



**AALBORG UNIVERSITY**

**MASTERS' THESIS**

**Lesvos March 2016: A Study of Volunteer  
motivations and notions of solidarity**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Built on a rich dataset gathered by means of semi-structured interviews on the Island of Lesbos in spring 2016, the objective of this project is to investigate the motivations of a select group of volunteers working on the beaches and rocky piers of the Island that lies right of the Turkish coast – untold thousands of mixed migrants dared to cross the narrow stretch between Turkey and the European Union risking their lives.

Using the assumptions and theoretical categories of Allen Omoto and Mark Snyder's Volunteer Functions Index (VFI) as a prism a catalogue of intuitively coded motivational thematics lifted from verbatim transcription are reordered described using established motivational categories. Following the an analysis informed by the VFI is carried out to reveal plausible individual motivational patterns.

Following the individual motivational patterns revealed are cross referenced and the salience and solitude of specific motivational functions are compared and discussed. The analytical process reveals a general motivational pattern across all sources.

Finally Carol Gould's theory of Transnational Solidarity that seeks to update Emile Durkheim's concepts of Mechanical and Organic Solidarity is introduced in concert with Kraig Beyerlin and David Sikkink's work on volunteering after the 9/11 terror attacks in New York City. Both are fused and applied in an attempt to explain the universal occurrence of value and community centered motivations to volunteer as an expression of Transnational Solidarity.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

It would be false to assert that I or anyone I have come across writing this paper knows exactly when or where the so called “refugee crisis” began. From a European perspective perhaps it was with the death of Aylan Kurdi on the shores of Lampedusa in the Southern Mediterranean Sea or perhaps it was when the North Western European countries began to see waves of migrants on their freeways that the term “crisis” was evoked.

Whoever manages to answer when the steady flow of mixed migrants, including asylum seekers looking for refugee status changed from what it was to a crisis will likely aid the ultimate resolution of the same. I do not hold the cards to produce that answer. Perhaps the first step is to decide if the term crisis springs from the humanitarian consequence of wishing away migration or the political issue of accepting the migrants inside the EU-member states.

As the “refugee crisis” is a rather large concept to cover, with this paper I am going to turn a stone in the quarry and attempt to understand one aspect of the crisis, or rather the crisis response: the volunteers. This paper examines this sub-topic, as it looked in early march 2016 when I travelled to Lesbos, not to help migrants reach the shore safely, but to understand what makes others do just that.

Since the beginning of 2014 I have been increasingly interested in the autonomous action of private people that have amassed at hot spots around Europe's borders to assist migrants travelling toward the European Union. From Flensburg to Budapest and from there to Lesbos, individuals and groups have pulled together to assist and in some cases save migrants in the absence of a timely and thorough official response sanctioned by the EU and its member-states for whatever reasons.

The current “refugee crisis” is interesting and relevant in its whole, but my focus on the volunteer action, perhaps better termed autonomous action has informative origins of its own.

It was the story of a wealthy Maltese family who, after solemnly having been explained by the captain of their Mediterranean holiday cruise that a group of empty life jackets they had spotted likely bore witness to the death of an unknown, had invested part of their fortune in the once privately funded MOAS (Migrant Offshore Aid Station) that first made me pay attention. I personally had the pleasure of talking to the father of the Catrambone family and the director of

operations for MOAS, the former Chief of Maltese defence forces in January of 2015. The second thing that caught my attention was their persistent focus during our conversation on the maritime obligation to carry out rescues at sea and an underlying though overtly stated message of no political affiliation or motive. In his words, Mr. Catrambone had simply been compelled to act.

While anecdotal, the story of the Catrambone family's decision to act raised questions as to the personal deliberations behind the decision – one that by many would be considered wrong and perhaps even subversive.

This paper aims to investigate and understand the motivations of select volunteers operating on Lesbos. Special attention will be paid to the motivational and mobilizing factors that brought them to the island. Furthermore, when and if it is relevant, I will attempt to understand the experience that has kept the same sources in Lesbos for longer periods of time.

In the case of volunteers converging on Lesbos to offer their time free of charge, while European national borders are closing down in attempt to limit the amount of migrants getting in to their respective territories, it is easy to recognize that there is a clear divide between the official actions of most EU nations and what the volunteers choose to do. This point makes the question of what drives volunteers even more interesting and truly relevant.

Based on interview data gathered in the beginning of March among volunteers working on the Greek Island of Lesbos I seek to answer the following line of questions:

**Problem formulation:** What motivates volunteers in working with refugees in Lesbos?

Work question 1: Are the selected volunteers' motivational patterns structurally similar to those suggested in Volunteer Functions Index (VFI)-theory?

Work question 2: What specific motivational patterns can be identified from the projects empirical base?

Work question 3: What additional motivations, if any, are expressed in relation to protracted volunteer efforts?

Work question 4: What motivational themes, if any, may be identified as particularly salient and general?

As I intend to analyse and understand the personal narratives of volunteer sources, the primary data in this paper is gathered by means of qualitative interviews that will be introduced in the methodology section. The full transcribed content of the utilized interviews has been coded to reveal thematic structures on the individual level and coded again to reveal general themes in the way that the interviewees explain their own actions as volunteers in Lesvos. The emerging catalogue of thematic issues will be further processed through the lens of the Volunteer Functions Index (VFI) with an emphasis on explaining a salience in what this paper suggests to be solidary sentiments.

#### **Note about the term volunteer**

The term volunteer is, among other things, associated with working without remuneration in terms of finances. This is perhaps one of the most important distinctions between a job and a volunteer job, even though volunteer workers usually have other benefits from their voluntary work – as this paper will also show.

In the coming paper, the term volunteer will be used to describe the sources I have interviewed and some that are merely used in anecdotal capacities. I use the term because it is widely used and fitting of actors I wish to investigate. However, given the protracted engagement as volunteers that some of my sources find themselves in, I should underline that in some cases a degree of financial support and pay is given to some sources.

This happens in several ways. Mostly room, board and vehicles are offered up by the organisations that host volunteers. This is fairly normal, especially among long termers. In one case my source has actually transitioned from being a volunteer to working under contract with an American aid organisation. The amount of money paid is on a subsistence level, and as such allows nothing more

than for the source to exist on the island, pay rent, eat etc. This is comparable to the support given to other volunteers by their host organisations.

While the above mentioned suggests a deviation from the term “volunteer”, I stress that it is the autonomous decision to go and help in Lesvos and its consequences that I wish to investigate. In this respect, the ways that my sources have found to sustain their personal mission is more interesting than it is disqualifying.

### **Note about term refugee**

Many terms are used to describe the souls that seek to cross Europe’s borders uninvited and sometimes unwanted from around the world. There are just as many reasons why people employ various terms that denote every and anything between victim and villain. This paper is focused on investigating the motivations of a selection of individuals who travelled to Lesvos to help along those arriving in boats from Turkey seeking whatever they do.

As this paper is not concerned with evaluating the political, legal or practical correctness of the terminology used to address the incoming flow of mixed migrants, they will primarily be called by term they were by the volunteers in Lesvos; refugees. When on occasion other terms such as mixed migrants are used, this is primarily done to ease the reading experience.



## **2. METHODOLOGY**

In this section, the methodological choices and approach I used to produce this paper will be outlined. Prior to commencing, it is valuable to underline a central point: While this section is neatly ordered for the sake of practical necessity, the process it describes is not as linear as its presentation.

This project is built on a reflexive approach by which is understood as a process of continuing adaptation between research methods, analysis strategies and theoretical lenses – in other words, this project does not contain an experiment by which a certain hypothesis is tested. Instead it seeks to understand a group of individual volunteers and their personal reflections on their decision to and experience of being a volunteer.

### **2.1. Research design**

Intention behind the project is to understand the motivations of (some) volunteers, in other words, to gain a deeper understanding of what the selected sources think in relation to their decision and how they argue and justify their decision to themselves, thus the empirical foundation almost had to consist of qualitative data. Furthermore, the data-set would also have to be rich and extracted in a way that allows for relatively complex personal deliberation by the selected sources. Below I will outline the specific methods used to extract the type of rich data needed.

One point deserves attention before addressing specific methods: While it has been established already that the data that will be used in this project was gathered on the Greek island of Lesbos, one could be inclined to ask why. Would it not be possible to investigate the motivations of volunteers dealing with refugees almost anywhere in Europe? It goes without saying that the answer to that question is yes. The overall intention to questions volunteer motivations could be addressed in many geographic locations. So the better question to ask is perhaps why Lesbos?

I have always been fascinated with the type of choices, behaviour and consequently experiences that belong to people who step outside of what I will call normal life. Volunteering in Lesbos rather than at one's local train station may not be much different in terms of utilitarian effect, but the

potential to meet volunteers drawn to the type of volunteer activities needed along the Schengen sea border intrigued me. Lesvos has come to represent an extreme in terms of the dramatic consequences of the refugee experience. In a sense, seeking out an extreme in terms of location suggested to me that I would also encounter extremely motivated volunteers – in reality it is questionable if volunteers in Lesvos would necessarily offer up richer and more interesting data than ones found anywhere else, but that is an afterthought.

Beyond the consideration of the types of sources that might be found in Lesvos, I resolved to go there, because the foreign environment (far from my usual habitat) would be well suited to observe the volunteers without personal bias and contextual knowledge.

## **2.2. Searching for rich data**

I planned to take a dual approach to my fieldwork consisting of participant-observations and semi-structured interviews to produce a data set, that would eventually enable an analysis of statements lifted from interviews supported by a rich contextual understanding of the source.

Furthermore, participating in volunteer activities would serve two additional purposes. First to gain access to groups of volunteers to search for sources and secondly, as an avenue to establishing rapport with the sources.

Establishing rapport means establishing the kind of trust with one's sources that allows them to be honest and candid in interview situations (Brinkman 2013) (Spradley 1979). The issue with building trust is that it can be a time demanding process. The intention to participate as a volunteer was in part a way of quickly getting close to the volunteers I wished to connect with by showing a genuine interest in their everyday. In his informative article on the interview styles and best practices Bernard Russel writes: "In general if you are really interested in learning about the lives of other people, some of the, at least will be pleased to spend time you in unstructured and semi-structured interviews, teaching you what you need to know" (Russel 1995, p. 211).

In reality, my intention to conduct participant observations was not entirely fulfilled. Arriving in

Lesvos without any set agreements to volunteer beyond a few superficial contacts established through email, I found it exceedingly difficult to find a volunteer station – In truth I was assigned a solitary harbor patrol for two days. It goes without saying that the solitary nature of my task made pursuing it further less than frugal.

Two days in, I decided to forego the ambition of gaining footing within a volunteer group by ways of participating and instead rented a car, so I could seek out volunteers across the island, being content with just observing them. This turned out to be a more viable research strategy considering the time allotted.

The interview style I adopted had three main components meant to work in pursuit of one aim. Overall the interview style is best described as semi-structured. With the exception of a handful of questions pertaining to age, sex, nationality etc. the interview guide I developed consisted of just four questions.

Q1: Please explain in as much detail as you can, what processes both practical and mental, you went through before arriving in Lesvos?

Q2: How does a typical day look as a volunteer?

Q3: What have you done today?

Q4: What are you going to do in the future?

It is important to underline that the primary purpose of the question guide was merely to define the general subject of the interview and let the source speak – in other words “get the informant on to a topic of interest and get out of the way...” (Russel 1995, p. 211). Thus, the specific wording of the questions changed and adapted on several occasions. As an example, the first question was more successfully phrased as “how did you end up here” on more than one occasion. The line of questioning was not isolated to those shown. Follow up questions that arose during the interview sessions asked as well.

The four questions that presented above served an additional purpose besides jumpstarting the source. Inspired by Hanne Kirstine Adriansen's text *Timeline interviews: A tool for conducting life history research*, the four basic questions I posed are designed to introduce a temporal perspective that might prompt a data set that can be understood on a timeline as well.

In her research Hanne Kirstine Andersen describes a method of interviewing where the interviewee is given a large degree of co-ownership of the data that the researcher leaves with. This is achieved by asking the interviewed party to participate in creating a timeline of events relevant to the life-history research that is being carried out. In this way, the researcher delegates part of the analytical authority to the interviewed party (Adriansen 2012) thereby gaining potential insights about the way in which the source understands his own reasoning over time.

In this project, what is borrowed from Adriansen is not her specific method, the type of timeline she describes as the "backbone" of the method (Adriansen 2012, p. 43) is neither drawn nor utilized. Instead, it is the co-ownership of the analysis and the temporal perspective that is present in the interview style I employed.

By being open about the focal point of my research (the motivations of volunteers) and the context that made the research relevant (the "extraordinary" refugee crisis) I successfully accomplished getting my sources to situate their answer in time, whenever it was relevant, as well as relating their own track towards becoming volunteers to "their wider historical, social, environmental, and political context" (Adriansen 2012, p. 41).

The open approach also seemed to aid building trust. The final element of my interview-guide and the styling of my follow-up questions was a focus on open questions soliciting descriptive answers. This is not so much a method as a necessity in terms of generating rich data, and in my experience successfully securing descriptive answers is often as much a matter of picking the right sources as it is asking the correct questions.

### **2.3. Sampling method**

With only a little more than a week to find, evaluate, select, develop and interview sources in Lesvos, the idea of gathering a statistically sound, representative cohort of sources seemed unrealistic from the onset. This realization, of course, helped inform the decision to seek an understanding of the thoughts of my individual sources rather than suggest a general picture of the motivations of all volunteers in Lesvos.

To these ends, I decided to pursue sources that would produce rich data and that the selection of said sources would be happen at my discretion based on the richness of the interview data, the richness of any contextual data about the source and its world. Two basic methods were employed to identify potential sources. First, I would attempt to become a volunteer myself once on Lesvos. At the onset of my fieldwork, this seemed like a viable option that I figured would be easily achieved, given the advertised need for volunteers around Lesvos. The second approach is well-known as “the snowball effect”: the idea being that once a proverbial bridgehead has been established by finding and establishing rapport with the first few volunteers and potential sources, more will follow as one source suggests or even introduces the next.

As already stated, I had partial success with both approaches, yet together they worked in harmony and eventually yielded a set of nine interviews of which six were selected for use within the project. Of the six sources, three are men and three are women. Half of the sources I selected had been in Lesvos volunteering for a longer period of time, one was back for a second tour of two weeks and two were new arrivals. Only one source had kids. Between the sources, more than half had completed a university degree where as one had no higher formal education. The average age between the sources is roughly 31, the youngest being 21 and the oldest 39. With the exception of one interview that was carried out in Danish the rest were done in English as a matter of practical necessity – for the same reason only English and Danish speakers were interviewed.

### **2.4. Data analysis method**

As the analysis section will show in time, the data collected in Greece has been subjected to a series of analytical steps intended to measure the motivations of the sources against motivations of volunteers working in other fields as well as identify particularly common and/or uncommon motivational factors across the individual data set. The intention is to situate the emergent themes of an initial intuitive analysis within a realm of established research. I will employ the concept of the

Volunteer Functions Index as described by Allen Omoto and Mark Snyder as well as Gil Clary and Mark Snyder (Omoto and Snyder 1995) (Clary and Snyder 1999) and use it as a focal point to understand the motivational patterns described in the interview transcripts.

Subsequently Carol Gould's concept of Transnational Solidarity will be used to present a possible explanation to the particularly salient topical expressions of a communal desire/responsibility and practical need to assist refugees in Lesvos.

The specific analytical procedure will be further explained and exemplified in the pertinent section of this paper.

Based on the analytical sections conclusions will be drawn with reference to the problem formulation and four work questions set out in the introduction.

## **2.5. Scope and limitations**

In many ways, this paper falls victim to the same range of limitations that befall many social science research projects relying on interviews with a small group of participants. In simple terms, this project can make specific claims about the exact people it investigates and it can do so in the context that they were observed in. Of course, using established theoretical assumptions about volunteers enables suggesting plausible relations between the subject of this project and others. However, where the particularities of the methods and goals of the project are limiting to application and generality of its conclusions the reverse is true of its scope – it invites more research either that either broadens or deepens the perspectives given in the conclusions of this project.

For example: stories of civil and volunteer action to help and alleviate refugees and other migrants traveling through Europe have followed the story of the masses. It would be equally interesting to do a similar project in almost any other place with their own particularities – the reception of refugees in the Balkans by people with comparable experiences of war in living memory to mention just one. But this is a late remark in any case, informed by new understanding.

While my paper is not trying to solve a concrete problem or test a particular experiment, it is my

hope that accumulated results of projects like the present enhances the accumulated knowledge of programs like the Global Refugee Studies at Aalborg University, my institution, closer to understanding the unfolding crisis, and in particular the resources that exist outside the formal structures of response.

### **3. THEORY**

#### **3.1. Theoretical framework**

In this section of the paper I will introduce a selected number of theoretical concepts that I will employ to answer the questions set forth earlier. The explanations given herein are relatively condensed and limited to a size that is conducive to understanding their role in the subsequent analysis.

This section begins by introducing the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI), which is normally employed in functional psychology studies focused on understanding the interplay between personality types, volunteer motivational patterns and predictive outcomes of volunteering.

Secondly, I will introduce the sociological concepts of solidarity (mechanical and organic) as well as the more modern idea of Transnational Solidarity as suggested by Carol Gould (2007). In connection with a review of Kraig Beyerlin and David Sikkink's considerations on the mobilization of unusual number of volunteers post 9/11 (2008), I will outline how volunteer effort in situations like the present can be viewed as an act of Transnational Solidarity partially facilitated by media attention.

#### **3.2. The Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI)**

When researching volunteer motivations from a theoretical angle, researchers Allen M. Omoto and Mark Snyder's Volunteer Functions Inventory quickly becomes relevant. The VFI is a theoretical frame widely used to assess the motivations of volunteers (Omoto & Snyder, 1995) (Clary & Omoto, 1999) (Yussof, Rahman, Shariful, Wan, Mohammed, 2014) (Marta, Gugliemetti, Pozzi, 2006) (Beyerling & Sikkink, 2008). The VFI was developed as an inventory of usually six categories (Omoto & Snyder have presented as few as five and as many as seven categories) representing motivational functions that are generally thought to be held by volunteers – in other words the six categories of the VFI represent functional reasons to volunteer. For the purpose of this project, all seven of Omoto and Snyder's categories will be employed and are briefly outlined below.



Table 1.	
Function	Explanation of concept
1. Values	Volunteering gives opportunity to express important values like Altruism or humanitarianism.
2. Understanding	Volunteering provides opportunity to learn more about the world and/or exercise uncommon skills
3. Social	Volunteering provides a social opportunity to meet people or strengthen bonds
4. Careers	Volunteering is used as a way to gain career relevant experience
5. Protective	Volunteering is used as an engine to reduce negative feelings, eg. guilt or low selfesteem
6. Enhancement	Volunteering provides a pathway to personal growth
(7). Community	Volunteering serves as a way to express concern for a person or community to whom the volunteer feels a connection, concern or obligation.
(Clary & Snyder, 1999) (Omoto & Snyder, 1995) (Marta, Guglielmetti & Chiara, 2006)	

The VFI is constructed based on four assumptions (Clary & Snyder, 1999) (Omoto & Snyder, 1995); **First** that volunteers engage in volunteering with purpose and intent to satisfy personal goals. **Secondly**, while different volunteers might attempt to satisfy the same goals, they may go about doing so in different ways and for different reasons. **Thirdly**, volunteers are not singular in their motivations and their volunteering may be serving several functions one time and through one activity. This is reflected in Harng Luh Sin's study of motivations for youth voluntourism (Sin, 2009). She asserts that her respondents expressed simultaneous desires to travel, give back and challenge themselves as reasons to engage in voluntourism. **Fourth**, the success of a volunteer experience is contingent on the satisfaction of the volunteer's motivations.

The latter point is addressed by Marta, Guglielmetti & Chiara. While essentially arguing that the VFI can serve as a tool to help relevant parties tailor volunteer experiences to fit individual volunteers in terms of motivations, tasks and satisfaction with their experience to avoid burnout and maximize their engagement as volunteers, Marta, Guglielmetti & Chiara remark: “This implies that the choice to begin and continue voluntary involvement is represented for each individual by a pattern of intertwined and fluid motivations rather than by a single motivation that is idiosyncratic and stable” (Marta, Guglielmetti & Chiara, 2006 p.4).

Furthermore, it can be argued that the list of functions shown above in Table 1. can be further reduced into two categories of self-oriented and other-oriented motivations reflecting the subject reaping the benefit of the volunteer’s efforts so to speak (Omoto & Snyder, 1995) (Clary & Snyder, 1999).

Or to explain in words of other authors: “The values and the community concern motivations are other-oriented in nature and reflect how volunteer work can benefit other people, while understanding, social, career, ego-protective, and self-enhancement motivations are self-focused in nature and center around personal gains that can be obtained through voluntary service” (Marta, Guglielmetti & Chiara, 2006 p.3).

With all the above in mind, the VFI becomes a structural tool that allows for a nuanced, multifaceted understanding of the motivational constructs that this project wishes to uncover. Furthermore, given that the common denominator with regards to the chosen informants for this project is their role as volunteers rather than their demographic profile, the VFI is an appropriate initial path of approach.

### **3.3. Solidarity**

While my aim in this section is to introduce a modern concept of solidarity, I will start by introducing the most basic concepts of solidarity. I do this partly to be clear about the main challenges with regards to talking about solidarity as a motivational factor with regards to the subject of this paper, but also because the root-ideas of solidarity seem to offer inspiration beyond their theoretical implication.

The French sociologist Emilé Durkheim was among the first to use the concept of solidarity to describe that which holds societies together, the glue as it is described (Guneriusen, 1996) (Christiansen, Groes, Klint, Fehler, Mortensen, Nørgaard) (Gould, 2007). Solidarity, in this sense, is

what gives members of a society reason to help one another. Durkheim suggested two types of solidarity depending on the type of environment (time period, developmental state etc.) they arise from. The first, Mechanical Solidarity, exists in smaller highly egalitarian societies. Typically found in tribal groups, Mechanical Solidarity exists on the basis of sameness and equality. “Equality and sameness works as an agent of integration amongst groups of people who on basis of their equality form groups within society” (Christiansen, Groes, Klint, Fehler, Mortensen, Nørgaard: internet). Additionally, Carol Gould explains that Mechanical Solidarity “pertains to the relation among members of traditional communities where each member is similarly characterized in terms of identities and perspectives, and stands in the same relation as others to the community as a whole” (Gould 2007, p.3). The existence and indeed persistence of Mechanical Solidarity derives from commonsense, and develops what Durkheim called a “conscience collective” (Gunneriussen 1996, p. 76). As long as this common narrative understanding exists, Mechanical Solidarity is also possible, establishing a theoretical reason for corporation and help within the specific group.

Recognizing the nature of modern industrialized societies as being far from the egalitarian, highly homogenous entities in which she situates Mechanical Solidarity, Durkheim coined the term Organic Solidarity to explain what binds together the subjects of modern societies. In this case it's the mutual dependence between individuals with highly specialized functions rather than sameness and equality that births solidarity (Gunneriussen, 1996) (Christiansen, Groes, Klint, Fehler, Mortensen, Nørgaard). In other words, where Mechanical Solidarity is a product of mutual understanding and identification, Organic Solidarity is a product of a mutual understanding that one highly specialized worker is dependent on the next to be part of a complete society – that is a society capable of providing subsistence for its subjects.

To reiterate, Mechanical Solidarity suggests the construction of imagined collective conscience within which individuals are scarcely indistinguishable, and that creates the conditions of identification and solidarity. On the other hand, Organic Solidarity arises when individuals with highly specialized and different functions recognize their interdependence, like individual cells part of a larger organism – hence the name (Gunneriussen, 1996). In Durkheim's world and time period, the world was still far from the suggested globalized entity we inhabit today where both common, uncommon, natural and man-made problems transcend the boundaries within which Durkheim first understood solidarity. I suggest modestly that at least imagining other types of communities than

the nation or clan in which mutually beneficial solidary relationships are found comes easy – perhaps most obvious is the thought that if the better part of the planet can be connected by free markets that disperse and specialize global production and manufacturing even more, then perhaps so can the organic solidarity. “For it is evident that economic integration has in fact extended the division of labor beyond the borders of a given society” (Gould 2007, p. 3).

### **3.4. Towards a modern understanding of solidarity**

Several researchers have attempted to create more modern concepts of solidarity that are not limited at their furthest reach to the state. One such idea concept is Carol Gould’s Transnational Solidarity that aims to consider “the supportive relations we can come to develop with people at a distance, given the interconnections that are being established through work or other economic ties, through participation in Internet forums and other new media, or indirectly through environmental impacts” (Gould 2007, p 1.). Gould is on mission to propose a theory that allows people to establish a connection of mutual gain and assistance to the sometimes very distant other (Gould 2007).

Two things are immediately clear. First, in order to establish such a connection, the premise of the relationship has to change from an intragroup of relations to something applicable beyond ones established community; however at the same time, Transnational Solidarity must be limited as to not apply universally. Gould recognizes that an attempt at suggesting there is such a thing as universal solidarity is practically unrealistic: “any effort to theorize global care, empathy, or solidarity immediately comes up against what seems to be an impossibility theorem, namely, that it necessarily violates the stricture that “ought implies can.” How can people possibly feel care, empathy, or solidarity with *everyone* else?” (Gould 2007, p2). Thus, what Gould proposes as Transnational Solidarity is “what might be called a horizon of possibility, where it refers to a disposition that each can have to act in solidarity with some others” (Gould, 2007, p. 2). While Gould’s purpose is to move beyond Durkheim's two ideas of solidarity, it is however not to fully departed from it. Thus, her thinking resides outside the realm of the local or national, but it still retains the notion of differentiation implied in Organic Solidarity (Gould 2007). Gould terms this first evolution of Durkheim’s concepts Network Solidarity or Plural Solidarity.

Of course, Transnational Solidarity is not a figment of Gould’s reasoning based only on Durkheim’s initial propositions. In her thinking, she also takes account of other contemporary attempts at similar

evolutions of theoretical solidarity. First and seemingly most important is Kurt Bayertz who suggests in four ways:

First as a connection between people as one big group, “as a fraternity among human beings generally” (Gould 2007, p.4). However, he agrees with Gould in her assessment that this conception quickly falls victim to the issue of the practical inevitability of the “in other words, as a fraternity among human beings generally” (Gould 2007, p. 4) as well as the equally evident case of conflict and competition. Indeed, it is reasonable to suspect that it is not solidarity that drives victims of war to flee in the first place even when there are many push and pull factors in play (Gould 2007). Gould explains Bayertz’s second suggestion as reflecting his first and much in line with Durkheim's two types of solidarity as the binding agent of societies (Gould 2007). The third suggestion from Bayertz addresses groups formed by people fighting for common interests. It is noted that these interests may be “criminal or more positive ones” (Gould 2007, p. 4): special interests groups in other words. The fourth suggested type of solidarity pertains to the solidarity of welfare states, their values and egalitarian nature, their compensation for unequal opportunities and value of citizenship (Gould 2007, p. 4).

In addition Gould explains, to distinguish Transnational Solidarity, another three conceptions of solidarity: Affectional Solidarity, Conventional and Reflective Solidarity. The latter is perhaps interesting in the context of this paper in regards to the somewhat polarized debate on migration in Europe.

Knowing these seven concepts is helpful to understand the width of the concept of Transnational Solidarity. In this way it assumes a size that “can characterize relations both among individuals and among associations.” and” it takes on a more dispersed but also more social aspect.” (Gould 2007, p. 4)

Gould also mentions labor movements in a Marxist reading Craig Calhoun’s seemingly constructionist social solidarity as types perhaps relevant to the contextual understanding of the transnational aspect of her idea.

Having identified what Transnational Solidarity is not yet in some senses seeks to encompass it's time to identify what Gould considers the two main tenants of her Transnational Solidarity, namely the ideas of **fellow feeling** and **mutual aid**. The former concept Gould borrows or rather explains

from Sandra Bartky who uses the German term “mitgefühl” or “fellow feeling” (Gould 2007, p. 6) as a central component of Transnational Solidarity. This is to be understood as a measure of empathy and imagination that is not contingent on having actually experienced the plight that one is empathizing with (Gould 2007). The latter term, mutual aid, underlines the idea that solidarity is at least in thought a reciprocal concept (Gould 2007) – this point is both very important to the final concept of Transnational Solidarity while it also represents the most general point of critique because of the distance between the supposed solidary parties. It is interesting to keep David Harvey's idea of time space compression (Sheppard 2002) in mind considering the scope of this last point.

The final clue given by Gould is borrowed from Klaus Peter Rippe who suggests Project Related Solidarity. This idea mirrors Bayertz' third point in so far as that it limits the scope of solidarity to address special interests (groups, issues, movements) and specific agenda. (Gould 2007). “He limits this concern to a very temporary effort to assist with a particular problem or to find a remedy for the plight, narrowly construed” (Gould 2007, p. 8).

Besides being born from the fellow-feeling and mutual aid already addressed, Gould insists that her theory of Transnational Solidarity, despite being particularistic in a sense, contains “a horizon of possibility, where it refers to a disposition that each can have to act in solidarity with some others” (Gould 2007, p. 8). Drawing on the many pathways to solidarity mentioned earlier, she also asserts that Transnational Solidarity could “plausibly designate a willingness to acknowledge need in everyone else and to act in general ways to support their human rights, especially by working toward the construction of transnational institutions that can allow for their fulfillment worldwide” (Gould 2007, p. 8). Because of the distance to the other with whom one can stand in sympathy, Gould's concept is rooted less in personal identification with the other than it is “in their efforts to overcome oppression or to eliminate suffering, and they take action to aid these others or stand ready to do so if called upon... We are here focusing on identification with the lived situation of others and with an appreciation of the injustices to which they may be subject” (Gould 2007, p.9). For the purposes of the project in hand I mention again in the words of Gould that her type of solidarity “involves an *affective* element, combined with an effort to understand the specifics of others' concrete situation, and to imaginatively construct for oneself their feelings and needs” (Gould 2007, p.9).

Another point to make in terms of Transnational Solidarities application to this paper is that solidarity is understood as help given to match needs defined by the party to whom one stands in solidarity. This help is also different from humanitarian assistance because the normative dimension of Transnational Solidarity still carries a notion of reciprocity even though “the solidarity relation is between a better-off person or group and less well-off ones” (Gould 2007, p. 10).

### **3.5. Degrees of separation in extraordinary events**

In their paper *Sorrow and Solidarity: Why Americans Volunteered 9/11 Relief efforts*, Kraig Beyerlin and David Sikkink revolve around the concept of solidarity to explain an extraordinarily large surge of volunteers rallying to help in the aftermath of the terror attacks on the World Trade Center in New York in 2001 (Beyerlin & Sikkink, 2008). At the heart of their argument lies that a process of individual identification preceded many volunteers' decision to act. Beyerlin and Sikkink are particularly curious of how a massive solidary effort could be raised in a country (USA) that is generally thought to have a highly individualized populous. Essentially, the authors argue that: “the act of volunteering in response to September 11 depended on levels of identification with victims of the tragedy. One of the strongest factors was personal identification with victims, which was built through personal networks such as knowing someone who was killed or in danger during the attacks, and through personal feelings of responsibility to help others in need” ( Beyerlin & Sikkink, p. 1 20).

One does not need to stretch far to make a connection between the notion that personal identification with victims of an event or condition or even the feeling of responsibility for the same is reflected in the VFI at several points. Points 5 (Protective) and 7 (Community) are particularly clear. Comparing the surge in volunteering after 9/11 to volunteer efforts after the Oklahoma City Bombing, Beyerlin and Sikkink point out that a high volume of volunteers with either direct ties to victims of the attacks or any other direct pathway to identification was expected (Beyerlin and Sikkink, 2008). This is reflected in Omoto and Snyder's study on AIDS-care volunteers where they found that personal connections with AIDS victims translated in to longer volunteer commitments. What was remarkable after 9/11 was the number of volunteers with no direct connection to victims of the attacks. Beyerlin and Sikkink attribute this to a combination of factors.

The authors expand on solidarity as a motivation, to more specific emotions like rage, anger and in

particular, sorrow and compassion. These are suggested as conducive to volunteering and so is the salience of religious attitudes in the US populous. Perhaps more important the popular media narrative proliferated clear across the western world suggested that 9/11 was more than just an attack on the World Trade Center. It was framed as an attack America and her culture, on democracy and on freedom itself (Beyerlin & Sikkink, 2008).

Kath Woodward addresses this in the preface to her book *Understanding Identity* quoting then president George W. Bush: “Freedom itself was attacked this morning and I assure you freedom will be defended. Make no mistake. The United States will hunt down and pursue those responsible for these cowardly acts” (G.W. Bush in Woodward, p 8. 2002).

Woodward, like Beyerlin and Sikkink, addresses the evocation of freedom, liberty etc. as evocations of symbols suggesting a larger possible community of all Americans – perhaps excluding devout Muslims. Those willing to rally around the symbols and perceived core values of the United States thus were given a pathway to identification with the victims of the 9/11 attacks (Beyerlin & Sikkink, 2008) – I would argue that anyone willing to identify as American became victims.

This process of drawing more people to identify as directly inflicted by the attack on the twin towers was not immediate of course. Beyerlin & Sikkink make note of mentioning how the identification does in many cases happen in increments. In other words, one may get into a process of socialization beginning at a candle light vigil or church gathering that could lead one to develop increasing emotional identification (Beyerlin & Sikkink, 2008). In relation to this point, I direct the reader to consider for a moment Carol Gould’s assertion that her Transnational Solidarity may be developed in a similar way.

### **3.6. The scope and scale of tragedy – Lesvos and 9/11**

The magnitude of the 9/11 attacks in popular culture, politics, civil rights etc. as well as the massive media coverage is a rare event seldom seen, but perhaps the events unfolding at Europe's borders with the beaches of Lesvos as their epicenter warrant a comparison.

To begin in proper fashion, I will point out that there are at least three major differences between the two events – these are ways in which the events do not deserve comparison. First the temporal profile of the events as they unfolded on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 and as they continue to unfold around



the Schengen borders are different in the sense that the former event was isolated and the latter is continuously unfolding. The second difference concerns the events themselves. Whereas the refugee crisis, perhaps more correctly termed the mixed migration crisis has a myriad of effects, reason and implications of the attack on the World Trade Center seems less complex even if it is far from simple. Finally, 9/11 was a decidedly hostile event and the volunteer reaction to it, as described above, was framed in terms of an attack on America. The volunteer brigades engaged in Lesvos are not in the same way victims of an aggression as the US-populous was.

The reason I wish to compare the two mentioned situations despite their differences is to suggest that media attention has played an important role in terms of volunteer mobilization in both cases. With regards to Beyerlin and Sikkink's article it is mentioned that the widely proliferated media narrative of us against them that allowed larger than usual amounts of people to find motivation to volunteer. Like 9/11 the refugee influx in Europe has been widely reported for years at this point. The culmination of in terms of media coverage was perhaps around the time when the picture of the drowned infant Aylan Kurdi was circulated world wide – a event that really predates the equally widely reported surge in refugees and migrants entering Europe via Turkey rather than North Africa.

Now, this paper is not concerned with the discursive construction of the boat refugee anno 2015/16, so without further theoretical consideration I assert that for those paying attention to the relevant media outlets renditions of the refugee experience has definitely been emotional. I mention this, of course, to re-enter the territory staked out by Carol Gould. In her proposal of Transnational Solidarity, she explains how empathy and identification with the perceived experience of the plight of others can produce solidarity (Gould 2007). She also suggests that media attention can help to establish the types of “affective ties of care or concern” (Gould 2007, p. 10) conducive of Transnational Solidarity.

In the sense that profilation of a disaster or an event of corresponding magnitude, and/or its perceived human consequences through media can potentially mobilize larger numbers of volunteers, I believe that a comparison of the above is reasonable. Furthermore, as the coming analysis will show several sources do elude that their focus was in fact directed by the search lights of traditional and social media to begin with.

## **4. SOURCE INTRODUCTION**

In the following section, I will outline the 6 interviewees and their story. This will help establish a narrative and understanding of each volunteer and will be valuable in the analysis section.

### **4.1. Nassos**

I met Nassos about half way through my stay in Lesvos. I didn't just come across Nassos on my own, rather, he like some others, was suggested as good source for me because, as I was told, Nassos who is himself a Greek national had been in Lesvos for an extended period of time and that he was a particularly skilled and vigilant guy worth talking to. It is safe to say that Nassos commanded some level of respect with other members of the various organizations operating along the south-eastern coastline of Lesvos around the capitol city of Mytileni and the nearby airfield. Before I met him, I heard talk about a very high level of dedication and a special forces background which I admit peaked my interest.

Nassos was not hard to track down they said. He would either be sleeping for a short few hours per day or keeping watch somewhere on the coast. When I first encountered him he was sitting at the southernmost watch post generally occupied by first responders. He was in a SUV belonging to the organization he worked with looking towards the Turkish coastline. Unlike what I was used to, Nassos was sitting alone in the truck, and though we received several visitors before and after our interview session the fact that Nassos was sitting alone provided for an easy interview situation that produced concise and interesting data set, less saturated with personal stories and anecdotes than others but rich in the consistency of the narrative argument Nassos was presenting. He seemed, in other words, fairly certain in his reasoning.

To be fair and transparent, Nassos was among the weaker English language speakers I interviewed, and that may have contributed to amount of personal detail he gave, but he did not seem to struggle with what he wanted to say or to be without confidence and it was my feeling throughout the interview, that he was able to convey his answers as he wanted. Nassos was 35 years old at the time of the interview and had no children.

**In his own words:**

The interview with Nassos was condensed, and it reads less colorful than other interviews, but it is not laconic and I do not mean to suggest that the lack of color is a matter of personal disconnection. In fact, the underlying story that he told was very personal and one of strong personal moral imperatives. “It's so strong, and that's why I am still here”, he said explaining how a two-week working vacation had turned into 2.5 months on Lesbos.

Nassos told me he had a background working in the army and navy, but he was generally employed as a maritime security officer, protecting ships when they need such services. He had decided to go to Lesbos after receiving an email from his employer stating that it would be fine to take days off to come help the organization Nassos was in fact working for in Lesbos as his employer was helping fund the rescue operations.

Nassos had made the decision to go see the situation for himself as soon as he saw the email. “Because it was a chance for me to help people”, he told me. Helping was a central theme to Nassos, who self-identified as person with a skillset that allowed him to be valuable in sea-rescue scenarios – something he also enjoys being capable of. As he put it:

“I have the skills. I have the training about rescuing in the sea, CPR.... I do whatever is necessary to do. Yes I am here, but if necessary I will go to the port and distribute clothes and food and everything, but I have training to do this; rescuing people in the sea and that's why. And I like action on the frontline”.

Nassos like so many others had been reading extensively about the situation in Greece, and he said several times, that he wanted to see with his own eyes, as he did not believe neither the positive nor the negative media narratives fully. He was however convinced that the situation we are seeing right now, though grave and amplified in terms of numbers is neither unique nor without precedence. He mentioned several times how Greeks had been refugees and that indeed any nation could be forced to seek international refuge at any given time.

“Greeks, we were in their situation 90 years ago, so now we must help them. In 20 years, maybe we will be in this situation. We are human you know. We are human beings. We must help each other”.

he explained mentioning that he was often thinking of his own grandparents, when he saw elderly people come of the boats from Turkey.

Two and a half months in to his two-week trip to Lesvos, Nassos concluded, that he was happy being on site. “When you help you have energy. I have energy, I sleep every day for four hours, five hours, because you know you do something good, so yes. I will stay as long as I can”, he said.

His personal satisfaction aside, something else that was repeatedly asked by Nassos as a rhetoric question was how anyone could stand aside and look knowing fully well that the consequences of not being constantly vigilant are potentially fatal. Nassos was quick to point out how people clearly did come from everywhere to help, like the locals had done before the volunteer surge, and at least for him the only reason he could see to leave the task at hand was to go and work for a few months before returning. As I mentioned earlier Nassos' reasoning seemed to take place on a personal level. He only mentions some fairly expectable political grievances in passing and then returns to an individualized focus.

## **4.2. Anne-Marie**

Among all the people I talked to on Lesvos, Anne-Marie represented perhaps what I had least expected to find. After spending a few days talking to volunteers that all somehow had an association to Lighthouse Relief at their camp in Skala Sikamineas, I had become increasingly curious to visit a smaller reception camp next to the Lighthouse Relief camp on the shoreline – these are camps where refugees that have just landed, can be fed, warmed, checked by medics, have change of clothes and sleep a while before busses arrive to take them to a UNHCR run overnight camp that was situated at a higher elevation on the mountain that had Skala Sykiminea at its foot. Later they would be transported to the well-known registration camps Moria and Karatepe closer to the capitol of Lesvos.

The name of the camp was Platanos and they flew the flag red white and black flag of “Antifascist Action”. It is a group I only have a marginal knowledge of, but I have seen their flag at home before in normal demonstrational processions but I admit I also had it lodged in my mind, that the group in its Danish incarnation always struck me personally to present itself as somewhat aggressive. The purpose of this information is of course only to be clear about my curiosity.

I was offered dinner and shelter from a beginning downpour under another timber and tarp tent. My conversation with the people around camp quickly revealed, as it had before, an eclectic group of nationalities and people that did not necessarily share any specific political agenda that stood out as aggressive at least – quite expectedly most of the volunteers I met on the island did share some political views with regards to refugee and human rights etc.

Anne-Marie had only just started as a volunteer at Platanos and was not on a shift when we fell into conversation. She is perhaps the least developed source I interviewed in the sense that we had very little time to establish good rapport prior to the interview. However, Anne-Marie already worked in development and humanitarian aid, and while I had met volunteers with aspirations of a similar career and hopes of potentially gaining professional merit and experience from volunteering that did not seem obvious with Anne-Marie.

#### **In her own words:**

In many ways this interview was the hardest to deal with after returning home. The quality and richness of the information given is not low. The issue, instead, is that Anne-Marie was harder to guide down the track of the time-line interview, I was hoping to follow, and as such answers are not set on a temporal scale similar to my other sources, yet Anne-Marie's answers are informing, though the interview contained less of an autobiographical narrative – perhaps a partial explanation of this beyond the relatively cold start to the interview is the fact that Anne-Marie seemed to also have a clear interest in my project which may have led her to over-think her own answers to my questions.

In any case, Anne-Marie's story begins in school when she decided to study international development and pursue a career in the field. Of course her school choice is not necessarily directly related to her much later decision to volunteer in Lesvos, but it's part of an interesting progression.

When I met her in the Platanos camp Anne-Marie began by explaining that she had both personal and professional interest in understanding the reality that unfolds in Lesvos, one she sees as functionally related to her own professional domain.

“Well obviously this is something that I've seen... I've read about on the news extensively. I've

worked in countries where these people are coming from, so for me just from a professional, personal aspect it's interesting to see how the push factors from these countries and then being on one side where you are trying to mitigate a situation, so it's interesting to me in different aspects.” (Anne-Marie, Lesvos, March 2016)

However in contrast to Laura or Simone who were both looking for ways to advance their professional projects, Anne-Marie seemed to have a contrasting purpose to her engagement. Speaking of her aspirations for her volunteer experience in contrast to her job, she said:

“I don't always think the things we do make a difference. I think some of the times it actually makes them worse. And then often I'm not in a position where I can change that in terms of just power and authority. Ahhh.... So I think those things honestly cause burnout in terms of the humanitarian sector, so for me it's also cathartic in terms of reengaging with the core aspects of why... what made me get in to this line of work to begin with.” (Anne-Marie, Lesvos, March 2016)

Anne-Marie explained that actually helping the people coming of the boats ”cold, freezing and hungry” was very affirming and made her consider her own situation, and that being closer to the actual refugees had deepened her understanding. She offered the following analogy to expand on the difference in experiences.

“I imagine if you are a chef it's like the difference between preparing... you know the food preparation beforehand and then actual cooking the meal. You know these things have to happen so that things run smoothly, but in terms of actual experience” ...”even though I have read about it in the news and I have seen photographs – but it suddenly really hit me in terms of what this meant to these people and what thousands of people had gone through” (Anne-Marie, Lesvos, March 2016).

When I asked if she had experienced the contrast to her professional experience she reflected on her first experience assisting with a boat-landing.

“God knows what they have been through, and you know just the brief moment when you have a chance to offer them a kindness before the continue on what will probably be very hard discouraging.” She continued: “The human aspect of it. I think it's very compelling. It's something you think about. I was in their situation; I would probably try to do exactly what they are doing” (Anne-Marie, Lesvos, March 2016).

Anne-Marie curiously was the only of my sources that touched on what I can best describe as a negative motivational factor, understood as something to avoid in pursuit of a worthwhile and ethical volunteer experience.

”(it) was important to me to kind of investigate and establish personally that by doing this, even though it was something I found interesting and wanted to do that I wouldn't be contributing to a worsened more chaotic situation by being here.” (Anne-Marie, Lesvos, March 2016)

Finally Anne-Marie made the remark, that she had pretty much gotten used to living in foreign settings and dealing with issues related to that in Lesvos. She enjoyed this life, and while she had really wanted to come and volunteer, doing so in Lesvos also offered a pleasantly framed opportunity. “The other thing, if I am being fully transparent and honest about it this is as I was explaining someone... maybe it was you... then Greece is not South Sudan, it's not Ethiopia, it's not Afghanistan. It's actually a pleasant environment to come to, so in some ways in terms of recreational activity you have the beautiful islands, the nice local people and you get to work on an issue that is important to you” (Anne-Marie, Lesvos, March 2016).

### **4.3. Laura**

I met Laura in Skala Sykamenia on my third day in Lesvos. At this point I was still pursuing my initial plan to be a fully-fledged, scheduled volunteer as a way to gain insights and meet sources. I had been writing organizations for positions, but three days in, I da yet to get a response, so I had resolved to seek out the Lighthouse Relief management in person. I knew from online, that they had been looking for extra communications help, and I figured I could offer myself as at least a temporary solution, if I found the right person to solicit.

I had just found my way to Skala Sykaminea where Lighthouse Relief was based when I met Laura. She immediately seemed open and enthusiastic about sharing her thoughts and considerations. By coincidence she happened also to be the “extra” communications help the job listing had been asking for. We quickly developed a mutually curious conversation which if nothing else was conducive of establishing great rapport, and in consequence I convinced Laura to let m interview her. She was having her first night off in a while and seemed eager to share and unwind her mind.

#### **In her own words**

Laura was a South African girl, educated in London with parents living in Dubai. From a young age, she explained that she had been aware that the world was not all good, which led her into volunteering originally.

“I have always grown up with that kind of awareness that there was a lot wrong with the world. And so like I did lots of volunteer work growing up. I worked in a home for HIV orphans, HIV/AIDS orphans... I volunteered at a hospital that was really understaffed, so I volunteered there for a few years so I’ve always had that side of me that wanted to do you know kind of humanitarian work in a way I guess” (Laura, Lesvos, March 2016).

Her diagnosis of an imperfect world led Laura tried out various studies, including medicine and visual-arts before she finally settled her intentions on a career in international development. She told me that her decision was influenced by a pivotal life experience she had in her 16<sup>th</sup> year: “I was sixteen, I went to Lebanon and because my father is Lebanese so I went to Lebanon so I went to visit and I was there for a few days and the war actually started while I was there” (Laura, Lesvos, March 2016). Laura says that she had not been paying close attention to world issues at this point in her life, but being suddenly caught in the middle of a war-zone changed her perspective: “I was in the war for about a week, and you are going to sleep, and you can hear bombs going off in the background, cause we couldn't get our embassy to evacuate us and tell us what to do” (Laura, Lesvos, March 2016).

The lack of assistance from the South African embassy that she experienced was not the worst part, Laura admits, and eventually she and her parents were evacuated, first to the embassy and later to a British Royal Navy ship that took them to safety. What impacted Laura was the experience of leaving her extended family behind: “that situation just showed me just how... just how horrific it must be to just be there and have no way out. And just have like that 's your home that all you know you can't go nowhere, that's your home and you are stuck there in this war until it gets sorted out” (Laura, Lesvos, March 2016).

She adds that everything had crystalized, when they call finally came to evacuate to the embassy. “Everyone was literally giving us the jewelry of their necks and lots of tears and it was just... it was horrific leaving them behind. And then we were in the embassy which is obviously like a protected



zone and every bomb that goes on, you don't know if it's your family is where that bomb is striking” (Laura, Lesvos, March 2016).

Realizing that many people, including in South Africa, are stuck in equally helpless situations sent Laura down a distinct path. She began volunteering with Amnesty International, and decided to change what she described as her “artsy” studies to Conflict Resolution and International Development. Laura explained that since she was in school, her goal has been to work with the conflict in Syria, since it is so close to Lebanon and ongoing, but wishing for experience and lacking a work opportunity led her to Lesvos: “Lesvos just seemed like the best way, so I just wanted to do... I just could not sit around anymore without doing anything, so I just decided to move here, so I could do something” (Laura, Lesvos, March 2016).

Choosing to go to Lesvos involved several calculations for Laura, as well as sacrifice. She says turned down a job with the South African department for land reform to go volunteer, partly because she did not imagine she would have much positive effect at home, less than in Lesvos. As well as feeling Lesvos was a better “stepping stone” to her eventual goal in Lebanon.

“You got so many people doing so much, so many official camps where as Lesvos...it's become formalized in the last little while, but it's still volunteers kind of running things. You have the official partners but I think Lesvos relies so much on independent volunteers and they (Lebanon) don't seem to have that kind of scheme...but my plan after this is to go to Lebanon and work”. (Laura, Lesvos, March 2016) She continued: “It's just easier. I only speak a little bit of Arabic so I just thought it's probably better to start here, kind of work on my Arabic kind of gain skills. I feel like this is kind of the in between step – Lebanon is where you need a lot of skill and a lot of experience”. (Laura, Lesvos, March 2016)

Even if Laura's story seems very planned, there are of course increments to the story. While her decision to work with refugees was made in the decade before she graduated college her decision to go to Lesvos fell much later. She says learning about Lesvos was a process. She had had peripheral knowledge of the situation in Greece for a while when she began to research the situation on her own, and as she watched videos, read articles and talked to former volunteers coming from Lesvos she became increasingly enthusiastic. In February 2016 Laura no longer had a place to stay and her applications for actual positions in Lesvos had not panned out, so she packed up and left.

“It was just like one of those impulsive thing where I decided I just couldn't wait anymore, so I just found cheap ticket in a week, like a full week later I would fly, so I booked that ticket and I was like I don't care, I'm going but I hadn't actually contacted anyone but then by chance I saw an advert on the internet, cause I had liked all the sites, so I saw an advert that they were looking for a communications person in photo/video ad I do that so I just applied” (Laura, Lesvos, March 2016).

Laura got the position, which is a volunteer job, though in exchange for a long commitment Laura was offered accommodation enabling her to stay for longer without care in the end. Compared to the volunteers that keep first response watch at the coast Laura seemed to be working a lot. That is to say there was very little down-time on her station. She seemed ok with working as much as she could handle, understanding that someone had to do it.

“It's hectic but, I think it's such a good... but it's ok, because it feels like you are doing something that's so important it needs to be done that it doesn't really matter. It's something so worthwhile so... But it's long” (Laura, Lesvos, March 2016)

Curiously Laura did not mention her function when I asked about her best experience though. Instead she mentioned how helping a boat ashore and finally being at eye-level with the situation she had come to see:

“I think yeah, you can see it on TV and you can see it on the internet as much as you want, but until you actually see those people in front of you it's impossible to imagine. It just brings it all home. All that stuff you hear on the news about them being migrants and economic migrants it just pulls away from people” (Laura, Lesvos, March 2016).

Laura made many more comments suggesting that the pinnacle of her experience so far had been the human interaction: “The kids that were just hysterical a few hours before were just playing and then eventually this little boy at the end I gave him my camera so that he could take pictures and he kind of started taking photos and it was just like amazing to see the changes” (Laura, Lesvos, March 2016). She elaborated: “It's not a big thing. I can't stop the war in their country, so they could go home and be safe and live the life they should be living, at least though I could do that one little thing. It's the small things. I think in this industry you have to hold on to the small things because otherwise you'll just go insane” (Laura, Lesvos, March 2016).

#### **4.4. Simone**

Towards the end of my time in Lesvos I found Simone, or rather she found me. I had posted an add on various social media forums stating that I was looking for Danish long term volunteers in Lesvos, ones still present on the island and interested in talking. As I had learned from my experiences prior it was easier to find short term volunteers lounging around in bars and cafés between shifts than finding long termers who generally seemed to be busier.

Simone was definitely busy. Despite her young age of only 21 years she was working every day in the UNHCR-run Kara Tepe registration camp not far north of Mytilene. I have to disclose up front that Simone stands out from the rest of my sources because she received a small salary rather than logistical support, and as such she is perhaps the furthest removed from the archetypical “volunteer”.

However Simone's status as an employee with the American relief organisation Samaritans Purse was a direct consequence of her story as a volunteer, with no other qualifications than time and devotion to her action suggesting that she would end up an employee.

Simone told me her story in Kara Tepe where ordinarily families with children are registered for asylum processing and live while on the island.

##### **In her own words:**

Earlier in her life Simone had been a volunteer on several occasions helping out in a few shelters for homeless and addicts. Her motivations for seeking out her previous volunteer opportunities were essentially twofold: to learn about the conditions that put the benefactors of her work in the shelters to begin with and secondly, to help. She put emphasis on both points.

As she explained she did not believe that the misfortune of some can always be attributed to their own isolated life and decisions – sometimes things are more complex and product of societal structures. Essentially she kept suggesting that while some problems might seem like individual issues, their solutions may be better handled by society as a whole.

“What I mean is that there might be more behind the stories, and that it's many more peoples responsibility. I can be mine as well”, she explained.

I asked Simone to tell me where we were before we began the interview, and she began by telling me how the asphalted incline from the main road out of Mytiline to the center of Kara Tepe was named Afghan Hill, and that what now looked like a at least semi-pleasurable place given the circumstances had seemed like “a hell on earth”, when she first arrived in Lesvos at the end of summer 2015.

Simone had just returned from a longer trip to Asia, when she became aware of the situation in Greece and Lesvos in particular lying on her mother’s sofa, where, as she explained, she had been overloaded with information within a very short period of time.

“I had been away travelling at this point, so I really hadn't followed the situation, so when I came home it was like it exploded in my face”, she said.

Studying the situation from home, Simone had relatively quickly concluded that she needed to help, and that she could both learn and do the most good in Lesvos.

“I read articles about Syria, and whatever else is going on, and then I sit up in the couch, call my sister and say Hvor, “we have to go down there”... I was getting physically ill, and the more days passed, the more I saw, the more people I met on the main train station... It was a bit like (edit. Recognizing)” I can't help enough here, I have to get closer to reality””, she said.

For Simone the idea of children and unaccompanied minors seemed an important issue. She mentioned that having read about kids travelling so long after effectively losing their families made her think of her own younger brother.

Simone and her sister moved fast. Within a short time, they had bought tickets and Simone had quit her jobs as a sushi waitress and bartender as well as cancelled her apartment.

“I had been very curious about, what I could learn from this, what I could gain. It was also a lot about personal development; “ok if I take a chance on this then it will have to hold up or fail, but I want to see, what I can gain”. Besides that, I didn't think so much about it. I just needed to get there and then take it in stride”, Simone explained.

From the moment the sisters arrived in Lesvos they had no doubts where and when people needed assistance. In early September, the island was understaffed and overloaded with migrating peoples of all sorts, according to Simone. She had been in it basically since they stepped off the ferry from Athens, but it was not until they arrived at the main registration camp in Moria outside the capitol that she had grasped the full scope of the situation.

After their first encounter with hordes of disgruntled families and single men standing around, fighting amongst themselves in frustration that police would not let them in to the camp for registration, Simone and her sister were quickly put to work as general volunteers organizing lines, guarding toilets and so forth.

“It was so close to it, to be standing with fathers that would throw their kids over the fence to Moria just to get police to let them in. It takes a lot, a lot to throw your kid over”, said Simone.

The average workday for Simone was long, and the tasks were varied, but the effect of staying busy was very good, happy sleep with a good conscience. And from the vantage point of early spring 2016 the work, according to Simone, had been worth it.

“If it had been a festival and my job had been to stand guard at those toilets then I would have been pissed, but because I felt like I could help these people by giving them information and getting them to calm down and stuff... It's the best feeling. People come over and say thanks, when it is I that should be thanking them. It was like a very liberating feeling and recognition of a different sort”, she explains.

Like others in her situation, Simone was not really supposed to stay in Lesvos for long, but she and her sister were both hired to help organize relief efforts for US based Samaritans Purse after a short while. Simone had no formal merits, but she was working hard, taking double shifts and taking initiative, and she speculates that it was her dedication that made her stand out. Either ways her

employment enabled her to stay in Lesvos where she has had several functions across the island in the period leading up our interview at the beginning of March 2016.

Among other things Simone was part of establishing an overnight UNHCR hot-spot on the northern part of the island above the village Skala Sykimedia. The experience of working for an NGO changed what she experienced on the island.

“This is where it all gets more boring, as our task became establishing some sort of system, making templates, develop schedules and all that kind of stuff. I became less... There are not as many stories as there were here (Moria), people we met, crying with my sister, tragic stories. It was more calm and quiet”, she said underlining that she still learned a lot from those experiences.

Simone is back in Asia now. She pulled out of the island roughly when the EU agreement with Turkey was settled in late March 2016. Her intentions in the light of all that she had experienced was to study something related.

#### **4.5. Brendan**

I met Brendan on recommendation from Laura who has her own place in this project. I had walked in to a cafe in Skala Sykamineas where her host organization Lighthouse Relief is based. I was there to ask a few follow up questions when Laura called Brendan over to introduce us – Brendan was introduced as a good storyteller with important stories and a deep involvement in the ”refugee issue”.

Brendan who is a professional fireman and former army combat medic from England was on his second trip to Lesvos in March 2016 and that morning he was changing affiliations on the island. He was preparing to leave his post with Lighthouse Relief watching the sea from atop the perilous cliffs at the Caracas lighthouse in favor of a posting with German Seawatch. They were stationed in the equally remote Village of Tsonia. After some casual conversation Brendan agreed to be interviewed.

I met up with Brendan later that same day in Tsonia – far enough from the island capital and even Molivos on the northern coast that the locals and the volunteer brigade were quite obviously not just

the first, but perhaps the only help that would arrive in anything near a timely manner when boats came in that way. If perhaps the reader wonders why I choose to say when rather than if boats arrived it is because the visible remains of dinghies, piles of life jackets and beached boats suggested no such relativity.

I had arrived too early, and while Brendan was having his first briefing before dusk I walked the pier where an old man was cutting boat scrap up for firewood. Only a short while later we sat down together in the local Taverna. I feel compelled to mention in the spirit of transparency that my interview with Brendan represented the emotional peak of my own experience in Lesvos.

**In his own words:**

Brendan asked me if I wanted the long or the short version of his story. I picked the long one, and it begins with his dad, a catholic preacher who had quit his ministry to marry Brendan's mom and raise a family. Brendan who no longer considered himself a practicing Christian, however, had grown up as "a good Christian boy" who as he explained had been on several pilgrimages to Lourdes, France and one that had always felt the need to stand up for others.

"As a child I was taken there to help in the hospitals and learn to have compassion for people... That kind of Christian background of love your neighbor as I have loved you stayed with me." (Brendan, Lesvos March 2016)

Brendan opted to tell me about one particular incident from his formative years when school teachers had only just been forbidden physically disciplining their pupils. When one of his peers nevertheless was threatened with a spanking, Brendan had tried to stop it, informing his teacher that he was about to break the rules. The result had been the threat of a spanking of his own, which Brendan took commenting:

"So I remember, eight years old, I stood up out of my chair, walked to the front of the class and said to the teacher "you can do that, but I will tell my mother." (Brendan, Lesvos March 2016) Which he did.

Brendan made gave many comments pertaining to his general values, yet to keep this presentation to the point I will explain only one more before addressing Brendan's more direct route to Lesbos.

I had asked why he had become a fireman, and in turn why later he had pursued becoming a combat medic.

"I wanted to make a difference to the world. I wanted to help people. I wanted to forge a career that actually.. not sat in an office, doing practical things. I wanted to be in teams. Do exciting things and I wanted maybe also to see a bit of the world." (Brendan, Lesbos March 2016)

After having been a fireman for some years Brendan read that insufficient numbers of trained medics was resulting in aggravated numbers of British casualties in Afghanistan prompting him to seek employment in the army.

"I thought, well in the fire services if I am good at anything it's the medical things, so I could maybe do some more training and be of some use." (Brendan, Lesbos March 2016)

By the time we talked in Tsonia Brendan was no longer in the army, though he was still a fireman. He explained to me that his first introduction to the refugee crisis had not been directly related to Greece. Rather he had been increasingly aware of escalating media reports, and then one day reading around online he had come across a photo-reportage from the Jungle, a now closed camp for migrants by the English Channel in the French city of Calais.

"I didn't even know there was a camp in Calais and the photographs were beautiful and I just thought to myself, I can do something here. I can change these people's lives a bit." (Brendan, Lesbos March 2016)

Brendan was quickly introduced to a small but growing regional support group in his local area called East Midland Solidarity. Through that group Brendan began going to Calais regularly, delivering privately gathered aid and helping out. Brendan quickly became more and more engaged through the solidarity group that also grew and became big enough to spread its support efforts around – a camp in Dunkirk similar to that in Calais had become a priority amongst others. This all



happened in the summer of 2015 around the time when Aylan Kurdi was found dead on the Italian island of Lampedusa.

”I read about Aylan Kurdi, and I was like, ok actually I need to help in Lesvos, or one of the islands. I have to look into it more, so I spent three weeks researching. Then I was Ok, I need to go to Lesvos. That's where half these people are coming.” (Brendan, Lesvos March 2016)

I questioned why he shifted his attention to Lesvos, when he was already engaged in volunteering at home. Brendan's answer was that the need (corresponding to his skills) was much greater in Lesvos than in Northern France. In Lesvos people were as a matter of fact ”dying” on the coast line. However, he underlines that efforts in France did not cease, when his attention pivoted to Lesvos.

”We had a budget set aside for this period and then we decided that actually I had a set of specific skills that are useful here and other people have some skills that are useful in Dunkirk or Calais, so they went there for a week... and I went here for two weeks. That was in December.” (Brendan, Lesvos March 2016)

Between the trips to Lesvos, the logistical support going from East Midlands Solidarity and across Europe, Brendan told me, he had never been prouder of a project he had been involved with in his life.

”So I came to Lesvos in December and obviously I knew I was motivated by the desire to help people and the Christian upbringing I was given, but not just the Christian background, but a kind of... you gotta help people. I am that kind of guy.” (Brendan, Lesvos March 2016)

I got the impression that Brendan was a fairly modest guy, even if pride allowed him to speak highly of his time in Lesvos. Where others would make quite large estimates as the amount of refugees they had rescued from the ocean Brendan made a clear distinction between rescuing and just leading to safety. This is worth mentioning to emphasize the reverence he had for his team-members, whom he kept mentioning in favorable terms.

”There is utter evil in the world, and we are so close to it (speaking of human smugglers on the Turkish coast). But then they come here (refugees) and meet people like Giarra, Hekla and... that have travelled the world but have come to give support and are some of the most compassionate

souls you'll ever meet. The contrast between the good people in the world and the bad people in the world, I cannot think of any greater example.” (Brendan, Lesvos March 2016)

In March 2016 the situation on Lesvos was no longer as grave as it had been when he visited the first time. In December, Brendan had been in several situations where lives had been on the line beyond any doubt. In March, the role of many volunteers had taken on a character more waiting and vigilant than heroic.

”Now it's different of course. Now I've seen the boats, helped them, provided some support once they have landed. But it's important work as well.. eh.. doing the lookout at Caracas. If you don't do that they will come and land on the rocks, and what can happen then.” (Brendan, Lesvos March 2016)

At this point in the interview, Brendan had already mentioned how proud he was more than once, but the point deserves one last reiteration, as it hints of a prior intent to help correctly.

”When I came the first time, I didn't know if I was going to, with the correct group. I was nervous... Am I going to be useful or am I here for my own ego?... Within two days, three days I had taken people off the boats and also rescued... I had made a difference in three days. A difference to this world. Some people will never be the same without my influence, and I had been there for three days.” (Brendan, Lesvos March 2016)

I can only guess if Brendan would have stayed in Lesvos for a longer time if he didn't have to go home to his family, work and solidarity group. He is not the only one of my sources that shows pride and satisfaction in his time on the island, but unlike others Brendan actually seemed happy that he would head home again.

#### **4.6. Salam**

Before leaving Denmark I had a few people and organizations I knew I would at least like to talk to regardless of the outcome. One of those people was 33 year-old Salam of the Danish organization

Team Humanity. Salam was one of the more known volunteer actors in Lesvos regularly interviewed and used for Danish and international media as well as recipient of several famous guests like Susan Sarandon and Chinese artist Ai Wei Wei – from afar Salam seemed interesting and connected enough that reaching out was advisable as a networking exercise at least.

After communicating with Salam's team, I finally met up with him and five or six other volunteers in a restaurant on the harbor front in Mytiline. It was dinner time before yet another night watch on the beaches around the airport, and Salam was benched with the rest of his crew commenting on pictures of refugees traveling through northern Greece that were being broadcast on Greek TV.

It took many hours before I actually had a chance to talk with Salam, who seemed constantly busy with something, on a night where the winds were high and the chances of boats reaching shore were slim. Yet, around four in the morning only after half of Team Humanity had left to go home, I interviewed Salam about his experiences in Lesvos.

**In his own words:**

According to Salam his introduction to Lesvos had been half coincidental and half a product of curiosity. His prolonged stay in Lesvos seemed to be the combined consequence of a moral need to assist and his own personal satisfaction with the identity he had built on the Island.

Exactly how much Salam knew about the situation in Lesvos prior to going was uncertain to me even after talking to him. He told me he was unaware of the island, its nationality and its position. However, he must have been marginally aware of the island if not as a physical place then as a significant point on the route sought by migrants headed for Europe.

“I saw something on the TV about the little boy (Aylan Kurdi) in Turkey (Lampedusa, Italy). And I saw this thing and I just thought “let me go” I want to go and see what is happening there”, Salam explained.

Instead of taking a trip to Vienna to have a tattoo made, which was the original plan, Salam and his

friend along with two girls went to Lesbos for holiday and to celebrate Salam's birthday on September 5<sup>th</sup> 2016. The group arrived at the airport in the south of Lesbos and quickly headed north for Molyvos where the restaurant The Captains Table was already known to be a hot spot for volunteers – This remains true, and The Captains Table is now the base of operations for the relief group Starfish Foundation. On the way, Salam saw masses of people traversing the island on foot. Salam noticed that the group travelled with children.

“I saw people walking with children, so I stopped at a gas station and bought lots of water, I put it in my car and drove”, Salam explains.

He continued to explain that after reaching Molyvos he had taken a drive for an hour or so, and it was then he first saw boats coming ashore. Salam said he was surprised no one was helping them get ashore.

“I had just arrived and this is a few hours later. I saw that and I thought “this is crazy. I saw the refugees come off the boat and I was actually surprised. After that, every day. I saw the people walking, so I told the women “let me take you”. I knew there was a bus station and people were walking there, so I took them, put them in my car and drove them there. Then I came back and I told all the others “we need a bigger car”, Salam remembers.

The following seven days Salam and his friends drove passengers from one end of Lesbos to the other and helped boats ashore. The situation was undeniable, as Salam recalls.

“I didn't expect nothing. I came here for like a vacation. I had to like see what's happening. This was like seven days. This was my birthday. On my birthday, I was driving with refugees taking (assisting) boats. This was on my birthday”, Salam explained.

Between the time of our interview and his first arrival in Lesbos Salam, who self identifies like one of the first volunteers in Lesbos, Team Humanity has grown in response to the overwhelming number of migrants arriving on the islands' northern and eastern shores. Salam has been in the country for most of that time, though he has been home a few times.

“When I was in Denmark I just wanted to go back. I was there for two days, three days and I

convinced 25 people and we went back 25 people and four cars and we were helping a lot of people, and when I say a lot I mean really...”, explains Salam.

According to Salam he slept very little from then on, working and coordinating constantly – this while it sounds unlikely was actually consistent with all the stories I was told by various sources that were in country in the fall and winter 2015/16. But the effort was worth it, and if not then necessary. In other words, I didn’t encounter anyone who addressed the feeling of working all the time in a negative light.

“Because... What I have seen with my own eyes you'll understand. What I saw with my own eyes... If you saw the same thing, you'll understand me. I felt like I have a responsibility because people are dying. In the night people are dying, and if nobody is helping them then who is helping them?”, asks Salam.

From what I could understand Salam and others from Team Humanity had been on the beaches every night waiting for boats to potentially come in from across the strait. At the time of our interview the frequency of that happening was getting lower, much lower than a few months prior, but Salam was consistent in his message, that a vigilant and constant presence remains important.

Salam said that with the skill and experience he had at this point, the singular difference between catastrophe and business as usual could be his presence on the beach. I found it curious that he also mentioned how his mood depended on the refugee activity, somewhat counterintuitively.

“You know, when it's like this (stormy and bad for boating) it's sad. When I help people, when the boats come I feel really good. It's like I get my happiness and energy when the boats come. When I do something...I feel good”, Salam said.

As mentioned in the beginning Salam has become a “notorious” character locally and in various media. He was surely put on the map when he was accused of human trafficking. Currently waiting for his legal process to conclude Salam seems almost welcoming of the potential ramifications.

“My future. I'm sitting now and waiting for trial. They want to give me 150 years (not fact checked) in jail for trying to go and help two boats. So my future if they give me that 150 years... then I'm gonna die in jail”, said Salam almost surely overstating the issue.

There is a part of his persona that almost wants to be a martyr it seems – this is a somewhat contextually informed point that I derive from the near contempt he showed while addressing the risk of being sentenced jailed for human trafficking.

Either ways recognizing the slowing of boat-migration between Turkey and Lesvos Salam said he would look into other ways of helping, if the boats stop coming. He did however not seem to enjoy the potential of having to return home to a life centered around money ”I hate money now”, he said.

“I will try to help in some other way. We have the whole Greece under invasion. So we have like camps where people need help all over the country”, Salam concludes.

Salam seems to roll with the punches, so to speak. He reacts to the situation he sees both pragmatically but also with a sense of drama. “We need a bigger car”. There is a savior complex to it in relation to Salam, and you could feel it on him. He takes the responsibility very personal and also enjoys it. There is a point where he almost wants to be a martyr...

## **5. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

In this section the data set that has been presented will be analyzed in order to answer the questions that were set out in at the beginning of this paper – reproduced hereunder for good measure.

### **5.1. Problem formulation:**

#### **What motivates volunteers in working with refugees in Lesvos?**

Work question 1: Are the selected volunteers motivational patterns structurally similar to those suggested in VFI-theory?

Work question 2: What specific motivational patterns can be identified from the projects empirical base?

Work question 3: What motivations additional motivations, if any, are expressed in relation to protracted volunteer efforts?

Work question 4: What motivational themes, if any, may be identified as particularly salient and general?

A brief introduction to the analytical process will outlined before presenting the core findings. Because of the reflexive thought process that has gone in to matching empirical data, theory and questions to each other the subsequent analysis is best expressed in a series of steps aided by a set of graphic representations.

### **5.2. Preface**

When I first returned from Lesvos my I was working as a mail man, in solitude a day or two every week, and in some sense the analysis began as I peddled around listening to the interviews again and again. But perhaps calling that a full step in the analysis is overstating. The preface to the process is likely more correct. Never the less this was the stage when the six interviews that form the empirical body were selected and also when three were deselected. Selections were based largely on the perceived richness of data and in one case the disqualification was at least partially as consequence of the technical quality of my recording.

Following the selection process verbatim transcriptions were produced of every interview. One interview was conducted and transcribed in Danish to enhance the potential yields from the interviews as Danish was the shared mother tongue. Quotes were translated as needed.

One more thing needs emphasizing before progressing. The analysis below is based in the verbatim material and refers genuinely to the wording, however part of the research process as stated was the also noting the behaviour, statements and actions of my sources in real time to form a contextual understanding of them which in turn supplemented the analysis.

### **5.3. Step 1 – Intuitive coding**

Initially the transcriptions were reviewed in turn disassembling the material into paragraphs selected for their thematic content that could be assigned one or more codes to create two separate indexes each containing half of the same puzzle. One containing six sets of codes arranged in relation to a single source and one with corresponding codes – the second one served the mostly practical purpose of easing access through order. Though the codes were matched by corresponding bits of text their full joined meaning was necessarily considered. The process was redone, or perhaps more precisely reconsidered to in part refine the list and as importantly allow for additional codes. A process of lifting more literal codes to general groups encompassing more terms and thus making the index more compact.

Below are two examples of passages from the verbatim material and their assigned codes.

”Day without boats we are here, we are always here because we must be here. These people need us with bad weather, with good weather. You saw tonight with this weather they came, so we must be here, so we came.” ( Nassos, Lesvos, March 2016) **Moral imperative, Calling of Humanity**

”No no... I mean, because I want to get into Humanitarian work there is that problem that you can't get work without having experience, but you can't get experience without work and it was kind of that situation where I knew I had to do free work for about six months, so my parents said that they would lend me money for six months to do like free work for six months if I needed it, soooooo..... But I need that loan now because I have this, but I was prepared to do six months free anyways.” (Laura, Lesvos, March 2016) **Opportunity, Career**



The analysis at this point meet two other challenges. One was a consequence of the settled intention to understand the motivations of the volunteers – perhaps implicitly to be understood as the motivations prompting the initial action, but not accounting for inevitable and relevant statements regarding experience induced motivation. To account for that codes were added when appropriate to statements regarding motivations developed in result of volunteering. Typically in paragraph with sentiments of gratitude, purpose and personal affirmation. However the new set of codes were not assigned to statements regarding expectations of the same gratitude, purpose or affirmation.

An example. When Challenged on his statement that "he hated money" Salam answered: "No. It wasn't. Before this I liked money. I was travelling enjoying my life, having fun, drinking partying using so much money. And then this came, and it changed my world. It changed my life."

Understood in his entirety Salam came across as content and acute in his current role and general circumstances, purposeful.

The second challenges was to address a number of statements that concerned outside factor and life circumstances that enabled or eased rather than suggested volunteering. In Nassos's case receiving an email from his employer offering a free leave acted as a catalyst rather than the fuel.

The overall purpose was to assemble a picture of the individuals complex of motivations and try to formulate a chain of logics connecting the motivations. The latter point proved difficult to do consistently in reasonable briefly, but will be demonstrated as traces of the attempt can be found in the project.

(**Table 2, left** displays the entire range of codes utilized grouped according to sources. Individual codes are only recorded once per source.)

Intuitive analysis of the individual data allows a series of considerations. First, all sources evidently act on the basis of several motivational factors – their answers reveal a complex of interplaying reasons to volunteer. This is a general trend that is only really challenged by Salam, who seems in some ways to have almost happened upon his current circumstances by accident only by virtue of limited curiosity and then rising to meet a moral challenge once in

country. And even he does display several reasons to volunteer, even if they appear at different points on a temporal scale as explained in relation to the experienced induced sustained motivations. Salam could be said to have relatively singular motivation, but perhaps suggesting that he merely less complex than others is more telling. This can be easily interpreted from table 2.

Second, cross referencing the intuitive codes with the individuals they are assigned to reveals that the codes **moral responsibility – humanitarian imperative, understanding and curiosity** are addressed by all sources. **Identification and personal fulfillment – feeling content** are also highly salient themes.

Third, most sources at least to a degree eventually address what I have termed mobilizing factors, those that ease and enable the decision to act. Salam and Anne-Marie are outliers with regards to this observations. Salam again seeming to have stumbled in to the situation. Anne-Marie simply having time between professional postings, in my opinion not a mobilizing factor. Simone's case is also somewhat interesting in terms of mobilizing agents. She called her sister up and generated outside momentum for the trip between the two thereby instigating a kind of cyclical effect.

Finally, only one source made reference to religion as a motivational factor – in reality the reference was to religious values rather than religious belief.

#### **5.4. Theoretical influence**

The process outlined in step one was followed by a focus on pertinent theoretical material to gain a deeper understanding of the field and its tools. It was at this point the VFI categorization system was adopted in order to assess the material on an established scale and to aid further organizing of the coded material.

#### **5.5. Step 2 – VFI Coding**

The process was advanced by assessment of the codes in relation to their quotes in order to assign gauge if they could be assigned one or more of the seven functions in the VFI. Most of the

intuitively assigned codes where assigned functions, but a few did not offer an obvious relation.

Revisiting the quotes used as examples under step one shows how codes were assigned one or more of the seven VFI-functions.

”Day without boats we are here, we are always here because we must be here. These people need us with bad weather, with good weather. You saw tonight with this weather they came, so we must be here, so we came.” ( Nassos, Lesvos, March 2016) **Moral imperative, Calling of Humanity >>> Values (1), Community(7)**

The intuitive codes reflect Nassos describing a situation where he is compelled by his values and feeling of connection through humanity (the latter presupposes a contextual understanding of Nassos' reasoning). They are in turn matched with the VFI-functions suggesting values (Volunteering gives opportunity to express important values like Altruism or humanitarianism. (Omoto and Snyder 1995)) as well as Community (Volunteering serves as a way to express concern for a person or community to whom the volunteer feels a connection, concern or obligation. (Omoto and Snyder 1995)) It was debated if the corresponding paragraph also warranted assigning an (E) for expression. This was not done, as Nassos consistently expressed the above values in terms of prior motivation.

”No no... I mean, because I want to get into Humanitarian work there is that problem that you can't get work without having experience, but you can't get experience without work and it was kind of that situation where I knew I had to do free work for about six months, so my parents said that they would lend me money for six months to do like free work for six months if I needed it, soooooo..... But I need that loan now because I have this, but I was prepared to do six months free anyways.” (Laura, Lesvos, March 2016) **Opportunity, Career >>> Career(4)** – this quote is also assigned a (M) for mobilizing effect.

The second example shows the intuitive codes opportunity and career being assigned the VFI-functions Career (Volunteering is used as a way to gain career relevant experience (Omoto and

Snyder 1995)) and an (M) for a mobilizing factor, reflecting that Laura expresses both purpose, but also facilitated opportunity to volunteer long term.

The process of recoding the intuitive material to match the VFI-functions when reasonable was carried out under critical supervision. In other words matches were argued verbally as measure to avoid implicit, hazy reasoning.

(**Table 2, right** displays the VFI-functions (1-7) assigned to each code for vertical comparison across entire individual interviews. Marks are also assigned to signify expression of experienced gain (E) and mobilizers(M)).

### **VFI-Insights**

The analysis at this point, after assigning VFI-functions offers a range of insights about the data material. In the theory section four assumptions are presented as the foundation of the VFI:

1. Volunteers engage in volunteering with purpose and intent to satisfy personal goals.
2. Volunteers may pursue the same goals by different means and vice versa.
3. Volunteers can pursue several goals through one activity.
4. The success of a volunteer experience is related to the satisfaction of the volunteer

Steps 1 and 2 of the analysis have revealed a plausible affirmative relationship with assumptions 2 and 3 as well as a partial relationship to assumption 1. Addressing these point in descending order the graphic representation (table 2, right) clearly shows that volunteers generally express motivations related to several VFI-functions. Though the motivational patterns of the different volunteers suggest some shared tendencies their individual patterns are also obviously different. Moreover, keeping in mind that the sources are in fact engaged in similar tasks in comparable conditions and all present in Lesvos it is deemed that assumption number two holds up as well.

In general the outcome of the analysis so far suggests that the first assumption is also correct, however, it could be argued that the notion of pursuing "personal" goals deserve further nuance. To understand this suggestion of nuance the distinction between self-focused motivations and other-focused motivations suggested by Omoto and Snyder as well as Clary and Snyder should be kept in

mind. Essentially the VFI-functions Values(1) and Community(7) are other focused, serving the benefits of someone else than the volunteer whereas the functions understanding(2), social(3), career(4), protective(5) and enhancement(6) are self-focused creating benefits for the volunteer. This will be deepened below.

The fourth assumption outlined above will be addressed in the section below. However, to prime it's discussion attention is called again to the idea of the experience induced motivational factors. These have been addressed several times throughout the analysis section and deserve a bit of timely attention at this point. Several of the sources interviewed for this project had already been in Lesvos for a longer time or where re-visiting the island, when I talked to them. Their interview data yielded mentions of satisfaction, affirmation, gratification etc.

These experienced feelings are in many cases used to explain the sustained volunteer efforts of individual volunteers. Examples of this will be given below when relevant

### **Step 3 - Motivational patterns of the individual sources**

(Derived from table 2, right)

The following section will analyze the individuals in turn, showing their motivational patterns seen through a VFI lens utilizing verbatim examples. As well, it will address more salient themes connected to the problem formulation.

#### **Nassos:**

With regard to Nassos, the construction of his motivational patterns seems fairly easy to describe. He registers heavily in terms of the VFI functions understanding(2) and community(7), with one mark assigned to values(1). As an example of addressing the idea of a belonging to a community Nassos expressed:

”You know, we had this situation here in Greece and now it's high, the problem is huge, but you know we have this problem but we had all this situation for more than 20-25 years, but not in these

huge numbers. And always we had these images, people, desperate people who are trying to cross the borders because they seek something better, you know hope and better life. This was the chance for me and I wanted to come and help and from the first day I was here we had boats so it was". (Nassos, Lesvos, March 2016)

Following is an example of Nassos speaking about understanding (2) that represents a dual focus on learning and applying rarely used military skills:

"Because I have the skills. I have the training about rescuing in the sea, CPR, but I help. I do whatever is necessary to do. Yes I am here but if necessary I will go to the port and distribute clothes and food and everything, but I have the training to do this, rescuing people in the sea that's why. And I like action, to be frontline. That's why I think." (Nassos, Lesvos, March 2016)

Keeping in mind the assertion set forth in the theoretical section that the VFI-functions can be categorized as other- or self oriented in focus, Nassos seems to a large degree to be other oriented. He displays a strong feeling of a community where he and the people he is helping are mutually bound together. This connection is established by historical and geographic proximity to current and former refuge producing regions (including Greece) lending credence to the potential of a reversed situation.

"You know life is one big circle. Now they are in this position. Tomorrow, after tomorrow maybe we will be, so we must respect them, we must accept all these people. Because in ten years twenty years maybe we will be in their place. Greeks we were in their place 90 years ago, so now we must help them. Before 20 years maybe we will be in this situation". (Nassos, Lesvos, March 2016)

Nassos has also been assigned the code (E) for experience induced sustained motivation. His stay in Lesvos had become significantly protracted – far beyond the two weeks he had planned.

"I had plans you know for after those ten days, I had plans to go for holidays, you know to go for holidays, but I cancelled them. It wasn't possible. When I don't have money I must go back and work 1-2 months then I come back."

Of course Nassos was fortunate enough to have a job waiting which earns him a (M) as well signifying outside facilitation of his original decision.

**Anne-Marie:**

Anne-Marie's motivation is clearly dichotomized. In her own words she went to Lesvos with the intention to understand(2) and experience the situation playing out between volunteers and refugees - the whole experience is seen in contrast to her professional function as a development aid worker:

“I've worked in countries where these people are coming from, so for me just from a professional, personal aspect it's interesting to see how the push factors from these countries and then being on one side where you are trying to mitigate a situation, so it's interesting to me in different aspects.”

Anne-Marie seems to be seeking insights regarding the non-hierarchical and autonomous as nature of the volunteer efforts in terms of understanding(2) and social bonds(3):

“I find I miss that... you know the kind of hands on exposure really working closely with people. Another aspect to, that I thought it would be a nice break with the volunteer setting, eh, was the opportunity of not being involved so much with a hierarchical structure...in a setting where self-motivated intelligent people came together and tried to address issues in a collaborative form. So that to me was also appealing to me about the volunteer opportunity.”

The above quote in understood as a part of the whole interview gives the impression that she is also searching for a human to human connection.

“When you work in the humanitarian sector professionally you often get stuck behind a desk, computer screen... you are managing or coordinating thing, managing hr personnel issues... more big picture things, which is also interesting and obviously essential, but I think sometimes things seem to feel very bureaucratic, and at least for me personally I have often felt in recent years, as I have become more senior, that you get removed from the humanity or human aspect of the actual projects you are working on.”

The assigned VFI functions (2&3) are technically self-oriented , but she pursues them with an ethical mindset, or other-oriented value driven mindset where doing no harm and ensuring a net gain in favour of refugees rather than herself is paramount:

“for sure I am also getting something out of this situation, and what is important for me is to make sure that I'm not exploiting people or making the raw situation worse by being here, but I don't have a problem enjoying the process and I actually think that is important in terms of motivation and doing good work.”

AnneMarie, unlike most other sources, neither addresses mobilizing factors, nor considers experience induced motivations. The latter point is not surprising because of her recent arrival.

#### **Laura:**

Laura's motivational complex contains a broad mix of factors. As outlined in her presentation, Laura is pursuing a long established career plan. She says she conceived after sharing her Lebanese with her family's experience during the 2006 siege of Lebanon that instilled a clear sense of community(7).

It is hard to say if she is self- or other-oriented because of her particular progression that displays motivations across the spectrum. In a sense understanding(2) and personal enhancement(6) are central elements, but only because they appear instrumental to her values and community driven career plan:

“I think Lesvos relies so much on independent volunteers and they (Lebanon) don't seem to have that kind of scheme...but my plan after this is to go to Lebanon and work... It's just easier. I only speak a little bit of Arabic so I just thought its probably better to start here, kind of work on my Arabic kind of gain skills. I feel like this is kind of the in-between-step “

Laura's explicit focus on career suggests a self-focused motivational pattern, however, the entirety of her interview data taken into concern, suggest that is not entirely self-oriented. This is reinforced by her decision to go to Lesvos and volunteer even though she was offered a paid development job in another part of the world:



“I didn't want to become comfortable with getting a salary and having a nine to five and kinda forget why I did this, cause why I did this was not to work in an office for a government it was to try and actually affect real change, so, I didn't want to loose what I ultimately wanted to do. I think the job would have been a good thing for my career, but I don't really care.”

Laura also registers both mobilization factors and expresses personal satisfaction and feelings of purpose, in consequence of her relatively short stay:

“It's hectic but, I think its such a good... but it's ok, because it feels like you are doing something that's so important it needs to be done that it doesn't really matter. It's something so worthwhile so...”

#### **Simone:**

Between the VFI factors, it seems clear that Simone weigh heaviest on values and community. As evident throughout her interview, she has a strong focus on values(1) as well as community(7). Her focus on other oriented values and community is clear from Table 2.

Speaking on social responsibility in general, Simone said: ”I believe it also has to do with us as a society stepping in from the beginning when these types of issues arise. Perhaps that alcoholic has grown up in an environment, where he was never helped by anyone. ”

Simones focus on social responsibility and community could be explained by her upbringing in a Scandinavian welfare state, where social responsibility is an established element in the normative framework. This is perhaps why she was quickly overwhelmed to the point of physically illness when confronted with the media proliferated news about the crisis in Lesvos in late summer 2015.

Yet, Simones motivational pattern also indicates a self-oriented position with regards to VFI functions understanding(2), protection(5) and enhancement(6). Like several others, she admits being motivated by curiosity. She is also expressing a desire to engage with a situation conducive to personal growth, a decidedly self-oriented motivation:

“I had a need to learn about myself and I also had a need to learn about the situation in general, so it was based a lot on personal growth.”

Additionally, Simone is the only source to portray protection(5) in her motivation. Protection signifies a perceived desire to shield one's ego from negative emotions like guilt, but in her case, the function and motivation derives from a statement of a desire to move on in life from a self-described sedentary phase. In other words, a case of escapism.

Simone having been in Lesvos for a longer period of time than most of the sources interviewed for has also been assigned an (x) signifying an experience induced motivations – it is noted, however, that hers is somewhat implicit.

“If it had been a festival and my job had been to stand guard at those toilets then I would have been pissed, but because I felt like I could help these people by giving them information and getting them to calm down and stuff... It's the best feeling. People come over and say thanks, when it is I that should be thanking them. It was like a very liberating feeling and recognition of a different sort”

### **Brendan:**

If there is a good Samaritan among the sources it is likely Brendan, in whose case volunteering in Lesvos is almost a natural progression, an escalation of life. Within his motivational factors, the functions of values, solidarity and benevolence appear most. Decidedly other oriented values are salient in Brendan's motivational pattern with heavy emphasis on values(1) understanding(2) and to a lesser extent community(7) are also present in Brendans motivational pattern.

“Those kind of values shouldn't leave you if you are raised with them probably. That's why I wanted... I've always grown up wanting to see the world and make a difference to it. Maybe I have looked at myself critically and thought is it just ego. Instead I have realized that I just have this real kind of want to help people.”

Brendan's motivations to volunteer in Lesvos are best understood in a general relation to his professional path and basic values like his christian upbringing. This is to be understood in such a way that his engagement in Lesvos is only part of his volunteer efforts in relations to the European

refugee crisis. Also, Brendan going to Lesbos is intimately tied to his engagement with the East Midlands solidarity group. Where other sources mention mobilizing factors, in a less instrumental sense, Brendan's decision to go was directly correlated with his previous work inside the East Midlands solidarity:

“ We had a budget set aside for this period and then we decided that actually I had a set of specific skills that are useful here and other people have same skills that are useful in Dunkirk or Calais, so they went there for a week and couldn't stay for much longer, and I went here for two weeks.”

He is in other words both a representative of himself, but also a larger community. Yet, while his motivational pattern suggests a decidedly other-oriented person, it can be argued along the lines of the argument given in relation to Laura, that Brendan's volunteering is tied to a overall personal identity. In other words, it did not require much of a professional or functional change in terms of tasks or abandoning of life objectives to take the leap in to volunteering. Brendan's pattern clearly displays satisfaction with his experience, again this seems consistent with his general direction in life: “I wanted to forge a career that actually.. not sitting in an office, doing practical things. I wanted to be in teams. Do exciting things and I wanted maybe also to see a bit of the world.”

### **Salam:**

Unlike Salam's motivational pattern, as seen in table 2, his interview data is really quite rich. But in terms of comparability with other sources, Salam, is the clear outlier. He does register in terms of understanding (2), solidarity (7) and values (2), but most of the statements behind the assigned functions refer to experience rather than prior considerations.

”There was one person from hellas giving out water and there were like som journalists. One or two. I took a boat alone. I had just arrived and this is a few hours later. I saw that and I thought this is crazy. I saw the refugees come of the boat and I was actualy surprised. After that, everyday. I saw the people walking, so I told the women, let me take you. And I knew there was a busstation and people were walking there so I took them put them in my car and drove them there. Then I came back and I told all the others “we need a bigger car”.

While this analysis takes the position that Salam does not express much in terms of prior motivations this is a bit of a convoluted point since Salam in a sense had not decided to volunteer

before going to Lesvos, and thus it could perhaps be defended that he went through his motivational considerations in an expedited tempo.

Where Salam is very clear is in his statements of profound personal change as a result of his experience in Lesvos. At the time of our interview, Salam saw no reason to leave Lesvos. In fact he seemed intent on staying from a sense of personal purpose that resembles enhancement, though gained through experience(E): “”Why are you staying right now on the coast”? You see the waves. People are sleeping. They say nobody comes. But if they come, they will not have a chance if they are alone. I know I am going to do if boat comes right now. And I can do it alone. I exactly know what to do if a boat comes.”

Secondly, his motivation is driven by a recognition of personal responsibility. The two are intimately connected. “So it's very important to have people like me and other volunteers to stay at the coast even if you think they don't come, because you don't know. Maybe they come.” In Salam's case it's compelling to understand exactly how connected his sense of purpose seemed to lifting the massive responsibility he takes: ”You know, when it's like this is sad. When I help people, when the boats come, I feel really good. It's like I get my happiness and energy when the boats come. When I do something actually, not only when the boats come, when I do something. So when I do something I am happy.”

#### **Step 4 – comparing patterns**

Having assessed the individual volunteer source's motivational patterns expressed in VFI-function it is possible to begin comparing the specific makeup of the patterns to determine what similarities and differences exist between the individual sets.

(Table 3 displays the seven VFI-functions as well as the mobilizing and experience categories arranged in one column opposite arranged opposite a column containing the names of the volunteer sources with lines connecting relevant names and VFI-function)

Looking at the attached Table 3 several insights are easily discernable and will be outlined in turn starting with the outliers. The VFI functions social(3), career(4), protective(5) and enhancement(6)

are all only registered once between the full group of volunteers. While it deserves mentioning this analysis will not deal much more with these VFI functions. The primary reason for this decision is that the amount of data analyzed is too small to make assumptions as to the generality or low representation of VFI functions in question(3-6), and as such there is a real risk of drawing confusing, perhaps counterproductive conclusions.

It is remarked, that while few sources addressed the social aspect as a motivational factor in their interviews there was an air of social bonding where ever groups of volunteers met, be that on or off shifts. A better understanding of this paradox might be an interesting avenue for further research.

At the other end of the specter in terms of salience lies the VFI-functions values(1), understanding(2) and community(7). These three categories are represented in all motivational patterns established in the present analysis. This spurs several thoughts.

First a note of self criticism: It seems unlikely that the analysis of six individuals with relatively diverse background, occupying a range of volunteer positions would in fact be as close to each other in terms of motivational patterns. Of course the second assumption of Omoto and Snyder states that different volunteers may seek the same goals by different means which opens a door to the possibility of several people occupying different jobs pursuing the same functional motivations.

The second obvious observation that begs mentioning is that the only shared self-oriented motivation is understanding – in this case it should be remembered that understanding means a chance to learn about the world and/or exercise unusual skills. In terms of this dichotomy all the interviewed sources did express a desire to learn about the world and the situation in Lesvos while Nassos and Brendan also expressed their desire to employ a specific skillset largely unnecessary in the "normal" world.

Brendan expressed the same sentiment explaining some particulars of his combat medic skillset: "I can do some things, that only in the military background.... that you could never... hardly anybody can do in the civilian world. Like I can tracheostomy in to bone, chest drains and all of this, and obviously I would never do that in the civilian world because I'm not allowed. " (Brendan, Lesvos, March 2016).

That all sources share a desire to learn more about the refugee situation in Lesvos as a part of their individual motivational patterns seems fitting, given the massive media coverage of the conditions on the island – several sources made explicit remarks that media coverage had drawn their attention to begin with, as it was the case for Simone:

”I was reading newspapers about Syria, and what all else is going on.... I was getting physically ill and the more days went by, the more I saw, the more people I met in the main trainstation. Jeg was getting ill. It was like, I can't help enough here. I have to get closer to reality” (Simone, Lesvos, March 2016).

Though it is likely overly ambitious to draw conclusions about a general correlation, it is interesting to note that those sources that were assigned codes for mobilizing factors are mostly the same as those that have been in Lesvos for protracted periods of time – imagining a connection between a facilitated stay and the resolve to stay for a longer period of time does not seem unreasonable though.

A similar relationship seemingly exists between volunteers engaged in protracted volunteer engagements and the identification of experience induced motivations. On the surface this group consists of four members, Nassos, Salam, Brendan and Laura. However, I will argue that they can be split into two pairs one consisting of Nassos and Salam who both to a degree have found a calling, that they have no good reason to leave. They both express an absolute sense of commitment in light of their experiences and self images as exemplified here:

”In 30<sup>th</sup> of October I was in the sea (pointing to the waves and comparing) I rescued 2 people with a boat. Only one died in my hand. He held my hand and he died. 42 people. The coast guard watched us doing it. 42 people were saved that day. I am sorry we couldn't save that last guy, but it was not my

mistake. So I have seen dead people with my eyes. I have seen everything, and if you see these things that's why I continue” (Nassos, Lesvos, March 2016).

The second pair consists of Brendan and Laura who have both also intentionally sought out the situation in Lesvos yet their commitment is not absolute. Brendan is a father of two, who is already deeply involved in similar issues at home in England while Laura as previously demonstrated is eventually looking to transition to a career job working with refugees (and similar) in Lebanon. While Simone was not assigned codes warranting her inclusion in either grouping my overall understanding of her suggests that she could also belong with Brendan and Laura.

### **Step 5 – suggesting Transnational Solidarity**

Of course the most interesting trend lifted from the data by way of analysis is the shared adherence to the VFI-functions values(1) and community(2), both other oriented functions. Consider for a moment the explanation offered in theory section of the VFI-functions in question.

**Values:** Volunteering gives opportunity to express important values like Altruism or humanitarianism.

**Community:** Volunteering serves as a way to express concern for a person or community to whom the volunteer feels a connection, concern or obligation.

Followingly attention is redirected towards the theoretical section and Carol Goulds theory of the Transnational Solidarity. She suggests that Emile Durkheim's explanation of the "glue that holds societies together", in other words the reciprocal relationships of timely assistance between interconnected people should have an application that can exist outside of the classic frame that is the nation-state. (Gould 2007)

To determine if a person or a group exhibits Transnational Solidarity towards another person or group Carol Gould establishes a range of necessary criteria, that are described in more detail in the theoretical section. In brief Transnational Solidarity is contingent on what Gould calls a fellow-feeling which suggest and affective, empathetic relationship to those with whom one feels in solidarity – this departs from Durkheimian solidarity not requiring the existence of a shared experience. The second contingent condition is the assumption of a relationship that in thought is

based on reciprocity – even if it is never fulfilled for. It's also important to understand, that Transnational Solidarity is not a universal application. It is instead particularistic and can be applied in one situation without necessarily being so in the next. Finally Gould remarks that the help given must correspond to the perceived needs of the recipient if and when the need arises.

As Gould expresses it: "they take action to aid these others or stand ready to do so if called upon... We are here focusing on identification with the lived situation of others and with an appreciation of the injustices to which they may be subject."

I suggest that a plausible explanation of the rather uniform motivational patterns emerging from the analysis above can be explained by adopting Carol Gould's concept of Transnational Solidarity. I built this claim on a three-fold argument. First, the universal adherence VFI function values(1) suggests that all my sources feel a value-based obligation to be ready to assist the refugees landing in Lesvos. Which is reflected in the following examples:

"Lesvos just seemed like the best way, so I just wanted to do... I just could not sit around anymore without doing anything, so I just decided to move here, so I could do something." (Laura, Lesvos, March 2016)

"Now it's different of course. Now I've seen the boats, helped them be provided some support once they landed. But it's important work as well... doing the lookout at Caracas. If you don't do that they will come and land on the rocks and what can happen?" (Brendan, Lesvos, March 2016)

"When we have many boats we run like crazy because we must be everywhere and try to help all these people. And when we have many many boats we must be vigilant, we must be focused because many bad things happen sometimes. We have some incidents, so we must be here always. We must be prepared, we must be ready, because they need us. They need us." (Nassos, Lesvos, March 2016)

Further the shared VFI-function community directly relates to a sentiment that is at least related to solidarity. Volunteering serves the functions of expressing concern, support or help to a group one feels obligated or related to.



By super-imposing Kraig Beyerlin and David Sikkinks discussion of the processes of identification that led to extraordinary numbers of volunteers following the terror attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 and in particular the role of media on to the this analysis, I suggest the following.

**It is plausible:** That the widely proliferated media-narrative showing the plight of untold amounts of humans arriving at Europes Borders where they were turned away or met with little acceptance and not being offered the percieved desired assistance enabled the development of an affective relationship towards the otherwise distant, anonymous others that make up the migrants coming to Europe. This in turn made a wave of Transnational Solidarity possible amongst those who were already motivated by values and community.

Likewise people like Salam, who may not have harbored the same predisposed motivations to volunteer could have developed stronger motivations when they have come into contact with refugees in Lesvos or elsewhere.

**Table 2:**

VOLUNTEER	Intuitive coding		VFI Coding							
<b>Nassos:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	E	M	
Historical awareness/self persevation		x					x			
Reciprocity/it could happen to us							x			
Identification/solidarity							x			
Curiosity/desire to learn		x								
Moral Imperative and the calling of humanity:	x						x			
A way to feel good/I like it:								x		
Skill vs. opportunity: Seeing himself in the role and life of (the savior) Professionalism		x							x	
<b>Anne-Marie:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	E	M	
Curiosity (professional)/learning more		x								
Opportunity over personal-need										
Personal need over opportunity										
Is she looking for identification/humanity – understood in contrast with professional role							x			
Being a volunteer and not a pro		x	x				x			
Moral Imperative – to act but also to act right and considered	x									
<b>Laura:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	E	M	
Acting on a background – continuing an identity project				x						
Identification – was visiting lebanese family during invasion							x		x	
Learning more		x								
Moral Imperative	x									
Learning more		x								
Opportunity x career				x					x	
The spontaneous										
Opportunity to go									x	
The identity of the savior(no comforter) – a measure of satisfaction in the moment								x		
Proximity and feeling of effect								x		
<b>Simone:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	E	M	
Altruisme	x									
Atruisme with focus on personal conviction	x									
Social Curiosity/Desire to learn		x								
Desire to learn/Personal gain						x				
Volunteerism as a part of societys responsibility	x						x			
Social Responsibility	x						x			
Identification							x			
A foreign experience						x				
For the greater good/self sacrifice								x		
Escapisme					x					
<b>Brendan Woodhouse:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	E	M	
Being the savior/Indentity project/helping others	x									

Christian benevolence	x									
Learning more		x								
Escalation, natural progression of identity– I have been training for this		x								x
Moral imperative	x									
Utility										x
Acting on identity										
The children/empathy									x	
Pride								x		x

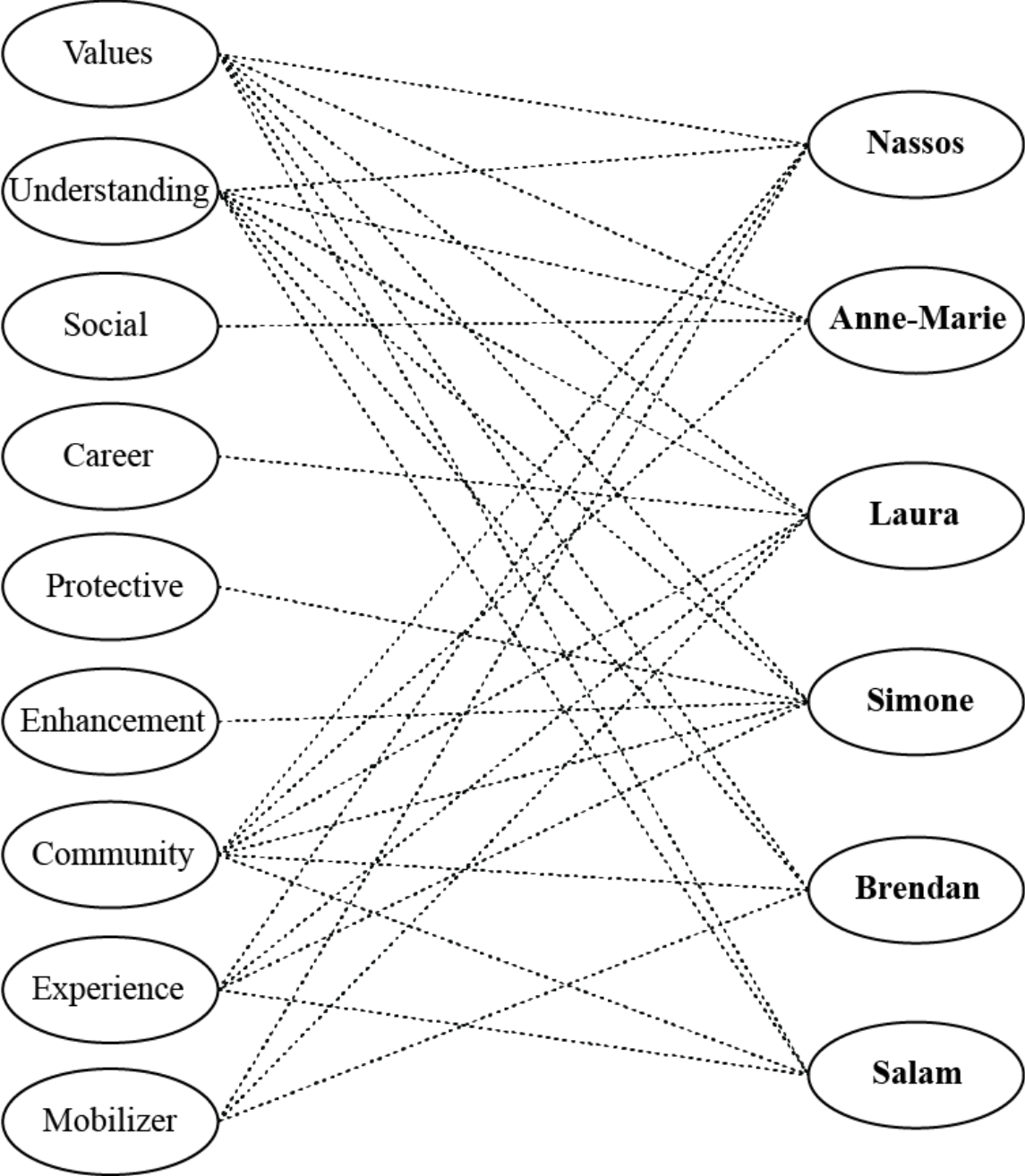
<b>Salam:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	E	M
An aimless yet moral desire								x	
Curiosity/desire to learn		x							
Moral(/practical) imperative	x								
IN CONTEXT (Helping, being awake and active all the time) Being happy and present							x	x	

**Table 2 left** displays the entire range of codes utilized grouped according to sources. Individual codes are only recorded once per source

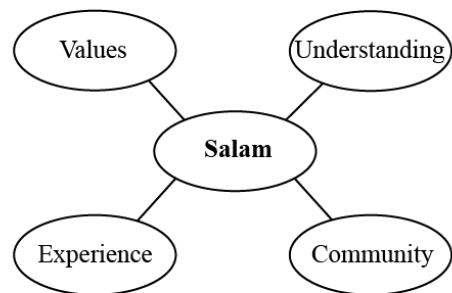
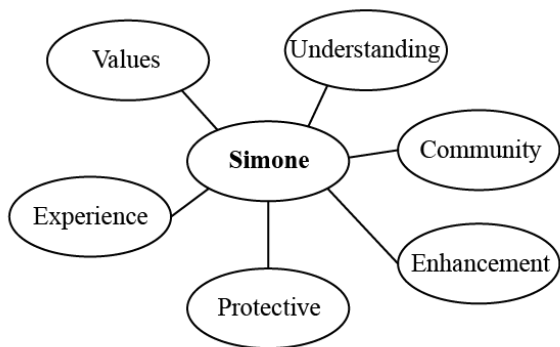
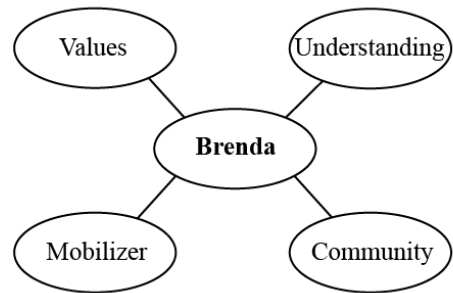
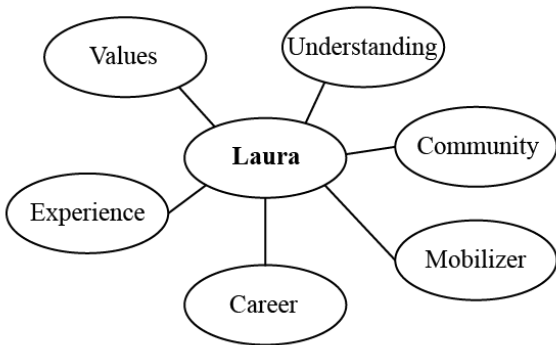
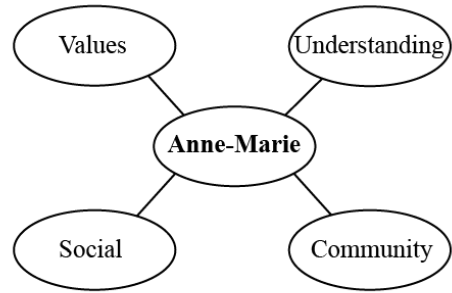
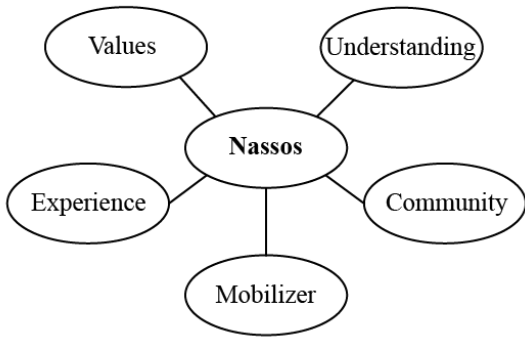
**Table 2 right** displays the VFI-functions (1-7) assigned to each code for vertical comparison across entire individual interviews. Marks are also assigned to signify expression of experienced gain (E) and mobilizers(M).

- 1 values
- 2 understanding
- 3 social
- 4 careers
- 5 protective
- 6 enhancement
- 7 community
- F experience
- M mobilizer

Image 1:



**Image 2:**



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