NAVIGATING TREACHEROUS TERRAIN

A study of refugee-focused NGOs operating in antagonistic climates

Emma Vinter

Master's Thesis in Development and International Relations

Specialisation in Global Gender Studies

Aalborg University

2023

Supervisor: Lise Rolandsen Agustín

Characters: 167985

Abstract

Refugees face immense political antagonism in Europe – national governments and the European Union (EU) have not provided viable or sustainable solutions to this problem, so in this paper I focus on non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as alternative actors as drivers of social change. I study four NGOs operating in Europe, in order to discover how they manoeuvre within a terrain that is heavily impacted by these political antagonisms. Specifically, I pose the research question (RQ):

How do Danish and Maltese refugee-focused NGOs navigate the political antagonisms towards refugees seen in their respective countries?

I approach this question from a feminist standpoint, which, although typically applied to study gendered inequality, is increasingly used in the study of broader social change. I use a constant comparative method (CCM) based on two data sets: expert interviews from a feminist perspective, and website material from the four NGOs' nationally focused webpages. Two core categories emerged from my data: namely that the NGOs use solidarity and resistance as mechanisms to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees. I build a theoretical framework around these concepts from an intersectional perspective, particularly due to intersectionality's raison d'être which lies in its concern with power relations and social inequalities – factors which I understand to underpin the ways NGOs can work with and for refugees. In the analysis I explore the diverging ways in which the NGOs employ these solidarity and resistance mechanisms when relating to: alliances, critical junctures, contention, adversaries, and funding. I find that although the national context in Denmark and Malta does provide local flavour to the ways in which the NGOs use solidarity and resistance to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees, the organisational strategies of the NGOs seem to have a greater impact. I furthermore find many similarities between the ways in which the NGOs must balance solidarity and resistance mechanisms to navigate the treacherous terrain in which they work, most of which seem to be grounded in a broader professionalisation of social change that necessarily disciplines dissent. This finding is likely applicable to the broader NGO-sphere in Europe, rather than just impacting refugee-focused NGOs.

Key Words: Solidarity, Resistance, Intersectionality, Refugees, NGOs

Table of Contents[1]

INTRODUCTION **1**

Literature Review 2

Research Question 4

METHODS **6**

Research Design 6

Country Selection 7

NGO Selection 9

Data Collection 11

Interview Method 12

Comparative Method 14

Limitations 16

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK **18**

Conceptualising Intersectionality 18

An Intersectional Theoretical Framework on Solidarity and Resistance 20

ANALYSIS **27**

Alliances 27

Refugee Alliances *27*

NGO Alliances *30*

Governmental Alliances *34*

Critical Junctures 36

Contention 39

Adversaries 42

Funding 46

DISCUSSION **52**

Differences 52

Similarities 54

Reflection 57

CONCLUSION **59**

REFERENCES **62**

[1] Appendix in separately attached document, including interviews, interview guide, consent forms, & project description.

Introduction

"The Danish Prime Minister declared that Denmark wanted 'zero asylum seekers'"
The Guardian 2022

"[Denmark's policies] are among Europe's harshest conditions for asylum seekers"
Le Monde 2022

"The government's message [is] that Malta is 'full up' of migrants"
Times of Malta 2022

"Malta's deficient asylum system under the spotlight once again"
The Shift News 2022

These quotes indicate that the mass media pays attention to the Danish and Maltese political resistance towards refugees[2]. Such sentiment can be seen as a reflection of a broader approach in the EU. A range of actors point to this stance. From Reuters (e.g., 2019; 2023) to Al Jezeera (e.g., 2021; 2022) to Politico (e.g., 2022; 2023) journalists highlight the restrictive measures imposed on refugees in the EU (e.g., Deutsche Welle, 2023; The Guardian, 2020). Many organisations, like the 110 NGOs in the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (2020), problematise the "increasingly hostile environments" that they, and refugees, must manoeuvre (p.1). Research institutions publish extensive reports on this; Pew Research Center outlines the predominantly negative public opinion of (Muslim) refugees (2016), as well as highlighting support for deportations, even to countries where deportees face severe abuse (2019). Similarly, the Danish Institute for International Studies (2017a; 2017b; 2016), has published a variety of documents on the topic. Refugees themselves also speak out against this, but they are often heard through intermediary actors like journalists (e.g., The New Humanitarian, 2018; Pantti & Ojala, 2019), NGOs (e.g., Translators Without Borders, n.d.), and scholars (e.g., Ryu & Tuvilla, 2018).

[2] I do not use the term refugee "as a rarefied and exclusionary legal category" rather as a "strategic essentialism" to discuss those who have fled their home countries, irrespective of their legal status (De Genova et al., 2018, p. 245).

We here see that the anti-refugee sentiments conveyed in the introductory quotes are not unique to Denmark and Malta, rather, the two nations seem to fit into a wider EU approach. In this paper, I focus on Denmark and Malta as two comparable nation states, since they are both small EU countries known for their anti-refugee politics (Hagelund, 2020; Schumacher, 2020**).** Nonetheless, their geo-political positions make it expectable that national differences impact this dynamic. Juxtaposing these two countries will allow for a greater understanding of each (following Vigour, 2011, p.220), but it will also allow me to discuss the underlying dynamics at play in the wider context.

Literature Review

In addition to the mass media, academics also focus on the anti-refugee stances in Denmark and Malta, as I now illustrate through a brief literature review:

There is an abundance of work which concentrates on what Agustín and Jørgensen (2016) discuss as the "antagonistic politics" towards refugees in Denmark (p.231). For example, Lassen (2018) explores an "ever-tighter immigration control" (p.427) and pays attention to subjects like a "deterrence campaign in Middle Eastern newspapers" which the Danish government launched to discourage refugees from coming to Denmark (p.428). Rytter (2018) examines similar policies, such as the "reduction in the financial support for refugees provided by the state", the "strict criteria for obtaining residency", and the "jewellery law", where authorities were "given permission to confiscate […] jewellery from asylum seekers in order to pay for their own expenses" (pp.12-14). This is a focus area for Vitus and Jarlby (2022) too, who explore how "politicians have legitimised the hardening of immigration politics by problematising the 'costs' of immigration" (p.1502), and they also problematise Denmark's violation of refugee and human rights conventions (p.1501).

These policies may be connected to a 'paradigm shift' in Denmark, which occurred in response to the 'refugee crisis'[3](Kjær, 2020, p.126) but Agustín and Jørgensen (2019) remind us that the "Danish immigration and integration policy framework since 2001 has been characterized as restrictive" (p.76). Since then, there has been "a consensus on the need to limit the number of refugees applying for asylum" across the political landscape, barring a few parties (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019, p.77).

[3] Like Agustín & Jørgensen (2019) I "deliberately use the notion of refugee crisis in scare quotes" (p.2) to emphasise a critical stance towards a term that depicts the crisis as "an 'event' distinct from the political 'norm'" hence allowing for exceptional measures (Rajaram, 2015, para. 1).

Agustín and Jørgensen (2019) suggest that these restrictive policies have "served as an inspiration for a 'new style of integration' which was pursued by other European countries during the 2000s" (p.76). One such country may be Malta, which joined the EU in 2004, where immigration policies were adapted to the EU framework (Nimführ et al., 2020, p.162).

Since 2004, there has been rich academic attention to Malta's stance on migration. Much of this literature deals with Malta's detention polices, where Skov (2016) characterises the conditions as "very questionable" (p.73) and Mainwaring (2012) asserts that the detention centres serve to "criminalise the migrant population" (p.679). In relation to this, Farrugia (2009) notes that refugees "are handcuffed when leaving the centre, even to go to hospital" (p.64) – Nimführ et al.(2020) highlight that this, along with the militarised reception, creates the image that refugees are "sick and threatening", linking this to De Genova's (2013) concept of a "border spectacle"(p.64) which serves to further alienate refugees (Nimführ et al, 2020, p.169). Scholars also look at issues like government policies which make family reunification or employment difficult for refugees (Vassallo, 2017; Debono & Garcia, 2016), the barriers to achieving refugee status (Pisani, 2012), and the challenges that temporary protection statuses incur (Farrugia, 2009).

There is a particular attention to Malta's SAR operations, which have been criticised by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (see e.g.: Mainwaring & DeBono, 2021; García-Carriazo, 2019). Here, the government's policy has been to "refuse to give access to its ports", thereby "neglecting" those at sea (Trevisanut, 2022, p.524). This practice has gained increased attention since 2018, where Salvini's government withdrew an informal agreement between Malta and Italy, whereunder refugees rescued in the Maltese SAR zone could disembark in Italy (Asylum Information Database [Aida], 2021, p.20). Damnjanovic (2020) characterises the withdrawal from this agreement as a symptom of the so-called 'refugee-crisis', whereunder collaboration between EU member states collapsed. Since then, scholars have paid close attention to the refugees whose lives have been endangered or lost in Malta's SAR zone (Wetterich, 2023; Velasco, 2022). Notably, Malta did not experience a 'paradigm shift' in the same manner as Denmark, but we here see that Maltese policies were still heavily impacted by the 'refugee crisis'. Here, Vaughan-Williams and Pisani (2020) argue that Malta "not only since 2015, but also over the past two decades beforehand" (p.654) has had "increasingly restrictive legalisation" on refugees (p.653).

Research Question

The above literature review underscores that political antagonisms towards refugees seen in both Denmark and Malta occupy the minds of academics greatly. Considering Ferris (2013) who asserts that NGOs play an ever-increasing role in refugee work (as also discussed by Zihnioğlu & Dalkıran, 2022; Skleparis & Armakolas 2016), I am curious as to how NGOs can manoeuvre within this terrain. This is particularly pertinent since Agustín and Jørgensen (2019) suggest that we "have to look elsewhere for alternative" actors when national governments and the EU have not been able to present "viable or sustainable solutions" (p.3). Further, Agustín (2012) suggests that "little research has been undertaken regarding the role of social actors" such as NGOs in this space. With these considerations in mind, I pose the RQ:

How do Danish and Maltese refugee-focused NGOs navigate the political antagonisms towards refugees seen in their respective countries?

By navigate, I mean how the organisations operate, what and how they think, and the ways in which they manoeuvre despite the political antagonisms towards the refugees that they work with. From this, the role that the NGOs play in such an environment can be discussed, and I expect that a comparison between NGOs in the two countries will shed light on the political contexts and systems through which organisations manoeuvre. This will furthermore help to build an understanding of the obstacles and opportunities refugee-focused NGOs face in the EU, although national politics may prompt these to manifest in distinct ways.

When exploring how the NGOs navigate, I am interested in the underlying ideas that drive the organisations, and in how this impacts their operations in a hostile environment. I will examine how the NGOs navigate in this terrain through a comparative analysis of the Danish and Maltese NGOs, in the expectation that the similarities and differences between the two national contexts will allow for underlying and structural issues to emerge. Ultimately, I propose that this will enable reflections on NGOs in a wider context, opening up for discussions of the ways such organisations can operate more broadly.

Exploring refugee-*focused* NGOs allows me to examine NGOs that also engage with other policy areas. I consider Martens (2002) when conceptualising NGOs: they are separate entities from the national government, they have headquarters, permanent staff, a constitution, and promote common goals (p.282). I explore the Danish NGOs: the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), and Refugees Welcome (RW), and the Maltese NGOs: Jesuit Refugee Service Malta

(JRS), and aditus foundation (aditus). The first three NGOs are explicitly refugee organisations, but aditus is a human rights organisation, whereunder their work with refugees is a key aspect of their operation (aditus, 2022a, pp.12-14).

As indicated through my literature review, I understand the term political antagonisms as dealing with issues like laws and policies which have a purposeful and explicit negative effect on refugees. I also mean the political will in relation to refugees, and the general way in which the Danish and Maltese governments deal with refugees. I do not intend to explore the discourse of politicians, or the view towards refugees in the general public. In this way, I do not focus on how differing political voices clash or the public debate, but rather on how NGOs navigate in a hostile environment towards refugees.

I investigate the RQ through a feminist lens. I achieve this by conducting expert in-depth feminist interviews with the NGO staff, as well as through an intersectional lens on my theoretical framework. Feminist research is typically applied to studies of women's oppression (Hammersley, 1992) covering areas such gendered inequalities in income, representation, or sex work (see e.g.: Macdonald, 1995; Adair, 2008; Comte, 2014 respectively). However, Doucet and Mauthner (2008) highlight that feminist researchers also advocate that "feminist research should be concerned with issues of broader social change and social justice" (p.328). Similarly, Hesse-Biber (2006) underscores that feminist research promotes social change for women and "other oppressed groups" (p.113). Considering this, I adopt a feminist lens in my analysis of the NGOs, since an understanding of their ability to navigate in a hostile environment may help to create social change for refugees, who can be considered part of the category 'other oppressed groups'.

My study focuses on how the NGOs presently navigate the political antagonisms towards refugees. I focus primarily on the last decade, as this will allow for the impact of recent political projects to come to light, but I use this timeframe to consider how the NGOs navigate within their contemporary climates.

My project is structured as follows: first I account for the methods I use. Then, I unpack my theoretical framework, conceptualising the notions solidarity and resistance as key concepts that emerged from my data, through an intersectional lens. Next, I present a constant comparative analysis of the Danish and Maltese NGOs, before deliberating my findings in a discussion. Finally, I present a summarising conclusion.

Methods

I here outline my research design and account for the countries and NGOs I selected. I describe my data collection and my comparative method. I reflect on the limitations throughout the chapter, but the final section delves further into this.

Research Design

I adopt a qualitative approach which is "used to better understand how we make sense of the world around us" and focuses "on meanings and processes" (Lamont, 2015, p.78). This coheres with my aim to understand how NGOs navigate their terrain, as I focus on the meanings and processes that compel them to do so. I also use qualitative data, which I account for below (pp.11-14).

Lamont (2015) notes that "qualitative methods often rely on inductive reasoning" (p.78) and that is also the case for my project, where I use specific data from website documents and interviews to craft broader conclusions. Feminist methodologists like Reinharz also argue for inductive rather than deductive reasoning, due to a focus on processes and understanding, rather than using "predefined concepts" that stem from patriarchal traditions (Gorelick, 1991, p.462).

Qualitative data also complements interpretivism (Lamont, 2015, p.19), which, unlike empiricism, is useful when looking into "underlying social and power structures" (p.20), like I aim to do. Oakley (1981) criticises positivism for overemphasising "hygienic research" when conducting interviews with personal involvement (p.58), and since my interviews may be clouded by my involvement (see: p.9), interpretivism is suited here. This means that my experiences and preconceived notions have an impact on the research, and so is not 'hygienic' in the empiricist sense. Yet, my involvement in the world I am studying supports an exploration of underlying structures to a greater extent since my experiences allow me to view the NGO from a different perspective. The interpretivist approach allows me to unpack a multitude of meanings behind statements made by the NGOs, rather than aiming to create quantifiable evidence. Hence, I avoid Levesque-Lopman's (2000) critique of quantifying objects which are not 'fully quantifiable'. In this vein, I adopt an interpretivist approach as I do not focus "on explanation but on generating knowledge aimed at deepening our understanding" (Lamont, 2015, p.38).

As outlined in the introduction, I utilise feminist perspectives to carry out my study, as the project is concerned with oppression and social inequality. I approach this issue through an intersectional lens (pp.18-20), which means that I necessarily understand oppression as constructed through co-constitutive social identity categories, and I therefore adopt a social

constructivist approach, much like Kantola and Lombardo (2021) confirm that intersectional perspectives cohere with this philosophy of science qua its focus on power relations (p.46)

I use an array of data in my project (pp.11-14) which allows for triangulation. Carter et al.(2014) explain that triangulation is used to "test validity through the convergence of information from different sources" (p.545), so data is compared to uncover discrepancies which could jeopardise the integrity of the study if left uninterrogated. Specifically, I utilise methodological triangulation, which uses data from at least two different types of sources to draw conclusions, and comparing the information from these sources furthers the validity of the findings (Thurmond, 2001, pp.254-255). I achieve this by using both interview data and data from the NGO websites, as well as by cross-referencing my findings with those of other academics. For example, the data from the websites indicates that the NGOs use international governments to put pressure on their national governments, which is, to an extent, corroborated by the scholarly literature. Yet, the interviews draw out the limitations of this, and highlight the barriers for the NGOs to make effective use of these, which is also corroborated by the scholarly literature. In this way, the use of website material, interviews, and scholarly literature allows me to triangulate and improve the validity and nuance of my findings.

Country Selection

I now outline why I choose to compare Denmark and Malta.

Denmark is seen as an attractive refugee destination due to high employment rates, equality on the job market, and economic stability (Lubanski, 2017). Yet, the country is increasingly known for its anti-immigration policies, such as the notorious jewellery law (Hardman, 2022) and the many obstacles in family reunification (Bendixen, 2021a). Denmark's adherence to human rights principles has been questioned, e.g., during political discussions of repatriation to Syria (see: Reliefweb, 2022) or the outsourcing of prison cells to Kosovo for persons awaiting expulsion from Denmark (see: Amnesty, 2021a). Many refugees utilise Denmark as a transit country to travel to countries such as Sweden (Hagelund, 2020, p.10).

Unlike Denmark, Malta, given its Mediterranean position, is often a first country of arrival (Aida, 2021, p.22). Malta is not viewed as an attractive refugee destination, due to lack of access to employment, housing, and documentation (Amore, 2005; Aida, 2021, p.86, p.81, p.75). Like Denmark, Malta is often a transit country – many refugees arriving in Malta have other European destinations in mind but come to Malta due to problems during their journeys (Klepp, 2011, p.545). Malta has been criticised for "lethal disregard" on the Mediterranean Sea (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2021), and many other

rights abuses against migrants (Amnesty, 2021b; Taylor, 2022). Refugees in Malta face some of the same issues that refugees in Denmark face, e.g., family reunification difficulties (Aida, 2021, p.127), but they are not threatened with repatriation to Syria or detention in third countries like Kosovo. However, they face difficulties that refugees in Denmark do not face. For example, Malta implements an accelerated procedure, so asylum applications from specific countries are deemed manifestly unfounded (Aida, 2021, p.53), which has a particularly negative effect on LGBT* refugees (aditus, 2021, "#Safe4All"). Malta also de facto detains newly arrived refugees, the detention conditions have been described as "overall deplorable", and NGOs have limited access here (Aida, 2021, pp.93-112).

Juxtaposing these countries is useful to as I can gain insight into two countries that have similarities in their values and practices, while their geo-political differences may allow for opposing dynamics to emerge. Both countries being situated in the EU also opens up for discussions on the broader dynamics that are at play here. Overall, I compare two EU states that both are criticised for human rights abuses against refugees, while their opposition towards refugees also manifests differently based on national context. This means that I can carry out a comparison of the systemic issues and look at underlying power structures, while acknowledging that the impact of these differ depending on each individual geo-political situation. In this way I can compare how the NGOs navigate the political antagonisms towards refugees seen in their respective countries, and by unpacking the similarities and differences between the Danish and Maltese NGOs, I can explore how systemic issues play out in both settings. In sum, I see the size of the two EU countries, their anti-immigration stances, and their (non)adherence to human rights to be somewhat similar factors, while the ways in which these values manifest, the national context, and the geographical positions remain different. Thereby the similarities afford a premise for comparison, while the differences concurrently provide fertile ground for discussion. In this way, a comparison allows me to evaluate the similarities and differences for the refugee-focused NGOs, which will elucidate the consequences of this, and aid a further understanding of the tools they use to navigate in their antagonistic climates.

Future research could incorporate further countries for comparison, but I choose to focus on two countries here as this is more suitable for my scope. I suggest that Denmark and Malta are adequate for comparison specifically due to my focus on underlying power structures, that is, exploring Danish and Maltese dynamics may reveal systemic issues faced by NGOs in both countries, while paying attention to the differences in national context also reveals the local dynamics that they operate within.

NGO Selection

I examine NGOs – I could have focused on refugees instead, this would suit my feminist lens, since I would pay attention to the "lived experiences" of those impacted, as Collins (2015) asserts is important (p.7). Instead, I add an intermediary actor: the NGOs that work for refugees. This increases distance to concrete lived experiences, but it has the benefit of expanding my scope. By this, I mean that interviewing refugees would give adequate insight into the current situation for a few refugees, while interviewing NGOs that work for refugees provides an understanding that covers a larger base; the NGOs work for hundreds of refugees each year and are actively engaged in the political arena surrounding refugees in the long-term. This means that NGOs can portray a more nuanced picture, rather than a snapshot of a singular experience. The lack of refugee voices is a limitation in a feminist research paradigm – however interviewing refugees would also have raised ethical concerns, e.g., exploiting vulnerable situations for my research.

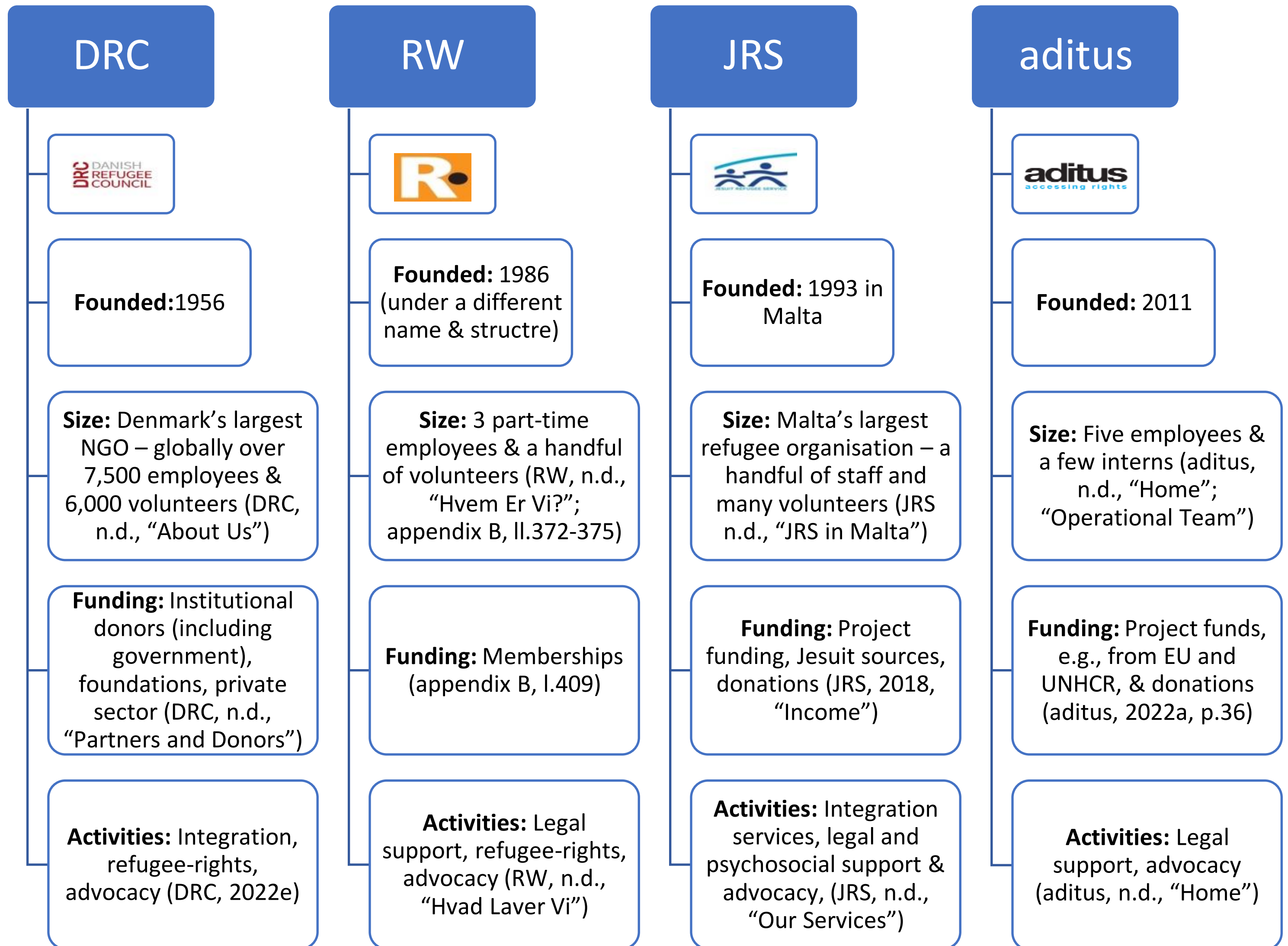
The organisations I study are: The Danish Refugee Council, Refugees Welcome, Jesuit Refugee Service, and aditus foundation.

I volunteered for DRC for several years, and I interned at aditus for a semester; this is an asset in that I experienced first-hand how the organisations work, but it is also a limitation in that it may influence my judgement of the NGOs. I keep this in mind as I carry out the analysis by actively interrogating my own preconceived notions and ideas.

DRC and JRS can be characterised as international NGOs (INGOs), but I examine their national operations only, to narrow the scope of my research and to create methodological coherence with the other NGOs. To this end, I interviewed the director of the Integration Department at DRC, Kenneth Flex, and the director of the Maltese division of JRS, Katrine Camilleri –I also primarily used documents from DRC's Danish websites and JRS's Maltese website, as opposed to their more internationally focused webpages. I also interviewed the chair of RW, Michala Bendixen, and aditus' director Neil Falzon.

Flex notes that his reflections stem from the Integration Department only, and that I might have gained a different impression had I spoken to the director of the Asylum Department (appendix A, ll.513-514). This is a limitation that could have been ameliorated if I spoke to several different directors within DRC, but this was not feasible given my time restraints. Nonetheless, Flex's interview provided insightful feedback to my questions, and I supplement his reflections with a wide variety of DRC documents to gain a fuller perspective on the whole

organisation. This issue is unique to my study of DRC, in that it is by far the largest organisation I interview – further information about the NGOs is presented in the below table:



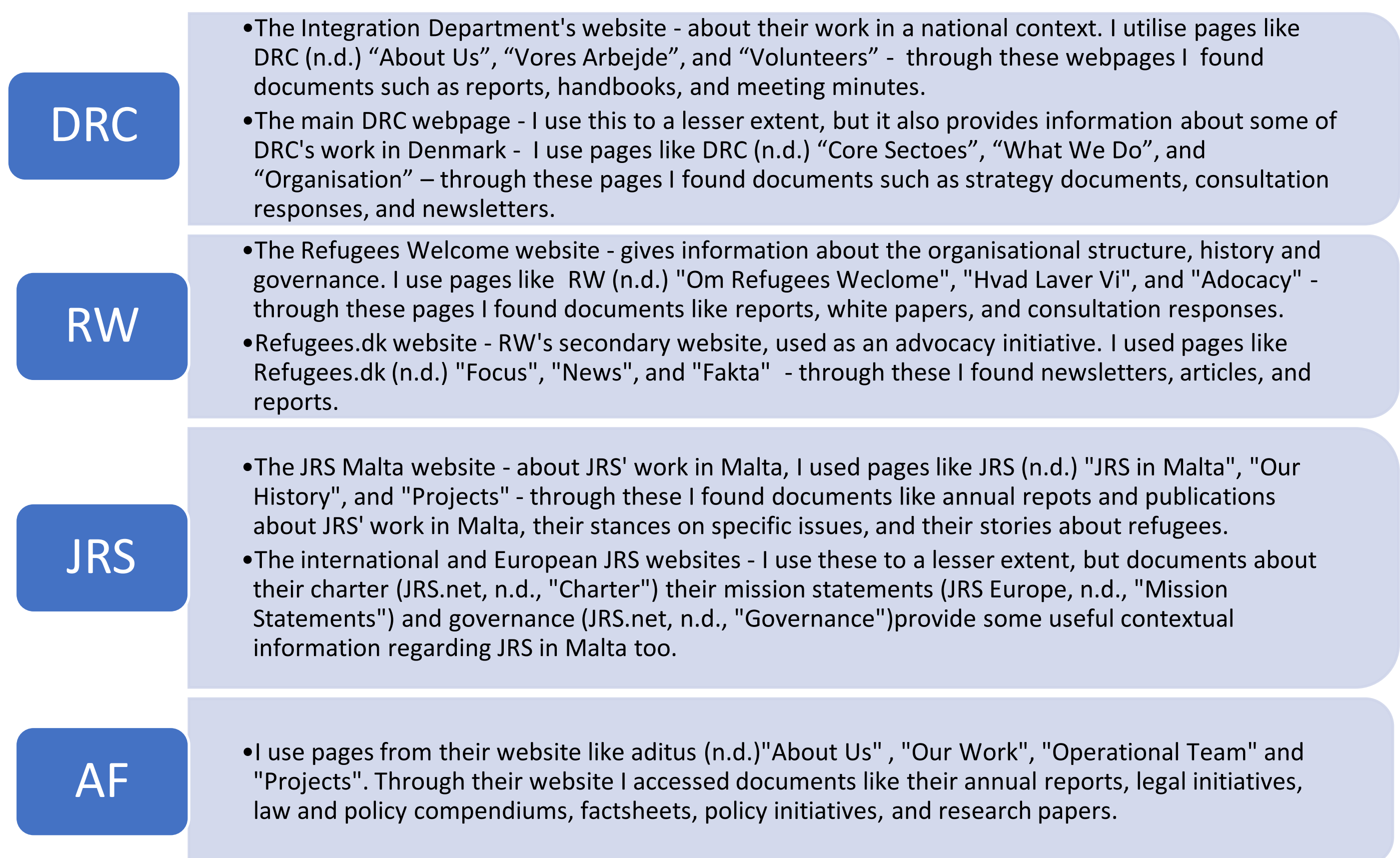
Here we see many differences between the NGOs. This is a strength for my research as it gives an impression of how differently structured NGOs operate within their given national context. For example, RW and DRC have different organisational structures (like aditus and JRS), but they are embedded within the same national context, and so must manoeuvre the same political antagonism – thereby I can unpack how the national context impacts how these NGOs operate, while including considerations of their differing organisational settings too. Thereby, I can consider two parameters; the country context and the organisation type, which provides a comparative advantage.

My NGO sample is small. However, this is in line with a qualitative approach, since Hesse-Biber (2006) notes: "the logic of qualitative research is concerned with in-depth understanding and usually involves working with small samples. The goal is to look at a 'process' or the 'meanings' individuals attribute to their given social situation, not necessarily to make generalizations" (p.119). So, I do not aim to generate quantifiable generalisations about all NGOs, but rather to understand processes and meanings embedded in their social worlds, as is possible with a smaller sample.

Data Collection

I conducted four interviews raning between thirty and fifty minutes, and I supplement this with a range of documents from the NGOs' websites to enhance my findings. This allows me to triangulate, as discussed above. In this section, I focus on the documents I collected, while the next section dives into my interview method.

The below diagram depicts the documents I consider in this study:



I use these documents to conduct a qualitative document analysis, i.e., an "analytics procedure [that] entails finding, selecting, […] making sense of, and synthesising data contained in

documents" (Bowen, 2009, p.28). I account for how I make sense of and synthesis the data when I explain my method of comparison, so I here focus on how I found and selected the data.

As seen in the diagram, my data comes from the NGO websites. The webpages I refer to, and the documents I retrieved from these *both* constitute documents for analysis (in line with Owen, 2014). I use a vast number of documents, but it is clear that I have not considered *all* documents from the websites – I focus on those giving the most information about the organisations' operational and institutional frameworks. I prioritise these over documents like reports on international affairs which are not the focus of my research. I do not use the NGOs' social media profiles as data sources, as the NGOs' activity levels diverge greatly here, so I aim to create methodological coherence by focusing on websites, as the NGOs all use these similar extents. Nonetheless, the NGOs' social media represents dynamics which may fruitfully be the focus of other papers.

Bowen (2009) warns that document analysis can risk giving too little detail, as the documents are "created independent of a research agenda"(p.31), and this is also the case for my documents, which need to be supplemented by interviews to give a fuller picture. In fact, Atkinson and Coffey (1997) state that "we cannot […] learn through records alone how an organisation actually operates" (p.47), so my interview data is crucial to fully unpack my RQ.

Interview Method

I conducted the interviews online, which was advantageous due to geographical and temporal restraints. Some are critical towards online interviews, due to difficulties in building rapport (e.g., Weller, 2017). Yet, in a post-covid setting, such challenges may be ameliorated by the almost habitualness of online meetings (Oliffe et al., 2021). Also, the interviews were not of a personal nature, so rapport did not play as significant a role as it would have if the interviews had been about the interviewees' own person.

My interviewees are professionals in the asylum field– so my interviews are expert interviews. Dorussen et al.(2005) highlight that the "expert interview is an attractive data collection method" but also assert : "the validity of information collected […] crucially depends on the quality of the experts" (p.333) – my interviewees' have vast experience from their NGOs, so they can be considered high quality experts. Yet, I supplement (and triangulate) the interviews with many secondary sources of information to further validity.

I use in-depth feminist interviews to gather information from and with my expert interviewees. Hesse-Biber (2006) shows that such interviews are "more of a conversation between coparticipants than a simple question and answer session" (p.134). Thereby, the

interviews are not a one-way communication where I ask for short answers, but rather a co-creation of meaning achieved through the exchange of ideas guided by topics of interest to both parties. For example, in my interview with Bendixen, I asked her about RW's dialogue with politicians, but when she preferred to discuss their advocacy work as a more effective tool, we then proceeded to focus on this area (appendix B, ll.221-269). Thereby, I allowed her account of the situation to guide the interview process. Here, conducting interviews that are both in-depth feminist interviews and expert interviews was particularly beneficial, since the experts' professional knowledge guided the interview, but through tools like open-ended questions, we were also able to co-create meanings that developed throughout the process, and ultimately enhanced the quality of the interviews.

Hesse-Biber (2006) states that a feminist researcher "must be prepared to drop his or her agenda" (p.132), and I suggest that this is particularly important for expert interviews, since the experts may, qua their level of experience, find relevant issues beyond my line of inquiry. To make it feasible to 'drop my agenda', I conducted semi-structured interviews. To add structure to these, I created an interview guide, which I ensured that my interviewees received beforehand[4]. The guide is inspired by Adams (2015). For example, I made sure not to "cram too many issues into the agenda" (p.370), but rather formulated four overarching questions, with smaller sub-questions to clarify the type of issues I am interested in within this topic. This coheres with a feminist approach to interviews, since it allows the participants' accounts to guide the interview process, in that I asked broad questions with room for interpretation. Adams (2015) suggest that broad questions are particularly useful to initiate an interview (p.372) so, my first question addressed how the interviewees view the political situation in their country, which also helped me to make sure that I was not assuming their positions on the overall political situation in their country. Adams (2015) suggests that more sensitive questions can be asked once the interviewees have talked for a while, which I took into consideration by asking about funding as the third of four overarching questions. Within this question, I asked my interviewee's about a critique of NGOs in relation to funding and accountability (appendix A,B,C,D, ll.407-413; 383-387; 295-303;190-197) but I did not include this in the interview guide that I sent beforehand, because I wanted to use tools like intonation and eye-contact to make sure that the participants did not feel accused.

[4] Before the interviews, all participants received an interview guide, project description, and consent form, all given the opportunity to read a transcript of their interview, none wished to make any substantial corrections.

The order of the questions is flexible in a semi-structured interview (Lamont, 2015, p. 184). In all of my interviews, the first question from the interview guide (appendix J, l.6) remained the first question I asked, but since it is such a broad question, the interviewees' answers paved the way for, and already started touching upon, the subsequent questions, which we then discussed when they came up more spontaneously in the conversation, rather than being "tightly controlled" (Hesse-Biber, 2006, p.116). In some interviews I did not have time to ask all of the questions planned, but I prioritised the interviewees' additional comments to questions I hadn't planned instead, which is in line with Hesse-Biber's depiction of the feminist interviewer being prepared to drop their agenda.

Hesse-Biber (2006) explains that "reflexivity goes to the heart of the in-depth [feminist] interview" (p.130). Therefore, I reflect on my position regarding gender, race, age, sexuality, education, etc., in relation to the interviewees. My interviewees are all heads of NGOs, which is indicative of both class and educational levels, but their gender, age, race, and sexuality all differ. Feminist researchers acknowledge their position as interviewers is more powerful than their interviewees', in that they decide the topic, speed, etc. of the interview (Levesque-Lopman, 2000; Landman 2006). This is also an important consideration in my interviews, particularly since I controlled the line of inquiry vis á vis my interview guide. Nonetheless, my position as a young student, with far less experience in the field, and aspirations to work in the field after my studies, compared to their expert status, can be argued blur this power relation. In the case of the interview with my previous internship placement, the relation between boss and intern also changed the positionality.

I also reflected on such power dynamics when I transcribed the interviews. As the transcriber, I have the power to determine how my interviewees' words are put onto paper (Bucholtz, 2000). To convey the interviewees' speech as accurately as possible, I included video in my recordings of the interviews, and after I had transcribed, I watched the videos, to ensure that there were no non-verbal clues that changed the meaning of the point made. My interviews with DRC and RW were carried out in Danish, so I also translated these. As a translator I also have power over how my interviewees' words are conveyed (Strowe, 2013), and I paid special attention to specific words and phrases that could not be translated one-to-one, to ensure that the meanings behind them stayed intact.

Comparative Method

I used the constant comparative method (CCM), which is an inductive approach used to systematise qualitative data (Walker & Myrick, 2006, pp.548-549) and so coheres with my

research design. The CCM relies heavily on categories, which "become the basis for the organizing and conceptualizing" of the data (Dey, 1993, p.118). In my project, the categories emerge from the interview data, as well as the material I collected from the websites. Like Bruner et al.(1972) suggest, my categories reflect "a 'fit' between the properties of a stimulus input and the specifications of a category" (p.176) – in other words, each piece of data (each code) within a category is "alike or related in some respect" (Dye et al., 2000, p.3). To see this relation, I constantly compared the data within each category, adding and removing data codes within the category throughout the comparative process, thereby, the "meaning of the category evolves during the analysis" (Dey, 1993, p.108).

I started comparing when I collected the documents from the NGO websites, and I used this to inform the interview questions I asked. Boeije (2002) underscores that an interview comparison can begin already once the first interview has been conducted (p.395). Once I transcribed the interview, I started to code the data to look for categories within it and thought about this in relation to the documents I had collected. I examined the overall storyline in the interview and the documents, and I looked for codes that co-constituted categories (following Boeije, 2002). I followed this method for each subsequent interview. As I carried out the remaining interviews, "the data in hand [was] then analysed again and compared with the new data" such that a "cycle of comparison" occurred (Boeije, 2002, p.393). After conducting each interview, I wrote up a memo (in line with Glaser, 1965) which also considered the documents analysed. I returned to this regularly throughout the research process, adding new ideas, and I carried out a "close reading and rereading" to make sure my conclusions were "grounded in data, not speculative" (Glaser, 1965, p.440).

I structured this cycle of comparison following Boeije's (2002) "purposeful approach" to constant comparison. After comparing the interviews and documents from each induvial NGO, I started to compare codes within the same group (following Boeije, 2002). I did this by comparing the Danish data pieces with each other, exploring the categories that emerged, unpacking new meanings, and critically evaluating existing categories. I asked questions like "what do both interviews [and documents] tell us about the category?" and "what interpretations exist for this?" (Boeije, 2002, p.398). Then I did the same for the Maltese interviews.

Next, Boeije (2002) carries out a comparison between different groups (p.398). I did this by comparing the Danish data with the Maltese data, firstly by examining which codes and categories were similar, which were different, and how these comparisons manifested. I asked questions like "What does group 1 say about certain themes and what does group 2 have to say

about the same themes?" (Boeije, 2002, p.399). Since my research aim is to compare Danish and Maltese NGOs, this step took up the largest amount of time and resources, and I explored the "similar and diverse aspects" of all the properties within the codes and categories (Glaser, 1965, p.444), and I "scrutinized every data bit" to look for patterns and outliers (Dye et al., 2000, p.7). Concretely, to look for these patterns and outliers, I made use of triangulation, e.g., when looking into alliances (as a code that emerged through the data) both the interviews and the website material indicated that the Maltese NGOs seem to work with other NGOs outside of the asylum field – in a manner that the Danish NGOs do not. I then used scholarly literature and looked for further codes in the data to further the implications of this finding.

When I compared the cases I focused on the similarities and differences between the documents and interviews connected to each. My strategy to compare them was to consider the codes and categories as described above, as well as to look for outliers and possible explanations of these. The CCM allowed for many categories to emerge as I went through this process, the most significant being: how the NGOs use solidarity to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees, and how the NGOs use resistance to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees. To analyse these themes further, I build a theoretical framework on intersectionality, solidarity, and resistance which will support my examination of these themes. In this vein, my approach is inductive – but my drafting of the interview guide also included some considerations of theory, so have some deductive elements in my method too.

Limitations

I here delve into the limitations associated with my interviews and the CCM.

As an interviewer, I am "more than a private or empirical person" when I carry out in-depth feminist interviews, and my respondent "is more than an object or scientific category" (Levesque-Lopman, 2000, p.104). This allows for intersubjective meaning to be co-created, as should be seen as an asset (Levesque-Lopman, 2000, p.126), but it also means that my research is not objective or standardised (Doucet & Mauthner, 2008, p.330) and is impacted by my "vision of social reality" (Levesque-Lopman, 2000, p.105). Yet, the respondents are not the objects of my research – instead, I use them as experts to give information about the NGOs they represent. So, it is not the respondents who are the scientific category I explore, but rather the NGOs. The information from the NGOs may be biased, since they are likely present their organisation in the best possible light – this is especially the case for the documents, since they are also available to funders, who the NGOs have a particular interest in presenting their

organisation positively towards (AbouAssi, 2014). While I cannot counterbalance this, I remember it throughout my analysis, and remain critical towards my data.

Similarly, the CCM is not designed "to guarantee that two analysts working independently with the same data will achieve the same results" (Glaser, 1965, p.438). This limits replicability. While replicability is desirable in that it improves validity, my research aim, in line with both the qualitative and inductive approach, is to understand and unpack complex socio-political relations, which may not easily "be replicated in other places and at other times" (Landman, 2006, p.431). While my research is largely non-replicable, I document my method of analysis so that the process is transparent.

Theoretical Framework

The CCM caused two core categories to emerge from my data: solidarity and resistance. Here, questions of solidarity emerged largely within and between the NGOs and their partners, particularly refugees, other NGOs, national and international institutions. Resistance emerged as a category largely relating to a struggle for refugee rights. Here we see that the categories which emerged are impacted by my NGO selection, particularly since they are all rights-based organisations that place great weight on their collaboration with other entities (DRC, n.d., "Mission. Vision. Values"; RW, n.d., "Om Refugees Welcome"; JRS.net, n.d., "JRS Europe"; aditus, n.d. "Our Work").

In this chapter, I build a theoretical framework which will allow me to operationalise theories of solidarity and resistance in NGOs in relation to my data in the upcoming comparative analysis, so that I can explore how the NGOs navigate political antagonisms towards refugees through this framework.

Considering scholars like Durkheim who see solidarity as closely connected to social position (Featherstone, 2012, p.20) and scholars like Reicher (2004) who see resistance as intimately intertwined with identity categories, I argue that it is imperative to underpin this theoretical framework with an intersectional lens. When understanding solidarity and resistance intersectionally, I approach the two concepts as dialectically intertwined, where solidarity and the manifestations hereof impact resistance, while resistance and the manifestations hereof impact solidarity. Overall, I thereby below build an intersectional theoretical framework on solidarity and resistance in relation to refugee NGOs.

Conceptualising Intersectionality

In order to construct an intersectional theoretical framework on solidarity and resistance, I first conceptualise how intersectionality is to be understood for this project. Weldon (2008) affirms that intersectionality is a critical feminist concept (p.196), much like Collins (2015) highlights that "intersectionality's raison d'être lies in its attentiveness to power relations and social inequalities" (p.3). This critical approach to power relations is particularly important when exploring NGOs, which are positioned in a space between government and the public sphere. In this position, some argue that NGOs 'fill a gap' and strengthen democracy and civil society (e.g., Van Tuijil, 1999) while others suggest that governments support NGOs to "strategically limit public advocacy" (Lang, 2012, p.8). Here we can clearly see that critical attention to power relations and social inequalities is pertinent when exploring NGOs.

Specifically, an intersectional understanding posits that "race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age operate not as unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but as reciprocally constructing phenomena that in turn shape complex social inequalities" (Collins, 2015, p.2) – in this way, intersectionality can be used to critically unpack how categories of social belonging interact to co-create a specific web of oppression. This is particularly useful to understand for my project, where the NGOs I study are submerged in these complex, intersecting, social inequalities every time they work with and for refugees. For example, positionality regarding these categories may impact the "politics of voice" (Couldry, 2010) for the NGOs and their partners, i.e., it may create a hierarchy or tension between "who should speak" and "who will listen" (p.580).

Although intersectionality often deals with gender issues (see e.g.: Shields, 2008), Tormos (2017) argues that "detaching intersectionality from studies of gender might lead to other productive sites of inquiry of intersecting systems of power" (p.714), which is interesting for my project where the refugees the NGOs work with may face power disparities based on gender, but also (and perhaps more significantly for some) based on ethnicity, citizenship, class, age, sexuality, etc. Also, the NGOs themselves are intermeshed in intersecting systems of power, particularly in relation to funding and organisational type, so I strive to unpack these relations by paying attention to the positions of the NGOs too. Here we see the potential of a feminist lens to unpack complex social relations of "other oppressed groups" (Hesse-Biber, 2006, p.113) and those that work to create change for them.

Many other categories than those listed by Collins above can play into the "axes of oppression" (Yuval-Davis, 2012, p.48) to create a "matrix of domination" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p.200), and "some axes might be more salient or politicised in some contexts than in others" (Weldon, 2008, p.208). Here, it can be argued that the category 'refugee' constitutes such an axis in and of itself given the politicisation of refugees in Europe, but it can equally be said that the group is made up of an intermeshed dynamic between more traditionally explored social categories like class, race, or ethnicity, which intersect in specific historical and political settings to construct particular refugee experiences. In this way, 'refugee' may be either a social category or the subject of analysis. In this context, it is important to note that Hancock (2011) rejects "the oppression Olympics", that is, the idea that social groups compete in a 'race to the bottom' to be considered 'the most oppressed'. In this regard Siim and Morke (2018) and Nielsen (2013) put forth the possibility that NGOs may fuel an oppression Olympics by pitting different social groups against one another, or by framing one group as somehow more oppressed, and thereby more deserving of attention, than other groups.

Collins' (2015) suggests that intersectionality can be seen as: a field of study, an analytical strategy, and as critical praxis. Here, I do not further develop on intersectionality as a field of study, as the concept's "history, themes [and] debates" (Collins, 2015, p.3) are not the focus of my paper. Instead, I primarily utilise intersectionality as an analytical strategy, i.e., as a methodological "framework[to] provide new angles of vision on social institutions, practices, social problems, and other social phenomena associated with social inequality" (p.3). This means that I can explore how the NGOs I study navigate the political terrain they are situated within in a manner that pays close attention to the specific, interconnected power dynamics within which they are embedded. To this end I also, albeit to a lesser degree, explore intersectionality as critical praxis to understand "how social actors [in my case NGOs] use intersectionality for social justice projects" (Collins, 2015, p.15). In this way, I do not utilise intersectionality as critical praxis myself, but I do consider how, or whether the NGOs do – specifically in relation to solidarity and resistance, which I turn to now.

An Intersectional Theoretical Framework on Solidarity and Resistance

One interviewee asked: "what is it we talk about when we say solidarity?" (appendix A, l.248) – indeed the concept, and the practice, is not easily grasped. In this paper, I focus on *civic solidarity*, that is, the way in which civil society initiatives, such as NGOs, organise to foster positive refugee relations. As Agustín and Jørgensen (2019) conceptualise it, "civic solidarity [practices] combine the expansion of rights with the shaping of we-ness", both within and between different social categories (p.41). Nonetheless, *elements of institutional solidarity* also constitute how solidarity is to be understood for this project, much like Agustín and Jørgensen (2019) highlight that types of solidarity are not "fixed and completely coherent" (p.40), so one type of solidarity does not exclude another. Institutional solidarity manifests through a "formalization in different degrees of solidarity, which connects the civil society arena with the one of policy-making" (p.41) – here, the NGOs I explore are decidedly placed within the civil society arena, but their organisational structures mean that they are formalised, e.g., by having a permanent staff and a constitution. They all interact with the policy-making arena, although in vastly different ways, as will become clear in the analysis, but they are distinct from governmental institutions which may enact institutional solidarity in a significantly more formalised manner. In the EU, solidarity is reduced to a "strategic calculation" of the "number of refugees each country has the obligation to take" (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019, p.28) – by focusing on civic and institutional solidarity, I move away from this mechanical understanding

of solidarity and use an understanding of solidarity which challenges “the methodological nationalism which underpins” this conceptualisation (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019, p.2).

Focusing on *civic solidarity with elements of institutional solidarity*, rather than for example autonomous solidarity (which is more concerned with activist citizens and self-organised infrastructures, Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019, p.40) or the mechanical solidarity implemented in the EU, has specific consequences for my conceptual framework and subsequent analysis. Firstly, it delimits my focus area, which is a strength in that I can unpack and conceptualise this solidarity practice in a more specific and in-depth manner. At the same time, it excludes in-depth analysis of significant actors like grassroots mobilisers or EU institutions, which both have the potential to impact refugee lives to a great extent – these are not the subject of my research, but I will refer to them through their relation to the NGOs that I study, and the impact this has on how the NGOs navigate within their terrain. When I focus on this type of solidarity, it also has a specific impact on my conceptualisation of resistance, since I will not look at EU-institutional or grassroots resistance against the political antagonisms towards refugees seen in Denmark and Malta – but, this bounded understanding also means that I can obtain a more comprehensive analysis of the specific manifestations of solidarity and resistance that pertains to NGOs.

Solidarity, when conceptualised in this way, can be said to have both a *spatial and a relational dimension* (Agustín and Jørgensen, 2019, p.26; Vasudevan, 2020). As for the *spatial dimension*, I look only at the national scale of the NGOs, even though some of the organisations are also INGOs, as explained in the method chapter. Nonetheless, all of the NGOs somehow interact on an international scale (e.g., through funding or complaints), and I consider how this impacts their national work, since “focusing on scales entails that we investigate how social relations are forged between actors and authorities in different governance structures” (Agustín and Jørgensen, 2019, p.36). Here, the fruitfulness of combining considerations of some elements of institutional solidarity with civic solidarity comes to light and will allow me to explore both the tensions and opportunities that this affords. This is particularly important considering the intersectional lens that I adopt, since actors situated within different structures have significantly different power relations exactly due to their situatedness – and this potentially plays into the politics of voice (Couldry, 2010), and may also co-constitute an axis of oppression in collaboration with the multitude of other positionalities that the NGOs are embedded within.

When I look at the *spatial dimension of solidarity*, I am also interested in where solidarity is produced. This follows Featherstone (2012) who unpacks the “spatial practices of

solidarities" to unearth "hidden geographies" (p.169, p.9). Due to my focus on civic solidarity with intuitional elements, the focus of my paper will be on the spaces wherein national NGOs produce solidarity, although I acknowledge that many other spaces, or 'hidden geographies' can be discovered e.g., through internationalised activism or grassroots spaces. Hidden geographies might be discovered through political opportunity structures (see: della Porta, 2018) – Joachim (2003) suggests that for NGOs, such structures include access to institutions and "changes in political alignments", but equally stresses that structural obstacles can outweigh institutional resources that allow access to, or utilisation of, these political opportunity structures. della Porta (2018) stresses that some political opportunities can be located within critical junctures (p.3) – a critical juncture is a "moment or certain window in time [and space] where there is a significant possibility of a decisive transition" (Nkomo et al., 2019, p.498). Critical junctures can manifest in a plethora of ways for NGOs, but Consterdine and Hampshire (2013) suggest that new immigration policies and/or transformed migratory paths are particularly relevant critical junctures for refugee NGOs (p.275-277). Significantly, Clark and Zahar (2015) underscore that the critical juncture literature tends to "neglect negative cases" that is, those cases where "little came of [the] junctures" (p.1). Thereby, hidden geographies of solidarity may equally remain unearthed in those cases whereunder critical junctures in space and time remain unutilised. In this discussion of critical junctures, it should be noted that Agustín and Jørgensen (2019) suggest that solidarity emerges strongly in moments or conjunctures (p.25), but, considering Clark and Zahar (2015) it may equally be said that solidarity can fail to manifest in these moments or conjunctures too.

I also understand *solidarity to be produced through relations* – Featherstone (2012) suggests that these relations do not need to have "a pre-existing commonality for solidarity to be durable or effective" (p.23). This is in line with Tormos' (2016) intersectional approach to solidarity as "an ongoing process of creating ties and coalitions across social group differences by negotiating power asymmetries" (p.712). In this relation, Lépinard's (2014) typology of repertories to address difference is particularly useful, whereunder intersectional solidarity is conceptualised as possible when intersectionally marginalised groups are included in these ties and coalitions, while, when their interests are represented by those who do not share their intersectional oppression, Lépinard suggests that "individual recognition" emerges instead (p. 886). The NGOs I examine all, although to different extents, act as mediators between differentially situated groups, such as refugees, civil society, other NGOs, and international and national governments – and they all create ties with these groups to varying degrees. Therefore, it may be questioned whether they relate to these through a 'pre-existing commonality' or

whether they, in collaboration with refugee representatives 'negotiate power asymmetries' across and through their differences. Chun et al.(2013) see conflicting identities, such as those different NGOs in an alliance might have, as "valuable evidence [for] new coalitions that need to be formed" (p.923), while Siim and Meret (2021) adopt a reflective approach that argues that solidarity alliances can be sparked not only in spite of difference, but also as a result of it (p.221). In this way, the 'shaping of we-ness' in civil solidarity may, following Chun et al.(2013), take place when NGO alliances are formed through similarity, while Siim and Meret (2021) might argue that 'we-ness' is strengthened through heterogenous relations.

Notably, Hemmings (2012) understands *solidarity as a "transformative power*" (p.152), which, when understood through an intersectional lens, suggests that the NGOs I study may be able to utilise solidarity as a critical praxis – for example, they may be able to allocate resources to issues that affect intersectionally marginalised groups (following De Rosa, 2014), and thereby have the opportunity transform social relations. This is also in line with Agustín and Jørgensen's (2019) argument that solidarity is "generative of political subjectivities" (p.25), which I suggest may emerge when these intersectionally marginalised groups can access new resources and tools. However, Gaztambide-Fernández (2012) also highlights that this transformative aspect of solidarity may equally fail in cases such as those when the newly generated political subjects face unequal relations with the previously established subjects (pp.43-46).

Another important relational aspect of *solidarity is that it is contentious* (Agustín and Jørgensen, 2019, p.26; Ataç et al., 2016). Here, "solidarities [are] forged through direct opposition to inequality and oppression" (Featherstone, 2012, p.12), and as such represent a stance of resistance towards injustice and discrimination. Hence, my conceptualisation of solidarity is in a dialectical relationship with my understanding of resistance, whereunder they manifest through their relationship with each other. As Featherstone (2012) argues, "it is necessary […] to see forms of solidarity and contestation as co-constituted" (p.246). When the NGOs enact solidarity through resistance, or when they enact resistance through solidarity, they may become what Agustín and Jørgensen (2019) call "inventive of new imaginaries" (p.25) – that is, they may produce new ideas of social organising, where, in the case of the NGOs I study, they have the possibility to invent new imaginaries that have an emancipatory nature for refugees (in line with Hillenkamp, 2015 who points to the emancipatory nature of solidarity). Gianni & Michele (2021) present more critical discussions of NGOs' ability to imagine new ways of social organising because they are so politically, economically, and

institutionally intermeshed in a neo-liberal world order that is sustained through the current way of organising (pp.47-53).

When conceptualising *solidarity as a contentious or resistive force*, an intersectional perspective is useful not only because intersectionality also has a critical approach to power relations, but because the interplay between social categories has a monumental force in this dynamic. When solidarity emerges through resistance, alliances may form by creating a shared 'we-ness' through a collective identity as 'the bearers of justice' (Phillips, 2010) but the power asymmetries in these alliances can have a big impact on how solidarity manifests. For example, if several NGOs come together to advocate against a policy they perceive as oppressive, then those NGOs with more funding or institutional power may dominate negotiations, leaving smaller organisations, like refugee-led grass-roots organisations, with little to no power in the dynamic (see e.g.: Mendez, 2008). Again, we see an implication of choosing to focus on civil solidarity with elements of institutional solidarity, where autonomous solidarity, and thereby grassroots resistance, is not a major focus area. Nonetheless, considering the politics of voice in the relationships that the NGOs enter into can have a big impact on how solidarity and resistance manifests, and the way in which the NGOs relate to this also impacts how they are able to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees.

When *theorising resistance*, it is important to question: "what counts as resistance and when resistance counts" (Thomas & Davies, 2005, p.714). Here, it is important to note that I do not intend to unpack resistance in all its various forms, for example, I do not look at resistance as manifesting in anti-solidarities (as seen e.g. in Hungary and Poland), but, like Agustín and Jørgensen (2019) state, such issues present "the other side of the coin" (p.14) which are not the focus of my paper. I rather aim to interrogate resistance from an intersectional perspective, that is, whether it emerges through solidarity (and solidarity emerges through resistance) in a manner that pays attention to, and challenges dominant norms that create unequal lived experiences for refugees. In this way, such resistance may challenge "universalism, essentialism and privilege" to achieve a distinct intersectional feminist lens, that is, it has the potential to focus on "emancipation and transformative change" for refugees (Thomas & Davies, 2005, pp.711-713).

When *resistance is understood in a feminist manner* that sees the notion as emancipatory, it can also be seen as *counter-hegemonic force*. In this way, dissent is an important aspect of resistance, in that "dissent refers to social and political questioning (not just to mere critique or a need for palliative reforms), to undoing consensus" (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2015, p.12). Agustín and Jørgensen (2015) highlight that dissent "consists in giving

visibility to disagreement and opening up spaces to do so" (p.14). For my project, this opens up for a discussion of how, or whether, differentially situated groups are able to negotiate power asymmetries and positional differences within their relations to several different, sometimes perhaps disagreeing actors. To this end, Thomas and Davies (2005) highlight that "feminist theorizing has emphasized 'difference' between resisting subjects" (p.723), thereby showing that attention to power relations within resistance mechanisms is important. This also coheres with a conceptualisation of intersectional solidarity, wherein inter-group differences and the negotiation of power within alliances are of great significance. When NGOs resist the hegemonic order through solidarity relations, it may be possible to hear "the expression of oppositional voices"– which may allow for new political subjectivities to emerge (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2015, p.14). Here, new "subjects of resistance" (Thomas & Davies, 2005, p.716) may come to light, although the "politics of voice" (Couldry, 2010) may still result in unequal power relations between these subjects.

Further, like solidarity, resistance may be *imaginative of new ways of social organising*, since dissent involves "rethinking the order from an alternative perspective" (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2015, p.15). This also ties into resistance as being counter-hegemonic as discussed above. Alinia (2015) frames "resistance within a matrix of domination" (p.2335) which is particularly pertinent when rethinking the political order from an alternative perspective because this must be "vigilant to power disparities" (p.2339) that intersect through several axes of oppression – both in these new imaginaries, and between the actors that co-construct the new alternatives.

Agustín and Jørgensen (2015) posit that "*dissent needs institutions*" since these afford continuity to a political struggle (pp.224-225). One such institution could be NGOs, which are the subject of my research – since I look at civic solidarity with elements of institutional solidarity, I am here able to connect my conceptualisation of solidarity to resistance mechanisms, in a distinct way that would not be possible if I had chosen to explore, for example, autonomous solidarity, which does not rely on institutional infrastructures in the same way. In this way, my NGO selection impacts the theoretical framework I can build, and the analysis I can carry out, while I leave manifestations of autonomous solidarity to be the focus of other papers. The organisations I study represent a formalisation of dissent, and I intend to unpack the consequences of this concerning how the NGOs can then navigate the political antagonism towards refugees in their respective countries.

However, much literature is critical towards how NGO resistance occurs. Roy (2014) criticises "*the NGO-ization of resistance*" (para. 1) which can be seen through what Choudry

and Shragge (2011) call the "professionalization of social change" that has "undermined the political space for radical organizing" (p.514) – in this context, Roy (2014) argues that NGOs "blunt the edges of political resistance" (para. 8). Further, Roy (2014) suggests that NGOs fill the vacuum that the retreating neo-liberal state creates in a "materially inconsequential way" although their intentions may be good (para. 14). Particularly, Roy (2014) argues that "NGOs are accountable to their funders, not to the people they work among" (para. 4), which for my project, suggests that, from this perspective, the NGOs may be accountable to institutions like the UNHCR and the EU more so than to the refugees that are the subject of resistance. Following this argument, the NGO-isation of resistance may also have a negative impact on intersectional solidarity, since more powerful funder voices could force refugee voices into the background for the sake of accountability, thereby jeopardising the negotiation of differential power relations that is otherwise a strength in intersectional solidarity.

Likewise, when researching resistance in the NGO sector, Girei (2022) asks "whose interests matter?" (p.1). Similarly to Roy, Girei (2022) concludes that "who pays the piper calls the tune" (p.17). Nonetheless, Girei (2022) asserts that "unexpected opportunities" can arise for NGO resistance (p.5) for example through specific moments (p.7) (which I here understand as critical junctures) – this also coheres with Agustín and Jørgensen (2015) who argue that the "politics of dissent use moments" (p.224). Importantly, Girei (2022) does not argue that resistance has to "substantially alter[…] power structures and dynamics" to 'count' as resistance, rather that allowing "subalterns' expression of discomfort or dissent" also 'counts' as resistance (p.6). This can be understood through the intersectional lens I adopt too, whereunder intersectionally marginalised groups may challenge the politics of voice by expressing their dissent, although intersecting axes of oppression may result in few substantial changes arising from this.

Overall, I therefore *conceptualise solidarity and resistance through an intersectional lens wherein the two concepts are dialectically intertwined.* Here, intersectionality, solidarity, and resistance all have emancipatory aims which aspire to challenge the hegemonic system in order to benefit refugees. In this way, the concepts are not only useful to interpret the social world, but also to change it (in line with Marx, 1845). While the NGOs I study have counter-hegemonic intentions to varying degrees, they all aim to better the lived experiences of refugees, and work to afford them more extensive rights than they currently obtain in the existing social order. I use this intersectional theoretical framework on solidarity and resistance to enhance my CCM– I do this by using the framework to unpack sub-categories that emerged through this framework, which I now unfold in the analysis.

Analysis

Two core categories emerged from my CCM: solidarity and resistance. Upon building an intersectional theoretical framework around these concepts, five sub-categories each relating to these emerged, which I here unpack to analyse how the NGOs navigate the political antagonisms seen towards refugees in their respective countries. 1) I examine the alliances the NGOs enter into, 2) the critical junctures that they relate to, 3) how the NGOs enact contention, 4) how they relate to adversaries, and 5) their relationship with funders. The CCM calls for "fragmenting and connecting" codes (Boeije, 2002 p.394) so I first fragment by analysing these five issues separately in relation to the solidarity and resistance mechanisms that the NGOs can enact through them to navigate in their antagonistic climates, before connecting the codes in the discussion.

Alliances

One way the NGOs navigate the political antagonism towards refugees is by building alliances. Below I unpack this, exploring the solidarity and resistance mechanisms they may or may not enforce through these alliances, to understand how these tools can be used by the NGOs to operate in antagonistic climates. I first explore how the NGOs enter into alliances with refugees, to uncover how they work with their target group to address oppression. Next, I look at how the NGOs establish alliances with other NGOs, building solidarity internally between them. Lastly, I examine the alliances some of the NGOs enter into with their governments, and I explore how solidarity and resistance mechanisms may or may not filter into this alliance when used to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees.

Refugee Alliances

From an intersectional solidarity perspective, the role of refugees in countering the antagonism they face is imperative (following Tormos, 2016; Lépinard, 2014). I here unpack the alliances that the NGOs enter into with refugees and explore how solidarity and resistance mechanisms play into these alliances when used as a tool by the NGOs to navigate in their political terrain.

JRS (n.d.) stands out when establishing ties with refugees: they follow the Christian principle of "journeying with refugees" ("Our Way") to build alliances (appendix C, ll.171-221). This encompasses going to the detention centres to "sit with people and listen to them" (appendix C, l.192). Until JRS' access to detention was barred (see: pp.37-38), the NGO was greatly present in detention (JRS, n.d., "JRS in Malta"). Here, Camilleri notes "sometimes it was very clear that there was nothing we could do" – she points out that some refugees said:

“you didn’t change anything” (appendix C, ll.194-195). The other NGOs do not journey with refugees like this; their refugee alliances focus more exclusively on creating social and legal changes (aditus, 2023, “Things That Matter To The Communities”; DRC, 2021c, Chapter 3; RW, 2020, p.49). Yet, their alliances can have minimal or “zero impact” too (quote from Falzon: appendix D, l.166; sentiment also seen in: DRC, 2022e, p.8 but only under Covid; RW in appendix B, ll.239-240). Here, none of the NGOs seem to substantially alter the oppressive forces that impact refugees. However, by paying attention to the issues refugees face (as informed by refugees; appendix A, ll.496-498; appendix B, ll.440-444; appendix C, ll.131-135; appendix D, ll.136-137), they create a space for “subalterns’ expression of discomfort or dissent”, which also ‘counts’ as resistance (following Girie, 2022).When creating these spaces, the NGO may also unearth “hidden geographies of solidary” (Featherstone, 2012), since new relations can be forged across social groups, although they do not necessarily constitute “a transformative power” like Hemmings (2012) underscores as an important force of solidarity (p.152). Here, we can see that the NGOs make use of refugee alliances to navigate the political antagonism seen towards refugees, even if this type of resistance does not have a transformative power.

JRS and aditus use refugees as allies to publish reports based on stories from asylum seekers (Leone-Ganado, 2022; aditus, 2016; JRS et al., 2018). Refugee voices are central to the creation of these papers, and I suggest that because of this, they are generative of new political subjectivities – i.e., the NGOs give voice to refugees, thereby “working together with them to challenge [oppressive] systems” (JRS, n.d., “Values”). RW functions in a similar way, as can be seen e.g., through the plethora of cases on their website that painstakingly outline individual refugee experiences with the aim of calling out oppressive policies (RW, n.d., “Cases”). RW also equips refugees to stand up for themselves (appendix B, ll.264-266), much like DRC aims to do through empowerment and rights workshops (see e.g.: DRC, n.d., “Nyt Gratis Guppeforløb”; DRC, n.d. “CO:LAB Afsluttet”). This goal can also be seen through aditus’ and JRS’ “training kit for empowering refugee-led community organisations” (aditus, n.d., “Training Kit”) where they aim to “transform refugee-led groups to active and equal partners” (JRS, 2022, “Training Kit”). Here all the organisations utilise refugees as allies in solidarity by promoting their political participation, which has the potential to generate new political subjects that can challenge the oppression they face – and thereby use this as a tool to navigate in an antagonistic climate.

When using refugee alliances to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees, we here see that the NGOs do so largely through collaboration, i.e., by using refugees to publish

information, or by holding workshops for them. It may be questioned whether the alliance building takes place mostly on the NGOs' terms, leaving the refugees' roles in shaping the organisation through their interests and demands as a secondary priority. This links back to the discussion of the professionalisation of social change, whereunder NGOs may first and foremost operate in a neo-liberal climate and thereby only secondarily work in a fashion that places the refugees' demands and dissent in the centre. In this way, the NGOs navigate the political antagonism towards refugees by establishing alliances with refugees themselves, which can be understood as a way of enacting solidarity by creating new political subjects, although the extent to which their role in shaping the organisations may be questioned.

Notably, DRC seems to be the NGO that has the least strong ties to their refugee alliances – while much of their work is informed by the refugees, this information is sometimes "translated", i.e., it is "information from the refugees" but it is "conveyed by the volunteers" (appendix A, ll.204-205). This necessarily impacts the politics of voice, where the volunteers become "political translators" in this alliance, which may impact how the refugees' thoughts and needs are conveyed (Doerr, 2019). A similar tendency can be seen in JRS, where Camilleri expresses that there is "pressure to edit refugee voices" (appendix C, l.132), again showing this 'translation' of the refugees' thoughts and needs in the alliances strike an uneasy balance. This can be understood through Lépinard's (2014) typology of repertories used to address difference. On the one hand, we here see "individual recognition", where those representing the refugees "do not have to share a similar identity" (p.886) – for example, volunteers and staff may represent the refugees' interest without being refugees themselves. This can mean that the politics of voice becomes distorted and that the alliance with refugees may not be as 'refugee-driven' as some scholars suggest is more effective (see e.g.: Viswanathan, 2017; Doerr, 2019). Nonetheless, the NGOs do make serious efforts to include refugees, as seen through the training kits, workshops, etc. as mentioned above. Here we see some aspects of another of Lépinard's (2014) typologies, namely "intersectional solidarity" whereunder "representatives of intersectional groups must be included in the mainstream movement" (p.886), specifically here, that refugees are included in the NGO work – although, as mentioned, the way in which the refugees' demands shape the NGOs may be questioned. In this way, these NGOs navigate the political antagonism towards refugees through 'translated' information from their alliances with refugees, which necessarily impacts how the refugees, and their demands, are represented.

From this we can understand that significant power disparities exist between the NGOs and refugees in these alliances. Szczepanikova (2010) outlines the risks in NGO-refugee

relations, pointing out that NGOs may reproduce the very power relations they aim to resist, which can "lock refugees in a position" where they have little influence on their roles (p.461). In this way, refugees may not be able to "negotiate meanings" with the NGO when dependent on the services they provide (Hyndman, 2010, p.456). Neither the interview data nor the website material indicates such a relationship, but this may be expected since both data sources stem from the NGOs rather than the refugees they work with. Here, an incorporation of refugee voices in my research would have added a further dimension (as also discussed in my method p.9). However, the NGOs seem to be aware of a differential power dynamic between themselves and refugees – Bendixen portrays the understanding that although RW would like to see refugees as active political subjects "it is incredibly difficult for" refugees to participate in the political sphere due to economic barriers and insecurities relating to status and rights (appendix B, ll.264-266; also echoed by Flex: appendix A, ll.487-494). Similarly, both aditus and JRS indicate that refugee participation is valued by their organisations (as seen through the training kit initiative), yet Falzon underscores that many refugees in Malta "are still at the point of struggling to survive", so political participation is not a priority (appendix D, ll.88-96). Here we can see that the NGOs navigate political antagonisms by generating new political subjects through alliances with refugees, but also that they acknowledge that the differential power position of refugees impacts their ability to partake on an equal footing, albeit in different ways in the two national contexts. In this way, the NGOs build solidarity alliances with refugees to navigate the political antagonism towards them, and they are, importantly, aware of their power position in this alliance – here Gaztambide-Fernández' (2012) point that solidarity may fail when this power difference is not addressed comes to light, showing that the NGOs awareness of this imbalance can be a decisive factor in how this solidarity can manifest.

NGO Alliances

Coalitions with a broad range of civil society organisations (CSOs) can be explored both in relation to solidarity (e.g., d'Auria et al., 2018) and resistance (e.g., Wise, 2018) for refugees. I here explore the alliances that the NGOs enter into with other NGOs, to understand how notions of solidarity and resistance impact the way in which the NGOs use these alliances to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees.

The NGOs all stress their alliances with other NGOs as a crucial aspect of their work, but tensions seem to exist within these. Flex, while stressing his respect for organisations like ActionAid and RW (appendix A, l.147; ll.574-582), also comments, in relation to their more provocative advocacy and rhetorical strategies "I think maybe it's not the smartest way to go"

(appendix A, l.580). Here DRC gives "visibility to disagreement" (Agusín & Jørgensen, 2015, p.14) within its alliances, which allows differences between resisting subjects to come to light when the NGOs navigate the political antagonism towards refugees in diverging ways– but importantly, both DRC and RW underscore their respect for one another despite their positional differences (appendix A, l.147; appendix B, l.448). This indicates that they enact solidarity between the NGOs in a reflective way to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees – here difference is not seen as an obstacle, although, for both DRC and RW it can also be said that they have a "pre-existing commonality" (Featherstone, 2012, p.23) since their organisational mandates are grounded in improving refugee conditions.

More broadly, both DRC and RW convey that although they have differences, their alliances with other NGOs make them stronger (appendix A, ll.405-406; appendix B, ll.163-170; DRC, 2021c, p.13; RW, n.d., "Hvad Laver Vi"). Here "building solidarity internally between the NGOs" (appendix B, l.150) may be a strategic tool used by the Danish NGOs to have a more influential voice. In this way, the Danish NGOs navigate the political antagonisms towards refugees by entering into solidarity alliances with other, sometimes differentially positioned, NGOs to boost their voice collectively – this also challenges the "politics of voice" (Couldry, 2010) that may influence the NGOs' power in agenda setting. This trend is also seen in civil society actors more broadly, where scholars like Ruzza (2007) discuss this as an "EU model of civil society involvement" whereunder the public sphere is strengthened through the collaboration of "a range of [different] actors" (pp.57-59).

Similarly, positional differences emerged through my analysis of the Maltese NGO alliances. Here religion plays a role in the Maltese setting that is not seen in the Danish context. While both are predominantly Christian countries (Worlddata, n.d., "Religion"), the Maltese rank in the top five most religious peoples in the EU, while Danes, in the same study, rank second to last in the extent to which they value religion (Eurobarometer, 2021, p.126). Perhaps due to this, a Christian organisation like JRS can flourish in Malta. Aditus is not a religious NGO, so in relation to JRS, Falzon notes that "the ethos of our organisation is different" hence their take on solidarity has "a bit of a different component" (appendix D, ll.134-137). This sentiment is mirrored by Camilleri, when noting that "besides the more human rights political side" that JRS shares with aditus, "the social teachings of the church" (appendix C, ll.231-237) differentially shapes how the NGO builds solidarity. Nonetheless, the two NGOs work in close collaboration, i.e., by publishing reports together (e.g., JRS et al., 2018; Caruana & Rossi, 2021), and collaborating on projects (e.g., JRS, n.d., "Project Integrated") – much like they both closely work with a wide range of other NGOs from which they differ (appendix C, ll.67-

68; appendix D, ll.74-86). Like Falzon notes "it being Malta, of course [we collaborate] with church-based organisations" (appendix D, ll.82-83), which shows that the NGO creates alliances despite of difference in order to better the lives of refugees. Here we can see that, similarly to the Danish NGOs, the Maltese NGOs work together despite positional differences in their organisations in order to further their collaborative efforts to navigate in a climate that is hostile towards refugees. Nonetheless, we also here see "a bit of local flavour" (appendix D, l.109) that adjusts how these differences come to light.

My analysis of the Maltese data produced a code which was not present in the Danish data: the Maltese NGOs place far greater weight on their alliances with NGOs outside of the asylum field. In their documents (e.g., aditus & MGRM, 2015) and the interview (appendix D, ll.74-86), aditus emphasises their alliances with NGOs that do not have refugees as a core focus group, such as NGOs working on "LGBTI issues, or gender issues, or age issues" (appendix D, l.254). This mirrors JRS' alliances with "mainstream stakeholders who are outside of the migration" arena (appendix C, ll.67-68). Here, both organisations acknowledge that they are not experts on these issues, so they work with organisations that do not have this "pre-existing commonality" (Featherstone, 2012, p.23) relating to refugee rights, but they work together to "creat[e] ties and coalitions" (Tormos, 2016, p.712) to counterbalance the political forces that position their target groups in a position of lesser power. For example, JRS and aditus work with the non-refugee focused NGO Richmond Foundation (e.g., Micallef, 2020; aditus, 2020, "An Immediate Food and Shelter Initiative") to collaborate on mental health issues (Richmond Foundation, n.d., "Our Services") Thereby, the Maltese NGOs are stronger together (appendix C, l.116) when they create alliances with more diverse actors – this may allow them to manufacture a broader "infrastructure of dissent" (Sears, 2007), i.e., they build a framework consisting of differentially situated actors that all work to challenge the unequal lived experiences that refugees face, and use this infrastructure to navigate in an antagonistic climate. Hence, the Maltese NGOs, like the Danish NGOs, adhere to Ruzza's (2007) "EU model of civil society involvement" (p.57) where CSOs are more effective when they work together, but the Maltese NGOs have a much broader infrastructure of dissent where several different types of NGOs enter into these alliances. This may be understood from the fact that the Maltese NGOs face significantly more difficulties in accessing the political sphere (see: pp. 35-36), such that their dissent is more strictly tied to the civil society arena, since there is very little room for dialogue with the policymakers in Malta (see also: Cachia, 2023, pp.81-82) – which means that they must look for alternative political opportunity structures to challenge the antagonism that refugees face. This coheres with Dellmuth and Bloodgood's (2019) assertion that diverse civil

society advocacy groups in general may make use of, and to an extent forge, political opportunity structures to access spaces that would otherwise be inaccessible to them. Thereby, the Maltese NGOs navigate the political antagonism towards refugees by working closely with other NGOs outside of the asylum field, as understood through the political opportunities that the NGOs have in their given context.

Falzon characterises this collaboration with non-refugee NGOs as a way in which aditus acknowledges the intersectional oppressions that refugees face (appendix D, ll.271-279). That is, the NGO can be said to tackle various "axes of oppression" (Yuval-Davis, 2012, p.48) by partnering with NGOs that are experts in different axes, to more effectively challenge the web of oppression that refugees face. In this way, the use of alliances with non-refugee NGOs can be discussed as a "critical praxis" (Collins, 2015, p.3) since it helps to resist the oppression that refugees face. Characterising this type of alliance-building as an intersectional operation also ties into the discussion of whether 'refugee' should be viewed as a social category in itself, or whether it is more accurate to describe the group as co-constituted by other social categories – such as those the non-refugee NGOs focus on. In either case, this manner of approaching the inequalities that refugees face indicates that the Maltese NGOs utilise intersectionality as a critical praxis to navigate the political antagonism that refugees face.

DRC also works with non-refugee NGOs, e.g., the Women's Council (Kvinderådet, 2018), but I found a greater focus on their collaboration with Danish municipalities in my data. A reason for this may be that Danish municipalities play a very important role in refugee governance in Denmark (Myrberg, 2017), as such, DRC may benefit more from having these as close allies rather than non-refugee NGOs[5]. Here, a structural difference also comes to light, because although Malta is divided into 68 *kunsilli lokali* (Local Councils' Association, n.d., "The Association") which are akin to Danish municipalities, Maltese refugee governance is much more centralised (see: Buhagiar, 2011) whereas the Danish municipalities have "increased their significance as integration policy actors" as compared to the more centralised government (Emilsson, 2015, p.1). This helps us to understand why DRC uses the municipalities as allies to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees while the Maltese NGOs to a far greater extent rely on a broader infrastructure of dissent through other NGOs. This difference between the Danish and the Maltese NGOs may also stem from the fact that Malta is considerably smaller than Denmark, and so a closer collaboration between more diverse actors becomes necessary in that case (see e.g.: Mainwaring, 2014). This shows that

[5] RW does not enter into an alliance with municipalities, this will be explored when I discuss funding.

the national differences between the Maltese and the Danish NGOs impact how they can navigate the political antagonism towards refugees seen in their respective countries through the way in which they build alliances with other NGOs. In both the Danish and Maltese case in relation to NGO alliances a "shaping of we-ness" (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019, p.41) takes place, since the NGOs work for a common aim, that is, they have a "pre-existing commonality" (Featherstone, 2012, p.23) that is grounded in an interest in being the "bearers of justice" (Phillips, 2010) for refugee rights – which following Chun et al.(2013) suggests that NGO alliances are formed through similarity. Yet, these alliances have tensions within them too, so they thereby also enact a type of reflective solidarity that occurs through difference (Siim & Meret, 2021, p.221). Overall, the NGOs here work to create solidarity internally with other NGOs to boost their advocacy for refugee rights, although the manner in which they do this, and the actors they incorporate, are impacted by national differences.

Governmental Alliances

Some of the NGOs enter into governmental alliances. Notably, alliances can occur without being solidarity alliances, but I here explore they manner in which the NGOs do (or don't) enter into alliances with their governments to understand how they navigate the political antagonism seen towards refugees in their respective countries. This allows me to unpack the tensions and opportunities such alliances afford, and the extent to which solidarity and resistance can be enacted through them.

DRC is the NGO with the closest governmental ties, being funded largely therethrough (pp.46-49), and actively consulting with governmental actors (DRC, n.d., "Positioner og Anbefalinger"; appendix A, l.163) Contrastingly, RW avoids being "involved in the system" (appendix B, l.404), and only participates in coffee meeting and consultations when specifically invited to do so (appendix B, l.212). Hereby, DRC to a far greater extent than RW uses the Danish government as an ally – this has a crucial impact on how they can use this alliance (or lack thereof) as a tool to navigate the political antagonism seen towards refugees in Denmark.

DRC's ties to government means they "get invited in" (appendix A, l.167) to the political space where policy is produced. Flex suggests that this "can help us [DRC] to create a little change" (appendix A, ll.185-186). This can be understood through Banks et al.(2015), who discuss how close ties to government can help NGOs to impact policy (see also: Bukenya & Hickey, 2013). Conversely, Bendixen suggests that getting invited in "gives a bit of a false impression that your points are considered seriously" although the government is "completely, utterly, indifferent to what we[NGOs] say" (appendix B, ll.235-236; ll.239-240). This coheres

with Carvajal (2022) who suggests that governments use NGOs to portray an image that they take NGOs seriously, which functions to pacify civil society and prevent resistance – similarly to Lang (2012) who asserts that governments support NGOs to "strategically limit public advocacy" (p.8). As such, these alliances may be understood as "misplaced alliances", i.e., they "occur as a result of the obfuscation of […] hegemonic relations and the interests they serve" (Mayo, 2016, p.141). Nonetheless, RW has an alliance with government actors "who seriously want to listen", that is, "those who already respect" the organisation (appendix B, l.258) – this contrasts Flex's statement that "it is important to try to have dialogue with those [politicians] who do not agree" (appendix A, l.163). Here we see two parallel approaches: RW can be understood to enact towards solidarity as forged through "pre-existing commonality" (Featherstone, 2012, p.23) while DRC can be argued to adopt aspects of Tormos' (2016) intersectional approach that places significance on differential positions within alliances. In this way, DRC uses alliances with government actors who may be differentially situated to navigate the political antagonisms towards refugees to a great extent, in the hope that incremental improvements can be made. RW does not use government alliances to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees in the same way, arguing that the alliance gives a "false impression" and actually rather functions to "pacify civil society" (appendix B, l.236; l.247) – i.e., it can also be argued that DRC's alliance with the government hampers their resistive capacity to such an extent that solidarity cannot fully manifest, so that this misplaced alliance does not allow for the oppressive forces that cause unequal lived experiences for refugees to be dismantled.

Conversely, my data indicates that both aditus and JRS see certain opportunities in governmental alliances (appendix C, l.93; appendix D, l.181-182; JRS Europe, 2019, "JRS Malta and Integra publish 3 papers"; aditus, 2023, "Colloquy"). This may be understood through a systemic differences in the two regions: Archambault (2009) conceptualises Scandinavian and Mediterranean countries as belonging to distinct "clusters inside the European pattern of third sector" involvement (p.2) – where the Scandinavian third sector (hereunder NGOs) is understood to be more firmly established and so less likely to seek governmental affirmation, while the Mediterranean third sector generally enjoys less economic and social capital, and due to the relative recency of the emergence of an influential third sector, CSOs may be more likely to seek governmental affirmation to boost their legitimacy here (pp.6-7).Yet, both JRS and aditus underscore that "there's no possibility of dialogue", on account of the Maltese politicians' refusal (appendix C, l.330; appendix D, l.142). This does not just seem to be an issue that the two studied NGOs face, as seen through Briguglio (2012)

who, albeit focusing on the environmental sector, discusses the Maltese governments' reluctance to engage with NGOs more broadly. Here, the NGOs are unable to uncover a new space for solidarity to manifest, since the government uses its power position to prevent an alliance from forming – this may help us to understand why the Maltese NGOs focus on allies with non-refugee NGOs as an alternative pathway for building solidarity through alliances. Thereby, the Danish and Maltese NGOs have different political opportunities to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees through government alliances due to their national differences.

Critical Junctures

I now explore how the NGOs relate to critical junctures, focusing on the extent to which they enact solidarity and resistance through these to navigate political antagonisms.

In Denmark, the arrival of Ukrainian refugees was decisive moment in time and space that opened up for the possibility of change. We can see this juncture through DRC's documents on what can learned from, and changed because of, the arrival of this new group (Damm et al.2023, DRC, 2022b). Similarly, RW published an article on the changes that the Ukraine situation opens up for (RW, 2022b). In fact, Flex notes that "with your thesis you have a very interesting timing" (appendix A, l.6) in relation to "before and after Ukraine" (appendix A, l.7). This shows that a critical juncture emerged. Note that Ukrainian refugees also arrived in Malta, but I suggest that this only constitutes a critical juncture in Denmark, since the Maltese arrivals did not seem to have a large impact on policy here.

The data from both RW and DRC shows that the arrival of the Ukrainian refugees is a critical juncture, but the NGOs have differing stances on the implications of this. Both have produced a consultation response on the introduction of a Special Act on displaced persons from Ukraine (RW, 2022c; DRC, 2022a), which allows Ukrainian refugees to bypass restrictions which impact other refugees (New to Denmark, n.d.). Flex suggests the "we [did] all the rights things, we create[d] a Special Act" (appendix A, l.560), and that the act allows for "flexibility in an extraordinary situation" (DRC, 2022b, para. 4). In this way, Flex suggests that "the situation in Ukraine has moved us a little bit" such that this new way of treating refugees might be transferred beyond Ukrainian refugees (appendix A, ll.597-598). While RW shares the view that the treatment of the Ukrainian refugees is a positive approach (RW, 2022c, para. 1), they also argue that the Special Act reflects an "undisguised racism" towards other refugees (RW, 2022c, para. 2). While Flex acknowledges that "you can definitely make that argument" (appendix A, l.574), he maintains that it is "the right way to go about it" since concrete, positive

changes that impact real lives can be made (appendix A, l.450) – while RW argues against special acts in general, since they constitute discriminatory practises (RW, 2022c, para. 5).

This difference in the two approaches reflects parallel modes in the way they relate to solidarity and resistance. RW, to a larger extent challenges "universalism, essentialism and privilege" (following Thomas & Davies', 2005) by taking an oppositional stance towards the Special Act, although they do acknowledge the benefits this has Ukrainians. Here we see that "the politics of dissent use moments" (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2015, p.224) through critical junctures to challenge the act. While DRC does not utilise this type of resistance to as large an extent here, their stance is "inventive of new imaginaries" (Agustín & Jørgensen's, 2019), that is, how this Special Act can be used to imagine new possibilities for other groups. Yet, RW is also inventive of new imaginaries, since they argue for the cessation of special acts, thereby imagining a new way of social organising. Both NGOs present aspects of the Special Act which they imagine could be transferred directly into the current policy that affect refugees at large (DRC, 2022b, pp.2-3; RW, 2022c, p.2). In this way, both NGOs use this critical juncture to imagine opportunities for solidarity, although RW does so in a much more resistive fashion – this shows that solidarity, as an imaginative force, emerges in moments or conjunctures. Thereby, the Danish NGOs use critical junctures to navigate the political antagonisms seen towards refugees in Denmark, albeit in differing ways.

As of yet, no policy changes for other refugee groups have come to light as a result of the Special Act, so this may be one of the "negative cases" that Clark and Zahar (2015) call for us to consider – in this way, the NGOs may enact imagination as a core aspect of solidarity, without utilising it as "a transformative power" (Hemmings, 2012, p.152) when navigating the political antagonism towards refugees.

The Maltese data sources also indicate one clear critical juncture. Namely, that access to detention was severely restricted for NGOs by the state (European Commission[EC], 2020). This change in detention policy has been prevalent since October 2019 (Aida, 2021, p.72; appendix C, ll.212-218) where NGO access to detention was "fully suspended" (EC, 2020; Falzon, 2022). The policy has now been relaxed slightly, allowing some NGOs a few hours of access under very controlled settings (aditus, 2021, pp.23-24). Note that the NGOs no longer have access to living quarters in detention centres and can only meet small groups in a conference room that is separate from the main facilities[6]. This has radically changed the ways in which the NGOs operate (aditus, 2022a, p.20; appendix C, ll.325-326), and so constitutes a

[6] As I discovered when visiting the detention centres during my internship.

critical juncture in that a "window in time" has emerged that allows for "decisive transition" (following Nkomo et al., 2019, p.498) – notably, this also coheres with Consterdine and Hamshire's (2013) suggestion that new immigration policies are fruitful paths of analysis when looking at critical junctures for refugee NGOs.

Both Maltese NGOs take an overtly critical stance towards this (appendix C, l.1 212-218; appendix D, ll.148-150), and collaborate to challenge the current detention regime (e.g., aditus, 2022, "Collaboration to Strengthen our Work"). Through such documents, as well as critical statements via their advocacy work (see e.g.: aditus, n.d., "#therearealternatives"; JRS, n.d., "Advocacy"), we can see that the NGOs use the critical juncture to navigate and specifically to challenge the circumstances that create unequal lived experiences for refugees. Here, the Maltese NGOs challenge the politics of voice, since the lack of access to detention means that refugee voices are isolated within the detention centres, and that refugees cannot use NGOs as allies to get their messages across. In this way, the NGOs' challenging of this policy can be seen as an attempt to open up spaces to give visibility to disagreement, as Agustín and Jørgensen (2015) conceptualise as an important aspect of dissent. This can also be seen as a way of opening up a space for solidarity, whereunder the concrete physical space of the detention centre can be seen as a hidden geography of solidarity, that emerges strongly through contention.

Much like the Danish NGOs, the Maltese NGOs use this critical juncture to be "inventive of new imaginaries" (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019, p.25) – this is clearly seen through Camilleri's statement: "the fact that some doors closed, led us to look for other windows" (appendix C, l.108). Such windows could be aditus' increased phone contact with detainees (aditus, 2022a, p.24), JRS' seemingly increased focus projects outside of detention (see e.g.: JRS, n.d., "Access to Protection"; "CHANGE"), and both NGOs' use of international governance mechanisms (pp.40-42). Here, the critical juncture prompted the NGOs to invent alternative ways of organising, which suggests that NGOs can be "inventive of new imaginaries" despite Gianni & Michele's (2021) discussion of whether they are too politically, institutionally, and economically intermeshed in the neo-liberal world order to do so. Yet, the NGOs have not been able to change this policy, and refugees still rarely see the NGOs while in detention (Falzon, 2022, p.25), showing that the solidarity and resistance mechanisms that the NGOs forged due to the critical juncture, do not seem to have a transformative power, suggesting that it can be one of the "negative cases" where "little came of [the] junctures" like Clark and Zahar (2015) discuss. In this way, the Maltese NGOs, like the Danish NGOs, use

critical junctures to navigate the political antagonism seen towards refugees, although not necessarily being able to capitalise on these as a transformative force.

The Maltese NGOs use contention and resistance in relation to these critical junctures to a much greater extent than in the above-discussed Danish case – yet this is to be expected given the difference in the two junctures, where the Ukrainian refugee situation in Denmark can be seen largely as an opportunity, while the Maltese NGO access to detention is a clear obstacle. This shows that in the Danish case there may be a small "change in political alignments" that allows for a new political opportunity structure (following Joachim, 2003), while the Maltese policy shows a continuation of the restrictive stance. Nonetheless, in both contexts, the NGOs navigate political antagonisms towards refugees through critical junctures which they use to imagine new ways of social organising in a manner that has an emancipatory stance towards refugees.

Contention

All four NGOs enact contention – "insomuch as they reject those politics" that exacerbate unequal lived experiences for refugees (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019, p.15). I conceptualise this as a key aspect of solidarity and resistance in my theoretical framework. I here unpack how the NGOs navigate political antagonisms towards refugees through such contention.

The NGOs enact contention when they criticise[7] the policies they view as unjust (appendix A, ll.338-352; appendix B, ll.284-288; appendix C, ll.6-19, appendix D, ll.12-16; DRC, 2018; RW, 2021b; aditus, n.d., "#dontletthemdrown"; JRS, 2023, "Government's Abdication"). In this relation, Bendixen puts forth a statement which seems to mirror the sentiment of all the NGOs: "it's really important to be constructive and pragmatic" through this contention – so, Bendixen argues that practical suggestions for policy improvements are a fruitful manner of structuring NGO dissent (appendix B, ll.230-231; see also: appendix A, ll.381-382; aditus, n.d., "#therearealternatives"; JRS, 2022, "Investing Time"). This suggests that they are inventive of new imaginaries with improved refugee conditions, although underpinning power structures can be argued to remain at play. Mayhew et al.(2006) praise such pragmatic NGO approaches as they "progressively realize the rights of their beneficiaries" by suggesting realistic changes that "balance protection and pragmatism" (pp.186-201). Yet, Roy (2014) may suggest that this "blunt[s] the edges of political resistance" (para. 8) since resistance only manifests within the already established order – thereby not sufficiently

[7] Flex prefers the understanding that DRC "point out where they [the policies] are wrong" and can be improved, rather than a direct criticism (appendix A, l.335).

resisting the forces that create inequality for refugees. This boils down to Luxemburg's (1900) question: "reform or revolution?", where NGOs tend to lean towards the former (Buckman, 2006). Regardless of whether one adheres to Mayhew et al.' or Roy's approach here, a pragmatic approach of making constructive suggestions largely allows the NGOs to "rethink[…] the order from an alternative perspective" (following Agustín & Jørgensen's 2015 approach to resistance) even if they do not "substantially alter […] power structures" (Girei, 2022, p.6) when enacting this resistance – and they thereby navigate the political antagonism towards refugees by enacting contention in this manner.

The NGOs channel this pragmatic contention nationally (see e.g.: DRC, n.d. "Høringssvar"; RW, n.d, "Høringssvar"; aditus, n.d. "Policy Input"; JRS Europe, 2017, Chapter 5). In the Maltese context, Falzon notes that many national strategies "have zero impact" (appendix D, l.166), much like Bendixen argues that Danish NGO consultation responses go "in through one ear and out through the other" (appendix B, l.233). Hence, NGO resistance may manifest in a "materially inconsequential way" like Roy (2014) suggests is a predictable outcome of the NGO-isation of resistance – yet, we can also understand this through the perspective that the NGOs enact "resistance within a matrix of domination" (following Alinia, 2015), wherein they may not be able to create "emancipation and transformative change" (Thomas & Davies, 2005, p.713) due to the unequal power relations that position NGOs as dependent on governmental backing (see e.g.: Lister, 2000; Coston, 1998). All the NGOs work around this matrix of domination by appealing to international courts. While the focus of my paper is on the NGOs on a national scale, this code emerged so strongly in my data that a reflection on the NGOs' interactions with international governance is necessary.

As I analysed the websites, a trend emerged indicating that the NGOs use international institutions to challenge their national government's antagonism towards refugees (see e.g.: DRC, 2020, p.14; RW, n.d. "Medhold I 3 Ud Af 3 FN-Klager"; aditus, 2022, "Our New Case Against Malta"; aditus, 2020, "Legal Update on the Captain Morgan Incident"). This is confirmed by Bartholomeusz (2005) who researches NGOs' use of international conventions to put political pressure on their national governments (see also: Shelton, 1994). This was, to an extent, confirmed by Falzon who suggests that international conventions are an "entry point" that the NGO "can latch on to", to pressure the government to live up to its "political commitment" (appendix D, ll.53-55). Yet, Falzon also notes that the approach is becoming "less resonant" and that it is "a language which no longer works" in Malta (appendix D, ll.58-59) – much like Camilleri confirms that "as much as I would like to see opportunities [in international conventions] I see very little" (appendix C, l.52). This is also seen in the Danish

NGOs, for example Flex's comments that international conventions "give us less than they did ten or twenty or thirty years ago" (appendix A, ll.110-134). Bendixen furthers this and suggests that the Danish government treats "international conventions as a type of straitjacket" that they try to escape from (appendix B, ll.32-35). Falzon notes that this trend is seen "all over Europe" and that it constitutes a "messaging crisis […] in the NGO world" (appendix D, ll.60-65). This idea is confirmed by Money and Lockhart (2017) who suggests that international conventions are increasingly disregarded by EU member states when migration issues are at play. This shows us that the power relations between NGOs, national, and international governments are a crucial factor that complicates how NGOs can challenge the political antagonism towards refugees.

All the NGOs confirm Flex's idea that international conventions do not afford them the same opportunities as they used to, but all four still use this framework. DRC warns of violations against the European Convention on Human rights in several documents (DRC, 2021a, p.4; DRC, 2021b, p.10). RW and aditus have appealed to international human rights courts several times (e.g., aditus, n.d., "Our New Case Against Malta"; RW, n.d. "Medhold I 3 Ud Af 3 FN-Klager), and JRS reported e.g., on Malta's violations of the "UN Convention on the Rights of the Child" (Balzan, 2022). Despite this tactic "becoming less and less resonant" (appendix D, ll.58-59), the NGOs use this as a tool to manufacture an infrastructure of dissent since the NGOs can structure their resistance within a larger framework, thereby allowing them to consistently document violations, and to an extent, challenge the structures that underlie these. This coheres with the notion that dissent needs institutions to afford continuity to a political struggle, while also respecting that resistance occurs within a matrix of domination that means that NGOs must navigate the political antagonism towards refugees in their countries in a space where the power dynamics between NGOs, national, and international governments greatly dictate how this can manifest.

When the NGOs navigate these political antagonisms through contention, we here see that they largely do so through institutional mechanisms. Yet, like Phillips and Hardy (1997) show, refugees themselves rarely have the resources that allow them to participate in this domain. Thereby, refugees are represented by the NGOs, which can be seen to constitute a type of "individual recognition" whereunder those representing the refugees "do not have to share a similar identity" (Lépinard, 2014, p.886) – this ties back to the NGO alliances with refugees, where the politics of voice may pixilate the refugees' own demands and interests. Indeed, Vandervoordt (2019) suggest that solidarity manifests most clearly in grass-roots mobilisations for this exact reason –but, the 'disciplining of dissent' that can occur through NGO-isation can

be argued to provide continuity to the struggle for refugee rights, which is likely to provide more long-term gains (following Dolhinow, 2005). Overall, the NGOs navigate the political antagonism towards refugees through a pragmatic approach to enacting contention, which takes place largely on an institutional level, although many refugees are barred from this domain, and are therefore represented by the NGOs.

Adversaries

I now unpack how the NGOs relate to adversaries, exploring how this impacts the solidarity and resistance that the NGOs can use to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees.

The NGOs enact contention when in "direct opposition to inequality" (Featherstone, 2012, p.12), yet some of the NGOs are reluctant to name the actors enforcing this. This is prominent in DRC, who "don't use the adversary perspective" (appendix A, l.180). This approach might be a tool to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees, in that it can be used to build solidarity, since no actors are singled out, which can be argued to leave room for ties to be established across groups, i.e., by not naming adversaries it may be easier to collaborate across difference. On the other hand, this can be seen to support the idea that the "professionalization of social change" undermines resistance (Choudry & Shragge, 2011, p.514), in that the NGO may be prioritising positive relations with governmental institutions at the cost of enacting a more "radical organising" (Choudry & Shragge, 2011, p.514) of dissent.

That being said, Flex, while maintaining that DRC does not have adversaries, expresses concern towards the discourse being carried by "very hard right-wing parties" that legitimise a "non-human" way of speaking about refugees (appendix A, ll.40-44). This inevitably makes DRC's work more difficult, since they "work to protect, advocate and build sustainable futures for refugees" (DRC, n.d., "About Us") – a task that must be viewed as "an up-hill battle" (appendix A, l.50) when such parties discuss refugees as non-humans (see: Kirkwood, 2017 about this in the UK). A similar approach can be identified for JRS, who "don't go as far as saying that they [the government] are adversaries" (appendix C, l.337) but rather that they make their "work really much more difficult" (appendix C, ll.325-326). Here, both NGOs agree that governmental actors create obstacles for them to navigate within their terrains, but neither opt to characterise these as adversaries. This has different implications in the two contexts. For DRC, this means that they can build alliances with those differing from them, although this can also be argued to have little effect other than to pacify civil society (appendix B, l.247). In Malta the government is reluctant to engage with NGOs, so the hesitancy to characterise the government as an adversary may have a different context. One understanding could be that this

is a strategic tool to access a potential political opportunity structure, that is, if there is "a change in political alignments" (Joachim, 2003), JRS will not have taken a stance against the government that would alienate them from future collaboration. Steffek (2013) presents a similar argument that NGOs "keep their doors open" to allow future partnerships with actors that currently refuse to work with them (p.1000). Here, JRS, by not naming adversaries, may leave future possibilities for hidden geographies of solidarity to be unearthed – although the argument that this functions to pacify civil society may also be made. Thereby, both JRS and DRC seem to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees in a manner where they are cautious of naming adversaries, which may make coalitions easier to enter into, although this may be at the cost of a more radical resistance.

Contrastingly, the documents collected from RW specifically mention adversaries, including specific politicians (RW, 2021a, p.99, p.119) and parties (Bendixen, 2021b; RW, 2022a, p.3). When I asked about this, Bendixen underscored that while these are adversaries to RW's work, it is "nationalists [who] really" constitute their "biggest adversaries" (appendix B, ll.295-305). By naming nationalists as adversaries, RW thereby navigates the antagonism towards refugees by pointing out those who they perceive to drive this antagonism – thereby clearly giving visibility to disagreement, which is a core aspect of resistance. Yet, this may make it more difficult to enter into coalitions and build solidarity alliances in this space – unless this is viewed as a misplaced alliance.

Bendixen explains that nationalists are the NGO's biggest adversary because they "hamper[…] the international collaboration and international responsibilities" (appendix B, ll.296-297) – this links back to the NGOs using international institutions as infrastructures of dissent that afford continuity to resistance, but where nationalists, qua their focus on the nation-state as the central actor, may increasingly view international institutions as a straitjacket (following Bendixen's term, appendix B, l.34) that limits national autonomy (see also: Telle, 2019). By naming nationalists as the NGO's biggest adversary, RW challenges the "universalism, essentialism, and privilege" (Thomas & Davies, 2005, p.711) that can be argued to underly this ideology (see e.g.: Malesevic, 2006), in that they resist those actors understood to oppose international collaboration on refugee issues. Here we can see that JRS, DRC, and RW all accept the premise that significant political antagonisms exist towards refugees in their respective countries, but only RW challenges specific actors driving this antagonism, while DRC and JRS tend to prefer to 'build bridges' rather than naming adversaries. Thereby, they navigate the political antagonisms in diverging ways, whereunder RW's adversary perspective allows for a more resistive stance, while DRC and JRS 'keep their doors open', which may

allow for broader collaboration, but it can also be understood as a misplaced alliance that hampers the counter-hegemonic aspects of both solidarity and resistance.

In the material I collected about aditus before conducting the interview, I found few mentions of actors that may be seen as adversaries. When asked I about adversaries, Falzon noted "there hasn't been a clear internal discussion" about this (appendix D, ll.223-224) indicating that it is not an active, strategic choice in their work to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees. Aditus, being the only NGO in this study that is refugee-focused rather than a refugee NGO, also deals with separate topics like rule of law issues, where they mention adversaries to a much greater extent (appendix D, ll.225-228; Falzon, 2020) – showing that the NGO is not against naming adversaries in general, rather that they haven't "thought about this" in the asylum space (appendix D, ll.221-229). Significantly, Falzon notes "maybe we should actually" name adversaries (appendix D, l.228), which shows that the NGO is open to a discussion of enacting resistance through this path, which may uncover both a spatial and relational aspect of solidarity (through contention) that the NGO has not yet utilised when navigating the political antagonism towards refugees.

We here see that larger differences seem to exist between the NGOs rather than between national differences. DRC and JRS are more hesitant to name adversaries, while RW is more explicit. Aditus does not clearly name adversaries, but this does not seem to be an actively chosen strategy. This indicates that it is not the national context which constructs how NGOs relate to adversaries to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees, rather that their organisational strategies impact how they manoeuvre within this terrain.

Notably, those actors discussed as (potential) adversaries in this chapter are of governmental character, although spaces like anti-refugee movements from European civil society (see e.g.: Generation Identity as studied by Nissen, 2020) could also be explored as potential adversaries to the NGOs – but these did not emerge as strong codes in my data. This may be understood by situating resistance within "a matrix of domination" (Alinia, 2015, p.2335), where potential governmental adversaries have more power in shaping political antagonism towards refugees than anti-refugee groupings who do not influence policy making to as large an extent (Ghosh, 2009), hence largely not constituting adversaries that the NGOs relate to in their navigation of political antagonisms. This can also be understood by interrogating the NGO-isation of resistance, where the professionalisation of social change results in social movements and grassroots mobilisations have lesser influence (Roy, 2014; Choudry & Shragge, 2011). In relation to social movements, it should be noted that RW mostly does not participate in demonstrations (appendix B, ll.177-187), and DRC and JRS also seem

to be reluctant to participate in such expressions of dissent due to their hesitancy to point out adversaries. This diverges with aditus who participates in many different political happenings, side by side with refugees (e.g., Agius, 2022; Sansone, 2023[8]) – here, aditus, while as an NGO representing the professionalisation of social change like the other NGOs, incorporates social movement expressions of dissent to navigate political antagonisms, which, following Vandervoordt (2019) boosts the intersectional solidarity they can enact since bottom-up refugee dissent becomes an integrated part of their work.

Note that the NGOs are all largely apolitical when they navigate the political antagonism towards refugees. We see this in DRC who did not "contribute […] to the political agenda" during the latest general election– i.e., they did not support or oppose any particular parties, instead they gave expert statements when asked (DRC, 2022c, pp.5-6). Flex notes "sometimes we [DRC] are deemed to be Halal-hippies" but underscores that the organisation, rather than adhering to any political or religious dogmas, is merely working "to create a good foundation for integration" irrespective of such principles (appendix A, ll.59-66). Similarly, RW argues that refugee rights are not a right- or left-wing cause (Henriksen, 2014; appendix B, ll.15.31), and they do not want to be seen as a left-wing organisation, although the original organisation (Refugees under the Ground) did, in 1986, stem from this ideology (RW, n.d., "Flygtninge Under Jorden"). Instead, RW is "on the side of refugees" (appendix B, l.19) – a stance that seems to be echoed by aditus that values the "non-political voice" of NGOs (Malta Independent, 2013, para. 4). JRS "stand[s] with refugees" (JRS.net, n.d., "Our Priorities"), and have, rather than a political affiliation, a religious affiliation (JRS.net, n.d., "Values"). Hereby, the NGOs distance themselves from supporting political parties. Petras (1999) is critical of an apolitical approach, arguing that it avoids a "class analysis of imperialism and capitalist exploitation" (p.430; see also: Shivji, 2006) – following this line of thought, it might be argued that the NGOs do not navigate the political antagonism towards refugees in a way that undoes consensus. Nonetheless, significant changes that improve concrete lived-experiences might arise from the apolitical rights-based approach to navigating political antagonisms (see e.g.: Offenheiser & Holcombe, 2003, p.291; VeneKlasen et al., 2004, pp.29-44) – which, from a feminist perspective that places such experiences at the centre (Collins, 2015, p.7), must also be viewed as valuable. Indeed, power structures do not need to be substantially altered for resistance to count, as Girei (2022) reminds us – although following scholars like Petras (1999),

[8] A Black Lives Matter demonstration, and a symbolic protest to commemorate the lives lost in Malta's SAR zone, respectively.

it might be suggested that the potential to forge solidarity as a transformative power is compromised because of this.

Funding

In this section, I explore how the NGOs' funding impacts their relation to solidarity and resistance, and use this to unpack how NGOs navigate the political antagonism towards refugees through these mechanisms. I first examine the NGOs that make use of institutional funding (JRS, aditus, & DRC), and reflect on RW's funding strategies subsequently.

DRC garners much funding from the Danish government (appendix B, l.444-445; DRC, 2022d, p.52) and stands out in this regard compared to the other NGOs, who receive government funding to a much more limited extent (RW, n.d, "Om Refugees Welcome"; appendix B, ll.390-398; JRS, 2018, p.21; appendix C, ll.310; aditus, 2021, p.36; appendix D, l.205). Aditus and JRS rely primarily on project-based funding, largely from EU and UNHCR institutions (Horsthemke et al.2017, p.135; JRS, 2018, p.10-17). DRC (2022) also works with project-based funding, e.g., projects funded by the Danish government, the EU, and private foundations (p.52). This indicates that these three NGOs "tap into" (appendix D, l.35) institutional funding opportunities to carry out their projects, and in this way navigate the political antagonism towards refugees in their respective countries by securing an economic foundation to carry out their work, in this way, their dissent relies on institutions (following Agustín & Jørgensen, 2015, pp.224-225).

However, this relationship is not effortless. All three NGOs point to the difficulties relying on institutional funding entails. For example, Flex notes that as Denmark received fewer refugees after the 'refugee crisis' (until the arrival of the Ukrainian refugees), "politicians' attention, and importantly also for us, the doners' attention" decreased (appendix A, ll.92-93). This can have concrete consequences, such as the closure of programmes (DRC, 2022d, p.25). This brings about Girei's (2022) question "whose interests matter?" (p.1) – and suggests that while DRC's interests may not have changed, their ability to act on these is largely dictated by the interest of funders. In this way, the NGO must navigate in a political terrain that is characterised by funders' interests, who, inevitably, have more bargaining power (see: AbouAssi, 2012, p.592) qua their economic relationship.

Both JRS and aditus receive most of their funding through projects (JRS, 2018, p.21; appendix C, l.283, aditus, 2021, p.36, appendix D, 151), and like DRC, these funding opportunities can be characterised as precarious and dependent on political will (appendix C, ll.286-294; appendix D, ll.142-159). Falzon and Camilleri note that their projects are primarily

funded by the EU and not the government – and they suggest this provides "a buffer of safety" (appendix D, l.206) that allows them to "raise their voice on specific issues" (appendix C, l.308) that would not be possible if the government funded them. Here we see that the politics of voice is heavily impacted by economic power relations. With similar reasoning to aditus and JRS, RW does not rely on government funding, so that there are "no strings attached" (appendix B, l.392). This seems to indicate that aditus, JRS and RW largely adhere to the critique "who pays the piper calls the tune" (Girei, 2022, p.17) – and thereby avoid government funding such that their advocacy is not hampered by governmental interest. Yet, aditus and JRS can be argued to be 'pipers playing a tune dictated by a different actor' – i.e., their work may not be shaped by the government, but rather the EU. For example, JRS may find themselves "unable to apply for funds to provide particular services" (appendix C, ll.312-313), much like aditus who must reshape their activities to adhere to project calls (appendix D, l.152). Chandhoke (2002) is critical of project-based work for this exact reason – and further suggests that this is a mechanism for limiting the bounds of NGO work (pp.45-49). Camilleri suggests that the limiting of such "parameters […] is maybe inherent in the system which unfortunately we're [refugee NGOs] forced to operate within" (appendix C, l.314) – the fact that the NGOs are *forced* shows that resistance must be viewed within a matrix of domination, and that while the NGOs fight to challenge the domination of refugees, they are, at the same time, dominated by the interests of institutional funders. In this way, the NGOs can be seen to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees by tapping into the resources of institutional donors – that is, dissent needs institutions for continuity (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2015, pp.224-225) – but these institutions also seem to limit how the NGOs' resistance can manifest.

JRS and aditus access project funding as *opposed* to government funding, while DRC access project funding as a *supplement* to government funding. As touched upon, aditus and JRS avoid government funding in order "to feel free enough" to criticise governmental policies (appendix C, ll.307-308). In this way, it can be argued that they avoid "blunt[ing] the edges of political resistance" (Roy, 2014, para. 8) by separating their funding from the institution that they criticise. Similarly, Iwilade (2023) argues that governments "manufactur[e] consent" by funding CSOs – that is, CSOs may not be at liberty to be as critical of governmental policies when funded therethrough (p.49). This may help us understand why DRC does not criticise government policy, instead they opt to "point out where they are wrong", i.e., where improvements can be made (appendix A, l.335), in contrast to the other NGOs that are significantly more critical. Hereby, the NGOs navigate the political antagonism towards

refugees in a manner that is heavily shaped by their funding structures, and hereto connected ability to practice dissent.

However, aditus and JRS' project-based funding means that they are "not able to plan longer term" (appendix D, l.153) since such projects have a temporal restriction (Islam, 2014, p.203). While they may, to a greater extent, be at liberty to criticise the national government (following Iwilade, 2023) they do not enjoy the continuity that such a stable source of funding affords. Here, DRC seems to be able to reach more people over a longer period of time, since they have a "funding backbone" (to use Van Rooyen's 2015 term) that the other NGOs do not have. Falzon notes that aditus' lack of such a backbone means that it is difficult to engage in long term work, although the NGO works to improve policy and institutional approaches, which is "inevitably long-term work" (appendix D, l.155) – a sentiment that is mirrored by several scholars (see e.g.: Ebrahim, 2003; Antrobus, 1987). DRCs use of project-based work as a supplement to their core funding in this way provides an additional source of funding, while their support from the government provides continuity. Here we can see that aditus, JRS, and DRC 'discipline their dissent' (Choudry & Shragge, 2011) in different ways to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees. Aditus and JRS can perhaps have what Flex calls "a more prominent voice" (appendix A, l.145) where they can criticise the government more freely, due to their reliance on project-based work, whereas DRC can enjoy greater continuity and scope in their work due to a more stable funding source. Note that government funding can also be somewhat volatile (see e.g.: Bloodgood & Tremblay-Boire, 2017), but nonetheless represents a more steady funding source than projects (following Khieng & Dahles, 2015).

Whether funded by the government or through project-based work, the NGOs operate in a climate where they must compete for finite resources (Batti, 2014; Schwenger et al., 2014). Here, they may partake in the "oppression Olympics" (Hancock, 2011) – DRC often uses the phrase "refugees are some of the most vulnerable" (DRC, n.d., "Sådan Arbejder Vi"), much like JRS (2016) journey with "the most marginalised" (pp.2-3), and aditus who focus their energies "on the most vulnerable communities" (aditus, n.d., "Our Work"). This may mean that the NGOs can more easily access institutional funding, since Berry (2017) suggests that funders are more likely to divert funds to "the *more* victimised or *more* oppressed" (p.841). In this way, the NGOs can be seen to partake in the oppression Olympics in order access funding opportunities that will allow them to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees more effectively. Yet, Szczepanikova (2010) indicates that such relations "foster rather than challenge unequal power relations that lock refugees in a position of clients lacking political means" (p.471), that is, this tactic to obtain funding may disregard refugee autonomy and

present the refugees in a way they may not identify with (see also: Bird & Schmid, 2023). Yet, the NGOs also support refugee organising through other initiatives (e.g., workshops and training kits), which indicates that they only partake in the oppression Olympics in some settings as a strategic tool to obtain funding, while, in others, they cultivate and encourage autonomous practices to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees.

Roy (2014) asserts that "NGOs are accountable to their funders, not to the people they work among" (see also: AbouAssi & Trent, 2016). This could indicate that aditus, JRS, and DRC are accountable to their institutional funders before they are accountable to the refugees they work for. Yet, the interviewees all express that this is not the case, they all argue that they only take on projects that they want to work with and that cohere with their values (appendix A, ll.428-429; appendix C, ll.292-293; appendix D, ll.203). Yet, they also concede that they may shape their projects to fit with funding opportunities (appendix A, ll.434-437; appendix C, ll.286-294; appendix D, ll.152). This suggests that the NGOs must be accountable to their funders, like Roy (2014) suggests, but not to such an extent that it interferes with their accountability towards their target groups. Hence, the NGOs can be said to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees in a manner where they are accountable to both their funders and the refugees they work with. This finding is impacted by the fact that I only interviewed the NGOs, whereas interviewing the refugees that the NGOs work for may have produced a different understanding.

JRS garners funding from a source that the other NGOs do not – via Jesuit sources (JRS, 2018, p.21). NGO relations to religion are widely discussed (e.g., Fountain, 2013), and religious NGOs play a significant role in refugee governance (Ferris, 2013). Woolnough (2011) praises such funding relationships and suggest that they have a positive effect on NGO reach and continuity, and Nawyn (2017) suggests that religious NGOs are particularly effective in community building (pp.15-19), which JRS also places great weight on (JRS, 2021, "Human Library"; appendix C, l.159). Jesuit sources are for example used in projects to "build bridges" between refugees and locals (e.g.: JRS, n.d., "CHANGE") – which can be seen as a type of solidarity building whereunder new ties can be established across difference (following Tormos, 2016, p.712).Yet, from a Gramscian perspective, religion can also be understood as a "means by which the ruling classes have extended their hegemony" (Mansueto, 1988 p.275), so the extent to which religion (and thereto connected funding) is implicated in the reproduction of the social order might also be questioned. Following this line of thought, such a relationship impacts how the NGO can relate to resistance and solidarity, which, as theorised above, have significant counter-hegemonic components. Thereby, JRS navigates the political antagonism

towards refugees by using Jesuit funding to provide continuity for their projects which aim to build community and solidarity in Malta – this thereby seems to cohere with Woolnogh's abovementioned proposition. Yet, from a Gramscian perspective, "the religious question" (Mansueto, 1998, p.270) also prompts a discussion of the extent to which such roots allow for the counter-hegemonic aspects of resistance and solidarity to come to light. Regardless of which stance one adheres to, it is relevant to note the difference between Denmark and Malta here, whereunder a religious NGO like JRS may have more success in a country where the citizens are decidedly more religious (Eurobarometer, 2021, p.126).

RW does not rely on institutional funding (RW, n.d., "Om Refugees Welcome"; appendix B, l.390). Instead, RW is membership-based (appendix B, l.409; RW, n.d., "Om Refugees Welcome"). Many of these members are refugees who the organisation has helped through the years, or family members to these (appendix B, ll.413-418). In this way they have an economic 'backbone' that is independent of governmental backing, and it is continuous without a temporal restriction like projects. In relation to Roy's (2014) critique of the NGO-isation of resistance, where NGOs are first and foremost accountable to their funders rather than the people whose rights they advocate for (para. 4), the funders and the people they advocate for are here the same group. Similarly, when considering Girei's (2022) statement "who pays the piper calls the tune" (p.17) – then it is the members who pay the piper, and their interests that matter. In this way RW manufactures an infrastructure of dissent that places refugees at the centre, and it is this group that the NGO is accountable towards. This also allows for intersectional solidarity relations to be forged between the NGO and refugees, since they are able to negotiate power asymmetries in their alliance (following Tormos, 2016) when the NGO is dependent on memberships, and the members depend on the NGO to express their dissent. In this way, RW can be said to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees by functioning through memberships, that allow the NGO's resistance to be accountable towards, and in solidarity with, the people they work for.

Nonetheless, Choudry and Shragge's (2011) criticism that the "professionalization of social change" has "undermined the political space for radical organizing" (p.514) is still a relevant here. In fact, in 2014 when Bendixen took over the NGO, she stated that she (and so by default therefore the organisation) was becoming "less radical" and more nuanced with time, and that it would be a pitfall to be "too provocative and too wild" – much like she has criticised other groups for their "too activist" approach (Henriksen, 2014). It was also Bendixen who spearheaded the change from being a committee (Refugees under the Ground), to an NGO under its now less politically controversial name (Jørgensen, 2015, para. 21). This seems to

confirm Choudry and Shragge's (2011) proposition, and it suggests that the resistance the NGO can practice has become "disciplined" (p.514) to such an extent that "power structures and dynamics" might not be substantially altered (Girei, 2022, p.6). These do not have to be transformed to count as resistance – although this may have a negative impact on the transformative potential of the NGO, as is a core aspect of solidarity. While these power structures are not dismantled, the fact that the NGO is funded through memberships suggests that members, who are often refugees, can channel their resistance through the RW, which thereby allows for "subaltern's expression of discomfort or dissent" – which Girie (2022) underscores "counts" as resistance (p.6). In this way, RW navigates the political antagonism towards refugees in a professionalised manner, that may curtail the transformative potential of the NGO, although they, through membership funding, allow for refugees' dissent to be heard and acted upon.

Discussion

Above I consider five sub-categories relating to solidarity and resistance as separate entities, here I discuss the connections between these, such that my analysis 'fragments' while the discussion 'connects' as is in line with the CCM. I here discuss and unpack the differences and similarities uncovered through the analysis and present a reflection.

Differences

National context plays a role in how the NGOs navigate the political antagonism seen towards refugees in their respective countries. This is clear when looking at the critical junctures in each case. The Danish NGOs were faced with a critical juncture with the arrival of Ukrainian refugees, while the Maltese NGOs experienced a transformation when access to detention was barred. Finding a national difference between the NGOs in this domain might be considered the least surprising area to uncover such a discrepancy, since the critical junctures here emerge as distinct national phenomena. Indeed, the nature of the two critical junctures diverge: in the Danish case the critical juncture can be said to originate from changes outside of the country, whereas the Maltese critical juncture can be said to stem from national changes in policy.

The two Danish NGOs relate differentially to their critical juncture, which may stem from their organisational strategies, which I look into next, but the very fact that this critical juncture occurred indicates that the underlying values towards refugees in Denmark may be shifting (Carlsen et al., 2023). This trend is also predicted in other EU countries where many Ukrainian refugees have fled to (Bosse, 2022). Here we see the importance of an intersectional lens, where "different kinds of difference" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p.199) come to light, since different kinds of refugees are treated differentially – underscoring that the categories co-constituting the 'refugee' category are of monumental importance. This also has essential ramifications for differing manifestations of solidarity, whereunder the 'shaping of we-ness' leaves us questioning who the NGOs choose to include in this 'we' group when establishing alliances to navigate political antagonisms.

In Malta, the lack of access to detention can be understood in connection with a broader lack of dialogue with policymakers, which means the NGOs cannot constructively discuss alternatives with these (although they try: aditus, n.d. "Alternatives to Detention"). This issue underpins many of the ways the Maltese NGOs navigate the political antagonism towards refugees, they e.g., create a broader infrastructure of dissent including NGO outside of the asylum space, whereas the Danish NGOs work more with refugee focussed NGOs and/or governmental actors. In this way, the Maltese NGOs embody the imaginative aspect of

solidarity to navigate in their terrain, i.e., they imagine new spaces for alliances. I expected this lack of dialogue to prompt a resistive stance towards the government, but I found JRS to be reluctant to name this as an adversary, which may relate more to organisational strategy as I explore next. The lack of dialogue with the government in Malta also impacts how the NGOs garner funding, in that they largely have to look for funding outside of the country, while the Danish NGOs to a larger extent have the opportunity to gain governmental funding, although they may choose alternative routes. From this I suggest that the largest national difference impacting the ways the NGOs navigate the political antagonism towards refugees is the fact that the Maltese NGOs have far less access to political structures through dialogue with politicians, whereas the Danish NGOs have more access to this space.

I expected most of the differences between how the NGOs navigate the political antagonism towards refugees to stem from national context. However, in many cases the organisational strategies seem more significant. For example, the Danish NGOs, while operating under the same premise when navigating the arrival of Ukrainian refugees as a critical juncture, use this moment in time and space in different ways. While DRC utilises the critical juncture to attempt to foster solidarity through incremental changes, RW takes a far more critical stance, labelling the Special Act regarding Ukrainian refugees as racist. Both organisations use the critical juncture to imagine new ways of social organising to different extents, but RW enacts contention to a much larger degree, as we also see in the way they relate to adversaries and funding. In general, RW seems to take a more resistive stance towards new policies, adversaries etc., whereas DRC is more likely to adopt the approach of building bridges and establishing relations. We see a similar clash in the case of the two Maltese NGOs, where, like DRC, JRS is hesitant to name adversaries, and adhere to the building bridges approach. Here, aditus can be seen to enact contention to a greater extent and are, like RW, more vocal in their advocacy approach. In these fields, I suggest that aditus and RW seem to share more similarities than their national counterparts, much like DRC and JRS here share many features. I further suggest that this boils down to the organisational strategies of the four NGOs, where DRC and JRS might lean towards what Contu and Girei (2014) discuss as the “co-optation of dissent”, that is they “smooth over antagonism” (p.205) to establish constructive and positive relations, while RW and aditus enact contention more in their work. Here we see that nature of the organisations differ, in that they seem to have different strategies and goals, which necessarily impacts how they relate to the actors around them. This suggests that although the political antagonism in Denmark and Malta manifests differently based on national context, the

ways in which NGOs navigate in this climate regarding solidarity and resistance seems to be influenced by the organisational values to a greater extent than the national context.

National context also means that some organisational strategies have more advantages in some settings. For example, JRS, as a religious NGO, may have a more effective reach in a country like Malta where the population weighs religion more heavily than in Denmark, and can therefore use an infrastructure that is already in place to expand communities and build bridges to establish solidarity relations. This also means that they capitalise on religious funding, but it should be noted that some religious NGOs in Denmark also enjoy such funding (Moigne & Petersen, 2016), indicating that it is rather the extent to which the population value religion that provides an opportunity for the NGO to use this as an infrastructure to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees using solidarity. Including a Danish faith-based NGO in my sample would here allow for further reflections on the importance of national context vs. organisational types.

Also, the national context in Denmark means that the Danish NGOs, to a far greater extent than the Maltese NGOs, are able to create ties with the government. Here, RW choose to avoid this as an organisational strategy, while DRC garners funding from the government and appreciate all opportunities to enter into dialogue with politicians, also those who disagree with them. Clearly this presents two different organisational strategies, but these are only able to come to light because of the national context. To clarify, the opportunity to establish such a relationship with the government opens up for diverging strategies on how to relate to this, whereas the Maltese NGOs do not have this option due to a lack of dialogue, and so the possibility to have differing stances on this does not arise as strongly.

Similarities

In addition to the different ways in which the NGOs navigate the political antagonism towards refugees, I found many similar mechanisms to be at play across four NGOs, which I turn to now.

Firstly, like Chouldry and Shragge (2011) suggest, all the NGOs discipline their dissent through a variety of mechanisms. They all largely adhere to Bendixen's approach that it is "important to be constructive and pragmatic" (appendix B, ll.230-231) so they suggest practical improvements that will make defined changes for refugees. This approach can be argued to blunt the edges of political resistance, in that the counter-hegemonic aspects of solidarity and resistance are downplayed in order to advocate for less-radical, incremental changes within the neo-liberal order – in other words, this dissent may not have a transformative force that enables

the power relations which supress refugees to be dismantled. Scholars suggest that this is a transversal and systemic trait for NGO organising throughout the EU (Chartier & Deléage, 2007; Kamat, 2004) which we can understand from the idea that dissent needs institutions, but these institutions must manoeuvre within the socio-political frameworks within which they are situated for their organisational survival (Wallace, 2004; Dunkerly & Fudge, 2004; Salgado, 2010).

In an extension of this, a professionalisation of social change is taking place in the EU, whereunder social change is increasingly fostered through regulated, monetised, organising (Saurugger, 2006; Cullen, 2010), as opposed to less-formalised grassroots organising (Van Der Heiden, 1999). This may help us to understand how the NGOs enter into alliances and relate to adversaries – namely that their alliances are largely focused on other NGOs and governments, while none of the interviewees bought up anti-refugee civil society mobilisations as adversaries. In this way, we see that social movements and civil society mobilisations are taking up less space in this arena (Bouchet & Wachsmann, 2019), indeed it can be said that Europe is facing a "shrinking civic space" (della Porta & Steinhilper, 2021). Within this shrinking space it may make sense that the NGOs in both countries all utilise critical junctures when they navigate the political antagonism towards refugees – i.e., critical junctures are *moments* which manifest in time and space, which the NGOs make use of because of an otherwise decreasing space for their voices.

In relation to adversaries, this professionalisation of social change can be understood in connection to the NGO-isation of resistance, whereunder the NGOs resist institutional forces, like policy suggestions and judicial discrimination, rather than resisting social movements, like anti-refugee groupings in civil society, or working to transform public opinion. Aditus stands out the most in this regard, since they more actively participate in protest events – here the national context is important in that these protests are a way to operate when there is little room for political dialogue (see: Burke, 2015 about this), and the organisational strategy is important in that aditus, compared to JRS, enacts contention to a greater degree. In this way, aditus resists some aspects of the NGO-isation of resistance as a tool to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees. This finding is impacted by my NGO selection, where NGOs that are more focused on shifting public opinion might pay more attention to this area, although, they too, may be influenced by the NGO-isation of resistance, e.g., in relation to funding.

In relation to alliances, the decreasing focus on civil society mobilisations impacts all of the NGOs – we particularly see this through the limited role of refugees in the organisations. All of the interviewees acknowledged the barriers refugees face to accessing spaces of political

participation, and all situate refuges within a matrix of domination where they understand the socio-political forces that interact to cement the social position of refugees. They also all aim to counter this, i.e., through workshops and empowerment toolkits –which I suggest can be seen as a type of critical praxis wherein the NGOs try to allocate resources (here immaterial resources) to refugees to equip them to resist the discrimination they face. Nonetheless, we see a limited involvement of refugee in the NGOs. This can partly be understood through the NGO-isation of resistance, which necessarily imposes some structure on political organising, and it seems that refugees are often barred from these structures. I suggest that RW challenges this to the greatest extent, in that they are funded through memberships, often refugee memberships, and in this way channel refugee voices through this relation. JRS, aditus, and DRC also to an extent challenge the politics of voice by translating refugee voices, but when the NGOs become "political translators" (Doerr, 2019) some refugee demands may become 'lost in translation' (Durst, 2021) when individual recognition is fostered rather than intersectional solidarity (Lépinard, 2014). Here, it would have been an advantage to my study to include refugee voices, to understand how refugees view the NGOs and their status within them. I could also have focused on other organisational types to achieve this, such as refugee-led initiatives like The Global Refugee-led Network (n.d.) – this may also have produced a different take on how solidarity and resistance can be used to navigate in a climate characterised by political antagonism, and I may have been able to explore issues like autonomous solidarity. Instead, I focus on NGOs as a necessary delimitation within the scope, and I also found this to be a fruitful focus area particularly considering their long-term engagement and ability to act as a bridge between civil society and policy.

Furthermore, all four of the NGOs are rights-based, which can also help to us to understand why they focus on policy changes, rather than public opinion when navigating the political antagonism towards refugees. Here, the small size of my sample impacts my findings, and it would be interesting to further explore how NGOs that are not rights-based focus on solidarity and resistance. Nonetheless, the fact that all of the organisations are rights-based is interesting in its own right. The rights-based approach is seen is many other CSOs operating within the EU, for example in disability rights (Mabbett, 2005), women's rights (Sudbery, 2010), and children's rights (Benitez, 2003). This suggests that a rights-based approach is common within the EU (Johansson, 2014), particularly as Nelson and Dorsey (2008) show under the increased privatisation in this area (p.169) – yet, like the analysis uncovered, this is a "language which no longer works" (appendix D, l.59). Despite this, the NGOs use the approach to manufacture an infrastructure of dissent, that is, they can consistently document

and challenge violations and discrimination, even if they are not able to transform the underlying structural forces that prompt these.

Additionally, the NGOs enter into alliances with other NGOs make them stronger. Ruzza (2007) suggests this may be an “EU model of civil society involvement” where CSOs collaborate despite their differences in order to boost their collective voice (see also: Contu & Girei, 2014; Banks et al., 2015). In this way, this use of alliances to navigate the political antagonism seen towards refugees may be expandable beyond the Maltese and Danish cases, and largely reflect a pattern within the EU. In these alliances, the NGOs build solidarity internally between them, to more effectively resist the oppressive forces that impact refugees. Yet, the mechanisms to achieve this do seem to differ in the two national contexts, since the Maltese NGOs to a much greater extent than the Danish NGOs utilise alliances outside of the asylum space to navigate this terrain – again, this should be understood through the lack of dialogue with the political sphere in Malta, that prompts the Maltese NGOs to build a broader infrastructure of dissent. In this way, the Maltese NGOs exhibit “a bit of local flavour” (appendix D, l.109) when approaching solidarity and resistance in this manner.

Overall, I found many similarities in the ways the NGOs navigate the political antagonism seen towards refugees, despite the national and organisational differences in all four organisations. Many of these similarities seem to stem from the professionalisation of social change, which disciplines the NGO’s dissent in such a manner that the tools available to the NGOs to navigate the political antagonism are bounded within this framework. Further, mechanisms at play within the broader EU structures may prompt specific manifestations of resistance and solidarity, as can be seen from the ways in which the NGOs utilise the rights-based approach and NGO alliances. However, in all of these cases national differences also came to light, suggesting that the NGOs make use of the tools available to them in a manner where they adapt the broader frameworks of NGO organising such that they function more effectively within each context.

Reflection

This discussion indicates that organisational strategies have a big impact on the ways the NGOs navigate the political antagonism towards refugees, and while national context provides specific characteristics to this dynamic, I found more similarities between JRS and DRC and between RW and aditus, than between the NGOs in the same country. I further found many similarities between all four of the NGOs, which indicates that transversal issues, like the

professionalisation of social change, and hereto connected 'shrinking civic space' in Europe largely defines the framework within which NGOs can operate.

The sample size may have an influence on this finding, in particular in relation to the differences between the tools the NGOs use to navigate the political antagonism towards refugees. Including more NGOs in the study may have helped me to uncover more differences relating to national context, especially through the use of the CCM, where more data in the two groups 'Danish NGOs' and 'Maltese NGOs' might have allowed for further patterns to come to light. Also, including refugees' voices would have helped me to counter the bias from my expert interviewee's, who, much like the websites, represent their organisations from an internal perspective – I critically interrogate the NGO statements to counter this, but acknowledge that further reflections might have arisen with a more diverse sample. Similarly, choosing different types of NGOs, with different structures and values might have prompted additional findings. Nonetheless, I do uncover some differences between national context, and the structural factors impacting all European NGOs would still be highly likely to influence how NGOs from a larger sample navigate the political antagonism towards refugees.

It is also necessary to reflect on the 'political antagonism' premise. While my interviewees did not use the term 'political antagonism' directly, they all convey the idea that the political climate is "not good enough" (appendix C, l.9) and their websites reflect that the NGOs work to better refugees' access to rights and a dignified life in those areas where policy and practice hamper this. This characterisation seems to be a trend for refugee-focused NGOs working across Europe (see e.g.: Bird & Schmid, 2021) indicating that the political antagonism towards refugees in this region create obstacles transversally, although my paper also seems to suggest that this manifests with some local characteristics in different countries. Although all of the studied NGOs characterise the climate as needing improvement, I suggest that RW embraces the political antagonism premise to a greater extent, since they most explicitly name the adversaries they see as enforcing this inequality. Aditus does not name adversaries, but this is not an active choice as seen in JRS and DRC, and they also enact the political antagonism premise when participating in demonstrations. JRS and DRC still accept the premise, but their focus on positive relations with policymakers curtails the extent to which they embody the political antagonism idea. Hence all of the NGOs operate under the political antagonism premise, but they relate to this in different ways – this impacts how they use solidarity and resistance as tools to navigate this political antagonism, where RW and aditus enact contention to a greater degree, while JRS and DRC focus more on positive relations, although some of these may be 'misplaced alliances' that hamper the transformative potential of solidarity.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have investigated the RQ: *How do Danish and Maltese refugee-focused NGOs navigate the political antagonisms towards refugees seen in their respective countries?* I used the CCM to analyse data from four NGO websites, as well as in-depth feminist interviews with the NGO staff. Through my data, it became clear that all of the NGOs accept the premise that political antagonism towards refugees is apparent within their national contexts, much like my literature review indicated. Solidarity and resistance emerged as two initial themes from the data, and I unpacked these by focussing on alliances, critical junctures, adversaries, contention, and funding, as further sub-categories relating to this. I expected national context to have a large impact on the differences between how the organisations navigate in their terrains, but while this did add national characteristics in many instances, I instead found the organisational strategies of the NGOs have a more significant impact. Indeed, JRS and DRC seem to share many traits due to their organisational strategies, much like aditus and RW have many similarities in this regard. In addition, all four NGOs also seemed to navigate in similar ways due to transversal issues like the professionalisation of social change and hereto connected shrinking civic space in Europe, which largely defines the frameworks that the NGOs utilise to improve refugees' rights and access to a dignified life.

Overall, I suggest that Danish and Maltese refugee-focused NGOs navigate the political antagonism towards refugees in their respective countries using a plethora of imaginative tools. Specifically, the enact solidarity and resistance mechanisms in different ways, and to varying extents, as seen through their relations to alliances, critical junctures, contention, adversaries, and funding. Although impacted by 'local flavour' to some extent, and organisational strategies to a great extent, these mechanisms seem to have many common traits stemming from increased NGO-isation and a shrinking civic space in Europe.

Common to all the NGOs is their commitment to including refugees in their organising, yet they all underscore the difficulties that refugees can face in accessing the political sphere. All of the NGOs work to alleviate these difficulties, e.g., through volunteers, workshops, or training kits. Nonetheless, intersectional inequalities preventing refugee participation largely remain in place, hence limiting access for refugees to voice their demands (Kaga, 2021, p.73). I suggest that this, in connection with the shrinking civic space, makes it ever more important to pay attention to the politics of voice, so that when refugees speak, the NGOs listen (following Couldry, 2010). Here the role of the NGOs as political translators becomes monumental, particularly when those representing refugee interests are not refugees themselves, i.e., when

“individual recognition” is used rather than intersectional solidarity (Lépinard, 2014). This manner of navigating the political antagonism towards refugees is impacted by my focus area, where I especially focused on civic solidarity with elements of institutional solidarity to delimit my study, although a focus on organisations promoting autonomous solidarity might have provided deeper insights into how refugees themselves navigate the political antagonism towards them. This was outside of the scope of my paper, but I suggest that the studied NGOs can benefit largely from incorporating elements from each other’s strategies to include refugees, to the extent that it is possible, while still acknowledging the intersectional oppressions that refugees face as a consequence of the political antagonism towards them, that can limit the opportunities they have to engage in this political struggle. For example, the Maltese training kits may be adapted to a Danish setting to help NGOs in Denmark to equip refugees to stand up for themselves, much like DRC’s strategy to use volunteers to convey information from refugees may also be adopted to a greater extent within JRS, that relies on volunteers in a similar way.

I have approached solidarity and resistance as two dialectically intertwined forces in my theoretical framework, and through my analysis and discussion I found that the contentious aspect of both concepts particularly tied them together. However, when conceptualised intersectionally, it also became clear that significant tensions exist within this relationship, and that these, rather than strengthening both, in some cases weakened either the solidarity or resistance that the NGOs could practice. We see this e.g., when DRC avoids naming the government that funds them as an adversary, and instead work to build alliances with governmental actors, also those who disagree, although this can be seen as a misplaced alliance that does not challenge the status quo in a counter-hegemonic way. Conversely, when RW or aditus enact resistance, e.g., by naming adversaries or participating in political protests, this may be at the expense of positive relations with actors who have the power to enforce incremental changes that can improve the lived experiences of intersectionally oppressed refugees, even if not manifesting in a counter-hegemonic fashion. In this way, I suggest that the NGOs often have to balance solidarity and resistance when they operate through political antagonisms – thereby navigating treacherous terrain both within this delicate balance, and within the antagonistic political climates in which they operate.

Although this paper is centred around refugee-focused NGOs, I suggest that many of my findings are somewhat transferable to other arenas. I suggest this despite my small sample, where my findings are initially conditioned by my NGO selection, but by interrogating the underlying structures and values behind these results, I suggest that the professionalisation of

social change not only impacts refugee-focused NGOs, but NGOs in the EU more broadly. Although NGOs concerned with ability, children's rights, or trafficking might not deal with political antagonism to the same extent, they still have to navigate in a climate characterised by a shrinking civic space, wherein the NGO-isation of resistance impacts the ways in which the organisations can work to better the lives of their target groups. NGOs working with LGBT* or women's rights increasingly face political antagonisms in Europe (see e.g.: Kováts, 2017; Liinason, 2021) and may face similar opportunities and obstacles as refugee-focused NGOs due to this, thereby their relations to solidarity and resistance may incorporate similar mechanisms as those discussed in this paper – but, further research is necessary to substantiate this hypothesis. Regardless of which arena the NGOs work in, I suggest that the incorporation of voices from those they work with and for are of crucial importance to their operations. Thereby, I suggest that practicing intersectional solidarity, whereunder the oppressed groups' voices and demands are placed at the centre, can be an asset to European NGOs particularly when a professionalisation of social change prompts the NGO-isaition of resistance, where these voices risk being pushed to the margins.

References

AbouAssi, K. (2012). Hands in the pockets of mercurial donors: NGO response to shifting funding priorities. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 42*(3), 584-602.

AbouAssi, K. (2014). Get money involved? NGO's reactions to donor funding and their potential involvement in the public policy processes. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organisations, 25*(4), 968-990.

Abouassi, K., & Trent, D. (2016). NGO accountability from an NGO perspective: Perceptions, strategies, and practices. *Public Administration and Development, 36*(1), 283-296.

Adair, V. (2008). The missing story of ourselves: Poor women, power, and the politics of feminist representation. *National Women's Study Association Journal, 20*(1), 1-25.

Adams, W.C. (2015). Conducting semi-structured interviews. In Newcomer, K.E, Hatry, H.P., & Wholey, J.S. (Eds.). *Handbook of Practical Programme Evaluation* (365-377). Wiley.

aditus [aditus foundation], & MGRM [Malta LGBTQ Rights Movement]. (2015). *Consultation on IVF Legislation*. Retrieved from: https://aditus.org.mt/Publications/ivfconsultation_10082015.pdf

aditus [aditus foundation]. (2016). *Press statement on world refugee day.* Retrieved from: https://aditus.org.mt/journeys-hope-urge-malta-grant-safe-legal-access-refugees/#.ZD6N8OxBxQI

aditus [aditus foundation]. (2020). *An immediate food and shelter initiative is urgently needed: Joint NGO press statement*. Retrieved from: https://aditus.org.mt/an-immediate-food-and-shelter-initiative-is-urgently-needed-joint-ngo-press-statement/#.ZE5oiOxBxQI

aditus [aditus foundation]. (2020*). Legal update on the Captain Morgan Incident*. Retrieved from: https://aditus.org.mt/legal-update-on-the-captain-morgan-incident/#.ZEkN9uxBxQI

aditus [aditus foundation]. (2022). *Collaboration to strengthen our work on strategic litigation involving detained children.* Retrieved from: https://aditus.org.mt/our-work/projects/pro-bono-unit/partnership-to-strengthen-our-work-on-strategic-litigation-involving-detained-children/#.ZEkq4OxBxQI

aditus [aditus foundation]. (2022). *Our new case against Malta, filed before the European Court of Human Rights.* Retrieved from: https://aditus.org.mt/our-new-case-against-malta-filed-before-the-european-court-of-human-rights/#.ZEkMcOxBxQI

aditus [aditus foundation]. (2022a) *Annual Report 2021*. Retrieved from: https://aditus.org.mt/?link_library_category=annual-report

aditus [aditus foundation]. (2023) *Colloquy bringing refugees and government to the integration table*. Retrieved from: https://aditus.org.mt/colloquy-bringing-refugees-migrants-and-government-to-the-integration-table/#.ZD_hXexBxKM

aditus [aditus foundation]. (2023*). Things that matter to the communities: Watch our video refugees and migrants meeting government partners*. Retrieved from: https://aditus.org.mt/video-colloquy-2incing/#.ZD6DUOxBxKM

aditus [aditus foundation]. (n.d.) *#Safe4all.*Retrieved from: https://aditus.org.mt/our-work/advocacy-initiatives/safe4all/#.ZEvCvOxBxKM

aditus [aditus foundation]. (n.d.). *#dontletthemdrown*. Retrieved from: https://aditus.org.mt/our-work/advocacy-initiatives/dontletthemdrown/#.ZEea-OxBxQI

aditus [aditus foundation]. (n.d.). *#therearealternatives.* Retrieved from: https://aditus.org.mt/our-work/advocacy-initiatives/therearealternatives/#.ZEedoexBxKM

aditus [aditus foundation]. (n.d.). *About us*. Retrieved from: https://aditus.org.mt/about-us/

aditus [aditus foundation]. (n.d.). *Alternatives to Detention.* Retrieved from: https://aditus.org.mt/alternatives-to-detention-discussed-in-legal-training/

aditus [aditus foundation]. (n.d.). *Home.* Retrieved from: https://aditus.org.mt/

aditus [aditus foundation]. (n.d.). *Operational team*. Retrieved from: https://aditus.org.mt/about-us/the-team/

aditus [aditus foundation]. (n.d.). *Our work*. Retrieved from: https://aditus.org.mt/our-work/

aditus [aditus foundation]. (n.d.). *Policy Input*. Retrieved from: https://aditus.org.mt/publications/#.ZEj1N-xBxQI

aditus [aditus foundation]. (n.d.). *Training kit for empowering refugee-led community organisations.* Retrieved from: https://aditus.org.mt/our-work/projects/training-kit-for-empowering-refugee-led-community-organisations/#.ZD6SmexBxKM

Agius, M. (20th of November, 2022). No 'us' without 'them', activist protest institutionalised racism. *Newsbook*. Retrieved from: https://newsbook.com.mt/en/no-us-without-them-activists-protest-institutionalised-racism/

Agustín, Ó.G. (2012). Enhancing solidarity: Discourses of voluntary organizations on immigration and integration in multicultural societies. *Journal of Multicultural Discourses, 7*(1), 81-97.

Agustín, Ó.G., & Jørgensen, M.B. (2015). *The politics of dissent*. Peter Lang.

Agustín, O.G., & Jørgensen, M.B. (2016). *Solidarity without borders: Gramscian perspectives on migration and civil society alliances*. Pluto Press.

Agustín, O.G., & Jørgensen, M.B. (2019). *Solidarity and the 'refugee crisis' in Europe*. Palgrave.

Aida [Asylum Information Database] (2021). *Country report: Malta*. Retrieved from: https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/malta/

Al Jezeera. (2021, 4th of September*). Europe is politicising Afghan refugees instead of helping them.* Retrieved from: https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/9/4/europe-is-policiticising-afghan-refugees-instead-of-helping-them

Al Jezeera. (2022, 26th of June). *The refugees cast adrift in the Mediterranean*. Retrieved from: https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/6/26/the-refugees-cast-adrift-in-the-mediterranean

Alinia, M. (2015). On Black feminist thought: Thinking oppression and resistance through intersectional paradigm. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 38*(13), 2335-2340.

Amnesty (2021a). *Denmark 2021*. Retrieved from: https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/europe-and-central-asia/denmark/report-denmark/

Amnesty (2021b). *Malta 2021*. Retrieved from: https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/europe-and-central-asia/malta/report-malta/

Amore, K. (2005, 16th of March). Active civic participation of immigrants in Malta. *European Website on Integration*. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/active-civic-participation-immigrants-malta_en

Antrobus, P. (1987). Funding for NGOs: Issues and options. *World Development, 15*(1), 95-102.

Archambault, E. (2009). The third sector in Europe: Does it exhibit a converging movement? In Enjolras, B., & Sivesind, K.H (Eds). *Civil society in comparative perspective* (3-24). Emerald Books.

Ataç, I., Rygiel, K., & Stierl, M. (2016). The contentious politics of refugee and migrant protest and solidarity movements: Remaking citizenship from the margins. *Citizenship studies, 20*(5), 527-544.

Atkinson, P.A. & Coffey, A. (1997). Analysing documentary realities. In D. Silverman (Ed.*), Qualitative research: Theory, method and practice* (45-62). Sage.

Balzan, J. (31st of May, 2022). Malta failing obligation to protect young migrants, report finds. *Newsbook*. Retrieved from: https://newsbook.com.mt/en/malta-failing-obligation-to-protect-young-migrants-report-finds/

Banks, N., Hulme, D., & Edwards, M. (2015). NGOs, states, and donors revisited: Still too close for comfort? *World Development, 66*(1), 707-718.

Bartholomeusz, L.(2005). The Amicus Curiae before international courts and tribunals. *Non-State Actors and International Law, 5*(1), 209-286.

Batti, R.C. (2014). Challenges facing local NGOs in resource mobilization. *Humanities and Social Sciences, 2*(3), 57-64.

Bendixen, M. (2019, 8th of August). The journey to Denmark: Routes, risk and cost. *Refugees.dk*. Retrieved from: http://refugees.dk/en/facts/the-asylum-procedure-in-denmark/the-journey-to-denmark-routes-risk-and-cost/

Bendixen, M. (2021a, 23rd of July). New Ruling: Denmark violates refugees rights to family life. *Refugees.dk*. Retrieved from: http://refugees.dk/en/news/2021/july/new-ruling-denmark-violates-refugees-right-to-family-life/

Bendixen, M. (2021b). European deterrence politics and the end of humanitarianism. *Refugees.dk*. Retrieved from: http://refugees.dk/en/focus/2016/july/european-deterrence-politics-and-the-end-of-humanitarianism/

Benitez, S.T. (2003). Reactive, protective and rights-based approaches in work with homeless street youth. *Children Youth and Environments, 13*(1), 134-149.

Berry, M. E. (2017). Barriers to women's progress after atrocity: Evidence from Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina. *Gender & Society, 31*(6), 830-853.

Bird, G., & Schmid, D. (2021). Humanitarianism and the 'migration fix': On the implication of NGOs in racial capitalism and the management of relative surplus populations. *Geopolitics, 28*(3), 1235-1261.

Bloodgood, E., & Tremblay-Boire, J. (2017). Does government funding depoliticize non-governmental organization? Examining evidence from Europe. *European Political Science review, 9*(3), 401-424.

Boeije, H. (2002). A purposeful approach to the constant comparative method in the analysis of qualitative interviews. *Quality & Quantity, 36*(1), 391-409.

Bosse, G. (2022). Values, rights, and changing interests: The EU's response to the war against Ukraine and the responsibility to protect Europeans. *Contemporary Security Policy, 43*(3), 531-546.

Bouchet, N. & Wachsmann, I. (2019). A matter of precaution: Watching the shrinking civic space in Western Europe. *Observatorium Maecenta, 29*, 1-4.

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative research journal, 9*(2), 27-40.

Briguglio, M. (2013). *EU accession and civil society empowerment: The case of Maltese ENGOs*. PhD dissertation, University of Malta.

Bruner, J.D., Goodnow, J.J., & Austin, G.A. (1972). Categories and cognition. In Spradley, J.P.(Ed.). *Culture and cognition* (168-190). Chandler.

Bucholtz, M. (2000). The politics of transcription. *Journal of Pragmatics, 32*(10), 1439-1465.

Buckman, G. (2006). Reform or revolution? The big activist question. *Chain Reaction, 96*(1), 42-43.

Buhagiar, A.J. (2011). *The role of local councils in building sustainable and inclusive communities*. PhD dissertation, University of Malta.

Bukenya, B., & Hickey, S. (2014). NGOs, civil society, and development. In Obadatre, E. (ed.). *The handbook of civil society in Africa* (311-335). Springer.

Burke, S. (2015). Conceptualizing protest and conflict: report from an interdisciplinary conference exploring how governments and institutions of global governance can better respond to contentious politics. *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*. Retrieved from: https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/11532.pdf

Cachia, J.C. (2023*). The Europeanisation of party politics in Malta*. Springer.

Carlsen, H.B., Gårdhus, T., & Toubøl, J. (2023). Ukrainian refugee solidarity mobilization online. *European Societies*, 1-12. Retrieved from: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14616696.2023.2177704

Carter, N., Byrant-Lukosius D., DiCenso, A., Blyther, J., & Neville, A. (2014). The use of triangulation in qualitative research. *Methods & Meanings, 41*(5), 545-547.

Caruana, J. & Rossi, A. (2021). In Pursuit of livelihood: An in-depth investigation of asylum seekers' battle against poverty and social exclusion in Malta. *Jesuit Refugee*

Service Malta & aditus foundation. Retrieved from: https://jrsmalta.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Povert-Research-Booklet_V2_Web.pdf

Carvajal, P.J.F. (2022). Advocacy NGOs and the neoliberal manufacture of the street voice. *Journal of Education Policy, 37*(5), 723-743.

Chandhoke, N. (2002). The limits of global civil society. In Glasius, M., Kaldor, M., & Anheier, H. (Eds.) *Global civil society* (35-53). Oxford University Press.

Chartier, D., & Deléage, J. (2007). The international environmental NGOs: From the revolutionary alternative to the pragmatism of reform. *Environmental Politics, 7*(3), 26-41.

Choudry, A., & Shragge, E. (2011). Disciplining Dissent: NGOs and community organizations. *Globalizations, 8*(4), 503-517.

Chun, J.J., Lipsitz, G., & Shin, Y. (2013). Intersectionality as a social movement strategy: Asian immigrant women advocates. *Signs, 38*(4), 917-940.

Clark, J.A., & Zahar, M.J. (2015). Critical junctures and missed opportunities: The case of Lebanon's Cedar revolution. *Ethnopolitics, 14*(1), 1-18.

Collins, P.H. (2015). Intersectionality's definitional dilemmas. *Annual Review of Sociology, 41*(1), 1-20.

Comte, J. (2014). Decriminalization of sex work: Feminist discourses in light of research. *Sexuality & Culture, 18*(1), 196-217.

Consterdine, E. & Hampshire, J. (2013). Immigration policy under New Labour: Exploring a critical juncture. *British Politics, 9*(1), 275-296.

Contu, A., & Girei, E. (2014). NGOs management and the value of 'partnerships' for equality in international development: What's in a name? *Human Relations, 67*(2), 205-232.

Coston, J.M. (1998). A model and typology of government-NGO relationships. *Nonprofit and voluntary sector quarterly, 27*(3), 358-382.

Couldry, N. (2010). *Why voice matters: Culture and politics after neoliberalism*. Sage.

Cullen, P. (2010). The platform of European social NGOs: ideology, division and coalition. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, *15*(3), 317-331.

d'Auria, V., Daher, R., & Rohde, K. (2018). From integration to solidarity: Insights from civil society organisations in three European cities. *Urban Planning, 3*(4), 79-90.

Damm, M., Ladekarl, A., & Slente, C. (2023). Danmarks modtagelse af flygtninge fra Ukraine- Hvad har vi lært? *Kommunernes Landsforening, Røde Kors, & Dansk Flygtningehjælp Integration.* Retrieved from:

https://integration.drc.ngo/media/qlnnocnj/danmarks-modtagelse-af-flygtninge-fra-ukraine-hvad-har-vi-laert.pdf

Damnjanovvic, I.L.(2020). Criminalization of search-and-rescue operations in the Mediterranean has been accompanied by rising migrant death rate. *Migration Policy Institute, Washington.* Retrieved from: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/criminalization-rescue-operations-mediterranean-rising-deaths

Danish Institute for International Studies. (2016) *The Ugly Duckling*. Retrieved from: https://www.diis.dk/en/research/the-ugly-duckling

Danish Institute for International Studies. (2017a). *European anti-migration agenda could challenge stability in Niger*. Retrieved from: https://www.diis.dk/en/research/european-anti-migration-agenda-could-challenge-stability-in-niger

Danish Institute for International Studies.(2017b). *Urban insecurity, migrants, and political authority.* Retrieved from: https://www.diis.dk/en/research/urban-insecurity-migrants-and-political-authority

De Genova, N. (2013). Spectacles of migrant 'illegality': The scene of exclusion, the obscene of inclusion. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 36*(7), 1180–1198.

De Genova, N., Tazzioli, M., & Garelli, G. (2018). Autonomy of asylum?: The autonomy of migration undoing the refugee crisis script. *South Atlantic Quarterly, 117*(2), 239- 265.

De Rosa, E. (2014). Gender statactivism and NGOs: Development and use of gender sensitive-data for mobilizations and women's rights. *Partecipazione e conflitto, 7*(2), 314-347.

Debono, M., & Garcia, C. (2016). Labour market integration of asylum seekers and refugees in Malta. *European Employment Observatory*.

della Porta, D. (2018). *Solidarity mobilizations in the 'refugee crisis': Contentious moves*. Springer.

della Porta, D., & Steinhilper, E. (2021). Shrinking spaces and civil society contestation. In Della Porta, D., & Steinhilper, E (Eds). *Contentious Migrant Solidarity* (1-18). Routledge.

Dellmuth, L.A, & Bloodgood, E.A. (2019). Advocacy group effects in global governance populations, strategies, and political opportunity structures. *Interest Groups and Advocacy, 8*(3), 255-269.

Deutsche Welle. (2023, 2nd of August). *Migration: The European Union's perennial conundrum.* Retrieved from: https://www.dw.com/en/migration-the-european-unions-perennial-conundrum/a-64636153

Dey, I. (1993). *Qualitative data analysis: A user-friendly guide for social scientists*. Routledge.

Doerr, N. (2019). Activists as political translators? Addressing structural inequality, gender and positional misunderstandings in refugee solidarity coalitions. In Irvine, J., Lang, S., & Montoya, C. *Gendered mobilizations in an expanded Europe* (189-207). Routledge.

Dolhinow, R. (2005). Caught in the middle: the state, NGOs, and the limits to grassroots organizing. *Antipode, 37*(3), 558-580.

Dorussen, H., Lenz, H., & Blavoukos, S. (2005). Assessing the reliability and validity of expert interviews. *European Union Politics, 6*(3), 315-337.

Doucet, A., & Mauthner, N. (2008). Qualitative interviewing and feminist research. In Alasuutari, P., Bickman, L., & Brannen, J. (Eds.). T*he Sage handbook of social research methods* (328-244). Sage.

DRC [Danish Refugee Council]. (2018). *Høringssvar I anledning af forslag til lov om ændring af lov om ændring af udlændingeloven.* Retrieved from: https://integration.drc.ngo/media/lm3d5b3n/h%C3%B8ringssvar-10-09-2018-om-revision-af-reglerne-om-transport%C3%B8ransvar-ved-midlertidig-gr%C3%A6nsekontrol.pdf

DRC [Danish Refugee Council]. (2020). *Frivillig magasin fra DRC Dansk Flygtningehjælp*. Retrieved from: https://www.frivillig.drc.ngo/media/mo1dtxjs/frivilligbladet-2020-nr2.pdf

DRC [Danish Refugee Council]. (2021a). *PRAB: Policy Note 1*. Retrieved from: https://pro.drc.ngo/media/he1lnzke/destruction-of-property-or-evidence-_-policy.pdf

DRC [Danish Refugee Council]. (2021b). *Pushing Back Responsibility*. Retrieved from: https://pro.drc.ngo/media/y3zieyzm/prab-report-january-may-2021-_final_10052021.pdf

DRC [Danish Refugee Council]. (2021c). *DRC strategy 2025*. Retrieved from: https://pro.drc.ngo/media/xghmuvdu/drc-strategy-2025-en-nov-2021.pdf

DRC [Danish Refugee Council]. (2022a). *Lov om midlertidigt ophold til ukrainere*. Retrieved from: https://asyl.drc.ngo/viden-og-holdninger/horingssvar/lov-om-midlertidigt-ophold-til-ukrainere/

DRC [Danish Refugee Council]. (2022b). *Ændring af særlov*. Retrieved from: https://integration.drc.ngo/media/perdink3/%C3%A6ndring-af-s%C3%A6rlov_26-april-2022.pdf

DRC [Danish refugee Council]. (2022c). *Minutes of executive committee meeting on 15 September 2022*. Retrieved from: https://pro.drc.ngo/resources/documents/executive-committee-minutes-2022/

DRC [Danish Refugee Council]. (2022d.). *Annual Report*. Retrieved from: https://pro.drc.ngo/media/ssybr2bm/2021-drc-annual-report_2021_uk.pdf

DRC [Danish Refugee Council]. (2022e). *Årsrapport 2021*. Retrieved from: https://integration.drc.ngo/media/vlubrust/2021-annual-report_dk_uddrag.pdf

DRC [Danish Refugee Council]. (n.d.) *Mission. Vision. Values*. Retrieved from: https://pro.drc.ngo/about-us/strategic-framework/mission-vision-values/#:~:text=DRC%20takes%20a%20rights%2Dbased,combat%20discrimination%20in%20all%20forms.

DRC [Danish Refugee Council]. (n.d.). *About Us*. Retrieved from: https://pro.drc.ngo/about-us/?campaign={DRIP-English}&adgroup={All-pages}&creative=647917490625source={google_ads}&medium={Grants_google}&keyword=&content={content}&time={2022}&gclid=Cj0KCQiA0oagBhDHARIsAI-Bbgdckh3HlhojkuLoeroHcEXEVeROHmhu5TgU3bHpFRkudkLVMhmrcgYaAgztEALw_wcB

DRC [Danish Refugee Council]. (n.d.). *CO:LAB Afsluttet*. Retrieved from: https://www.integration.drc.ngo/vores-arbejde/udviklingsprojekter/flygtninge-i-job/co-lab/

DRC [Danish Refugee Council]. (n.d.). *Core sectors*. Retrieved from: https://pro.drc.ngo/what-we-do/core-sectors/

DRC [Danish Refugee Council]. (n.d.). *Høringssvar*. Retrieved from: https://integration.drc.ngo/bliv-klogere/materialer/horingssvar/

DRC [Danish Refugee Council]. (n.d.). *Nyt gratis gruppeforløb for ukrainske ældre*. Retrieved from: https://integration.drc.ngo/bliv-klogere/nyheder/nye-gratis-gruppeforlob-for-ukrainske-aeldre/

DRC [Danish Refugee Council]. (n.d.). *Organisation*. Retrieved from: https://pro.drc.ngo/about-us/organisation/

DRC [Danish Refugee Council]. (n.d.). *Partners and donors*. Retrieved from: https://pro.drc.ngo/about-us/partners-and-donors/

DRC [Danish Refugee Council]. (n.d.). *Positioner og anbefalinger.* Retrieved from: https://asyl.drc.ngo/viden-og-holdninger/postioner-og-anbefalinger/

DRC [Danish Refugee Council]. (n.d.). *Sådan arbejder vi*. Retrieved from: https://help.drc.ngo/da/sadan-arbejder-vi/

DRC [Danish Refugee Council]. (n.d.). *Volunteers*. Retrieved from: https://frivillig.drc.ngo/

DRC [Danish Refugee Council]. (n.d.). *Vores arbejde*. Retrieved from: https://integration.drc.ngo/vores-arbejde/

DRC [Danish Refugee Council]. (n.d.). *What we do*. Retrieved from: https://pro.drc.ngo/what-we-do/

Dunkerly, D., & Fudge, S. (2004). The role of civil society in European integration: A framework for analysis. *European Societies, 6*(2), 237-254.

Durst, I. (2001). Lost in translation: Why due process demands deference to the refugee's narrative. *Rutgers Law Review, 53*(1), 127-179.

Dye, J.F., Schatz, I.M., Rosenberg, B.A., & Coleman, S.T. (2000). Constant comparison method: A kaleidoscope of data. *The Qualitative Report, 4*(1/2), 1-10.

Ebrahim, A. (2003). Accountability in practice: Mechanisms for NGOs. *World Development, 31*(5), 813-829.

Emilsson, H. (2015). A national turn of local integration policy: Multi-level governance dynamics in Denmark and Sweden. *Comparative Migration Studies, 3*(7), 1-16.

Eurobarometer. (2021). Values and identities of EU citizens. European Commission, *Eurobarometer 508*. Retrieved from: https://data.europa.eu/data/datasets/s2230-94-1-508-eng?locale=en

European Commission [EC]. (2020). *NGOs in Malta denied access to detention centres.* Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/ngos-malta-denied-access-detention-centres_en

European Council on Refugees and Exiles. (2020). *Strategic Plan 2020 to 2022*. Retrieved from: https://ecre.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Strategic-Plan-2020-to-2022-FINAL.pdf

Falzon, N. (13th of February, 2020). No, normality has not been restored. *Times of Malta.* Retrieved from: https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/no-normality-has-not-been-restored-neil-falzon.770399

Falzon, N. (2022). *Detention: Turning the tables*. Retrieved from: https://humanrights.gov.mt/en/Documents/Detention%20Publication.pdf

Farrugia, R. (2009). Integration at what cost? Research into what refugees have to say about the integration process. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies, 11*(1), 51-75.

Featherstone, D. (2012). *Solidarity: Hidden histories and geographies of internationalism.* Zed Books.

Ferris, E.G. (2013). The role of non-governmental organisations in the international refugee regime. In Steiner, N., Gibney, M., Loescher, G., & Nurse, A.D. (Eds.) *Problems of Protection* (117-137). Taylor and Francis.

Fountain, P. (2013). The myth of religious NGOs: Development studies and the return of religion. In Carbonnier, G. (ed.). *International development policy: Religion and development*. (9-30). Palgrave Macmillan.

García-Carriazo, Á, J. (2019). Small island, big issue: Malta and its search and rescue region. *Paix et Sécurité Internationales, 7*(1), 299-321.

Gaztambide-Fernández , R.A. (2012). Decolonization and the pedagogy of solidarity. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society 1*(1), 41-67.

Ghosh, S. (2009). NGOs as political institutions. *Journal of Asian and African Studies, 44*(5), 475-495.

Gianni, N.F. & Michele, C.L (2021). NGO-ization. *Civil Society Review, 5*(1), 46-72.

Girei, E. (2022). Managerialisation, accountability and everyday resistance in the NGO sector: Whose interests matter? *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 1-21.

Glaser, B. (1965). The constant comparative method of qualitative data. *Social Problems, 12*(4), 436-445.

Gledhill, J. (2007). Neoliberalism. In Nugent, D., & Vincent, J. (Eds). *A companion to the anthropology of politics* (332-349). Blackwell Publishing.

Gorelick, S. (1991). Contradictions of Feminist Methodology. *Gender & Society, 5*(4), 459-477.

Hagelund, A. (2020). After the refugee crisis: Public discourse and policy change in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. *Comparative Migration Studies, 8*(13), 1-17

Hammersley, M. (1992). On feminist methodology. *Sociology, 26*(2), 187-206.

Hancock, A. (2011). *Solidarity politics for Millennials: A guide to ending the oppression Olympics.* Springer.

Hardman, N. (2022, 16th of March). Denmark's mismatched treatment of Syrian and Ukrainian refugees. *Human Right Watch*. Retrieved from:

https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/03/16/denmarks-mismatched-treatment-syrian-and-ukrainian-refugees

Hemmings, C. (2012). Affective solidarity: Feminist reflexivity and political transformation. *Feminist Theory, 13*(2), 147-161.

Henriksen, S. (15th of December, 2014). *Flygtninge burde ikke være venstrefløjens sag. Information.* Retrieved from: https://www.information.dk/indland/2014/12/flygtninge-burde-vaere-venstrefloejens-sag

Hesse-Biber, S.N. (2006). The practice of feminist in-depth interviewing. In Hesse-Biber, S.N., & Leavy, P.(Eds.). *Feminist Research Practice* (111-148). Sage.

Hillenkamp, I. (2015). Solidarity economy for development and women's emancipation: Lessons from Bolivia*. Development and Change, 46*(5), 1133-1158.

Horsthemke, L., Vogt, F., Becker-Jamme, C., & Zumstein, G. (2017). Malta Report. In Mratschkwski, A. (Ed.) *Asylum Related Organisation in Europe* (121-158). Nomos Verlaggesellschaft.

Hyndman, J. (2010). Introduction: The feminist politics of refugee migration. *Gender, Place and Culture, 17*(4), 453-459.

Islam, M.R. (2014). Improving development ownership among vulnerable people: Challenges of NGOs' community empowerment projects in Bangladesh. *Asian Social Work and Policy Review, 8*(1), 193-209.

Iwilade, A. (2023). Manufacturing consent in Africa? Multinationals, NGOs and the (re)invention of resistance in the Niger Delta's oilscapes. *Third World Quarterly, 44*(1), 39-56.

Joachim, J. (2003). Framing issues and seizing opportunities: The UN, NGOs, and women's rights. *International Studies Quarterly, 47*(1), 247-274.

Johansson, H. (2014). Bridging the gap: How do EU-based civil society organisations acquire their internal representation? *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations, 25*(1), 204-224.

Jørgensen, T.T. (5th of May, 2015). Månedens interview: Menneskerettigheder skal ikke til debat. *Notat: Magasin om Demokrati og Europa*. Retrieved from: http://notat.dk/artikler/2015/menneskerettigheder-skal-ikke-til-debat

JRS [Jesuit Refugee Service Malta], aditus foundation, & Integra Foundation. (2018). *Family unity: A fundamental right*. Retrieved from: https://aditus.org.mt/Publications/pipublicationfamilyreunification_2018.pdf

JRS [Jesuit Refugee Service Malta]. (2016). *Case for support*. Retrieved from: https://issuu.com/jrsmalta/docs/case_for_support

JRS [Jesuit Refugee Service Malta]. (2018). *Annual report.* Retrieved from: https://www.dropbox.com/s/cbfcy6uklnnqilh/JRSM%20Annual%20Report%202018.pdf?dl=0

JRS [Jesuit Refugee Service Malta]. (2021). *Human library: A safe space to 'read' a chapter in the lift of asylum seekers.* Retrieved from: https://jrsmalta.org/human-library-a-safe-space-to-read-a-chapter-in-the-life-of-asylum-seekers/

JRS [Jesuit Refugee Service Malta]. (2022). *Investing time in people for safe, legal, and dignified work.* Retrieved from: https://jrsmalta.org/investing-time-in-people-for-safe-legal-and-dignified-work/

JRS [Jesuit Refugee Service Malta]. (2022). *Training kit for empowering refugee-led community organisations*. Retrieved from: https://jrsmalta.org/training-kit-on-empowering-refugee-led-community-organisations-launched/

JRS [Jesuit Refugee Service Malta]. (2023). *Government's abdication of search and rescue responsibilities contributing to deaths in Mediterranean*. Retrieved from: https://jrsmalta.org/governments-abdication-of-search-and-rescue-responsibilities-contributing-to-deaths-in-mediterranean/

JRS [Jesuit Refugee Service Malta]. (n.d.). *Access to protection*. Retrieved from: https://jrsmalta.org/projects/

JRS [Jesuit Refugee Service Malta]. (n.d.). *Advocacy.* Retrieved from: https://jrs.net/en/programme/advocacy/

JRS [Jesuit Refugee Service Malta]. (n.d.). *CHANGE.* Retrieved from: https://jrsmalta.org/projects/

JRS [Jesuit Refugee Service Malta]. (n.d.). *JRS in Malta*. Retrieved from: https://jrsmalta.org/jrs-malta-today/

JRS [Jesuit Refugee Service Malta]. (n.d.). *Our history*. Retrieved from: https://jrsmalta.org/our-history/

JRS [Jesuit Refugee Service Malta]. (n.d.). *Our Services*. Retrieved from: https://jrsmalta.org/services/

JRS [Jesuit Refugee Service Malta]. (n.d.). *Our Way*. Retrieved from: https://jrs.net/en/about-us/

JRS [Jesuit Refugee Service Malta]. (n.d.). *Project Integrated*. Retrieved from: https://jrsmalta.org/projects/

JRS [Jesuit Refugee Service Malta]. (n.d.). *Projects*. Retrieved from: https://jrsmalta.org/projects/

JRS [Jesuit Refugee Service Malta]. (n.d.). *Values*. Retrieved from: https://jrs.net/en/about-us/values/

JRS Europe [Jesuit Refugee Service Europe]. (2017). *I Get You: Malta*. Retrieved from: https://jrseurope.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/01/I-Get-You-Maltese-report.pdf

JRS Europe [Jesuit Refugee Service Europe]. (2019*). JRS Malta and Integra publish 3 papers on refugee integration in Malta*. Retrieved from: https://jrseurope.org/en/news/jrs-malta-and-integra-publish-3-policy-papers-on-refugee-integration/

JRS Europe [Jesuit Refugee Service Europe]. (n.d.). *Mission Statements.* Retrieved from: https://jrseurope.org/en/about-us/

JRS.net [Jesuit Refugee Service]. (n.d.). *Charter.* Retrieved from: https://jrs.netjesuit.org./wp-content/uploads/downloads/2011/08/1-JRS_Charter-layout-201108.pdf)

JRS.net [Jesuit Refugee Service]. (n.d.). *Governance*. Retrieved from: https://jrs.net/en/about-us/governance/

JRS.net [Jesuit Refugee Service]. (n.d.). *JRS Europe*. Retrieved from: https://jrs.net/en/jrs_offices/jrs-europe-central-asia/

JRS.net [Jesuit Refugee Service]. (n.d.). *Our priorities*. Retrieved from: https://jrs.net/en/home/

JRS.net [Jesuit Refugee Service]. (n.d). *Values*. Retrieved from: https://jrs.net/en/about-us/values/

Kaga, M.T. (2021). *Can refugees speak? Challenging power and creating space in the humanitarian system for refugee agency and voice.* Thesis dissertation, University of Ottawa.

Kamat, S. (2004). The privitization of public interest: Theorising NGO discourse in a neoliberal era. *Review of International Political Economy, 11*(1), 155-176.

Kantola, J., & Lombardo, E. (2021). Social Constructivism. In Abels, G., Krizán, A., MacRae, H., & Van der Vleuten, A. (Eds.). *The Routledge handbook of gender and EU politics (*43-55). Routledge.

Khieng, S. & Dahles, H. (2015). Resource dependence and effect of funding diversification strategies among NGOs. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organisations, 26*(1), 1412-1437.

Kirkwood, S. (2017). The humanization of refugees: A discourse analysis of UK parliamentary debates on the European refugee 'crisis'. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology, 27*(1), 11-125.

Kjær, A.M. (2020). Paradigmeskiftet i dansk udviklingspolitik. *Politica, 52*(2), 125-146.

Klepp, S. (2011). A double bind: Malta and the rescue of unwanted migrants at sea: A legal anthropological perspective on the humanitarian law of the sea. *International Journal of Refugee Law, 23*(3), 538-557.

Kováts, E. (2017). The emergence of powerful anti-gender movements in Europe and the crisis of liberal democracy. In Köttig, M., Bitzan, R., & Petö, A. (Eds.) *Gender and far right politics in Europe* (175-191). Palgrave Macmillan.

Kvinderådet. (18th of May, 2018). *Kvinderådet I ledelsen af Dansk Flygtningehjælp*. Retrieved from: https://kvinderaadet.dk/kvinderaadet-i-ledelsen-af-dansk-flygtningehjaelp/

Lamont, C. (2015). *Research methods in international relations*. Sage.

Landman, M. (2006). Getting quality in qualitative research: A short introduction to feminist methodology and methods. *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society, 65*(1), 429-433.

Lang, S. (2012). *NGOs, civil society, and the public sphere.* Cambridge University Press.

Lassen, I. (2018). Resisting dehumanization: Citizen voices and acts of solidarity. *Critical Discourse Studies, 15*(5), 427-443.

Le Monde. (2022, 27th of October). *Denmark's increasingly harsh immigration policies*. Retrieved from: https://www.lemonde.fr/en/europe/article/2022/10/27/denmark-s-increasingly-harsh-immigration-policies_6001996_143.html

Leone-Ganado, C. (2022). In pursuit of livelihood: Stories from asylum-seekers fighting poverty in Malta. *Jesuit Refugee Service Malta and aditus foundation*. Retrieved from: https://aditus.org.mt/Publications/povertyresearch_stories_2022.pdf

Lépinard, E. (2014). Doing intersectionality: Repertoires of feminist practices in France and Canada. *Gender & Society, 28*(6), 877-903.

Levesque-Lopman, L.(2000). Listen, and you will hear: Reflections on Interviewing from a feminist phenomenological perspective. In Fisher, L., & Embree, L.(Eds.) *Feminist Phenomenology* (103-133). Springer.

Liinason, M. (2021). Drawing the line and other small-scale resistances: exploring agency and ambiguity in transnational feminist and queer NGOs. *International Feminist Journal of Politics, 23*(1), 102-124.

Lister, S. (2000). Power in partnership? An analysis of an NGO's relationships with its partners. *Journal of International Development, 12*(2), 227-239.

Local Councils' Association. (n.d.). *The association*. Retrieved from: https://www.lca.org.mt/the-association/

Lubanski, N. (2017, 19th of July). Denmark is the 10th best country for immigrants. *Copenhagen Capacity*. Retrieved from: https://www.copcap.com/news/denmark-is-the-10th-best-country-for-immigrants

Luxemburg, R. (1900). Social reform or revolution? *Marxist Internet Archive*. Retrieved from: https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1900/reform-revolution/

Mabbett, D. (2005). The development of rights-based social policy in the European Union: The example of disability rights. *Journal of Common Market Studies, 43*(1), 97-120.

Macdonald, M. (1995). Feminist economics: From theory to research. *The Canadian Journal of Economics, 28*(1), 159-176.

Mainwaring, C. (2012). Constructing a crisis: The role of immigration detention in Malta. *Population, Space and Place, 18*(6), 687-700.

Mainwaring, C. (2014). Small states and nonmaterial power: Creating crises and shaping migration policies in Malta, Cyprus, and the European Union. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies, 12*(2), 103-122.

Mainwaring, C., & Debono, M. (2021). Criminalizing solidarity: Search and rescue in a neo-colonial sea. *Politics and Space, 39*(5), 1030-1048.

Malesevic, S. (2006). *Identity as ideology: Understanding ethnicity and nationalism.* Springer.

Malta Independent. (22nd of April, 2013) *Identifying weaknesses and trying to improve local standards.* Retrieved from: https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2013-04-22/news/identifying-weaknesses-and-trying-to-improve-local-standards-1437270024/

Mansueto, A. (1988). Religion, solidarity and class struggle: Marx, Durkheim, and Gramsci on the religion question. *Social Compass, 35*(2-3), 261-277.

Martens, K. (2002). Mission impossible? Defining nongovernmental organisations. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit organisations, 13*(3), 271-285.

Marx, K. (1845). Theses on Feuerbach. *Marx/Engels Internet Archive*. Retrieved from: https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/theses/theses.pdf

Mayhew, S., Douthwaite, M., & Hammer, M. (2006). Balancing protection and pragmatism: A framework for NGO accountability in rights-based approaches. *Health and Human Rights, 9*(2), 180-206.

Mayo, P. (2016). Hegemony, migration and misplaced alliances: Lessons from Gramsci. In Agustín, Ó.G. & Jørgensen, M.B. (Eds.). *Solidarity without borders: Gramscian perspectives on migration and civil society alliances* (135-149). Pluto Press.

Mendez, J.B. (2008). Globalizing scholar activism: Opportunities and dilemmas through a feminist lens. In Charles, R. (Ed.) Engaging contradictions: *Theory, politics, and methods of activist scholarship* (136-164). University of California Press.

Micallef, A. (4th of May, 2020). More than €300,000 collected for charity thanks to 'Malta Together' festival.*TVM News*. Retrieved from: https://tvmnews.mt/en/news/more-than-e300000-collected-for-charity-thanks-to-malta-together-festival/

Moigne, J. & Petersen, M.L.(2016). Donor engagement with religion and faith-based organisations in development cooperation. *Netværk for Religion og Udvikling*. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Marie-Juul-Petersen/publication/312393753_Donor_Engagement_with_Religion_and_Faith-based_Organizations_in_Development_Cooperation_A_Brief_Overview_Donor_Engagement_with_Religion/links/6093cf95299bf1ad8d7e4a77/Donor-Engagement-with-Religion-and-Faith-based-Organizations-in-Development-Cooperation-A-Brief-Overview-Donor-Engagement-with-Religion.pdf

Money, J., & Lockhart, S.P. (2017). The paucity of international protections: Global migration governance in the contemporary era. *Global Summitry, 3*(1), 45-67.

Myrberg, G. (2017). Local challenges and national concerns: municipal level responses to national refugee settlement policies in Denmark and Sweden. *International Review of Administrative Sciences, 83*(2), 322-339.

Nawyn, S.J. (2017). Faithfully providing refuge: The role of religious organizations in refugee assistance and advocacy. *The center for comparative immigration studies*, University of California, San Diego, Working Paper 115. Retrieved from: https://escholarship.org/content/qt63x0r2ng/qt63x0r2ng.pdf

Nelson, P.J., & Dorsey, e. (2008). *New rights advocacy: changing strategies of development and human rights NGOs.* Georgetown University Press.

New to Denmark. (n.d.) *Information to persons from Ukraine*. Retrieved from: https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/Words%20and%20Concepts%20Front%20Page/Shared/Information%20Ukraine

Nielsen, H.P. (2013). Joint purpose? Intersectionality in the hands of anti-racist and gender equality activists in Europe. *Ethnicities, 13*(3), 276-294.

Nimführ, S., Otto, L., & Samateh, G. (2020). Denying, while demanding integration: An analysis of the integration paradox in Malta and refugees' coping strategies. In Hinger, S., & Schweitzer, R. (Eds.) *Politics of (dis)integration*. (161-183). Springer.

Nissen, A. (2020). The trans-European mobilization of "Generation Identity". In Norocel, O.C., Hellström, A., & Jørgensen, M.B. (Eds.) *Nostalgia and hope: Intersections between politics of culture, welfare, and migration in Europe* (85-100). IMISCOE Research Series, Springer.

Nkomo, S.M., Bell, M.P., Joshi, A., & Thatcher, S.M.B. (2019). Diversity at a critical juncture: New theories for a complex phenomenon. *Academy of Management Review, 44*(3), 498-517.

Oakley, A. (1981). Interviewing women: a contradiction in terms. In Robers, H. (Ed.) *Doing Feminist Research* (30-61). Routledge.

Offenheiser, R.C., & Holcombe, S.H. (2003). Challenges and opportunities in implementing a rights-based approach to development: An Oxfam America perspective. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 32*(2), 268-301.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2021). *Lethal disregard: Search and rescue and the protection of migrants in the central Mediterranean Sea.* Retrieved from: https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Migration/OHCHR-thematic-report-SAR-protection-at-sea.pdf

Oliffe, J.L., Kelly, M.T., Montanter, G.G., & Ko, W.F.Y. (2021). Zoom interviews: Benefits and concessions. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 20*(1), 1-8.

Owen, G.T. (2014). Qualitative methods in higher education policy analysis: Using interviews and document analysis. *The Qualitative report, 19*(26), 1-19.

Pantti, M., & Ojala, M. (2019). Caught between sympathy and suspicion: Journalistic perceptions and practices of telling asylum seekers' personal stories. *Media, Culture, & Society, 4*(8), 1031-1047.

Petras, J. (1999) NGOs: In the service of imperialism. *Journal of Contemporary Asia, 29*(4), 429-440.

Pew Research Center. (2016). *Negative views of minorities, refugees common in EU.* Retrieved from: https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2016/07/11/negative-views-of-minorities-refugees-common-in-eu/

Pew Research Centre. (2019). *Europe's unauthorized immigration population peaks in 2016, then levels off.* Retrieved from: https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/11/13/europes-unauthorized-immigrant-population-peaks-in-2016-then-levels-off/

Phillips, J. (2010). NGO duties in relation to human rights. *Ethics and Economics, 7*(2), 1-19.

Phillips, N., & Hardy, C. (1997). Managing multiple identities: Discourse, legitimacy and resources in the UK refugee system. *Organization, 4*(2), 159-185.

Pisani, M. (2012). Addressing the 'citizenship assumption' in critical pedagogy: exploring the case of rejected female sub-Saharan African asylum seekers in Malta. *Power and Education, 4*(2), 185-195.

Politico. (2022, 12th of May). *The EU's real refugee policy: Division and delay*. Retrieved from: https://www.politico.eu/article/ukraine-war-refugees-europe-real-policy-brussels-migration-division-delay/

Politico. (2023, 30th of January). *Europe looks to wield trade 'stick' on migration*. Retrieved from: https://www.politico.eu/article/europe-looks-to-wield-trade-stick-on-migration-sweden/

Rajaram, P.K. (2015). Beyond Crisis: Rethinking the Population Movements at Europe's Border. *Focaal Blog*. Retrieved from: http://www.focaalblog. com/2015/10/19/prem-kumar-rajaram-beyond-crisis

Refugees.dk. (n.d.) *Facts*. Retrieved from: http://refugees.dk/fakta/

Refugees.dk. (n.d.) *Focus.* Retrieved from: http://refugees.dk/fokus/

Refugees.dk. (n.d.) *News.* Retrieved from: http://refugees.dk/nyhedsbrev/

Reicher, S. (2004). The context of social identity: Domination, resistance, and change. *Political psychology, 25*(6), 921-945.

Reinharz, S. (1992). *Feminist methods in social research.* Oxford University Press.

Reliefweb (2022). *Denmark: Threatening letters to Syrian children part of government's hostile environment.* Retrieved from: https://reliefweb.int/report/denmark/denmark-threatening-letters-syrian-children-part-governments-hostile-environment-enar

Reuters. (2019, 14th of May). *Despite falling numbers, immigration remains divisive in EU issue*. Retrieved from: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-eu-election-migrants-idUSKCN1SK1GD

Reuters. (2023, 26th of January). *EU wants to send more migrants away as irregular arrivals grow*. Retrieved from: https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/eu-wants-send-more-people-back-africa-middle-east-asia-2023-01-26/

Richmond Foundation. (n.d.) *Our Services*. Retrieved from: https://www.richmond.org.mt/our-services/

Roberts, S.M., Jones, J.P, & Fröling, O. (2005). NGOs and the globalisation of managerialism: A research framework. *World Development, 33*(11), 1845-1864.

Roy, A. (2014). The NGO-ization of resistance. *Toward Freedom: Global Reports, Grassroots Perspectives.* Retrieved from: https://towardfreedom.org/story/archives/globalism/arundhati-roy-the-ngo-ization-of-resistance/

Ruzza, C. (2007). Advocacy coalitions and the participation of organised civil society in the European Union. *Governance and civil society in the European Union, 2*(1), 47-71.

RW [Refugees Welcome]. (2020). *Velbegrundet frygt- troværdighed og risiko i asylsager.* Retrieved from: https://refugeeswelcome.dk/media/1206/velbegrundet-frygt_da_web.pdf

RW [Refugees Welcome]. (2021a). *A Firm Hand: Danish policies on rejected asylum seekers and return*. Retrieved from: https://refugeeswelcome.dk/media/1226/a-firm-hand_web.pdf

RW [Refugees Welcome]. (2021b). *Kan det virkelig passe, at herboende flygtninge skal ligge vågne om natten på grund af angst*. Retrieved from: https://refugeeswelcome.dk/advocacy/debat/borgerforslag-kan-det-virkelig-passe-at-herboende-flygtninge-skal-ligge-vaagne-om-natten-paa-grund-af-angst/

RW [Refugees Welcome]. (2022a). *Et mere retfærdigt og humant asylsystem? Hvidbog om alternativer til asylmodtagelse i tredjeland*. Retrieved from: https://refugees.dk/media/2143/hvidbog_web.pdf

RW [Refugees Welcome]. (2022b). *Information til og om Ukrainske flygtninge*. Retrieved from: https://refugees.dk/fokus/2022/marts/information-til-og-om-flygtninge-fra-krigen-i-ukraine/

RW [Refugees Welcome]. (2022c). *Lov om midlertidig opholdstilladelse til personer, der er fordrevet fra Ukraine*. Retrieved from:

https://refugeeswelcome.dk/media/1257/hoeringssvar-saerlov-ukrainere_marts-2022.pdf

RW [Refugees Welcome]. (n.d.). *Advocacy*. Retrieved from: https://refugeeswelcome.dk/advocacy/

RW [Refugees Welcome]. (n.d.). *Cases*. Retrieved from: https://refugeeswelcome.dk/cases/

RW [Refugees Welcome]. (n.d.). *Høringssvar*. Retrieved from: https://refugeeswelcome.dk/advocacy/hoeringssvar/

RW [Refugees Welcome]. (n.d.). *Hvad laver vi*? Retrieved from: https://refugeeswelcome.dk/om-os/hvad-laver-vi/

RW [Refugees Welcome]. (n.d.). *Hvem er vi?* Retrieved from: https://refugeeswelcome.dk/om-os/hvem-er-vi/

RW [Refugees Welcome]. (n.d.). *Medhold I 3 ud af 3 FN-klager over Danmark*. Retrieved from: https://refugeeswelcome.dk/advocacy/indsatser/medhold-i-3-ud-af-3-fn-klager-over-danmark/

RW [Refugees Welcome]. (n.d.). *Om Refugees Welcome*. Retrieved from: https://refugeeswelcome.dk/om-os/

RW. [Refugees Welcome]. (n.d.). *Flygtninge Under Jorden*. Retrieved from: https://refugeeswelcome.dk/advocacy/indsatser/flygtninge-under-jorden/

Rytter, M. (2018). Made in Denmark: Refugees, integration and the self-dependent society. *Anthropology Today, 31*(3), 12-14.

Ryu, M., & Tuvilla, M.R.S. (2018). Resettled refugee youths' stories of migration, schooling, and future: Challenging dominant narratives about refugees. *The Urban Review, 50*(1), 539-558.

Salgado, R.S. (2010). NGO structural adaptation to funding requirements and prospects for democracy: The case of the European Union. *Global Society (24)*4, 507-527.

Sansone, K. (5th of February, 2023). Activists d enounce Malta's murderous policy on migrant crossings in the Mediterranean. *Malta Today.* Retrieved from: https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/121119/activists_denounce_maltas_murderous_policy_on_migrant_crossings_in_the_mediterranean

Saurugger, S. (2006). The professionalisation of interest representation: A legitimacy problem for civil society in the EU. In Smismans, S. (Ed). *Civil society and legitimate European governance* (260-277). Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.

Schumacher, L.R. (2020). Malta, Italy, and Mediterranean migration: A long history and ongoing issue. *Foreign Policy Institute.* Retrieved from: https://policycommons.net/artifacts/1428166/malta-italy-and-mediterranean-migration/2043021/

Schwenger, D., Straub, T., & Borzillo, S. (2014). Non-governmental organizations: Strategic management for a competitive world. *Journal of Business Strategy, 35*(4), 11-19.

Sears, A. (2007). The end of 20th century socialism? *Revolutionary Strategy: An Online Textbook.* Retrieved from: https://revolutionarystrategy.wordpress.com/sears/

Shelton, D. (1994). The participation of nongovernmental organizations in international judicial proceedings. *American Journal of International Law, 88*(4), 611-642.

Shields, S.A. (2008). Gender: An intersectionality perspective. *Sex Roles, 59*(1), 301-311.

Shivji, I.G.(2006). The silences in NGO discourse: The role and future of NGOs in Africa. *African Development, 31*(4), 22-51.

Siim, B. & Meret, S. (2021). Patterns of reflective solidarity and migrant resistance in Copehhagen and Berlin. *Critical Sociology, 47*(2), 219-233.

Siim, B. & Morke, M. (2018). Gender, citizenship, and political inclusion/exclusion in the European Union: An intersectional approach. In Tsakiropoulou-Summer, T., & Kitsi-Mitakou, K. (Eds.) *Women and the ideology of political exclusion* (312-326). Routledge.

Skleparis, D., & Armakolas, I. (2016). The refugee crisis and the role of NGOs, civil society, and media in Greece. *Balkan Human Corridor: Essays on the Refugee and migrant Crisis from Scholars and Opinion Leaders in Southeast Europe,* 171-184.

Skov, G. (2016) Transfer back to Malta: Refugees' secondary movement within the European Union. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies, 14*(1), 66-82.

Steffek, J. (2013). Explaining cooperation between IGOs and NGOs, push factors, pull factors, and the policy cycle. *Review of International Studies, 39*(1), 993-1013.

Strowe, A. (2013). Power and translation. In Gambier, Y., & Doorslaer, L.V. (Eds.). *Handbook of translation studies* (134-142). John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Sudberry, I. (2010). The European Union as political resource: NGOs as change agents? *Acta Politica, 45*(2), 136-157.

Szczepanikova, A. (2010). Performing refugeeness in the Czech Republic: Gendered depoliticization through NGO assistance. *Gender, Place and Culture, 17*(4), 461-477.

Taylor, A. (2022, 15th of December). Frontex, Malta accused of facilitating migrant human rights violations. *Euractiv.* Retrieved from: https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/frontex-malta-accused-of-facilitating-migr, ant-human-rights-violations/

Telle, S. (2019). 1989-2019: From the end of history to the golden straitjacket and back? European integration and populism. [Conference] *Revolutions and Transformation in Global Perspective*, Leipzig, Germany. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334465373_1989-2019_From_the_End_of_History_to_the_Golden_Straitjacket_and_back_European_integration_and_populism

The Global Refugee-led Network. (n.d.) *The global refugee-led network*. Retrieved from: https://www.globalrefugeenetwork.org/

The Guardian. (2020, 8th of October). *Europe's migration 'crisis' isn't about numbers. It's about prejudice.* Retrieved from: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/08/europe-migration-crisis-prejudice-eu-refugee-orban-christian

The Guardian. (2022, 25th of May). *Zero asylum seekers: Denmark forces refugees to return to Syria*. Retrieved from: https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/may/25/zero-asylum-seekers-denmark-forces-refugees-to-return-to-syria

The New Humanitarian. (2018, 1st of October*). Surviving Denmark's open prisons for 'undeportables'*. Retrieved from: https://deeply.thenewhumanitarian.org/refugees/articles/2018/10/01/surviving-denmarks-open-prisons-for-undeportables

The Shift News. (2022, 21st of December). *Malta's deficient asylum system under the spotlight once again.* Retrieved from: https://theshiftnews.com/2022/12/21/maltas-deficient-asylum-system-under-the-spotlight-once-again/

Thomas, R., & Davies, A. (2005). What have the feminists done for us? Feminist theory and organisational resistance. *Organization, 12*(5), 711-740.

Thurmond, V. (2001). The point of triangulation. *Journal of nursing scholarship, 33*(3), 253-258.

Times of Malta. (2022, 11th of October). *Minister defends message that Malta is 'full up' with migrants.* Retrieved from: https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/home-affairs-minister-defends-message-malta-full-up-migrants.986780

Tormos, F. (2017) Intersectional solidarity. *Politics, Groups, and Identities, 5*(4), 707-720.

Translators Without Borders. (n.d*.) Refugee Voices*. Retrieved from: https://translatorswithoutborders.org/blog/refugee-voices/

Trevisanut, S. (2022). Search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean: Factor of cooperation or conflict? *International Journal of Marine and Coastal Law, 25*(10), 523-542.

Van der Heijden, H.A. (1999). Environmental movements, ecological modernisation and political opportunity structures. *Environmental Politics, 8*(1), 199-221.

Van Rooyen, G. (2015) *Understanding resilience among non-governmental organisations in post-apartheid South Africa: A case study of youth for Christ cape town*. University of Western Cape Press.

Van Tuijil, P.(1999). NGOs and human rights: Sources of justice and democracy. *Journal of International Affairs, 52*(2), 493-512.

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

Vassallo, S.H. (2017). *A study on the right to family life of refugees and persons with subsidiary protection in Malta*. Thesis dissertation, University of Malta.

Vasudevan, R. (2020). Developing a relational solidarity politics in ethnographic research: reflections for a planner. *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography,* 1-19.

Vaughan-Williams, N., & Pisani, M. (2020). Migrating borders, bordering lives: everyday geographies of ontological security and insecurity in Malta. *Social & Cultural Geography, 21*(5), 651-673.

Velasco, A.C. (2022). Vulnerability and marginalization at sea: Maritime search and rescue, and the meaning of 'place of safety'. *International Journal of Law in Context, 18*(1), 85-99.

VeneKlasen, L., Miller, V., Clark, C., & Reilly, M. (2004). Rights-based approaches and beyond: Challenges of linking rights and participation. *Institute of Development Studies*, Working Paper 235. Retrieved from: https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/20.500.12413/4084/Wp235.pdf

Vigour, C. (2011). Comparison: A foundational approach in the social sciences. Readings in methodology: *African Perspectives, 15*(1), p.215-246.

Viswanathan. M. (2017). What the subsistence marketplaces stream is really about: Beginning with microlevel understanding and being bottom-up. *Journal of marketing management, 33*(17), 1570-1584.

Vitus, K., & Jarlby, F. (2022). Between integration and repatriation: Frontline experiences of how conflicting immigrant integration policies hamper the integration of young refugees in Denmark. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 48*(7), 1496-1514.

Walker, D., & Myrick, F. (2006). Grounded theory: An exploration of process and procedure. *Qualitative Health Research, 6*(4), 547-559.

Wallace, T. (2004). NGO dilemmas: Trojan horses for global neoliberalism? *Socialist register, 40*(1), 202-219

Weldon, S.L.(2008). Intersectionality. In Goertz, G., & Mazur, A. (Eds.) *Politics, gender, and concepts. Theory and methodology* (193-218). Cambridge University Press.

Weller, S. (2017). Using internet video calls in qualitative (longitudinal) interviews: some implications for rapport. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 20*(6), 613-625.

Wetterich, C. (2023). Search and rescue ships as exceptional spaces in the Mediterranean: Navigating emergencies, threats and governmental actions. *Journal of Intercultural Studies, 44*(1), 77-92.

Wise, R.D. (2018). Is there a space for counterhegemonic participation? Civil society in the global governance of migration. *Globalizations, 16*(6), 746-761.

Woolnough, B.E. (2011). Christian NGOs in relief and development: One of the church's arms for holistic mission. *Transformation, 28*(3), 195-205.

Worlddata. (n.d.). *Religion*. Retrieved from: https://www.worlddata.info/country-comparison.php?country1=DNK&country2=MLT

Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). Intersectionality and feminist politics. *European journal of women's studies, 13*(3), 193-209.

Yuval-Davis, N. (2012). Dialogical Epistemology – An intersectional resistance to the "Oppression Olympics". *Gender & Society, 26*(1), 46-54.

Zihnioğlu, Ö., & Dalkıranb, M. (2022). From social capital to social cohesion: Syrian refugees in Turkey and the role of NGOs as intermediaries. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 48*(11), 2455-2472.