NSD and by UDI.

After being granted the access at the institution of which the interviews were conducted, one of the requirements from NSD was the fact that the employees at the centre could not have access to the information about who would potentially be interviewed for the thesis and the recommendation was that the contact between the interviewees and myself should be direct. I discussed the tactics of gathering informants with the administration at the institution, and they made a note of the fact that the overturn of people at the centre is quite high and that they recommended me doing interviews on the spot rather than spending much time trying to plan a schedule. As I did not have any prior knowledge of any particular individuals I could interview, my tactics initially ended up being just spending time at the facility with note-pad in hand. To get in contact with potential candidates for interview, I attended one language course and one “Café” organised by a volunteer organisation. I did this to be able to establish myself as a known character at the centre and to get the opportunity to talk to people who knew the English language. English was often used to communicate between the staff and the informants during volunteer attendance. This tactic proved to be successful, as I was able to get in contact with the residents in a casual and relaxing environment. I will further describe the process of selecting informants below.

3.2.2 Selecting informants

The choice of interviews with refugees as the main source of empirical material, based on my interest in the theme derived from the usage of smartphones in a context of displacement. In addition this choice contributed to providing a platform for a group of people whose voices are rarely heard in the context of policy and research. Initially I considered the possibility of doing field work in another location abroad, but since the circumstances proved to be more challenging than anticipated due to both access and relevance I ended up selecting informants that were located in Norway. One of the other requirements of me selecting informants was the premise that they spoke English as I did not have any knowledge of other languages than Norwegian and English and I did not have personal knowledge of an eligible person or the finances to support the use of an interpreter. There were employees at the centre who offered to do interpretation for me, but as the instructions from NSD was that the employees at the centre could not have any knowledge of who I were to interview, I did not want to make use of this offer in order to make sure I stayed within the frames of the approval. Another reason for me choosing to interview refugees in Norway was the fact that they had already made the journey, assumingly by the use of some sort of technology like smartphones, and this could then almost guarantee that the individuals I would interview had knowledge of the theme in question.

At the location of the empirical gathering they had an “internet-room” with access to wifi, and I was told this room was often in use as people would sit and use their phones to go online. One of my first tactics then, was to just to go to this room and try and talk to people. I was a bit uneasy about how I should open for a conversation about smartphones and ended up looking for people who had smartphones and just go up to them asking if they knew how to speak English, as that was a requirement for the conversation to continue. Another tactic was that I asked if people could help me translate my name from Norwegian to their own language, like Arabic, however this approach did not guarantee the level of spoken English for a possible interview. A third option became snowballing, where I asked if certain individuals had friends or acquaintances that spoke English and would be willing to do an interview. In the end, approaching people and asking if they spoke English and the snowballing method deemed to be the most successful way of gathering interviewees. I did not want to make a distinction early on regarding the origin of the potential interviewees, but

I had some assumptions regarding the origins of the majority of of possible informants. Eide et al. (2017) in their qualitative study on refugees and use of smartphones, have explicitly made a decision to talk to individuals by the use of their own language as they present an assumption regarding English-speaking refugees often being what they refer to as “elite”. These individuals are seen as from a background of significantly more economic and social capital, compared to others who are considered less privileged. My choice to interview English speaking individuals was based on my own much more limited options regarding language skills and means for conducting research. In this thesis I choose to not make a similar distinction between different categories of refugees as I consider their stories to be relevant for the case and scope of this particular study.

3.3 Qualitative interviews

The main method for gathering empirical material in this study has been through interviews. According to Dunn an interview is a data-gathering method “in which there is a spoken exchange of information”(Dunn, 2016, p. 149). Research interviews are essential to obtaining the views of the interviewee and also for them to reflect on their own experiences (Dunn, 2016, p. 150). Focusing on the interviewee’s point of view was important to gain knowledge about their personal experiences with the use of smartphones as well as their journeys travelling to Norway. Through seeking open response answers the interview can reveal what is relevant to the informant, which is one of the methods major strengths (Dunn, 2016, pp. 150–151). In my research I have focused on interviewing a group of people sharing the fact that they are refugees, seeking asylum in Norway. Thus their experiences were different, but there was common theme in that of the use of smartphones. As a researcher conducting interviews, the responses of individuals or even several individuals of a group cannot be used to say something true about the group as a whole, but rather as a part of or an extraction of a debate, situation or set of views. Through the interviews have aimed at gaining knowledge about the individual experiences of the informants and their reflections on a topic in need of further exploration. I have conducted six interviews with five informants with English speaking individuals at a centre for refugees.

The approach of the interviewees has been that of a biographical approach. A biographical approach concerns people’s stories and experience of everyday life and has a twofold purpose in its ability to provide the researcher with rich material to analyse while the interviewees

have an opportunity to learn about themselves (Bron & Thunborg, 2015, p. 2). My ambition in using a biographical approach have been that of providing rich context to the story of the interviewee, due to the sensitive nature of the group of informants. One of the ambitions of conducting biographic interviews is that of letting the interviewees freely tell their stories without being interrupted which gives a rich account of their lives, values and attitudes as well as how life events and experiences have and might influence their lives (Bron & Thunborg, 2015, p. 2). However, as my study was centred on a specific theme, I made use of a semi-structured interview guide that were chronologically based on the journey from being in the respondents home country, through the journey and lastly being in Norway, and how the smartphone were a part of these trajectories. This kept the conversation on track in the process of letting the interviewees telling their stories, as well as providing the ability to compare their stories in the analytical sense. This also provided the interviewees with guidance in the case that they didn't remember or unsure of what to share. The guide was in many ways detailed in that it addressed a number of potential situations, but during the interviews I only made use of the main questions and used the follow-up questions when necessary or the interviewees needed a direction for their stories. The level of

3.3.1 Conducting interviews

As I secured interviewees, I would early on present myself as well as the project, letting my agenda for being at the site of the research known. I also provided each interviewee with a consent form in English. Before the interview, I handed out a letter of information that explained the project more in detail and that they could use to prepare for the meeting. In the cases that the interview was done on the spot, I spent extra time explaining the project before the interview and also provided the interviewee with a project description. However, at the beginning of each meeting, I repeated the description and also made clear my position, and they're right to remain anonymous and to withdraw from the project at any time. The selection of interviewees consisted of five individuals. With the permission of the respondents, I made sound recordings of all of the interviews. Some of them even recorded parts of the conversations on their smartphones. The informants were from Eritrea, Somalia, two from Turkey and one from Syria. I ended up with doing two interviews with the respondent from Syria, ending at six separate interviews. I also made it clear that my ambition was to do a project and not interfere with their situation or possible applications with UDI or services at the centre. It was important to me to emphasise this, as there are

many volunteer organisations and others who provide help and assistance at the residents of the centre, and I did not want to be mistaken for possibly creating expectations of something I could not fulfil.

The interviews lasted from between thirty minutes up to two hours. On an average, the interviews lasted from one hour to an hour and a half. I tried to make the interview-situation in itself as comfortable as possible for the interviewees and brought biscuits and tea bags as well as provided pen and paper. Some interviewees made use of the notepad to write down words they were unsure about or to draw maps. I had the opportunity to conduct the interviews in a separate room with only the subject and myself, allowing for a quiet and private interview situation.

The interviewees

In the end I ended up interviewing four men and one woman. It was not ideal to have an unequal divide of men and women, but both due to time issues and the lack of access to women at the centre I decided it was better to go forward with the interviews I had performed. As mentioned, the informants were from Turkey, Syria, Somalia and Eritrea. In order to preserve the anonymity of the interviewees I have decided to only use their country of origin and not gender or age in connection to the quotes in the thesis, as these aspects are not relevant for the sake of this study. However, all the interviewees were between the ages of 28 – 42. They all had different stories and journeys, which also made the interviews different and which also illustrated the different uses of the smartphones. In a sense then, it was both many similarities but also a few individual differentiated stories that made the usage more explicit and underlined the individuality of the demography of the displaced which is often viewed as one whole in the context of media. The journeys of all the interviewees could be investigated individually, due to the compelling stories. They tell of critical border passing, dangerous routes and unwanted surveillance at the same time as beautiful cities and new friendships. Thus, their stories do not only refer to a precarious and dramatic journey, but can be seen to represent excerpts and the complexities from a lived life. In the thesis I will refer to the interviewees as both interviewees and respondents and will use these terms interchangeably.

3.4 Documents

According to Bowen (2009) document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing and evaluating documents, both printed and electronic and requires data to be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge. Documents that can be used in a qualitative analysis can, according to Bowen, take a number of forms and includes any written text like books, papers, journals, newspapers, public records, organisational and institutional files to mention some. In my thesis I have made use of various written and digital documents, mainly online news articles to follow the central events that made up the context of the theme of the thesis. I have also made use of some public records like that of consultation documents from the Norwegian government. Here I have mainly focused on content analysis as analytical format.

3.5 Assessing quality of the project

Through my previous experience with the field, reference to existing research of the theme in question and interviewing users of the technology in question in a relevant context, the validity of this study is enhanced. Through conducting interviews, the oral accounts from the informants could be documented and checked against documents or oral accounts from other informants. The fact that I ended up interviewing individuals with different backgrounds and nationality, the theme could be placed in a context across cultural barriers, showing both corresponding and conflicting aspects, for instance that of nationality. Even though this was not the main focus of the thesis, the information provided interesting findings that hopefully can provide possibilities of further exploration, like accounts on the technological divide between the Africa, Europe and the Middle East. In considering trustworthy research, the external validity is central. The concept of external validity considers defining the domain to which a study's findings can be transferred to other contexts In qualitative research statistical generalisations are rarely a goal in itself, but the focus is rather on analytical generalisations. Analytical generalisations are based on argumentation that is theoretically informed, and is the most common form of generalisation in qualitative case studies (Yin, 2014, pp. 42–43). In my case, the study is based on similar projects approaching the same theme, and thus some of my findings have been confirmed in existing literature, enhancing the external validity of both my own and of existing research. In this case, the generalisability is related to the approach of studying a particular technology in a particular context, and not the explicit use of corresponding theory.

Reliability relates to the trustworthiness of the way the study is conducted (Thagaard, 2013, p. 22). Yin (2014, p. 44) holds that if a study is conducted the same way, another researcher should get the same results. Thus, the aspect of open and transparent documentation of research can be considered a goal. Throughout the thesis and methodological chapter especially, I have sought to provide detailed accounts of how I conducted my fieldwork, what challenges and limitations influences the data, and what main empirical findings makes up the analysis.

One of the challenges related to the reliability of my data gathering might be the number of informants gathered as well as the lack of gender-equality when it comes to the selection. My ambition going into the interviews was to be able to provide a representative selection and one that consisted of an approximate equal number of men, women and different age groups. However, as I began the process of gathering possible interviewees, this process deemed more challenging than anticipated as the number of people who first, were willing to be interviewed and second, had knowledge of English to the extent that one could lead a conversation based on it, were limited. As I started to spend time at the centre, talking to people, I found that people spoke English to a lesser degree than what I had anticipated. Initially, I wanted to focus on interviewing individuals who were from the countries most represented in the 2015 refugee crisis, that of the Middle Eastern countries. However, based on previous research and my own experiences, I knew I needed to extend my criteria to only include the knowledge of English as it would, as mentioned possibly prove challenging to be nationally specific. In addition, I was only able to interview one woman. One of the reasons was the fact that fewer women were available in the common areas where I mostly made attempts at gathering interested parties for my project, and more women declined the interview situation when approached them with the opportunity. However, I had the opportunity of for instance getting access to the designated “women-room” at the reception centre and here I made conversation with one woman who agreed to participate in the research by doing an interview.

3.6 Analysis

In studies deriving from ethnographic work and case studies like my own, the data are often unstructured in the sense that the information is not gathered through a set of finite

categories. From preparation to writing the conclusion, analysis takes place throughout the whole research process making the analytical categories grow from the process rather than through being pre-decided. Going into the project I had some ideas as to what theoretical categories would be interesting and made some pre-determined assumptions. However, these were adjusted during and after the empirical gathering as I found new themes during the interviews. During the interviews I listened to the interviewees trail of thought and what they were themes they brought up. I also wrote down some thoughts after each interview to make the thoughts I had throughout the interviews more explicit and make out the more relevant topics.

During the interviews I made sound recordings of the conversations, which made the transcribing easier, and I could also focus on the interview situation rather than keeping a lot of notes. I also transcribed the interviews myself through a transcribing program. This process provided more familiarity with the empirical material and made the mapping of topic of interest. I alternated between transcribing, re-read my notes and developing the theoretical framework and research questions. Based on the chosen concepts of the theoretical framework I coded the material, like that of fluid technologies and script and so on. Based on the initial impressions from the interviews I had some of the categories in mind prior to coding, but while going through the material new categories emerged, like that of liminality. The decision to organise the empirical material in four chapters, where three are more explicitly analytical, was a decision made during the analysis process rather than the process of gathering data. Among other things I found it useful have a chapter (chapter four) addressing the more instrumental qualities of the smartphone in providing the reader with enough knowledge in moving to the analysis. Thus, the research questions, the theoretical concepts and the chapters of analysis were gradually developed and adjusted in relation to each other.

3.7 Research as an incomplete process

In the process of pursuing this project, there were a variety of opportunities that could have been investigated and approached, but in social research there is only so much the researcher can obtain. A limitation to my project was the number of informants and the fact that I potentially could have gathered different results had I conducted fieldwork at a location of more precarity, like a refugee camp in Greece. The data gathered was still a sufficient

amount, however this represents only the opinions of a few people in a very specific context at a specific time. Had the group of informants been different, for instance only women, or I had conducted the interviews at a different time in their journeys, the results may have been completely different. As I write now many of the informants have been granted citizenships in Norway, and their lives and perspectives may have changed. In addition, technology is continuing to merge into the politics of displacement and humanitarian work. Hence, the research conducted only provide a small fragment of a specific situation, but through the project I aim to contribute to the debate on what role technology is and should play in the context of humanitarian crisis and politics.

3.8 Research ethics and ethical dilemmas

Through working on a project where the main object is to gain knowledge in individual life stories, any researcher must make different ethical considerations. In this particular case, the choice of informant group required more considerations than usual as the group is considered sensitive. First and foremost I have focused on maintaining my informants anonymity and treat the empirical material within the frames that is the basis for the guidelines of the Norwegian research committee. This includes full confidentiality of the researcher and that all information documented during the interview must be kept in a secure place, and deleted after the project has ended. I have also put emphasis on coding the material in such a way that possible personal information cannot be connected to individuals.

The process of applying for the approval proved to be more time consuming than what I had previously anticipated. The information they required was mostly related to the project itself, but one of the issues I especially needed to take into consideration was that of privacy. In regards to my application to NSD, they were explicit in the sense that they found the project to be potentially problematic due to the sensitive nature of the group of informants. In the application process they underlined the fact that UDI would need to approve my presence at the centre as well as the recruitment of potential subjects for interview, and that the administration at the reception centre could not grant this permission. Hence, I also needed to apply to UDI for the explicit approval of me spending time at the centre as well as me being able to do interviews. I had no intentions of interviewing children, and I made this explicit in the application to UDI and well as NSD. First and foremost I found it to be too sensitive for the interest of my thesis to include children in the study and I believed the information

provided would perhaps not be as relevant. In addition, the application process would be proving even more challenging, as children can be considered more vulnerable than adults. In addition to the approval of UDI, NSD emphasised the need for anonymity of the potential informants and hence I needed to emphasise that any participation in the project would not influence any possible application the individual had with UDI and that the administration at the centre as well as UDI would not gain knowledge as to who participates. The choice to participate should also not influence any services provided at the centre. The anonymity of informants was also the reason for me having to locate potential subjects by myself, without the help of the centre. Even though the process of gathering for instance English-speaking individuals would be more efficient with the help of the employees at the centre, it was not an option due to the importance of striving for the maintaining of ethical considerations. As the group I have decided to interview is considered sensitive, I have thus as mentioned, decided to anonymise the age and gender of the interviewees throughout the thesis.

In addition to the anonymity of the potential subjects for interview, the need to consider their potential need for supervision in the case of any physical or mental reactions was important to me. However, personally I could not provide any form of professional help and hence I made sure the centre could provide the individuals with suitable care if they needed it, which I communicated both to NSD and to the informants themselves. Keeping in mind the specific group of informants I have chosen for this project represents people who have experienced a number of physical and mental trials, my approach to the situation have been trying to maintain sensitive to their experiences and to the fact that there may not be all information that they would be willing to share. Given my previous knowledge of working with refugees I gained some knowledge that have given me an initial understanding of what kind of stories I may be witnessing. This experience includes hands on experience and contact with individuals, as well as knowledge about the administrative side of casework of asylum seekers. It is challenging to know what sort of psychosocial experiences even a volunteer informant would have, and thus I remained aware of any signs of reactions. In the end, none of my informants needed the assistance, at least to my knowledge, but a few of them emphasised that the interview had made them reflect more about their own experiences, which they appreciated.

The situation of interviewing refugees was both anticipated to be, and proved to be, an emotional challenge. I would consider myself a privileged person as I happened to be brought

up in Norway. In this sense it was a humbling experience to hear the stories of the interviewees. Even though the stories told influence the situation, it was important to me to maintain a professional approach and not let the emotional mark of the situation influence the empirical material gathered. My main objective was to gather research for a project and thus I needed to remain pragmatic in relation to the situation. However, this proved to be very challenging, and I often felt the need to verbally acknowledge events or information that I could see affected the interviewee. I tried to have an emphatic but toned down approach to the situation, as I did not want my reactions to influence the information provided by the informants.

I also needed to address the fact that in my interest in listen to individual's personal stories I could come across as a person eager to change their situation, and can possibly be viewed as someone that can help the informants resolve any personal challenges. As this was not my objective, I needed to emphasise my role as a researcher and student in that I had no formal influence in their asylum case or personal life. If the people I talked to experienced a relief and an improvement of their situation through the process of interviewing, this was a positive side effect of the project, but it was not an overall goal in itself. At the same time I strived to comply with research ethics of not inflicting any damage, mentally or physically, and during the interviews did assessments based on individual situations in the case of me getting the impression that the interviewees get reactions to the interview situation. It will be difficult both for myself and others to predict what sort of potential needs the informants will have as a potential reaction to sharing their stories and it was therefore important that I as a researcher had a humble and open approach to the their stories and experiences to ensure they are met with respect and compassion. As mentioned in the introduction, my previous experiences working with the migration-field have been something characterising the way I have approached the theme. In going into the project I needed to assess my own position as researcher and engaged citizen, and to be aware of not mixing the two. It was important to me to approach the research-situation mainly as a researcher and not going in to the process with pre-notions regarding the way different processes is done, thus stay as neutral as possible.

Since I am conducting a research project at an institution like the University of Oslo, I was aware I could come across as a person in a certain position and people can perhaps feel obligated to participate. I experienced, however that people were generally interested in the project and wanted to participate, and the ones that didn't were explicit about this fact. I was

also aware that my gender or ethnicity could influence the situation, and for instance made a point of wearing neutral clothes, like jeans and a sweater.

The intention of the project have not been to go into detail of specific sensitive information, but the nature of the interviews have opened for the uncovering of sensitive information not directly relevant for the project or information that can be potentially harmful to share. In these cases I have either left this parts out of the transcribing or coded the information in a way that it cannot be tied to the person. These aspects have also not been included in the thesis.

3.9 Summary

In this chapter I have described the methodological approach for this study. More specifically I have provided insight in how the study was conducted, analysed and what ethical considerations proved relevant for the context of interviewing a sensitive group such as refugees. I have categorised the study as an exploratory case study, of which I have provided a detailed account of the process of getting access to and collecting empirical material at a centre for refugees. This process have been time consuming and required reflections on my part, and rightly, as the chosen group of respondents is regarded as sensitive. The techniques used for collecting data have mainly been biographic interviews, in addition to some exploration of documents. The approach of conducting biographic interviews have been useful, as it has encompassed the complexity in the life stories of refugees and thus provided rich data. I have also addressed essential ethical concerns related to interviewing a sensitive group such as refugees, as well as reflections on the quality of the research and challenges faced in the process.

4 The smartphone as a socio-technical device

In this chapter I will address the first sub-question of the research questions. This relates to what constitutes as the most important qualities of the smartphone in the context of displacement, and why. The chapter will work as an introduction to the smartphone as a socio-technical device in the context of displacement and the relationships between the refugees and this device. It will also raise questions related to the way it works that will be further discussed in the following chapters. The technology, politics and human agents work together in creating the social world of contemporary displacement and migration, and in this process the technology both maintains and creates new forms of relationships that can be said to be a result of the multiple/flexible nature of the smartphone. This will be further discussed in relation to mobility, care and connectivity in the following chapters. What I want to make clear is the fact that the three aspects of mobility, care and connectivity are not independent from each other, but are integrated into the life trajectory of the refugee. However for the sake of analysis I have chosen to separate them.

In the words of Akrich, technological objects participate in building heterogeneous networks that bring together both human and non-human actors, and thus the task in studying these devices is to describe what role they play within the networks they are integrated. According to Akrich, the answer to what role they play in the networks has to do with the way these technological devices build, maintain and stabilise structure of links between diverse actants (Akrich, 1992, p. 206). Hence, I will focus on the way the smartphone relates to the actors in the context of displacement and how it influence number of relationships of different strength and extend between the actors in the network. Drawing on my research questions and quotes from my interviewees I will present some of the most essential effects of the smartphones workings and the way it is used in this particular context.

4.1 The workings of the smartphone

In approaching informants to talk about the subject of smartphones and flight many people found the subject to be interesting. When I sat down in the “internet-room” and started asking individuals questions about how they used their phones, they were easily engaged by the

topic. This was an indicator to me that the role of the technology and smartphones was important in their lives, an assumption that was confirmed during all the interviews. When asked about how they viewed the smartphone in their lives in general and in the case of leaving their home countries especially, all of the informants were explicit in the sense that the smartphone provided a number of essential tools and opportunities for navigating and managing their life trajectory. However, a few aspects, both explicitly and analytically eventually emerged as problematic. These will be presented and discussed in the following chapters. Based on a number of quotes from the informants regarding their smartphones I have compiled a four main discussion points as to how the smartphone plays out as a socio-technical device and in what ways it emerges as an actor in the relationships within this network. What was made clear in the was how it holds a *variety* of important qualities; hence one of the interviewees explained it as follows:

“What I would call it? A bank of information” – Syria

When asked about the way the smartphone plays a part in their lives, all the respondents emphasise many different but also many corresponding aspects. What became clear to me in the way they talked about it was the fact that in the many different ways it was used, the smartphone contributed to managing their lives and the precarity of the situation they were going through. Like the quote above indicates, one important aspect of the smartphone was the fact that it could hold and reveal existing and new knowledge and information that was essential for both managing the day-to-day needs as well as specific solutions to challenges faced along the journey. The respondent from Syria explained how during their time staying in their hometown, the internet-connection and even electricity was cut on a regular basis. The electricity-shortage was in many cases managed by installing solar panels on the rooftops of houses and apartment buildings, but as the intake of electricity became reduced, larger electrical appliances such as TV’s could not be used, as they would overpower the system. However, smartphones and mobile phones could be charged and thus used to stay in contact with family as well as following the news and stay informed about the situation in their country.

The respondent from Somalia explained how they, in lack of being able to leave their house, made close friends and even learned how to speak English through the use of their smartphone before leaving their home country. In Turkey, one of the respondents described having to live

in hiding for a year while internally displaced due to having been identified as a member of a group categorised as a threat to the government. The respondent explains they could not have managed without their smartphone as they could for instance get in contact with individuals that could help without having to ring their doorbell and expose both themselves and others to danger.

All the interviewees emphasised the need to stay in touch with family and friends during the journey as one of the most important aspects of owning a smartphone. In this way, the uncertainty and precarity of being on the run and often not knowing what would happen could in some sense be managed by staying in contact with loved ones. In addition, staying connected and being able to make use of internet-based tools such as digital maps and messaging-services like WhatsApp could provide information and help individuals navigate in the direct sense while for instance crossing a border, and also stay in contact with “helpers” that could assist them in moving between places. In the interviews, many different aspects of smartphone usage became apparent, and in an effort to systematise the information gathered, I have compiled some categories where I will explain the most important usage of the smartphones and raise some questions as to how this influences the relationships in the network.

4.1.1 Navigation, passing borders and communication

In the interviews, the initial time spent was focused on providing a trustworthy relationship between myself and the interviewee and also an introduction to the theme. As such, the questions were more instrumental in regards to what particular aspects of capabilities of the smartphone that was most important to the people I interviewed. In this part of the interview I often asked the interviewee what they used their smartphones for the most on their journeys and one of the aspects that was most highlighted as important was the need for navigation and communication, as the journeys could be navigated and organised through contact with essential “helpers” along the way. As many of the interviewees had made their journeys crossing borders by foot into new countries being able to orientate oneself in his or her surroundings became paramount. The interviewee from Syria explained the way the smartphone became essential in moving away from the Turkish border after crossing from Syria:

“My problem was that I couldn’t complete my journey...I didn’t know east and west, I didn’t know where I have to go because it’s not my land. And the first step for me was to move away from the Syrian border, form the wall to make myself safe. If I were to be arrested they will send me back. That was the first. So I turn on my mobile phone” – Syria

An important aspect for the people in this case, is that navigating is not just a way of making the journey possible, but it is also an essential part of staying safe and avoiding pending dangers like that of being captured by guards and possibly being sent back to their home countries. As most people in this situation leave their home countries illegally, they often await great risks of potentially returning home, both in the sense that they can be prosecuted by their own governments but also in a more general sense that they risk being victims of war and violence by even staying in their home countries. Another interviewee from Turkey explained how they used the smartphone for “corresponding needs”, in the sense that it provided a platform both for organising, but also for the way of moving in and out of different forms of relationships that could be both personal, like family and friends, as well as practical in that it allowed for contact with “helpers”.

These “helpers” are in some cases out to exploit the people in need of the help enabled by the network, and this raises another set of questions related to the agency and freedom of the people who are considered refugees. The smartphone moves in the sphere between a personal device and a facilitator in a network of relationships they need to make the journey possible. The use of smartphones thus enables the individual to navigate their journeys in a way that is more informed and perhaps thus increases their agency.

4.1.2 Family, friends and memories

Another aspect of the usage of the smartphones in the lives of the refugees was explained in the way the need to stay in touch with family and friends were highlighted as one of the most important. As the lives of refugees are filled with uncertainty of where to go and what to make of your surroundings, being able to stay in contact with family and friends is explained as an important factor of even managing the journey in itself as the contact provides emotional support and feeling of care in a setting where you often need to consider only how to survive. In the case of my interviewees this was probably the aspect most highlighted as essential, being able to communicate to your family that you are safe and vice versa. In

addition to I being a means for communication, the smartphone in itself can be used as a personal device and a place to store both memories, interests and store personal information. One of the respondents described the phone as a “partner in crime”:

“ [...] You can write and tell it whatever you want, and it doesn't tell anyone [...] it's your best friend actually, it keeps your memories and pictures and maybe your recordings and everything” - Somalia

In this sense, the phone does not only allow you to stay in contact with family and friends but can in itself be a place for storing memories and thus provide ease to the situation. Like the respondent above, some of the interviewees described the way it can store memories from your previous life and thus function as what Eide et.al (2017) refers to as a “memory bank”. For instance, the ability to precisely take a picture and send it to loved-ones is an important way of managing both own and their family's uncertainties. In this sense, the smartphone also enables important connections and the managing of precarity through meeting the more emotional needs of people in the challenging situation as that of being a refugee.

This brings to the table questions on what the smartphone is as an object. Marketed as a personal device, the smartphone is moving into becoming an object providing care and could in this aspect even be seen as a form of welfare technology. What does this do to the way we view technology in care-contexts? In describing the smartphone as “a best friend” it gains anthropomorphic qualities, becoming a living thing able to provide support in itself, in its ability to work in correspondence with the interests and wishes of the user. This can also be in the sense that it creates a bond of trust between the user and the object in the way it is expected to keep information. In addition the smartphone follows the people through an emotional, physical and political journey, where the object is used to manage these trajectories. In this sense it can be compared to that of a liminal object in the anthropological sense, providing the tools needed to move through the refugee state.

4.1.3 Education, building capabilities and leisure

In addition to the smartphone being an object meeting practical and emotional needs of refugees, the smartphones are also described as important in the sense that they are used to

gather and process new knowledge and to gain new capabilities. One of the interviewees described the way they used the smartphone to watch videos and learning about Norway or other countries moving to and through them. The phone was also used to view videos of the Norwegian application system and learning what would happen when arriving in Norway. Thus they felt more prepared in trying to make sense of the reception process after arriving. The smartphones are also used for more leisureed activities such as watching movies and sometimes playing games. Most of the respondents however, emphasised the fact that it was more often than not aimed at educational films or practical tasks such as getting information about the application process online. One respondent talked about how they rarely used the phone for other things than calling their family in Somalia, while on the journey, and that their son was the one using it the most:

"[...] He uses it to listen to baby songs, the ABC-things on YouTube, the colours, the numbers, and now he is learning because he is repeating the knowledge like the ABC" –
Somalia

This was both an activity to keep the son busy, and in addition to him learning things he may not have had access to in the case of the respondent not having the opportunity to bring a smartphone on the journey. In this sense, the educational effects are extended to the son. The informant from Eritrea explained how they had used the time after arriving in Norway to work on getting two certifications in web development and was currently working on getting a third, this being gained through using their phone and computer. When asked to describe the smartphone they used the words "a small world" explaining this with the fact that it is "[...] always movement inside it". However, even though many of the informants acknowledge the fact that the smartphone provides almost endless options for acquiring new knowledge, most of them are quick to specify that most use is intended and goal-oriented often explaining it with phrases like "I don't want to waste time". Several respondents used this phrase as they often indicated the situation had been a necessary evil, and something they felt had taken up too much time in their lives. This was also often tied to their experiences in their home countries and not just in the journey. This can perhaps show the way the state of being a refugee is often considered something in between things, and a period of their lives where they feel like they are neither here nor there, similar to that of being in a liminal state. In this sense, the smartphone contributes to focusing their priorities and becomes a tool for building on the capabilities they themselves consider important.

However, there is much frustration tied to this aspect of for instance not being able to use their skills and to contribute in the workforce or more specialised education after having arrived. When leaving their homes for the prospect of seeking asylum in a new country, the decision to leave has often been one where you have come to terms with possibly not being able to return. Many of the interviewees explained how they felt restless in the situation they found themselves in, awaiting response or answers regarding their application and ability to start their new lives. Even though most refugees today are either internally displaced or residing in neighbouring countries, the ones actually making the journey have decided to do so based on a need or wish and thus wish to gain residency in another country. Due to European laws such as the Dublin- regulation (Arbeids-og inkluderingsdepartementet, 2017) as well as the closed borders to Europe, the choice of country for your application is important and often one that people spent much time contemplating.

Effects of the way smartphones have influenced movement, can be exemplified in the way social media is gradually becoming a way for governments to communicate and to reach their audiences, for instance communicating laws and regulations that will impact the way refugees are received and treated in the respective countries. Being able to navigate these international agreements, decisions, laws and regulations is an essential capability needed to move. Several of the informants explained the fact that they had previously changed their decision to go to Norway several times, for instance due to rumours and news articles on the way the processes worked, which they learned through their smartphones.

The smartphone into politics

During the Arab spring and the escalating situation in the Mediterranean Sea in 2015-2016, the smartphone and its actorship were closely tied to the development of the situations and to democracy, addressing the relationship between the helper and the helped. In one sense the phone became a symbol of the increasingly enabled citizen, a weapon in hand against the suppressing powers of inequality. In the sense of actorship, the smartphone could start to establish its active role as liberator or enabler for “the weak”. A few years later it became the face of digitally driven mass-migration, like mentioned in the introduction, placed in the debate between the helper and the helped (Habekuß & Schmitt, 2015). In the case of the Norwegian Immigration act, the smartphone has become inscribed into politics, changing its agency and the agency of the refugee. In a hearing document published by the Norwegian

Ministry of Justice and Public Security January 2017 they present a request making changes to the Immigration Act in relation to visitation and examination of asylum seekers at registration (Justis- og beredskapsdepartementet, 2017). The document clearly states the role of technology in today's society is an integrated part of the lives of almost everyone, including displaced people and thus it should be explicitly incorporated in the process. As such, the actorship of the smartphone has been acknowledged through the power of policy, legitimising its agency.

4.1.4 Precarious life, precarious device?

Even though most of the interviewees expressed positive attitudes towards the use of smartphones, some also highlighted some challenging aspects. The continuing integration of digital devices and solutions in society connects people in a much more broad sense than what has been seen before. Governments are coming up with solutions to for instance approach the challenges of displacement through digital infrastructure and programs aimed at making the process both easier and more straightforward, like that of Norway. However, the approach to incorporate the digital in increasing aspects of life has its consequences, not only for the displaced themselves but for the whole network of relationships. One of these aspects was emphasised through the stories of some of the respondents, where they highlighted the way the use of smartphones did not only have a positive effect on their agency and relationships.

One of the respondents from Turkey exemplified the way the infrastructure and connectedness of digital devices could be used in a way that exposed and left the users more vulnerable to conflicts in the relationships in the network. The respondent told the story of having been suspected of affiliations with a group called *Gülenists*; a group in conflict with the sitting government and thus the respondent were at risk of being arrested. The respondent explained how they were being monitored and watched by the government, and that there was a certain encrypted messaging application called Bylock that was announced illegal on the grounds of association with the terrorist movement by the government in 2016. Anyone that downloaded the application or were in possession of the application after this time could potentially be seen as a threat to the government, or a member of a terrorist organisation and thus being arrested. Allegedly, people were detained or dismissed from their jobs suspected of being linked to the Gülenist movement, led by the preacher Fetullah Gülen, who lives in

the US and has been accused of orchestrating attempted uprising in the country (Bowcott, 2017). The respondent thus explains how the smartphone could potentially be a “danger tool” for certain individuals:

"In turkey smart mobiles are both a danger and a freedom tool. Signals, Internet traffic, comments on social media over mobile are opportunities for governments to detect potential opponents. At the same time if you use it cautiously, as I told you before, if you use a VPN, it is the only way to reach western media to break the government propaganda” – Turkey

This quote indicates emerging challenges globally with the close-knit processes of politics and the digital, as the way they live our lives through the digital sphere is increasingly becoming a part of how politics is done. Another example related to this situation is the way the smartphones and digital traces are incorporated into application processes of refugees in countries such as Norway, exemplifying how the boundaries between the digital and the physical life is blurred and seen as inseparable. As such then, the smartphone must negotiate its place between being a personal device, a liberator and a political instrument that can be used both in line with but also against the desires of the owner.

The way the digital and physical life is increasingly interchangeable can be related to Haraway’s (1984) concept of cyborgs, as it functions as an appropriate metaphor for the contemporary life we live with and through technology. The meeting point between the digital, the physical, the individual and politics is all a part in changing the way the narrative of both individuals as well as the grand narratives are being built and changed. The smartphone contributes to making a traceable line that in a sense makes up the storyline and the narrative of the person. This is one of the phones most important qualities, as you can keep essential information and memories like pictures and even documents stored on the phone.

All these different inscriptions contribute to the making of the narrative of the holder of the phone, but can also say something about the relationships the user has to other actors in the network. This is also one of the things that are used in the Norwegian context where the phones are searched through to piece together the history of the person. This information is then often used to decide whether a person is to be granted a residency in Norway or not. In this sense, then, the narrative of the user as represented in the smartphone, can be a potential

danger to the individual as their mission is to avoid being arrested or denied asylum. The phone can contribute to either the acceptance or denial of their application and thus this process can be seen as a setting where its actorship becomes visible.

As many refugees make their journeys alone the need for trustworthy information is often highlighted. As this is the case, most of my respondents explained how they predominantly tried to rely on information and contacts they got through family and friends, but in some cases the anonymous helpers are relied on as was the case for one of the informants while trying to secure essential travel documents. Likewise, there were stories of contact between people that failed in that they acquired money for then to vanish. These stories exemplifies the way the smartphone, in the context of displacement is not only one thing, rather many things; it is multiple and flexible. Also, its effects on agency and the relationships in the network shifts continually based on its place in the trajectory and thus it moves in and out of being an essential tool for survival and an object of which precarity is negotiated. This I will go more into detail in the following chapters.

4.2 Summary

In this chapter the aim has been to address the first research question in emphasising the different uses for the smartphone as described by the interviewees. This has been done by organising the material into categories based on the importance to the respondents, drawing on quotes from the interviews. Based on the biographic interviews with refugees, I have mapped a number of different aspects in which the smartphone is considered important. Some of the most important aspects have been that of navigation and family contact, as these aspects both manage their life trajectory physically as well as emotionally. In addition, an important quality of the smartphone is the possibility of providing information and opportunities of education, as well as storing information like memories. I have also addressed some issues regarding the smartphone, like that of being a so-called danger and freedom-tool. Thus, I have made some preliminary analytical considerations that will be addressed in the following analytical chapters.

5 Phones and people on the move

In this chapter, I will focus on the different aspects in which the smartphone enable mobility. In talking about smartphones with the interviewees, one of the emerging themes has been the way in which the smartphone allows for them to be able to make the journey across borders by combining different capabilities of the phone. In asking the interviewees about the most important aspects of the smartphone, almost all of the interviewees highlight the use of navigation and physical orientation as one of the most critical elements of the smartphone.

In this chapter I will focus on the different aspects in which the smartphone enable mobility. This includes the aspect of being able to navigate, in a literal sense (i.e. geographically), but also to navigate the precarity of their life trajectories. However, I will also look at the concept of mobility as that of mobility both moving *to* and *from* places and situations. In this chapter, I will also draw on the concept of liminality, here seen as a form of movement through relationships and belonging. The physical and emotional separation from home followed by the wish and efforts to integrate in a new country can be seen as a form of liminal process encompassing both emotional and physical conditions of the “before”, where the phone becomes a mediator in the separation, the liminality and the re-aggregation.

5.1 Moving to, moving from

The aspects of “being mobile” and being able to move from one place to another physically are essential in the sense that it gets you closer to your destination. However, like previously mentioned, it also guides them away from pending dangers that include the possibility of being arrested and sent back to either their own country or another place where they face either prosecution or being further exposed to violent environments.

5.1.1 Moving to - Mobility in maps and navigation

Even though most of the informants spent a considerable amount of time preparing for the journey, they all emphasised the uncertainties of the situation after they had left their homes. In many cases, the chosen route was identified through their lack of infrastructure, and dangerous terrains such as rivers, or even animals like hyenas, as explained by one of the respondents. Several of the interviewees explained how they had to navigate perilous border crossings, rivers or areas. Also, they often move into countries or cities they are not familiar

with, and thus navigation becomes essential. Besides, sometimes the border crossings were closed or moved for instance in the areas they were walls are built to slow down the flow of refugees crossings from neighbouring countries. The respondent from Syria explained how they used the GPS on their phone to navigate the route after having crossed the border to Turkey:

[...] And I open my Google maps, I check, and I get out the GPS, and I make the decision to go directly to the street because it will take me far away from the border” – Syria

In making use of applications such as digital maps, the journey can be more efficient in the sense that you can move the fastest possible way from one place to another. However, different navigation options are also tied to conditions that do not show up on the maps such as for instance, the results of political decisions to regulate the flow of people. One of the respondents explains how they followed three friends on parts of the journey, but then they decided to take a different route:

“Right now they are in Greece. They tried to go to Holland but the European border is closed for refugees. They tried to illegally cross the border to Albania, and Serbia. But when they arrived in Serbia they could not cross the border illegally because the border is closed” – Syria

The instrumental or practical effects of for instance using maps and planning where to go have to take into account the way other groups or actors in the network of displacement relates to the current patterns of movement. New mobility patterns emerge as people are able to be more flexible but also because they have to be more flexible due to how politics influences people movements for instance through stricter laws for crossing borders. Hence, the routes that are being used by most people can turn out to be the ones that are the least beneficial to the refugee. However, in addition to having to consider the mobility of trying to move *to* a place, there are also the continuingly consideration of moving *from*.

5.1.2 Moving from - Mobility in safety and border control

In explaining the way they used their GPS, the aspect of moving *from* places is often described as just as important as the aspect of moving *to*. In the cases where the respondents

describe how they used their smartphones they describe how it was important to keep moving away from situations they considered dangerous or undesirable. In this sense, the smartphone played out its actorship as a guide taking it upon itself showing the way to safety. The navigation aspect does not only become a practical aspect but also a matter of staying safe, and the smartphone hence becomes essential. The Syrian respondent explains how they made use of the smartphone so that they could feel safer:

“I was near the Syrian border and it was dangerous, a lot of controls. I had to leave and be far away to be safe. I used the GPS, without the GPS I would be arrested and sent back to Syria” – Syria

Time and distance saved are of the essence and hence the important aspect of the smartphone is extended not only to practicalities, but also rather to the meeting of physical and emotional needs, such as safety. However the smartphone with its practical functions, are made to work both during the day and night. This, if you are going to use the smartphone at night, it will make use of its light-up screen. In some cases this is not desirable for refugees, as the lights of the smartphone can give away your position to others. The respondent above describes how they had to be careful in using the phone at certain times during the night because the light of the smartphone could give their position away. The informant describes the way the map application provided a clear overview of the situation they found themselves in after a dramatic border crossing from Syria to Turkey. During the night they got separated from the group because the group encountered a Turkish guard. The respondents threw themselves down a hill and managed to escape the situation. However the respondent further explained how they had to be careful in using the phone at certain times during the night because the light of the smartphone would give their position away to armed guards. The respondent then had to wait until daybreaks, which could pose a potential danger. As illustrated by this account, the smartphone can be something refugees adapt to rather than the other way around. In the case of the smartphones actorship, it too increases its agency in the situation, as other actors are made dependent on its workings in this particular context.

5.1.3 Strategic mobility - Global and local patterns

In the case of the mobility patterns playing out in the context of displacement the smartphone can directly or indirectly play a part at different levels. One aspect of the situation that

became clear during the 2015 crisis in Norway especially was the way new routes opened up like that of the route through Russia to northern Norway. The use of this route emerged just as abruptly as it eventually disappeared. As previously mentioned the fast-paced migration-patterns emerging at the beginning of 2015 have been referred to as the first digitally driven mass migration, which became apparent, among other things, from the ways in which people moved. Both information about and guides explaining how different routes could be used were widely shared and could mobilise people in a short amount of time. In 2015, a record high number of 1, 015,078 people attempted to cross the Mediterranean sea both from the Middle Eastern and African countries were at 1, 015,078 (UNHCR, 2016b), suggesting, perhaps both an increase in violent conflicts but also increased options for information, travel routes and knowledge about the possibilities offered if the journey would be successful. The integration of political resolutions changing the routes have changed the mobility of the same people, showing the way the political frame of the situation have a large impact of how people move. New mobility patterns emerge in the sense that people are more flexible and also have to be because the politics influences the way the flow of people move by for instance enforce stricter laws for crossing borders.

In addition to global patterns, the technology can also be seen to have an impact in more locally situated patterns of movement. One of the respondents explained how they in the situation of having to live in hiding before crossing the borders, could not use their smartphone independently as the signals of their device could be traced and reveal his location. To manage this situation he respondent had to move around in the area they were staying so that the signals from the smartphone were dispersed and not traceable to one specific location.

“I was using a connection so the government noticed there is a user, and he or she always connect to Internet with VPN. OK? And they are not moving to any other place. So if we check the area, is there a legal, registered VPN user? No. They have all profiles of this area. Is this person related to the registered peoples relatives? No. So there is a fugitive just giving a signal in that area. This was one of the risks. That is why I was using a portable Internet device, I was trying to make it portable, I was taking it and just walking in the streets, not in the streets where the cameras are looking, but in small streets. I was trying to make it difficult to focus on the area, but still it is easy. That is why I was using it less, and not so much” – Turkey

In this particular case the aspect of the mobility works as a consequence of the connectivity, as the way the person can use the smartphone is restricted to what is or feels safe. Because of the way that they felt or was under surveillance played an essential part in the way they could use the smartphone, to the extent they had to apply certain tactics for managing the situation like that of moving around in a pattern that would remain within a credible one. As such one can see how the aspect of digital life becomes an integrated part of the physical lived life.

5.2 Fluid identities

I will argue that De Laet and Mol's writings on the Zimbabwe Bush-pump and fluid technology fluidity can be used to analyse the situation of displacement, as the objects and people in it move physically, mentally and emotionally with unclear boundaries. The fluidity of the situation is both an aspect related to the object and its workings, but can also be considered for the actors as well, in the sense that their situation is just that; displaced. Eide et al. borrows Zygmunt Bauman's concept "nowhere – places" to describe how refugees lose their place on earth being tossed into a *nowhere* (Bauman 2007 in Eide. et al). I choose to use the term liminality, drawing on the anthropological tradition of moving from one state to another. I argue that liminality, like "nowhere-places", is descriptive of the precarious situation refugees go through in their journey. Liminality in addition encompasses the idea that the objects and people considered liminal are often considered "polluted" or "dangerous". Along their journey the individuals move through and between categories in the sense that they are no longer citizens, but considered without place as they are categorised as refugees. Turner uses the term "threshold people" to describe an individual or group moving through a liminal phase, a description I find fitting to the situation of the refugees. They are on the threshold to a new life, but moving through a phase categorised by ambiguity.

However, the ambiguity or fluidity of the situation can also be considered something the actors mobilise or investigate in their search for a new life. Many of the respondents in talking about their journey, mentioned the different documents and identification papers needed to make the journey possible. In most cases they were acquired illegally and were often counterfeit. The smartphone both enabled the opportunity to acquire such documents, but in some cases they can also be used to aid its user. It is an extension of the person, and the person exists both in and outside the phone. One example is the way on of the Turkish

respondents explained how they, in crossing a border, had to change the operator from Turkish to Greek operator on their phone. This was done so that it would seem like it was a Greek businessperson travelling the area, because they believed their phone was being traced. They explained it like they “became” a businessperson. In the account shared, they describe how were very deliberate in choosing operator, as a Greek signal would insinuate a Greek person. Thus, with a Greek operator they imagined how they would appear in the eyes of the government, being watched. In many cases, however these processes are very challenging, especially in the context of trying to cross the borders using counterfeit documents.

In many cases, these processes are very challenging, especially in the case of trying to cross the borders using counterfeit documents. The Syrian respondent explained how they had spent many months on the journey, among others reasons due to the fact that they attempted to cross several borders using fake identification documents. The respondent describes how they tried to use a fake Italian ID on the border between Greece and Albania, but because Albania is outside the Schengen-area his information would need to be registered, and when the Greek police tried to register their information based on the counterfeit ID, it did not match:

“...so they discover me and I told him “I am Italian”, but the policeman can speak Italian and I cannot speak Italian. I just know a few words [speaks Italian words] but the policeman is fluent in Italian, so he discover me, he takes my phone, opens the contacts and see Arabic words, and say "you are Arabic" I say “yes, yes I am Syrian” – Syria

In this particular case, the respondent was arrested, but released after a short period of time with the incident is registered. The incident of the Syrian and the Turkish respondents indicate that the workings of the phones act out differently in the different situations and that the workings of the smartphone are not necessarily biased or play along to the trajectory the way that it is intended by the user. This aspect of the relations in the network can be seen rather as a negative aspect of the situation in the context of the phone working against them. However, within the network there is room to stretch the boundaries of your own identity, and this opportunity is often used as it can be seen as a way of managing the precarity and protecting yourself from dangerous relations or situations that are not in line with their needs. The smartphone can thus function as representation of the person, in it being a device for experimenting with their identities. The situation of being a refugee can be described as fluid

in the sense that it does not have clear boundaries. Like the smartphone, the refugees themselves can be considered fluid entities, in a state of “betwixt and between”.

A comment on the dual meaning moving across the border can have, both physical and symbolic; The physical moving from the border is both a way of continuing the trajectory of the journey, but just at much the crossing of the border is a symbolic because you are moving towards a new life. In addition the movement is political, because the second your cross the border illegally, you enter into a new political system of citizenship and belonging. This aspect is clearly identified in all of the interviewees who made the choice to leave their countries illegally. Their reasons for leaving are different, but they are all clear in the aspect of not having the same opportunities to go back. The choice to leave is final, and the first movement across the border is the first step towards a new life. In this sense the modes of meaning making of the phone is multi-sided, as is the role of the phone as an actor.

5.3 Summary

In this chapter, the concept of mobility has been addressed. I have looked at different adaptations of the concept of mobility, both in the concept of navigation and moving to places and from precarious situations. In this aspect the smartphone contributes to both reaching a trajectory goal, as well as assisting in avoiding precarious situation. In addition I have addressed the concept of fluid identities in being both between identities and being in a process of experimenting with identities. I have here presented patterns of mobility in how it may play both in a global and a local context and how the smartphone can enable altered global patterns, but can also influence the way people move in their daily life during a precarious situation. Two theoretical concepts have been introduced, that of fluidity and that of liminality. These concepts refer to the fluid and flexible boundaries and identities of the trajectory of the refugee, and will be used further in other aspects of the analysis.

6 Relations of care

One of the reasons for focusing on the aspect of care in relation to displacement is the way different forms of care emerge, change and become decisive for the way the life trajectory of a refugee is done. I will use “care” as an overarching category for this chapter as I argue that care-relations enable and motivate the life trajectory of the respondents, and in many cases, refugees in a more general sense. I choose to define “care” in the sense of both *caring for* something, and *taking care* in relation to oneself both in health, well being, maintenance and protection. In terms of script, the design facilitates strengthening of relationships and enables both an opportunity for, but also an increased need of, care and contact

6.1 Strong ties

In a precarious situation, people’s needs are often reduced to the most basic. In Maslow’s pyramid of needs, he emphasises the various needs essential for the development of the human personality (Maslow, 1943). The three most basic need as explained by Maslow is physiological needs on the first level, safety the second level, and social needs on the third. In the case of contemporary displacement, it could be suggested that some of these needs have been shifted or negotiated. As mentioned in the introduction, it has been claimed smartphones are in some cases considered more important than food and water, as they can provide immediate relief by talking to family and friends in the situation of precarity. In the context of care, one can argue that the possibility of being connected provides essential relief. In a sense, it can be said to provide *caring through distance*. In addition to the ways that the smartphone can provide relief in staying connected with family and friends, the network of displacement also considers the establishing of new forms of essential relations. In general the smartphone is a helper in the context of displacement, and provides care in the managing of the situation in general. One of the interviewees explains how they generally found the smartphone to be helpful:

“You don't really plan it [the journey], especially the border crossing from Eritrea to Ethiopia. There is like, there are these smugglers, it's like you have a big question mark in your life. You don't know what will happen for certain days or weeks and you cannot plan them, everything is unplanned, like everybody is own their own “[...]” You have to be

dependent on yourself, basically. Its so hard like to be...it has to be on you. The phone helps in that”- Eritrea

Here the respondent introduces another aspect of the precariousness of the situation; the feeling of being alone. As many attempt such journeys alone, having a smartphone can help in the situation of making decisions and providing assistance. Hence it can be argued the while smartphone can provide aid in the form of emotional care, its essential tools like navigation, communication and storage of important documents can also be a form of care in the sense that they reduce the precarity of the life trajectory of the refugee.

6.1.1 Maintenance of strong ties

When explaining the most important reasons for owning a smartphone, almost all of the interviewees immediately move to the aspect of being able to contact family and friends. Like indicated above, the aspect of being able to stay connected to family friends have been approached like an essential capability in many cases even proving to a greater priority than that of being able to provide food and water. The script of the smartphone is, in its ability to stay connected to other devices, opening up for the increased connection with “strong-tied” relations. By strong ties I refer to family and friends, where an important aspect of the relationship is motivated by positive emotions. All of the interviewees emphasised the need to keep in touch with family and friends as the most important aspect of the phone because their families could stay informed about their journeys and of they were safe or not. In some cases the power of reaching family is prioritised even through it can result in exposing yourself in an unsafe way.

“I didn’t have a tip top phone, but it had Internet and a little screen, so I had Facebook. At that time so I posted "I am in Ethiopia and I am safe". So that’s not safe for an Eritrean to write certain things at that time, but I had to do it because I had to inform my family and friends that I am at the other side [of the border]. So I, they started calling me. When they called, you feel like you have people who think about you and you’re not alone in the trip so that gives you a little confidence.” – Eritrea

The first part of this quote addresses the fact that even though they put themselves in a dangerous situation, they were motivated by the fact they had to convey the message making

it across the border to the neighbouring country which, the respondent also described as dangerous because Eritreans and Ethiopians have been known to be “enemies”.

Communicating the safety aspect seems to have dual reassurance: The person conveying the message is also reassured when they know their family is reassured. The second half of the quote emphasises the emotional aspect even further, is the reassurance the possibility of staying in contact with your family or loved ones. It provides the emotional support needed to complete the journey. Often it is not even the content of the message that is the central, but the *activity* of providing the information itself that is most important. Just sending a message, or a picture to the family letting them know you are all right is an important mechanism for managing the precarity. This confirms that providing care need not be verbal, but can just as well be an activity, or action (Mol et al., 2010, p. 10).

The phone becomes a place for meaning making through its different workings, in addition to being an actor in how these workings are performed. This is explained, among others things, through the choice of device. The capabilities of the phones are by important through their having for instance a “good camera” or “easy access” to the different phone applications. All of the informants emphasised the “smart”-aspect of the phones as important and decisive for their ability to make their journeys. The care is maintained through the ability to call and send/receive messages, but also share pictures and film through the camera features. However, the camera features for instance, are not only used for one thing, and are just as essential for the purposes of for instance navigation as well as communicating with people at home.

In addition to providing the essential message of being safe, the smartphone enables their family and friends to participate in their lives in a more active way. The more opportunities the phone provided, the more active the families could stay. One of the respondents talked about how their family could participate in their son’s birthday-party through the video function on the phone, and hence be involved in an important event of their life. The relationship with the real world is mediated by technology, and has now become an essential part of how we “do” relationships. Social ties are therefore mediated by technology. This becomes especially visible in the context of precarity like that of displacement.

6.2 Taking care, managing risk

The modification of your own security is not the only important task of the refugee. In many cases making sure family and friends at home were safe was highlighted as very important. Just because you travel across a border does not mean your life has changed for the better. Many of their family and friends are still in their home country and the need for security is perhaps even greater for them. As the informants consider themselves to be safer in being in Norway, some explained the need to make sure their friends and family back home were safe too. However, for some there were still a risk associated with contacting friends and family. For instance, one of the informants explained how they could not contact the family from a normal Norwegian cell phone. They still had to use the encrypted means of communicating as the government could trace the calls their relatives received:

*” If I call my country with my mobile with a operator, a GSM operator the Turkish tyranny, ” oh this person is in Norway and he or she have relatives here and they are connected to this fugitive, this Gülenist, so they can loose their passport, they can be accused of being possible supporters of a terrorist, so they can loose their properties, they can loose many things, so it is very risky. That is why, I guess for an asylum seeker coming from Turkey it is very useful and very essential to use this phone to connect with people over internet, over data + ” –
Turkey*

The phone is a way of managing the connections with loved ones at home, but in the context of the network of displacement it can come at a cost. The connections/relationships of risk is only shifted from one actor to another. Hence, the danger and the modification of risk do not stop even though a person makes it to Europe. The life trajectories of a displaced person are not adapted into the society as a whole. In fact, one of the aspects defining refugee in its own right is precisely the displacement, or rather misplacement, in society. They are placed “wrong”; the remaining society is not adapted to their life situation. As refugees are often defined by their circumstances in facing the outside world, they often need to fight certain kinds of judgements and prejudice that do not separate individuals, but rather see them as one group. This notion is often considered in media and in politics, and in working on this project an aim has been to bring the voices of this specific group to the forefront. In this sense, they are often dependent mostly on themselves and their close relations, as they often move between systems, be they legal, bureaucratic or social.

6.2.1 Loose ties as an essential capability

In the relationship between the actors in the network of displacement, new relationships have also emerged, that can be said to be just as important as that of strong ties like family or friends. In the sense of the network and its relations, it consists of actors with varying attachment to one another. One form of relationships that have been described and that has emerged as important are that of the “helpers” or the “other people” in the network that are made use of in order to manage the precarity of the journey.

“Because I was hiding, I couldn’t let my connections be traced in an open way, I cannot go to someone ring their bell and hey can we talk about this issue? It [the smartphone] helped me to cover my connections and cover my messaging and so it’s easier for everybody to use mobile phone to connect to other people. In one hour you can connect 50 or 60 people. But if you don’t have a phone you can just visit your neighbour” – Turkey

The importance of the network of connections is crucial in attaining correct information within the interviewee’s setting. Because they were living in hiding, the phone could provide a way of circumventing the dangerous aspects in a freer way. The phone could provide the necessary veil of protection, as well as the opportunity to get in contact with people fast and through many links.

“The smugglers, they contact you basically. For example in Eritrea you cannot contact them, they contact you. Because you don’t know them, because maybe they are the government officers maybe they are something that work with security, so you ask a relative or friend outside the country to find smugglers or they ask other people and they call you” – Eritrea

The loose ties also works as a way of “hiding” within the network, if you manage to use it right. When in need, the helpers in the network are completely essential, but most of the time you do not even know who they are, if they really are who they say they are or even if they are actually trying to help you or are working against you. However, most of the time these connections are the core and source of the practical workings like acquiring the needed documents to cross certain borders or to organise the transport from one place to another. Often they don’t even meet the person they talk to, rather a representative or a periphery associate of the person organising. In maintaining these loose ties, often switching between

the people they are in contact with that is only helping along a short and very specific leg of the journey, they can avoid leaving an identifiable trace with the person that potentially can reveal them or get them arrested and sent back home. One can argue the success of the script lies in the ability to manage different kinds of relationships simultaneously and move in and out of connections between single actors that can be modified to facilitate one particular kind of need. The ability to use the network to get in touch with essential helpers is in some aspects just as important as the managing of strong ties.

6.3 Caring for a technical object

The anthropomorphising of technology is described by several of the informants, as the phone is in many cases the closest and sometimes only connection to family and friends. In some cases the phone also provides them with the only connection to information of critical importance and that makes the journey possible in the first place by the interviewees own accounts. When asked to describe the phone, several informants use terms like "friend" and describe it with human-like abilities, for instance the ability to keep secrets. The close relationship with the phone and its anthropomorphic qualities is found in other research where the phone is said to "eat" electricity and "die" as the power runs out (Rydjord 2016 in Eide et. al 2017).

These descriptions of anthropomorphic qualities indicate the view on the phone as a living thing. In itself, it is looked upon as a means to an end or something having purely instrumental capabilities, but at the same time in certain settings the phone becomes a thing with a mind of its own and a "life". This can perhaps indicate that the aspect of the smartphone as a thing that has a life of its own, and that can potentially break down, is especially visible in the precarious situation of displacement. Perhaps because the phone in many cases is a vital need, and the need to keep it safe also becomes paramount:

The covering is very important. My mobile was damaged because it fell down on the floor and the screen died, broken, because I didn't have protection. And after this I didn't removed it, I had the protection all the time, and never removed it, and for this it still works – Syria

The Bush pump is fluid in the sense that it incorporates the possibility of breakdown; it has the flexibility to deploy alternative components, or even work without certain screws and

bolts. The smartphone, however, is in its physical design a rigid object. In some cases the look of such an object may be prioritized over the durability of the design, and this makes it vulnerable to outer forces like challenging weather conditions. In addition, the managing of the inner technical qualities of the smartphone is a necessity. One of the respondents explains how the prevalence of smartphones varies where they are from, and that they experienced many positive aspects of being able to manage the technical aspect of such devices, to the extent that they could even gain the trust and comradery of people they met on the journey in being able to assist if their phones stopped working or they experiences a problem with the digital infrastructure.

6.4 Challenges of care

In being available through the connectedness the smartphone provides, relationships are expected to be maintained. When they are not, it can be a challenge for everyone involved. One expects in a way to be able to call or get in contact with friends and family, and when this is not possible the challenge of care emerges. One of the informants talked about how they, due to their situation being in conflict with the government, could not stay in contact with friends and family because such contact could be traced and create problems for the people on the other end. They had to choose to only contact people through the use of encrypted communication, something the interviewee explained that they advised all people at the reception centre to do as well. In order to function, the smartphone requires the connectivity aspect to meet the care of strong ties, but at the same time this is the aspect that can potentially be problematic:

“ If I call my relatives from foreign number, + 47. That will mean that the risk comes for them and for me. They are trying to find me in my country, and they can't find me so they will check with my relatives. And if they see they get regular calls from Norway then probably the person we are looking for is in Norway. They will lose their passports if they have them, because they are possible supporters of a fugitive ” – Turkey

The situation makes clear the expectations to technology, and the connectedness, which is considered one of the most important aspects of the smartphone, can at the same time be a challenge, or a danger. The care aspect in this case is a desired relation, but may provide increased precarity, as the risk of exposing family and friends to danger can be imminent.

Hence the aspect of care is also multiple in the way one both have to provide but also manage care.

6.5 Summary

In the context of care, I adopt related but also independent approaches to the concept as I use both the aspect of care in the sense of emotional care relationships, but also the aspect of taking care, in the aspect of being careful. Different forms of relationships are central to the network of displacement and the smartphone provides capabilities to maintain and access these. Strong ties are viewed as the most essential as they are categorised as family and friends. This is also often direct and open communication. Loose ties are often connected to the “helpers” which makes the journey possible, where the identity of other actors can be remain hidden in the network. This protects both the refugee and the helper, but can also be exploited. In addition challenges of care relations can emerge, especially that of strong ties where digital connections may be precarious and in the sense of loose ties as there is always insecurity related to who is actually on the other end.

7 Essential connectivity

Connectivity is here looked at in both the possibility of staying connected to digital infrastructures like the Internet, but also that of the actors being connected in different ways, which builds on the ambition of looking at relations. The ways actors and objects are connected manifest themselves in different ways in the network of displacement. The respondents focused on the fact that the connectivity in most cases was the reason for the need or wish to use of the smartphone itself. Without the ability to use online applications the smartphone is by some described as “useless”. The “connectedness” is essential, to a communications standard that allows the portable device to access the Internet wirelessly. This connectedness is closely related to the concept of multiple workings, as the connectivity enables many of the aspects that make the phone appear “smart”.

“It facilitates all my corresponding needs” – Turkey

Like the quote above indicates, the smartphone is in many ways what can be described as a facilitator, in the sense that the infrastructure of the trajectory moves through the phone both in the sense of relationships, organising and politics. It also connects the multiple needs of the displaced. Hence, the phone can be viewed as a meeting point of different relations and capabilities that makes the journey possible, as the relationships, connections and information all move through the phone, and the maintenance of these connections requires the phone and its connectivity. Through the increase of connections and connectivity infrastructures globally, the connectivity has now been so tightly woven into our lives it is viewed as invaluable. The phone is a facilitator for this connectivity, and this, in relation with its flexible script, is the success of the object. The ability to stay connected were by some respondent described like a taken-for-granted aspect of using the smartphone, and in some cases during the interviews some of the interviewees seemed confused when asked what was important with being able to stay connected. To me, this indicates the workings of the smartphone played the part as a mundane, truly integrated into the daily activities as well as the extraordinary. Going into more detail some of the respondents emphasized the aspect of securing the connectivity either by finding ways of using WIFI, or by purely ensuring the phone kept working.

“I have a power bank because I always [need to] charge my phone, and for this I got the power bank so that I am connected all the time. – Syria

The aspect of charging the smartphone all the time indicates the multiple aspects of the areas of use in the sense that the need for connecting was always present. The aspect of the digital and technological is also in many cases juxtaposed with the western society and can perhaps be seen as an idealised aspect of “doing technology right”

“Like I am into professional people, I like the professional and disciplined ways of managing and doing things, when I landed, the process, I was like, ok this looks perfect...(laugh)” – Eritrea

When it comes to organizing, the western countries in general and Norway in this particular case, is presented as a form of ideal way of organizing. In the case of one of the Turkish interviewees, they explain how they chose to go to Norway on the grounds that Norway wouldn't, as they explain it “bow down” to the support of suspicious use of digital tools. In many aspects the connectivity of the smartphone enables the refugees with resources and capabilities that are essential in both getting acquainted with but also adapt to their new destination. This aspect indicates that the fluid capabilities of a digital infrastructure can exist in two places simultaneously, but be used by very different means.

7.1 Precarity and solidarity in connectivity

The role of infrastructure has been proving important in times of crisis. In later years, civilians and regimes alike have acknowledged the importance of digital infrastructure. The cutting of electricity or Internet cables has become a political tool for the battles of power in conflict. One of the respondents explains how the lack of electricity was a constant element of uncertainty during the time he lived in his home in Syria after the war broke out and, that these were often executed by the regime. The place of digital technology in time of crisis both highlights the need for the technology, but can also leave people more vulnerable in the case where connectivity is not an option. At the same time as the smartphone is flexible in enabling digital infrastructure, it also creates new dependencies. In order to rely on the network, people need to take certain risks.

“If you are not good with communication you're dead. You have to be able to communicate with people and in the way that they communicate. Because you are new to Ethiopia, Sudan, Turkey, and you have to communicate in those terms” – Eritrea

The ability to communicate and navigate new places and cultures is not only a matter of cultural adaption, but may also be an essential life skill for survival and to manage potential dangers. The respondent from Eritrea explains how they, in crossing the border to one country, was exposed to dangers due to cultural conflicts. The respondent was therefore dependent on the smartphone to navigate the city, as he wanted to keep the interaction with locals to a minimum in order to stay safe.

If you are to maintain the infrastructure of the network, then you also have to take some risks. You have to stay connected to the network and therefore must adapt to the surroundings if you are going to draw on the advantages of the network. Like the Syrian who made the journey alone, and was supposed to stay in contact with a person that could help, but they also had to take some risks to be able to remain in contact with the person. The respondent had to expose themselves to a number of threats, like soldiers that could have them arrested.

“ I remember I saw a village when I was high up, I saw a Turkish village. I wanted to get there because it would help me to contact and give an address to the guy [helper] to come and get me. But in the middle of nowhere I cannot give an address. If I got to this village it would be easier. But it was also difficult to get there, [...] I had two choices, I could go to the street, but then I could also get arrested because there are many soldiers. The other way, I can go towards the border. I chose the street” – Syria

In this case, the respondents needed to expose themselves to a dangerous situation to be able to continue the journey and get the help he needed. However, the alternative is to perhaps not be able to continue and so they are willing to take that risk. As presented here, the smartphone is a device to both manage the situation of precarity and avoid danger, but there can also be a risk tied to the aspects of actually using the device and the connections in the network.

7.1.1 Solidarity and democracy

In the network the actors are dependent on the phone to be able to perform their agency/tasks. These include both the instrumental and the emotional aspects of the journey, as in the ability to communicate with family and to navigate through unknown terrain. In this sense, the smartphone works as an important enabler for the connectedness between individuals. The network enables both one individual actor to stay connected, but also for several actors to stay connected to each other.

“I make the call and there are a Turkish guy who discovered me. He said “what are you doing here?” I said “I came from Hataye”, but he said “you are a liar, you come from Syria”. But he was kind. He called the Turkish guy to come get me, and gave him my address. He helped me” – Syria

This quote resonates to the concept of “*communitas*” (Turner, 1969) or solidarity of potential precarious situations. In the context of precarious situations the relationships are often mediated by the concept of likeness or community, in the feeling of mutual dependency and situation. As such, the feeling of solidarity can also be a way of managing precarious situations, and in the case of displacement, this aspect is also present. This becomes especially clear in the way the actors rely on other actors within the network. The interviewees highlight openness and opportunities to reach information and the people you need to contact as some of the more important aspects. The way mobile phones in general have made their mark in history have predominantly been through the way they have been referred to as making the world more “open” and “democratic” due to the fact that people can reach each other more easily, across social divides and outside political infrastructures.

In the case of the smartphone it can be argued it is a technology compatible with a democratic social structure and that these workings are both external and internal. They are external in the sense that the infrastructure of the phone is compatible with an almost infinite number of other devices, independently from social structures such as class and access to resources. On an internal level, assuming the internal workings includes the connectivity aspect of the smartphone, the ability to customize an accumulation of applications provides equally near-infinite amount of possibilities to access information. One essential quality that the phone facilitates is the use of free applications such as Whatsapp and Viber, and social media such

as Facebook. These applications are mostly used because they give you the opportunity to communicate directly with people across the globe without the fees of text messaging. Therefore, the Internet connection is an essential part of the infrastructure of the smartphone.

However, the notion of the democratic nature of the phone could be challenged by the fact that it is inscribed into very specific political contexts where the agency of the individual is arguably increasingly being integrated. One example of this is the case of the “Bylock” – application in Turkey, where the use of the application was announced by the government to be a sign of terrorist activity. By inscribing parts of the technological capabilities of the phone into politics with a particular agenda, the politics of the phone itself shift to serve other agendas than that of democracy and the individual user.

7.2 The socio-technical personae

Along the trajectories of the refugee, the phone builds up a repertoire of information and capabilities that shift between enabling and constraining the individual, and that are challenged when the individual arrives in Norway. In other words one can say that the repertoire can *speak* for the person or put forward a certain version of their story. Some of the informants use the word “secrets” to describe what kind of relationship they have with their phones. “It can keep your secrets”, one explains. Another focuses on the way “the police know all my secrets now” in having searched through their phone. The phone, like a trusted confidant, can suddenly turn on you and expose your secrets, to someone you did not want to share them with. One of the respondents explains how they in meeting the police in Norway had to hand over their phone. The respondent explains, albeit in a joking tone, that they found the situation challenging because it meant they had to share aspects of their story the respondent was not prepared to share.

“It was difficult for me, I should have thrown my mobile phone before I got to the police station (laughs)” – Syria

In this case, the interviewee understood the necessity, but found it an undesirable experience to have to reveal the contents of their phone to the Norwegian police. However, other interviewees did not find this to be an issue, as they trusted the Norwegian government would not misuse their information. The process of the analysis of both the refugees themselves and

the phones, substantiates the hybrid refugee. The impact of the digital life is recognised both through the political decision to change the interview process and also in the asylum process itself. The actorship and the fluidity of the smartphone plays out as it become a representation of the person in question, an extension of their person, interests and agenda. The constant intertwining of workings and actions make the actors into hybrids, in that the smartphones can work as representations of them.

7.3 Technologically displaced?

Having a smartphone is very much a defining characteristic of the network of displacement treated in this study. The aspect of non-users were not a deliberate choice in regards to the process of gathering informants, as I was open to the possibility to interview people who had not made use of or did not own smartphones. However, in the words of some of the respondents, “everybody” uses smartphones, from smugglers to the refugees themselves. One of them explained how, in the case of people not having phones, these were people who did not have anyone caring for them, or anyone to care for. As such, care can be seen not as a consequence but rather a precondition for the use of the connectivity aspect and in part the general use of smartphones or technology in the context of displacement. However, one can question whether this is the case in the bigger picture when looking at different groups of refugees, perhaps those currently residing in countries behind the closed borders. One can for example imagine that the increasing dependence on both systems and technological objects that may not be available for everyone. It may create new forms of expectations of the informed refugee, and infrastructure perhaps not facilitating for all. In this sense, one can also question whether this creates new groups of displacement, technologically displaced.

7.4 Both a danger and a freedom tool

The refugees use the phone to do research and get information about the possible ways of executing the journey, and they stay in contact with key informants regarding documents, smugglers and other intermediaries. They also use the phones for practical tasks, such as maps, texting and sometimes calling friends and family, as well as documenting their lives through pictures and videos. In addition, the phone functions as a form of “bank” that can keep documents and other information, like “secrets”.

One of the respondents describes the phone as a “freedom tool”. In relation to their own background, the phone is a place for adjusting their worldview, in the sense that they can look up news and information from what he describes as “the free world”, which by the respondent is categorized as a few very specific countries and regions; Norway, Sweden, Germany, England, Canada. This is in contrast to the production of news in their home county, which is characterized by strict censorship of the official media and the published news, which in most cases considered pure “propaganda”. Most of the media houses and newspapers have, according to the interviewee, been deliberately restructured by people who work for the prime minister and his cause.

In this perspective the phone plays a part in countering the claims of the government and providing what they feel is trustworthy information. However, the agency of the individual in this case is constrained by the surveillance of the government. The Turkish government have introduced new legislation saying that all people using a certain application called *Bylock* are to be considered members of the officially designated terrorist-group the Gülenists. According to the interviewee, the story of how *Bylock* became a signifier of terrorism was initially due to its use among others Gülenists to communicate and coordinate group meetings, rallies and other social events.

Due to the implication of guilt from just having downloaded the application, or even from someone having downloaded it through your Internet connection, many people, including people not associated with the Gülenist movement, were arrested (Osterlund, 2018). As the use of certain applications, or simply having downloaded this application in itself is a sign of a criminal act, the phone poses a threat and danger in the sense that you could be jailed or arrested in possessing or having previously downloaded the app.

Another threat the phone presents, is the use of social media. Two of the respondents tell stories of people being jailed or arrested because of writing messages on either facebook, or through messaging services on television-sites. One respondent tells how in their country, it is believed that new prisons are being built to hold the growing number of arrested terrorism suspects. The dual aspect of the phone as both a danger and a freedom tool sharply illustration by this informant, due to their background of being a cultural minority in Turkey.

They also emphasises the importance of using VPN-links and applications that cannot be traced by the government. In this way the risk and precariousness of the phone/human relationship is constantly negotiated. The phone cannot be used without restrictions, and it can “reveal” you if not used with the utmost caution. In this sense the phones seems to have a sort of dual goal by both enabling and a constraining the agency of the person using it. In this sense the phone can be said to take a part in creating or emphasising the precariousness and risk in the lives of the refugees.

The smartphone both provides opportunities for new relations in the sense it broadens the search for potential contacts and it can create a safe distance between yourself and individuals that can pose a threat. If needed, one can communicate anonymously with someone across the globe and thus protect your own privacy. However, this also applies to the individuals you are in contact with, as your can never be completely sure if they are who they say they are. Thus this relationship creates new form of *necessary trust*, wherein sometimes you are simply dependent on trusting certain people in the network. More often than not, this aspect proves challenging. One of the informants explained how they, in the process of trying to provide essential documents individuals to help them solely through online contact. In one incident, he spent a lot of money trying to get the documents through one person who ended up taking the money and disappearing. This was of course cause for frustration, as the documents were needed and the he did not have a lot of money. Later however, he ended up getting in contact with a person who turned out to be very helpful, and in the interviewee’s own words “used to being in contact with people like me”, which made the experience a positive one. Relationships between the different users of the digital platforms and infrastructure can be ones where information are widely shared, and people who seek help will be able to receive it.

One can say the boundaries of the network of displacement is fluid or flexible, because it allows people to move in and out depending on their relations to the actors that continue to remain central in the network. The fluidity allows people to draw on specific relations needed to manage their trajectories. However, the more the network is extended, the greater the risk will be to come across someone who will take advantage of the situation. In my case the role of smugglers were downplayed or not prioritised by the informants, even though one person who used the term “smuggler”. The others used terms like “organizer” or “a guy”, which indicated they got assistance on the journey. When I asked one of the informants if the people

helping them were smugglers, they were hesitant in defining them as such. They defined them as “not regular smugglers” as in their case they were working with people at the borders organizing the overpass for people wanting to cross illegally.

My impression based on the stories from the others was that this was a general experience that they were dependent on help and assistance from periphery contacts. However, in the case of the one of the respondents explained how they got assistance from a man that was supposed to take them to Norway. This contact was found through what they referred to as “passaparola” (word of mouth) in their home country. The man ended up taking them to Switzerland, and then asked for more money. The respondent said didn’t have any more money, and then the man left them. Their interaction with the man who took them to Switzerland, however, is an archetypical story in the when it comes to displacement, and perhaps a story with a happier ending than most. Eide et.al (2017) writes about the case of smugglers exploiting individuals and groups in the network of migration, extorting them or their families for money, often becoming violent if their demands are not met. This creates an increased precarity to the situation, as you are dependent on other people to be able to complete the journey, but may perhaps more often than not end up in a situation where you risk both money and health putting your faith in the hands of others. As such, the fluid boundaries of the network that provides essential resources in order to manage the situation that can work against the users.

7.5 Between dependency and distance – managing the digital life

During the interviews I became aware many of the interviewees eventually started to reflect on their own situations and opinions. As these were biographical interviews, this was a positive side benefit, but not the main goal in itself. One of the informants even expressed the fact that there were a lot of the things that came up in the interview that they hadn’t been aware of and appreciated the opportunity to be able to reflect on these aspects of their own experiences. Several of the respondents, either in the end or during the interview acknowledged the fact that they had a lot to tell and their stories would provide me with a lot of information. In this process, an aspect of the connectivity and integrated network that could be extended into the world as such. This is the aspect of over-information.

Like I have explained previously, the use of smartphones were in the case of my respondents mostly directed at specific needs, like practical tasks or information, in some cases with the justification that they didn't want to "waste time." In the case of knowing how to get trustworthy information, many explained that they had to make assessments on what sort of information would benefit them. One other issue that came out of one of the interviews was the problem of having too much information available and the need to manage this situation, mostly related to the aspect of social media. The respondent explains it like this:

"Why am I checking on these profiles of people, they are not even doing anything to contribute to my life and I am wasting so much time?" [...] "Its like if want to focus on certain things, if you have certain goals in life, you have to narrow your direction and focus on it. – Eritrea

The respondent explains how they experiences pressure through over-information on social media and though news. The interviewees can be said to move between the context of dependency and distance of the connectivity aspect of the network. As they have been and in large are managing their lives through the decisions of others, like that of the government or helpers in the network, the need to make independent decisions seems to be a priority for many. This process can occur simultaneously with the dependency they have on the network in managing the situation and thus this can be an example of the way the workings of the smartphone are multiple. The same informant ends the interview with this reflection:

"Whether you are a victim of certain parts or you want to take control of your life. From an immigrant point of view I like to take control of my life. I am done with being a victim." – Eritrea

This quote exemplifies they way several of the informants highlighted the desire to start their new lives and to be active in the decisions of their lives. This also highlights the fact that despite having a smartphone to increase their options and agency, they are still dependent on the existing structures framing the network like that of politics and bureaucracy. The connectivity aspect can in the extended version provide distractions and "noise" interfering with their goal of increasing their quality of life

7.6 Summary

This chapter has introduced the concept of connectivity. Connectivity is here understood both as the concept in Internet connectivity, but also in the way the actors relate to one another.

One of the ways in which the interviewees explain the use of their cell phones is describing it in a way that portrays the phone as an enabler of their journey. They use the phone to do research and get information about the possible ways of executing the journey and they stay in contact with key helpers regarding documents, smugglers and other intermediaries on the journey. As such, the smartphone can enable connections of solidarity. However, in order to be able to make use of the assistance enabled by the connectivity, the displaced may have to expose themselves to different forms of dangers. I have also presented the way the smartphone may enable new forms of agency in the intertwinement of technology through what I have categorised as cyborgs, or hybrid identities.

8 Discussion

In the previous chapters I have, based on the empirical data and theoretical framework, discussed three distinct categories where relationships in the network of displacement are affected by the smartphone. I will now use the opportunity to explore further some of the findings, insight and implications in light of the smartphone as a humanitarian technology. As a point of departure, I will make use of the theoretical framework as presented in chapter two to further illuminate the way the smartphone influences the relationships in the network of displacement. I will also draw on the existing literature as mentioned in the introduction. Based on six interviews with five respondents I have made the following observations:

- 1) The strength of the smartphone's capabilities is its flexibility.
- 2) Both the life trajectory of the refugee and the smartphone itself can be considered liminal.
- 3) The smartphone contributes to the maintenance of existing and creation of new forms of care relationships, both between actors and in relation to objects.
- 4) The smartphone contributes to the creation of new hybrid identities in the network of displacement.
- 5) The smartphone actualise new issues of surveillance and privacy in the context of displacement.

In the following section, I will merge these findings into a more general discussion on how the situation of precarity in displacement influences both people and object. I will begin by discussing the liminal aspect of displacement, before I go into a longer reflection on humanitarian technology and the way the smartphone influences the humanitarian field in context of mobility, care and connectivity.

8.1 Being betwixt and between

The smartphone is closely tied to what I have described as the liminality of the life trajectory of displaced people. Eide et.al (2017), as previously referred to, have made use of the concept of “nowhere places” to describe the situation of precarity for contemporary refugees. The concept is valuable to use in comparison with the concept of liminality, as both approaches refer to a state of being “neither here nor there”. I choose to make use of liminality as the

concept encompasses a more procedural approach to the possibility of productivity and change.

8.1.1 The multiple identities of things and people

Chapter five presents the way individuals move through specific and different phases in which their identity is both ambiguous, and where different measures are taken to reach the desired destination. One can refer to this activity as a sort of experimentation with their identity in a precarious situation. In the context of liminality, the character of the liminal person is often ambiguous, as it is meant to go through a transformation into the person's new status. Through different rituals and activities the liminal personae moves through a process where they are stripped of their "before", and are eventually fully integrated into their new status. This process can be applied to the context of displacement, as migrants move through an ambiguity with the aim of being integrated into a new status as accepted. Like some of the respondents mentioned, they became aware of the way they spent their time and made very deliberate choices in regard to what sort of activities they were performing, both in the physical life but also through the smartphone. They made different decisions as to what activities are the most efficient to spend time on, which provides them with the essential capabilities needed to become desired subjects for acceptance.

As such, explicit choices made on building capacities in the context of applying for asylum, can be seen as a form of attempt at re-aggregation, and that of being accepted. In the third phase of the liminal ritual, the re-aggregation, the passage is consummated and the state of the individual or corporate is relatively stable. In the re-aggregation phase the rights and obligations of the person is clearly defined and have a "structural" type, as he or she is expected to behave in accordance with certain customary norms and ethical standards (Turner, 1969, pp. 94–95). In the context of displacement, one can argue the refugees do certain activities in order to become a desired candidate. For instance, the activity of applying the smartphone as a part of the application process becomes an object of worrying uncertainty, or precarity, as they do not have control over all the connections the process may reveal. As the network of displacement is one where you are more or less dependent on managing loose-tied connections, you do not know if your connections may reveal details that make you an undesirable candidate.

More often than not, liminal situations and roles are often considered dangerous, polluting or inauspicious to people and relationships outside of the liminal context. Turner explains this with the fact that it appears as dangerous and anarchical in its lack of structure, and hence must be “secured” with prescriptions, prohibitions and conditions (Turner, 1969, pp. 108–109). In this context Turner draws on Mary Douglas’ work concept of “matter out of place” who argues; that which cannot be classified in terms of traditional criteria of classification, or falls between classificatory boundaries is almost always considered polluting or dangerous (Douglas 1966 in Turner, 1969, p. 109). In the context of displacement, one can see the political efforts to close borders and restrain the movement of the increasing flow of refugees crossing to Europe as an attempt of reinstate structure and control over a group representing the concept of matter out of place.

8.1.2 Agency in solidarity

In the context of displacement, the concept of *communitas* can be drawn on in the way the smartphone enables networks of relations build on solidarity (Turner, 1969). In being connected, the network builds on relations of mutual responsibility in aiding and providing opportunities. Gillespie et al. (2018, p. 6) explains how “digital solidarities” can emerge in the network of displacement, focusing on the relationships between refugees, volunteers and NGOs providing inclusive spaces for the sharing of information and news. In this sense, the smartphones become platforms for connecting and possibly providing new forms of constellations of relationships like that suggested by Sandvik et al. (2014). Equally, the smartphone contributes to the increase of the agency of the displaced in the way the network both provides information and possibility of new connections, like the case of the digital solidarities.

However, the aspect of how political processes play out in this context also need to be addressed. The network enables new constellations of agents and as such can perhaps provide unique solutions to existing challenges, but the system does not work outside the aspect of policy, as explained by the concepts of hybrid agents. In this perspective, the power structures of the network and its agents need to be addressed. It can be argued the agency of the actors in the network may be constrained or shifted despite the opportunities the digital infrastructures provide. However, in light of my findings, the solidarity of displacement

works mainly as an enabler of the agency, and therefore I will argue the relationship of solidarity provides the displaced with increased options. I argue the network of displacement influences the way humanitarian work is considered and done through there- and de-classification of people and objects. Below I will go into the elements of the implications for the smartphone as a humanitarian technology.

8.2 The case of humanitarian technology

One of the ambitions of this thesis is to highlight and discuss the place of smartphones in the context of the humanitarian field. So far, several aspects of how the smartphone influences the lives of refugees have been presented, focusing on the way the smartphone builds, maintains and stabilises certain relationships. The aim in this section is to situate the findings and theoretical and analytical considerations in relation to existing research. I have chosen to follow the actor into a network of relationships that can be considered decisive for the contemporary refugee. The theoretical framework has been drawn on to support the approach of using an object and its relations as the starting point for the analysis of the network and investigating the power and actorship of objects.

8.2.1 Flexible agents and objects

The strength of the relationships of the smartphone in the network, like that of the bush-pump, rests in the flexibility its workings. The strength of the smartphone is not its strength in keeping all aspects of the network stable, but rather the ability to move in and out of an almost seamless frame of reference, including and excluding capabilities. It is the ability to keep the network open and allow the actors to move in and out of the network as they like. This strength is found in the loose ties more than the close ties, especially in the ability to keep the ties loose behind the invisible web of connectivity. The flexibility of the phone is what makes it an invaluable object. The multiple capabilities of smartphones, or mobile phones is confirmed in the research of Eide et al. (2017). In their research they highlight the aspect of how mobile phones, and smartphones especially, can gain multiple meanings simultaneously and meet different needs of safety, contacting family and function as a memory-bank. In the same sense, the respondents of interviews conducted for this thesis emphasised the different modes of usage, an ability that can be considered a result of its flexible nature. Through different applications users can customise their smartphone to fit their explicit needs and wishes.

In the case of humanitarian work, the smartphone can be said to change the patterns of how and where people move in the sense that they enable insight about possible routes. When the agents of displacements are more mobile, this equals new patterns of movement. However, this can also include more variety in the individuals in need of aid, as well as the areas of which they will stay in, creating a need to increase the reach of humanitarian aid. As previously mentioned, record high numbers of people are displaced in a global context, partly due to new and continuing conflicts. However, changes in patterns of mobility can be a result of knowledge of new options regarding migratory routes. Thus, the smartphone can both influence the migratory patterns, as well as the ability to reach individuals in need of aid.

8.2.2 New forms of aid and care

As the relationships of the network of displacement play out, it becomes clear the smartphone contributes to the meeting of essential emotional needs, like that of connection to family and friends, in order to manage precarious situations. In the context of vital meeting of needs, the aspects of the technological needs in context of displacement can be said to perhaps change what it means to receive and provide aid. In the 1940's the American psychologist Abraham Maslow developed his infamous model on the hierarchy of needs, aimed at explaining how the development of personality occurs. In the hierarchy, the physical needs is considered the most basic aspect, safety is the second level of need, and social needs as the third. In the case of displacement information can be paramount in providing a feeling of safety (Rydjord, 2016, p. 21). One can discuss the aspect of what is considered aid in the contemporary context of displacement, as mentioned in the introduction. Drawing on this principle in my own study, the smartphone, with its connectivity, can thus be considered equally important as the concept of Internet in itself. The smartphone then can contribute to the managing of precarity and become both an agent and a facilitator for aid.

However, as some of the respondents I interviewed emphasised, it is in many cases the smartphone itself may not be more vital than other essential needs such as food and water. One of the respondents also emphasised the way identification documents is vital in the process, as this could, in his case, secure his passage to Norway. In his case then, the identification documents were more important than the smartphone. This however, is not necessarily the case for everyone. In this respect, the ability to receive information can be

considered an aspect of care when it becomes a part in managing the precarity. Thus the smartphone becomes an object of care, or in some respect a form of caregiver or “giver of care”.

The aspect related to the concepts of digital technologies as a research area as presented by Sandvik et al. (2014) where they suggest how the use of such technologies can influence what constitutes as aid. As such, also in the relation to the political focus on the right to connectivity, it can be claimed both the concept of aid is changing, but also what constitutes as an explicit need. In approaching the aspect of performing needs - the way the displaced themselves are able to manage the need for care - the opportunity to make use of a smartphone can be considered a form of self-care and as such a form welfare technology, in the context of displacement. However, one can question whether this continuous adaption to a system of connectivity includes all groups.

One can argue that the increasing dependence on both systems and technological object that may not be available to everyone. It may create new forms of expectations of the informed refugee, and infrastructure not facilitating for all. In this sense, one can also question whether this creates new groups or non-users in displacement, the technologically displaced. This could include groups such as elderly or children, and other groups that are considered vulnerable. While such distinctions are beyond of the scope of this study, I still find it important to address this aspect here as it is relevant to the theme and theories in question, and a reminder of the limitations of the empirical materials presented in this study.

8.2.3 Hybrid agents

The technological, and especially digital aspect of working with agents and networks can also be said to influence that is acting in the network. In the case of connectivity and the influence on the on humanitarian technology, the positive opportunities of staying connected have hopefully been emphasised in the above mentioned chapters of the thesis. The intertwining of displacement, technology and politics seems to be have made its mark and thus it will continue to develop.

The digital infrastructure of displacement provides the refugees with the opportunity to stay connected to essential information about their journey or news and other aspects that may

provide them with much needed input. Secondly it enables connectedness in the sense that they can reach other people and individuals they rely on to manage the situation. This marks a shift in global migration patterns, and introduces new issues regarding the relationship between humans and technology, like that of agency of the displaced. It fundamentally transforms the situation into one where refugees themselves can gather and navigate information in a setting dominated by chaos and precarity. Through translating applications they can follow the media, and they can also stay in touch with the world outside at a whole new level, getting involved in the public debates and decisions. It is by this process that the smartphone was made into an object of necessity, a vital tool for managing the precarity of the displaced and truly emerged as a humanitarian technology.

In the introduction of this thesis I pointed to how some researchers have focused on what constitutes trustworthy information, as the pending fear of unwanted government surveillance restricts smartphone use (Dekker et al., 2018, p. 1). This concern is represented in my own research in the way smartphones in the eyes of the respondents are considered essential, but also can be connected to precarity. This is especially present in the context of the respondent sharing stories of having to live in hiding and later escape the country on the grounds that they were connected to a group prosecuted by the government. In addition to restricting the way the smartphone is used, it also restricts the frequency of use. Thus, the digital life playing out in the network must be managed in a different way than before.

This aspect of the digital relationships relates to the concept of hybrid identity like that conceptualised in the cyborg and how the contemporary actor and the technological life is increasingly integrated, erasing the separation of the technological and lived life. In the context of humanitarian aid, the exploitation of digital infrastructure must be a priority to address. As much as the digital offers to the humanitarian field, leaving vulnerable groups even more vulnerable is a risk that could play out. The use of mobile devices and social media can become a risk in itself by making the displaced vulnerable to surveillance both by state and non-state actors (Gillespie in Dekker et al., 2018). In the case of stabilising relationships, it can be argued the smartphone is in the process of stabilising its actorship as a facilitator in the context of displacement. The smartphone and its degree of agency has become particularly clear through its ability to generate and contribute to organise many different forms of inscriptions that meet the need of different actors, like the need for

emotional support, the need for mobility and the need for certain essential documents for the displaced.

8.3 Good or bad technology?

As stated in the theory section, the aspect of normativity in the script of the smartphone will be addressed here. In investigating the smartphone as a humanitarian technology, the aspect of flexibility, or fluidity, like that of the bush-pump are in large considered positive features in the way they facilitate essential needs and enables new ways of doing humanitarian work in the context of displacement. However, as this thesis is written in the scholarly tradition of STS, the concept of good or bad technology becomes a binary, and hence flawed, approach. Technology, as previously stated, is in STS not considered possessing inheriting good or bad qualities. It is only in the meeting with its users and context that the normative aspect of the technology is illuminated. The case of the smartphone is a suitable example, as it in its flexibility both works for and against the desires of its users. However, in the meeting with the interviewees, the way the technology could say to improve their lives were decisively highlighted. In the context of humanitarian technology, an equally nuanced view is necessary in investigating the workings of a technological object, in the way that it can both change and stabilise existing and new forms of relationships.

9 Conclusion

In this final chapter I will first answer my research questions. Although they have been the guiding aspect of this thesis and thus have been addressed in various ways throughout the empirical and analytical chapters, I will now provide a summary of my findings for each of the two research questions. In the last part of this section I will describe the theoretical and policy implications of my findings.

9.1 Research questions and summary of findings

- 1) *What aspect of the smartphones qualities are the most important and why?*

In the talking to the interviewees the most important aspect is that of navigation, family contact and internet- connection in highlighted. These three aspects of the phone have made out three analytical chapters of this thesis. As the respondents share their stories the aspect of connectedness and networks makes out a clear denominator in that they talk about being able to reach other people essential to their journey. What is considered essential is thus the ability to be mobile and to navigate the precarious life trajectory of displacement, both in a literal sense, but also in that of being able to organise the different needs. As such the aspect of the ability to stay in contact with family and friends, as well as other actors in the network that can be mobilised to provide assistance is also deemed important. However, in appearing as mainly pragmatic and practical, it has shown that the aspects of what is considered important is, like the smartphone itself, multiple.

- 2) *How does the smartphone influence the way actors in the network of displacement relate to each other?*

In the case of the relations in the network, the smartphone provides the network with different forms and constellations of relationships. In being introduced to the network of displacement, the smartphone has contributed to building new relationships between actors in enabling loose tie connections where people can connect without exposing themselves. This aspect is however not only a trustworthy relationship in that individuals can exploit this type of relation. I have also argued, the smartphone has also contributed to the emerging of new

forms of connections between humans and technology, forming hybrid identities, or cyborgs. This is a result of how the smartphone is inscribed into certain political situations where the identity of the user is represented in the phone and actively used in assessing their acceptability or trustworthiness. In its ability to be integrated into digital networks globally, the smartphone also contributes to the maintenance of existing close relationships like that of family and friends while displaced moves across borders. Close relationships are an essential part of the managing of the precarious situation, as the opportunity to stay in contact with family and friends provide relief if the trajectory of the refugee. However, new expectations of staying connected may emerge in addition to the challenge of maintaining these relationships in the case of unwanted surveillance. Likewise, the smartphone enables relations of solidarity both between displaced, but also in the inclusion of actors such as NGOs. Lastly, the smartphone contributes to the stabilising of its actorship as a facilitator in it increasingly being looked to as an essential tool in the context of displacement.

9.2 Implications

Theoretical implications and recommendations for further research

In regards to the theoretical framework, the approach of material semiotics have been helpful in approaching the study of technological objects in the case of displacement, in the way it acknowledges the relational aspect of how meaning is made. In studying the aspect of smartphones and displacement, I have made use of the concepts of script, fluid technology, care, liminality and cyborg, with an overarching lens of material semiotics and ANT. This object-oriented framework has proven useful in the analysis of a technology such as the smartphone. However, in relation to some aspects of the findings, it could be argued the framework came to short. In the object-approach in looking at the smartphone other aspects in the context of displacement may have been more or less ignored, like other aspects of the infrastructure that is considered essential for the displaced. This could have been different had I for instance gone to a refugee-camp or border. Likewise the aspect of non-users this thesis comes to short, as I have not directly had the opportunity to take into consideration the opinions or insight of people who did not have access to smartphones.

In the introduction of this thesis I made the statement that it exists a knowledge gap in the studies of digital humanitarian technologies by the use of the scholarly field of STS. Hence, I have aimed at providing insight in how the approach of STS can contribute to the field of

humanitarian technology. Firstly I have contributed to the field by showing how an actor-oriented approach can be applied to digital technologies and thus how objects can work as agents in the context of humanitarian technology. In the theories of Script, ANT and constructivist studies of technologies in general the concept of gender is disregarded as an analytical approach. Hence, during the last decade the need for a gender approach in the constructivist studies of technology have been put forward, as it traditionally has been ignored in relation to social groups, as designers and users. These include that of Berg and Lie (1995) and Lohan (2000) Wajcman (2000). I will argue there is a need for a feminist approach to the investigations centring on the effects of humanitarian technologies women are often one of the more vulnerable groups in the context of aid. In addition, the focus on surveillance and privacy are in need for further research in the context of humanitarian aid especially, as the tendency to adopt technology, and the digital in this context can

Policy implications

In the of humanitarian technology, the context of policy is essential in the way it both influences the general discussion of displacement, but also plays a part in the process of adopting technology. In the context of developing humanitarian technology, policy suggestions can play a large part in the legitimisation and access to various solutions. In working towards the cross-disciplinary cooperation of the humanitarian field and policy development, the understandings need to understand the connection between theory and practice can perhaps be met. In relation to digital devices, the development of solutions for identification can be said to be relevant as the study of this encompasses various aspects of both political and technological workings. However, as stated in the introduction, the sense of urgency is neigh, as the number of globally displaced only continue to increase. As such, the crisis does not only encompass the European continent, but extends beyond. In the case of policy then, the need to come together have across countries and political views is needed. In approaching this study on smartphones in a humanitarian context I have wished to highlight the possibilities and constrains such technology provides and thus make a contribution into the debate.

10 Literature

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11 Documents

11.1 Interview guide

Date, time and place for interview:

Introduction:

Hi, Thank you for agreeing to do this interview. I am currently writing my master thesis on asylum seekers and use of cell phones. I am interested in your own opinions on the importance of a phone in your life and on your journey from your home country and to Norway. In this interview I am going to ask you questions about cell-phone use and questions about your journey to Norway. You can choose what questions to answer and you can choose to stop the interview at any time. The interview will probably take 1-2 hours, but if you need to take a break at any time just let me know. Also, if you have any questions for me feel free to ask me.

So, the interview is going to start you telling your life story and your journey to Norway. I will not say much in this phase, but just listen and take notes. After you have told your story I will ask you more specific questions about your life and about the part the cell phone plays in this. You can take as long as you want to tell the story and details are very good.

1. Life history

- What do you think is important to tell about yourself and your experiences?
- Why is this important? Please tell me some stories

2. Refugee history

- What do you think is important to tell about your experiences as a refugee?
- What has experiences has impacted you the most?

Factual questions (Descriptive)

1. How old are you?
2. What country are you from?
3. How long have you been in Norway?

Transitioning questions (Motivation)

1. Can you tell me about your life before you left your native country?
 - a. Family
 - b. Job
 - c. Politics
 - d. Media/public life
 - e. Communication
2. Did you have a phone or Internet? If yes, what did you use is for?

3. When did you decide to leave your home country?
4. Why did you decide to leave?
5. Did you travel alone or with someone else? Why did you do it this way?
6. Did you think this was difficult/easy? Why?
7. For how long did you travel?
8. Did the fact that you had/ didn't have a cell phone influence your choice to go? Why/ Why not?

Departure/Organising

1. Did you plan your journey?
2. How did you plan your journey, did you use the phone or Internet to plan? If so, how did you use it?
3. What were the biggest challenges before leaving and how did you solve them?
4. Can you tell me about the things you thought could be a problem when you decided to leave? How did you solve these?
5. Did the phone play any part in this?

Journey

1. Did you have a phone on your journey?
2. Did you have a phone the entire trip?

If they had a phone:

1. What was the phone used for on the journey?
2. How often did you use it?
3. Where did you keep your phone? How did you store it?
4. In what situations did you find the phone most important? Either for you personally or other people you know? Can you give some examples?
5. Were there any situations where the phone was not important, Can you give some examples?
6. Were there times where you felt negative about the phone?
 - a. Getting from place to place – How?
 - b. What kind of transportation?
 - c. Refugee camps?
 - d. Police?
 - e. Immigration services?
 - f. Food/Drink

-
7. How did you plan transportation and what part did the phone play in this?
 8. Did you have a planned route?
 9. Did it change along the way, why, why not?
 - i. How did you travel? (Boat, car, bus, train, bike?)
 - ii. Where did you stop along the way, why?
 10. How important was information on your journey
 11. What sort of information was important to you?

12. How did you receive this information?
13. How important was communication with other people on the journey?
 - a. Who did you communicate with, why?
 - b. How did you communicate with people?
14. What were the biggest challenges on your journey and how did you solve these challenges? Did the phone play a part in this?
15. In your mind, what types of people used a phone?
16. Did you meet or know people who didn't have a phone? How did that affect them?

Introductory questions

1. Do you currently have a phone?

If yes:

2. What sort of phone do you have?
3. Why do you have this type of phone?
4. Are you happy with this phone? Why/Why not?
5. What do you use the phone for?

If No:

1. Why do you not have a phone?
2. Would you like to have one?
3. If yes: why do you want it?

If they didn't have a phone:

1. *Did you have a planned route?*
2. *Did it change along the way, why, why not?*
 - i. *How did you travel? (Boat, car, bus, train, bike?)*
 - ii. *Where did you stop along the way, why?*
17. *What were the biggest challenges on your journey and how did you solve these challenges?*
18. *How important was communication on the journey?*
 - a. *Who did you communicate with, why?*
 - b. *How did you communicate with people?*
19. *How important was information on your journey and what role did the phone play in how you received information?*
 - a. *What sort of information was important to you?*
 - b. *How did you receive this information?*
20. *In your mind, what types of people used a phone?*
21. *Did you meet or know people who didn't have a phone? How did that affect them?*

Current:

1. Have you heard anything about refugees and cell-phones in the news? If so, what have you heard?
2. What do you think about this?
3. What have you heard about Norway and refugees?
4. What do you think about this?
5. Do you think cell phones are important to people in your situation? Why, Why not?
6. Do you think your gender/age has had any effect on how you use your phone?
7. How do you feel about your future?

Personal use:

1. Is the way you use your phone now different than what it was on your journey? Why?
2. Do you think your experience would be different if you didn't have a phone? OR do you think your experience would be different if you had a phone on your journey? Explain
3. Do you feel dependent on your phone, why/why not?
4. If you were to use three words, or less, to describe the phone, what would it be?

Closing:

I have now asked you all the questions on the interview guide. Is there anything you would like to add or anything you would like to talk about more?

Thank you very much for doing this interview, you have been very helpful.

11.2 Consent form

Participation in research project

Master thesis on humanitarian technology – cellphones and refugees

Title: Digital refugees – the scripting and de-scripting of cell phones

Background and purpose

The master thesis is an independent study on humanitarian technology in the academic field of science and technology studies with a focus on investigating how cellphones/smartphones influence refugee situation in a mainly European perspective. The approach of the study will be to look at the cellphone/smartphone as an object with different political, technical and social implications regarding use and availability. The study will focus on how the phone is used by people categorized as refugees, in the political debate and in specific measures, hence it's meaning with positive and negative aspects. To be able to collect good data I need to talk to people who have used cellphones/smartphones while being a refugee, and people working with humanitarian technology either in the field, politically or bureaucratically.

What does participation in the study entail?

The interview will last approximately 1-2 hours. All information identifying individuals and other potentially sensitive data will be processed confidentially. All names and other personal characteristics will be made anonymous. Participation in the study is voluntary. And you can at any point in time withdraw your consent without giving a reason for this. If you withdraw from the study the information you have provided will be deleted. This project will be completed and the thesis will be handed in by the end of May 2018. By then all data will be made anonymous and recordings from the interview will be deleted.

Participation in the study will NOT influence the result of a potential application the participant has at UDI. The administration at the reception centre or UDI will NOT know if you choose to participate or not and participation will not have any influence on the services you receive at the reception centre. If you feel you have bad reactions to the interview and are in need of assistance you can contact the health services at the reception centre.

The study has been reported to Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS (Data Protection Services). Supervisor for the project is Ana Delgado, associate professor at the centre for Technology,

Innovation and Culture at the University of Oslo. Supervisor can be reached by email: ana.delgado@tik.uio.no.

If anything is unclear, or you have any questions regarding the study you can contact me at number + 47 95133475 or email: marianneareng@gmail.com

Consent to participate in the study

I have received information about the study and am willing to participate

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(Signed by participant, Date for interview)

*Title of the project is only guiding

Thank you!

Best regards
Marianne Areng

11.3 NSD approval