

Choosing to Act: A Scrutiny of Greece-Based Pro-Immigration Civil Groups

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Master Thesis Spring Semester 2017
Aalborg University
Global Refugee Studies



AALBORG UNIVERSITET

Abstract

This thesis is written at Aalborg University as part of the Master's Programme: Global Refugee Studies in the Spring Semester 2017, by Lars J. S. Andersen and Jonatan L. Fredsgaard. Titled 'Choosing to Act: A Scrutiny of Greece-Based Pro-Immigration Civil Groups,' it is an investigation of how members of pro-immigration civil groups in Greece, are motivated to help in response to the influx of refugee migrants primarily from Syria, that arrive in Greece as a consequence of the present ongoing conflict. The influx rose significantly in 2014, peaked between 2015 and 2016, and has since been on the decline. In order to demarcate the analysis, the following research question is stated: *How is the existence of Greece-based pro-immigration civil groups that have emerged as a response to the current refugee situation justified by groups members?* The central objective in this thesis therefore is to determine under what conditions groups act and how member motivation for joining a civil group, helps explain how the existence of pro-immigration civil groups is justified.

The research question is answered by referring to three main theories: regime theory by Stephen D. Krasner; the logic of collective action by Mancur Olson, in particular his thoughts on freeriding and social movement theory by Charles Tilly and Lesley J. Wood, with emphasis on the concept of WUNC (Worthiness, Unity, Numbers and Commitment). In order to accommodate the main theories to the relevant academic context, a number of supplementary authors are included. The theoretical framework is referred to in tandem with empirical material; academic articles, books, conventions and declarations, online sources, press releases and reports, but in particular with data collected during a field trip to Greece in

the period between 03 April - 15 April 2017, where a series of seven interviews were conducted with members of Greece-based pro-immigration groups. It is recognised that public opinion toward the arrival of irregular migrants is not to be understood as solely positive, or pro-immigration. Hence, the anti-immigration perspective is discussed, with emphasis on the Greece-based nationalist party Golden Dawn.

It is established that the Greece-based civil groups act within the European refugee regime, and that within this regime, freeriding is taking place amongst actors. It is subsequently argued that freeriding is of decisive importance to the understanding of why there is room for civil groups in the European refugee regime in the first place.

It is argued that under the concept of WUNC, the terms worthiness and commitment are instrumental to understanding how group existence is justified, in relation to a demonstrated weakening of the European refugee regime.

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List of Abbreviations

CEAS: Common European Asylum System

EU: European Union

EuroDac: European Dactyloscopy

EP: The European Parliament

Frontex: Frontières extérieures

GD: Golden Dawn

INGO: International non-governmental organisation

IR: International relations

LAOS: Popular Orthodox Rally

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGO: Non-governmental organisation

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

WUNC: Worthiness, unity, numbers, commitment

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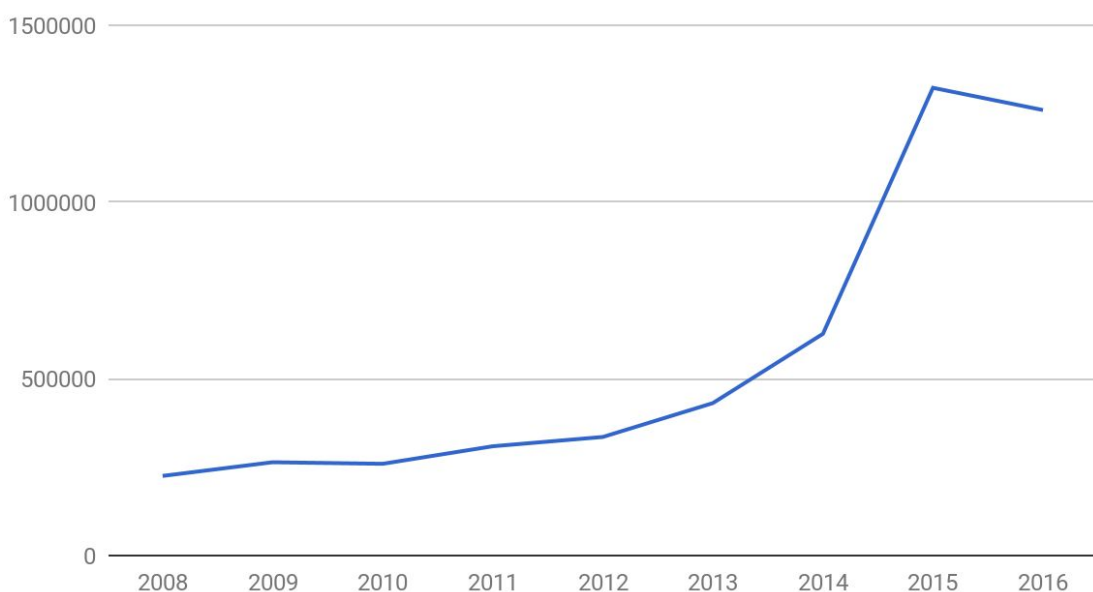
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Problem Area

According to the United Nations High Commissioners for Refugees (UNHCR), there are currently a record high 65.6 million forcibly displaced people in the world of which 22.5 million are refugees.¹

Eurostat statistics indicate that 3,209,740 first time asylum applications were received across the 28 European Union (EU) Member States between 2014 and 2016;² a first time asylum applicant being a person who: “lodged an application for asylum for the first time in a given EU Member State and therefore excludes repeat applicants (in that Member State) and so more accurately reflects the number of newly arrived persons applying for international protection in the reporting Member State.”³

Figure I: Number of first time asylum applicants in the EU Member States



¹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Figures at a Glance*, <http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html> (accessed 21 July 2017).

² Eurostat, *Asylum and first time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex Annual aggregated data*, http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asyappctza&lang=en (accessed 27 July 2017).

³ Eurostat, *Asylum statistics*, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics (accessed 27 July 2017).

As Figure I⁴ indicates, irregular migration to the EU is not a sudden phenomenon, however, the increased influx of first time asylum seekers, peaking in 2015, has prompted public and political reaction.

This thesis is concerned with the proliferation of civil groups in Greece as a reaction to the rise in influx of irregular migrants in the period from January 2014, where the influx increased rapidly, to present day. Throughout the thesis *the influx* refers to irregular migration from non-EU Member States to EU Member States in the abovementioned period.

In a 2016 article featured in the Guardian, this proliferation prompted Helen Nianias to discuss the scale of the influx, by declaring that at the time of publication 81 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were active on Lesbos, with 30 additional ones registered with local authorities pending permission on an island with a population of 90,000, indicating a significant rise in the number of civil groups responding to the influx.⁵ The intended definition of *civil groups* in relation to this thesis likewise requires some delimitation: The quality of being civil has two remarkably different connotations: In the first understanding of the word, it implies that a group's cause and members are undeniably noble and moral, in other words *civilised*. In the second understanding, civil refers to anything related to *civilians*, meaning the public branches of society as opposed to institutions and governing organs. Although both definitions of the term are equally valid, this thesis consistently subscribes to the latter of the two. The purpose of the thesis is not to determine whether the groups that are analysed are civilised or not; rather, the purpose is to analyse their position and options as civilians within the European refugee regime. This thesis refers

⁴ Eurostat, *Asylum and first time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex Annual aggregated data*, http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asyappctza&lang=en (accessed 27 July 2017).

⁵ Helen Nianias, *Refugees in Lesbos: are there too many NGOs on the island?*, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/jan/05/refugees-in-lesbos-are-there-too-many-ngos-on-the-island> (accessed 27 July 2017).

to Stephen D. Krasner's definition of international regimes as: "principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue-area."

⁶ The concept is further explored in the context of this thesis in the chapter 'The European Refugee Regime.'

Figure II: Nationality of first time asylum applicants in Greece 2016

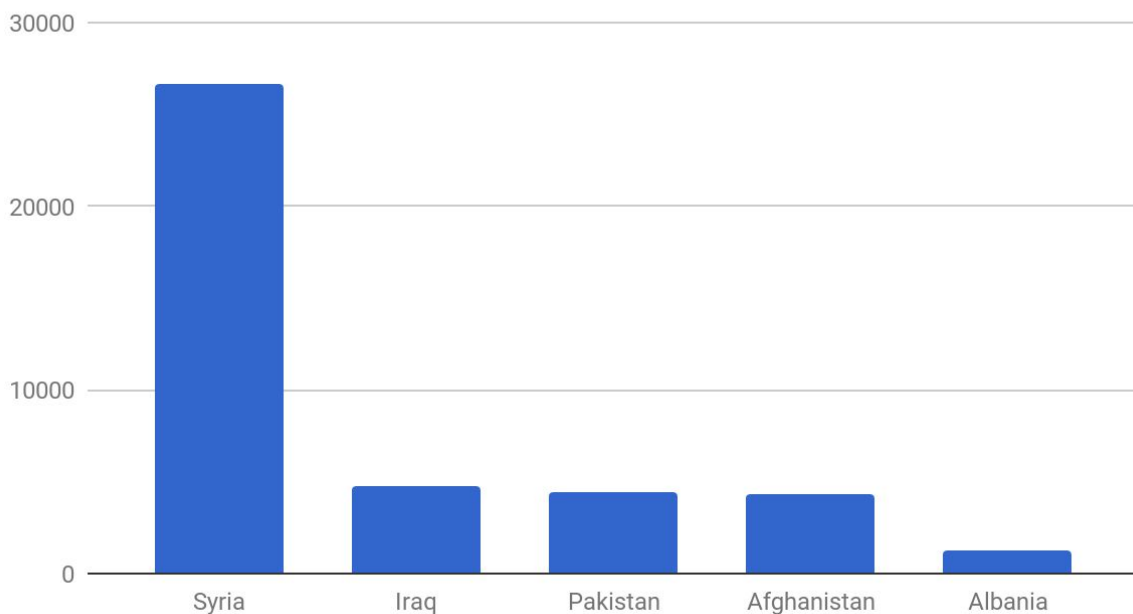


Figure II⁷ above indicates top five nationalities of first time asylum applicants in Greece, and it helps to understand how the current irregular migration influx is characterised. As shown, the largest portion of asylum applicants in Greece in 2016 were Syrians, presumably taking the route through Turkey before entering Greece and the EU on their flight. Travelling from Syria to the EU via the shortest possible route, Greece is logically the first Member State one would reach.

⁶ Stephen D. Krasner, *International regimes*, ed. Stephen D. Krasner (New York: Cornell University Press), 1983, 1.

⁷ Eurostat, *Asylum statistics*, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics (accessed 27 July 2017).

Initial research for this thesis revealed that civil society across Europe is divided in terms of how to deal with the influx. It is a critical finding that both pro- and anti-immigration groups actively engaged with the influx, share a critical attitude toward the European refugee regime. The focus of this thesis is to analyse what happens when individuals identify a lack of response, or a perceived incorrect response by actors within the European refugee regime, and attempt to rectify this by establishing or joining civil groups.

This thesis is preoccupied with the Greek context. As a Member State, Greece has to abide by EU regulations, directives and decisions. In relation to the irregular immigration from non-EU Member States, Greece's location on the south-eastern periphery of the EU is decisive. Its geographical composition with numerous islands, long coastline and border with Turkey makes it possible for irregular migrants to arrive at multiple different entry points to the country.

Figure III: Number of first time asylum applicants in Greece

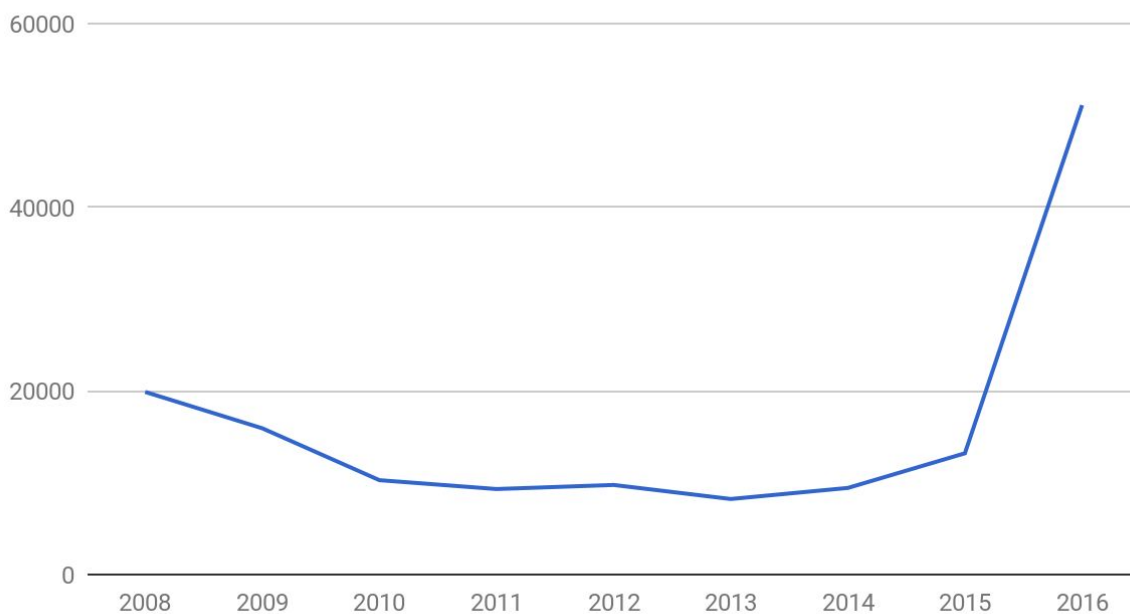


Figure III⁸ indicates that Greece experienced a decrease of first time asylum applications in the period between 2008 and 2010, then a relatively stable period between 2010 and 2013, followed by a slow rise in 2014 and a severe rise between 2015 and 2016.

During the influx, the majority of irregular migrants travelling to Europe have done so via either the Eastern or Central Mediterranean route, arriving in Greece or Italy.⁹ The River Evros constitutes most of Greece's natural border with Turkey. It was possible to cross a small section of 13.5 kilometres of the border by foot and migrants were known to enter the EU via that pathway, up until 2012, when Greek government decided to built a fence covering the passable area. The fence forced irregular migrants to choose between crossing the dangerous River Evros or looking for alternative routes.¹⁰ Not only is River Evros characterised by its strong current, the border is also monitored by thermal sensors and policed by *Frontières extérieures* (Frontex), instructed to arrest irregular migrants, also introduced in 2012, claims Martin Lemberg-Pedersen.¹¹ As argued by Mary Bosworth and Andriani Fili, the risk of crossing the river and the risk of detention of irregular migrants was a deliberate strategy by Greek authorities aimed at keeping irregular migrants out of the country.¹² Daniel Trilling has inspected the numbers of crossings, and the restrictions in the River Evros area seem impactful: In 2012, 34,084 people were stopped at the border; in 2013, the number of people stopped had dropped to 12,556. In 2010, 54 people had died, trying to

⁸ Eurostat, *Asylum and first time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex Annual aggregated data (rounded)*, http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asyappctza&lang=en (accessed 30 June 2017).

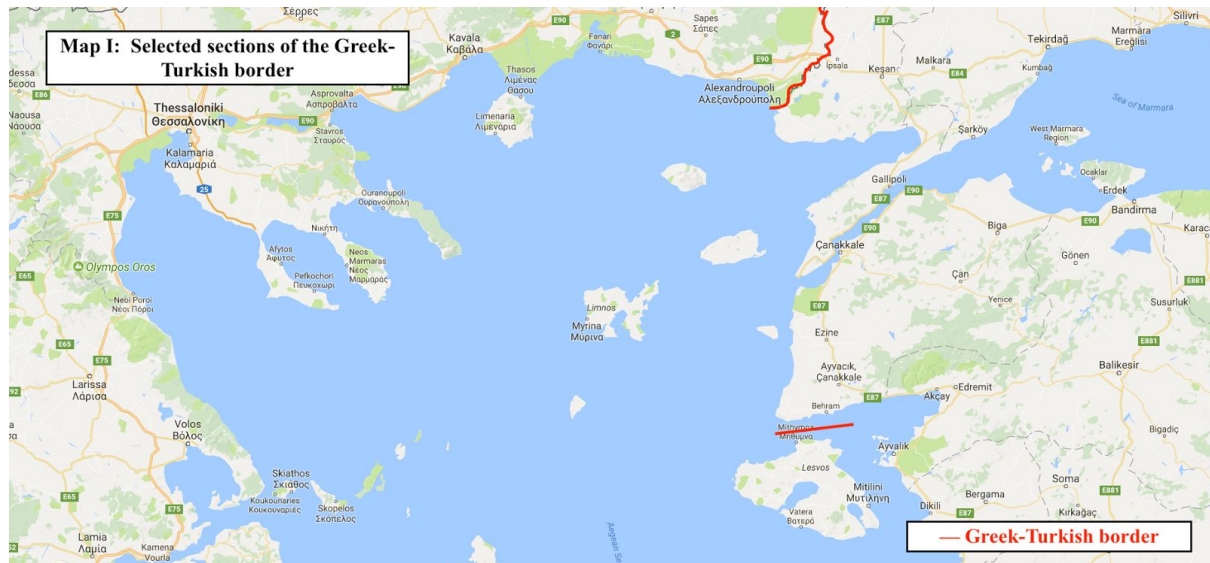
⁹ Frontex, *Eastern Mediterranean Route*, <http://frontex.europa.eu/trends-and-routes/eastern-mediterranean-route/> (accessed 27 July 2017).

¹⁰ Mary Bosworth and Andriani Fili, *Detaining the Immigrant Other*, eds. Rich Furman, Douglas Epps and Greg Lamphear (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2016, 80.

¹¹ Martin Lemberg-Pedersen, *Borderscaping: Imaginations and Practices of Border Making*, eds. Chiara Brambilla and others (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing), 2015, 144.

¹² Bosworth and Fili, *Detaining the Immigrant Other*, eds. Furman, Epps and Lamphear, 80.

cross the river; in 2013, six people died. However, rather than stopping the flow of migrants, the fence redirected people toward the Eastern Mediterranean route, including the Aegean Sea.¹³



Map I¹⁴ highlights selected sections of the Greek-Turkish border. In the upper right corner, parts of the heavily policed border following the flow of River Evros is depicted. In the lower right corner, a part of the maritime border separating Turkey from Greek island of Lesbos indicates the part of the border where, according to Frontex, the majority of the irregular migrants arrived during the mass-influx of 2015.¹⁵

Although crossing into the EU via islands in the Aegean Sea obviously does not diminish time spent on potentially dangerous waters, it arguably presents a greater chance of avoiding detention. Policing the area is more complicated because the Greek and Turkish coast guards have no authority in each other's waters and the area of concern is larger.

¹³ Daniel Trilling, *In Greece, a river holds tragedy for migrants*, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/06/greece-river-holds-tragedy-migrants-2014630828461621.html> (accessed 30 May 2017).

¹⁴ Google, *Google Maps*, <https://www.google.dk/maps/@40.1122757,24.4129872,8z> (accessed 20 July 2017).

¹⁵ Frontex, *Eastern Mediterranean Route*, <http://frontex.europa.eu/trends-and-routes/eastern-mediterranean-route/> (accessed 27 July 2017).

In accordance with the Dublin Regulation, Greek authorities are responsible for registering every refugee migrant who arrives in Greece, and for processing their asylum claims. As migrants arrived in Europe in great numbers, especially in the summer and autumn of 2015,¹⁶ the Dublin System was severely pressured, criticised and partially suspended. As a statement of humanity, and in order to relieve the countries that received the most migrants, a few EU Member States, spearheaded by Germany, offered refuge to Syrian asylum seekers who had previously been registered in another Member State, under the European Dactyloscopy (EuroDac) Regulation, the central European asylum fingerprints database.¹⁷

Reece Jones points out that even though the Dublin Regulation is meant to standardise the asylum procedure across the EU, migrants are well aware of the fact that “some countries are more migrant-friendly,” thereby prompting asylum seekers to “avoid providing their fingerprints in less desirable destinations by burning their fingers, covering them with glue or plastic, or avoiding detection even though they have already reached the EU.”¹⁸ According to Eurostat; “The highest shares of positive first instance asylum decisions in 2016 were recorded in Slovakia (84 %) and Malta (83 %). Conversely, Greece, Ireland, Poland and Hungary each recorded first instance rejection rates above 75%,”¹⁹ thereby underlining that refugee migrants might have better chances of obtaining asylum in some Member States than others. Throughout the thesis, the term refugee migrant is applied. This specific term is consistently used because the terms irregular migrant, asylum seeker or refugee are not satisfactory terms to describe people who are part of the influx. The term *irregular migrant* is

¹⁶ Eurostat, *Asylum and first time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex Annual aggregated data*, http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asyappctza&lang=en (accessed 27 July 2017).

¹⁷ Deutsche Welle, *Germany reinstates Dublin rules for Syrian refugees*, <http://www.dw.com/en/germany-reinstates-dublin-rules-for-syrian-refugees/a-18842101> (accessed 10 March 2017).

¹⁸ Reece Jones, *Violent Borders: Refugees and the Right To Move* (London: Verso, 2016), 21.

¹⁹ Eurostat, *Asylum statistics*, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics (accessed 27 July 2017).

insufficient because a person can migrate irregularly from one country to another without seeking asylum or without intending to seek asylum. The term *asylum seeker* is insufficient because it implies that a formal application has been lodged, which is not the case for every individual that is part of the influx. The term *refugee* is insufficient because it indicates that the person has had his asylum claim processed with a positive outcome in a host state. Thus, a *refugee migrant* is a person who has the intention of seeking asylum but it is understood that he might not have done so yet. It is recognised that amongst the influx of irregular migrants, a substantial part are regarded as refugee migrants, however some might migrate for reasons other than to seek asylum, and when referring to statistics of irregular migration it is not possible to distinguish between individual migrant motives.

In the wake of the mass-influx to Greece and the de facto suspension of the Dublin Regulation, the EU eventually negotiated an agreement with Turkey in an attempt to regain control of irregular migration to Member States. For Greece, the ‘EU-Turkey Statement’ meant that Greek authorities should return all new irregular migrants back to Turkey.²⁰ The Statement resulted in a shift in migration patterns in Greece. In 2015, prior to the Statement, Frontex reported 885,386 illegal border crossings into the EU, whereof the vast majority arrived on a number of Greek islands, particularly on Lesbos.²¹ According to Eurostat 13,205 persons filed claims for asylum in Greece that same year.²² Following the Statement of 2016, the situation changed. Frontex registered 182,534 illegal border crossings,²³ but conversely

²⁰ “EU-Turkey statement, 18 March 2016,” *The European Council* (Brussels: Press Office - General Secretariat of the Council), 2016, 1-2.

²¹ Frontex, *Eastern Mediterranean Route*, <http://frontex.europa.eu/trends-and-routes/eastern-mediterranean-route/> (accessed 27 July 2017).

²² Eurostat, *Asylum and first time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex Annual aggregated data*, http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asyappctza&lang=en (accessed 3 July 2017).

²³ Frontex, *Eastern Mediterranean Route*, <http://frontex.europa.eu/trends-and-routes/eastern-mediterranean-route/> (accessed 27 July 2017).

the number of asylum applications for 2016 went up to 51,110 according to Eurostat.²⁴

Jones argues that the EU-Turkey Statement was in line with recurring EU practice of externalising irregular migration control by regulating irregular migration outside EU borders. This practice might be convenient, but not unproblematic, as Jones argues: “The true source of the [refugee] crisis is that movement restrictions at borders continue to allow states to contain the poor and protect the wealth and privilege of their populations. Until free and safe movement is available to all, the European Union and wealthy countries will live with the uncomfortable reality that, because of their exclusionary border policies, dead babies will occasionally wash up on their beaches.”²⁵

In 2015, when the body of three-year-old Alan Kurdi, washed up on a Turkish beach and was photographed lying face down in the sand, it triggered wide public response.²⁶

Just after the incident, the Jon Henley published an article reporting on the vast increase in Britons getting involved in helping especially refugee migrant children, one way or another. To mention just two examples: In the 24 hours after the story broke, the British division of Save the Children experienced a 70% increase in enquiries from people asking how they could help or donate money and the independent Migrants Offshore Aid Station, an independent rescue boat team operating in the Mediterranean Sea, “had seen a 15-fold increase in donations in 24 hours.”²⁷ In an article published a year after the death of Kurdi, migration correspondent Patrick Kingsley, also via the Guardian, argues that the occurrence itself and the following pressure from the public did inspire certain countries to ease

²⁴ Eurostat, *Asylum and first time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex Annual aggregated data*, http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asyappctza&lang=en (accessed 3 July 2017).

²⁵ Jones, *Violent Borders*, 27-28.

²⁶ Helena Smith, *Shocking images of drowned Syrian boy show tragic plight of refugees*, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/02/shocking-image-of-drowned-syrian-boy-shows-tragic-plight-of-refugees> (accessed 19 May 2017).

²⁷ Jon Henley and others, *Britons rally to help people fleeing war and terror in Middle East*, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/sep/03/britons-rally-to-help-people-fleeing-war-and-terror-in-middle-east> (accessed 12 June 2017).

migration policies. However, the immediate awareness and initiatives the incident entailed failed to bring about sufficient lasting results. Kingsley further claims that when the pressure from the public gradually diminished, political leaders opted to return to their previous stricter stance.²⁸

By the European Commission's estimate, 22 per cent of all rescues on the Central Mediterranean Route were carried out by NGOs in 2016,²⁹ thereby highlighting the significance of civil initiative. Sadly, the death of Kurdi at sea was in no way a one-off; however, it is an example of how an isolated incident can raise awareness to a more general and continuous problem and prompt action. The death of Kurdi raised attention to the fact that people were dying, trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea. International Organization for Migration numbers, reveal that 3,784 persons in 2015 and 5,143 in 2016 died or went missing in the Mediterranean Sea, making it the region in the world where most migrants die or disappear.³⁰

This thesis therefore finds it relevant to examine how members of the public respond to the current refugee situation, by joining Greece-based civil groups that share a similar stance.

²⁸ Patrick Kingsley, *The death of Alan Kurdi: one year on, compassion towards refugees fades*, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/01/alan-kurdi-death-one-year-on-compassion-towards-refugees-fades> (accessed 12 June 2017).

²⁹ European Political Strategy Centre, *Irregular Migration via the Central Mediterranean From Emergency Responses to Systemic Solutions*, https://ec.europa.eu/epsc/publications/strategic-notes/irregular-migration-central-mediterranean_en (accessed 3 July 2017).

³⁰ International Organization for Migration, *Missing Migrants Project*, <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/> (accessed 27 July 2017).

Research Question

The context along with the topics and reflections presented in ‘Problem Area,’ has amounted to the following research question:

How is the existence of Greece-based pro-immigration civil groups that have emerged as a response to the current refugee situation justified by groups members?

In the following section, an explanation of the refugee situation is presented.

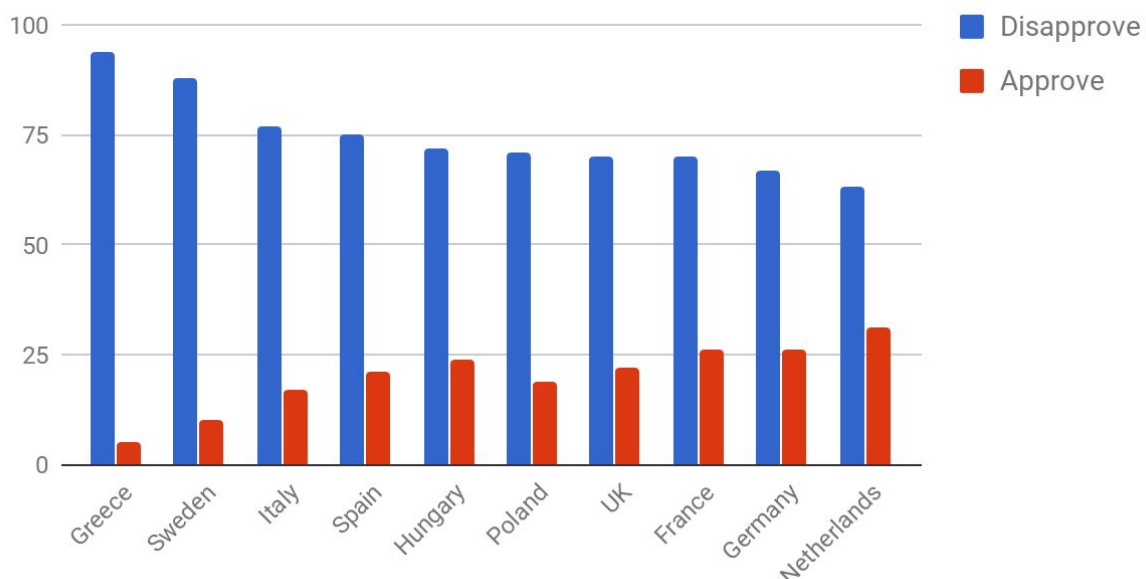
The Refugee Situation

Preceding the research question, this thesis has been occupied with the broad strokes of irregular migration tendencies to the EU. This chapter will analyse the tendencies already presented by bringing them together with a presentation of public European attitudes toward the influx. What is defined as the *refugee situation*, should be understood as the combination of measurable irregular migration tendencies and European public attitudes. The refugee situation comprises a foundation of analysis that takes the broad irregular migration tendencies into consideration, but also reserves analytical room for public opinion to be taken into consideration.

A 2016 survey carried out by Pew Research Center analysing opinions of Europeans on the refugee situation indicated that public opinion was divided. The survey is a global attitude survey, gathering approximately 1000 interviews per EU Member state, by means of either

face-to-face or telephone interview.³¹ The survey found that; “Regardless of whether they [the people asked] see refugees as a threat, or whether they think they increase terrorism, crime or take jobs, Europeans overwhelmingly believe that the European Union is doing a poor job of handling the refugee crisis. Majorities in every country surveyed say they disapprove of how the EU is handling refugees, including a staggering 94 per cent of Greeks and 88 per cent of Swedes,” as presented in Figure IV.³²

Figure IV: Percentage of asked persons who either approve or disapprove of the way the EU is handling refugees



The figure reveals a significant public discontent with how the EU is handling the situation, regardless of whether citizens are anti- or pro-immigration, albeit without going into detail about in which way respondents approve or disapprove. According to the survey, the three main concerns associated with the influx were those of increased risk of terrorism, refugees

³¹ Pew Research Center, *International survey methodology*, <http://www.pewresearch.org/methodology/international-survey-research/international-methodology/global-attitudes-survey/all-country/2016/> (accessed 30 July 2017).

³² Jacob Poushter, *European opinions of the refugee crisis in 5 charts*, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/09/16/european-opinions-of-the-refugee-crisis-in-5-charts/> (accessed 27 April 2017).

being a burden to the welfare systems in European countries and a rationale that refugees are to blame for an increase in crime rates.³³

The survey brings to light how refugees in public discourse are not simply understood as, according to the ‘1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees’, a person that: “is outside his or her country of nationality or habitual residence; ... [with] a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion; and [who] is unable or unwilling to avail him- or herself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution.”³⁴

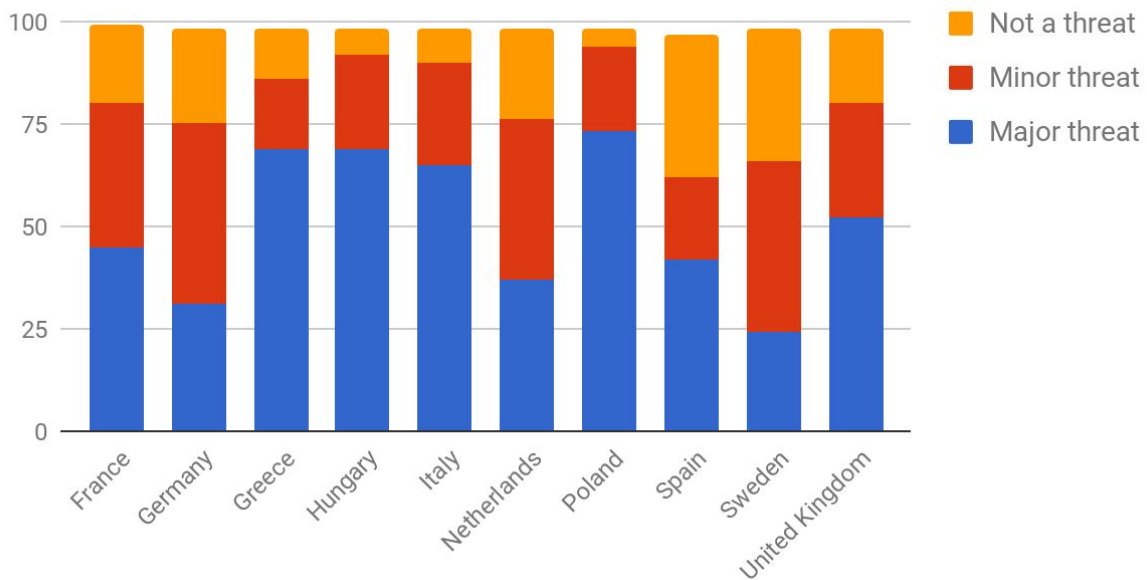
In public perception, as the 2016 survey points toward, the term refugee is not solely understood by its legal definition as per the 1951 Convention. Refugees are at present in Europe a focal point onto which Europeans project concern for national security and stability. The survey found that of people asked in Poland, Greece and Hungary, respectively; 73 per cent, 69 per cent and 69 per cent, believed that refugees “leaving countries such as Iraq and Syria” pose a threat to national security, as presented in figure V.³⁵

³³ Richard Wike, Bruce Stokes and Katie Simmons, “Europeans Fear Wave of Refugees Will Mean More Terrorism, Fewer Jobs,” *Pew Research Center*, 2017, 30-32.

³⁴ “1951 Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of the Refugee,” *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Communications and Public Information Service), 60 Years Edition, 2011, 14.

³⁵ Poushter, *European opinions of the refugee crisis in 5 charts*, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/09/16/european-opinions-of-the-refugee-crisis-in-5-charts/> (accessed 27 April 2017).

Figure V: Percentage of asked persons who believe that refugee migrants are either a; major threat, minor threat or not a threat to national security



The perception of the refugee is not limited to him being a person who has had to flee from his home and is now in need of help. He is a character onto which concern and opinion is loaded, and in that process he becomes an obscure and diffuse figure, and people's perceptions of him, his motives, his rights and the justification of his presence in a host society become contested. It is fair to consider that the sceptical attitudes held by Greek civilians, is in part shaping how irregular migrants from countries such as Syria and Iraq are received, minding that the current influx is predominantly Syrian.

According to Liisa Malkki, refugees are by many regarded as posing a security threat. Malkki claims that since the period between the two World Wars, both of which produced an enormous amount of displaced persons, scholars, policy-makers and the public have equated physical uprootedness with moral uprootedness.³⁶ "the premise [is] that refugees are necessarily "a problem". They are not ordinary people, but represent, rather, an anomaly

³⁶ Liisa Malkki, "National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity among Scholars and Refugees," *Cultural Anthropology*, volume 7, issue 1, 1992, 32.

requiring specialized correctives and therapeutic interventions ... “the problem” [is] not the political conditions or processes that produce massive territorial displacement of people, but, rather, within the bodies and minds (and even souls) of people categorized as refugees.”³⁷

The refugee situation in Greece is marked by three things of analytical value to this thesis.

Firstly, the EU has recently seen a severe rise in the number of irregular migrants arriving,

whereof a large portion are refugee migrants, a vast amount of which arrived in Greece in the

first place. The influx has peaked, and is now on the decline. Secondly, the Greek public

attitude is characterised by scepticism toward the consequences of the high number of

refugee migrants arriving and concerns toward refugee migrants from Syria and Iraq are

stark. Thirdly, the public is virtually in agreement that the EU is doing a poor job of handling

the situation. These three characteristics of the the refugee situation are part of public

discourse, and members of civil society who join civil groups in relation to the influx are

regarded as doing so under the premise of the situation.

Methodology

This chapter accounts for the methodological framework of the thesis. It begins with a

presentation of the analytical framework and subsequently presents reflections on choice of

research field, approach to field and empirical evaluation.

Analytical Framework

This section will account for the methodological and theoretical choices made in order to

answer the research question.

³⁷ Ibid., 33.

In order to specify the research question, this thesis initiates by describing the relevant irregular migration tendencies in the ‘Problem Area,’ hereafter referred to as the influx. After the research question is put forward, an analysis of what is termed as the refugee situation is conducted by combining the broad tendencies with a presentation of selected public European attitudes toward the influx.

This is established in order to facilitate further analysis with emphasis on the micro level amongst individual actors and civil groups, thereby qualifying the choice of doing fieldwork and conducting interviews with pro-immigration actors. The initial ambition was to inquire into both pro- and anti-immigration perspectives toward the influx, however, this remained unrealised, for reasons that are accounted for in ‘Opting out on the Anti-Immigration Perspective.’ Due to the hurdle in establishing contact with anti-immigration groups and informants, a brief analysis of the Greek nationalist party Golden Dawn (GD) is accounted for in ‘Golden Dawn: An Anti-Immigration Movement,’ where scepticism toward irregular migration is briefly discussed.

In the chapter ‘The European Refugee Regime,’ the thesis is embedded in international relations (IR) theory, exploring concepts under regionalism and regime theory, arguing that pro-immigration groups and individual actors react to changes within the European refugee regime, demonstrated by two concrete examples.

In ‘Collective Action Response,’ it is examined why civil groups develop in the first place by employing collective action theory, and the concept of freeriding is introduced and discussed as a partial explanation of why there is room for civil groups in the European refugee regime. The self-perceptions of members of the civil groups that are represented in the analysis are discussed in ‘The Social Movement of Pro-Immigration Groups.’ The chapter serves as an

analysis of how groups evaluate the regime they operate within as part of a larger social movement, and thereby how they justify their existence.

Field of Research

It has been established that amongst citizens of EU Member States, there is a general discontent with the efforts taken by individual states and the EU as a whole, in response to the influx. The purpose of this section is to explain why, then, Greece-based pro-immigration civil groups are of particular interest to this thesis.

Obviously, the fact that many of the refugee migrants that travel to Europe pass through Greece on their journey makes Greece stand out. The analysis of the refugee situation suggest that the influx has affected Greek attitudes toward refugee migrants. Notably, in Pew Research Center survey, Greek respondents rank amongst Europe's most discontented in matters such as trust of the EU and refugees. Another entry point to the EU, such as the Central Mediterranean route, would also have made for an interesting field of research, but Greece was chosen because it saw a massive influx of refugee migrants and aid volunteers. Lesbos specifically was chosen because the island was on the receiving end of the highest number of refugee migrants travelling to Greece.³⁸ Since the traffic on the Aegean Sea has decreased and most crossings are now taking place on the Central Mediterranean route, it is likewise interesting to investigate how the civil groups adjust their activities in accordance with a decreasing or shifting demand. Furthermore, the influx to Lesbos is very noticeable in the sense that the strait between Lesbos and Turkey is small, and the fact that Lesbos is a relatively small island, where boats carrying irregular migrants predominantly land on a short stretch of the north coast, narrows the geographical setting. The inclusion of pro-immigration

³⁸ Frontex, *Eastern Mediterranean Route*, <http://frontex.europa.eu/trends-and-routes/eastern-mediterranean-route/> (accessed 27 July 2017).

groups based in Athens, the capital of Greece, allows the thesis to focus on a response to the influx that is not directly affiliated with emergency response, thereby dispersing the empirical evidence collected, making for a more nuanced analysis of the pro-immigration social movement.

Introducing Groups and Informants

When referring to the term *group* or *groups*, this thesis refers to Mancur Olson's definition that any number of people sharing a mutual interest is a group. Subscribing to this definition, it would in theory be reasonable to label a gathering of people who share a minimal mutual interest as a group. An example of this could be people waiting in a terminal or riding the same bus. Although such a gathering of people share the same interest in taking the bus from one place to another, they supposedly do not have other shared ambitions. Central to Olson's definition of groups is that "most discussions of group behavior seem to deal mainly with groups that do have common interests."³⁹ The definition is suitable as it allows for a relatively loose definition of groups that is applicable on several levels of the European refugee regime.

The six groups that have been interviewed for this thesis respond to the influx in different ways. Consequently, for the sake of clarifying the analysis of the respective groups' work, this thesis distinguishes between three different categories of work the groups perform: The first category is *emergency response*, where groups assist refugee migrants on crossings at sea and by assisting at landings, rescues and first aid. The second category is *second stage response*, where groups meet refugee migrants on the coast, provide them with food, water and warm clothes. The third category is *psychosocial response*, where groups assist refugee

³⁹ Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press) Second Edition, 1971, 8.

migrants in ways that relate to improvement of livelihood; it can for instance be via different types of education, labour, by including them in the democratic processes within the groups or advocating for political change.

For good measure, it should be stated that one could think of other categories of pro-immigration groups responding to the influx, notably Athens based anarchist movements. However, interviews with groups of that nature were not pursued for this thesis, as they were deemed more difficult to gain access to, minding the 13 days allotted to conduct fieldwork. Moreover, workers of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) could have been interviewed. They are, however, seen, in the context of the thesis, as deviating from the selected civil groups in that they were established actors well before the influx, and other regime conditions apply to them.

This thesis repeatedly refers to members of six specific groups. In this context, any person who has been accepted by any of the six groups as working on their behalf is a group member. As such, factors such as seniority, influence and dedication are not taken into account when applying the group member predicate. For example, the head of a specific group and someone who has volunteered with the group only a few days are equally referred to as group members.

A total of seven interviews with a total of nine informants were conducted for this thesis. If more members of the same or other groups had been interviewed, there would be a larger body of data to conclude upon. As such, it should be taken into perspective that general conclusions about civil groups within the European refugee regime are drawn carefully, seeing as they are based on a relatively small sample of seven interviews. In the following,

concise profiles for the informants and the groups they represent are featured. The statements about the general values and agenda of the groups that each informant represents is based on text published on the respective groups' official websites. The resonance behind this approach is to be mindful about the potential deviations there might be between a group member's own characteristics and perceptions and the values and strategies expressed by the group as an entity. Even though the informants were interviewed on behalf of their affiliation with the groups they each represent, they were asked both general questions about the operations of the groups and questions about personal motivations and views. Duration of interviews and timestamps of references are indicated by: hours:minutes:seconds.

Interview one (duration 1:11:55): Isidoros Lapsatis, coordinator with Lifeguard Hellas. The first interview was conducted on 05 April 2017 on a spotting mission near Skala Sykamineas, Lesbos. Lapsatis is a 21-year-old Greek from the island of Kefalonia but has lived several years in England. Before joining Lifeguard Hellas, he was in the military, did youth work and community work. At the time of the interview, Lapsatis had been working on Lesbos for two weeks, but he had been training with Lifeguard Hellas in order to prepare himself nearly two months in advance.⁴⁰

Obviously, Lifeguard Hellas are lifeguards and on the website of the group it is stated: "We are a big family, fully trained, with the correct equipment and strong bases. We share our passion for what we do, we serve it humbly."⁴¹ The group has existed before the influx but has been ceaselessly on Lesbos, responding to the influx, since 09 November 2015. "We are a non Governmental organisation, we are not subsidised, we are a lifeguard school and our

⁴⁰ Appendix 1: Isidoros Lapsatis, Interview, 05 April 2017, 0:01:14-0:02:23.

⁴¹ Lifeguard Hellas, *We Are Lifeguard Hellas*, <http://www.lifeguardhellas.gr/en/> (accessed 20 July 2017).

team of volunteers ... will provide our services.’’⁴² As such, Lifeguard Hellas has not been established in response to the influx but the operations of the group have expanded.

Interview two (duration 34:33): Ivory Hackett-Evans, camp manager with Lighthouse Relief.

The second interview was also conducted on 05 April 2017 in a cafe in Skala Sykamineas.

Hackett-Evans is a 27-year-old from Chichester, England. She has experience working with other NGOs, prior to joining Lighthouse Relief and has also previously worked at sea, as she has been captain on 200-ton boats. At the time of the interview, Hackett-Evans had been working with Lighthouse Relief for seven months.⁴³

As stated on the website of the group, Lighthouse Relief was established in 2015 and “is a Swedish NGO with a branch based in Greece ... We are operating with skilled volunteers from all over the world. We provide relief to refugees that are stranded in mainland Greece and those still arriving on the Greek island of Lesbos. On Lesbos, we also support the local residents in restoring their beautiful island ... Our mission is to provide immediate crisis response, as well as long term relief.”⁴⁴

Interview three (duration 1:39:10): Eric and Philippa Kempson, independent volunteers. The

third interview was conducted on 06 April 2017 at the married couple’s private residence in Eftalou, Lesbos. E. Kempson is 61 years old and from England whilst P. Kempson is 45 years old and from Wales. Now a painter and sculptor, E. Kempson has previously worked with wild animals and with landscaping. The Kempsons have lived on Lesbos for 17 years and for the duration of their time on the island, they have always helped irregular migrants crossing

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Appendix 2: Ivory Hackett-Evans, Interview, 05 April 2017, 0:01:15-0:02:26.

⁴⁴ Lighthouse Relief, *Who We Are*, <http://www.lighthouserelief.org/about/> (accessed 20 July 2017).

the Aegean Sea, landing on the coast near their house.⁴⁵ However, “These past years have been full on; since 2015.”⁴⁶

Because they identify as independent volunteers, the Kempsons do not have an official mission statement, but, in the words of E. Kempson: “Basically, ... we look after the refugees and independent volunteers and the NGOs and we scream a lot at the aid agencies and big NGOs.”⁴⁷

Interview four (duration 1:30:53): Dina Adam, coordinator with Starfish Foundation. The fourth interview was conducted on 07 April 2017 at the Starfish Foundation office in Mithymna, Lesbos. Adam is a 54-year-old who has lived on Lesbos for 18 years but is originally from the mainland of Greece. Prior to getting involved with Starfish, she has worked in the fitness -, tourism -, and restaurant industry. Adam has been involved with Starfish since it was informally established in 2008. During the influx of 2015, Adam left her job at the time as a hotel receptionist in favour of a full-time position with Starfish.⁴⁸

Now a registered NGO, in the early days of the influx, Starfish Foundation was an informal group of locals who handed out food to refugee migrants as they arrived in the harbour of Mithymna. When the influx increased during 2015, local and international volunteers in great numbers started working on Lesbos, it was decided that Starfish should open its ranks to outsiders and “The team made sure the refugees had food, water, dry clothes and onward travel to Mytilene, where they could be registered and given papers to continue their journey.”⁴⁹ According to its website, following a decrease in arrivals in spring 2016, Starfish

⁴⁵ Appendix 3: Eric Kempson and Philippa Kempson, Interview, 06 April 2017, 0:13:20-0:14:30.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 0:14:30-0:14:36.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 0:00:29-0:00:39.

⁴⁸ Appendix 4: Dina Adam, Interview, 07 April 2017, 0:01:01-0:04:27.

⁴⁹ Starfish Foundation, *The Story of the Starfish Foundation*, <http://www.asterias-starfish.org/en/the-story-of-the-starfish-foundation/> (accessed 20 July 2017).

staff thought it best to shift the focus of their operations and they “decided to suspend our volunteer program and focus on a few ongoing programs while continuing our efforts to assist local people.”⁵⁰

Interview five (duration 1:21:27): Rebecca van Kempen, solidarian with Refugee

Accommodation and Solidarity Space City Plaza. The fifth interview was conducted on 11 April 2017 in City Plaza. Van Kempen is a 19-year-old German who went with a friend on a journey to Greece after finishing high school. She visited and was impressed by the City Plaza project, its structure and what it had already achieved and decided to stay in Greece and become a part of the squat.⁵¹ At the time of the interview, van Kempen had been involved with City Plaza for five and a half months.⁵²

Refugee Accommodation and Solidarity Space City Plaza is a squatted hotel in Athens where refugee migrants and ‘solidarians,’ a word preferred to ‘volunteers’ in City Plaza, are invited to live together. Independent of state funding, City Plaza offers to its members food, a pharmacy, a hairdresser, education and legal counselling.⁵³ At City Plaza all decisions are made collectively and on its website it is proclaimed that: “first and foremost, in order to be and remain a political example: The City Plaza Hotel is a place of equality and solidarity, the lived antithesis to Fortress Europe and its borders of shame.”⁵⁴

Interview six (duration 2:27:38): Mania Bikof and Spiros Mitritsakis, founders of Lifeguard Hellas. The sixth interview was conducted on 12 April 2017 at the Lifeguard Hellas training

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Appendix 5: Rebecca van Kempen, Interview, 11 April 2017, 0:38:08-0:39:45.

⁵² Ibid., 0:28:56-0:29:02.

⁵³ Accommodation and Solidarity Space City Plaza, *The Best Hotel in Europe*, <https://best-hotel-in-europe.eu/> (accessed 20 July 2017).

⁵⁴ Ibid.

centre in Athens. Both 46 years old and both originally from the Greek island of Crete, the married couple now lives in Athens. Bikof and Mitritsakis share the same professional background, seeing as they are both physical education teachers and lifeguards. Parallel to their physical education teaching, they have been lifeguards since the age of 17 and owned Lifeguard Hellas lifeguarding school for 26 years. Since its foundation, the team has been operating all over Greece at water sports events and at beaches. During the influx, Bikof and Mitritsakis decided to focus their activities on Lesbos.⁵⁵

Interview seven (duration 1:14:26): Rebecca Dalby Bowler, volunteer coordinator with Khora. The seventh and final interview was conducted on 14 April 2017 in Khora. 26 years of age,⁵⁶ Bowler had previously worked for a social integration charity in her native England before moving to Greece. She had followed media coverage of the refugee influx closely and initially went to Lesbos to work for Starfish Foundation in mid-2016. After about a week, as Bowler realised that significantly fewer people came to Lesbos as a result of the introduction of the EU-Turkey Statement, she felt her efforts were more needed in Athens. Bowler worked for a month in an informal camp in Piraeus, port of Athens. Having settled in Greece, she became interested in Athen's refugee migrant squats and ultimately ended up working with Khora, where she had been for nine months at the time of the interview.⁵⁷

Khora is a community centre in Athens. The space is not exclusively for refugee migrants but on its website, a statement reads: "We are responding to this humanitarian crisis that is affecting those forced from their homes by war, poverty and climate change."⁵⁸ Also on the website, Khora's mission statement is found:

⁵⁵ Appendix 6: Mania Bikof and Spiros Mitritsakis, Interview, 12 April 2017, 0:46:06-0:48:14.

⁵⁶ Appendix 7: Rebecca Dalby Bowler, Interview, 14 April 2017, 0:12:54-0:13:00.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 0:00:29-0:04:56.

⁵⁸ Khora, *About Us*, <http://www.khora-athens.org/organisation/> (accessed 20 July 2017).

“The Community Centre’s aim is to facilitate shared ownership and active involvement by those who use the space and the local community, to create a space where people from a diverse set of backgrounds, cultures and languages can learn, work, create, socialise and relax. As well as to offering support, including but not limited to; food, dentistry, internet and computer access, information, legal support, education, a kids area, a women’s space, a carpentry and metal workshop and a safe space to spend the day.”⁵⁹

The total duration of the six interviews was ten hours. The design for the interviews was inspired by Laila Launsøe and Olaf Rieper and their chapter on qualitative interviews in the book ‘Forskning om og med mennesker.’⁶⁰ The interviews were semi-structured and followed an interview guide.⁶¹

Direct quotes have been refined, and edits are indicated by square brackets: ‘[]’. If part of a quotation is left out, it is indicated by three full stops: ‘...’. Certain colloquial words have been edited into formal written language, but contractions are retained. In direct quotations, the status of migrants are not adjusted to match the defined terms of the thesis. In many circumstances, informants refer to the term ‘refugees’, when essentially, one of the other terms; asylum seekers, irregular migrants or refugee migrants would comply with the specifications put forward in ‘Problem Area.’

The informants that this thesis relies on have been chosen on the basis of their active membership of pro-immigration groups. A common feature for the informants interviewed

⁵⁹ Khora, *Welcome to the Khora Community Centre*, <http://www.khora-athens.org/welcome-to-the-khora-community-centre/> (accessed 20 July 2017).

⁶⁰ Laila Launsøe & Olaf Rieper, *Forskning om og med mennesker* (Copenhagen: Nyt Nordisk Forlag Arnold Busck), Fifth Edition, 2005, 127-141.

⁶¹ See Appendix 11: Interview guide.

for this thesis is that, although their motivations for getting involved vary, they have all willingly taken an active role upon themselves. None of the informants are refugees themselves, and many of them lived outside of Greece or in another Greek location than Lesbos before the influx, but chose to move there as a response to European refugee regime practice.

It should be declared that when conducting an interview, there is a possibility that informants might restrict or modify their answers. The informants are regarded as trustworthy and there is no cause for discrediting their comments or intentions in the interview setting as not being representative for the group as a whole. This is done on the basis that informants were either group leaders or appointed by other group members upon enquiry for interviews. It is therefore assessed that the groups supplied informants that would speak on behalf of the respective groups in a fulfilling manner. Consequently, when informants speak about intra-group conditions, the thesis does generally not have any precautions. On the other hand, it is recognised that informants are biased as per their position within the European refugee regime. In spite of this realisation, the validity of statements by informants regarding other actors or the European refugee regime in general is not assessed. The ambition is to present the perception and stance of the pro-immigration groups, not to declare whether or not group members' criticism of the European refugee regime is factually sound.

Opting out on the Anti-Immigration Perspective

The initial ambition was for this thesis to present an equal amount of unique empirical data on both the pro- and anti-immigration perspectives. Before travelling to Greece to conduct interviews, representatives from both pro- and anti-immigration groups were contacted via e-mail. Out of the seven interviews that were ultimately recorded, only the one with Bikof

and Mitritsakis was arranged before departure. It turned out that getting in contact with potential informants was quite easy once on site on Lesbos and in Athens. At least this was the case with members of pro-immigration groups. Apart from the two interviews with members of Lifeguard Hellas, the interviews were scheduled by simply showing up at the sites where the groups were housed or by e-mailing or calling informants on relatively short notice. As it turned out, it proved difficult to get a chance to sit down with known or alleged anti-immigrant group members or sympathisers. Seemingly, people in this category were less open about their views and possible affiliations. After a number of failed attempts at scheduling interviews with representatives of anti-immigration groups, it became clear that it would not be possible in the amount of time left in Greece. As a final attempt, two phone calls were made to the Athens headquarters of GD. The calls, unfortunately, did not convince member of GD to let themselves be interviewed.⁶²

As a consequence of the realisation that it was not possible to conduct interviews with anti-immigration group members, the thesis instead focuses on pro-immigration groups, hence the research question. However, it is of value to the context of the refugee situation to present a limited understanding of civil groups within the European refugee regime, that represent a different social movement, that pro-immigration groups position themselves in opposition to. This is touched upon in a brief analysis of the Greek right-wing party GD. Admittedly, GD falls somewhat outside of the criteria of being a civil group in that it is in fact a political party, represented both in the Greek Parliament and the European Parliament (EP). Although the party has become part of the political establishment, as is further clarified

⁶² Appendix 10: Field notes, 3-6.

in the analysis of GD in the following chapter, its leaders maintain a strong anti-establishment policy and rhetoric and the party includes a violent grassroots following.

Golden Dawn: An Anti-Immigration Movement

This chapter serves as a brief introduction to the anti-immigration social movement that is also a response to the influx. In relation to the refugee situation, it is positioned in stark contrast to the pro-immigration social movement. As discussed in ‘The Refugee Situation,’ the anti-immigration sentiment is shared by many Greeks; a political party that is symptomatic for this sentiment is GD.

Based primarily on academic writings focusing on the popular appeal of the party as well as on its strategies to gather a following, this chapter is illustrating the structural and strategic construct of GD and how it has obtained such an influential position in Greek politics. The purpose of this chapter is not to thoroughly analyse GD in a specific theoretical perspective, but rather to illustrate the alternative to the pro-immigration social movement.

Having explored the ideology of the party, Antonis A. Ellinas finds that: “As is typical of far right parties, GD explicitly equates the state with the nation, citizenship with ethnicity ...

‘Democracy means state of the demos, that is of the People, made up of individuals of common descent.’”⁶³ It is therefore understood that the influx is in direct dispute with the ideals held by GD members, and that this incongruence is breeding ground for anti-immigration attitudes. GD has received a lot of notoriety this past decade, especially

⁶³ Antonis A. Ellinas, “The Rise of Golden Dawn: The New Face of the Far Right in Greece,” *South European Society and Politics*, volume 18, issue 4, 2013, 549.

since its successful 2012 national election result. The party has existed since 1980, albeit without gaining enough popular support to win any seats in parliament prior to 2012.⁶⁴ According to Alexandros Sakellariou, xenophobia has been on the rise in Greece since the 1990s. Despite being active at rallies throughout Greece, it was not until 2010 that GD managed to capitalise on the tendency by winning a seat in the Athens city council in the local elections.⁶⁵ Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS), Greece's largest rightist party at the time, withdrew its autonomous candidacy and instead ran alongside the Conservative New Democracy. Voters on the right were now left with the choice of voting for either the moderate Conservative coalition or GD, an option further to the right of the spot LAOS had vacated.⁶⁶ As it turned out, "In the municipal elections of 2010 in Athens the absence of a populist radical right candidate released far-right voters to move further to the (extreme) right."⁶⁷ Elias Dinas and others acknowledge that many voters had a demand for a far-right party and that helped pave the way for GD, but the authors also highlight that the party followed an effective strategy to win influence.⁶⁸

As such, Dinas and others claim that GD members were able to gain support from the momentum generated by increased immigration to Greece: "Since 2008, irregular flows of immigrants entered Greece mainly from Turkey and concentrated in certain areas of the centre of Athens. This wave of immigrants was predominantly settled in the neighbourhoods of the 2nd and 6th city districts,"⁶⁹. Furthermore, "The combination of rapid increase of immigrant population, high crime rates and urban degradation boosted the demand for anti-immigrant rhetoric ... It was therefore a straightforward task for any anti-immigration

⁶⁴ Alexandros Sakellariou, "Golden Dawn and Its Appeal to Greek Youth," *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung*, 2015, 6.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Elias Dinas and others, "From dusk to dawn: Local party organization and party success of right-wing extremism," *Party Politics*, volume 22, issue 1, 2016, 82.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 81.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 82-83.

party ... to mobilize support, by equating immigrants with criminals.”⁷⁰ GD leaders regarded the tumultuous situation as an opportunity to form a stronghold in the area in the hopes of mobilising ethnic Greeks against immigrants.⁷¹

GD was very successful in fulfilling the strategy. Research by Dinas and others shows that out of 20 local residents’ associations, GD were able to build ties with at least half of them. Once settled in the selected area of Athens, group members started emulating the role of government by donating goods and services to residents of strictly Greek nationality and swearing that they would protect civilians and persecute criminals, by taking the law into their own hands. This oath led to several violent clashes between GD and their sympathisers versus immigrants and leftists.⁷²

“Violence is an instrument of double utility in the strategy of the organization: it is used as a means of confrontation with the perceived enemies and as a symbol of power in order to attract members and voters ... It hence exploits the presence of pro-immigrant activists and antifa groups in order to create acceptance in and proximity with the local population and acquire visibility.”⁷³ Consequently, GD secured a strong presence and following in Athens where it was easy for party members, compared to opting on a national focus, by being well organised and always responsive, members were able to react to incidents in the community. This proactive strategy became a platform upon which members could illustrate the drive and efficiency of the party and inspire similar mobilisation and support across Greece.

In recent years, GD has succeeded in also gaining national success. In 2012 GD won 18 out of 300 seats in parliament and in the 2014 European elections, it got 9.39 per cent of the

⁷⁰ Ibid., 83.

⁷¹ Ibid., 85.

⁷² Ibid., 85-86.

⁷³ Ibid., 86.

votes. GD members have successfully mirrored the strategy that initially made the party popular in Athens unto other regions of the country.⁷⁴

“An outsider to parliamentary politics for nearly three decades after its foundation, GD was able to turn its pariah status into a symbol of its genuine and authentic opposition to the political system.”⁷⁵ In the latest national election in 2015, GD maintained its 18 seats in parliament but a different dispersion of votes meant that it is now Greece’s third largest party.

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Yiannis Baboulias analyses the electorate in the 2015 election. In relation to the refugee situation specifically, GD support seems to have somewhat decreased in metropolitan areas but increased in islands in the Aegean Sea, where the influx is arguably more felt. Notably, the elections were held in September 2015, the period when the influx peaked: “On Lesbos, the third biggest island in Greece, Golden Dawn’s share of the vote shot up to 7.8%, from 4.7% in January. On Samos, the party received 7.7%, from 5.5% in January. Across the Dodecanese, its percentage went up to 8.1% from 5.5%,”⁷⁷ an indication that GD’s incline in support is related to the influx of refugee migrants to islands in the Aegean Sea.

Comparing the findings in this chapter to the findings in ‘The Refugee Situation,’ might suggest that GD has been successful in contributing to the anti-immigration sentiment shared by a significant proportion of the Greek population.

⁷⁴ Sakellariou, “Golden Dawn and Its Appeal to Greek Youth,” 7.

⁷⁵ Ellinas, “The Rise of Golden Dawn,” 557.

⁷⁶ Yiannis Baboulias, *The EU’s woeful response to the refugee crisis has revived Golden Dawn*, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/sep/21/eu-refugee-crisis-golden-dawn-greek-neo-nazi-europe> (accessed 23 July 2017)

⁷⁷ Ibid.

The European Refugee Regime

In order to answer the research question, it is necessary to define the prerequisite to which informants relate. Seeing as this thesis is preoccupied with civil groups based in Greece, understanding that the Greek EU membership has consequences for national legislation and practices is significant. This chapter opens by presenting an understanding of regionalism in relation to forced migration and introducing the terms common legal framework and policy harmonisation. These two are prominent examples of the foundation upon which the European refugee regime is built. Subsequently, the thesis will present a regime understanding, based on four core concepts; principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures. When informants articulate criticism toward how the influx is being handled by the EU, states and international actors, this criticism can be understood as relating to the European refugee regime, and its four inherent terms. The concept of regime is then applied in a discussion of informant statements toward the European refugee regime, demonstrated in two examples. The informants are not regarded as experts on IR theory or all of the elements of the European refugee regime. The rationale for including informant statements in this chapter is to illustrate some of the mechanisms within the European refugee regime that informants are criticising and thereby how they position themselves and identify their role as actors.

European Union Regionalism

In order to analyse the efforts taken by the EU to implement a response to the influx, the concept of regionalism holds explanatory value: Regional collaboration between states is not a new phenomenon, but the EU, with its supranational laws, integral systemic structures, binding ties and impact on Members States is an example of regionalism. Alexander Betts claims that: “The most prominent example of regionalism is the EU, which has developed significant levels of institutionalized cooperation and policy integration.”⁷⁸ Just as any other concept of IR theory, regionalism has been described by numerous authors and each account differs slightly from the other. Betts’ analysis of regionalism is deemed as being of value to the ambitions of this chapter, namely because it elucidates the concept in a forced migration context. In this regard, Betts claims that: “the nature of forced migration is inherently regional. The causes, consequences, and responses to forced migration all have important regional aspects.”⁷⁹ Not only can regional conflict produce forced migration, but, as we have seen since the influx, a region on the receiving end of migration might struggle both in terms of providing care and access to human rights for immigrants, but also in terms of agreeing upon an action strategy in unison.⁸⁰ As the empirical examples presented later in this chapter show, the response by the EU as an institution to the influx has been questioned, not least by the pro-immigration informants that were interviewed for this thesis.

Betts discusses two terms within the regionalism concept that are of importance to forced migration, these being common legal framework and policy harmonisation:

⁷⁸ Alexander Betts, *Forced Migration and Global Politics* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons), 2009, 164

⁷⁹ Ibid., 174-75.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 175.

In essence, the term common legal framework relates to the fact that: “The refugee regime has not simply been defined by international treaties with global coverage. Rather, many of the legal mechanisms which protect the rights of refugees and other displaced people are regional treaties.”⁸¹ Most notably, the 1951 Convention is the central universal document recognised by most states across the globe. However, regional institutions might implement specific legal systems to match regional patterns of migration.⁸² This has been the case in the EU where the ‘European Convention on Human Rights’ and the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) represents an adaptation of policy to match the European irregular migration conditions.

In the EU, policy harmonisation happens when norms and rules of the Union are implemented into national norms and rules and institutions of Member States. This supranational approach is not rare in the EU; the implementation of the Euro to replace national currency in many Member States is a prime example of policy harmonisation of economic policy. In relation to asylum, the aforementioned CEAS and especially its Dublin System, are examples of policy harmonisation. The Schengen Agreement means that there is in principle free movement across borders within the EU and that the EU’s external border is mutual. As such, argues Betts, “one state’s asylum policy decisions will affect other European states.”⁸³ As presented, regionalism in terms of common legal framework and policy harmonisation are central to understanding the way Greece and other Member States have responded to the refugee migrant influx. Thus, it is understood that they as Member States have handed over parts of their sovereignty, in order to benefit from cooperation and

⁸¹ Ibid..

⁸² Ibid., 175-76.

⁸³ Ibid., 177.

coordination. Cooperation and coordination in this context are managed through the European refugee regime.

Conceptualising Regime

This thesis regards a regime as the “sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a given area of international relations”, as described by Stephen D. Krasner.⁸⁴ It is acknowledged that the regime concept is a debated one, but the analysis will not go into depth with extensive regime theory literature. Several sources were considered, and it became clear that the authors pointed to Krasner as having defined the standard formulation of what constitutes a regime. Thus, the regime concept, in this thesis, is determined by Krasner’s standard formulation that “Regimes must be understood as something more than temporary arrangements that change with every shift in power or interests.”⁸⁵ He differentiates between agreements and regimes, in the sense that agreements often are short term, one-off arrangements, and regimes are in place to facilitate agreements.⁸⁶

Returning to Krasner’s regime definition; *principles* “are beliefs of fact, causation and rectitude”, *norms* “are standards of behavior defined in terms of rights and obligations”, *rules* “are specific prescriptions or proscriptions for action”, and *decision-making procedures* “are prevailing practices for making and implementing collective choice.”⁸⁷ Accordingly, an elaboration of principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures in present context is in order. Beginning by making a clear distinction of principles and norms on one hand and rules and decision-making procedures on the other:

⁸⁴ Krasner, *International Regimes*, 2.

⁸⁵ Ibid..

⁸⁶ Ibid., 3.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 2.

Principles and norms make up the characteristics of the regime. For instance the principles of non-refoulement, non-discrimination or the right to claim asylum, are key to defining the European refugee regime, and should any of these be changed or abandoned, it would be a change to the European refugee regime itself.⁸⁸ The UNHCR alongside large NGOs and INGO, are central actors upholding norms within the European refugee regime.

Rules and decision-making procedures relate to regimes differently. In Krasner's definition, rules do not necessarily equate law. However, in the case of the EU adaptation of common legal frameworks and policy harmonisation, the rules of the EU must be seen as legally binding. Examples of these include the CEAS that regulates state behaviour in the European refugee regime. Whereas changes of norms and principles are changes of the regime itself, changes in rules and decision-making procedures are changes within the regime. For instance, the de facto suspension of the Dublin Regulation, or the EU-Turkey Statement is a change to the European refugee regime.⁸⁹ A final point on norms, principles, rules and decision-making procedures is that "If the principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures of a regime become less coherent, or if actual practice is increasingly inconsistent with principles, norms, rules, and procedures, then a regime has weakened."⁹⁰ It is arguably inadequate practice within - and weakening of the European refugee regime that informants reacted upon, when they chose to get involved by joining Greece-based civil groups in response to the influx. This perceived inconsistent behaviour will now be discussed by analysing informant statements on central European refugee regime elements and actors, meaning the EU, Member States, UNHCR, INGOs, NGOs, other social movements and other civil groups.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 4.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 3.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 5.

Example I: The Common European Asylum System

CEAS is a common legal framework of the EU; a system that standardises asylum procedures across Member States.⁹¹ In this section, the Dublin Regulation and EuroDac are discussed as two key elements in the European refugee regime, relating to asylum. CEAS consists of: the Asylum Procedures Directive, the Reception Conditions Directive, the Qualification Directive, the Dublin Regulation and the EuroDac Regulation.⁹² Of those, the Dublin Regulation and EuroDac were instrumental in affecting how the influx went on to disperse after entering the EU.

This section about the construct of the CEAS is based on literature published on behalf of the EU itself. The selected literature is not the collection of legal documents that dictate CEAS operations themselves but rather the formulations, as they are purveyed on online EU platforms. As such, the sources are valid but not necessarily impartial. EU publications must be regarded as the main source of information about the CEAS at present; however, the information found in EU publications might downplay arguments that the CEAS and especially the Dublin Regulation are inadequate in response to the influx, and that EU Member States are failing to meet their criteria. Consequently, this chapter will challenge the EU literature by analysing the implementation of - and obligations contained within the Dublin Regulation from a critical angle.

⁹¹ The European Commission, *Common European Asylum System*, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum_en (accessed 13 June 2017).

⁹² European Commission, *A Common European Asylum System* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union), 2014, 1.

Gradually ratified by EU Member States throughout the 1990s,⁹³ the Dublin Regulation is a common basis for distribution of people claiming asylum across the Schengen Area.

According to the European Commission, the purpose of the Regulation is to “ensure quick access to asylum procedures and an examination of an application on the merits by a single, clearly determined Member State.”⁹⁴

The Dublin Regulation and EuroDac form the Dublin System. EuroDac is the EU’s database for fingerprints of people claiming asylum in Member States. Whereas the Regulation is the set of rules regarding the distribution of asylum seekers, EuroDac is a database dedicated to registration and storing of fingerprints. When national authorities process asylum claims, they are able to refer to the EuroDac for potential existing fingerprints taken in other EU Member States. If the fingerprints have been registered in another country, that country is responsible for processing the asylum application. According to plan, the applicant will thusly be transferred to the country where the fingerprints were initially recorded.⁹⁵ Under the Dublin System, factors such as the applicant having family in a certain Member State or valid visas might come into consideration. However, the standard procedure is to distribute people in accordance with the fingerprints system.⁹⁶

On the EU website where the Dublin System is explained, it is clear that members of the Commission are aware of the pressure that the Dublin System is under: “The large-scale,

⁹³ European Council, Council of the European Union, *Agreement*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/documents-publications/agreements-conventions/agreement/?aid=1990090> (accessed 18 May 2017).

⁹⁴ European Commission, *Country responsible for asylum application (Dublin)*, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum/examination-of-applicants_en (accessed 23 July 2017).

⁹⁵ European Commission, *Identification of applicants (EURODAC)*, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum/identification-of-applicants_en (accessed 18 May 2017).

⁹⁶ European Commission, *Country responsible for asylum application (Dublin)*, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum/examination-of-applicants_en (accessed 23 July 2017).

uncontrolled arrival of migrants and asylum seekers has put a strain not only on many Member States' asylum systems, but also on the CEAS as a whole. The volume and concentration of arrivals has exposed in particular the weakness of the Dublin System, which establishes the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application based primarily on the first point of irregular entry.”⁹⁷

In September 2015, at the height of the influx, the Commission presented a proposal to “help address the refugee crisis.”⁹⁸ Popularly known as the Juncker Plan after European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, the proposal included an ambitious strategy for a new relocation system to replace the Dublin System. The proposal suggested some general actions to implement in case of future pressure but, most curiously in relation to the refugee situation, and indeed to Member States that had been mostly affected by the dictations of the Dublin System, the proposal by the Commission featured a suggestion for emergency relocation of 120,000 refugees staying in Greece, Hungary and Italy under compliance with the Dublin System. This specific number was an estimation of the amount of people in obvious need of international protection, meaning that they came from either Eritrea, Iraq or Syria.⁹⁹ “The relocation would be done according to a mandatory distribution key using objective and quantifiable criteria (40% of the size of the population, 40% of the GDP, 10% of the average number of past asylum applications, 10% of the unemployment rate).”¹⁰⁰ The attempts at implementing the Juncker Plan was arguably an attempt at policy harmonisation between Member States to ensure that potential state interests and policies could not

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ European Commission, *Refugee Crisis: European Commission takes decisive action* (Strasbourg: European Commission - press release), 2015, 1.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 1-4.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 1.

influence reception of refugee migrants. Nevertheless, the proposal was never ratified as EP ultimately turned it down.

Since the spring of 2016, the Commission and EP have been negotiating a plan to reshape the common EU asylum allocation system. However, the two institutions are in disagreement over whether to reform the common legal framework of the Dublin Regulation into a version IV, which takes disproportionate asylum pressure to Member States into account, as proposed by the Commission¹⁰¹ or to overhaul the Dublin System in favour of a more extensive common legal framework in the shape of a common EU collection of asylum applications, where applying for asylum in the EU, rather than to a specific Member State, would be possible, as proposed by EP. Should the latter suggestion eventually be implemented, it would most likely entail that the CEAS would be restructured and become more unavoidable and strictly governed.¹⁰²

The abandoned Juncker Plan and the ongoing negotiations between the Commission and EP underline that regimes are prone to change.

As accounted for in ‘Problem Area,’ Greece has seen a massive mismatch between how many irregular migrants arrived in the country and how many, or rather how proportionately few, applied for asylum in Greece. This reality is testament to the defectiveness of the Dublin System. Three factors are at play: The general ineffectiveness of the Dublin System; the inability or unwillingness of national authorities to comply with regime rules in order to relieve some of the pressure from themselves and finally that refugee migrants might have a specific destination in mind and refrain from registering with the police in the first country they arrive in. Considering these circumstances and the statistics on arrivals versus

¹⁰¹ Detelin Ivanov, “Reform of the Dublin system,” *European Parliamentary Research Service*, 2017, 4-5.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 3.

applications in Greece, it follows that Greece was a transit country for the majority of irregular migrants in the EU, whereof many were refugee migrants.

However, the freedom of movement for irregular migrants in Greece has been further limited by reintroduction of border control and the 2016 EU-Turkey Statement. Moreover, Greece's position as transit country has also been changed.

Example II: The European Union-Turkey Statement

Between November 2015 and March 2016, the members of the European Council met with representatives from the Turkish government in order to discuss what would eventually become the EU-Turkey Statement. According to the official press release, the purpose of the series of meetings was to strengthen the bonds between the EU and Turkey and to discuss and hopefully reach an agreement on an action plan in response to the influx of irregular migrants.¹⁰³ Essentially a quid pro quo installation, the Statement which announced the common action plan consists of nine initiatives meant to relieve Greece of some of the influx of irregular migrants coming from Turkey. Of these nine initiatives, four of them are directly targeting the Council's mission to limit the influx to Greece, whilst the remaining five initiatives are a representation of what Turkey receives in return for accepting the return of irregular migrants from Greece.

In the following, the content of the nine initiatives is discussed. Rather than a point by point examination, the general content of the Statement as it is presented in the official press release is analysed:

¹⁰³ European Council, *EU-Turkey statement, 18 March 2016* (Brussels: Press Office - General Secretariat of the Council), 2016, 1.

Per 20 March 2016, migrants crossing from Turkey to Greek islands irregularly will be deported back to Turkey: “Migrants not applying for asylum [in Greece] or whose application has been found unfounded or inadmissible in accordance with the said directive will be returned to Turkey ... The costs of the return operations of irregular migrants will be covered by the EU”.¹⁰⁴ However, whenever a Syrian national is returned to Turkey, another Syrian asylum seeker is to be resettled somewhere in the EU; a one-to-one resettlement exchange.¹⁰⁵ Turkey is the party responsible for ensuring that no new routes from Turkey to the EU will emerge.¹⁰⁶

In return for the efforts above, Turkey have been given benefits that diplomatically ties the country more closely together with the EU in the form a promise of visa liberations for Turkish citizens travelling to Member States; €3 billion in EU funding for the fulfilment of the action plans described in the Statement, including improving conditions for asylum seekers in Turkey; an upgrade of the EU-Turkey Customs Union and cooperation on improvement of humanitarian conditions in Syria.¹⁰⁷

Further cooperation is arguably a positive measure for both parties but, more controversially, “The EU and Turkey reconfirmed their commitment to re-energise the accession process as set out in their joint statement of 29 November 2015.”¹⁰⁸ For decades, Turkey has on numerous occasions applied for membership of the EU unsuccessfully. The main argument behind the decisions to disallow Turkish inclusion has been that shifting Turkish governments have failed to provide its citizens with the civil rights and justice required for citizens of EU Member States, with conditions for ethnic minorities and non-citizens being

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 1-2.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 1.

even more questionable. Critics of Turkish membership therefore are fearful that any collaboration with Turkey will bring the country one step closer to a membership that it should not be granted.¹⁰⁹

In March 2017, one year after the enactment of the common action plan, the European Commission published an assessment of its implementation, declaring it a massive success: “one year on, the Statement continues to deliver proof of its effectiveness on a daily basis. Irregular arrivals [in Greece] have dropped 97%, while the number of lives lost at sea has decreased equally substantially.”¹¹⁰ The enormous drop that is referred to in the assessment is somewhat difficult to validate because it does not specify under which circumstances the data has been produced or exactly in which period of time. It is further stated that the cooperation with Turkey has been effective: The EU has donated the funds it committed to, Turkey has worked toward improving conditions for irregular migrants and preventing human smuggling.¹¹¹ However, informants Mania Bikof and Spiros Mitritsakis suspect that the human smuggling market has simply moved elsewhere. Instead of transporting people from Turkey to Greece, smugglers are now allegedly offering to take asylum seekers who are at risk of deportation from Greece to other countries in Europe.¹¹² Lastly, the EU and Turkey have been “cooperating closely on resettlement and return.”¹¹³ Taking a closer look at resettlement statistics from the introduction of the Statement up until 26 July 2017, 7,853 Syrians have been resettled in the EU, whilst 1,877 irregular migrants have been returned

¹⁰⁹ Armagan Emre Cakir, *Fifty Years of EU-Turkey Relations*, ed. Armagan Emre Cakir (Abingdon: Routledge), 2011, 1-3.

¹¹⁰ European Commission, *EU-Turkey Statement One Year On* (Brussels: The European Commission), 2017, 1.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Appendix 6: Bikof and Mitritsakis, 0:27:16-0:28:30.

¹¹³ European Commission, *EU-Turkey Statement One Year On*, 1.

from Greece back to Turkey,¹¹⁴ bearing witness of a considerable mismatch in the proclaimed one-to-one resettlement agenda, at least for the time being.

Considering the significant decrease in arrivals to Greece, the support for the implementation of the action plan and the notable change in reception statistics, the Statement appears to be somewhat of a triumph. However, in the Commission's positive assessment, the implicit human and socio-economic consequences of the Statement are not visible in the statistics.

Since the implementation of the Statement, as hinted in 'Example I: The Common European Asylum System,' Greece has largely been transformed from a transit country into a country that now has to deal with a different challenge in relation to migration into the EU. At the Khora day centre in Athens, informant Rebecca Dalby Bowler has witnessed a definite shift in how long people consult Khora: "Needs are shifting and as more and more people are leaving Greece ..., either ... through the relocation scheme or family reunification or finding illegal ways to move [away from] Greece, more and more of the people that are in Athens are people that will be here to stay."¹¹⁵

The EU-Turkey Statement and the tendency that Greece is becoming a host country at a permanent basis are arguably disputable on at least four levels:

Firstly, the Statement is a more formal neglect of the Dublin Regulation, suggesting a change of rules and decision-making procedures within the European refugee regime. The country where the refugee migrant first sets foot is no longer necessarily responsible for processing the asylum claim. Evidently, the Dublin System was not successful prior to the Statement, but for the EU to willingly withdraw it is extraordinary.

¹¹⁴ European Commission, *Operational implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement* https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/press-material/docs/state_of_play_-_eu-turkey_en.pdf (accessed 29 July 2017).

¹¹⁵ Appendix 7: Bowler, 0:16:28-0:16:44.

Secondly, the Statement is problematic for refugee migrants planning on travelling further into the EU after their initial arrival in Greece. An obvious conclusion would be that once a refugee migrant has managed to escape the country in which he was persecuted and has the ability to claim asylum in a second country, his immediate concerns vanish; any deliberations the refugee migrant might have regarding where he would like to resettle is a luxury that lies outside of the basic conditions of the European refugee regime. Nevertheless, although the Dublin Regulation already entails that asylum seekers have their cases tried in the first EU Member State they encounter, the Statement ensures that people might be expelled from the EU altogether. For these reasons, more people have chosen to avoid registration and now live under the radar somewhere in Greece, writes Helena Smith.¹¹⁶ A March 2017 estimate by the Greek government suggests that 62,434 people are caught in limbo in Greece without proper access to protection and support and no opportunity move to another safe country.¹¹⁷

Thirdly, with Greece's financial decline in the past decade, accommodating asylum seekers, helping them financially, providing them with food, educating them, processing their asylum claims and potentially assisting them in their eventual integration into Greece is a real challenge. Even though some of the demand can be satisfied with the help of the over €1 billion in reception support that Greece has received from the EU¹¹⁸, there still lies a tangible challenge in ensuring a viable distribution of Greece's limited funds as well as acceding to the challenges that are not part of the immediate reception procedure and might not be solved

¹¹⁶ Helena Smith, *Refugees in Greece suffering after EU deal with Turkey, say NGOs*, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/17/refugees-in-greece-suffering-after-eu-deal-with-turkey-say-ngos> (accessed 01 June 2017).

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ European Commission, *EU-Turkey Statement One Year On*, 3.

solely by allocating a certain amount of money. The Statement is also fuel to the fire for the anti-immigration voices, claiming that the burden of hosting asylum seekers is out of proportions and that the EU is forcing the problem on Greece.

Lastly, members of the European Council have arguably turned the blind eye to the unsuitable conditions for asylum seekers in Turkey. Turkey has received some acclaim for hosting many refugees, especially from neighbouring Syria, but is criticised by Human Rights Watch and United States Department of State for not granting them adequate protection. Amongst the concerns is that “the government only grants Syrians temporary protection rather than refugee status, while other nationalities of asylum seekers do not receive that.”¹¹⁹ In the United States Department of State report it is claimed that asylum seekers in Turkey live under the paradox that they receive insufficient support to maintain a decent livelihood but, at the same time, they have little or no access to legal employment. As such, asylum seeking families, including children, are engaged in begging or working physically harmful illegal jobs. Moreover, “Syrian refugee women and girls are vulnerable to sex trafficking ... Some girls have been reportedly sold into marriages with Turkish men, in which they are highly vulnerable to domestic servitude or sex trafficking.”¹²⁰

The EU’s deal with Turkey is a compromise to the principles and norms of the EU. The examples of conditions for refugee migrants in Turkey suggest that sending someone from Greece to Turkey is a borderline violation of non-refoulement and non-discrimination.

¹¹⁹ Human Rights Watch, *Turkey, Events of 2015*, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/turkey> (accessed 01 June 2017).

¹²⁰ United States Department of State, *2016 Trafficking in Persons Report - Turkey*, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/577f959313.html> (accessed 01 June 2017).

Five of the nine informants¹²¹ that were interviewed for this thesis expressed that they feel that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan cannot be trusted to respect his obligations in the Statement. Informant independent volunteer Eric Kempson voices his concern about the EU negotiating such a significant plan with Turkey:

“In this situation, I think it [mass-influx] might come again here, in the north of Lesbos, I think, because Erdogan, the President ... of Turkey, he’s threatening and he’s using the refugees as a tool. He’s threatening to open the gates if he doesn’t get the money he wants, these visas he wants. He’s getting very pissed off with Holland, with Germany at the moment, screaming and shouting and things like this. And he’s said he will open the gates. If he opens the gates, ... you know we’ve brought in 600,000, we might get a million thrown at us because he’ll push them.”¹²²

Examples I and II have helped to signify three things; first, that the EU is a major actor within the European refugee regime; second, that changes are happening within the European refugee regime in response to the influx; and third, that informants are motivated to take action by conditions within the European refugee regime.

Collective Action Response

This chapter features a discussion of the logic of collective action and an explanation of why individuals enter into groups in the first place, and of what they gain from doing so.

Subsequently, the concept of freeriding is discussed on three levels: inter-group level,

¹²¹ Appendix 3: E. Kempson and P. Kempson, 1:11:56-1:12:29 + Appendix 4: Adam, 0:20:35-0:20:55 + Appendix 6: Bikof and Mitritsakis, 0:36:05-0:37:31.

¹²² Appendix 3: E. Kempson and P. Kempson, 1:11:56-1:12:29.

intra-group level and state level. Throughout the chapter, theoretical considerations are tested, by discussing these with regards to the empirical material produced during the fieldtrip. Mancur Olson is treated as the primary source in the chapter, because he is recognised for his contribution to collective action theory by pointing out that group members do not necessarily share the same characteristics as the group as a whole. Notably, Olson emphasises this argument by use of the term freeriding. Olson's arguments about freeriding are used in tandem with Russell Hardin and Alexander Betts. Hardin raises some valid points that are included because Olson, although appreciated for his pioneering approach to the term, is deemed as being somewhat diffuse in his disentanglement of freeriding. Betts' writing on freeriding is implemented because it is specifically related to freeriding in a forced migration setting.

The Logic of Collective Action

In his book 'The Logic of Collective Action,' Mancur Olson explains how individuals join organisations in order to achieve goals and gains, which are unachievable by any one individual. Olson writes from an economic theories position, and parts of his book are directed toward economic scholars.¹²³ However, the overall theoretical framework performs well in addressing the research question at hand. Olson describes how "Economic incentives are not, to be sure, the only incentives; people are sometimes also motivated by a desire to win prestige, respect, friendship, and other social and psychological objectives."¹²⁴ Four of nine informants are unpaid volunteers, two are on stipends, one is employed by an NGO and the last two own a lifeguard school and have decided to utilise private funds. It is not reasonable to rule out that there were no economic incentives for the informants to get

¹²³ Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*, 3.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 60.

involved, but the narrative that emerges indicates that informants are driven by motivations other than economic kinds. Amongst the pro-immigration informants, the motivation for taking action revolved around a common care for people in danger, however with important differences amongst them. Dina Adam of Starfish Foundation described herself as a “person who always helped ... I believe in helping ... when this thing [the influx] started, it happened right on the middle of our front door ... it was impossible to close your eyes and [not] do anything about it. Impossible.”¹²⁵ Adam is not alone in expressing an imperative need to help. Representing Lighthouse Relief, Ivory Hackett-Evans from England explains how she, with her maritime background, “decided to become involved because this crisis is [on] my continent, and I felt a responsibility to use my skills to contribute in some way.”¹²⁶ It is interesting how they both express a close communal concern for the situation, even though their initial geographical distance to the events on Lesbos varied greatly. Adam being a Mithymna local and Hackett-Evans being a British citizen, the distance to the unfolding events seem to play little or no role in their decision to help. What does seem to play a crucial role is the communal feeling shared by the two, on two different levels; Adam being a local, and Hackett-Evans being European. They both view their decision to help as a product of their merits, how they see themselves and what previous experience they have. With Rebecca Dalby Bowler, also a British citizen now on a stipend with Khora in Athens, a narrative of an imperative feeling for taking action and a feeling of communal responsibility toward the influx seems to recur. It is considered that this feeling of communal responsibility, stems from an understanding by the informants that EU Member States, including their own country of origin, is part of the European refugee regime. Events within the overall European refugee regime is therefore understood to have consequences throughout the regime. When asked

¹²⁵ Appendix 4: Adam, 0:07:50-0:08:11.

¹²⁶ Appendix 9: E-mail from Hackett-Evans, 13 April 2017.

why she had decided to come to Greece and help, she explained that she was “just watching loads of shit going on in the media” which resulted in her “feeling a bit helpless and disconnected from it, so I wanted to come here and meet people and ... kind of the classic thing, hear people’s stories, and hear them, and support them, and show some solidarity.”¹²⁷

It would seem that the collective good that the groups work to achieve are to be understood as the strengthening of norms and principles within the European refugee regime; in this thesis referred to under the overall term of human rights. However, informants were also found to gain personally from other aspects of their contribution, in a way that corresponds with the informants’ morality and what Adam refers to as: “Me being a volunteer. Of course I am getting something out of it. A part of me feels good doing that. We are all made like that.”¹²⁸

Adam is not alone in feeling rewarded by doing good. When talking about the limitations to the degree of help her group offers, Mania Bikof of Lifeguard Hellas recalls how at the beginning of the influx she and her husband set no limitations to the help they would provide: “Every time you rescued someone, you felt like a superhero. When they came off the boat they would hug you, kiss you. They were so grateful.”¹²⁹ Even though she speaks about how her work made her feel good in more indirect terms than does Adam, it is fair to argue that feeling good about helping is important for both of the informants.

What then is interesting is to examine the way they chose to act on their initial impulse. Why do individuals organise themselves in groups in order to achieve their goals? Olson argues that one characterising thing about groups is that they exist in order to advance the interests of their members. Failing to do so might result in the demise of the group.¹³⁰ Although coherence and harmony within the pro-immigration groups are important, some of them

¹²⁷ Appendix 7: Bowler, 0:02:59-0:03:52.

¹²⁸ Appendix 4: Adam, 0:33:28-0:33:36.

¹²⁹ Appendix 6: Bikof and Mitritsakis, 1:36:37-1:36:50.

¹³⁰ Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*, 6.

deviate in this aspect from Olson's definition. The main agenda for the emergency and secondary response groups is not improve conditions for their members in a strictly economic sense, as it would be for instance for a trade union. Rather, the emergency and secondary response groups exist first and foremost to rescue refugee migrants who are at risk of drowning at sea and the ensuing assistance. On the other hand, the psychosocial Athens-based groups, City Plaza and Khora, comply better with Olson's suggestion, as they hope to improve the long term conditions for refugee migrants in Greece, which many of the members are exactly. The different groups that this thesis deals with vary greatly in what goals they try to obtain, but common for them is that they serve as platforms from which individuals can act upon their motivations.

In the context of this thesis, the common denominator for the pro-immigration groups is a belief that it is imperative to help refugee migrants who are fleeing hardship and are undergoing dangerous situations doing so. This stance arguably reflects a positive attitude toward universal human rights, amongst others: freedom of movement, the right to life and the right to seek asylum,¹³¹ and this stance also helps to define the collective good that the pro-immigration groups are working to achieve. Informants indicate that groups on Lesbos gain from inter-group cooperation and organisation in order to contribute to their collective good. Bikof reflects that different groups do different jobs, and by cooperating and coordinating it is possible to contribute more comprehensively.¹³² However, in cooperation, the burden is rarely distributed evenly, and group members might utilise the possibility to freeride on the efforts of others. With regards to the influx, cooperation and coordination would seem to be of high priority to anyone interested in safeguarding the lives of migrants crossing the Aegean Sea from Turkey to Greece. However, Eric Kempson expresses his

¹³¹ "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," *United Nations General Assembly*, (Paris: United Nations), 1948.

¹³² Appendix 6: Bikof and Mitritsakis, 1:34:39-1:36:21.

dissatisfaction with what he believes is a subpar effort contributed by large actors of the European refugee regime, such as the EU, UNHCR and Greek government, relative to their presumed capabilities.¹³³

Freeriding

This mechanism where an actor within a group profits from the collective action of the group without contributing to the collective good themselves, can be understood through the concept of freeriding.

Freeriding is a concept that is conditional of the total number of individuals involved: It is easier to freeride in situations with large amounts of contributors, where the absence of one individual's contribution does not affect the common gain significantly. Hardin reflects that: "The signal difference is that I can cheat in the large-number exchange by free riding on the contributions of others, whereas such cheating in the two-person case would commonly be illegal, because it would require my taking from you without giving you something you prefer in return."¹³⁴ What E. Kempson then gives words to is large organisations freeriding on the efforts of smaller groups and volunteers, on the collective issue of saving lives of irregular migrants who arrive on Lesbos. E. Kempson further elaborates that, in his experience, most large NGOs and INGOs are only there to take photographs and receive funding, before moving on to the next big disaster. In this scenario, the sum of all pro-immigration groups, NGOs and volunteers make up the group, and the organisations that E. Kempson refers to as 'mafia NGOs'¹³⁵ make up a sub-group within the European refugee regime that gains from the collective good, without proportionate contribution.

¹³³ Appendix 3: E. Kempson and P. Kempson, 0:18:51-0:31:20

¹³⁴ Russell Hardin, *The Free Rider Problem*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/free-rider/> (accessed 21 July 2017).

¹³⁵ Appendix 3: E. Kempson and P. Kempson, 0:18:59-0:19:05

Actors do not only freeride on the inter-group level, it also occurs on the intra-group level:

Adam, mentions reading a question in a report: “Are you willing to come to Africa without a camera in your pocket?”¹³⁶ She equates the question with a situation when boats came ashore carrying refugee migrants, whilst volunteers and bystanders were preoccupied with taking pictures, rather than assisting. In this scenario, passersby and volunteers helping people who just crossed the Aegean Sea are contributing to the collective good, whilst a few people freeride by taking pictures of the scene without contributing, but with the gain of having pictures to show as faux proof of their contribution. Without the initial help from volunteers and bystanders there would have been no humanitarian aid scene to document to begin with.

Freeriding also takes place on the state level: “International cooperation is necessary for overcoming the most serious negative consequences of forced migration,” according to Betts. He stresses that: “No one state acting in isolation is likely to be able or willing to address a large scale refugee or IDP situation by itself.”¹³⁷

Betts points to the fact that inter-state cooperation and coordination are essential in order to remedy the negative consequences of large scale displacement, as the influx this thesis addresses is an example of. However, looking at inter-state cooperation mechanisms in detail is beside the point of this thesis, seeing as the focus is on civil groups.

Betts argues that: “To some extent, refugee and IDP protection might be considered to be global or regional public goods insofar as the provision of protection benefits a number of states, irrespective of whether they themselves contribute to providing protection.”¹³⁸ When

¹³⁶ Appendix 4: Adam, 0:32:50-0:33:06.

¹³⁷ Betts, *Forced Migration and Global Politics*, 80.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 81.

Germany decided to accept a large number of refugee migrants, it benefitted all of the EU Member States that were then able to freeride on the collective good supplied by Germany. It follows that: “durable solutions and action to address the underlying causes of displacement might also be regarded to confer non-excludable benefits to states. This is because, once provided, they will benefit a number of states - in terms of providing security and fulfilling humanitarian goals - irrespective of whether those states actually contribute to provision.”¹³⁹ This becomes central to understanding two things: First; why there is room for pro-immigration groups on Lesbos and in Athens to handle what arguably are state and EU responsibilities, and secondly; why the groups that the nine informants represent receive little or no support from government and INGOs. It is fair to deduce that part of the answer has to do with freeriding. If pro-immigration groups are able to attend to saving lives of refugee migrants, there is little or no incentive for government or INGOs to take action as the responsibility for fulfilling humanitarian goals is then being met. With the EU being, amongst other things, a human rights project, as is recognised under the ‘EU Charter of Fundamental Rights’: “Human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights – these values are embedded in the EU treaties,”¹⁴⁰ it can be argued that these norms are only partially met during the influx in Greece, and bearing in mind its lesser resources, the pro-immigration movement accepts responsibility for maintaining a certain level of human rights within the European refugee regime, arguably disproportionately so in comparison to larger actors. As discussed earlier, this also helps to understand why E. Kempson expresses discontent toward the large INGOs, UNHCR, the Greek government and

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ European Union, *Human rights*, https://europa.eu/european-union/topics/human-rights_en (accessed 18 July 2017).

the EU often in bombastic terms; he is aware that the collective good he is a part of supplying is being exposed to freeriding.

In conclusion it is worth noting that if humanitarian goals were met, and the collective good was supplied by the EU for instance, the pro-immigration groups' *raison d'être* would vanish.

The Social Movement of Pro-Immigration Groups

This chapter of the thesis discusses the concept of social movement. Social movement theory is central to the issues discussed throughout this thesis as it is in essence a discussion of the relationship between more or less powerful actors within a given regime. The main medium of reference for this chapter is Charles Tilly and Lesley J. Wood's 'Social Movements, 1768-2012'. In the book, the authors present an extensive overview of social movements. Their work is pivotal in relation to understanding the term WUNC (worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment) displays that is implemented as a central tool to identify common denominators amongst the pro-immigration civil groups. Where applicable, accounts from Tilly's solo effort 'Stories, Identities, and Political Change' are implemented to supplement the elucidations in 'Social Movements 1768-2012'. Sara Koopman's writing on social movements is likewise introduced in order to nuance the arguments.

Social Movements are often positioned in opposition to an establishment and Tilly and Wood stress that movements can only truly prosper within a democratic environment. Referring to historical epochs, such as the Soviet Union, Communist China, Colonialism and Feudal Britain, they argue that social movements are largely unsuccessful in such settings where

democracy is either weak or non-existent.¹⁴¹ “Social movements occasionally form in democratic crevices of segmented or otherwise authoritarian regimes.”¹⁴² In such environments where people have restricted or no rights to assemble, express different opinions and protests, launch or join a social movement is a lot riskier. Should the social movement fail and the regime be left unchanged, the ruler will punish the rebels severely.¹⁴³ This is arguably what happened in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, when several of the uprisings were stifled. The social movement took shape within an environment where it could not succeed and the backlash left many countries in an even more unstable condition than they had been in before the protests. Interestingly in the context of this thesis, the instability that occurred after the Arab Spring can be seen as one of the key elements producing the mass-outflow of migrants from the Middle East and North Africa.

The term social movement is intended to be neutral; however: “By the twenty-first century, people all over the world recognized the term “social movement” as a trumpet call, as a counterweight to oppressive power, as a summons to popular action against a wide range of scourges.”¹⁴⁴ As explained in the paragraph above, it is true that the definition of social movement entails the element of rebellion toward a government, however, social movement must not be understood as an uncompromising term of endearment, as a social movement can work for any cause, not just ones that would be considered either humanitarian or moral.

¹⁴¹ Charles Tilly and Lesley J. Wood, *Social Movements, 1768-2012* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers), Third Edition, 2013, 124-26.

¹⁴² Ibid., 127.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 138-39.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 3.

Introducing the Concept of Worthiness, Unity, Numbers and Commitment

It is of importance to distinguish that a certain level of persistence and interaction is required for a popularly mobilised action to be an actual social movement. One might argue that Tilly and Wood are somewhat unspecific about exactly what characteristics are required for a series of public group actions to qualify for the social movement predicate. However, for movement leaders to be able to include, construct and adapt WUNC displays is an essential feature that separates the wheat from the chaff. A proper social movement requires “a particular connected, evolving, historical set of political interactions and practices. It means the distinctive combination of campaign, repertoire, and WUNC displays.”¹⁴⁵

Any social movement must include the four elements of WUNC, when appearing in public. First, *worthiness* refers to the demeanour of the members of the group. Members must act civilized and lead by example. If the public is convinced that members of the social movement are decent, respectable people, its legitimacy will not be in doubt.

Secondly, *unity* is important in a social movement. Members must look and act similarly. It can be by wearing the same t-shirts, chanting the same distinctive songs or simply by subscribing to a joint narrative.

Thirdly, in relation to *numbers*, the movement must have a significant following to be able to attract a crowd when marching or collect several signatures on petitions.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 8.

Finally, members must show *commitment* to the cause, rain or shine. Members must show that they are willing to fight for the movement and defend the viewpoints and actions of the movement, if challenged by friends, family members and opinion holders.¹⁴⁶

These four factors might give the implication that members of social movements have to abandon all individuality and individual thought. However, this is not (necessarily) the case, according to Tilly and Wood, who claim that: “Analysts often treat “the movement” as a single unitary actor, thus obscuring both (a) the incessant jockeying and realignment that always go on within social movements and (b) the interaction among activists, constituents, targets, authorities, allies, rivals, enemies, and audiences that makes up the changing texture of social movements.”¹⁴⁷ Interestingly, Tilly argues that there is rarely equilibrium between WUNC elements within a social movement. It is, for instance, not difficult to imagine a scenario in which a social movement signifies strength in numbers, but people who jump the bandwagon are not all equally involved or determined and thereby the movement lacks worthiness, unity or commitment.¹⁴⁸

When analysing the WUNC displays of any social movement, one must keep in mind that the values expressed by WUNC elements are not necessarily an exact reflection of the actual mission statement, or rather *claim making* of the movement. Seeing that the main purpose of WUNC displays is to mediate a message to members of society who are not already part of the social movement, the displays may be structured in a way which instils sympathy for the movement and its leaders. This might be a plot to attract new members or donations or convince the audience of the authenticity of the movement. The WUNC displays may

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 5.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 7.

¹⁴⁸ Charles Tilly, *Stories, Identities, and Political Change* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers), 2002, 89.

therefore portray a rosy image of the social movement that it does not live up to on a daily basis.

The vast majority of analytical discussion raised in this chapter about the pro-immigration groups can either directly or more subtly be regarded as factors contributing to the WUNC of the social movement of which each group make up a significant part. At the end of this chapter, a joint analysis pinpointing common features and deviations within the pro-immigration social movement is featured.

The Room for Social Movement in the Context of the Refugee

Situation

In order to fully understand recent developments in Greek civil society, one must be able to place this specific case in a wider historical and social context. Tilly and Wood argue:

“History helps because it explains why social movements incorporated some crucial features ... that separated the social movement from other sorts of politics. History also helps because it identifies significant *changes* in the operation of social movements ... and thus alerts us to the possibility of new changes in the future. History helps, finally, because it calls attention to the shifting political conditions that made social movements possible.”¹⁴⁹ In essence, no social movement can be understood as something that simply bursts out independently.

Rather, a social movement should be regarded as a counterreaction.

Historical recollection can also motivate actors to join a certain social movement. Especially one historical incident stroke a chord amongst the Greek informants interviewed for this thesis, namely the 1923 compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey:

¹⁴⁹ Tilly and Wood, *Social Movements*, 4.

As a consequence of the Balkan Wars, the First World War and the instability that followed them, writes Renée Hirschon, millions of people from Balkan countries were displaced across nearby countries. The Ottoman Empire gradually was breaking up and Greece and other countries in the area were hopeful to “wrest territory from the empire.”¹⁵⁰ Having fought on the winning side in the First World War, Greek negotiators felt their country had a right to annexing Asia Minor/Anatolia. Thus, in the spring of 1919, Greek forces occupied the region. In the Ottoman Empire: “the organisation of the nationalist movement and army was taking place ... Under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal (later Atatürk) these forces began regrouping, preparing to fight the Greek army and to establish a modern nation-state.”¹⁵¹ After many diplomatic and battling struggles, Kemal’s forces succeeded in forcing the retreat of the Greek army in the summer of 1922.¹⁵² “This exposed the Christian population of Anatolia to reprisals by irregulars and the victorious Turkish army following the atrocities committed earlier by the advancing Greek army.”¹⁵³ The initial wars and the acts of revenge that followed them led to another wave of over a million people getting displaced, many of which crossed the Aegean Sea to Lesbos. There are, however, no official statistics available as to how many were affected.¹⁵⁴ Eventually, the struggling parties met with the League of Nations in Lausanne to formalise a peace treaty and definitively agree on a delimitation of borders. In brief, the outcome of the 1923 Lausanne Convention was the birth of the Republic of Turkey and the decision that Turkish nationals of Christian faith and Greek nationals of Muslim faith were forced to emigrate from their home region and settle in the areas where the majority of the population shared the same faith.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ Renée Hirschon, *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey*, ed. Renée Hirschon (Oxford: Berghahn Books), Paperback Edition, 2004, 3.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 5.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 4-5.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 6-8.

Dina Adam of Starfish Foundation as well as Mania Bikof and Spiros Mitritsakis of Lifeguard Hellas, notably the informants that have lived in Greece for most of their lives, refer to the intraregional migration in the early 1920s as a crucial epoch in Greek history. As Adam, says toward the end of the interview: “So recently I went to Turkey ... My grandfather ... came from Asia Minor. You must know about Asia Minor in 1923, with the population exchange. So the island here was full of refugees, Greek refugees; so they [people who are against helping refugee migrants] mustn’t forget that.”¹⁵⁶

After having explained about hostility toward refugee migrants amongst people in Mithymna ¹⁵⁷, Bikof says: “the other people remember that they are also Greek refugees from the other side”¹⁵⁸ and Mitritsakis shares his understanding of why opinions on refugees migrants and helping refugee migrants can differ so significantly between, Mithymna and Skala Sykamineas, two villages in close proximity of each other on the north coast of Lesbos: “most of people [on] Lesbos are [descendants of] refugees, especially people in Skala. That’s why in Skala, it’s more friendly.”¹⁵⁹

Social movements are positioned in oppositions to an established reality. This means that if a social movement is successfully realised, it is so in conflict with other parties.¹⁶⁰

“governments of one sort or another figure somehow in the claim making, whether as claimants, objects of claims, allies of the objects, or monitors of the contention.”¹⁶¹ When public discontent with the establishment becomes sufficiently strong, it is fertile ground for social movement. Groups of people take upon themselves a perceived responsibility for

¹⁵⁶ Appendix 4: Adam, 1:24:39-1:25:10.

¹⁵⁷ Appendix 6: Bikof and Mitritsakis, 0:06:50-0:07:43.

¹⁵⁸ Appendix 6: Bikof and Mitritsakis, 0:07:43-0:07:49.

¹⁵⁹ Appendix 6: Bikof and Mitritsakis, 0:09:57-0:10:05.

¹⁶⁰ Tilly and Wood, *Social Movements*, 3-4.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 4.

defying the existing political agenda on a certain topic, and for trying to implement positive changes.

In the contexts of the refugee situation, critique is more specifically directed toward the European refugee regime, rather than the EU as a whole. Because the four pillars, principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures, have been impaired, the European refugee regime in general is impaired. Supporting this argument, all nine of the informants expressed dissatisfaction with the efforts of actors within the European refugee regime. Although the arguments are presented differently by informants, the European refugee regime is even accused of aggravating the situation by refusing to commit to multilateral agreements and negotiations for the benefit of refugee migrants.¹⁶² Rebecca Dalby Bowler of Khora's response when asked about her perception of the term 'refugee crisis' serves as a representation of a general concern expressed amongst the informants:

“What's made it a crisis is the fact that governments and Fortress Europe just shut down and turned what could have been actually quite a peaceful integration into different societies into this ... situation that's just put so many people's lives at risk, when it didn't need to happen like that. If countries across Europe and around the world had opened their arms and just accepted that people needed a safe space to be and followed the rules of asylum seeking, ... then this wouldn't be a crisis. It's purely down to the failures of governments.”¹⁶³

¹⁶² Appendix 1: Lapsatis, 0:57:48-1:01:52 + Appendix 2: Hackett-Evans, 0:24:58-0:27:01 + Appendix 3: E. Kempson and P. Kempson, 1:14:20-1:15:18 + Appendix 4: Adam, 1:08:15-1:13:50 + Appendix 5: Van Kempen, 1:07:12-1:10:20 + Appendix 6: Bikof and Mitritsakis, 0:37:32-0:38:23 + Appendix 7: Bowler, 0:53:15-0:55:36 + 0:24:58-0:27:01.

¹⁶³ Appendix 7: Bowler, 0:53:57-0:54:28.

Adam of Starfish Foundation and Rebecca van Kempen of City Plaza both argued that the crisis element is first and foremost political. The lack of proper national and multilateral reception organs puts people taking flight at risk. In this sense, refugee migrants are not themselves the agents of the refugee crisis, politicians are.¹⁶⁴ Isidoros Lapsatis of Lifeguard Hellas pointed to the hypocrisy behind the measures EU Member States take in order to hinder migration, when in fact, European countries are partly to blame for people having to flee:

“Since 2000, Europe has been giving funding to North African countries, like Libya and Egypt, to stop refugees coming from Central Africa and [the region of] South Africa to Europe ... Those countries who often have corrupt governments, or dictatorships, or what have you, use that money to build jails or to fund their police or the army ... That, over time, created ... the Arab Springs uprising, because you ... basically gave people whom already have power more power. And, you know, people at some point had enough and they rebelled and they went to war and then they came here because there weren't anybody to pick up the pieces, unfortunately.”¹⁶⁵

Programme Claims, Identity Claims and Standing Claims

Tilly and Wood identify three essential elements that have to be analysed, when one tries to understand claim making of a social movement. These are: programme -, identity - and standing claims.¹⁶⁶

Programme claims are perhaps the most central factors, as they are a representation of the core values and targets of a social movement.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ Appendix 4: Adam, 1:08:15-1:13:50 + Appendix 5: Van Kempen, 1:07:12-1:10:20.

¹⁶⁵ Appendix 1: Lapsatis, 0:58:05-0:59:24.

¹⁶⁶ Tilly and Wood, *Social Movements*, 12-13.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 13.

In order to identify programme claims of the pro-immigration groups, informants were asked what they consider the most important task their respective group does and what their overall purpose is. On behalf of Lighthouse Relief, Ivory Hackett-Evans says that their purpose is to support refugees and ensure that no one dies at sea.¹⁶⁸

Eric and Philippa Kempson have a similarly broad purpose, stating that they are simply human beings helping other human beings who are suffering.¹⁶⁹

Starfish Foundation have a more specific purpose: Members used to call the group's office 'the Sandwich Factory', because Starfish members were determined to provide second stage response in the form of thousands of sandwiches, fruit, water and dry clothes.¹⁷⁰ Now that the Starfish staff has adjusted its efforts, in accordance with the shift in needs, the groups' main purpose is to support Lesvos Solidarity, an open asylum camp in Mytilene.¹⁷¹ Starfish is especially focused on assisting unaccompanied minors.¹⁷²

Lapsatis talks about how the main purpose of Lifeguard Hellas on Lesbos has changed in accordance with the shifting demand:

"The operations we do here, originally, were search and rescue for refugee boats crossing from Turkey to Greece ... from simple rescues, showing them where to go, where to land and things like that to helping them once they landed, treating basic first aid, shock, hypothermia, what have you. And getting them ready for the next stage, which is basically getting registered, going to refugee camps and stuff like that. Now, due to funding, people, circumstances et cetera, we are a spotting team, so we work with the other organisations and we have allocated ... areas where we go ... look for

¹⁶⁸ Appendix 2: Hackett-Evans, 0:08:42-0:09:01.

¹⁶⁹ Appendix 3: E. Kempson and P. Kempson, 0:35:25-0:35:39.

¹⁷⁰ Appendix 4: Adam, 0:09:11-0:10:15.

¹⁷¹ Lesvos Solidarity, *Lesvos Solidarity open solidarity refugee camp*, <http://www.lesvossolidarity.org/index.php/en/home/about-us> (accessed 07 July 2017).

¹⁷² Appendix 4: Adam, 0:25:04-0:30:01.

boats crossing and together with the other organisations we organise rescue operations, landing teams and what we call second stage ... where they are given clothes, food, biscuits and stuff, water, tea.”¹⁷³

Lapsatis’ superior, Bikof, expands on his elucidation by revealing Lifeguard Hellas’ general main purpose as a group; to educate more lifeguards and raise awareness about the potential dangers of the sea.¹⁷⁴

With community centre Khora, Bowler says that the main purpose is to help refugee migrants with long term social needs of their members in order to help them feel connected to society and feel a sense of purpose in their new environment. Khora wants to give back agency to refugee migrants, so that they are not turned into numbers.¹⁷⁵

Identity claims are expressions by a group or an entire movement of how they represent themselves to the public and establish a sense of unity and coherence within them.¹⁷⁶

Regarding the creation of coherence, the groups impute different value and strategies to the concept. Lifeguard Hellas members often assemble, also with other pro-immigration civil groups based in Skala Sykamineas, to have a drink or a meal together off duty. This way, they are allowed to socialise in an informal setting whilst also being able to exchange opinions and learn from each other.¹⁷⁷ At Lighthouse Relief, Hackett-Evans says that creating cohesion is uncomplicated and happens naturally because volunteers who sign up to work with the group share the same political outlook and ideology.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷³ Appendix 1: Lapsatis, 0:09:00-0:10:25

¹⁷⁴ Appendix 6: Bikof and Mitritsakis, 1:27:00-1:28:59.

¹⁷⁵ Appendix 7: Bowler, 0:14:42-0:17:04.

¹⁷⁶ Tilly and Wood, *Social Movements*, 13.

¹⁷⁷ Appendix 1: Lapsatis, 0:28:26-0:31:07.

¹⁷⁸ Appendix 2: Hackett-Evans, 0:16:31-0:17:23.

At City Plaza they have a strict paradigm for creating cohesion: New people who join City Plaza are introduced to the two central pillars of the squat; solidarity and collective thinking. If people understand these two concepts, it makes it easier for them to understand and integrate to City Plaza. Moreover, van Kempen declares that, in order to distinguish itself from asylum centres, it is important that the squat is not overpopulated. Consequently, when many people are living in the building, people who would like to live there are put on a waiting list. People cannot expect to have a room to themselves and City Plaza members carefully organise people into rooms, based on estimations of whom they will match with.¹⁷⁹ The waiting list is not organised in a first come, first served manner; the personal profile of people are taken into consideration. Solidarians and refugee migrants live together under the same roof in an attempt to obliterate the distinctions between them.¹⁸⁰

Lastly, standing claims define the social movement's affiliation and ties to other actors. It is a statement of with whom the movement's sympathy lies.¹⁸¹ As should hopefully be evident by now, the social movement sympathises with refugee migrants. Informants also talked about their positive relationship and fruitful cooperation with other groups and locals that all help shape the social movement as a whole.

As the only informant, Adam expressed that her group has cooperated with the EU, as Starfish was selected as a grassroots organisation for a capacity building programme by the EU.¹⁸² Apart from that, Starfish attends periodic meetings for volunteers on Lesbos, hosted by the UNHCR. In 2015 during the height of the influx, groups had no choice but to collaborate, says Adam. At present, however, the collaboration works better now that groups are no

¹⁷⁹ Appendix 5: Van Kempen, 0:01:30-0:03:41.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 0:16:22-0:17:29.

¹⁸¹ Tilly and Wood, *Social Movements*, 13.

¹⁸² Appendix 4: Adam, 0:11:44-0:12:59.

longer under the same amount of pressure. Adam recollects that in 2015, the rich amount of groups and volunteers created a competitive environment, which was not for the benefit of refugee migrants on the island.¹⁸³

Lapsatis also regards the volunteer realm as being competitive, although with some reservation: “We’re all here to do the same thing, which is help refugees. And to do that we just work together, so there has to be cooperation. But around this cooperation, there’s always competition ... Every organisation has its own way of doing things; its own leadership, its own budgets, its own equipment, its own problems ... It’s not intentional competition, so like: Uh, I’m better than you. But they’re not equal either.”¹⁸⁴ In continuation, Lapsatis talks about the positive things related to working closely together with other groups:

“There’s also a little bit of sympathy. So, for example, I’ve been here [the specific spotting location] by myself now for ... a week almost. The other teams recognise that I’m working my butt off, I’ve been here longer than I’m supposed to. And, you know, I need some help, and I’ve never asked for it, but they’ll offer it, you know. I’ve had the other coordinators come to help me ... So we bring each other up, you know, where we fall down, which is good, it builds bonds.”¹⁸⁵

Amongst informants, perceptions of the groups’ relationships with the local community within which the groups perform their tasks are disputed, and negative relationships are discussed in ‘Criticising Other Actors’. In the following, informants reflect upon their relationships locals that welcome them and applaud their work.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 0:30:17-0:32:29.

¹⁸⁴ Appendix 1: Lapsatis, 0:48:08-0:48:46.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 0:49:15-0:50:02.

Lapsatis claims that Lifeguard Hellas is generally feeling welcome on Lesbos. The reason for this, he suggests, is quite complex: Not only are locals aware of the valuable work that Lifeguard Hellas does in relation to the influx, prior to it, the group performed life savings on the island, looking after holidaymakers and locals at beaches and pools. Certain other groups might have a more rigid approach, expecting that locals will automatically sympathise with them, because they perform the moral task of assisting people at risk, which is not always the case. Being a Greek group with mostly Greek volunteers, Lifeguard Hellas know and feel the same struggle that other Greeks go through in this era of financial crisis. They are able to see eye to eye with locals and even authorities, and vice versa.¹⁸⁶

Hackett-Evans states that Lighthouse Relief members are equally aware of the value of involving the local community in the work of the group and of trying to be as lenient with the settings as possible: Skala Sykamineas locals have been known to assist to the best of their capabilities at landings by, amongst other things, opening their shops at odd hours, donating food and lending cars to Lighthouse. Hackett-Evans even claims that Lighthouse could not function properly without the locals.¹⁸⁷ She is also certain that Lighthouse's beach cleaning programme has a positive impact on the relationship with the people of Skala Sykamineas.¹⁸⁸

Landings typically leave a mess on the shores with wrecked dinghies and rowing boats, abandoned lifejackets, bottles, apparel and the like, leftovers that can still be found across the island.¹⁸⁹

Apart from working closely together with - and organising other groups of volunteers,¹⁹⁰ E.

Kempson says that the couple has received donations from locals to give to refugee migrants;

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 0:41:34-0:43:25.

¹⁸⁷ Appendix 2: Hackett-Evans, 0:14:09-0:14:44.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 0:22:10-0:22:27.

¹⁸⁹ Appendix 10: Field notes, 3.

¹⁹⁰ Appendix 3: E. Kempson and P. Kempson, 0:41:39-0:43:50.

however these donations have often been left by their house at night, because some locals are afraid they will be excluded by anti-immigration locals.¹⁹¹ Gradually, the couple has built ties to the coast guard and Frontex: “We’ve always tried our best to cooperate with the coast guard and now we’re with Frontex, we’re talking. We’ve had Frontex here, the boss of Frontex in my house.”¹⁹² Although the relation is not always friendly, E. Kempson feels it is important to interact and join forces:

“about two months ago the head of Frontex from Poland came to my house ... and straight away I said to her: I’ll tell you straight now ... I don’t trust you and you don’t trust me, so ... now we start the conversation. We know where we stand, you know. And she laughed at that. But she brought me some sleeping bags for the refugees, she brought me some wind-up torches for the refugees and to me, anyone that helps refugees [are] good enough, I’ll talk to them ... She said: Well, what do you want, Eric? What do you want from us? I said: Cooperation ... If they [refugee migrants] cross over, then we should work as one team. You have the boats, you have the equipment, you have the helicopters and everything else. I have the people ... And she agreed, which was nice, so [laughs] now ... they come to our meetings ... And a lot of the Frontex have become friends with volunteers.”¹⁹³

Khora is located in Exarchia, a neighbourhood in Athens known for being liberal and for having many squats, some of them for and by refugee migrants. This means that locals are mostly supportive and understanding. The biggest concerns in relation to common Exarchia locals have been noise complaints. Khora is regularly visited by locals who help out on shifts;

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 1:10:25-1:11:43.

¹⁹² Ibid., 0:57:57-0:58:05.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 1:00:02-1:01:14.

mainly teaching or in the kids' space.¹⁹⁴ Furthermore, they collaborate with several other groups under a carefully organised scheme. Khora is involved in so called working groups with other pro-immigration groups providing medical services, food, clothes legal support, case work and education. The info point at the entrance of Khora features a map of services provided by other Athens groups, which might also be helpful for members of Khora. Khora also collaborates with a nearby squat for refugee migrant women and children, arranging joint effort workshops.¹⁹⁵

Ideological End Goals

The instigators of a given social movement tend to be realistic about their end goals. As such, only in rare cases should social movements be regarded as revolutionary in nature. Social movements are largely symbolic actions, albeit often with tangible results, that hope to influence public opinion little by little. Therefore, social movements can only thrive in an environment where there is a political sovereign or status quo which the people involved can make their claims against. In this respect, one might argue that social movements are dependent on the presence of a faulty system it can define itself in opposition to.¹⁹⁶

In all seven of the interviews that were conducted for this thesis, informants were asked to reflect upon the end goals of the groups they represent. A recurring claim is, much in line with Tilly's argument, that the respective end goals, however different some of them are, can only be reached if rulers within the EU refugee regime change. The informants are aware that civil involvement with the refugee situation cannot solve all of the challenges of the refugee situation. Alternatively, informants reflected upon when their work as groups was either

¹⁹⁴ Appendix 7: Bowler, 0:32:05-0:33:32.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 0:40:02-0:41:32.

¹⁹⁶ Tilly, *Stories, Identities, and Political Change*, 88-89.

complete or futile. Overall, the argument shared between informants representing groups that perform emergency response, these being Bikof and Mitritsakis and Lapsatis of Lifeguard Hellas, Hackett-Evans of Lighthouse Relief and the Kempsons, is that their work on Lesbos is not complete until there are no longer any irregular crossings from Turkey. However, their approaches are more nuanced than that. Bikof and Mitritsakis touch upon the moral dilemma of deciding when the operations can end. Should they experience a long period with few or no crossings, the owners of Lifeguard Hellas might be tempted to abandon their operations on Lesbos. It is, however, difficult to foresee the interval of crossings and news reporting on the refugee situation is somewhat unreliable and the realisation that mass-crossings might occur again makes Lifeguard Hellas stay on Lesbos.¹⁹⁷ As the name of the group implies, Lifeguard Hellas' founders are lifeguards, first and foremost. However, as a reaction to the influx decrease, Bikof and Mitritsakis have implemented some changes to the group's work, some of psychosocial nature: "The situation's changed, I mean, because of the lack of arrivals. So we are spotters now and in May, we start again the swimming lessons ... inside Kara Tepe [asylum camp on Lesbos] for the kids."¹⁹⁸

Also of Lifeguard Hellas, Lapsatis has a more pragmatic and pessimistic approach to the end goal of the group of which he is a member: "Job is finished when one of two things happen: We run out of funding or refugees stop coming. That's it [laughs]."¹⁹⁹ He continues by saying that he believes the first scenario is more likely to spell the end of Lifeguard Hellas' activities on the island, but he also reflects upon when the scale of the influx would make the group surplus to requirements: "If there's one boat in half a year and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty

¹⁹⁷ Appendix 6: Bikof and Mitritsakis, 0:49:24-0:51:50.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 0:19:46-0:20:01.

¹⁹⁹ Appendix 1: Lapsatis, 0:53:06-0:53:19.

Organization), Frontex and the coast guard can't handle that, then there's something wrong."

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Hackett-Evans says that Lighthouse Relief have committed to stay on Lesbos as long as there are crossings from Turkey. However, because Lighthouse undertake a wide range of tasks, their relevance is not only in place when helping out at crossings: "the code is to keep us there and keep supporting the locals and keep being here for the people crossing, regardless of how quiet it gets."²⁰¹ Because the Kempsons live on Lesbos, they obviously have no intention of leaving, should the influx cease. On the contrary, E. Kempson reveals that the couple will be ready to help whenever it is needed: "Our end game is survival of the species, you know, human beings helping human beings and human beings helping all creatures on Earth, you know, because we all have to live here together."²⁰²

On behalf of Starfish Foundation, Adam subscribes to the argument that groups should be ready as long as there is a need for help, but rather than outstay its welcome, Starfish should either disband or direct their attention to other crises.²⁰³

The above statements are all reflections of end goals and lifespans of the groups that work with either emergency response or second stage response. Perhaps because of the work they do, their considerations about the scope of their actions are mostly related to the immediate reception of refugee migrants, welcoming them and helping them move on, if possible. As long as people benefit noticeably from the work each group does, their existence is justified, is the mutual argument. It can be deduced from the way the informants present their groups, that helping as many people as possible is the supreme priority.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 0:53:55-0:54:03.

²⁰¹ Appendix 2: Hackett-Evans, 0:24:46-0:24:53.

²⁰² Appendix 3: E. Kempson and P. Kempson, 1:26:20-1:26:31.

²⁰³ Appendix 4: Adam, 0:40:18-0:41:16.

The psychosocial groups based in Athens have a different understanding of their end goals and it seems to be more implemented into the claim making of the groups and pronounced amongst group members.

At Khora, they have agreed on two end goals for the future: The first goal is to reorganise the demography within the group. At present, members of Khora are a combination of foreign, mostly western volunteers, local volunteers and refugee migrants themselves.²⁰⁴ “The long term plan is that the building will no longer run on volunteers, volunteers who come in to help out. It will be run by the community, so, people [who] live here, regardless of whether they have papers or don’t, but local Greek people and refugees.”²⁰⁵ When asked about why Khora members hope to implement this transition, Bowler replies: “Because I think there’s this white saviour complex of people coming in and saying: I’m here to solve your crisis that you can’t deal with. But Greek people have the power and the knowledge and the ability to do it. As do people who have been put in the situation themselves.”²⁰⁶ She argues further:

“I think that saying that volunteers or people who can spare a couple of months from their lives can come in and save the day [is] not fair ... and actually it is not sustainable, because ... people will go back to their own lives and they will eventually leave ... If you rely on that [workforce], then you’re always going to be changing ... people and the way it’s organised and opinions are always going to change.”²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Appendix 7: Bowler, 0:22:16-0:22:41.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 0:22:46-0:23:04.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 0:23:20-0:23:36.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 0:23:45-0:24:11.

This transition is the predominant end goal , but, should the refugee situation be normalised, the second end goal for Khora is not to disband but to adapt into working for the benefit of local Greeks.²⁰⁸

Van Kempen gives an interesting answer, when asked about the end goal of City Plaza.

Rather than strictly talking about the end goal of the squat, she talks about what is required for the refugee situation to be normalised, insinuating that City Plaza is required as long as governments maintain strict migration policies: “If the whole policy would change to not have people living [under] this kind of condition, opening the borders, forbidding camps, ... make people have the freedom of movement, ... not ranking people ... For example, ...

Afghans have [a] really bad chance [of getting] asylum in Germany, because Afghanistan is a safe country, as they say ... If all these things would not happen, there would be no need [for] City Plaza.”²⁰⁹ Van Kempen believes that asylum seekers are isolated from society in remote asylum centres and therefore, it is a goal for City Plaza to raise the awareness about - and visibility of asylum seekers and the conditions they are forced to live under. The City Plaza project is supposed to make people realise that locals, foreigners and refugee migrants can coexist.²¹⁰ As such, City Plaza does not simply offer residential accommodation, members take pride in also being part of a political project.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 0:51:34-0:52:14.

²⁰⁹ Appendix 5, Van Kempen, 0:55:34-0:56:18.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 0:56:18-0:57:57.

Criticising Other Actors

The tendency of actors of social movements weighting themselves against perceived opposition might result in them becoming desperate for recognition and approval. In order to prove that the movement is qualified, the actors might exaggerate and manipulate evidence of their activities and the unjust behaviour of the regime they oppose.²¹¹

Amongst all informants, criticism of the political realm within which groups as civil actors have to operate was immense. Some of the arguments made by informants have been addressed in ‘The European Refugee Regime,’ ‘Collective Action Response’ and present chapter. The claims that have already been addressed elsewhere in the thesis will not be revisited in this section, but here follows a more in-depth analysis of general claims made by informants. This analysis is not interested in estimating whether the accusations are accurate or exaggerated but rather in underlining the evident pattern of group members criticising other actors in order to appear more righteous themselves. Informants direct their criticism onto five different kinds of actors or institutions within the European refugee regime: The political establishment, meaning national governments and the EU; the anti-immigration movement; and even other pro-immigration groups, NGOs and INGOs. Finally, informants criticise human smugglers and the role of the media. However, this analysis will not engage in a discussion about the role in the European refugee regime of the two latter. Discussions of those two kinds of actors were beside the initial focus of the thesis and the methodology was not adjusted in order to properly facilitate analysis of these.

²¹¹ Tilly, *Stories, Identities, and Political Change*, 90.

All of the informants expressed their distaste with the political establishment's approach to the influx. Claims ranged from politicians being corrupt, greedy for power or simply incompetent to them deliberately making conditions in host countries intolerable for refugee migrants, in order to discourage them from trying to reach Europe.²¹² A statement by Adam is a broad representation of some of the major concerns shared between informants, when she asks rhetorically: "If ... politicians and politics dealt better with this, would [there] have been a refugee crisis? So I think it's more political, yes, definitely more political"²¹³ and continues: "There you have EU, you know, having quite a bit of money given left and right in the humanitarian sector. So why, then, they didn't provide better conditions [for] my government [the Greek government] in the Moria camp?" in reference to an incident where the asylum camp on Lesbos failed to provide heating over the winter, resulting in three people freezing to death.²¹⁴

Informants generally use all of three different approaches when describing their strained relationship with representatives of the anti-immigration movement: The first approach is to establish a portrayal of the anti-immigrant movement as an enemy trying to hinder the work of pro-immigration groups, as expressed by Hackett-Evans claiming that a small but well-organised minority of locals from the towns of Mithymna and especially Petra protest at landings and harass volunteers. This has led to the decision that group members should no longer wear their usual high-visibility vests with the Lighthouse Relief logo on the back when

²¹² Appendix 1: Lapsatis, 0:57:48-1:01:52 + Appendix 2: Hackett-Evans, 0:25:15-0:25:48 + Appendix 3: E. Kempson and P. Kempson, 1:12:30-1:14:00 + Appendix 5: Van Kempen, 1:08:17-1:08:59 + Appendix 6: Bikof and Mitritsakis, 0:37:32-0:38:22 + Appendix 7: Bowler, 0:53:35-0:55:31.

²¹³ Appendix 4: Adam, 1:08:55-1:09:08.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 1:10:14-1:13:19.

assisting at landings in the two towns, so as not to expose volunteers to potential reprisals by locals.²¹⁵

The second approach is to acknowledge the presence of such people, but refuse to let them invoke fear and interfere in the work of pro-immigration groups. This strategy seems to be prevailing with City Plaza. There is a GD branch in the same neighbourhood as the squat, but City Plaza members have not taken extraordinary measures to protect themselves from potential attacks and do not spend their time contemplating about the doings or plots of GD.

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The final approach is to express regret over how the refugee situation has divided communities and thereby left a negative stamp on Lesbos and Greece. Examples of this attitude are expressed by Adam, who talks about feeling excluded by people in Mithymna as a consequence of her work with Starfish Foundation²¹⁷ as well as Bikof and Mitritsakis who regard the response of the anti-immigration groups as a wasted opportunity to use the massive media attention that Lesbos has gotten since the influx to portray a positive image of Lesbos as a humanitarian place where people are willing to help other people in need.²¹⁸

Perhaps most surprisingly, informants give several critical comments about other groups working for the benefit of refugee migrants. Bikof and Mitritsakis, Bowler and the Kempsons shared the sentiment that actors such as the UNHCR are inefficient, spend an excessive amount of resources on bureaucracy and are focused on numbers rather than people.²¹⁹

Mitritsakis and Bikof and the Kempsons²²⁰ even accused large NGOs of operating on a

²¹⁵ Appendix 2: Hackett-Evans, 0:22:20-0:23:45.

²¹⁶ Appendix 5: Van Kempen, 1:16:20-1:18:04.

²¹⁷ Appendix 4: Adam, 0:52:05-0:53:04.

²¹⁸ Appendix 6: Bikof and Mitritsakis, 0:09:27-0:09:41.

²¹⁹ Appendix 7: Bowler, Interview, 0:05:17-0:05:33 + 0:08:20-0:09:13.

²²⁰ Appendix 3: E. Kempson and P. Kempson, 0:21:50-0:22:29.

system of structural corruption. Bikof says: “For us as a Greek team, no one, no one, I mean government, major ... they never helped us, but they help ... UNHCR. A lot of money are given ... but it’s going to specific things and not to the real teams, sometimes not to the real people ... The millions are coming, they’re going somewhere and from there somehow disappear”²²¹ and expands her argument by saying that money disappear into pockets of NGO workers or a disproportionate amount is spent on huge salaries, rather than on aiding refugee migrants.²²² Mitritsakis talks further about the hectic situation on Lesbos leaving room for faux NGOs to profit from the situation: “There was, last year, ... ‘ghost NGOs’. They were coming only to take photos, ... go back to their countries, make money.”²²³ P. Kempson says: “There’s a lot of money. We never knew ..., until we were involved in this, how big a business disaster and aid is and a fraction of the money donated by people gets to where it should be”²²⁴ and her husband follows suit: “It’s all over. I get people from Haiti, from Bangladesh coming to me saying: Eric, these same people ... were doing exactly the same here. So they go from disaster to disaster, making money doing nothing. And it’s a big business. You know, they come in to Lesbos, because Lesbos is the centre of the world and there’s a big disaster going on. They make a quarter of a million Euros and they sit on a beach somewhere until the next disaster.”²²⁵

At Khora, Bowler has experienced the same sort of aversion toward large NGOs. In this case, however, the criticism was directed onto the community centre. When asked about whether people in the surrounding Exarchia neighbourhood had tried to intervene with the work of Khora, she answers: “There was pushback from some of the anarchists in Exarchia, because

²²¹ Appendix 6: Bikof and Mitritsakis, 0:56:14-0:57:01.

²²² Ibid., 0:57:39-0:58:14.

²²³ Ibid., 1:51:08-1:51:20.

²²⁴ Appendix 3: E. Kempson and P. Kempson, 0:21:50-0:22:03.

²²⁵ Ibid., 0:22:06-0:22:28.

we look like a large NGO to them. We look like we've got loads of money and ... we're, you know, coming in and renting a building in an area that is predominantly squatted.”²²⁶ Bowler reflects upon why the anarchists were antagonistic toward Khora in the beginning, supposing that they feared that Khora would attract other NGOs, money and bureaucracy, which would eventually change Exarchia and also that the anarchists disagreed morally with Khora prioritising a psychosocial model and favoured squats that provide accommodation first.²²⁷

Accessibility and Communication

Whereas Tilly and Wood present a classical and historical approach to analysing social movements, Sara Koopman, in her chapter in ‘The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Political Geography’, offers an interesting contemporary insight into the field. Koopman criticises the arguably vague classical definition of social movements: “How many groups does it take to count as a movement? Do they have to be connected and/or coordinated? Do they have to be effective at creating social change to count? Can groups have paid staff? Can they be involved in electoral campaigns? Can they take up arms? Can they engage in property destruction? What if groups have no office, or no formal structure?”²²⁸ Koopman’s criticism, although somewhat valid, must be taken with a pinch of salt. It is virtually impossible to credit or discredit a social movement on the basis of quantifiable data. Evidently, in a small village, three people might be influential enough to be a social movement. And, moreover, what is considered noble behaviour deviates across audiences and target groups. However, Koopman’s chapter does not exhaust itself in its criticism of the approach taken by Tilly and other classical social movement theorists. Rather, Koopman raises a set of valid definitions of

²²⁶ Appendix 7: Bowler, 0:48:09-0:48:33.

²²⁷ Ibid., 0:48:41-0:51:12.

²²⁸ Sara Koopman, *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Political Geography*, eds. John Agnew and others (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons), 2015, 340.

the criteria for modern social movements and explores the spatiality factors of contemporary social movements.

Koopman writes that generally there has been a change in the structure of social movements, resulting in movements being able to reach a broader audience and following. On the other hand, people are typically less committed to the cause, both in terms of amount of time and effort they are willing to sacrifice. This tendency can be seen as a collective action problem in terms of freeriding. When asked about how long volunteers typically help out in Khora, Bowler explains: “It varies. So, we’ve recently introduced a one-month policy, so we ask people to stay for at least a month ... but I’d say the average is maybe two-three months.”²²⁹ Bowler explains further the problems it can cause when volunteers leave again after a short period of time: “it’s just a scheduling nightmare ... as someone who does the rotor, trying to figure out, you know, new volunteers and where they want to work, where they know how to work, ... when their shifts are, when they’re available, it’s just ... time-consuming.”²³⁰ Apart from logistical challenges, many and sudden changes to the group of volunteers can be stressful to people using the centre:

“The biggest part of this building is the connection that people build with each other and the relationship that you build. I mean, that’s not to say someone can’t come for a couple of weeks and build really great relationships but then we’ve got attachment ... that’s taken away and the value [of] familiar faces and getting to know people so people feel that they walk in the building and [are] meeting friends rather than this kind of saviour that is here to serve them the meal.”²³¹

²²⁹ Appendix 7: Bowler, 0:20:19-0:20:43.

²³⁰ Ibid., 0:20:53-0:21:08.

²³¹ Ibid., 0:21:15-0:21:40.

One of Hackett-Evans' tasks is to recruit volunteers for Lighthouse Relief, based on applications they receive online: "We do the recruitment process online, so our website comes up very quickly if people 'google': Volunteering [on] Lesbos. And then there's just an application process that goes through 'Google Forms,' it comes straight through to the base that people are interested in volunteering in."²³² As this quotation reveals, applying to volunteer with Lighthouse is a swift and easy process and people can stumble upon the group's website and application form, without looking for it specifically. Another statement by Hackett-Evans suggests that some volunteers sign up and go to work with Lighthouse on Lesbos without having given proper thought to whether they match the profile of the specific task they request beforehand: "Usually, people who maybe come and feel like their skills will be better placed elsewhere, we actually support to move on to a different place ... they're all here to help, we're here to help. If they feel that sitting on a clifftop watching for boats isn't their skill set, then, you know, we'll help them move to [an asylum] camp, or we'll get them the contacts and stuff. We're not working against each other."²³³

Other than usually only allowing volunteers over the age of 25 to work with them, the Kempsons are particular about their choice to not search for people with a specific profile: "The people that help people, they just have a big heart, they just want to help. Why have they got to be religious, why have they got to do this and do that and everything else? They just want to come here and help people. And that's why we don't have [any] contracts for anyone; ... they come on their own back and they help people."²³⁴

²³² Appendix 2: Hackett-Evans, 0:10:28-0:10:44.

²³³ Ibid., 0:17:26-0:17:57.

²³⁴ Appendix 3: E. Kempson and P. Kempson, Interview, 06 April 2017, 0:32:30-0:32:47.

Koopman claims that the tendency of volunteers exploring several social movements or groups within the same social movement for limited amounts of time is largely caused by information and communication technology: People are able to find information about unjust incidents in remote areas of the world, communicate with the parties involved and help raise awareness. In essence, you can become part of a social movement without ever leaving your home. The easy access and instant feeling of gratification can lead to activists constantly being on the lookout for new movements to represent. Thus, whilst on the prowl for the next big movement to join, people's commitment to other movements gradually diminish.²³⁵ Moreover, it seems as if there has been a shift in the issues that people choose to involve themselves in. Originally, people would typically organise themselves in response to a local phenomenon that had a direct influence on the livelihood of people within the social movement or someone close to them. Today, people have an opportunity to pick and choose from a range of global phenomena and opt for the one they want to influence. Citing Gavin Brown and Helen Yaffe, Koopman claims that "political solidarity campaigns try to change "the connection and flows between places, refusing to participate in the reproduction of inequalities and oppression.""²³⁶ Social movements result in meetings between people of many different cultures and backgrounds, leading to transformative relations between actors and recipients, characterised by interchange of cultures, values and struggles.²³⁷ The groups that do not, or initially did not request for their volunteers to have a specific skillset or professional background, such as Khora, Lighthouse Relief and Starfish Foundation²³⁸ have a remarkably international composition of volunteers. Amongst the

²³⁵ Koopman, *Political Geography*, eds. Agnew and others, 340.

²³⁶ Ibid., 344.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Appendix 7: Bowler, 0:31:27-0:32:04 + Appendix 2: Hackett-Evans, 0:09:39-0:10:20 + Appendix 4: Adam, 0:42:42-0:44:13.

informants themselves, only three of the nine informants are active in the area where they were based before the influx, these being Adam and the Kempsons. Another three are Greek but not based on Lesbos where they are now active, these being Bikof and Mitritsakis and Lapsatis. The final three informants are from other European countries and had no prior affiliation with pro-immigration groups in Greece. These statistics imply that informants regard the refugee situation as a collective European challenge, but some of their statements also suggest a certain degree of arbitrariness in their choice of settling on Greece and the specific group they have enrolled themselves in. Motivations range from Bikof and Mitritsakis feeling that their expertise as lifeguards required for them to help²³⁹ over Adam who joined Starfish particularly because she already had a relation to other group members²⁴⁰ to Bowler who initially worked short periods of time with other groups before ending up preferring Khora²⁴¹ and van Kempen who was travelling through Europe and ended up staying with City Plaza after what was initially merely a visit out of curiosity.²⁴²

According to Koopman, in the not so distant past, most social movements were mediated by one-way communication. Typically, messages were delivered by spokespersons or in leaflets. Today, with the introduction of social media and other online tools, we have seen a platform for enhanced interaction. This means that it is easier for actors of a social movement to reach their target group and organise rallies but it also means that the leaders do not have sole control of what is communicated.²⁴³

²³⁹ Appendix 6: Bikof and Mitritsakis, 0:49:24-0:51:50.

²⁴⁰ Appendix 4: Adam, 0:08:15-0:09:10.

²⁴¹ Appendix 7: Bowler, 0:00:29-0:01:37.

²⁴² Appendix 5: Van Kempen, 0:26:51-0:29:07.

²⁴³ Koopman, *Political Geography*, eds. Agnew and others, 340-41.

A symptom of the presence of modern social movements on social media, all six of the groups represented in this thesis' interview are represented by public Facebook profiles.²⁴⁴ Generally, the informants rely heavily on modern technology in their daily working routines. Communication tools, such as 'WhatsApp,' are important elements in the operations of Lifeguard Hellas, Lighthouse Relief and the Kempsons, the three groups that are directly involved in emergency response on the Aegean Sea. Not only did WhatsApp serve as a platform for communication, reporting and transmissions of information at internal level; the communication tool provides the groups with a unique and previously unattainable direct and instant contact, not only to members of other civil groups, but also to representatives from UNHCR, who will then pass on relevant information to the coast guard.²⁴⁵ The perks of instant communication between actors and the effectiveness it brings to rescue missions are expanded upon by Hackett-Evans: "We also have large WhatsApp groups, which include all of the organisations and volunteers here, which means that, again, when there's a boat that lands, everyone has the same information, when there's a social activity, everyone has it, when there's a training, everyone knows."²⁴⁶

When asked to describe a regular work day for himself, his wife and the people who volunteer with them in any given period, E. Kempson reveals how central and integrated WhatsApp communication is to their operations: "On our phones, we have two special [WhatsApp groups], one is North Shore [group] and one is a boat [group]. The boat [group] is

²⁴⁴ Facebook, *Khora*, <https://www.facebook.com/KhoraAthens/?fref=ts> (accessed 29 June 2017) + Facebook, *Lifeguard Hellas Save & Rescue Volunteer Team*, <https://www.facebook.com/lifeguardhellas/?fref=ts> (accessed 29 June 2017) + Facebook, *Lighthouse Relief*, <https://www.facebook.com/lighthouse relief/?fref=ts> (accessed 29 June 2017) + Facebook, *Philippa and Eric Kempson - refugee support Eftalou / [sic] Molivos*, <https://www.facebook.com/thekempsons/?fref=ts> (accessed 29 June 2017) + Facebook, *Refugee Accommodation and Solidarity Space City Plaza*, <https://www.facebook.com/sol2refugeesen/?fref=ts> (accessed 29 June 2017) + Facebook, *Starfish Foundation - Help for Refugees in Molyvos*, <https://www.facebook.com/HelpForRefugeesInMolyvos/?fref=ts> (accessed 29 June 2017).

²⁴⁵ Appendix 6: Bikof and Mitritsakis, 1:30:13-1:32:42.

²⁴⁶ Appendix 2: Hackett-Evans, 0:21:23-0:21:37.

for first response rescues ... We have two fast small boats that will go to the scene of the accident immediately and they will coordinate from there ... And then they will put on the North Shore [group]: Doctors are needed at this beach, that beach.”²⁴⁷

Hierarchy

As accounted for in the above statements by informants, traditional structure with a clear hierarchical gap between social movement leaders and ordinary members seems to have been diminished by the introduction of social media and instant communication platforms, where members of all ranks can express themselves without censorship. In extension of these findings, analysing the hierarchy within the groups is enlightening. Curiously, approaches to - and perceptions of hierarchy varied significantly between groups. Three different approaches to hierarchy are visible amongst the groups that were interviewed for this thesis: The first approach to hierarchy is that it should be avoided when possible and power relations should be limited and interchangeable. This perception of hierarchy was expressed by Bowler and van Kempen, the representatives from Khora and City Plaza, respectively. Distinct from the groups that were primarily active on Lesbos, those two groups are not directly involved in life or death rescue operations. Rather, Khora and City Plaza are psychosocial projects for which coexistence and inclusiveness is arguably more important than making sure members know and follow a certain chain of command in emergency situations. At Khora, according to Bowler, there is, by choice, no hierarchy: “50 brains are always going to be more powerful and have more ideas and come up with more solutions than one or two ... Ultimately, the people [who] are using the building ... should be involved in the decision-making and should be involved in where the building goes and how it grows ... If you have one person calling all

²⁴⁷ Appendix 3: E. Kempson and P. Kempson, 0:36:29-0:36:51.

the shots, no one feels they have the right to speak up.”²⁴⁸ At City Plaza, they also want to avoid power relations. However, as van Kempen states, they follow a different strategy than the one they opt for at Khora: “We try to have a ‘not-boss’ every day ... The not-boss is trying to be the person who is coordinating, organising between getting the information of the reception and then ... run after people and ask them if they can help, if they can do something.”²⁴⁹ As the word not-boss implies, the people of City Plaza have a dislike for hierarchy. However, instead of avoiding it, members take turns being in charge for a day at a time to ensure that important tasks are attended to.

The second approach to hierarchy is found in the structure of Lighthouse Relief. Hackett-Evans stresses the importance of hierarchy and structure in the operations that the group fulfils: “We work in quite a hierarchical way, but that’s because we’re doing emergency response, so it’s very important that the volunteers are safe and that the situation is kept under control.”²⁵⁰ Hackett-Evans continues by explaining about Lighthouse Relief’s structure: There is always a leader in charge of each team of volunteers. The team leaders give instructions and are appointed based on their seniority and commitment to the group. Above the team leader is a staff member responsible for a specific branch of tasks and for appointing group members as team leaders.²⁵¹

The third and final approach to hierarchy is found within Lifeguard Hellas. Although, according to Lapsatis, Lifeguard Hellas do have a hierarchy with owners Bikof and Mitritsakis in charge of every major decision, any recruitment and investment and a specific

²⁴⁸ Appendix 7: Bowler, 0:10:37-0:11:12.

²⁴⁹ Appendix 5: Van Kempen, 0:41:51-0:42:16.

²⁵⁰ Appendix 2: Hackett-Evans, 0:06:10-0:06:20.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 0:06:20-0:07:15.

chain of command, it is expected that members who are sent to Lesbos have received enough training beforehand to be able to work without relying on an excessive amount of guidance and surveillance from the two owners. Nevertheless, Lifeguard Hellas devotes coordinators with more responsibility than common members. The role of coordinator is passed on relatively arbitrarily, depending on how members' periods of time spent on Lesbos overlap.²⁵² In the interview Lifeguard Hellas owners Bikof and Mitritsakis gave for this thesis, they say half jokingly that: "There is no structure, it is only a big passion and huge love [for] what we are doing."²⁵³ During Lifeguard Hellas first year on Lesbos, Bikof and Mitritsakis were on standby 24 hours a day. The couple confirms that since then, they have appointed skilled and reliable coordinators to lift some of the burden.²⁵⁴

The Prospect of Freeriding

Tilly and Wood curiously reflect on the possibilities and challenges of the increased accessibility of modern technology: Networks are likely to become more loosely structured; local activists might lose ownership of the movement and reliance on local and national involvement might become less crucial; communication and statements will, to an extent, be in English, rather than the local language; ideology might become an insignificant motivational factor; the importance of physical and financial resources will be toned down; movements will be permanent campaigns with larger scale goals, but the individual targets and situations on which they focus will shift more rapidly. All of these factors might readjust what we have come to understand about WUNC displays.²⁵⁵ Furthermore, members might be tempted to freeride.

²⁵² Appendix 1: Lapsatis, 0:05:44-0:08:27.

²⁵³ Appendix 6: Bikof & Mitritsakis, 1:02:26-1:02:33.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 1:02:33-1:04:01.

²⁵⁵ Tilly and Wood, *Social Movements*, 107-09.

Adam presents some interesting insights into the struggle smaller, relatively inexperienced NGOs, such as Starfish Foundation might face in relation to recruiting dedicated people with a suitable profile: Since the formal foundation of Starfish, the group has hosted a total of 1,500 volunteers,²⁵⁶ a small percentage have been local, but most have been international volunteers.²⁵⁷ Although, according to Adam, the average time that volunteers worked with Starfish was one month, the group did not have a rule for how long people should commit to Starfish, especially not in the acute period in the summer and autumn of 2015. In this period it was not an abnormality if people only worked with the group for three days.²⁵⁸ Adam stresses that the vast majority of volunteers did very valuable and dedicated work, but Starfish have had some “black sheep” for volunteers.²⁵⁹ When asked how certain volunteers misbehaved, Adam replied: “People came, you know, and were driving carelessly, they would cause ... problems in the centre of the village,”²⁶⁰ and further that certain volunteers caused problems by:

“misbehaving, by ... drinking heavily, by ... not attending to their shifts ... That caused a problem because it’s not like an office shift. If you don’t go, say something happened to you and you cannot ... come to the office for 9:00, but can come for 10:00, nobody really gets affected by that. But if somebody stays waiting in the [asylum] camp to serve the food, or to provide the clothes, or to attend to an incident, or somebody has hurt himself and you don’t turn up to your shift, well, that has a complication.”²⁶¹

²⁵⁶ Appendix 4: Adam, 0:10:17-0:10:39.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 0:16:31-0:17:00.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 0:13:30-0:16:17.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 0:43:23-0:44:13.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 0:23:47-0:23:58.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 0:24:15-0:25:00.

These statements are testament to a period in time, where Starfish Foundation staff was unable to control the WUNC within the group and certain members were freeriding. Because the influx to Lesbos has dramatically decreased since it peaked in 2015 and because larger actors are now more in control of the situation, Starfish no longer has a need for volunteers and has, at least for the time being, shut down its volunteer programme.²⁶² However, should a similar influx occur again, Adam ensures that Starfish would invite volunteers again, but this time they would implement a stricter recruitment procedure.²⁶³ Specifically, “if we reopen our programme, we’re going to be more careful and we’re going to ask more specific questions: Why do you want to volunteer; what drives you to do this? ... And set a month [as the minimum period for how long someone] must be here.²⁶⁴ Moreover, Starfish would prioritise applicants who: “have some kind of experience in the humanitarian sector ... Then, we will ... prefer to have ... professional people, meaning nurses, someone [who knows] if you’ve hurt your leg, what to do with your leg ... Some people [who] know how to handle situations that are not very pleasant sometimes.”²⁶⁵

The sometimes inappropriate behaviour and freeriding of certain group members have led to rare expulsions.²⁶⁶

At City Plaza and Khora in Athens, dismissals have also occurred. Both places have a formulated set of rules that members and guests must abide by.²⁶⁷ However, violations of the rules do happen occasionally. In the examples that both van Kempen of City Plaza and Bowler of Khora raise, tensions have culminated in conflict where some of the house rules were definitely broken. All incidents are handled case by case and dismissals are usually only

²⁶² Ibid., 0:19:59-0:20:41.

²⁶³ Ibid., 0:20:57-0:21:18.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 0:22:09-0:22:26.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 0:22:47-0:23:23.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 0:45:31-0:46:55.

²⁶⁷ Appendix 5: Van Kempen, 0:48:55-0:51:37 + Appendix 7: Bowler, 0:45:37-0:46:26.

temporary. The involved parties in the conflict are encouraged to make amends and resolve the disagreement.²⁶⁸

Seemingly, Lifeguard Hellas have succeeded in avoiding dismissals of members because they have stricter requirements for volunteers and the skillset they must possess. According to Lapsatis, the recruitment of members is a lengthy and structured process:

“The thing is, with us, our volunteers aren’t like the other organisations, [whose applicants] apply and say: Oh, you know, I would like to come for two weeks for this experience ... We all know Spiros [Mitritsakis], you know. Spiros has been our mentor and has been our teacher at some point ... We all passed through him. Some of the volunteers that have come here [did not undergo the same amount of training] but they still met Spiros ... Spiros had to decide whether or not ... they were suitable for this place ... Because the majority of people who come here are lifeguards, ... they’ve either worked together before, swam together before, or Spiros sent them because he knows that they can work together, even if they’ve never met before.”²⁶⁹

The Worthiness, Unity, Numbers and Commitment of the Pro-Immigration Movement

Up until this point, the chapter has presented central statements by informants about the groups they each represent and discussed these accounts from a social movement theory perspective. The discussion has investigated both individual qualities of the groups but also identified common features that are shared between pro-immigration groups. In this final section of the chapter, a concluding analysis of the pro-immigration social movement that

²⁶⁸ Appendix 5: Van Kempen, 0:51:38-0:55:20 + Appendix 7: Bowler, 0:45:26-0:48:01.

²⁶⁹ Appendix 1: Lapsatis, 0:31:27-0:32:30.

each of the six groups contribute to is presented in the shape of a WUNC analysis. As argued by Tilly and Wood, WUNC displays are regarded as central to determining the credibility and longevity of a social movement, and as such, the ambition of this section is to outline the WUNC of the pro-immigration social movement, based on the empirical data that has been discussed hitherto.

Worthiness: The movement does face certain challenges in relation to worthiness. As informants revealed, a significant fraction of locals do not sympathise with the movement and there has generally been a decrease in funding. Arguably, the decrease in funding is not surprising, since there has been a similar decrease in refugee migrants travelling to Greece. One might further question whether those who protest the movement see it as directly lacking worthiness, or rather protest because they would prefer if refugee migrants did not come to Greece. As such, it should be deduced that critics are mostly protesting because they oppose the goals of the movement, not because they deem the movement and its actors unworthy or incompetent. In terms of how actors of the movement advocates its worthiness themselves, they highlight the complicated relationship with INGOs. It is no secret that INGOs will set up operations wherever major crises around the world occur and, at least in theory, respond to the same needs that the pro-immigration social movement does. Comparing the major budget, workforce and accessibility of INGOs to those of civil groups in the social movement, it would suggest that the social movement simply cannot be as effective. However, informants speak positively about their relationship to actors of other groups of the movement and how they tend to cooperate. This tendency implies that the social movement does have strength in numbers and the capacity gap between it and INGOs is not as large as it would seem at first glance. Furthermore, informants of all six groups that represent the movement were critical

toward the efforts of INGOs and many questioned their motives. This narrative is testament to the self-understanding of social movement actors that their collective effort is more efficient and more worthy relative to that of INGOs, taking the social movement's limited resources into account.

Unity: Unity in social movement can be seen as a directly visible and audible phenomenon concerning signs, garment and chants. Although informants did discuss these concepts, it was not one of the main topics in the interviews and seemingly not viewed as a central element of claim making within the movement. Although groups such as Lifeguard Hellas and Lighthouse Relief did wear uniforms, it would not be fair to conclude anything general about the social movement on that basis. Rather, the interviews focused on unity at a structural and dynamical level. However, even taking this approach, it is somewhat difficult to pinpoint central common features within the social movement. One could certainly point to the fact that every informant is criticising the European refugee regime, which implies unity in defining how the movement differs from other agents and that every group share similar end goals and identity claims. This is indeed true and it is a shared indication of unity. Nevertheless, each group's focus on internal unity differed too significantly for this analysis to point to specific mutual patterns. This discovery is, at least in part, a consequence of the approach taken in this thesis. Different kinds of groups were approached and had interviews only been conducted with groups that perform either emergency -, second stage - or psychosocial response and are either political or apolitical, it is likely that it would have been possible to identify more indications of unity within the social movement.

Numbers: Very rigidly, one might argue that when the pro-immigration social movement fails to save all people in a shipwreck, it is because they lack manpower. However, claims such as that would be deficient. What can be said about numbers is that it does influence the response the social movement is able to muster. There are definitely benefits and disadvantages of having many members of the social movement volunteering at once. Across all groups, they had been forced to adjust both to periods where volunteers were practically flocking and periods where it was difficult to fill vital positions, such as when Lapsatis was asked to stay longer on Lesbos than intended, because Lifeguard Hellas could not find a suitable candidate to fill his role as coordinator. On the other hand, it is evident that a high number of members can belittle commitment and worthiness of individuals and thereby leave a negative impact on the social movement, internally and in terms of reputation. Further, having many members with varying intentions can be incentive for freeriding.

Commitment: The notion of freeriding serves as a segue into discussing the commitment of the pro-immigration social movement. Although some informants were more particular about it than others, the movement is now generally hoping to recruit experienced volunteers who agree to work for a predefined and longer period of time. There is no question that the main instigators and core members of the social movement are very committed, the fact that the groups on Lesbos have stayed when many others have abandoned their operations in line with the decrease of the influx is testament to this. Also on Lesbos, although they agree that there could be a hypothetical minimum, informants ensured that they would stay as long as irregular crossings from Turkey occur regularly and as long as refugee migrants benefit from the efforts the movement is contributing. In terms of the psychosocial Athens branch of the movement, focus is on leaving a positive and long lasting impact. Should the movement no

longer be needed to assist refugee migrants, informants are clear about their actions not only being aid but also statements of alternative ways of structuring society and living together.

Conclusion

The discussions raised throughout this thesis answer the research question:

How is the existence of Greece-based pro-immigrations civil groups that have emerged as a response to the current refugee situation justified by groups members?

To begin with, the broad irregular migration influx tendencies are established, and since combined with a selection of public European attitudes toward the influx, thereby establishing the current refugee situation, under which the following chapters are understood. It is determined that the refugee situation is characterised by discontent toward European refugee regime practices. The anti-immigration perspective is then examined in a brief analysis of the far-right political party GD. It is argued that there is a correlation between increase in irregular migration and party support. Subsequently a discussion of the European refugee regime is presented, focusing on norms, principles, rules and decision-making procedures, in order to define the structure within which Greece-based pro-immigration civil groups operate, and under which informant statements are considered. It is concluded that changes of norms and principles result in changes of the European refugee regime itself and that changes in rules and decision-making procedures are changes within the European refugee regime. Furthermore, relaxation or neglect of the four elements are regarded as weakening of the European refugee regime, pointing to the de facto suspension of the Dublin Regulation and the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement as prominent examples. It is

argued that it is the weakening of the European refugee regime that made informants react, when they decided to get involved. Building on this conclusion, an investigation of the logic of collective action and group formation is performed, concluding that groups represent an effective opportunity to coordinate efforts and interests, as a way of achieving a collective good. The concept of freeriding is introduced and it is argued that wherever collective action is undertaken, there is arguably incentives to freeride. Freeriding is identified at three levels within the European refugee regime in relation to relevant groups: On intra-group level, where volunteers might freeride in order to showcase humanitarian behaviour they find desirable; on inter-actor level within the European refugee regime, where groups, NGOs, INGOs, and international organisations might have incentives to freeride, in relation to supplying to the collective good of upholding European refugee regime norms and principles. It is established that states within the European refugee regime might freeride on the effort by other states, in order to either appear to comply with norms and principles, or simply to avoid burden carrying.

Departing from the preceding analysis, the relevant pro-immigration groups are discussed by use of social movement theory. Social movement theory is applied in order to understand that the pro-immigration groups are part of a larger movement within the European refugee regime, and as way to understand how the civil groups justify their existence. By making use of social movement theory, conclusions are drawn under the terms of worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment. Essentially, two different angles can be applied when determining the worthiness of pro-immigration groups. According to the first perspective, the groups are worthy because the findings suggest that locals and refugee migrants generally sympathise with their methods. On the other hand, as long as a large proportion of Greeks are sceptical of

refugee migrants who are part of the influx, the groups cannot muster a significant worthiness in the eyes of their critics. Due to the broad differences, it is hard to conclude on any specific unity amongst different pro-immigration groups, and it is concluded that the empirical foundation is insufficient in supporting an understanding of a single unity across the entire social movement; interests and practices vary greatly. The number of persons who join pro-immigration groups, and thereby the pro-immigration social movement, has decreased substantially as the number of crossings from Turkey to Greece has diminished, and it is concluded that this variation might be explained under the term commitment. As the influx has diminished, the number of people who travel to Greece has likewise fallen, as the workload reduced. What is now in demand is workers and volunteers with more specific qualifications, that show long-term commitment, even in times when the influx is low.

In sum, the existence of pro-immigration groups is justified by their members as a response to weakening within the European refugee regime, by way of demonstrating their worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment as a counterbalance to present European refugee regime practices.

Perspectives

The European refugee regime has effectively caused crossings on the Eastern Mediterranean route to decline. However, refugee migrants still try to reach Europe, albeit now more so via the Central Mediterranean route from Libya to Italy, suggesting that complicating entry to Europe does not make refugee migrants refrain from taking flight.

In July 2017, at an EU Justice and Home Affairs council in Tallinn, action strategies to diminish crossings on the Central route were discussed. An Italian proposal to prohibit civil groups from performing rescue operations at sea was discussed.²⁷⁰ As of now, for civil groups based in Europe to assist refugee migrants on crossings on the Central Mediterranean route is arguably more comprehensive and complicated than on the Eastern route, because authorities patrol the waters close to the Libyan coast. This means that fewer people can access the areas of concern, leaving less leeway for pro-immigrant civil groups with broad volunteer appeal, such as the ones entertained in this thesis. It must accordingly be deduced that room within the European refugee regime for groups of such character will diminish, and a shift toward smaller more specialised groups is likely to transpire. In Estonia, an action plan to relieve Italy of the pressure was adopted. Further coordination with African countries to diminish the flow of migrants to Libya was agreed.²⁷¹ Further externalisation, both physical and political, would enforce changes to the European refugee regime. If the virtual border to the EU lies somewhere in Turkey and in Libya, banning civil action in the Mediterranean Sea would force emergency response civil groups to move their activities outside of the EU. Further externalisation of the European refugee regime would entail changes to -, reductions of - or cessation of civil group activities.

Further analysis from the perspective of European refugee regime externalisation could take two, not necessarily contradictory directions. One, it would be of interest to investigate into how externalisation affects the room for civil groups to manoeuvre within the European refugee regime, and what possible consequences could come of this. Two, a scrutinisation of

²⁷⁰ Lizzie Dearden, *Italy's draft code of conduct for refugee rescue ships 'threatens thousands of lives', charities warn*, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/refugee-crisis-ngo-rescue-ships-mediterranean-libya-smugglers-italy-code-of-conduct-threatens-lives-a7842966.html> (accessed 25 July 2017).

²⁷¹ Dimitris Avramopoulos, *Central Mediterranean Route: Remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos following the informal JHA Council in Tallinn* (Tallinn: Justice and Home Affairs Council), 2017, 1.

what the externalisation of the European refugee regime does to irregular immigration-attitudes in Europe would be of interest. Is it in fact weakening the European refugee regime further, seeing as the number of forcibly displaced persons has never been higher and anti-immigration sentiment seems to be on the rise? If migrants have already crossed an external border irregularly, they are likely to be received with sceptic attitudes to begin with.

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Appendix 1: Lapsatis, Isidoros. Interview. 05 April 2017. Duration: 1:11:55

Appendix 2: Hackett-Evans, Ivory. Interview. 05 April 2017. Duration: 0:34:33

Appendix 3: Kempson, Eric and Kempson, Philippa. Interview. 06 April 2017. Duration: 1:39:10

Appendix 4: Adam, Dina. Interview. 07 April 2017. Duration: 1:30:53

Appendix 5: Van Kempen, Rebecca. Interview. 11 April 2017. Duration: 1:21:27

Appendix 6: Bikof, Mania and Mitritsakis, Spiros. Interview. 12 April 2017. Duration: 2:27:38

Appendix 7: Bowler, Rebecca Dalby. Interview. 14 April 2017. Duration: 1:14:26

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