Grassroots Organisations and the logics of humanitarianism: the framing of, and actions towards People on the Move on the Aegean Island of Lesvos.

July 2022

University of Glasgow ID: 2567105d

University of Trento ID: 225142

Charles University ID: 54792037

Presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree

of

International Master in Security, Intelligence and Strategic Studies

Word Count: 23,372

Supervisor: Anna Casaglia

Date of Submission: 22/07/2022

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Anna Casaglia for her advice and guidance in making a lot of challenging choices. Thank you for your care and involvement in my research project. Many thanks to my parents, Elżbieta and Przemysław Dolscy for making my dream of travelling and studying a reality. Moreover, I am entirely grateful to my grandmother, Elżbieta Steca, for her unchallenged faith in my abilities, beyond my own comprehension.

Many thanks to all research participants, and friends whom I had the pleasure to meet during my fieldwork. This research would not have been possible without your contributions. Particular thanks to Anne Kessling, who supported me despite many challenges, both on professional and personal level.

Finally, a big thank you to my IMSISS peers, friends, and flatmates. I can call the past two years an ultimate adventure thanks to our socially distanced projects in Glasgow, many Aperitivo get-togethers and lake trips in Trento, and way too many pints in Prague. I wish you all the best.

Abstract

This research analyses the ways in which Grassroots Organisations (GOs) interact with the logics of humanitarianism, while providing assistance to the People on the Move (POM) on Lesvos, Greece. In doing so, it investigates how GOs position themselves vis-a-vis the core humanitarian principles (humanity, neutrality, impartiality, independence). Incorporating evidence from participant observation and semi-structured interviews, this study demonstrates that GOs tended to embrace the principle of humanity, independence, and impartiality (to an extent that the current socio-political situation allows), while strictly non-conforming to the principle of neutrality. Upon consideration of their approach towards, and the framing of the People on the Move, the praxes of Grassroots Organisations have been found to stand in sharp contrast to the functioning of the well-established humanitarian actors. Consequently, GOs contested the harms and violence of the current European border regime and Greek approach to migration, through a variety of practices of a varying political character.

Ultimately, addressing the time and scope limitations, this research recommends that future academic enquiries evaluate factors accounting for the establishment, development, and disappearance of GOs, which would allow for highlighting the trajectories of such form of POM-support vis-a-vis the increasingly violent border regimes. Moreover, it recommends transcribing the study into different socio-political contexts, which would allow for evaluating the ways in which GOs' motivations, obstacles they face, and outcomes of their actions are conditioned by the time and space they emerge in, while also outlining the factors accounting for their challenging/upholding of the humanitarian logics.

Keywords

Migration, Grassroots Organisations, solidarity, Greece, 'refugee crisis', migration, criminalisation, securitisation, humanitarian aid, humanitarianism;

Table of Contents

Introduction

Despite migration constituting a worldwide and continuous phenomenon, the events between the late 2015 and early 2016 characterise a period of historical exception. Namely, the failure of the EU's reception infrastructure and the asylum system, in accommodating little more than 1.4 million People on the move (POM)[1] seeking safety, security and refuge on European soil (Kallio, Hakli, Pascucci, 2019; UNHCR, 2022). In face of the self-evident unpreparedness of the EU, exemplified by the lack of unity and effective institutions underpinning the European migration policy (Scipioni, 2018), the label of 'refugee crisis'[2] had been deployed to describe the situation, and to justify a range of extraordinary measures deployed in response (Vries & Guild, 2018). With the increased severity of the new European migration regime, and its progressively more securitised and militarised nature, a variety of discourses and approaches to the 'issue' of migration entailed the portrayal of refugees as 'threats', with the political decision-making responding to migrant 'emergency' resulting in designation of the 'Mediterranean as a specific site of intervention' (Pallister-Wilkins 2016, p. 313).

It is crucial to note that the discourse of 'crisis' influenced not only the EU policies regarding migration control, but also the humanitarian aid delivery, which has been embedded in the dual goal of saving lives, and the simultaneous securing of the EU's external borders (Ticktin, 2014).

---

[1]The term 'People on the Move' (POM) is deployed in this study in order to transcend the restrictive labels encompassing words such as 'refugees', 'asylum seekers', potential asylum seekers (individuals facing barriers with accessing asylum service), as well as 'undocumented migrants'. The rationale for doing so is that those labels prevent the recognition of epistemic and symbolic violence associated with the abovementioned value-charged labels, which inherently entail a degree of judgement about their (un)deservingness entailing the access to both legal protection, as well as humanitarian aid (see Schack and Witcher 2020). In this way this research allows for the inclusion of the individuals who migrated for various reasons, from state/religious persecution and violence to economic insecurity (Witcher & Fumado, 2021).

[2] This thesis uses the term 'refugee crisis' critically, as accordingly to the literature, the magnitude of the influx to Europe has neither been a novel occurence, nor did it constitute an 'invasion' that it had been portrayed as within public discourses (De Genova et al. 2016; Krzyżanowski et al. 2018). What is more, it came to denote a particular moment in European history, underpinned by a range of crucial political implications, particularly in relation to the labelling, perceptions, and management of contemporary international mobility (Massari, 2021). This is to highlight that the reaction of the EU to the number of POM reaching European soil is seen as unjustifiable in this research.

The humanitarian logic, guiding the approach of the most well-established humanitarian actors (from intergovernmental agencies to NGOs), has raised a range of criticisms for (re)producing power hierarchies, while further victimising the People on the Move. Parallelly to the discourses of 'crisis', as well as the implication of the most influential humanitarian aid actors in the border regime maintenance, a range of scholars (see McGee & Pelham, 2018; Rajaram, 2016; Sandri, 2018) have illustrated an emergence of a significant rise of solidarity initiatives outside of the institutionalised scope of the humanitarian field. Grassroot Organisations (GOs)[3], diverse groups of ordinary people who self-organised to provide humanitarian assistance to the People on the Move across Europe, have oftentimes become crucial for the provision of aid, while operating outside the institutional establishment of humanitarian care (Guribye & Mydland, 2018). To this day, GOs continue to address the gaps left by the government and NGOs, while operating in a highly challenging context. This entails a combination of a hostile and arbitrary responses to migration on both the EU and national levels, including the closure of the safe and legal migratory routes, erecting of the novel bordering infrastructures (from ditches to fences and watchtowers), the normalisation of violence occurring at the EU's 'borderscapes', as well as criminalisation of solidarity (Nagy, 2016). As a consequence, some of the non-governmental and informal groups became overpowered and marginalised, while being forced towards institutional transformation and legal approval (i.e., becoming formalised NGOs) (see Cantat, 2020; Jovanović, 2020). The others, who resisted such formalisation became increasingly criminalised, particularly on the Greek Aegean Islands, where essentially all autonomous search and rescue initiatives have been halted because of the risks associated with being accused of human trafficking, or migrant smuggling (Adam & Hänsel, 2021).

Despite these tendencies, some of the GOs persisted in operating on the ground, sometimes acting in manners invisible to the unknowing eye, while at other times engaging with

---

[3] This research recognises the complexities of deploying the suitable terminology for conceptualising the ways in which European citizens reacted to the novel transformations of the EU border regime. In doing so, this research furthers the debates regarding the links between human rights, solidarity, and humanitarianism within Europe, through critical engagement with the notion of 'grassroots'. The underlying assumption of this research is that the features of 'grassroots' (praxes, motivations and the outcomes of their actions), rather than assumed in advance, should be priorly empirically explored.

widespread actions entailing documentation, scandalisation, monitoring and protesting against the increasingly violent and hostile nature of both, the border and reception policies visible across the whole Europe (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013). Consequently, taking into account the importance of the GOs and their contrasting nature vis-a-vis the well-established humanitarian actors, this research aims to analyse the ways in which GOs engage with the logic of humanitarianism through their approach to, and conceptualization of the POM. Ergo, this research attempts to find answers to two questions:

- How do GOs engage in humanitarianism at the borders?
- In what ways do GOs challenge/uphold the humanitarian logic through their approach to migrants and bordering processes?

Answering these questions requires a thorough analysis of humanitarianism's main features, expanded by an evaluation of the ways in which GOs approach them. The research is empirically promising, as the European border regime is increasingly tightening, with limited academic knowledge of the growing phenomenon of GOs involved in humanitarian aid and the ways in which their practices interact with humanitarianism at the borders (Fechter & Schwittay, 2019). What is more, the examination of the role that the humanitarian actors play in the management of the 'refugee crisis' is particularly interesting in the contemporary securitised context, as those actors are not frequently associated with the phenomenon of securitisation, usually related to the law enforcement, national border apparatuses or entities like Frontex (Krzyżanowski et al. 2018; Mountz 2015; Huysmans 2016). Additionally, as literature has aptly suggested, solidarity serves as an alternative to the core principles of humanitarianism, particularly impartiality and neutrality. This entails 'working with' rather than 'caring for' the People on the Move (Brun, 2016). As this has been argued to constitute one of the main premises of GO's praxes, this thesis will pay an increased attention to the embodiments of solidarity on the ground (see Agier, 2010; Rygiel, 2011). While attempting to further the academic knowledge on functioning of grassroots humanitarianism, this research also interrogates the dynamic nature of civil initiatives, which find themselves operating within an increasingly changing political order, not only in terms of the division of the world into nation

states, but also the recent (2019) electoral victory of the right-wing party in Greece. This together with the social order within which humanitarians function, accounts for a progressively complex situation, which has not yet been thoroughly analysed within the literature on migration, border studies, nor security. Therefore, the research attempts to bridge that gap, while offering a nuanced understanding of GOs' role within border humanitarianism.

Contextualising the 'refugee crisis'

The 2012 escalation of the Syrian Civil War, forced Syrian people to seek refuge in neighbouring countries.[4] During that time, most of the aid, distributed by the UN agencies, international organisations and INGOs, was delivered to the countries neighbouring Syria, as the access to the affected populations inside the country has been severely limited. In 2015, due to a number of aspects such as the exacerbated conditions in the neighbouring countries (UN, 2015), and the opening of the eastern Mediterranean and Balkan routes (Fargues, 2015), the movement of Syrians has been directed towards Europe. Despite not more than a million asylum applications registered on the southern coasts of Europe, at the time, many commentators described the situation of the Mediterranean, a migrant, or refugee 'crisis' (Pallister-Wilkins 2016).

Lesvos as an archetypical migration hub

Greece, alongside Bulgaria and Cyprus, is part of Eastern Mediterranean route (see Figure 1), which has constituted a significant pathway for People on the Move, particularly from the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, to reach Europe since 2014 (Mentzelopoulou & Luyten, 2018).

---

[4] With more than 5.5 million people recognised as Syrian refugees with the UNHCR (2017), Turkey hosted around 3.5 million, Lebanon 1 million, Jordan 7 655,000, Iraq 230,000, Egypt around 115,000 (UNHCR, 2017).
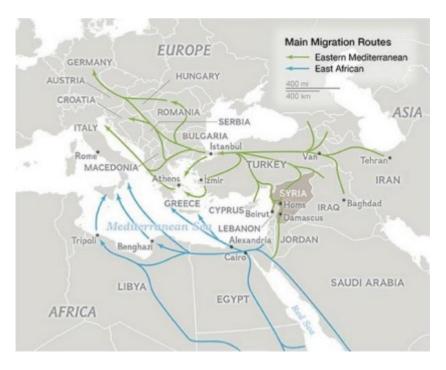
Figure 1Mediterranean Sea Routes (IOM, 2015)

Since the beginning of the 'long summer of migration', Greece has received the majority of POM, compared to any other country situated at the EU's external border (Afouxenidis et. al., 2017). According to Cuttitta (2012) the Mediterranean Islands on the Eastern and Southern borders of Greece have turned into places of particular importance due to specific dynamics of mobility. This can be illustrated by the case of Lesvos, which has been significantly impacted by its proximity to Turkey, where different intensities of POM have been arriving on the island for many years. The first peak was marked by the Greco-Turkish War between 1919 and 1922, which resulted in a forceful expulsion of Anatolian Greeks from Turkey (Cederquist, 2019). This has been followed by a continuous stream of different numbers of people, until the 2015/2016 influx, with more than half a million refugees arriving on the island by the end of 2015 (UNHCR, 2018). The island, despite constituting the biggest of the Greek Aegean Islands, is still a relatively small place (1,633 km²) with a similarly small number of inhabitants (approximately 86,000 people) (Greeka, 2022). Hence, considering its capacities and size, it can be argued that Lesvos played a disproportionate role in receiving POM. Illustrated by the arrival of 504,000 people transiting the country to continue their

journeys further into Europe in 2015 (Papataxiarchis 2016), and the outcomes of the 2016 EU-Turkey Deal. The deal transformed Greece into a host country to a large number of POMs, as they have been bound to remain on the island until receiving a decision on their asylum claim, unless transferred to another 'hotspot'[5] (Jauhiainen & Vorobeva, 2020).

Greek civil society in context of EU and national approach to migration

The transformation of the Greek state, from an emigration pole to a host state started only in the mid-1990s (Kasimis, 2012). In the course of such shift, Greece experienced an increase of NGOs and voluntary organisations, operating to promote social inclusion, protect the rights and support the increasing number of people moving into the country, while standing against racism, discrimination, as well as xenophobia (Skleparis, 2015). The subsequent maturing of the Greek civil society, and increased availability of EU funding, led to flourished mobilisation in support of the POM, as well as an establishment of a progressively more outspoken and varied civil society (Gropas and Triandafyllidou, 2012). Despite such an increase, the Greek civil society is usually described as rather weak in academia, due to the fewer NGOs and volunteering rates vis-a-vis other European countries (Lyrintzis, 2002). On the other hand, a number of academics emphasised the existence of its vibrant and non-institutionalized, informal, and rarely registered counterpart, which is rarely taken into account in official statistics (Sotiropoulos 2004; Loukidou 2013). Grassroot organisations (collectives of people gathering their resources mainly from their own community, while oftentimes constituting volunteer-run entities (see Fechter & Schwittay, 2019)), became crucial in the first phase of responding to the 'refugee crisis' (beginning of 2015, till October 2015). Consequently, they

---

[5]Hotspots are semi-carceral spaces devised for the 'management of undesirables' (Aiger, 2011) with the goal of interrupting their mobility and collecting their data (both biometric and personal)(see Pallister-Wilkins, 2020). The 'hotspot approach' has been established by the European Commission to assist EU MS located at the external EU borders and embedded in the 2015 European Agenda on Migration.

found themselves filling out the gaps left by the government and NGOs in regard to aid provision on the Aegean Islands (Parsanoglou, 2020). This assistance entailed a provision of medical and first aid, information, nourishment, and infrastructure (from tents to showers); and occurred alongside only a few international humanitarian actors such as MDM, IRC, and MSF (Rozakou, 2017). As the situation on the island became declared a site of a humanitarian crisis by UNHCR (Franck, 2018), the EU allocated ample resources to respond to the developments on the ground. Consequently, an approximate of a hundred more-experienced humanitarian agencies arrived on the Island in late October of 2015 (Rozakou, 2017). Their interventions, however, rather than welcomed by the locals, have been perceived as neo-colonial, and transforming the character of the Island into one similar to the 'Third World' countries (Rozakou, 2017). Lesvos, at that time, recorded the arrival of approximately 330,000 individuals (which accounted for more than two thirds of the total number of arrivals to Greece (IOM, 2022)). During that period, Grassroots Organisations were still central to rescue, reception and service provision to the POMs (Papataxiarchis, 2016). The landscape of humanitarian aid of 2016, on the other hand, can be described as an unprecedented phenomenon for Greece, and any EU country, due to the multitude of diverse actors operating on Lesvos, from locals, grassroots groups, and solidarians, to intergovernmental, and (inter)national organisations (Rozakou, 2017). At that time, however, the Greek state began to criminalise solidarity to regularise humanitarian interventions of both independent volunteers and GOs. This decision to 'control' the aid landscape was followed by the externalisation of the governmental responsibilities to a range of subcontracted NGOs (who were the only actors allowed to operate inside the camp), as well as shifting the 'reception duties' to Frontex and the police (Haaland & Wallevik, 2019). Consequently, some informal groups decided to institutionalise and register as NGOs to continue aiding POM, while others remained highly critical of 'ngoification of solidarity' and became marginalised by the state in the process (Boorsma, 2021). Next, 2019 marked a phase of visibly increased physical, legal, and political hostility towards civil society actors and humanitarians who were forced to operate in an

increasingly dangerous environment (Papataxiarchis, 2020). The election of the New Democracy government in 2019 has been argued to account for the worsening of already poor quality of protection, which rarely followed the international standards (Pallister-Wilkins, 2021). This resulted from the introduction of the International Protection Act (where the access to legal protection for the POMs arriving on Lesvos has been reduced), as well as implementation of the closed-camp policy, linked to the decreased protection in the spaces outside the camp (while ultimately designating safety of Greek citizens as an issue of a primary concern), and a more rigid deterrence approach along land boundaries and at sea (including co-called 'pushbacks').[6] Additionally, the Greek-Turkish border crisis of 2020 resulted in militarisation of the refugee and migrant issue, and the ultimate justification of the implementation of its new migration policy (Bounia et. al., 2020). Hence, the reversal of the aforementioned 'welcoming culture' was completed by this shift in the policies deployed by the New Democracy (ND) government.

This, together with the COVID-19 pandemic (which designated POM as particular groups for public health interventions, such as confinement to already unsuitable camp (see Tazzioli, 2020)), reinforced the climate of xenophobia, racism, and stigmatisation of POM (as for instance evidenced by the attacks carried out by the locals on NGO workers (see RSA, 2022)). As a consequence of these changes, the number of POM on the Island decreased dramatically, from 504,000 people in 2015 to only 2,103 at the beginning of 2022 (see UNHCR, 2022 for the most recent data on sea and land arrivals to Lesvos). This in turn caused a number of NGOs to leave the Island, while either transferring their activities mainly to Athens (ex. Attica, One Happy Family), or responding to the new 'refugee crisis' unfolding as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine (e.g., Refugee4Refugees). On the other hand, a number of Grassroots Organisations, which are of central focus for this research, persisted on the Island,

---

[6] The term pushback refers to a prevalent deployment of informal state measures at the external borders of the EU, physically forcing POM outside their territory, while impeding their access to relevant legal and administrative frameworks under their right to apply for asylum. The practices of pushbacks include placing POM who already arrived in Greece on inflatable rafts and leaving them to drift to the sea, as well as sabotaging boats on which POM attempt to arrive before leaving them to drift (Cortinovis, R., 2021).

while operating in an extremely challenging context, highly influenced by the Greek government (particularly in relation to shaping the landscape of necessities GOs had to respond to, as well as the availability of opportunities for political actions), as well as the EU policies regarding migration, which have been conditioned by a range of humanitarian and security discourses (Pallister-Wilkins, 2017).

This chapter effectively showed that this research is located in a particularly challenging setting in which GO operate. This entails an increased hostility from the state, criminalisation of solidarity, normalisation of violence and a general feeling of 'tiredness' amongst the local population. This, however, does not mean that the empirical analysis of the GO vis-a-vis the logics of humanitarianism ceases to be adequate, but highlights a set of challenges in the context of which their operating had not been extensively addressed within the academic literature. As a consequence, this research has a potential to substantially enrich emerging knowledge on the topic, while engaging with the outcomes of dynamic changes in the present-day landscape of the humanitarian scene on Lesvos.

Literature review

This section will provide the readers with a critical evaluation of the state of knowledge on the issues of migration management, humanitarianism, and securitisation, while introducing the concept of Grassroots Organisations. This will allow for highlighting the gaps in most recent literature while grounding the research in the context of most relevant theories and approaches.

European Approach to migration

According to Panebianco (2022), the events of 2015 illuminated a contradictory nature of the European Union's political strategy, characterised by a simultaneous duty to protect POM (with the humanitarian ethos embedded in narratives of emergency and crisis), as well as the commitment to preserve the state borders and national homogeneity, regardless of individual needs (conductive of shifting the responsibility for migration management and EU borders' control to a range of non-EU countries). In a similar vein, Massari (2021) argued that Europe finds itself torn between two coexisting responses to migration, which are xenophobia (fear of difference (Cap, 2018)) and hospitality (civil humanitarianism (Esperti, 2020)). Consequently, it becomes evident that the present emphasis on both securitisation and humanitarianism illustrates a more complicated and intertwining logic of risk and compassion, danger, and vulnerability, which ultimately allows for deployment of a military-humanitarian response (Musarò, 2019); explored in detail in the following sections.

The Greek context

Following the 2013 Dublin III Regulation, the first EUMS of arrival is responsible for the examination of asylum applications for individuals seeking refuge under the 1951 Geneva Convention (Jauhiainen & Vorobeva, 2020). This has been argued to lead to overburdening of the Greek asylum system particularly during the 'long summer of migration', as it is situated at

the EU's external border (Pallister-Wilkins, 2021). In an attempt to limit the arrival of POM from Turkey via Greece, the EU-Turkey deal was reached in 2016, which resulted in a dramatic decrease in the number of arrivals in exchange for the promise of 6 billion euros, visa liberalisation, and renewal of Turkey's EU accession discussions (Felix, 2022). This, together with discriminative visa policies (Laube, 2019), rigid asylum laws and stricter border patrols (Geddes and Scholten, 2016) culminated in the EU's attempts to prevent POM from entering the EU territory (Aras, 2019).

As reaching Lesvos requires POM to cross the Aegean Sea from Turkey by boat, the safety of their journeys has often been jeopardised by the Greek and Turkish Coast Guards, leading to immense suffering and even death due to the practice of pushbacks (see Kokkinidis, 2022), which have been consistently denied by the Greek Government (on the allegations regarding pushback, see UNHCR, Greece, 2022; for Greek Prime Minister denying pushbacks taking place, see Tagaris, 2021). Once in Greece, POM become immobilised in RICs, following the hotspot approach (see European Agenda on Migration, 2015), as well as the inefficiency of the asylum proceedings (their arbitrary nature, slow pace, and lack of adequate staffing (Pace et al., 2016)). Only if the application is deemed admissible, individuals can travel to mainland Greece, where the national asylum authority processes their application further (Felix, 2022). Here, it is important to note that with the election of the New Democracy government in 2019, Greece experienced the restructuring of the hotspots on the Aegean islands, including plans of closing the Moria camp (prior to its destruction by fire), and establishing a new RIC in northern Lesvos (faced with considerable opposition from the locals)(Refugee Observatory, 2020), followed by the revisions of the ESTIA accommodation program (resulting in a crisis regarding both health and borders at the beginning of 2020, as the significant reductions of the humanitarian sector have severely impacted the degree and quality of POM protection (Papataxiarchis, 2020)). This has been accompanied by the Joint Ministerial Decision No. 42799/2021, which designated Turkey as a 'safe third country' for applicants from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Somalia, Syria, and Afghanistan. Second, the applicants on the Islands, including Lesvos, are subjected to a fast-track border procedure pursuant to Greek Law 4375/2016, and

updated in Law 4636/2019. This results in externalisation of the asylum procedure by Greece, remitting the obligation of examining petitions for international protection to Turkey, notwithstanding the nearly universal criticism of the Turkish International Protection regime by human rights organisations (Koca, 2022). This means that first, the applicants need to prove that Turkey is not a safe country for them during an admissibility interview, otherwise facing deportation. The resulting drastic change in POM's demography and further worsening of living conditions in Moria, had been accompanied by the government closing self-organised residence structures (such as the PIKPA camp, an alternative accommodation based on the principles of dignity and respect (Pallister-Wilkins et al., 2021)). Next, Ankara removed border checks on its border with Greece in Evros in 2020, which highlighted the worsening of the Greek-Turkish relations (Karadağ & Üstübici, 2021). In response, Athens reinforced their border closures and approached POM trying to enter European soil with increased violence (ibid.). It is crucial to note that the increased tensions between the two states had grave effects on migration management in the Aegean, particularly in terms of POM's rights and access to humanitarian assistance (Ünver, 2022). Pallister-Wilkins (2021) argues that the actions of the Turkish government triggered a wave of xenophobia in Greece, where the militarization of migration, casting migration as 'invasion', and portraying POM as 'threats' resulted in a wave of hatred, evidenced by fascist groups building roadblocks, attacking both POM and humanitarian workers. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in mobility restriction for all POMs in RICs,[7] which has been prolonged until 2022. Córdova-Morales (2021) illustrated that the devastating fires in the former Moria camp (known for inhumane conditions, riots, and deaths), which occurred in September 2020, left 13,000 people destitute for a period of several weeks. This has been followed by the establishment of a new 'temporary camp' located in the northern suburb of Mytilene, which previously served as a military polygon (Legal Centre Lesvos, 2022). This 'temporary camp' persists until now, partially surrounded by the sea and exposed to adverse atmospheric agents, with the notoriously bad living conditions leading

---

[7] See Common Ministerial Decision (Δ1 α/ΓΠ.οικ. 20030/2020) of March 21, 2020

several organisations and scholars to label it Moria 2.0 (see Oxfam, 2020). POM are only allowed to leave the camp Monday-Friday between 8am and 8pm, and Saturday between 8am and 4pm, while previously being only allowed to leave the camp only two days a week, or not allowed to leave at all due to the COVID-19 restrictions (Legal Centre Lesvos, 2022). Jauhiainen & Vorobeva (2020) showed how COVID-19 further exacerbated the situation of the POM through the suspension of their asylum process, closing the camp for external persons, and hindering direct access to POM during the full lockdown across the country.

All things considered, the government can be argued to interfere with the humanitarian space on Lesvos, where the operational independence from the authorities of (I)NGOs, GOs etc is shrinking. This is underpinned by the implementation of the carceral policies evidenced by Athens's goal to establish closed camp (RIC) on each Aegean Island, as well as a range of COVID-19 measures, which in reality enabled the government to accomplish that aim via limiting POM's ability to freely leave the camp. This, together with the increased xenophobic sentiment on the island, resulting in an overwhelming climate of fear and discouragement within the pro-migrant solidarity structures, severely impacts their ability to act, save lives and alleviate suffering.

Academic approaches to securitisation

Before discussing the securitisation of migration in the Greek context, we will now turn to the theoretical underpinnings of securitisation theory. The founders of the Copenhagen school fundamentally challenged the realist approaches to security, which considered the State as the sole unit of analysis in the context of the international security system, while only analysing threats of military nature (Buzan et al. 1998; Wæver, 1995). Consequently, the concept of the referent object has been expanded to include a range of non-state actors. Additionally, the broadening of the scope of security has been accompanied by the concept of 'securitisation'. This entails a discursive construction of an issue in terms of security through the use of 'existential threat rhetoric' (asserting the urgency of the situation), while simultaneously shifting

the said issue beyond the scope of 'normal politics', as it requires a range of exceptional measures to address it once the rhetoric is accepted by the broader audience (Buzan et al. 1998, p.24–25). In theory, any actor can frame a given issue as an object of security, however, the efficacy of the securitizing claim depends on the position of the actor vis-a-vis the audience and the issue itself (Buzan et al. 1998, 32). This entails the creation and maintenance of a shared understanding of what the existential security threat is, among both the political elites and the audiences (Wæver 1995). Subsequently, the opposite identities are created, organised around the division between 'us' vs 'them', which serves to justify the deployment of extraordinary measures to eliminate given 'threats' (Squire, 2016). This is seen in the context of migration, where opposing identities have been established between the 'threatening' migrants vis-a-vis the states, societies, and the EU (Huysmans, 2000). Consequently, migrants are securitised by the policies preventing them to enter EU territory, as well as detention and deportation, which directly approach them as threats to the EU's security. Following Schuster (2005), these practices have been deployed as tools for control of 'undesirable' populations, while designating them as threatening 'others'. This suggests that these practices are not only powerful instruments allowing for the securitisation of migrants through the establishment of mechanisms for their exclusion from the state's physical space, but also can be associated with the state's exercise of sovereignty through the establishment of boundaries regarding national community (De Genova, 2010). Despite detention and deportation being argued to be ineffective in regard to migration control, they have been shown to bear symbolic power in regard to assuring the public's concerns about migration (Shuster, 2005). The proliferation of detention, or 'reception' centres across Europe, where migrants are either completely deprived of their mobility or given an extremely limited freedom to move, together with the growing number of returns, demonstrate not only the rising ubiquity of these practices across Europe (European Commission 2014), but also normalisation of these practices within the securitised governance of migration, where concerns for national and public security justify expulsion and detention of the POM.

Securitisation of migration in Greece

The security discourses have been dominating academic thought regarding migration since the 1990s (See Huysmans, 2000; Buzan, 2008; Wæver et al., 1995). With time, security considerations took prime within the European approach to international mobility, casting it as posing danger to security, identity and well-being of European nations and populations (Karamanidou, 2015). This is evidenced not only on the national levels, but also in the context of the EU-wide approach to migration, seen in a variety of binding laws and policies deployed by EUMS,[8] non-existent Dublin Regulation's reform, and lack of replacement of the quota system relocating migrants across the EU soil via a voluntary resettlement mechanism (see European Council, 2018). These can be argued to have positioned migration as an occurrence which needs to be controlled and regulated in an increasingly strict manner (Karamanidou, 2015). It is worth noticing that the humanitarian crisis persists at the southern borders at the EU, which rather than the number of arrivals, considers the (in)security of People on the Move and increased precarity of their journeys. For instance, it can be argued that the primary facet of the crisis has a humanitarian dimension, embedded in the dramatic death toll seen in records of dead or missing people trying to cross the Mediterranean (Pallister-Wilkins et. al., 2021)). Counterintuitively, however, rather than scrutinising the EU border policies, and its unpreparedness and inadequacy in addressing the 'refugee crisis' (Guiraudon, 2018), the popular understanding of the 'crisis' has been embedded in a demand for an immediate response to the 2015 influx of POM, heavily influenced by media framings of migration as a new and unexpected phenomenon (Harteveld et al., 2018). This has consequently led to the erection of internal physical barriers, refusal to redistribute migrants (particularly by the

---

[8] These include EC 343/2003 and EU 604/2013c (the Dublin II and III regulations), 2005/85/EC and 2013a/32/EU (directives dictating thresholds regarding granting and withdrawal of the refugee status), 2004/83/EC and 2011/95/EU (standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection). The scope of such policies has expanded upon the establishment of FRONTEX , the Returns Directive (2008/115/EC), as well as the implementation of new control technologies such as Eurodac or Schengen Information System (Karamanidou, 2015).

Vysehrad group), and reinstating of border controls, which marked a sharp decline in EU Member States' cooperation and an EU-wide crisis (Bauböck, 2018).

The humanitarian approaches in academia

Academic research also focused on the humanitarian approaches, which exposed the dynamic between the use of humanitarian discourses as means to legitimise the tightening of borders for POM's own security (Cusumano, 2019). The emerging literature highlighted an interaction between humanitarianism and securitisation, with a number of studies shedding a light onto the ways in which humanitarian praxis interrelates with security and securitisation rhetoric (see Cuttitta, 2015; Reid-Henry, 2010; Vaughan-Williams, 2015). In particular Andersson (2014) highlighted the ways in which securitarian and humanitarian dimensions underpin a complex threat/vulnerability motion which allows for security-humanitarian response. Another interesting piece of literature is Chouliaraki's article (2017), where she illustrated how security and humanitarian responses worked together within a novel moral order of hospitality, within which border is reconditioned both as a space of power and exclusion, while at the same time enabling solidarity which simultaneously reinforces and challenges it. This literature illuminates the ways in which humanitarianism accounts for shaping of securitarian discourses. Despite these studies focusing on humanitarian practices, there exists a gap in understanding the ways in which non-traditional humanitarian actors, Grassroots Organisations in particular, interact with this intertwining.

Humanitarian border(work)

Walters (2010) coined the term 'humanitarian borders', which entails the close relationship between border enforcement, humanitarian aid and migration, characterising European approach to mobility governance. This approach is underpinned by coming together of securitised notion of 'control' and humanitarian 'rescue'. Following Pallister-Wilkins (2017), humanitarian borders are comprised of a variety of different actors, who oftentimes reproduce

existing borders via a range of humanitarian practices developed specifically for border zones, while existing in complementary relation with migration control, what she terms 'humanitarian borderwork'. While the increasingly tightening and restrictive nature of European border regime has been underscored in the academic literature, this thesis will emphasise that humanitarian borders in Europe are not only instruments of mobility control, but also sites of informal activism and solidarity, which become increasingly policed and repressed by the state (see Mitchell and Sparke 2020). The concept of 'humanitarian border' indicates that borders can take multiple forms, which are rather challenging to anticipate (Walters, 2010). In this context, borders do not only constitute an outcome of political events (entailing increased mobility and international conflicts) but are also embedded in the interactions of care and control, which the concept of 'viapolitics' inherently highlights (ibid.). This is because it does not only emphasise on the infrastructures facilitating the provision of care and control, but also focuses on the intertwining of humanitarian praxis and security policies, which rather than in contrast, operate in a reciprocal relationship (Dijstelbloem & van der Veer, 2021). Within migration, border and security studies, this predicament has been attributed to the increasing overlapping of the humanitarian and securitised discourses and praxis (see e.g., Casas-Cortes et al., 2015; Pallister-Wilkins, 2016; Perkowski, 2016). First of all, Perkowski (2016) illuminated that both phenomena are closely related to the notion of 'crisis'. Second, humanitarian discourses are deployed to legitimise security politics and praxis, such as military actions (ibid.), or to halt the 'crises' (Walters, 2015). Finally, the praxes of the humanitarian, and the migration management actors are interconnected in regard to their organisational mediation, and their interactions via a variety of 'things' ranging from the ships in which POMs arrive, the food and medical care they receive, through the fingerprinting technologies, and camps (see Dijstelbloem & van der Veer, 2021). For instance, POM interact with the Hellenic Coast Guard tasked with human smuggling detection, while at another point acquiring clothing from NGOs operating on the ground. This illustrates that POM simultaneously interact with both elements of security and humanitarianism (Walters, 2015).

The humanitarian border on Lesvos

Dijstelbloem & van der Veer (2021) illustrated the emergence of the 'humanitarian border' on Lesvos in the context of the 'refugee crisis', due to an intertwining phenomenon of care and control, entailing elements of both humanitarianism and securitisation. The emergence of a 'humanitarian border' has been described as a result of the combination of the EU hotspot approach and Greek authorities' modes of migration management in the Aegean Islands on the one hand, and humanitarian aid supplied by NGOs and volunteers on the other (ibid.). It is important to emphasise the coinciding of the Greek geographical borders with the EU external borders, due to the intentional designation of the Aegean Islands as the European frontier by the EU policies (see Dublin III regulation) and the resulting immobilisation of the POM on the island due to a range of regulatory, technological, and administrative apparatuses. These apparatuses materialise simultaneously as the practices of care, such as efforts to alleviate POM's discomfort and unsafety. Which, as Konrad (2015) argues, is generative of the border itself, where all actors involved, from the locals to international volunteers, play a central role in 'making the border'. Despite Rumford (2013) not conceiving the borderwork pursued by ordinary people as interlinked with securitisation, the distinction between their humanitarian praxis and securitisation can be argued to blur at times. This is particularly visible when NGOs and volunteer groups collaborate with the authorities from whose bordering practices, they try to distance themselves from, and also when the bordering praxes pursued by the authorities do not solely consist of securitising responses but entail the acts of care. In doing so Dijstelbloem & van der Veer (2021) highlighted the work of well-established NGOs, who have been found to either collaborate with the Hellenic Coast Guards (for instance through arranging for clothes distribution for the new arrivals, of which they have been informed by the Coast Guards), or NGOs consider themselves to have a good relationship with Frontex. These are important aspects to consider, as Papataxiarchis (2016, p.5) highlighted that the Greek government

supplied crucial aspects of refugee management to NGOs operating on the island (by shifting the state duties to a range of non-state actors).

As the majority of the literature has focused on the ways in which NGOs, rather than GOs, interact with the logics of securitisation, this thesis aims to bridge the gap by building on the aforementioned literature. This will allow not only for the investigating of the ways in which GOs interact with logics of humanitarianism at the border, but also for placing it within the wider context of the humanitarianism-security nexus.

The concept and problematization of humanitarianism

Humanitarianism

The humanitarian field has been characterised by Barnett (2021) as being guided by an unchallengeable humanitarian imperative, where action should be pursued for the sake of preventing death or alleviating human suffering resulting from a conflict or a disaster. This suggests that humanitarianism positions both humanity and lives at stake, while being embedded in the principles delimiting the ways in which humanitarian action should be carried out. Consequently, four main principles became central to humanitarian praxis (Weiss, 1999). Humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence have been argued to be both regulative and constitutive, which means that they both define what a legitimate humanitarian action is, while at the same time authorising aid agencies' access to victims, under certain conditions (Brun, 2016). This is particularly seen in ways in which humanitarian actors aim to improve their effectiveness while balancing the pressures exerted by donors and states, which often drives the processes of rationalisation, bureaucratization (Kennedy, 2019), and professionalisation.

Fundamental humanitarian principles

One of the two ways in which humanitarian action can be delineated is through its guiding principles (Sezgin & Dijkzeul, 2016). The ICRC-developed (see Pictet, 1979) framework influencing humanitarian organisations entails four core standards, which are as follows: neutrality (refraining from favouring either side, it is not to care who loses and who wins (Seybolt, 1996), abstaining from any type of action which might further or jeopardise the interests of either of parties involved in dispute or conflict (Weller, 1997), as well as refraining from engagement in ideological, religious, political, racial controversies in the crisis zones (Sezgin & Dijkzeul, 2016); Impartiality (acting without discriminating against any religious beliefs, class, race, nationality, or political opinions, to prioritise the most immediate causes of distress.; Humanity (preventing and alleviating all human suffering wherever it is found and with respect to their dignity (Alamaeldeen, 2021)), as well as independence (freedom from ties and constraints imposed by any warring parties, including donors and governments, and any interests at stake, such as those of political, economic or military nature (McAvoy, 2010). It is clear that these principles are underpinned by a duty-based ethic revolving around the intentions of humanitarian actors who are invariably compelled to assist people in need.

Critique

The seemingly 'apolitical' and 'universal' nature of humanitarian principles, demonstrated in the previous section, has come under increased criticism regarding its depoliticising and dehistoricising effects regarding the root causes of suffering that humanitarian action aims to address in the first place (Ticktin, 2014). Humanitarian actors, in particular, have been chastised for uncritically sustaining the context within which they operate: in this instance, that the border is a hazardous place, resulting in the deaths of People on the Move (Pallister-Wilkins, 2017). Next, one of the most relevant critiques of humanitarianism centres on its repressive elements. These are particularly seen in the dichotomous positionality of the 'providers' and 'recipients' of aid, with the former assumed to possess necessary resources

and competencies which the latter are seen to be lacking (Vandevoordt, 2019). Malkki (2005) suggests that in the process, the recipients of aid are often reduced to the position of 'mere bodies' that need to be cared for, fed and represented by others. This results from the subjectification process, pertinent to humanitarian action (see Agier, 2011). Foremost, through the focus on saving lives, humanitarian praxis has been argued to depoliticise the lives of the 'aid recipients' through reducing those very lives to the instances of 'bare life', where their biographical life (political and social subjectivity) becomes erased. This is seen in instances when the bodies (physical and biological needs) of the POM are seen as more reliable sources of truth than the testimonies and stories shared (Fassin, 2011). This clear relation of domination is observable in approaching the 'aid recipients' solely as passive and vulnerable actors in sole need of relief efforts, not possessing the capability to counteract their own suffering, while at the same time positioning humanitarians as 'selfless heroes' sacrificing their daily routines for missions in disaster-struck areas (Malkki, 2015). For instance, Karakayali (2008) illustrated that advocacy groups tend to highlight the powerlessness of migrants, which leads to the reinforcement of the victimisation of the People on the Move. It is important to note, that this asymmetrical portrayal of the caring volunteers and dependent victims has been often (re)produced in academia and public discourses. Next, Pallister-Wilkins (2016) argues that humanitarianism establishes diverse life categories (depending on one's age, nationality, gender etc.) according to the perceived (un)deservingness of aid, which further aggravates the differences between its 'providers' and the 'recipients'. The reproduction of such exclusionary logic (differentiation between 'deserving' and 'undeserving/'illegal' groups of people (Fassin, 2011)) is particularly acute towards POM, while being particularly visible in the context of the NGOs who have overtaken governmental responsibilities in the area of migration management. Consequently, those actors have been subcontracted by the government to provide accommodation for POM, or to supply food and services inside the camp (the tendency labelled as 'governmental deresponsibilisation' by Cuttitta (2018)). What is more, the innate professionalisation of more-established humanitarian actors (a demand for more specialised knowledge in areas such as human resources, evaluation, and logistics etc.) rather than

emphasising the proximity to the lived, local experiences, renders them inferior vis-a-vis more 'specialised' and often Western-produced knowledge (Barnett, 2021). This suggests that the humanitarian field also reproduces inequalities within its very own sector, where within the top-down humanitarian governance structure, only a few actors (such as the UN agencies, INGOs and some states), have been shown to marginalise local actors who are often the first responders, have better ability to mobilise local resources, carry out a big proportion of work and have the knowledge necessary for thoroughly understanding the context within which the crisis occurs (Weiss, 2013). This is problematic as humanitarianism not only typically occurs in settings unfavourable to its success (i.e., natural disasters or armed conflicts) (Sezgin & Dijkezul, 2016), but also due to the fact that a range of factors from climate change to economic inequality account for the substantial increase in both the number and intensity of humanitarian crises (Barnett & Walker, 2016). Despite the growing number and variety of actors addressing these crises (particularly since the end of the Cold War which marked the end of superpower rivalry and rendered sovereignty less inviolable, making it easier to intervene), the ever-increasing needs are overwhelming the pool of available resources and capacities to address them (Sezgin & Dijkzeul, 2016). This inadvertently puts the humanitarian field under great pressure.

Subversive humanitarianism and Grassroots Organisations

Having critically assessed the concept of humanitarianism, this thesis will aim to evaluate how the alternatives to humanitarian action pursued by more established actors, function on the ground. In line with Stavinoha and Ramakrishan's (2020) argument, this research refrains from taking humanitarianism as an 'absolute value'. This is to say that the goals, frameworks, and outcomes of aid pursued by different actors are not conceptualised as having identical outcomes. Hence establishing whether GOs challenge or reinforce the humanitarian logics is

empirically promising, given the Fechter and Schwittay's (2019) demand for a more in-depth qualitative inquiry into their functioning within the study of humanitarian practice.

Subversive humanitarianism

Although humanitarian aid can be argued to have always been subversive, the 2015-onwards wave of civil action in Greece has furthered the meaning of the concept of 'subversive humanitarianism', which entails a 'morally motivated set of activities assuming a political character' not because of the way they are carried out, but because of their 'implicit opposition to the current socio-political order' (Vandevoordt & Verschraegen, 2019, p.105). Vandervoordt (2019) proposes that subversive humanitarianism should be operationalised according to seven different dimensions, which vary depending on spatio-temporal contexts. These are: 'civil disobedience; reconstituting social subjects; contending symbolic places; constructing social spaces and personal bonds; assuming equality; putting minds into motion; and transforming individual lives' (ibid., p.245). 'Subversive humanitarianism' has been argued to occur on a number of divergent levels, from social interactions (entailing spontaneous encounters, rather than formal interactions with POM mediated through NGOs and governmental agencies); spatial practices (converting public spaces into sites of solidarity); as well as subject-relations (where POMs cease to be approached as 'invading outsiders' who should be contained, stopped and excluded, but rather as members of the same community) (Witcher & Fumado, 2021). Here, it needs to be acknowledged that, similarly to any other concept, 'subversive humanitarianism' is not without its limitations. In particular, this heuristic model somewhat fails to focus on complexities and interconnections between cases that it tends to set apart.[9]

---

[9] As this thesis is based on empirical inquiry into the lived realities of grassroots volunteers, rather than a purely theoretical engagement, the argument presented in this paper will adequately reflect a range of diverse challenges facing GOs, as well as strategies devised to overcome them, regardless of the accuracy with which they reflect the concept of 'subversive humanitarianism'. Hence this paper accepts that some GOs might not be fully complicit with the heuristic model (for instance, where such initiatives decide to cooperate with the local authorities).

Grassroots Organisations

The term 'grassroots humanitarianism' refers to small-scale efforts undertaken by informal organisations to help those in need, as opposed to more formalised and professionalised aid delivered and managed by the government and wealthy funders (Sandri, 2018). The current academic literature surrounding grassroots organisations suggests that many terms are deployed interchangeably to describe that type of collective mobilisation, for instance: Citizen Aid, Private Development Initiatives, and Grassroots International Organisation (see Haaland & Wallevik, 2019; Appe & Schnable, 2019). In order to retain a degree of academic rigour, this research will use the term 'Grassroot Organisation' (GO) in relation to entities-initiated ad-hoc in response to the needs of People on the Move (not existing before the crisis) and orchestrated by 'ordinary citizens', often lacking previous experience regarding refugee or crisis management (Kitching et al, 2016), who mobilised to support the people in need in their local communities. Grassroot organisations primarily rely on the labour of majorly untrained volunteers (Sandri, 2018) and are funded through individual contributions, while exercised via a range of non-institutionalised practices (which renders them flexible and adaptive to the needs arising on the ground), rather than more formalised and professionalised aid brought, and orchestrated by the state and large donors (Sandri, 2018).

Staples (2016) argues that in an inherently political world, the label of 'grassroots' immediately evokes an affiliation with a notion of political progressiveness. A range of scholars, through contrasting grassroots with state institutions, automatically portrayed the former as politically progressive, socially just and morally legitimate actors, with the latter being characterised as violent, absent, and failing (see Milan, 2018). However, this oversimplistic conceptualisation of grassroots should be avoided, which is why this thesis accepts that 'grassroots' responses to mobility can entail a range of not only welcoming but also negative and violent elements. Hence, this research acknowledges a broad range and varying nature of 'grassroots' responses. Second, the term 'grassroots' has a lot of connotations. It might apply to 'prefigurative politics,' which aims to represent the types of caring and relationality that are

considered essential to a better society in the future (Vandervoordt & Verschraegen, 2019). While simultaneously, GO practices might further the perpetuation of neoliberal care systems (ibid.). According to Muehlebach (2012), the neo liberalisation of welfare may entail an active appeal from the state to change oneself into an "ethical citizen' and a 'loving citizen,' someone prepared to step in and mitigate the impacts of the loss of public and governmental forms of assistance' (p.6). Neoliberal welfare reforms across Europe have elicited distinct moralities, which are expressed in the shifting of the responsibilities regarding the wellbeing and survival from public institutions to individuals and their moral inclinations (Trnka & Trundle, 2014). Similarly, in various parts of Europe, complex entanglements of care and control are surfacing in the context of the approaches to the POM (Fleischmann & Steinhilper, 2017). Consequently, by examining how GO's members approach numerous dilemmas (both ethical and political) inherent in humanitarian aid this research will focus on the ways in which GOs approach the logics of humanitarianism. Responding to Kalogeraki's (2020) calls for further research on organisations supporting migrants in regard to their main characteristics and challenges to their actions, as indispensable for both POM, as well as society faced with a 'refugee crisis', this research centres its analytical lens on aid brought by Grassroots Organisations supporting POM.

The concept of solidarity

In analysing the praxes pursued by the GOs operating on Lesvos, it is crucial to engage with the concept of 'solidarity', particularly as it has been argued to constitute an alternative to the core humanitarian principles (see Agier, 2010; Brun 2016; Rygiel, 2011), which are of central importance for this study. Despite the concept of 'solidarity' gaining popularity in the context of the 'refugee crisis', it has been rarely defined, while being commonly appropriated by a variety of different actors, from politicians, journalists, and NGOs in order to describe divergent repertoires of action (see Oikonomakis, 2018). Fleischmann (2020), similarly, contends that solidarity constitutes a rather ambiguous and malleable term, which can entail a variety of

different meanings. Therefore, following Agustín & Jørgensen (2019), this study approaches the term 'solidarity' as a set of divergent practices, organisational structures and articulations pursued by GOs members, while aiming to support POM. Their praxes are seen as focusing not only to alleviate suffering wherever it is found (Pictet, 1979), but to additionally oppose unjust border policies and approaches in either explicit or implicit way. This means that 'solidarity' described in this study does not only entail elements of humanitarianism, but also of enacting distinctive ideas of how society should operate (see Vandevoordt & Fleischmann 2020). Hence, the concept entails a utopian element, which Scherr (2013) argues is central for the establishment of society founded on the premises of mutual help and cooperation, rather than inequality and competition. To reiterate, solidarity is conceptualised as entailing a variety of relational practices, which are contentious and materialise in specific moments, while entailing building alliances between different actors, and having the ability to establish new, alternative, imaginaries (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019). What is more, following Rozakou (2017) solidarity practices described in this study are situated in horizontal and anti-hierarchical approaches to the POM. Hence, this research transcends the conceptualisations of solidarity as a sole reaction to oppression, discrimination, and injustice (see Scholz, 2008), which allows for approaching the concept not only as oppositional to the existing EU and state approaches to mobility, but as a dynamic force which has a potential to forge novel social patterns and relations within migration management (De Angelis, 2019). Hence, solidarity in this research should be conceptualised as a set of practices entailing resistance, instead of charity, which aims for transforming the current border regimes. In doing so, this research pursues a non-essentialist approach to solidarity, which centres its lens on the ways in which GOs understood and cast solidarity in practice, while responding to the current situation of the POM on Lesvos.

Research design and methodology

In line with the aim of this research, which is the examination of the ways in which GOs engage with the logic of humanitarianism through their approach to and conceptualization of People on the Move, the research relied on qualitative methods of data collection. Namely, the participant observation and semi-structured interviews. These enabled the researcher to gather data necessary for the thematic analysis, affording an in-depth understanding of how Grassroot Organisation members perceive their own actions, goals and positionality while engaging in border humanitarianism.

Participant observation

Participant observation allows for a thorough understanding of the people, or communities of interest through working, spending time, or living with them (Laurier, 2010). As GOs are local and informal (Sandri, 2018), access to them remains limited to the 'outsiders'. Hence, the researcher gained an access and a consequent in-depth understanding of their functioning, through resorting to volunteering with a more established organisation during the initial phases of their field visit to Lesvos between March and June 2022. This allowed for reaching out to the relevant individuals through ties established with other actors. Hence, snowball sampling allowed not only to become an actively involved participant in the context of border humanitarianism (Spradley, 1980), but also to gain access to GO's, which would not have been otherwise possible given their informal and makeshift nature, and the fact that such contact required the creation and maintenance of trust relationships (Pospíšilová, 2011). Consequently, the researcher took an active part in certain elements of the life of 'humanitarians', while 'joining their ranks' such as assemblies, protests, and other forms of mobilisation (Bernard, 2006). This allowed for an understanding of the GO's approach to People on the Move in their natural setting and for producing a subsequent interpretation of

the factors accounting for this (Grills, 1998). In line with Emerson et. al. (1995), the data from participant observation relied on a written account including what the researcher has heard, seen, and experienced in the field; recorded in the form of field notes and jotting notes (Lofland, 1999). The written accounts of the most relevant events, have been produced after such encounters (to maximise immersion in the given context), and away from the researched subjects (to avoid altering the interactions with the individuals of interest) (Emerson et. al., 1995). Sometimes, due to the dynamism of the situation, the researcher reconstructed important events at the end of the day, as there was no possibility to excuse themselves and write their thoughts down immediately. This, however, does not mean that the participants were unaware of the researcher's role, which will be discussed in the following section titled 'ethical considerations'.

Semi-structured interviews

Additionally, the researcher conducted 17 semi-structured interviews, held in English, asking a variety of precise and descriptive questions (see Appendix A). In line with Bryant's and Charmanz's (2007) argument that the quality of collected data depends on the character of questions asked, the researcher ensured that the interview guide and questions were of the best quality possible and founded on existing knowledge. The rationale behind deploying semi-structured interviews was to gain a more in-depth, rich inquiry into the ways in which GOs frame people on the move, as well as their own actions (Hockey & Forsey, 2020). Consequently, the interviews allowed to better capture additional characteristics based on interviewees' own experiences, feelings and attitudes while elaborating the common understanding of the functioning of GOs in supporting People on the Move in Greece, which was indispensable for the study (Seidman, 2006). Semi-structured interviews also enabled a reconstruction of the events which could not be observed by the researcher, as well as overcoming the challenges regarding the limited time scope of the research, as studies relying on interviewing can usually be completed in less time than those deploying participant

observation as the sole method of data gathering (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2015). Hence, semi-structured interviews were crucial for gaining the relevant context required for a more accurate understanding of the perspectives and lived experiences of GOs in the study, which surfaced during the participant observation (Becker & Geer, 1957).

These methods resonated with Fechter and Schwittay's (2019) call for a more in-depth qualitative inquiry in the study of humanitarian practice, as they allowed to shed light on how informal organisations understand and frame their initiatives towards the People on the Move in the context of border humanitarianism.

Ethical considerations

In order to ensure the highest ethical standard of this study, the collection of the primary data required informed consent procedures and taking appropriate steps for preventing harm to the participants. Consequently, the researcher consulted the Glasgow University ethics committee (evidenced by the receipt of the ethical approval, see Appendix B), while ensuring confidentiality, safety, and adequate handling of data during and after the research. Another consideration had to be made regarding the risks arising from COVID-19 transmission. To minimise that risk, the researcher followed the health guidelines put in place by the Greek government, while making sure that appropriate distance had been maintained between the individuals included in the study at all times. The research had been carried out overtly, which means that the researcher first disclosed their intentions, and then asked for explicit informed permissions from the studied subjects (evidenced by the supply of the PLS and signature of the consent forms; see Appendices C and D for the relevant templates), while respecting participants' will to not reveal certain aspects of their lives (Emerson, 1995), ensuring their anonymity (assigning them pseudonyms) and ensuring that events detailed in this paper would not jeopardise their anonymity or safety in any way.

Researcher's positionality

In line with the choice to be directly involved with the studied subjects, reflexivity became of crucial importance as the researcher's reactions and performances needed to be constantly reviewed to prevent skewing of the analysis (Holloway & Biley, 2011). Consequently, the researcher thoroughly considered the ways in which their experiences and positionality (such as nationality, sex, ethnicity, and legal status), as well as their subjective experiences in the field, such as personal relationships, biographical, linguistic, cultural, and ideological biases, might have influenced their research. This allowed for the prevention of data subjectification (Ambert et. al., 1995), which was important as the researcher became a 'humanitarian' themselves, thus additionally assumed a dual role of an insider/outsider, while balancing the duties of a researcher, as well as a full-time volunteer, which ran an inherent risk of reinforcing their subjectivity towards the data analysis (Peshkin, 1988).

Coding and analysis

Upon reaching theoretical saturation, the audio-recorded data from the interviews had been transcribed and organised alongside the field notes into a data set uploaded to NVivo software, to facilitate coding and thematic analysis. Adopting software for qualitative analysis was beneficial in terms of increasing the rigour of the analytical procedures (Alhojailan, 2012). Thematic analysis entailed the identification of themes, patterns, and variations within the record, and has been chosen as the evaluation of GOs in the context of humanitarian logic remains under-researched, rendering it the most suitable method (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Additionally, thematic analysis allowed for representing the reality of the data collection using various instruments (observation and interviews simultaneously) (Creswell, 2009). The analysis entailed six phases: 'familiarisation, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining, and naming themes, and writing up' (ibid., p.54).

Limitations

Finally, it needs to be acknowledged that the data from this research does not rely on a statistically representative sample in a large population as the GO community of Lesvos is relatively small (Bernard, 2006). Next, the data gathered was context-specific, hence it cannot be generalised to other settings, or contexts (Alhojailan, 2012). Despite this limitation, this research offers valuable insights into the logics of grassroots humanitarianism while enhancing the existing knowledge of GOs' functioning.

Analysis and Discussion

Lesvos, the current socio-political climate

In order to effectively engage with the research questions, this section will introduce the variety of ways in which Grassroots Organisations respond to the current situation of the POM on Lesvos, while contextualising it vis-a-vis other (local/ more institutionalised) approaches. Hence, the readers will be presented with the complexities of the setting in which the study has been situated, which is particularly important, as the literature has aptly suggested that the GOs' actions are heavily influenced by the dominating socio-political climate (Fleischmann, 2017).

As defined previously, GOs constitute ad-hoc efforts of the 'ordinary citizens' (lacking previous experiences in the field of humanitarian aid), responding to the needs of the POM (Kitching et al., 2016). The emphasis on such local dimensions of their responses suggests that it is necessary to examine the landscape of the current, local attitudes towards POM on Lesvos. The majority of the interviewees categorised such reactions as pertaining to 3 different groups, as expressed in the following: 'Now you can probably divide the islanders into three camps: ones that are very welcoming and understanding and would do anything to support; then we have the fascists who will never accept the people coming, nor will they change their minds; and then there's perhaps the largest category of people who are in the middle, they're not waving their flags in the welcome, they are not rushing out with drinks and blankets, but neither are they hostile'. [S2, 23/03/2022]. This citation highlights the general feeling of a big split on the island, underpinned by stark divisions between individuals living in the same community. These divisions can be argued to have surfaced only in the aftermath of the peak of the 'refugee crisis', as according to the literature on the initial local responses, Lesvos constituted an Island of Solidarity (see Oikonomakis, 2018). Such shift has been attributed to the general

feeling of tiredness amongst locals, taking into account the duration of the 'crisis' as highlighted by K: 'There were people in need, you go and help. That is simple. I have something and I share with you, that is amazing. But if that lasts for one year and then it's 3 years, and then you also need to take care of your own things and you become more afraid and then you say 'I don't want refugees, they are fucking up my life' [11/04/2022]. The literature attributes this to the 'crisis' altering the local population's dependence on the tourist sector as the main source of income (see GTP, 2022). This, accompanied by the sense of struggle in the post-2008 financial crisis, as well as the high unemployment rates, exacerbated the feelings of hostility towards the new arrivals. Here, it is important to note that due to time and scope limitations, this study does not focus on the anti-POM grassroots mobilisation. Henceforth the insights presented only represent the pro-POM sentiment amongst the local population. This does not mean however that responses to mobility of grassroot nature solely entail a variety of welcoming and positive elements, nor that their negative and violent counterpart do not exist on the island, as highlighted by another participant: 'It's not so many, but when they do something, they call some villages far away from Mytilene, about 300-400 people to make damages only. ' [B, 18/05/2022]. This is important to highlight, as such reactions can be argued to have impacted the nature of GOs' mobilisation: 'After that 'Pogrom'[10] in 2018, some people got scared. They didn't stop, but they stepped back.' [B, 18/05/2022]. This has been accompanied by a manifold of accounts regarding organised local groups 'attacking NGO volunteers working inside the camp' [K, 11/04/2022]; 'assaulting people standing in solidarity' [O, 05/06/2022]; and the 'racist rhetoric within the local community towards the new arrivals' [field journal, 14/04/2022]. These statements reflect that GOs operate in an increasingly hostile environment, where the counter-mobilisation entails a variety of violent mobilisation against

---

[10] 'Pogrom' in this context refers to the events on 22nd April 2018 which followed the death of a Person on the Move caused by inhumane living conditions and inadequate medical care at Moria's detention centre. This has led to the protest at the Sappho square (central square of symbolic significance in Mytilene, where the traditional Sunday flag-raising ceremony takes place), which had been met with violence from local nationalists and fascists, some of whom are deemed to have been, or be members of the local government (efsyn.gr, 2018).

them. This can also be read as an expression of the overall political climate, as the government and the police have been generally seen as complicit in the attacks on people standing in solidarity with POM. This has been explicitly expressed by M: 'The cops were actively involved, either letting the fascists to commit more violence, or pushing, kicking, and swearing at the migrants themselves. The migrants were massively attacked by the state and fascists in the face of their demands and their political position in the square' [08/06/2022]. The hostile approach of the state towards the people standing in solidarity with the People on the Move entails criminalisation, which severely impacts the GO's mobilisation. O argued:

In the past there were many people in collective mood [...] but the main shift was when they started to criminalise the solidarity of people in 2016 with the government of Syriza. People became scared because they didn't want to get arrested. It was a big gap amongst the struggles and a lot of people chose to step back. After this, also the migration is not anymore like it was in the past, people have left and the numbers have changed a lot and the struggle that is happening now, so the assemblies and the collectives, there's only a few. [05/06/2022].

This account highlights that compared to the literature shortly in the aftermath of the peak of the 'refugee crisis' (see Serntedakis, 2017, Rozakou, 2017), the number of GOs decreased, while responses underpinned by indifference, or violence towards the POM and people standing in solidarity with them became increasingly more common. Particularly in relation to the abovementioned self-organisation of aggressive groups who have been attacking people and destroying properties of POM, volunteers, and GO's members from 2018 onwards. This tendency has been also described in literature in the case of Slovenia (see Żemojtel-Piotrowska et. al., 2021), hence is not an uncommon phenomenon.

Main characteristics of GOs involved in the study

In face of the above-mentioned challenges, we will now focus on the characteristics of the GOs which continue to operate on the ground and are of central importance for this study. They will be, at points, positioned vis-a-vis more-established humanitarian actors, such as NGOs. This will serve as a point of departure not only to examine the ways in which GOs engage with border humanitarianism, but also to investigate the ways in which they uphold/contest the logics of humanitarianism codified in its four fundamental principles (namely: humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence (see Labbe & Daudin, 2015)), to which NGOs tend to adhere, at least in theory.

First of all, the GOs members tended to describe their structures as spaces of 'self- organised, collective action' [S, 04/05/2022], 'solidarity' [O, 05/06/2022], 'not offering charity, nor being a business, where nobody gets paid' [N, 23/05/2022], 'for people who share the aim of supporting people on their journey to Europe' [field journal, 28/05/2022]. In doing so, the interviewees denounced the hierarchisation between the 'givers' and 'receivers' of aid, while emphasising on collectivity, mutuality and solidarity. At the same time, they opposed the professionalised and bureaucratized aid structures, pertinent to the 'traditional humanitarian actors' as NGO workers have been found to be often obliged to follow bureaucratic procedures, which prevented them from enacting spontaneous responses and establishing personal connections with the POM (Cabot, 2016). The issue of hierarchies is particularly interesting regarding GOs, specifically in instances when their collectives have been described as 'anti-hierarchical on purpose' [S, 04/05/2022], characterised by 'unmediated solidarity and mutual aid' [O, 05/06/2022]. Consequently, these feelings of solidarity and mutuality, devoid of hierarchies have been seen within the majority of decision-making processes, which have been typically occurring through the open assemblies, where every attendant (regardless of their legal status) was free to express their point of view [field journal, 18/06/2022], with the exception of one GO, where decisions of whom to help were entirely dependent on who requested assistance which

then led to resource mobilisation [field journal, 05/06/2022]. This stands in sharp contrast to decision-making processes between the NGOs and GOs and has been described by K: 'I could not feel comfortable in a structure in which I don't have a direct influence. Big structures have a tendency to be more hierarchical' [11/04/2022]. These accounts imply that GOs and NGOs considerably differ in regard to the decision-making processes and their efficiency, while the former places an increased emphasis on the voices of their members. This visible opposition to the more-established aid structures, such as NGOs, is not devoid of pitfalls, as highlighted by one of the open assembly attendees:

> I am really frustrated, the assembly was really long, and not very well-structured. People were just sitting in silence and there was no judgement really on what was being said, in a sense that people's opinions weren't discussed, but taken in silence. How are we supposed to change anything if people don't want to share their experiences and what's been working and not working in the past? [B, 18/05/2022].

Despite this phenomenon leading to frustration amongst the attendees, the general feeling was that GOs were still more flexible in their responses as highlighted by S, amongst other participants: 'It's easier to adjust for us because there are not hundreds of US-based boards of directors that make decisions, and no CEOs who have no clue about the issues they decide over. We can decide now that we completely change our work, and we can start with it next week.' [S, 04/05/2022]. This contrasting of NGOs hierarchisation and slow responsiveness vs GOs flexibility and horizontality can be conceived as an embodiment of a general feeling of mistrust amongst the interviewees, who stood in strong opposition to more-established humanitarian actors. This has been evidenced by a number of following statements which, amongst others, scrutinised their bureaucratization and inefficiency: I used to work for NGOs, but it's like you work at the bank. I go to a house and see that there is a problem with the lamps, and I must make a paper to sign it, to give it to the main officer to take that, you give it to the electrician and the electrician is going to take half an hour to think about it and I can do

that. I carry a backpack every day and I have a screwdriver and I can fix that. Why must I make a paper to sign it and give it to an officer?' [B, 18/05/2022]; interest in economic gain as opposed to supporting POM: 'NGOs are all here for money, there are also people like you and me that they want to help, okay.' [B, 18/05/2022]; deresponsibilisation of the government and upholding the structure of the camp: 'These NGOs are as responsible as the state, first of all by going inside they are supporting the state, they are using the money for the people to support the sanctions that the state made. The state does not connect the camp to the same electricity network as the rest of the island, but the NGOs are buying generators to fill out this gap. They are taking advantage of the miserable conditions in which the EU wants the people to be.' [U, 10/04/2022] and silencing of POM: 'We saw a post of an NGO claiming they are doing cleaning here. They never spoke to us, and now they collect a lot of money with these pictures when they are doing all this work.' [P, 12/06/2022]. These accounts suggest that GOs position themselves in sharp contrast to NGOs, particularly while scrutinising their complicity with the state policies and upholding the structure of the camp, while remaining inefficient and inflexible. Oftentimes, those workers were also discouraged from taking a political stance in their private time: 'X had to sign a code of conduct, which stated that she is an NGO volunteer at all times, even when she's not on the job. X said that she wouldn't share that she's participating in protests with her boss because she's not quite sure of the reactions, as the NGO works inside the camp, so they cannot pursue any political action' [Field journal, 10/04/2022]. This account also suggests that some NGOs were prone to becoming complicit in sustaining state approaches to migration (due to discouragement, or the lack of criticism of the current border regime), particularly in instances when they assumed state responsibilities for migration management, such as providing services inside the camp. This has been reflected in literature, where well-established humanitarian actors have been chastised for uncritically sustaining the context within which they operate: in this instance, a border is a hazardous place, resulting in the deaths of People on the Move (Pallister-Wilkins, 2017). Hence, in line with Fleischmann (2020), the NGO workers who find themselves following the rules of established by their organisations, can be argued to constitute an 'extended arm' of

the agents who are not only sustaining the structures they were established to work against, but also are characterised by depoliticising practices. The theme of governmental deresponsibilisation in particular has been covered in literature, where certain humanitarian actors have been scrutinised for complying with state policies, effectively cooperating in the 'management of undesirables' (Agier, 2011). The reluctance of NGOs to take a political stance in regard to the current situation of the POM on Lesvos, the outcomes of the governmental and European approach to migration can be seen as leading to dehistoricisation and depoliticization, as neither encourage political discussion, or any sort of activism. The apolitical nature of their engagement can be also seen in their emphasis on neutrality in their interventions, which will be discussed in the following sections. Geiger and Pécoud (2011, p.11) argued that even the concept of 'management' is underpinned by apoliticalism and technocratism, where rather than focusing on migration politics, migration becomes depoliticised as policies result from technical considerations and processes focused on the practices conceptualised as the most successful regarding responding to migration. When discussing the nature of GOs' engagement, it is interesting to notice that sometimes their actions could be argued to depoliticise the situation of POM as well, as at times they were focusing on the alleviation of the most immediate needs through the provision of items such as food and NFIs, rather than taking an explicit stance against the governmental approaches. Hence, they were also engaging in acts of humanitarianism based on the supply of basic needs without explicitly condemning the governmental (in)actions. Hence, the nature of GO's engagement becomes more ambiguous in regard to their preconceived political progressivity and subversive nature (see Milan, 2018). On the other hand, it can be argued that overall, those structures still implicitly challenged the dominant political climate, while redrawing the lines of in/exclusion. This is seen in the context of a hostile political climate within which they operate on Lesvos, as their acts were still subversive while contrasting the Athens' approach to POM and resisting exclusionary tendencies instigated by the policymakers. These aimed to dissuade POM from entering the EU territory (via, for instance, criminalisation of solidarity,

hotspots approach, and push backs) and have been widely recognised by the research participants:

> The Greek government says 'ok, try to come, I will stop you at the sea, I will kick you back to Turkey but if you want and finally make it and come, you will not get asylum'. They minimised the services in the camps that people stayed without cash assistance for 3 months and without cash assistance for 3 months it means you cannot get a pack of cigarettes. But it is a right of people to come here and ask for protection.' [U, 10/04/2022].

Consequently, the aid provided by GOs opposed the government's wishes through the establishment of an alternative social order characterised by redrawing of the in/exclusion lines (Millner, 2011). This will be discussed in detail in the section concerning the principle of impartiality, particularly in relation to the ways in which GOs established practical initiatives directed not only towards POM, but also Roma communities and people in difficult economic situations. Here, it is important to highlight that some of the GOs members have been found to be particularly conscious of their relation to the state in instances when their practices were not explicitly oppositional to its functioning:

> I believe that the groups, or the structures that I am supporting, are working in the best possible way to support without replicating the system, but in the end, we also do, because if we give food to people who are not getting food otherwise and if nobody else gave them food then the authorities would have to manage an entirely different situation, they would have to either let people starve or change their organisation. But this is a very deep conflict and the main criticism of NGOs from my side. [S, 04/05/2022].

Another important criticism of humanitarianism stemmed from the lack of spatial proximity and knowledge of the local contexts, particularly pertinent to international NGOs. This has been accompanied by the general feelings of injustice and inequality in approaches of INGOs, compared to the local solidarity structures as expressed by one of the interviewees:

> This is our reality; we don't come from Northern Europe and try to have a mission here and then leave. We come from here [Lesvos], so we need to deal with the locals too. We are locals so it's our problem. It's one of the things that most of the organisations here don't see and I agree with some of the locals when they say 'yeah, the organisation from NE come here, they do their stuff and never ask us if we like this if we agree and if we want to participate, they just come, do their stuff, put their money and then go'. The new ones come and it's like the local population has been put aside, but we have a duty towards them [K, 11/04/2022].

This citation highlights the ways in which the colonialist and paternalistic attitudes of Northern-European organisations and volunteers lead to the opposition from the locals who feel silenced and marginalised, which results in resentment towards POM. What is more, the innate professionalisation of more-established humanitarian actors (a demand for more specialised knowledge in areas such as human resources, evaluation, and logistics etc.) rather than emphasising the proximity to the lived, local experiences, renders them inferior vis-a-vis more 'specialised' and often Western-produced knowledge (Barnett, 2021)). This suggests that the humanitarian field also reproduces inequalities within its very own sector, where the top-down humanitarian governance structure, with only a few actors such as the UN agencies, INGOs and a few states, marginalise local actors who are the first responders, have better ability to mobilise local resources, carry out a big proportion of work and have the knowledge necessary for understanding the context within which the crisis occurs (Weiss, 2013).

Next, another one of the most pertinent critiques of humanitarianism, is that it establishes two types of dichotomous actors: the active one, providing for others and the passive one, unable to provide for themselves and others (Barnett, 2011). This is underpinned by the notion of white saviourism, which echoes the colonialist and paternalist approaches to the 'other' (Massari, 2021). This has been explicitly highlighted by the interviewee where NGOs have been found to perpetuate the idea of an external, knowledgeable 'saviour' with the power and legitimacy to address the passive victim at their mercy. This resonates with Kurasawa's argument (2015), which points to the hierarchisation between a saviour, possessing the capacity and legitimacy to intervene and impact the helpless victims' circumstances. In the interview, one participant claimed that 'what we do is standing with POM from below, they can fight for themselves, but they need to know there's someone standing with them' [P, 12/06/2022]. This, together with the interviewees who emphasised the togetherness with POM as crucial to ensure their rights ('I believe that all together we can make it much better. One by one is difficult. But as a team! As a team we can connect people, people different from us, if we connect, we make it bigger and we can change things.' [B, 18/05/2022]), indicates that Grassroots Organisations tend to embrace migrant autonomy and self-organisation, underpinned by the notion of solidarity and togetherness, rather than approaching POM as victims. The critique regarding the replication of hierarchies is taken further, as according to the interviewees, international NGOs, in particular, have additionally rendered Greek locals as passive actors, unable to act as well, specifically seen in an interview with an English NGO worker: 'There are also a lot of terrific organisations here, but I have grown really cynical towards the Greek NGOs, they are just so incompetent. Organisations that are paid a lot of money to do a job, first are doing it badly, second, they are incompetent, and just saying 'this is Greece' as if there is nothing we can do.' [S, 04/05/2022].

Focusing on GO's modes of action more explicitly, the collectives researched in this study tended to ask for individual donations; gather particular items required for their actions such as lentils, rice, clothes, and hygiene items, while sometimes selling T-shirts or other items to

raise monetary funds towards particular interventions [field journal, 18/06/2022], rather than being orchestrated by large donors and governments. Here, to avoid the portrayal of GOs as a homogeneous group, as it has been seen in literature (see Parotta, 2020; Milan, 2018), it is important to highlight some innate differences between the collectives operating on Lesvos. This has been exemplified by O who was a member of two GOs:

I think in the end they share very little beyond the basic values and the ways in which they organise themselves. The basis on which they both stand is a similar understanding of solidarity, of the situation, of the political views if you don't specify it on a certain kind of anarchism or something. Generally, we hate the borders, police, and the EU and then it becomes very different. Because *one GO (emphasis added)* offers structured support and generally there have always been shifts in the week of doing something with food or else, and it's also something that makes this collective work in a different way because you have to take responsibility to do something every week so there have to be meetings, there have to be certain discussions on a very practical level, not even theoretical, so like who takes the car, who takes the food. And it makes up for this difference because at least at the moment *another GO (emphasis added)* is not sustaining support in this way, which gives more room for political theory, a lot of creating spaces, opening up for discussions, creating safer spaces also for just fun and trying to reach out and connect and be there. And everything is changing so much, I've only been here for 6 months and so many things have changed already. When I came here, we were delivering warm food every day and at some point, we started having distribution points again because there was no more need for warm food anymore because nobody showed up when we were bringing the food to their doorsteps so now, we have food packages so dry food and people can cook themselves. The warm food started when people didn't have the access to kitchens, now they do so we want

to empower their autonomy. We don't have shifts anymore for driving food anymore and it gives us so much more capacity for the community. This is great because we want to stop the isolation that is happening because of the camp. This is a really nice example. I also wish that a lot of women got positive decisions, and this is great. It's a very beautiful moment, which at the same time changes the structures a lot. And also changes the capacities that we have, in a few weeks we had at least one woman and their families leave and the work of the collective was 'how the fuck do we get the money for their journey and what do you need?' and of course, we didn't have the capacity to think about demonstrations because so many women were also planning their leaving or taking their fingerprints and this is very fine, it's not at any point worse than being politically active, because this is part of it. A big part of it. And now it's just a small group so maybe you can spread out to more women again and find new people, because we had a really big collective at the beginning, if people are coming to us that's fine but we cannot reach out to the people on our own because the assemblies are taking 5 hours already. At some point, it is really tough because all assemblies are of course translated, so naturally, it takes at least double the time. [05/06/2022].

There are numerous themes surfacing from this account. First of all, GOs should not be approached as a homogenous group. Despite some common denominators such as their organisational structure, as well as an understanding of solidarity, they can assume different modes of action, which entail different outcomes. This is particularly important as their approaches have already been highlighted to constantly change according to the ever-shifting landscape of POM's needs and circumstances. This consequently stands is in line with Stavinoha and Ramakrishan's (2020) argument for avoiding the essentialization of GOs, while resonating with Fechter and Schwittay's (2019) appeal for a more thorough inquiry in the GOs'

engagement in humanitarian praxis). The particular praxes pursued by different GOs will be now examined vis-a-vis the core principles of humanitarianism.

Humanity

The principle of humanity (preventing and alleviating of all human suffering regardless of where it is found, while respecting human dignity (Alamaeldeen, 2017)) has been labelled as a foundational principle of humanitarianism, from which all other principles (impartiality, neutrality, independence) derive from (Pictet, 1979). However, despite the seemingly noncontroversial nature of the principle, evidenced by its widely accepted primacy by a number of different aid actors, the principle is not free of contention (Feldman & Ticktin, 2010).

According to Pictet (1979), humanity refers to acting in desire to assist without discrimination, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found, with the purpose of protecting life and health, while respecting dignity. At the same time, it advances shared friendship, tolerance, collaboration and peace between all people. Here two meanings of humanity are highlighted, namely being human and acting humanely. This has been one of the main motivations to help amongst the GOs members interviewed for this study: 'I don't know. I do that because I love humans, I am a human being and I believe that all together we can make it much better.' [B, 18/05/2022]; 'We are human beings if I can help someone, why not help.' [N, 23/05/2022]. Hence people's humanity, highlighted by the participants, can be argued to have conditioned the GO's responses to the suffering humanity of another, which seems to be in line with existing literature on humanity (see Barnett, 2011)[11]. Despite this seeming rather

---

[11]Reiterating on the GOs motivations to help, where some accounts highlighted the importance of political engagement as main motivations to act. 'In the first line I consider myself a border activist, I feel a lot of anger at border policies and borders in general, but particularly the European border policies.' [S, 04/05/2002]. This highlights that the motivation to help did not only stem from feelings of empathy and humanity, but also entailed rejection of the EU approaches to migration on the political level. At the same time, this citation also illustrates one of the main differences between different GOs interviewed in this study, which is the explicit engagement in politics (with some GOs not considering themselves to be political, and others for which political engagement is of the essence). This will be discussed in a relevant section as it is more appropriate to be placed while analysing the principle of neutrality.

straightforward, the relationality of humanity entailed in the explicit compatibility with the premise of a Golden Rule (treating others as one wants to be treated) (see Pictet, 1979) entails certain elements of contention.

First of all, the pursuits of charity ('an effort demanded of us, to relieve and put an end to the sufferings of others' (Pictet, 1979, p.14) characterised by the lack of sensitivity, awareness and understanding have been argued to lead to the excess of pity and resulting humiliation of its recipients (Radice, 2018). This can be linked to one of the most pertinent critiques of well-established humanitarian actors, namely the establishment and perpetuation of the aid beneficiary/recipient hierarchy where some humans are characterised by a higher status and possessing more means to supply their excess to those not possessing as much, which highlights the ways in which humanity pursued as charity tends to be embedded in hierarchization, where the former are obliged to aid the latter (Laqueur, 2011). This results in approaching the 'aid recipients' solely as passive and vulnerable actors in sole need of relief efforts, not possessing the capability to counteract their own suffering, nor to reciprocate. At the same time this positions humanitarians as 'selfless heroes' sacrificing their daily routines for missions in disaster-struck areas (Malkki, 2015). This tendency can be however conceptualised as rather absent from GOs, whose underlying organisational principle was the horizontal engagement with the POM. This defiance of hierarchies between the givers and receivers of aid has been explicitly emphasised by O: 'If they want so we build relationships where we do things together. I will not clean you, for example, your space, we will clean together, I will not cook you the food, we cook together, I will not tell you what this is, but I will come, and we figure it out together.' [2022]. In doing so GOs have not only been found to stand in sharp contrast to the 'humanitarian machine' which has been frequently criticised for approaching POM in terms of 'vulnerable victims', who need to be helped and cared for, but also accepted POMs agency to care for themselves, underpinned by the spirit of togetherness. Second, the GOs' approaches seemed to emphasise POM's individual and diverse identities with their own stories, skills, and experiences, rather than their biological lives, or in

essentializing terms. This has been evidenced particularly by praxis, such as organising get-togethers where POM was invited to discuss the political situation from their own countries of origin, cook their own national dishes, or celebrate their national events. The sole act of establishing spaces for mutual encounters has been argued to transcend the essentialization of POM's identities through giving establishing a platform to share their voices and individual encounters and experiences, hence seeing them as individual agents, which contrasts and transcends the labels imposed upon them by the professionalised aid actors ((un)deserving victims), the government (threats to national homogeneity and security) and by public discourses (Fast, 2015).

This transcending of 'vulnerable victimhood' has also been shown by including POMs voices and agencies as active participants in GOs decision-making processes. This allowed for the countering of the main pitfalls of the Golden Rule, which entails a degree of presumption, which in turn allows for devising paternalizing approaches towards the 'fellow humans' even when acting on the presumption of acting towards them the way the acting agent would like to be acted towards. This has been highlighted by a number of participants: 'And we try through our assemblies and the movement that I was taking part of to include them as people, not treating them or doing something for them, but to be part of the struggle' [S, 04/05/2022]; 'The non-hierarchical decisions, you know we're there to take decisions together and some don't like it because they don't have it in their culture. They are treated in a totally different way which makes it really difficult to transform, if they want, we can do it' [O, 05/06/2022]. These accounts highlight that GOs emphasise considering the multitudes of experiences of particular individuals' humanity (see Radice, 2016, p.217) while emphasising POM's will to share and participate as much as they feel comfortable with. This has been evidenced by the statement found in the course of participant observation: 'Being able to participate and establish social spaces together with people whose oppression is graver than ours, to learn from their stories, experiences and perspectives, is a gift to us.' [field journal, 22/06/2022]. This exemplification of the experiences of the people affected by the violent migration regime clearly contrasts the functioning of the 'humanitarian machine' which has been scrutinised for approaching POM

only as 'biological beneficiaries'. For instance, one of a series of GOs-organised events attended by the researcher focused on Kurdistan and had been led by Kurdish members of the collective. During the meeting, POM born in Kurdistan took the leading role in discussions on Kurdish culture and the situation of Kurdish people, with GO members and other attendees engaging in the conversation from a position of learners [field journal, paraphrased, 25/05/2022]. This, again, contradicts not only to the positioning of POM as 'universal victims', but also the tendency of the humanitarian machine to approach POM as instances of 'bare life' (Agamben, 1988), hence a prism of biological needs, rather than biographical life, while allowing for sharing of subject-specific interests and particular cultures in an atmosphere devoid of paternalism. Here it is important to highlight that the difference between the biological and biographical lives lies in the priority assigned to the needs and the necessities of the living organism in the former, whereas the latter entails focusing on agency, therefore the ability to impact one's own future via the capability to act (Brun, 2016). The emphasis on the latter can be argued to challenge the principle of neutrality, guiding much of the traditional humanitarian action, through enabling the potential for change, this will be discussed in detail in the relevant section.

This has also been accompanied by what seemed to be a genuine interest in POMs lives and the development of personal bonds: 'So we are staying with the same people, getting involved, also personally with those migrants, because we are trying to build relationships. Not just to offer a facility, but we want to meet them personally and treat them and find out what's going on in their lives.' [R, 09/06/2022]; 'I think of most of them as friends. I speak with most of the families every day and it's 120 families' [B, 18/05/2022]. At the same time, one interesting account surfaced about the innate power imbalances between them, even in terms of friendship:

> Of course, I am making friends here, with both who are with or without European
>
> passports, and I do believe that it is important to acknowledge that these

friendships cannot be on actual eye-level here, there will always be a part of, even though I didn't want to leave, I could leave at any given time, and you can't. If I get in trouble with the police, the worst thing is that I spend a night at the police station, the worst thing that could happen to me is being deported, pushed back, very likely harassed, and maybe killed. And this is missing in many approaches of people building relationships with others and it does not affect my feeling of friendship, but it does affect the approach with which I am getting into this friendship. [S, 04/05/2022].

This highlights that these relationships are not devoid of asymmetries, despite GO members developing a horizontal approach to the POM (caring about, not for), especially when contrasted with the more established humanitarian actors. The inherent disadvantage regarding the lack of the same citizenship rights, opportunities, and resources vis-a-vis the citizens does not become erased in those encounters (Fleischmann, 2020), hence even actions underpinned by solidarity construct relationships between groups of people with asymmetrical resources and rights (see Paragi, 2017). On the other hand, standing in solidarity with the POM might be read as offering novel ways to overcome certain imbalances between (non)citizens, as the GOs tend to highlight demands of POM within political and public spheres, while being aware of those power asymmetries. Hence the praxes pursued by GO have a potential to reshape the world in more equal terms (see Featherstone 2012, p.4). In the context of the indisputable asymmetries of power those relationships were embedded in, it is worth noticing that these relationships at the same time enabled a degree of mutuality and reciprocity, for example when POM and GO members were sharing meals together (for instance when the former were bringing homemade dishes to share with the latter or when they were teaching the latter the recipes from their home countries), spending time together and sharing stories with one another. This echoes the literature on refugee support based on 'buddy systems' where informal reciprocity enabled a type of ethics focusing on the relationship between actors

involved (see Kontowski & Leitsberger, 2018), instead of the one-sided dependency on the 'givers' and 'receivers' of aid.

All things considered; this section has successfully addressed the ways in which GOs engage with the principle of humanity while operating on Lesvos. In doing so, it has been highlighted that following the principle entails recognising that understanding what 'humanity' means depends on certain presumptions which GOs seem to have been aware of while at the basis of their action responding to the suffering of 'fellow humans', however critically engaging with their needs beyond the notion of reductionist 'bare lives' through' including POM's voices and self-representations. Hence at the same time, GOs have been shown for allowing for the surfacing of the bibliographical lives of POM, while approaching them beyond the notion of 'vulnerable victims', so pertinent to the most established humanitarian actors. In this way, the POMs agency gained room to surface, while people who hold divergent conceptions of their own humanity are placed in the centre of GOs' action. Therefore, it can be argued that GOs encourage a reforming of the humanitarian system through the embracing of the local contexts, emphasis on accountability, as well as uncontested proximity and presence alongside the POM. This can be argued to ultimately lead to contesting of dehumanisation practices and discourses devised by the state underpinned by a denial of the humanity of the 'other' to sustain in the first place, seen in securitization processes characterising the EU approach to migration in the Mediterranean. This in turn allows for the surfacing and respect for POM beyond the realm of 'bare lives', while taking into account the local contexts, biographical lives, forging of mutual trust, and dialogue while pursuing the ideal of the community as founded on tolerance and plurality (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019). Hence the GOs in their approaches to the POM can be argued to be in line with Fassin's (2012) argument on humanity as entailing 'affective movement drawing humans toward their fellows', which constitutes humanity's mobilising qualities, effectively deployed by GOs.

Impartiality

Impartiality entails 'Aid provided not conditioned by race, creed or nationality of the beneficiaries or by any other adverse distinctions' (Tanner, 2002, p.86), hence focusing on alleviating the most immediate needs. To reiterate, impartiality entails aiding individuals irrespectively of their identities, but based on their need. This has been explicitly stated by one interviewee, while being argued to be the case by many other GOs members: 'We clearly say on Facebook that our group is providing practical assistance irrespective of race, colour, ethnic origin, religious or political beliefs, disability, physical or mental illness, marital status, sexual orientation or identity and gender characteristics.' [B, 18/05/2022]. This shows that, at least in theory, GOs seemed to embrace the principle of impartiality, especially in their most immediate proximity in regard to 'practical' aid, such as provision of food and NFIs. Hence, despite the GOs interviewed for this study being established with the main focus of helping POM on Lesvos, their activities were not limited to this community only. Therefore, their way of recognising most pressing needs was not conditioned by the distinctions mentioned in the definition of impartiality.[12] This has been seen by a variety of practical initiatives directed not only towards POM, but also Roma communities and people in difficult economic situations: 'We don't say for refugees but people in need, it's nothing else. We also have Roma people and locals suffering here. We have 3 problems at the same time, refugee, economic and the corona crises' [N, 23/05/2022]. Effectively, GOs established actions such as food deliveries and NFIs distributions, where the researcher noted:

---

[12]It is important to reiterate on the nature of GOs, which are small-scale collectives, composed of locals, and financed independently from the government or big-donors, hence their ability to tend to all suffering wherever is found would be a rather challenging pursuit taking into account the limited resources, legitimacy on the international arena, and mandate vis-a-vis big international humanitarian actors. This, however, does not mean that in their pursuits, it is not possible for them to follow impartiality to an extent according to their capacities. GOs operate in the proximity where they are able to perform their functions, hence primarily in their local area of Mytilene on Lesvos in this case. It is important to note that the scope of GOs' actions is restricted to the area where they are based, this is similar to the big international actors, who are only given legitimacy based on the consent of the party controlling the given territory (Newman, 2002). On the other hand, GOs do not need such consent as they exercise their civil and political rights in the given area. Hence GOs' actions do not tend to extend to other geographical proximities, at least in the same way regarding the provision of 'practical aid', the political orientation of some can be argued to transcend the geographical limitations as they are advocating for systemic changes.

I saw a lot of different people coming to Sappho's today, not only POM but also Roma people and homeless locals and just hungry passer-byes. Everyone could help themselves to whatever they deemed to be necessary for them (such as many portions of food, or multiple pairs of shoes). Nobody was controlling how much you could take; some even took 15 portions; some others would take just one or two and eat on the spot. 'M' was a bit surprised with the people taking too much, but ultimately, she did not stop anyone. [field journal, 04/05/2022].

Such expanding of the aid provision to different communities facing economic challenges on Lesvos can be argued to connect the condition of dispossession and structural violence affecting both the citizens and non-citizen 'others', resulting in obscuring of those boundaries. Hence, in line with Ramsay (2018) this enables thinking about the shared (but not necessarily identical struggles) of the groups usually positioned in a competition of needs against each other, resulting in legitimisation of fear of the 'foreign other'.

What is more, locating such events in central places around Mytilene also allowed for different groups to encounter each other and interact: 'I got an invitation to come inside the camp from one woman and her brother who were sitting close to the table with food. They wanted me to try Arabic food. It was a nice gesture, we exchanged phone numbers and I invited them to visit the NGO I worked at' [field journal, 18/05/2022]. Following Braun (2017), the establishment of such spaces (i.e., a food and NFI distribution at the main square in Mytilene) allowed for interactions of individuals characterised by different citizenship status, asymmetrical social positions, different experiences, and locations, which inherently stood in sharp contrast with the European approach aiming to manage POM. This is evidenced by the hotspots approach and immobilisation of POM in the camps following the Dublin III regulation and EU-Turkey Deal, which have been devised to contain POM both socially and symbolically by limiting their access to the local population, only to the Greek NGO workers inside the camp, camp employees and the police officers outside the structure. Hence, GOs created spaces where

spontaneous encounters with the locals were made possible, rather than conditioned by formal interactions with POM mediated through NGOs and governmental agencies. It needs to be acknowledged that the establishment for the spaces of encounters did not erase those asymmetries and differences in status, however it encouraged the reconstituting of the 'asylum seekers' and 'refugee' labels as social and political subjects, transcending the in/outsider denominations imposed both by the state and the well-established humanitarian actors. Additionally it can be argued that this allows for the surfacing and respect for POM beyond the realm of 'bare lives' (despite the provision of items necessary for sustenance of biological live), but to take into account the local context, biographical lives and the new possibilities of forging of mutual trust, and dialogue while pursuing the ideal of community as founded on tolerance and plurality as strictly opposed to the governmental and policy approaches (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019).

Next, Hoffman (2020) argues that impartiality is a rather challenging principle to operationalise due to the complexities of political and social environments within which humanitarian actors function, and the lack of previous understandings of the contexts within which they are set to operate. On the other hand, the nature of GOs, such as being composed primarily of the locals (who are in the immediate proximity of the people they support), can be argued to alleviate at least a proportion of those challenges. Additionally, by living in the close proximity to the site of the crisis, with the access to the POM (perhaps contested by the essentially closed structure of the camp, which so far does not halt, but considerably prevents the access to the POMs immobilised in it due to the hotspots approach), enables GOs to reach the individuals in the greatest need (as opposed to the more well-established actors, constrained by geographical and social access to those populations who are excluded from participation in the needs assessment, which challenges the principle of impartiality in the first place (Fast, 2015)). For instance, it can be argued that GOs have a better understanding of who needs aid the most urgently (without the necessity of carrying out needs assessments, or deciding categories of vulnerability), while living in proximity to those affected by certain crises and building

relationships with them: 'We make decisions on actions together, based on needs that arise in the communities around us, and the dynamic of our group' [M, 08/06/2022]; 'We decide together. We are all equally important because in this family each member supports the group, and the group supports each member.' [S, 04/05/2022]. In other instances, decisions on certain GOs' pursuits were based on case-specific instances: 'We help everybody, not just Greeks, refugees, everyone. People learn about us by word of mouth. People can call me and say that they know families with some problems, and we just go.' [B, 18/05/2022]. This, together with their emphasis on horizontality and joint decision-making, or efforts to accommodate people needing assistance upon request, affords them an opportunity to gain an insight into people's own views on which needs should be prioritised. It can be argued that GOs, rather than rendering the voices of POM invisible and unheard with their experiences commodified (see Rajaram, 2002), work to exemplify them. It has been noted by Sigona (2013) that the diversity and plurality of refugee voices do not tend to be mirrored in public, humanitarian, or academic discourses, as they usually prioritise one-dimensional depiction of 'the refugee', underpinned by feminised and infantilised discourses of vulnerability and victimhood. This is hence contradicted by GOs actions who refrain from representing POM but embrace their agency, particularly through joint decision-making processes, hence do not render them 'speechless emissaries' (Malkki, 2005), or 'mute victims' (Rajaram, 2002), reduced to the instances of 'bare life' hence basic physical needs and devoid of a political agency (Agamben 1998; Vaughan-Williams 2009; Schindel 2016).

On the other hand, the state, particularly its tendency to criminalise 'solidarity' can be argued to constrain the enactment of impartiality, as for instance the Greek government prohibits aiding people arriving on boats in any way under the litigation of human trafficking and migrant smuggling. Hence GO members were forced to halt all independent search and rescue operations, while at the moment not being able to organise 'first response' mechanisms to the people arriving on the shores. Therefore, GOs are almost entirely depraved of the capacity to aid people in the most life-threatening situations. Despite the major threat of criminal

proceedings severely limiting their ability to act, some GOs have been working on devising informational brochures and tactics to do their best to support the new arrivals without necessarily breaching the law [field journal, 23/05/2022]. Consequently, criminalisation can be argued to constitute a considerable complication for aid distribution in an impartial way where people arriving at the shores of Lesvos can be argued to be in an increasingly more immediate need of aid and assistance than people living in Mytilene.

All things considered, despite existence of a variety of factors making it challenging for well-established humanitarian actors to follow the principle of impartiality, ranging from political considerations, negotiating of independent access and proximity to beneficiaries as well as the institutional biases, practical limitations, political viewpoints, and personal attachments frequently obscuring decisions regarding where and how to assist (Scott-Smith, 2016), the nature of GOs renders at least a number of them inapplicable. Despite certain practical constraints (particularly the lack of funding and criminalisation), GOs have been shown to support very different communities, from locals, through the Roma community and POM, to alleviate the suffering, according to their own (limited) capacities.

Independence

Independence is a humanitarian principle entailing autonomy from constraints of any parties in the conflict, including both the authorities and donors, as well as any of their political, military, or economic interests at stake in the areas wherever the humanitarian praxis is implemented (McAvoy, 2010). This, at least in theory, automatically renders humanitarianism as a practice opposing domination and dependency. Following this ideal typology, humanitarianism should be guided solely by the goal of alleviating human suffering and saving lives (De Lauri & Turunen, 2020). As humanitarian praxis tends to be faced with a major challenge of manipulation by private, political, religious, or military actors (ibid.), this section will discuss the ways in which GOs engage with the principle and its pitfalls.

The GOs operating on the island tended to finance themselves privately (from the joint contributions of the members for printing out leaflets etc.), through events (such as movie screenings or parties, where the funds were raised via food or beverage purchases), and need-specific donations accepted at certain times ('We don't take money. We only accept things' [O, 05/06/2022]), independent initiatives such as t-shirts sale, and rarely through accepting monetary donations ('If people are far away like in Athens or Thessaloniki, who want to buy something they can put some money in. And we post everything 'Ela gave me x euros to buy y'.' [B, 18/05/2022]). This can be argued to account for upholding the independence of their structures as such ways of gathering resources are independent of big donors, and the government. What is more, such independence can also be seen in decision-making processes and GOs' lack of bureaucratisation, for which NGOs have been often scrutinised (Vandervoordt, 2019): 'It is easier for us to adjust, because there are not hundreds of boards that make decisions, there is no CEOs who have no clue but decide over it. The money that we have, we can decide now that we completely change our work, and we can start with it next week.' [S, 04/05/2022]. This shows that independence comes with certain flexibility, where GOs are not forced to follow agendas of the donors or politicians.

Despite GOs being freed from the possible manipulation by large donors (they are sustained mainly by individual donations raised for a specific, typically announced in advance causes) and the state (the section on neutrality will highlight their oppositional nature to the authorities and EU's policies on migration), the independence from the constraints of the former comes with a certain limit regarding the scope of their actions. Funded by individuals, GOs often find themselves struggling to sustain their actions for a longer time as highlighted by one of the participants:

> At the end we didn't have money to keep on providing food and first aid kits to everybody, whoever needed, but we've been explaining to them that we cannot

help them forever because we are not NGOs and we don't have European fundings to send them every 3 months, because we are solidarity and co-work with other collectives, but the money in this collective ended. We are just people using our own money. That we provide whatever we can in whichever way we can, but it's a struggle. [O, 05/06/2022].

Here it could be argued that due to the limited resources, the GOs' pursuit of impartiality could be skewed as the lack of adequate means runs the risk of forcing GOs to establish criteria where certain groups are prioritised over others. This establishment of diverse life categories according to the perceived (un)deservingness in getting help (from gender, age, nationality, and recognized vulnerability), so pertinent to humanitarianism, has been argued to aggravate the differences between the helpers and the recipients of help as the former decide over the fate of the latter (Pallister-Wilkins, 2016). GOs in this study, however, have been found to contest this exclusionary logic, at least to an extent, by the emphasis on trust and a sense of mutuality in the struggle:

The first time we tried to set up a *GO* we had to see how we were going to manage [*deliveries to*] so many people each, we had to do some calculations. They were like people coming and giving us IDs to prove who they were, but we were saying that we are not the Asylum Service, that we are not the police, and we didn't want their IDs. We believed them, we just gave it to them and if they lied, okay it's your problem. It's your fault because you will understand that you have taken the bag from somebody else, this is what we are trying to do. [O, 05/06/2022].

This citation highlights that even though not everybody could get a delivery at that time, which had led to some operational decisions of whom to help, the GOs have emphasised the

resistance to the praxis of the dehumanising humanitarian actors, while instead forging the spirit of solidarity between different POMs at the 'receiving end of aid'.

Next, another interviewee also highlighted that the pursuit of independence, underpinned by the struggle for financial resources is also exacerbated by criminalization, which pushes a lot of GOs to operate outside of the state's watchful eye:

> Financially we are in a really bad spot. We often don't have the means exactly what we want to do, and I do believe that for NGOs and registered organisations that can apply for fund it's much easier, I mean there are limited resources and fundings for self-organised collectives, but they are severely limited and it's really hard to get them if you don't want to give a lot of information about the people working with it. It usually requires a name and a contact information of the people working with it and it's definitely making one or more people identifiable, and this is also not necessarily wanted. [S, 04/05/2022].

This, on one hand prevents the instrumentalization of their support by the large donors as shown to be pertinent to its well-established counterparts by Barnett and Weiss (2008), but also entails the issues of sustainability and capabilities discussed prior, while highlighting a genuine level of concern regarding anonymity of people involved in the collectives, which also include POM. This is particularly important as the Greek state criminalises both the POM arriving on Lesvos' shores, and people standing in solidarity with them, evidenced by a range of court cases where volunteers have been faced with the accusations of 'human trafficking' or 'espionage' (see Kokkinidis, 2022; Rieffer-Flanagan, 2009) as well as a statement of one of the GO members: ' every so often we have one of us to have to pass by the police station or the coast guard headquarters, accused of espionage... It is a threat for everyone because the system is trying to stop us from providing support.' [U, 10/04/2022]. Hence to ensure the GOs' anonymity, they tend to refrain from requesting donations from fundings for self-organised

collectives. This can be argued to clearly highlight their commitment to independence, furthered by their operational decision not to register with the Greek state to begin with. Rozakou (2017) showed that solidarity groups have been faced with a dilemma of institutionalisation, which would enable them to cooperate with larger international organisations (receive funding from them), host international volunteers, provide financial support for the volunteers, and establish paid positions. While some Grassroots Organisations institutionalised (see Starfish, Lesvos Solidarity), GOs interviewed in this study have been found to remain independent, hence refusing to accept external interventions in their self-management and role on the island (tendency mirrored in Fleischmann's, 2020 study). This effectively gave them a degree of political independence and space for voicing their disagreement, in contrast to NGO volunteers who were interviewed for this study: 'x had to sign a code of conduct, which stated that she is an NGO volunteer at all times, even when she's not on the job, that she wouldn't share it with the boss that she's taking part in the protests etc. because she's not quite sure of the reactions. The NGO works inside the camp, so they cannot get real political action so she wouldn't say anything to the coordinator, but it does not mean that she feels constrained by it, in the end she is just a volunteer and is not getting paid for this' [field journal, 13/03/2022]. This entry also highlights the depoliticising effects of a more conciliatory relationship with the state, to which GOs are standing in sharp opposition to.

All things considered, while upholding humanitarianism as an independent praxis can be read as an increasingly challenging task particularly for the institutionalised and state-dependent aid agents, GOs have been seen to uphold their independence despite the innate limitations to the scope of the aid they were able to provide, as well as the questions of sustainability of their collectives. However, this independence grants them the space for contestation and resisting of authority, which will be discussed further in the following section.

Neutrality

Neutrality, according to Seybolt (1996) is a principle entailing abstaining from prioritising either side of the conflict, hence disregarding who wins and who loses. It also includes refraining from any praxis either furthering or jeopardising the interests of the parties involved in a dispute (Weller, 1997), hence not taking part in controversies of political, religious, racial, nor ideological nature within the zones of operation (Sezgin & Dijkzeul, 2016). The principle itself remains a crucial imperative for most humanitarian actors, including more prominent and outspoken ones, such as MSF (Agier, 2011; Fassin, 2011).

The discussions on the principle of neutrality are particularly interesting in the context of GOs as the overwhelming majority of them explicitly denounced the Greek and European approaches to migration on multiple grounds, particularly the hotspot approach, pushbacks, and lack of any substantial support for POM from the state. For instance, S, while discussing similarities between 2 GOs that they have been a member of, highlighted: 'What we do share is the ground level of anger and disgust of the situation in Europe and Greece' [S, 04/05/2022]; next, O, claimed: 'The European approach, and the approach of Greece is to push back people and not let people live outside of the sea. So, it is a violent approach, full stop. Nothing else because people are leaving from here to proceed with their asylum application, but they get stuck in Athens.' [05/06/2022]. Despite the general feeling of anger and increasingly violent approaches to migration, it can be argued that GOs varied in the ways in which they conceptualised their own actions. First, a big proportion of GOs assumed a more explicitly political stance, followed by actions such as organising protests (see Pazar, 2022), circulating leaflets, attending court proceedings of the criminalised POM (see Keímeno, 2022), spreading awareness about recent disasters, such as the washing up of 7 dead bodies on the Lesvos's shore (see Kokkinidis, 2022), and making explicit political statements against the inhumane treatment of POM on social media platforms such as Facebook, or Instagram. In a similar vein, one of the collectives ran a T-shirt campaign in order to raise money for refugees and/or

activists' court costs in Lesvos [field journal, 05/2022]. Additionally to the explicit support on the political grounds with the financing of court proceedings, the statement on the t-shirt could be read as bearing political intentions as evidenced by one of the members: 'The aim of this t-shirt is to get some financial income in order to continue our work here on Lesvos but also to show and spread our idea and way of resistance against the daily struggles we are facing as migrant women at the borders of Europe' [M, 08/06/2022]. This repertoire of action has been previously evidenced in literature by Haaland & Wallevik (2019), who focused on the Safe Passage Bags project. Here, however the T-shirts, as compared to bags made out of life jackets that served as expressions of biographical life of POM (as they constituted reminders of their precarious journeys to Europe), are expressions of solidarity and struggles it entails, hence positioning of GOs as political actors vis-a-vis well-established humanitarian actors. These actions can be read as explicit manifestations of solidarity while assuming roles of opinion makers towards the broader public. Here, however, it is important to reiterate on criminalisation as a major obstacle to free expressions of political discontent, which renders such instances even more subversive acts of 'civil disobedience' as the provision of support to the POM required them to act against the governmental wishes (see Vandervoordt, 2019). As highlighted by U:

> Solidarity has been criminalised on the island, every so often we have one of us to have to pass by the police station or the coast guard headquarters, accused of espionage... It is a threat to everyone because the system is trying to stop us from providing support. I can say that everyone on the island is really careful now about what they are saying and how they are saying it and when they will call the people for a demonstration. It's not like before when we did a demonstration to open the route for the people to go from the island, to open the island in 2016 and 2017 and there were 3000 people who came from the refugee population and demanded basic human rights. Now it's not like before

where we are very careful not to expose ourselves to the danger of prison. [10/04/2022].

This highlights a trend described by Agustín & Jørgensen (2018), where solidarity has been increasingly criminalised. This has been expressed in a variety of pieces of national legislation, which targeted people trying to help in the context of the 'long summer of migration' (see Witcher & Fumado, 2021). Here it is worth noticing, however, that the state repressions towards the enactments of solidarity with the POM can be argued to render the praxis more subversive and assuming a political nature as disregarding the fines and penalties, solidarity with POM continues to stand in sharp opposition to the existing legal and political systems. This section, however, does not intend to portray all GOs as inherently political, hence replicating the tendency to do so within academic literature (see Staples, 2016). This is because these groups do not constitute homogeneous structures in regard to their views of political and ideological nature (Hamann & Karakayali 2016), with some explicitly distancing themselves from being political. This in turn opens up a discussion on what assuming a political stance means in this context. For instance, a member of a GO offering food, clothes and other NFIs to POM, destitute locals, and Roma communities, hence showcasing an explicitly humanitarian component, claimed: 'I don't like politics, I only believe in human beings and Jesus, I think he was the first anarchist and solidarity man. I am not a Christian; I am an atheist. I still go to protests, but I go alone wearing a mask and glasses. I don't want to be told that I vote SYKZA or whatever. I have a free mind, no media.' [B, 18/05/2022]. This shows that despite the majority of GOs analysed in this study emphasising the importance of political action, not all GOs offer their support in the same manner. This mere filling out of the service gaps left by the state highlights a somewhat ambivalent relationship with the state (see Frykman & Mäkelä 2019), but does not explicitly mean that the collective was devoid of political expression. It can be argued that despite their self-determination as a-political, their support to the most vulnerable and cast-away parts of the population, underpinned by incontestable solidarity, while building spaces for the locals and the people they were supporting is a form of

expression of political will. The will to stand in opposition to the Governmental approach to POM, Roma people and locals impacted by Greek austerity policies, hence positioning themselves in somewhat ambiguous relation to the principle of neutrality. This is particularly visible in the statement from the same interviewee: 'Also for food, catering for the first month is about 70 euros per person and they eat shit. Everything was disgusting. And it is still the same, it can't be like this, so we cook ourselves.' [B, 18/05/2022], the following food distribution can be read as apolitical, however, placing their initiative in publicly significant spaces such as Sappho's Square in Mytilene highlights the existence of those issues not only to other members of the community, but also the authorities. Next, by providing support not only to POM, but everyone in need, the GO can be argued to have combined the issues of structural violence and deprivation affecting people with and without the citizen status (the citizen and the 'other'), consequently obscuring boundaries between them (DeBono & Mainwaring, 2020). Hence by doing so the said GO challenges the state-imposed and conditioned modes of belonging through everyday practices (see Youkhana 2015, p.11). To reiterate, without making explicitly political and direct statements against the government, the praxis that aims to change certain aspects of society, which can be argued to constitute a political action (see Bosi and Zamponi, 2015).

All things considered, it can be argued that GOs reject the principle of neutrality, while directing their support towards the victimised groups, while speaking out, or acting against the systems that oppress them and the particular socio-political conditions sustaining them. Hence the engagement of GOs can be seen as entangled in ideological and political disputes, rather than aiming to place themselves in an impartial world. This stands in sharp contrast to Pictet's (1979) assertion that: 'humanitarians should beware of politics as they would of poison, for it threatens their very lives' (p.23), through the engagement with politics and willingness to assume a political expression in face of increasingly lethal border regimes, which also entails forging of alliances, as well as making enemies while pursuing a political action, not on behalf, but together with the wronged others. This seems to resonate with Terry (2002), who argues

that the failures in taking a stance against the moral wrongs leads to perpetuating the status quo of the policy and lawmakers, underpinned by the assumption of equality (in both legal and moral sense) between the victims and oppressors. What is more, due to their material independence from the state, or large donors, GOs have a greater predisposition to pursue their (im/explicitly) political and ideological visions of a better world, as contrasted with the state-funded or mandated NGOs (such as the ones operating inside the refugee camps) (Malkki, 2005). Hence the GOs' interventions can be argued to stand in sharp contrast to humanitarian structures whose pursuit of 'neutrality' leads to augmenting repressive and deadly migration policies while solidifying global inequalities (see Ticktin, 2011). On the other hand, it needs to be acknowledged that in instances of well-established humanitarian actors, the pursuits of neutrality, allow for them to access the vulnerable populations (and ultimately alleviate a proportion of human suffering, however without addressing its root causes, taking into account that their intervention is successful in the first place, otherwise the pursuits of neutrality can be argued to be obsolete). In this way, it can be argued that practices of refugee support do not occur in an apolitical vacuum, especially when underpinned by escaping the confines of state governmentality and, through being rooted in proximity to the suffering of others underpinned by horizontal approaches, the ones of European coloniality as well (Morales, 2021). This is particularly the case as GOs' motivations, despite divergent political frameworks at times, are rooted in search of state independence, pursuing structures of self-organisation, expressing a critique or even rejection of state and EU policies as POM oppressors, or at least acknowledging their failures. Hence, in line with Fleischmann & Steinhilper (2017), it can be argued that 'apolitical' refugee support is rather a myth, particularly as aid actors are involved in a context entailing discriminating border and migration policies, with their relationship to governmental actors sometimes reproducing mechanisms of discrimination and exclusion, or sometimes challenging them. Thus, together with Fleischmann (2020) this thesis considers world-building practices aiming to alternate ways of living together in the context of refugee support practices as deeply political. This research has shown that GOs' practices do not tend to fit perfectly under labels of either 'humanitarianism' or 'political

activism', the boundaries of which have been blurred through an entanglement of divergent types of praxis pursued by them.

Conclusions

All things considered, the GOs analysed in this study positioned themselves in sharp contrast to the well-established humanitarian actors through their complex engagement with the logics of humanitarianism underpinned by the four core principles (neutrality, impartiality, independence, humanity). This has been evidenced particularly by their opposition to reproducing racialised hierarchies of (un)deservingness underpinning humanitarian aid, as well as the disputing the securitised approaches labelling them as a 'threat'. Through the establishment of numerous alternative practices underpinned by solidarity with the People on the Move, GOs opposed both the functioning of the increasingly violent border regimes (see Bigo, 2014; Canning, 2019), as well as the humanitarian modes of governance (see Fassin, 2011). Such practices of solidarity materialised in a variety of ways, which ranged from more 'traditional forms of aid provision' such as distribution of food and NFIs through advocacy, scandalising and 'sharing the struggle'. Despite the actions pertaining to the former group, not always assuming an explicitly political character, this does not mean that they were devoid of it. This is particularly seen when taking into account their subversive character in face of criminalisation and violent opposition of some local groups. Hence, it can be argued that despite the varying expressions of political engagement, they all formed a kind of political resistance, as opposed to humanitarian assistance (see Dadusc & Mudu, 2019). This is because those praxes entailed an active opposition to the functioning of the hierarchies devised by both the state and humanitarian aid system, while embracing the biographical lives, and the general feelings of mutuality in the struggle amongst POM and GOs in particular, while at times attempting to widen the inclusion of other parts of the local population in their approaches.

More precisely, focusing on the principle of humanity, this research has shown that GOs members were motivated by the idea of responding to the suffering of fellow humans, therefore embracing the principle. In doing so, their pursuits could be characterised by increased awareness and sensitivity towards the dignity of the POM. This has been pursued by horizontal

engagements with the People on the Move, genuine interest in their lives and embracing their agency and voices in decision-making processes, which ultimately resulted in counteracting one of the most pertinent critiques of humanitarianism, hence the establishment of aid provider/recipients hierarchy. At the same time, GOs contested the functioning of the 'humanitarian borders' (Walters, 2010), which entailed the humanitarian interventions undertaken by well-established humanitarian aid organisations rendering the violent nature of the borders less visible and increasingly more tolerable, reproduced, and strengthened (Pallister-Wilkins, 2020). In doing so, the GOs opposed the dehumanising praxes pursued by the state and humanitarian actors, while pursuing the ideal of the community as founded on tolerance and plurality as strictly opposed to the governmental and policy approaches, the GOs embraced the surfacing and respect for POM beyond the realm of 'bare lives' but to take into account the local context, biographical lives, and the building of mutual trust, and dialogue (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019).

While examining the GOs complex relationship with the principle of impartiality, this research highlighted that, while emphasising the provision of assistance to all disadvantaged parts of the community, including not only POM but also locals and Roma communities (ultimately blurring the boundaries between dispossessed citizens and 'those' who are not citizens, while enabling the considerations of the common (albeit not necessarily similar) hardships of the groups that are typically pitted against one another in a need-based competition), has been constrained by the criminalisation of solidarity by the Greek state. Therefore, under the threats of litigations of human trafficking, the government forbids providing any kind of assistance to those coming on boats. Consequently, GO members were forced to stop all autonomous search and rescue activities, and they are now unable to set up 'first response' mechanisms for the persons who are coming ashore. As a result, practically all GOs lack the ability to help individuals in circumstances where their lives are in danger and hence are not able to fully embrace the principle of impartiality.

Next, GOs, by the virtue of gathering their funding from private individuals, accepting particular resources of previously announced actions, or through certain fund-raising events, as well as

the lack of bureaucratisation, have been found to be fully independent, hence immune to the dangers of manipulation from the government, big donors, and overseas CEOs. Despite this affording them a degree of freedom in scrutinising the actions of the government, this also entails a limitation regarding the scope and sustainability of their actions.

Finally, GOs have been found to stand in sharp contrast to the principle of neutrality, by supporting the groups that have been victimised, speaking out against the institutions that oppress them, and taking action to change the specific socio-political circumstances that support them. Therefore, rather than attempting to establish themselves in an unbiased realm of humanitarian aid, the activities of GOs might be understood as being highly involved in ideological and political conflicts. Hence this research highlighted that GOs resisted EU and Greek laws and practices which criminalise POM, approach them as security threats, embodied by their criminalisation (the central feature of current policies on migration; see Stumpf, 2006), detention and incarceration (Bosworth 2014; Martin 2012; Mountz 2011).

To reiterate, the solidarity exercised by GOs established alliances with POM's struggles, while uniting in the fight against borders, rather than portraying them as humanitarian 'vulnerable victims', or securitarian 'threatening others'. Second of all, they established alternative practices rejecting constitutions of POM as instances of 'bare lives', while cooperating on establishing spaces that instead of dehumanising them, enable them to become teachers, and friends, and reclaim their agency. In their pursuits, GOs refused self-positioning as 'providers' of aid, as they organised themselves horizontally (resisting top-down, humanitarian tendencies to intervene) with the humanitarian 'recipients', while subverting discourses of neutrality, at the same time refusing control and essentialisation of the POM, while instead aiming to establish collectivities resisting practices of detention, containment, racialisation, and violence. In persisting to act, GOs work against criminalisation which aims to repress the actions of individuals who openly resist and oppose securitarian and humanitarian borders, while making border violence increasingly visible, hence holding authorities accountable (Dadusc & Mudu, 2020). It has been shown that GOs, in their varying interaction with the logics of humanitarianism, ultimately stand in sharp opposition to the traditional humanitarian praxes,

while at the same time contesting border violence through rejection of the subjectification, dehumanisation and control of POM. Here it can be argued that Grassroot Organisations operating on Lesvos, at least temporarily undo the critiques pertinent to humanitarian aid. This has been done without always resorting to political action, understood in the traditional sense as lobbying, advocacy work or rallying, which nevertheless has been an important part for a number of GOs members interviewed in this study (Vandevoordt & Verschraegen, 2019). Here the governmental stance on migration has been politicised by action. First, is the formation of a more horizontal approach to people on the move, characterised by solidarity. Second, disputing the labels and categorisations imposed by the migration apparatus by a variety of seemingly apolitical actions, which assumed their political character due to their subversive nature. Third, by publicly denouncing criticisms of the policymakers and well-established humanitarian actors, which occurred both implicitly and explicitly.

All in all, this study has provided the readers with a detailed empirical inquiry on the growing phenomenon of GOs involved in humanitarian aid and the ways in which their practices interact with humanitarianism at the borders. This was particularly important taking into account the lack of academic inquiries not only in regard to the functioning of GOs, but also the influences of increasingly challenging socio-political settings on their actions. Hence, this research also highlighted the ways in which the reluctance, indifference, or even hostility of the local population, coupled with criminalisation from the Greek state, as well as persistent securitarian and humanitarian discourses sustaining an increasingly violent border regime, influenced the functioning of GOs. In analysing the GOs praxes vis-a-vis the logics of humanitarianism, this research has bridged a gap in understanding of the ways in which collectives of locals coming together to help (usually omitted in official statistics, as well as academic scholarship) position themselves within the humanitarian field dominated by well-established humanitarian actors.

A major pitfall of this study needs to be acknowledged, as though the focus on a pro-POM mobilisation by majorly local actors, this study runs the risk of diverting the attention away from

both anti-POM grassroots mobilisation, as well as POM's self-mobilisation. This is not however to establish GOs only as progressive and supportive actors within the academic inquiries, in the case of the former, nor to exclude them from the discussions of the modes of resistance to both the humanitarian government and border practices, but to highlight the ways in which certain mobilisations have a potential to constitute praxes and approaches resistant to the most pertinent critiques of humanitarian logics. What is more, due to the time and scope limitation of this study, the reflections on the diversity of GOs existing on the island have been ultimately limited, hence deserve more academic attention in order to avoid positioning GOs as a homogeneous type of pro-POM mobilisation. Next, taking into account the qualitative nature of this study, hence the innate lack of generalisability of its findings, it would be interesting to compare and contrast POM-supporting GOs from different countries in order to examine their motivations, challenges they face, and outcomes (their ability to affect asylum and border policies and governance), particularly taking into account different socio-political contexts within which they operate, and by which their mobilisation is ultimately conditioned. What is more, the evaluation of the factors accounting for the establishment, development, and disappearance of GOs, would allow for highlighting the trajectories of such forms of POM support vis-a-vis the increasingly violent border regimes. Finally, it would be interesting to delve into the functioning of proclaimed horizontality with the POM, the innate power asymmetries, and the ways in which they are navigated, especially in the context of their respective motivations and interests.

References

Adam, J. and Hänsel, V., 2021. After Humanitarian Reason?. Formations of Violence, Modes of Rule and Cosmopolitical Struggles at the» European Margins «. *movements. Journal for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies*, *6*(1).

Afouxenidis, A., Petrou, M., Kandylis, G., Tramountanis, A. and Giannaki, D., 2017. Dealing with a humanitarian crisis: Refugees on the Eastern EU border of the island of Lesvos. *Journal of Applied Security Research*, *12*(1), pp.7-39.

Agamben, G., 1998. 2. Biopolitics and the Right of Man. In *Homo Sacer* (pp. 126-135). Stanford University Press.

Agier, M., 2010. Humanity as an identity and its political effects (a note on camps and humanitarian government). *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, *1*(1), pp.29-45.

Agier, M., 2011. *Managing the undesirables*. Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Government, London, Polity Press.

Agustin, O.G. and Jørgensen, M.B., 2019. From refugee crisis to a crisis of solidarity?. In *Solidarity and the'Refugee Crisis' in Europe* (pp. 1-21). Palgrave Pivot, Cham.

Alameldeen, A., 2021., The Relevance of Humanitarian Principles in Contemporary International Humanitarian Affairs.

Alhojailan, M.I., 2012. Thematic analysis: A critical review of its process and evaluation. *West east journal of social sciences*, *1*(1), pp.39-47.

Ambert, A.M., Adler, P.A., Adler, P. and Detzner, D.F., 1995. Understanding and evaluating qualitative research. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, pp.879-893.

Andersson, R., 2014. *Illegality, Inc.: Clandestine migration and the business of bordering Europe*. Univ of California Press.

Appe, S. and Schnable, A., 2019. Don't reinvent the wheel: Possibilities for and limits to building capacity of grassroots international NGOs. *Third World Quarterly*, *40*(10), pp.1832-1849.

Barnett, M., 2011. Empire of humanity. In *Empire of Humanity*. Cornell University Press.

Barnett, M. and Walker, P., 2015. Regime change for humanitarian aid. *Foreign Aff.*, *94*, p.130.

Barnett, M. and Weiss, T.G. eds., 2008. *Humanitarianism in question: Politics, power, ethics*. Cornell University Press.

Barnett, M.N., 2021. *Global governance in a world of change*. Cambridge University Press.

Bauböck, R., 2018. Refugee protection and burden-sharing in the European Union. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *56*(1), pp.141-156.

Becker, H. and Geer, B., 1957. Participant observation and interviewing: A comparison. *Human organization*, *16*(3), pp.28-32.

Bernard, H.R., 2006. Methods in Anthropology. *Qualitative and Quantitative*, *424*.

Bigo, D., 2014. The (in) securitization practices of the three universes of EU border control: Military/Navy–border guards/police–database analysts. *Security dialogue*, *45*(3), pp.209-225.

Boorsma, T., 2021. A community centre in a humanitarian context: The professionalization of a grassroots initiative in Istanbul, Turkey. In *Citizen Humanitarianism at European Borders* (pp. 35-48). Routledge.

Bosi, L. and Zamponi, L., 2015. Direct social actions and economic crises: The relationship between forms of action and socio-economic context in Italy. *Partecipazione e conflitto*, *8*(2), pp.367-391.

Bosworth, M., 2014 Can immigration detention centres be legitimate? Understanding confinement in a global world. *The borders of punishment: Migration, citizenship, and social exclusion*, pp.149-165.

Bounia, A., Witcomb, A. and Papataxiarchis, E., 2020. The Politics of Mnemonic 'Restorative Practices': Contesting memory, mobility, identity and objects in post–'refugee crisis' Lesbos. In *Migrant, Multicultural and Diasporic Heritage* (pp. 148-164). Routledge.

Braun, K., 2017. Decolonial perspectives on charitable spaces of "welcome culture" in Germany. *Social Inclusion*, *5*(3), pp.38-48.

Brun, C., 2016. There is no future in humanitarianism: Emergency, temporality and protracted displacement. *History and anthropology*, *27*(4), pp.393-410.

Bryant, A. and Charmaz, K., 2007. Grounded theory research: Methods and practices. *The Sage handbook of grounded theory*, *1*, p.29.

Buzan, B., 2008. *People, states & fear: an agenda for international security studies in the post-cold war era*. ECPR press.

Buzan, B., Wæver, O., Wæver, O. and De Wilde, J., 1998. *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Cabot, H., 2016. 'Contagious' solidarity: reconfiguring care and citizenship in Greece's social clinics. Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale, 24(2), pp.152-166.

Cahill, S.E., 1999. Emotional capital and professional socialization: The case of mortuary science students (and me). *Social Psychology Quarterly*, pp.101-116.

Canning, V., 2019. Reimagining refugee rights: Addressing asylum harms in Britain, Denmark and Sweden. Migration and Mobilities Bristol.

Cantat, C., 2020. The Rise and Fall of Migration Solidarity in Belgrade. *Barbara Beznec, Marijana Hameršak, Sabine Hess, Andrej Kurnik, Marc Speer*, *5*(1), p.97.

Cap, P., 2018. 'We don't want any immigrants or terrorists here': The linguistic manufacturing of xenophobia in the post-2015 Poland. *Discourse & Society*, *29*(4), pp.380-398.

Casas-Cortes, M., Cobarrubias, S. and Pickles, J., 2015. Riding routes and itinerant borders: Autonomy of migration and border externalization. *Antipode*, *47*(4), pp.894-914.

Cederquist, A., 2019. Civil society between void and action–the case of refugee support on Lesvos. *Local Environment*, *24*(6), pp.509-524.

Chouliaraki, L., 2017. Symbolic bordering: The self-representation of migrants and refugees in digital news. *Popular Communication*, *15*(2), pp.78-94.

Clarke, V., Braun, V.., 2016. Thematic analysis. *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods*, *222*(2015), p.248.

Córdova Morales, E., 2021. The black holes of Lesbos: life and death at Moria camp : Border violence, asylum, and racisms at the edge of postcolonial Europe. *Intersections*, 7(2), pp.73-87.

Cortinovis, R., 2021. Pushbacks and lack of accountability at the Greek-Turkish borders.

Creswell 2009. Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. Sage Publications.

Cusumano, E., 2019. Migrant rescue as organized hypocrisy: EU maritime missions offshore Libya between humanitarianism and border control. *Cooperation and conflict*, *54*(1), pp.3-24.

Cuttitta, P., 2012. Lo spettacolo del confine: Lampedusa tra produzione e messa in scena della frontiera. *Lo spettacolo del confine*, pp.1-144.

Cuttitta, P., 2015. Humanitarianism and migration in the mediterranean borderscape: The Italian-North African border between sea patrols and integration measures. *Borderscaping: Imaginations and practices of border making*, pp.131-140.

Cuttitta, P., 2018. Repoliticization through search and rescue? Humanitarian NGOs and migration management in the Central Mediterranean. *Geopolitics*, *23*(3), pp.632-660.

Dadusc, D. and Mudu, P., 2020. Care without control: the humanitarian industrial complex and the criminalisation of solidarity. *Geopolitics*, pp.1-26.

De Angelis, M., 2019. Migrants' inhabiting through commoning and state enclosures. A postface. Citizenship Studies, 23(6), pp.627-636.

DeBono, D. and Mainwaring, Ċ., 2020. Transgressive solidarity: from Europe's cities to the Mediterranean sea. *Nordic journal of migration research*, *10*, pp.90-106.

De Genova, N., 2010. The deportation regime: Sovereignty, space, and the freedom of movement.

De Genova, N., Tazzioli, M. and Álvarez-Velasco, S., 2016. Europe/crisis: New keywords of "the crisis" in and of "Europe". *Near Futures Online*, *1*, pp.1-16.

De Lauri, A. and Turunen, S., 2020. Independence. In *Humanitarianism: Keywords* (pp. 110-112). Brill.

De Vries, L.A. and Guild, E., 2019. Seeking refuge in Europe: spaces of transit and the violence of migration management. *Journal of ethnic and migration studies*, *45*(12), pp.2156-2166.

Dijstelbloem, H. and van der Veer, L., 2021. The multiple movements of the humanitarian border: The portable provision of care and control at the Aegean Islands. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, *36*(3), pp.425-442.

Emerson, R.M., Fretz, R.I. and Shaw, L.L., 1995. Processing fieldnotes: Coding and memoing (Chapter 6, pp. 142-168).

Esperti, M., 2020. Rescuing migrants in the Central Mediterranean: The emergence of a new civil humanitarianism at the maritime border. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *64*(4), pp.436-455.

European Commission, 2014. Frontex joint operation 'Triton' – Concerted efforts to manage migration in the Central Mediterranean, 6 October. Available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/pressrelease_MEMO-14-566_en.htm

European Commission, 2015. Joint Foreign and Home Affairs Council: Ten point action plan on migration. Available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-4813_it.htm

European Commission, 2016. EU operations in the Mediterranean sea. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/securing-eu-borders/fact-sheets/docs/20161006/eu_operations_in_the_mediterranean_sea_en.pdf

Fargues, P., 2015. *2015: The year we mistook refugees for invaders*.

Fassin, D., 2011. *Humanitarian reason: a moral history of the present*. Univ of California Press.

Fast, L., 2015. Unpacking the principle of humanity: Tensions and implications. *International Review of the Red Cross*, *97*(897-898), pp.111-131.

Featherstone, D., 2012. *Solidarity: Hidden histories and geographies of internationalism*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
Fechter, A. and Schwittay, A. (2019) Citizen aid: grassroots interventions in development and humanitarianism. Third World Quarterly, 40(10), pp.1769-1780

Feldman, I. and Ticktin, M., 2010. Introduction Government and Humanity. In *In the Name of Humanity* (pp. 1-26). Duke University Press.

Felix, C., 2022. Understanding the impact of European asylum and migration policies: A promise of a dignified life. *Janus. Net-Thematic dossier-The Middle East. Local dynamics, regional actors, global challeges*, pp.65-78.

Fleischmann, L., 2017. The Politics of Helping Refugees Emerging Meanings of Political Action around the German Summer of Welcome. *The Politics of Helping Refugees Emerging*

Fleischmann, L., 2020. *Contested solidarity: practices of refugee support between humanitarian help and political activism* (p. 274). transcript Verlag.

Fleischmann, L. and Steinhilper, E., 2017. The myth of apolitical volunteering for refugees: German welcome culture and a new dispositif of helping. *Social Inclusion*, *5*(3), pp.17-27.

Franck, A.K., 2018. The Lesvos refugee crisis as disaster capitalism. *Peace Review*, *30*(2), pp.199-205.

Frykman, M.P. and Mäkelä, F., 2019. 'Only Volunteers'? Personal Motivations and Political Ambiguities Within the Refugees Welcome to Malmö Civil Initiative. In *Refugee protection and civil society in Europe* (pp. 291-318). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

Geddes, A. and Scholten, P., 2016. *The politics of migration and immigration in Europe*. Sage.

Geiger, M. and Pécoud, A., 2010. The politics of international migration management. In *The politics of international migration management* (pp. 1-20). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Gokalp Aras, N.E., 2019. Coercive Engineered Syrian Mass Migration in the EU-Turkey Relations: A Case Analysis for Future Reference. *International Migration*, *57*(2), pp.186-199.

Greekacom. 2022. *Geography of Lesvos island | Greeka*. [online] Available at: <https://www.greeka.com/eastern-aegean/lesvos/geography/> [Accessed 11 July 2022].

Grills, S., 1998. An invitation to the Field In: Grills, S.(Ed.) Doing ethnographic research.

Gropas, R. and Triandafyllidou, A., 2012. Migrants and political life in Greece: Between political patronage and the search for inclusion. *South European Society and Politics*, *17*(1), pp.45-63.

GTP Headlines. 2022. *Greece's latest tourism industry news by Greek Travel Pages*. [online] Available at: <https://news.gtp.gr/> [Accessed 15 July 2022].

Guiraudon, V., 2018. The 2015 refugee crisis was not a turning point: Explaining policy inertia in EU border control. *European Political Science*, *17*(1), pp.151-160.Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Guribye, E. and Mydland, T.S., 2018. Escape to the island: International volunteer engagement on Lesvos during the refugee crisis. *Journal of Civil Society*, *14*(4), pp.346-363.

Haaland, H. and Wallevik, H., 2019. Beyond crisis management? The role of Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity in humanitarian aid: the case of Lesvos. *Third World Quarterly*, *40*(10), pp.1869-1883.

Haaland, H. and Wallevik, H., 2019. Beyond crisis management? The role of Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity in humanitarian aid: the case of Lesvos. *Third World Quarterly*, *40*(10), pp.1869-1883.

Hamann, U. and Karakayali, S., 2016. Practicing Willkommenskultur: migration and solidarity in Germany. *Intersections*, *2*(4).

Harteveld, E., Schaper, J., De Lange, S.L. and Van Der Brug, W., 2018. Blaming Brussels? The impact of (news about) the refugee crisis on attitudes towards the EU and national politics. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *56*(1), pp.157-177.

Hockey, J. and Forsey, M., 2020. Ethnography is not participant observation: Reflections on the interview as participatory qualitative research. In *The Interview* (pp. 69-87). Routledge.

Hoffmann, S., 2020. Impartiality. In *Humanitarianism: Keywords* (pp. 108-110). Brill.

Holloway, I. and Biley, F.C., 2011. Being a qualitative researcher. *Qualitative health research*, *21*(7), pp.968-975.

Efsyn.gr, 2018, https://www.efsyn.gr/. 2018. Proceedings against 17 extreme right-wingers for the pogrom in Mytilini. [online] Available at: <https://www.efsyn.gr/ellada/dikaiosyni/148543_dikografia-se-baros-17-akrodexion-gia-pogkrom-sti-mytilini> [Accessed 21 July 2022].

Huysmans, J., 2000. The European Union and the securitization of migration. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *38*(5), pp.751-777.

Huysmans, J. 2016. 13 migration and the politics of security. Minorities in European Cities: The Dynamics of Social Integration and Social Exclusion at the Neighbourhood Level, 179.

International Organization for Migration (IOM). 2015. The World's Congested Human Migration Routes in 5 Maps. [online] Available at: https://weblog.iom.int/world%E2%80%99s-congested-human-migration-routes-5-maps [Accessed 16 June 2022].

International Organization for Migration (IOM). 2019. Flow Monitoring: Europe–Arrivals to Greece. Accessed July, 11, 2022. Available online. https://migration.iom.int/europe/arrivals?type=arrivals

Jauhiainen, J. and Vorobeva, E., 2020. Asylum seekers and migrants in Lesvos, Greece, 2019–2020. *Publications of the Department of Geography and Geology at the University of Turku*, *15*.

Jovanović, T., 2020. Transformations of Humanitarian Aid and Response Modes to Migration Movements. A Case Study of the Miksalište Center in Belgrade. *movements. Journal for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies*, *5*(1), pp.125-147.

Kalogeraki, S., 2020. A mixed method approach on Greek civil society organizations supporting migrants during the refugee crisis. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, *21*(3), pp.781-806.

Karadağ, S. and Üstübici, A., 2021. Protection during pre-pandemic and COVID-19 periods in Turkey. *ADMIGOV Deliverable*, *4*, pp.6-34.

Karakayali, S., 2008. Gespenster der Migration. Zur Genealogie illegaler Migration in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Bielefeld: Transcript. *RONNEBERGER, K.', TSIANOS*, *2008*, p.140.

Karamanidou, L., 2015. The securitisation of European migration policies: Perceptions of threat and management of risk. In *The Securitisation of Migration in the EU* (pp. 37-61).

Kasimis, C., 2012. Greece: Illegal immigration in the midst of crisis. *Migration Information Source Online Journal*, *8*.

Keímeno, E., 2022. *Press release: Justice for Amir and Razuli! – Legal Centre Lesvos*. [online] Legal Centre Lesvos.org. Available at: <http://legalcentrelesvos.org/2022/03/03/press-release-justice-for-amir-and-razuli/> [Accessed 5 July 2022].

Kennedy, D., 2019. Humanitarianism Governed: Rules, Identity, and Exclusion in Relief Work. *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, *10*(2), pp.207-237.

Kitching, G.T., Haavik, H.J., Tandstad, B.J., Zaman, M. and Darj, E., 2016. Exploring the role of ad hoc grassroots organisations providing humanitarian aid on Lesvos, Greece. *PLoS currents*, *8*.

Koca, B.T., 2022. Bordering processes through the use of technology: the Turkish case. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *48*(8), pp.1909-1926.

Kokkinidis, T., 2022. *Bodies of Seven Migrants Wash Up on Lesvos, Greece*. [online] Greek Reporter. Available at: <https://greekreporter.com/2022/03/01/migrants-washed-up-lesvos-greece/#:~:text=Authorities%20in%20Lesvos%2C%20Greece%20announced,to%20reach%20Greece%20by%20boat> [Accessed 11 July 2022].

Konrad, V., 2015. Toward a theory of borders in motion. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, *30*(1), pp.1-17.

Kontowski, D. and Leitsberger, M., 2018. Hospitable universities and integration of refugees: First responses from Austria and Poland. *European Educational Research Journal*, *17*(2), pp.248-270.

Krzyżanowski, M., Triandafyllidou, A. and Wodak, R., 2018. The mediatization and the politicization of the "refugee crisis" in Europe. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, *16*(1-2), pp.1-14.

Kurasawa, F., 2015. How does humanitarian visuality work? A conceptual toolkit for a sociology of iconic suffering. *Sociologica*, *9*(1), pp.0-0.

Labbé, J. and Daudin, P., 2015. Applying the humanitarian principles: Reflecting on the experience of the International Committee of the Red Cross. *International Review of the Red Cross*, *97*(897-898), pp.183-210.

Laqueur, T.W., 2009. Mourning, Pity and the Work of Narrative in the Making of Humanity. Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilization of Empathy, eds. RD Brown, RA Wilson.

Laube, L., 2019. The relational dimension of externalizing border control: selective visa policies in migration and border diplomacy. *Comparative Migration Studies*, *7*(1), pp.1-22.

Laurier, E., 2003. Participant Observation. Key Methods in Geography. NJ Clifford and G. Valentine.

Laurier, E., 2010. Participant observation. *Key methods in geography*, *133*.

Legalcentrelesvos.org. 2022. *ONE YEAR OF MAVROVOUNI CAMP – Legal Centre Lesvos*. [online] Available at: <https://legalcentrelesvos.org/2021/09/14/one-year-of-mavrovouni-camp/> [Accessed 11 July 2022].

Lesvos Solidarity, Lesvossolidarity.org 2022. [online] Available at: <https://www.Lesvossolidarity.org/en /> [Accessed 16 July 2022].

Lofland, J., 1999. Data logging in observation: Fieldnotes. *Qualitative research*, 3(Part 1).

Loukidou, K., 2013, June. Formal and informal civil society associations in Greece: two sides of the same coin. In *6th Hellenic Observatory PhD Symposium on Contemporary Greece and Cyprus, Hellenic Observatory, European Institute, LSE, Retrieved from https://www. semanticscholar. org/paper/Formal-and-Informal-Civil-Society-Associations-in-Loukidou/c006ac10e158bf388e224fa878db7b9732199ef5*.

Lyrintzis, C., 2002. Greek civil society in the 21st century. *Greece in the European Union: The new role and the new agenda*, pp.90-99.

Malkki, L.H., 2005. Speechless emissaries: Refugees, humanitarianism, and dehistoricization. In *Siting culture* (pp. 233-264). Routledge.

Malkki, L.H., 2015. *The need to help: The domestic arts of international humanitarianism*. Duke University Press.

Martin, L.L., 2012. 'Catch and remove': Detention, deterrence, and discipline in US noncitizen family detention practice. *Geopolitics*, 17(2), pp.312-334.

Massari, A., 2021. *Visual securitization: Humanitarian representations and migration governance* (p. 204). Springer Nature.

McAvoy, J., 2010. What are Humanitarian principles? [Online]. UN OCHA. Available at: https://ochanet.unocha.org/p/Documents/OOM_HumPrinciple_English.pdf.

McGee, D. and Pelham, J., 2018. Politics at play: locating human rights, refugees and grassroots humanitarianism in the Calais Jungle. *Leisure Studies*, 37(1), pp.22-35.

Mentzelopoulou, M.M. and Luyten, K., 2018. Hotspots at EU external borders: State of play. *European Parliamentary Research Service. European Parliament*.

Mezzadra, S. and Neilson, B., 2013. *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor*. Duke University Press.

Milan, C., 2019. Refugees at the gates of the EU: Civic initiatives and grassroots responses to the refugee crisis along the western Balkans route. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 21(1), pp.43-60.

Millner, N., 2011. From "refugee" to "migrant" in Calais solidarity activism: Re-staging undocumented migration for a future politics of asylum. *Political geography*, 30(6), pp.320-328.

Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 2016, Greece law 4375/2016. Available at: http://asylo.gov.gr/en/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/GREECE_Law_4375_2016_EN_final.pdf

Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 2020, Asylum Service update on asylum numbers, February. Available at: https://migration.gov.gr/statistika/

Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 2020, 'The fire that destroyed the RIC of Moria'. 17 September. Available at: https://migration.gov.gr/the-fire-that-destroyed-the-ric-ofmoria/

Mitchell, K. and Sparke, M., 2020. Hotspot geopolitics versus geosocial solidarity: Contending constructions of safe space for migrants in Europe. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, *38*(6), pp.1046-1066.

Mountz, A., 2011. The enforcement archipelago: Detention, haunting, and asylum on islands. *Political Geography*, *30*(3), pp.118-128.

Mountz, A., 2015. In/visibility and the securitization of migration: Shaping publics through border enforcement on islands. *Cultural Politics*, *11*(2), pp.184-200.

Muehlebach, A., 2012. The moral neoliberal. In *The Moral Neoliberal*. University of Chicago Press.

Musarò, P., 2019. European borderscapes: The management of migration between care and control. *Global humanitarianism and media culture*, p.145.

Naderifar, M., Goli, H. and Ghaljaie, F., 2017. Snowball sampling: A purposeful method of sampling in qualitative research. *Strides in Development of Medical Education*, *14*(3).

Nagy, Z., 2016. Repertoires of contention and new media: The case of a Hungarian anti-billboard campaign. *Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics*, *2*(4), pp.109-133.

Newman, E., 2002. Humanitarian intervention legality and legitimacy. *The international journal of human rights*, *6*(4), pp.102-120.

Oikonomakis, L., 2018. Solidarity in transition: The case of Greece. In *Solidarity mobilizations in the 'refugee crisis'* (pp. 65-98). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

Oxfam Italia. 2022. *Moria, per i migranti è un inferno senza fine*. [online] Available at: <https://www.oxfamitalia.org/campo-profughi-moria-inferno/> [Accessed 11 July 2022].

Pace, R., Bayaner, A., Bolani, L., Boluk, G., Erdem, S., Fernandez, B., Gemi, E., Ruisi, F. and Skleparis, D., 2016. Migrants and refugees: impact and future Policies-case studies of Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Greece.

Pallister-Wilkins, P., 2016. Interrogating the Mediterranean 'migration crisis'. *Mediterranean Politics*, *21*(2), pp.311-315.

Pallister-Wilkins, P., 2017. Humanitarian rescue/sovereign capture and the policing of possible responses to violent borders. *Global Policy*, *8*, pp.19-24.

Pallister-Wilkins, P., 2020. Hotspots and the geographies of humanitarianism. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, *38*(6), pp.991-1008.

Pallister-Wilkins, P., Anastasiadou, A., Zavos, A. and Papataxiarchis, E., Protection in a Hostile Environment: An on-the-ground study into protection practices in Lesvos and Athens.

Panebianco, S., 2022. The EU and migration in the Mediterranean: EU borders' control by proxy. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *48*(6), pp.1398-1416.

Papataxiarchis, E., 2016. Being 'there': At the front line of the 'European refugee crisis'-part 1. *Anthropology Today*, *32*(2), pp.5-9.

Papataxiarchis, E., 2016. Being 'there': At the front line of the 'European refugee crisis'-part 2. *Anthropology Today*, *32*(3), pp.3-7.

Papataxiarchis, E., 2018. Pragmatism against austerity: Greek society, politics and ethnography in times of trouble. Critical Times in Greece: Anthropological engagements with the crisis, pp.227-247.The concept of solidarity

Papataxiarchis, E., 2020. The new geography of the refugee issue: Violence and the multiplication of borders in the Aegean. *Synchrona Themata*, *147*, pp.41-45.

Paragi, B., 2017. Contemporary gifts: Solidarity, compassion, equality, sacrifice, and reciprocity from an NGO perspective. *Current Anthropology*, *58*(3), pp.317-339.

Parrotta, Y., 2020. Redefining humanitarianism in the making: grassroots/volunteer organizations in Samos (Greece).

Parsanoglou, D., 2020. Volunteering for refugees and the repositioning of state sovereignty and civil society: the case of Greece. Citizenship Studies, 24(4), pp.457-473.

Pazar, T., 2022. *Mısır'da köpekbalığı saldırısı: İki kadın öldü*. [online] Gazete Duvar. Available at: <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/misirda-kopekbaligi-saldirisi-iki-kadin-oldu-haber-1571981> [Accessed 5 July 2022].

Perkowski, N., 2016. Deaths, interventions, humanitarianism and human rights in the Mediterranean 'migration crisis'. *Mediterranean Politics*, *21*(2), pp.331-335.

Peshkin, A., 1988. In search of subjectivity—one's own. *Educational researcher*, *17*(7), pp.17-21.

Pictet, J., 1979. The fundamental principles of the Red Cross. *International Review of the Red Cross (1961-1997)*, *19*(210), pp.130-149.

Pospíšilová, T., 2011. *Grassroots Volunteering: Definitions, Concepts and Themes: Overview of the Literature*. Agora Central Europe.

R.S.A. 2022. *Timeline of attacks against solidarity - R.S.A.*. [online] Available at: <https://rsaegean.org/en/timeline-of-attacks-against-solidarity/> [Accessed 11 July 2022].

Radice, H., 2018. Humanity. In *Humanitarianism* (pp. 158-167). Routledge.

Rajaram, P.K., 2002. Humanitarianism and Representations of the Refugee. *Journal of refugee studies*, *15*(3), pp.247-264.

Rajaram, P.K., 2016. Whose migration crisis?. *Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics*, *2*(4), pp.5-10.

Ramsay, G. 2018. Dehumanisation and Contested Spaces: Rethinking Displacement from Refugees to Homelessness. Allegra Lab. https://allegralaboratory.net/dehumanisation-and-contested-spaces-rethinking-displacement-from-refugees-to-homelessness/

Refugee Observatory, 2020, Observatory of the Refugee and Migration Crisis in the Aegean (2020a) Letters from Lesvos, 1,2 and 3. March–April 2020. Available at: https://refugeeobservatory.aegean.gr/el/node/2541

Reid-Henry, S., 2010. The territorial trap fifteen years on. *Geopolitics*, *15*(4), pp.752-756.

Rieffer-Flanagan, B.A., 2009. Is neutral humanitarianism dead? Red Cross neutrality: walking the tightrope of neutral humanitarianism. *Hum. Rts. Q.*, *31*, p.888.
Rozakou, K., 2017. Solidarity# humanitarianism: The blurred boundaries of humanitarianism in Greece. *Etnofoor*, *29*(2), pp.99-104.

Rumford, C., 2013. Towards a vernacularized border studies: The case of citizen borderwork. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, *28*(2), pp.169-180.

Rygiel, K., 2011. Bordering solidarities: Migrant activism and the politics of movement and camps at Calais. *Citizenship studies*, *15*(01), pp.1-19.

Sandri, E., 2018. 'Volunteer Humanitarianism': volunteers and humanitarian aid in the Jungle refugee camp of Calais. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *44*(1), pp.65-80.

Schack, L. and Witcher, A., 2021. Hostile hospitality and the criminalization of civil society actors aiding border crossers in Greece. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, *39*(3), pp.477-495.

Scheel, S., 2019. *Autonomy of migration?: Appropriating mobility within biometric border regimes*. Routledge.

Scherr, A., 2013. Solidarity in Postmodern Capitalism. In Solidarity in Crisis (pp. 263-270). Springer VS, Wiesbaden.

Schindel, E., 2016. Bare life at the European borders. Entanglements of technology, society and nature. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, *31*(2), pp.219-234.

Scholz, S.J., 2008. Political solidarity. Penn State Press.

Schuster, L., 2005. A sledgehammer to crack a nut: deportation, detention and dispersal in Europe. *Social Policy & Administration*, *39*(6), pp.606-621.

Schuster, L., 2011. Turning refugees into 'illegal migrants': Afghan asylum seekers in Europe. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *34*(8), pp.1392-1407.

Scipioni, M., 2018. Failing forward in EU migration policy? EU integration after the 2015 asylum and migration crisis. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *25*(9), pp.1357-1375.

Scott-Smith, T., 2016. Humanitarian dilemmas in a mobile world. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, *35*(2), pp.1-21.

Seidman, I., 2006. *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. Teachers college press.

Serntedakis, G., 2017. 'Solidarity'for strangers: A case study of 'solidarity'initiatives in Lesvos. *Etnofoor*, *29*(2), pp.83-98.

Seybolt, T.B., 1996. The myth of neutrality. *Peace Review*, *8*(4), pp.521-527.

Sezgin, Z. and Dijkzeul, D. eds., 2016. *The new humanitarians in international practice: Emerging actors and contested principles*. Routledge.

Sigona, N., 2013. *The politics of refugee voices: Representations* (pp. 369-382). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Skleparis, D., 2015. Towards a hybrid 'shadow state'? The case of migrant-/refugee-serving NGOs in Greece. *Austerity and the Third Sector in Greece. Civil Society at the European Frontline, London and NY: Routledge*, pp.166-177.

Sotiropoulos, D.A., 2004. Formal weakness and informal strength: Civil society in contemporary Greece.

Sphere Association ed., 2018. *Sphere handbook: humanitarian charter and minimum standards in humanitarian response*. Practical Action.

Spradley, J.P., 1980. Doing participant observation. *JP Spradley, Participant observation*, *53*, p.84.

Squire, V., 2016. *The exclusionary politics of asylum*. Springer.

Staples, L., 2016. *Roots to power: A manual for grassroots organizing: A manual for grassroots organizing*. ABC-CLIO.

Starfish, Asterias-starfish.org. 2022. [online] Available at: <https://www.asterias-starfish.org/> [Accessed 16 July 2022].

Stavinoha, L. and Ramakrishnan, K., 2020. Beyond humanitarian logics: Volunteer-refugee encounters in Chios and Paris. *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, *11*(2), pp.165-186.

Stumpf, J., 2006. The the crimmigration crisis: Immigrants, crime, and sovereign power. *Am. UL Rev.*, *56*, p.367.

Tagaris, K., 2021. *Greek PM defends migration policy in heated exchange with journalist*. [online] Reuters. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/greek-pm-defends-migration-policy-heated-exchange-with-journalist-2021-11-09/> [Accessed 11 July 2022].

Tanner, V., 2002. Reflections on Humanitarian Action: Principles, Ethics and Contradictions. Taylor, SJ, Bogdan, R, & DeVault, M 2015, Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods : A Guidebook and Resource, John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, Hoboken. Available from: ProQuest Ebook Central. [3 March 2022].

Tazzioli, M., 2020. Governing migrant mobility through mobility: Containment and dispersal at the internal frontiers of Europe. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, *38*(1), pp.3-19.

Terry, F., 2002. The paradox of humanitarian action: Condemned to repeat. *London: Cornell*.

Ticktin, M., 2014. Transnational humanitarianism. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *43*(1), pp.273-289.

Ticktin, M.I., 2011. Casualties of care. In *Casualties of Care*. University of California Press.

Trnka, S. and Trundle, C., 2014, April. Competing responsibilities: Moving beyond neoliberal responsibilisation. In *Anthropological Forum* (Vol. 24, No. 2, pp. 136-153). Routledge.

UN 2015. State of the World's Volunteerism Report. United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme. https://doi.org/10.18356/d32ea212-en

UNHCR, Data.unhcr.org. 2022. *Situation Mediterranean Situation*. [online] Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5179?fbclid=IwAR2f2o0Uom1B w8kqDxUhG3I49h4gqV658GwsAxsGoBRVR-WAjcvgDmOppYM&source=post_page> [Accessed 11 July 2022].

UNHCR. 2017. Syria regional refugee response - Regional overview. http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php

UNHCR. 2018. Operational Portal, Refugees, Mediterranean. Accessed 11 July 2022. https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5179

UNHCR Greece. 2022. *UNHCR concerned by pushback reports, calls for protection of refugees and asylum-seekers - UNHCR Greece*. [online] Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/gr/en/16207-unhcr-concerned-by-pushback-reports-calls-for-protection-of-refugees-and-asylum-seekers.html> [Accessed 11 July 2022].

Ünver, O.C., 2022. Transnational Turkish–German community in limbo. Consequences of political tensions between migrant receiving and sending countries. *International Migration*.

Vandevoordt, R., 2019. Subversive humanitarianism: rethinking refugee solidarity through grass-roots initiatives. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, *38*(3), pp.245-265.

Vandevoordt, R. and Verschraegen, G., 2019. Subversive humanitarianism and its challenges: Notes on the political ambiguities of civil refugee support. In *Refugee protection and civil society in Europe* (pp. 101-128). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

Vaughan-Williams, N., 2009. The generalised bio-political border? Re-conceptualising the limits of sovereign power. *Review of International Studies*, *35*(4), pp.729-749.

Vaughan-Williams, N., 2015. "We are not animals!" Humanitarian border security and zoopolitical spaces in Europe. *Political Geography*, *45*, pp.1-10.

Wæver, O., 1995. Securitization and Desecuritization. I Ronnie D. Lipschutz (red.) On Security.

Walters, W., 2010. Foucault and frontiers: Notes on the birth of the humanitarian border. In *Governmentality* (pp. 146-172). Routledge.

Walters, W., 2015. Secrecy, publicity and the milieu of security. *Dialogues in human geography*, *5*(3), pp.287-290.

Weiss, T.G., 2013. *Humanitarian business*. John Wiley & Sons.

Weiss, Thomas. 1999. Principles, Politics, and Humanitarian Action. Ethics and International Affairs 13: 1–22.

Weller, M., 1997. The relativity of humanitarian neutrality and impartiality. In *Proceedings of the ASIL Annual Meeting* (Vol. 91, pp. 441-450). Cambridge University Press.

Witcher, A. and Fumado, V., 2021. Informal citizen volunteering with border crossers in Greece: the informality double-bind and intimate solidarity. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, pp.1-17.

Youkhana, E., 2015. A conceptual shift in studies of belonging and the politics of belonging. *Social Inclusion*, *3*(4), pp.10-24.

Żemojtel-Piotrowska, M., Piotrowski, J., Sedikides, C., Sawicki, A., Czarna, A.Z., Fatfouta, R. and Baran, T., 2021. Communal collective narcissism. *Journal of Personality*, *89*(5), pp.1062-1080.

- Why have you decided to become engaged with the collective? / What were your motivations?
- When was your group set-up on Lesvos?
- Could you tell me a little bit about the most important idea behind your group? What is your goal and motivation?
- How does your group work? What's the structure of the group? Who are your colleagues? Is there leadership or decision-making hierarchy?
- How do you get resources/finances needed for your functioning? Do members of your collective get any type of training? Why yes/no?
- What do you think people on the move need the most?
- Do you consider yourself to be close with the people you advocate/work for? Why yes, why not?
- How do you understand the word solidarity?
- Would you consider yourself to be a humanitarian? Would you consider the work done by your group as more humanitarian, advocacy or political, or both? And why?
- In the provision of your services, do you prioritise a certain group of people? Why yes, why not?
- What was your most important project and why? Can you give an example of a service or project that your organisation provides/provided that the government or a big INGO wouldn't be capable of providing, or providing in a timely manner?
- Would you say that your organisation has changed over time? Why yes, why now? What are the challenges faced by your organisation?
- Do you coordinate with other organisations/ advocacy groups on the Island?
- What do you think about the current situation of the people on the move? What do you think about the camps, how would you describe them?
- What do you think about the Greek and EU approach to the people on the move? What are your interactions with local authorities?
- What's the general approach to the people on the move on the island? Do you see a lot of support for refugees on the Island? What is your organisation's relation with the locals? Do you cooperate? Why yes, why not?
- How do you think groups working on Lesvos are influenced by the situation on the Island? Why? What influences them the most?
- Do you think international NGOs are needed on Lesvos?
- Do you know any other groups/ people that could contribute information to this study?
- Is there anything else you would like to tell me about or you think people should be aware of?

University of Glasgow

School of Social & Political Sciences

School Ethics Forum for Non-Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects

Notification of Ethics Application Outcome – UG and PGT Student Applications

Application Details

Undergraduate Student Research Ethics Application ☐   Postgraduate Student Research Ethics Application ☒

Application Number: PGT/SPS/2021/168/IMSISS

Applicant's Name: Elzbieta Dolska

Project Title: Grassroot organisations and humanitarianism: the framing of and actions towards migrants on the Aegean Islands.

Application Status: Fully Approved

Date of Review: 03/02/2022

Start Date of Approval   01/03/2022   End Date of Approval   31/07/2022

NB: Only if the applicant has been given approval can they proceed with their data collection from the date of approval.

Fully approved
Means that the applicant can proceed with data collection with effect from the date of approval.

Amendments required
Where amendments are required by reviewers, applicants must respond in the relevant boxes below to the recommendations of the School Ethics Forum and provide this as an 'Amendments Response' document to explain the changes made to the application as well as amending the documents, as relevant. Changes to the application form or supporting documents should be highlighted either in block highlight or in red coloured text to assist the reviewers. All amended application documents should then be sent to the ethics administrator by the Supervisor for the approval of the SEF before data collection can proceed.

Rejected
If your application is Rejected a new application must be submitted to the School Ethics Forum. The reviewer feedback below will indicate whether a similar future project is likely to be supported. Where recommendations are provided, they should be responded to and this document provided as part of the new application. A new reference number will be generated. The new application forms should be signed off and submitted to the ethics administrator by the Supervisor.

REVIEWER MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS   APPLICANT RESPONSE

Please ensure that you follow all rules concerning Covid-19 thoughtout the research process.	

REVIEWER MINOR RECOMMENDATIONS	APPLICANT RESPONSE

ADDITIONAL REVIEWER COMMENTS	APPLICANT RESPONSE

University
of Glasgow

College of Social
Sciences

Plain Language Statement

Grassroot organisations and humanitarianism: the framing of and actions towards
migrants on the Aegean Islands.

The main purpose of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of the practices of
everyday humanitarianism by Grassroot Organizations on the Greek Aegean Islands in
relation to the European refugee crisis. The focus of the research is analysis of the ways
in which GO volunteers act towards and talk about people on the move on the Aegean
Islands.

Supervisor: Professor Anna Casaglia

anna.casaglia@unitn.it

Researcher: Elzbieta Dolska
email: 2567105d@student.gla.ac.uk
School of Social & Political Sciences
Degree/Programme Title   International Masters in Security, Strategy and
Intelligence

You are invited to take part in the research study which aims to learn more about your
volunteering. Before you decide whether to take part in the research or not, it is
important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve.
Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if
you wish. Ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like
more information. Take time to decide whether you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the study is to analyse the ways in which GO volunteers act towards and
talk about people on the move on the Aegean Islands. It is to understand the motivations
behind Grassroot Organizations' actions and how volunteers reflect on them. This is

important as there is limited empirical knowledge of the growing phenomenon of grassroot organisations involved in humanitarian aid and the ways in which their practices interact with humanitarianism at the borders. The research will be conducted in the context of Greece, a relevant setting where grassroot organisations continue to fill out the gaps left by the government and NGOs in the provision of aid to migrants. Therefore, the research will offer a nuanced understanding of grassroot organisations' role while engaging in humanitarian practices.

The study will take part between March and April with the final research produced in July.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen as you are volunteering for a Grassroot Organisation providing humanitarian aid to migrants on the Greek Aegean Islands, where the research is situated.
The research aims to conduct an estimate of around 10 semi-structured interviews lasting for around an hour to learn about your experiences, hear your voice and thoughts about the work you do.

Do I have to take part?

Taking part in the research is entirely voluntary, this means that it is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you decide to take part, you will be asked to take an hour or so, to discuss your viewpoints about your volunteering and the mission of the Grassroot Organization you are affiliated with, in the form of a semi-structured interview which will be audio-recorded.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information which is collected about you on the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will be identified by a pseudonym and any information about you will be removed so that you cannot be recognised from it.

You need to know that the research is situated in a unique location, Greek Aegean Islands, therefore there is a chance that you could be identified from the context. However, this research is not interested in your personal data per-se, but your thoughts and your voice, which will minimize such risk.

Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

At the end of the study, the personal data will be destroyed. The research will be used to fulfil the requirement of Masters thesis at University of Glasgow, therefore it will be reviewed by examinators. The results are likely to be gathered in July of 2022 and you will be notified (if you so desire) about the research completion with the possibility of obtaining a copy of the research which will be for personal use only, unless otherwise agreed.

Who has reviewed the study?

The project has been reviewed by the School of Social and Political Sciences Ethics Forum.

Contact for Further Information

Researcher: Elzbieta Dolska 2567105d@student.gla.ac.u

Supervisor: Professor Anna Casaglia anna.casaglia@unitn.it

If you (participants) have any concerns regarding the conduct of the research project you can contact the School of Social and Political Sciences Ethics Officer, email: socpol-pgt-ethics @glasgow.ac.uk

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Appendix D

Consent Form

Title of Project: **Grassroot organisations and humanitarianism: the framing of and actions towards** migrants on the Aegean Islands.

Name of Researcher: Elzbieta Dolska

Name of the Supervisor: Professor Anna Casaglia

Please tick as appropriate

Yes ☐ No ☐   I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information

                        Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

Yes ☐ No ☐   I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to

                        withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

Yes ☐ No ☐   I consent to interviews being audio-recorded

Yes ☐ No ☐   I acknowledge that participants will be referred to by pseudonym.

I agree that:

Yes ☐ No ☐   All names and other material likely to identify individuals will be anonymised.

Yes ☐ No ☐   The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.

Yes ☐ No ☐   The material will be retained in secure storage for use in future academic research

Yes ☐ No ☐   The material may be used in future publications, both print and online.

Yes ☐ No ☐   I waive my copyright to any data collected as part of this project.

Yes ☐ No ☐   Other authenticated researchers may use my words in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form

Yes ☐ No ☐   I acknowledge the provision of a Privacy Notice in relation to this research project.

I agree to take part in this research study   ☐

I do not agree to take part in this research study   ☐

Name of Participant ………… Signature ………………… Date ……………………………..………

Name of Researcher ………… Signature ………………… Date ……………………………..………