

Inertia creeps:

Experiences of refugees with disabilities in Greece



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Master's Thesis 2023

MSc Global Refugee Studies, Aalborg University

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Characters: 140764 (57 pages)

Abstract

Although international organizations call for attention on refugees with disabilities there are no official data neither on international nor national levels apart from estimates. Studies that primarily focus on refugees with disabilities are scarce and among them, it's even more rare to approach the refugees' issues with a perspective of their agency. By investigating the experiences of refugees with disabilities living in Greece, this research aims to address that vacuum.

The data for this study derive from semi-structured interviews of refugees with disabilities conducted online via video calls. The methodology of reflexive thematic analysis has been of crucial importance in understanding, analyzing and categorizing the data from the interviews into four distinct themes. In order to support and provide optimal comprehension of the living situations and intricacies described throughout the interviews, supplementary data collected through document analysis, along with secondary data, have been deployed.

On the foundation of the theoretical framework of this research lays the theory of structuration, as presented by Anthony Giddens (1984). Among the premises of structuration theory lays the duality of structure, understanding structure as both enabling and constraining human agency. Additionally, the theoretical concepts of stuckness and social identity are deployed as supporting theoretical pillars. Stuckness is informed both from Ghassan Hage's (2009) conceptualization of the term as 'waiting it out', as a last resort of agency when one has no agency at all and from Jefferson's et al (2019) descriptions of stuckness as a quality instead of an effect. Regarding the concept of social identity, Jenkins' (2004) approach of researching social identity with the individual, interaction and institutional orders is utilized to capture the interviewees' social identity formation process through their experiences of living in Greece.

The beginning of the analysis is concerned with how bureaucratic obstacles hinder the refugees' access to healthcare and become source of accommodational and financial distress for refugees with disabilities. The analysis continues by elaborating on manifestations of stuckness and social identity formation respectively. The conclusion identifies key common points of the analysis and situates syllogisms for further research.

Acknowledgements

First of all, two huge “tesekkur” and a huge “sukran” to the interviewees themselves for sharing their stories, without you, this project wouldn’t be possible!

Two more “thank you”. One for all of the friends who tried to help in locating possible interviewees and one more to Christina in UNHCR for her help.

One more “thank you” to all of the professors of Global Refugee Studies for enlightening us with their knowledge and a very special “thank you” to Danny Raymond for his guidance throughout this thesis.

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List of Abbreviations

AMKA	Greece's Social Security Number (in Greek: Αριθμός Μητρώου Κοινωνικής Ασφάλισης)
ESTIA	Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation
EU	European Union
HELIOS	Hellenic Integration Support for Beneficiaries of International Protection
ID	Identification/Identity
IDIKA	Greece's Social Security Electronic Governance
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPA	International Protection Act
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PAAΥPA	a temporary social security number for asylum seekers which allows them to access services like public health care, and to work (in Greek: Προσωρινός Αριθμός Κοινωνικής Ασφάλισης Αλλοδαπού)
PAMKA	Social security number only for covid vaccination for people without PAAΥPA or AMKA (in Greek: Προσωρινός Αριθμός Μητρώου Κοινωνικής Ασφάλισης)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

According to estimated data from World Health Organization (WHO) and World Bank (WB), approximately 15% of the world's population experiences a form of disability (Migration Data Portal, 2023). Although there are no official international reports for how many of the people seeking refuge are also persons with disabilities, the estimated number in 2021 from WHO and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reaches up to 12 million out of the 80 million forcibly displaced (Migration Data Portal, 2023).

Nevertheless, the academic literature regarding refugees with disabilities is relatively limited and mainly focused either on the causes and treatments of mental health, or from a legal, educational, public health, or policy update perspective (Migliarini, 2020; Thapa et al., 2003; Cronkright & Lupone, 2017; Walton et al., 2020; Felder et al., 2022; Rfat et al., 2022). Although arguably there is an academic interest on subjects that are affecting the lives of refugees with disabilities, the lack of focus on their perspectives, their experiences, adds yet another layer of invisibility to an already invisible part of the population, since their needs, their voices and their issues are not frequently heard, neither reported nor academically researched.

Among the researches that do focus on the perspectives and the voices of refugees with disabilities, they don't usually include a perspective that recognizes the refugees with disabilities' agency (Meekosha & Soldatic, 2011; Mirza & Hammel, 2011; Wolbring, 2013; Pisani et al., 2016). Additionally, the majority of the research is situated in the previous decade and focused outside of Europe which, in the last decade, has seen one of the largest mobilization of people escaping conflict in history (Joseph et al., 2020,).

From 2015 to 2016, during the quite often called 'migration crisis' approximately 1.2 million asylum seekers applied asylum claims in Europe, with Greece being one of the main countries of entry-point (Niemann & Zaun, 2017). Since 2016, with the closing of the 'Balkan route' and the signing of the Europe-Turkey Common Statement, thousands of refugees had no option but to remain within Greek territory, waiting either for relocation or integration, marking the necessity of transforming, in a policy level, from a transit country as it was during 2015 to a long-standing model focused on integration and social inclusion (Kourachanis, 2018). After the warnings of penalties from the European Union, the Greek government created five hotspots on the

islands with the highest influx of refugees and approximately 40 open reception and accommodation camps throughout the mainland, while for those belonging to vulnerable groups, the Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation (ESTIA) program under the funding of European Commission and UNHCR, would provide accommodation in hotels and apartments (Kourachanis, 2018). Ever since the implementation of the ESTIA program and throughout its 7 years duration of operations, thousands of people have been accommodated and received support services (European Website on Integration, 2022). After taking over the responsibility of the program from UNHCR to the Ministry of Migration, the Greek government announced in 2022 the termination of the program, raising concerns regarding the situation of thousands of vulnerable beneficiaries (Médecins Sans Frontières International, 2020; European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 2022). Legally, regarding the protection of refugees with disabilities, Greece has the responsibility to protect people with disabilities as a signatory party of Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006).

As a student, my academic motivation lies within this gap, addressing and comprehending the experiences of the most vulnerable and yet, the most invisible. The use of the word 'invisible' is not unjustified considering that there are no statistical data (apart from estimates) for refugees and asylum-seekers with disabilities, neither on an international nor on a national level, where funds are supposed to be allocated in order for their needs to be addressed and solutions to be implemented. Despite that, there are numerous reports, newsletters and reports calling for attention for this particular group of people (United Nations, n.d.-b). Hence, although they are recognized as a vulnerable group with global organizations calling for attention, they are still, invisible.

My interest on this issue starts empirically, from direct experience. Formerly being a humanitarian aid worker of four Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Greece for more than five years in total, I have witnessed various implementations of refugee-aid programs from day zero to completion, knowing first-hand the inadequacy of recognizing the needs of refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities, along with the efforts that are required to raise the awareness for the needs of those people on a practical and on an administrative level.

The lack of addressing the needs of refugees with disabilities is also reflected in a gap within academic research regarding this problematic issue. This research is an endeavor to address these vacuums. By conducting semi-structured interviews with three refugees with disabilities residents of Athens and methodologically applying reflexive thematic analysis and interpreting recurrent themes, lead to informing this research with the theoretical framework of structuration along with the theoretical concepts of stuckness and social identity. The experiences, the perspectives, the interplays of human agency and structure, contribute to finding answers for the inquiry of *“How do refugees with disabilities experience living in Greece?”* Additionally, after the adaption of the theoretical framework, supplementary answers contributed to the explanation of the primary research question. Some of the most fundamental questions to these questions are: *“How is the agency of refugees with disabilities affecting and affected by structure and how is structure affected by actions of their aforementioned agency?”*, *“Which manifestation of the quality of stuckness do they express?”*, *“What are the effects and what is their impact on their social identity while living in Greece?”*

Methodology

This thesis relies on a qualitative approach to investigate the research question. Explanations and insights regarding the chosen methodology and data collection will be presented along with my insights, position, challenges and limitations of the methodological process.

Locating the participants

In order to understand the experiences of refugees with disabilities, the most logical approach in acquiring empirical data was to conduct interviews. The selection of semi-structured interviews was decided because they serve the purpose of acquiring descriptions of lived experiences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). I was aware that this non-probability sampling process would be difficult as I would need to find people that fit the criteria of both being refugee or asylum-seeker with disability (Groenewald, 2004). The option of fieldwork research was also considered at the beginning of this project but since I am located in Denmark, travelling to Greece to conduct fieldwork research was both time consuming and financially unsustainable.

Initially, I approached online networks for refugees and asylum seekers in Greece on social platforms, making posts that were as clear and coherent as possible, explaining the scope of the research, but there was no sign of interest. It quickly became evident that the chances of finding potential interviewees online were quite narrow. After a few days with no response on the social media platforms, I approached former colleagues and supervisors, explaining my academic settings and goals, in hope of providing the connection with refugees with disabilities. Former colleagues from five different NGOs (Praksis, SolidarityNow, Arsis, Metadrasi, Catholic Relief Services) returned to my emails and messages with more or less the same verdict, the beneficiaries were not picking the phone or the number itself has been deactivated, while the last registered visits of the refugees for the NGOs' services were more than a few months old.

The only contact that proved positive, was a former colleague, currently an employee of UNHCR in Greece, who provided the contact details of a social worker of UNHCR in Athens, who in turn linked me with another colleague of hers, working in the 'Disability Inclusive' project of UNHCR. After explaining the scope of the investigation, the social worker asked for a research topic and a data protection compliance statement which were sent to her within a few days. After a few weeks, she informed me that there are 4 refugees with disabilities interested in participating to the research, although the last interviewee withdrew two days before our arranged date.

With the social worker acting as an in-between communicator between me and the refugees, we agreed to conduct the interviews online, both for the refugees' convenience and because of my inability to be physically in Athens. The dates and times of the interviews were left to their discretion (of the interviewees') as I wanted to give complete priority to their convenience. The social worker proposed to provide the room and the equipment for the interviews. Additionally, UNHCR interpreters who have already been familiar with the interviewees would be assisting the process whenever required. The choice of the platform for the interviews was discussed with the UNHCR's social worker. In the first interview there were issues with the agreed platform Microsoft's Teams and was conducted with Zoom instead. Due to Zoom's application's settings of time limit, the first interview was shortly interrupted until a new link was set. The following two interviews were conducted with Microsoft Teams. Two of the interviews were both audio and video recorded, one

interview was only audio recorder upon the interlocutor's request. For the files recorded, it was agreed to be deleted upon the completion of this project and to be saved in a safe online location in the meantime.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The use of semi-structured interviews as a qualitative method of acquiring data for academic research spreads among a plethora of fields. With the utilization of open-ended questions, asking from the participants to discuss their experiences, their thoughts regarding the issue of investigation, the interviewees themselves can provide a deeper perspective into the topic of inquiry (Galletta, 2013). The amount of research that has been conducted prior to this thesis with the use of semi-structured interviews to comprehend experiences is evident of this method's benefits. As a partial literature review regarding this method, the academic articles that follow are thematically restricted around issues that are within the vicinity of this research.

Focusing on the impact of shared social identity as assistance to stress factors among Syrian refugees in Jordan, Alfadhli and Drury (2018) utilize semi-structured interviews to gain an insight on the personal and collective aid among refugees (Alfadhli & Drury, 2018). Their findings, inter alia, exhibit that from a perception of common fate, arises a refugee identity, which is a factor for personal and collective support (Alfadhli & Drury, 2018). Investigating the impact of government-created information vacuums, Carlson et al. (2018) conduct semi-structured interviews with humanitarian aid employees and government officials to exhibit how common crisis management tools, such as frequent policy changes and limited dissemination of information, can backfire concluding with recommendations to governments for greater importance on functional communication and policy transparency (Carlson et al., 2018). Examining the implications of European Union's laws and policies regarding protection of refugees and the ways by which policies alternate as a reaction to people's mobility Stevens and Dimitriadi (2018), use semi-structured interviews in their combination of methodologies to unravel the response of policymakers to 'migration crisis' in comparison with the projections of refugees (Stevens & Dimitriadi, 2018). They exhibit among their conclusionary thoughts, the devaluation of human agency through legal constructions (Stevens & Dimitriadi, 2018). Taking the perspectives and views of humanitarian stakeholders in consideration Joseph et al. (2020) utilize semi-structured interviews to conduct research regarding refugees' healthcare access in Greece (Joseph et al., 2020).

The conclusions of the research exhibit both the socio-cultural and language obstacles as well as the need for policies and interventions to address these issues and promote healthcare access for refugees (Joseph et al., 2020). In a qualitative study of assessing cash transfers program with a focus on protection issues, Rodgers et al. (2019) within a combination of methods, conduct semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders of NGOs and UN personnel, exhibiting the benefits and results of cash programs in Greece (Rodgers et al., 2019). In their conclusions, the importance of the benefits of financial assistance for the refugees is highlighted, after covering their basic needs refugees were able to prioritize secondary needs while Greek economy is receiving a significant boost (Rodgers et al., 2019). Moreover, they exhibit the important factor of protection since due to cash transfer programs, the interactions of stakeholders with refugees offer chances of identifying protection risks (Rodgers et al., 2019).

With the scope of this research being to grasp a better understanding of the experiences of the refugees with disabilities, their inner perceptions and feelings, manifestations of their reality, semi-structured interviews are the most widely used tool to realize this goal (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Semi-structured interviews provide flexibility since there is a room of adjustment to the questions, as well as the opportunity to ask follow-up questions on issues that may require further elaboration, in awareness that the information provided from the interviewees is subjective and the topic of discussion might unfold in unanticipated ways (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

The interviews lasted from fifty minutes to one hour and in all of the interviews, essential, extra, throw-away and probing questions were asked (Wildemuth, 2016). Before the beginning of any of any of the interviews I would present myself as a student and as person. Then there was an opening part where I would thank the interviewees for participating and re-stating the scope of this research. As a closing to this introduction, I would always make explicit that if they didn't want to answer any of the questions they should feel absolutely comfortable to say it, that they were not obliged to answer by any means, in awareness that some of the topics discussed regarding their experiences could be sensitive and as a way to make them feel comfortable, to create a safe space of discussion (Galleta, 2013). At the first part of each interview, a general question regarding the background of the interlocutors would be asked, in a way of creating rapport with them

by introducing themselves. All of the preestablished questions were open-ended and there was no theoretical drive both at the preparation of the questions and throughout the interviewing process. For each interview, the objective was to allow the interviewees to express their stories, their experiences in their way. The follow-up questions asked were on topics that seemed unclear or in need for further elaboration during the process, different subjects triggered different follow up questions for each interview. Additionally, there was no theoretical framework influencing neither the preestablished questions nor the process of the interviews.

In every interview, detailed notes have been kept regarding emotional expressions and feelings that were exhibited and all of them have been manually transcribed without the use of any transcription software, as the transcription itself is regarded as an important process of familiarization with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis has been methodologically applied to various academic fields, as it has many variants of application and it's "best understood as an umbrella term" (Braun et al., 2019). Its vast academic field application as a method spreads, inter alia, from health to education and leadership (Martimianakis et al., 2015; Saunders et al., 2023; Dharmasukrit et al., 2021; Herrick et al., 2020; Pascoal et al., 2013; Roberson & Perry, 2021).

Narrowing down the applications of thematic analysis closer to research concerned with migration, Peñuela-O'Brien et al. (2022) investigate the perceptions and attitudes of healthcare providers regarding migrants and refugees in Europe. By adopting a thematic analysis methodology and identifying three themes, their results indicate a strong association of mental health with material and social disadvantage (Peñuela-O'Brien et al., 2022). With the common factor of mental health, Veronese et al. (2018) research on sources of agency and psychological adaption to trauma among Palestinian children (Veronese et al., 2018). By asking the kids to write a self-description and then applying thematic analysis to these writings, their conclusions exhibit that the environment has a key role to children's reactions to violence and trauma, questioning the effectiveness of intervention programs (Veronese et al., 2018). Maintaining the focus on refugees and health, Al-Tamimi et al. (2023) investigate the health literacy level and experiences of Yemeni refugees with the Dutch healthcare

system (Al-Tamimi et al., 2023). By methodologically applying thematic analysis to semi-structured interviews, their conclusions indicate a good level of acquaintance with the Dutch healthcare system yet, revealing issues regarding vaccination literacy, mental and health awareness for which, improvements can be achieved through cultural mediation and better understanding of cultural diversity by the healthcare providers to prevent health inequalities, as they suggest (Al-Tamimi et al., 2023). Maintaining the focus on the experiences of refugees with healthcare systems and social inequalities, Fatoye and Fatoye (2018) investigate the blurred field of African asylum-seekers in United Kingdom regarding health and social care (Fatoye & Fatoye, 2018). Approaching methodologically with thematic analysis the semi-structured interviews, the results of their research show that African asylum-seekers experience difficulties in housing, employment, financial, social aspects, education and health (Fatoye & Fatoye, 2018). Resuming with a focus on health, experiences and refugees, Sar (2023) investigates the role of Family Health Brokers, trusted family members acting in-between the family and health care systems, by conducting a focus group with Bhutanese and Bosnian family health brokers in the United States (Sar, 2023). The results indicate that the family health brokers had significantly more negative experiences than feelings of reward indicating issues of structural social inequalities (Sar, 2023).

Shifting the perspective away from health to research associated with migration and refugees, Shaw S. and Wachter K. (2022) investigate integration policies, giving emphasis to the experiences and the perspectives of refugees that have been living in the United States for over ten years (Shaw & Wachter, 2022). By utilizing thematic analysis, their conclusions exhibit among other findings, that practices and policies around integration can alleviate difficulties people face by embracing social priorities (Shaw & Wachter, 2022). Remaining in the United States, Bennouna's et al. (2021) research focuses on inclusion of young refugees through the school environment by researching the perspectives of educators and service providers (Bennouna et al., 2021). After conducting semi-structured interviews they employ thematic analysis leading to findings that among others structural barriers prevent meaningful engagement (Bennouna et al., 2021).

The different utilizations of thematic analysis as a methodology as exhibited vary, yet it is deployed in research associated with unraveling experiences and perspectives of particular social groups and casual factors of the experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Reflexive thematic analysis provides the possibility of engaging

with the data deriving from the interviews not only as a methodological tool that enables to capture the intricacies of these human experiences, but also allows the researcher to dive into the data, as part of the process of interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Due to its theoretical freedom it can be used within different theoretical frameworks, as it is not intertwined with any pre-existing one, providing pliability in its application (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 178).

The 6 phases of Reflexive Thematic Analysis

Phase 1, Familiarization Following Braun's and Clarke's (2013, 2019) phases of thematic analysis, initially, as a first step, there is the familiarization with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). After finalizing the transcription of the interviews, the text itself along with the audio and video recordings were investigated multiple times along with the detailed notes that were kept during the interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The process of this phase could be described as active and the approach as latent. Familiarizing myself with the ins and outs of the recordings and the texts, keeping more notes on everything that instantaneously seemed as possible aspect of supporting a path of answering the research question, from pauses in the voices, hesitancy in answers, difficulties in answering questions, signs of distress, signs of shame, the way the words were used and facial expressions to changes in the body language (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Generally, I would describe this step mostly as a repeatedly return to the data while questioning myself and the ideas that the data would provoke to me.

Phase 2, Generating Codes The second phase involved an initial coding of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). I would say that this step had already started to form in my thoughts before I actively got engaged with it. According to Braun & Clarke (2019) this step can be divided to two approaches, inductive and deductive (Braun & Clarke, 2019). As my aim in this research is to comprehend the experiences, inductive was the path to follow, allowing the data to be interpreted by me without me bringing into the data ideas or theories. Of course, I don't disassociate myself from the active process of interpreting and being a part of this process as a researcher, but at this point I was not theoretically informed and more importantly, I was not trying to be.

On a practical level, this phase it's a broad and relaxed coding of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Words and meanings that had a common meaning and connotation were assembled together. The codes I used

on the data at this phase were gathered around general meanings and issues, such as 'health', describing anything regarding health, from positive to negative, from healthcare access to individual wellbeing. Another broad code of this phase was 'strong body language', which contained parts of the interviews that the interlocutors' body language would be strongly indicative, such as facial expressions or gestures. Due to the generalized approach, at this phase, many codes were overlapping with each other.

Phase 3, Constructing themes The third step could be described as grouping the codes, or even coding the codes (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Turning the codes into themes while trying to not omit any of the data was a back-and-forth process. Many times there was a return to the audio and video recordings to make sure that no information was lost and to readjust the perspective, taking a step outside of the codes themselves to recalibrate the thought, in a sense, trying to make sense of a bigger picture.

The result of this phase are codes for the social security numbers (AMKA and PAAYPA), general descriptions of accessing healthcare services in Greece, discussions about accommodation, economic challenges, issues with disabilities.

Phase 4 and 5, Revise and Define The fourth phase of thematic analysis is combined with the fifth because it is also, a back and forth process (Braun & Clarke, 2019). For the reviewing phase, all of the coded data for each theme were read again to validate if they form a coherent pattern. At this point, some themes seem to collapse into each other, for example accommodation and daily challenges and the social security numbers with daily challenges.

This phase deemed problematic in the beginning. Indeed, revising and defining required a great deal of returning back to themes to define them again. There were many overlaps among the themes identified. Initially, the theme of social security numbers would overlap with daily challenges, accommodation with economic challenges and disability issues with daily challenges. At this step, in order to assist myself in comprehending the themes and defining them, I made a visual representation in an effort to finalize this phase. Following the recommendations of Braun & Clarke (2019) of categorizing and naming themes for better definition, the final result of this level would be:

- 1) Stuckness: expressions of hopelessness and stuckness
- 2) Financial difficulties: unable to afford housing, unemployment, difficulties of covering basic needs
- 3) Bureaucratical issues: inaccessibility to healthcare and social services and the impacts.
- 4) Identity: self-definition and interactions with the Greek society.

Phase 6, producing the report In a sense, the 6th phase is my analysis chapter where I infuse the thematic analysis with my theoretical framework, to answer the research question of “*How refugees with disabilities experience living in Greece?*”

Supplementary Data

In order to provide a better understanding of the societal and legislative factors of the experiences of the interviewees, additional primary data are utilized throughout the analysis. To establish a comprehensive context regarding the Greek administration, policy and legislative updates that have direct effect on access and engagement with healthcare and asylum services, as well as on accommodation and financial assistance to refugees and asylum seekers in Greece, I have applied document analysis as a method.

In particular, during the analytical chapter governmental and legislative updates regarding the issuing of health and security social numbers in Greece are deployed, along with reports from NGOs and UNHCR. By supplementing the data from the semi-structured interviews, document analysis provides further insight, informing the research process by enabling firstly to optimally comprehend the answers of the interviewees and secondly, the situations that these people are experiencing (Bowen, 2009).

Secondary Sources

Throughout the interviews conducted for this thesis, the issues of bureaucracy, healthcare, accommodation and economic difficulties were raised multiple times. In order to contextually position and construct the analytical framework to elaborate on these points, I employ secondary data deriving from academic articles that have already addressed them. Although the academic literature that was utilized is not

concerning refugees with disabilities per se, the research that is concerned with the living situations of refugees in Greece is still relevant.

The research of these articles was exclusively through Aalborg's university's online library with peer-reviewed filters enabled. Keywords of the exact issues (bureaucracy, healthcare, healthcare access, accommodation, economic) were used along with various synonyms and in combination with keywords in the vicinity of my research question, such as "disability", "disabled", "Greece", "refugees", "ESTIA", "HELIOS". Out of the results that Aalborg university's library produced, I reviewed all of the articles that I found relevant. Although I did not delimit the research chronologically through the search engine's filters, I did personally filter out articles that were before 2015, due to the thought that Greece has received multifarious pressures on the topic of refugees from 2015 and after. Some articles that are outside of this chronologic restriction have been included on purpose, as indicators of the continuity of these issues up until nowadays, hence a continuity that affects the interviewees.

A position of reflections

It is important in qualitative research to consider and make explicit the researcher's influence and involvement, to be explicit regarding presumptions that perhaps underlie in order to maximize the credibility and be self-aware of any potential bias (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Personal reflexivity is an important part of the process, to be self-aware of your personal biases. I am a white, Greek, man. My interest in studying and researching the experiences of refugees with disabilities started through my experience as a humanitarian aid worker both in field and administrative positions. At a grey zone area between the Greek and North Macedonian border called Idomeni, I've seen thousands of refugees both crossing the border and being trapped behind it with the closing of the 'Balkan Route', witnessing the obstacles refugees with disabilities were facing. A few years later in an administrative position, I realized the efforts required for the needs of these people to be addressed and solutions to be implemented.

My biases expand in different areas. My first and foremost is that as a Greek national and activist, I tend to stand critically against the government itself, which also correlates with ideological biases. To counteract the above, I tried many times to remind myself, keeping personal notes, even writing it explicitly as a narrative

memo throughout some points of this thesis: This research does not venture to accuse any government, neither any political structure nor to unravel political agendas. The sole focus point is to academically contribute and understand the experiences of the refugees themselves.

The second personal bias that I can be self-aware of is to approach refugees with disabilities with a high empathy, as victims of their physical condition. This is not the case in this research. I delimit myself from any compassionate approach that my personality may entail as I seek to understand these experiences. Moreover, because of a personal health journey, in the eyes of the Greek administration, I am 91% disabled as my life is pharmaceutically depended. I denounce myself as a disabled person though. I am able, but my enablement is different. I approach “refugees with disabilities” the same way I approach myself, I don’t equilibrate disability with less ability, there is no pity or any form of enhanced sympathy in this thesis. I acknowledge though the social settings of a disability, the same way that if I was in a region that couldn’t grant me access to the basic pharmaceuticals my body needs, the stratifications of my “disability” would be different.

The other dimension of reflexivity is the functional one, where a researcher needs to be critically aware of the tools and procedures that may have influenced the study (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The interviewees as mentioned were approached through a network of former colleagues, which expands two-fold. On the one hand, my role as a former humanitarian aid employee grants me access to a network that I could use as a resource for academic purposes to locate, at least a small sample, of this specific group of the population. On the other hand, exactly because the interviewees were informed about this research initially through UNHCR, it could have been an obstacle of building a better rapport with them.

Limitations

To elaborate on the issue of rapport with the interviewees, the topics that were discussed are of sensitive nature. Shame and hesitancy were evident on questions regarding everyday difficulties and many times I would ask for further elaboration with follow up questions. Moreover, there is a lack of ethnic and gender variety since out of the three interviewees, two are from Afghanistan and one from Syria, two adult men and a male minor that the interview was conducted with his mother, who has the role of his caregiver and hence her perspective is

important. Given that my position is somehow favorable regarding acquiring access to the humanitarian network in Greece, I believe that the sample size reflects the difficulties of locating refugees with disabilities in the country in the first place.

Regarding the lack of variety in terms of forms of disability, WHO defines disability as a result of the interactions of individuals with a health condition, drawing significance on personal, environmental and social participations aspects (World Health Organization: WHO, 2020). This study is not exclusive to that extent, all three of the interviewees have physical disabilities, meaning that noncommunicable diseases and mental health issues are not represented. Although the selection criteria were informed according to the above, participants with the aforementioned conditions were not found.

Regarding the fact that the interviews were conducted online, there is the issue of not perceiving entirely social cues and body language (Opdenakker, 2006). However, in this particular case, the camera was allowing a view from the waist and above as there was a significant distance between the camera and the interlocutors. Moreover, there are disagreements that online interactions may increase genuine reactions and self-presentation due to 'relative anonymity' (Bargh et al, 2002). Lastly, despite the fact that the decision of day and time for the interviews was at the discretion of the interviewees themselves for their best convenience, in the interview with the mother of the minor with disabilities there was a time limit because of a pre-scheduled medical appointment at the hospital. Although the interview concluded with more than enough time for them to attend at the appointment, it could have been a factor of increased hesitancy and haste in the interview.

Theoretical Framework

Introduction

In this theoretical section, I will present the concepts that will be utilized during the analytical part. As this thesis aims to address *The experiences of refugees with disabilities in Greece*, the theoretical concepts of stuckness and social identity will be employed on the data deriving from the interviews in order to delve deeper into the experiences of the refugees with disabilities. In addition, as theoretical framework supporting this

research, I will be implementing Giddens' (1984) structuration theory which is of main relevance in understanding how these refugees resist and reproduce social structures.

Stuckness, as a theoretical concept emerged as a necessity rather than a deliberate choice given the sense of inertia that was omnipresent throughout the interviews. In an effort to analyze the multifaceted state of immobility those people face, stuckness, is employed here as a theoretical concept that escapes the sense of physical and geographical limitations by entering the psychological and social realm of the meaning. Constantly waiting, a state of stasis and loss of hope, characteristics that we meet in stuckness as a theoretical concept are present. Nothing could describe better the atmosphere, the feelings and the meanings, behind each breath, between the pauses of the answers of the interviewees. Even after the transcription of the interviews, stuckness is there, luring and lingering between and with every word, from envisioning the future, hoping, or coping through the present. I believe that there was no better theoretical concept to incorporate in my research and I wish I could state that I chose it, but the truth is that it was chosen for me from the interviewees themselves, unawarely.

Additionally, I will be utilizing social identity theory and stuckness in order to delve deeper into the dynamics of these experiences. Social identity is a powerful social psychological framework that can shed a light on how and why individuals' self-perceptions are shaped, on the cognitive processes and social dynamics that underlie group memberships and intergroup relations, as well as behaviors and viewpoints within and between social groups. Understanding and utilizing the nuances of intergroup relations, unveils the potential of gaining an insight to answer the questions of why and how the interviewees have found themselves in these living conditions. In this research, the interviews were conducted with people of different nationalities, with different disabilities and different backgrounds. Social identity theory informs this study by enabling it to understand each case in a deeper level, also in the way they see themselves within the Greek society.

As a point of departure and for analytical purposes to investigate the dynamics and the structures that constitute the everyday lives of the interviewees, I will be employing Giddens' (1984) structuration theory, taking a similar position within the greater structure-agency debate, that human agency and social structures are interrelated, yet intertwined and interdependent. I find that this combination of theoretical concepts and theory

provide the optimal foundation to analyze the narratives and the experiences of refugees with disabilities in Greece. This chapter will depart by elaborating on structuration theory and then proceeding to stuckness and social identity respectively.

Structuration Theory

Structuration theory will be operating as a theoretical framework in my research and informing the analysis where, investigating the experiences and the narratives of the interviews, will take place. In the greater structure-agency debate, Giddens positions himself within the equilibrium of these dynamics, as a duality instead of dualism, or as he phrases it: “The constitution of agents and structures are not two independently given sets of phenomena, a dualism, 'but represent a duality” (Giddens, 1986, p.25). This research aligns with Giddens’ theory in that matter, that people are able to resist constraining structures through means of action, or allow them and enable them, by not exercising action. By recognizing every person’s ability to reflect on their given position, all humans as agents have the potential of dualism, of creating change or enabling, through actions and decisions. With a similar notion, structures are not confining in an absolute sense and restricting, a one-way path leading to constraint, but there is room for maneuvering, resisting and enablement. In this chapter follows a presentation of the main theoretical elements of structuration that I will be using as a conceptual framework to analyze the responses from refugees with disabilities in Greece.

Spreading among various academic researches mainly in the fields of information systems, education and management, structuration theory has been applied to analyse various social practises, structures, understanding individuals’ and groups’ interactions, both with each other and within each and their environment (Rose et al, 2001; Elbasha & Wright, 2017; Ashley, 2010; Pham 2019; Khando, 2022). Considering research that is engaging with human mobility, refugees and their experiences and integration, the application of structuration theory is utilized in diverse ways to understand how agency and structure are bidirectionally affected (Richmond, 1993; Al-Ali et al, 2001; Healy, 2006; Naidoo, 2009; Akua-Sakyiwah, 2020). Richmond (1993) investigates theories of migration along with movements of refugees by applying structuration theory while Al-Ali’s et al (2001) research adopts a Giddensian framework by focusing on refugees’ agency potentials in transnational interrelations (Richmond, 1993; Al-Ali, 2001). Ruth Healey (2006)

analyzes the experiences of asylum-seekers and refugees in UK, examining the ways by which social structures are constraining and enabling their actions by applying elements of structuration theory (Healy, 2006). Drawing data from semi-structured interviews with asylum-seekers and refugees residing in UK, Healy demonstrates in the findings how the experiences of those people are interrelated to their feelings and the degree of ontological security, along with how coping strategies enable an increase in their ontological security (Healy, 2006).

Loshini Naidoo (2009) applies structuration theory in a similar, yet different field of focus. Researching the Refugee Action Support program in Sydney, this research delves into the struggling experiences of refugee high school students in Australia when transitioning to academia, deriving from previous experiences from their home countries and how this also affects their inclusion in the host society (Naidoo, 2009). Akua-Sakyiwah (2020) by drawing data from the narratives of educators, community members and camp management employees in Ganfoso Refugee Camp, applies structuration theory as a conceptual framework to provide an insight on how children's education is affected by social structures and policies along with refugees' agency (Akua-Sakyiwah, 2020). Drawing inspiration for the above researchers, I will be presenting below the core principles from structuration theory that will be utilized in my research.

In a way, structuration theory could be described as a framework that enables a viewpoint “in the between”, the interplays of humans' agency and social structures, within those social structures. In an effort to evaluate and explain these complicated and intertwined dynamics, human agency can be concisely defined as ‘the ability to act’ (Valentine, 2001, p. 341). A vital point of structuration, human as an individual, as an agent and actor, is of key importance. An individual has knowledge and potential, all of the subject's actions are either intentional or purposeful, as Giddens phrases it “to be a human being is to be a purposive agent, who both has reasons for his or her activities and is able, if asked, to elaborate discursively upon these reasons”, drawing the significance to the fact that actors are knowledgeable about the actions (Giddens, 1984, p. 3).

Agency signifies recognizing the agent's power to act, an acknowledgment that subsequently implies recognizing the potential of refrainment from the act thereof. Understanding the potential of influence as an actor and the capabilities of an individual to affect or not a current ‘state of affairs’, means that the refugees

themselves as agents have the potential of transforming the same structures that affect their everyday living, given that they exercise any form of power. In Giddens's words:

“To be able to 'act otherwise' means being able to intervene in the world, or to refrain from such intervention, with the effect of influencing a specific process or state of affairs. This presumes that to be an agent is to be able to deploy (chronically, in the flow of daily life) a range of causal powers, including that of influencing those deployed by others. Action depends upon the capability of the individual to 'make a difference' to a pre-existing state of affairs or course of events. An agent ceases to be such if he or she loses the capability to 'make a difference', that is, to exercise some sort of power” (Giddens, 1984, p. 14).

Employing this perspective enables this research to investigate the degree of lost capability to ‘make a difference’ without viewing the refugees with disabilities as passive, stigmatized and powerless submissive subjects to structures, but, as agents that are able to resist these structures and in turn, be impactful in the society within they experience life.

The issue of actors' knowledgeability is further explored, as there is a significant distinction. Defining the limitations of human knowledgeability, Giddens discerns between conscious and unconscious knowledge and the knowledge of the consequences of actions. While the subject of consequences will be elaborated later, the distinction that no agent can have any form of perfect knowledge is of primary importance, "the knowledgeability of human actors is always bounded on the one hand by the unconscious and on the other by unacknowledged/unintended consequences of action" (Giddens, 1984, p.282). Defining the conscious and unconscious awareness of the agent's knowledge of the social environment into practical and discursive consciousness affects drastically the way by which the data will be approached later. As discursive consciousness Giddens defines it as: “What actors are able to say, or to give verbal expression to, about social conditions, including especially the conditions of their own action; awareness which has a discursive form” (Giddens, 1984, p. 374). Therefore, it correlates entirely with the responses themselves, the words that are spoken, the situations narrated and the experiences that are described.

Practical consciousness on the other hand occurs when agents unconsciously monitor events and structures around them, What actors know (believe) about social conditions, including especially the conditions

of their own action, but cannot express discursively (Giddens, 1984, p. 375). Key element here is that this is happening unconsciously, thereby actors in that case are not reporting actions, beliefs or viewpoints and conditions, signifying the importance of drawing data from the interviews that are not direct quotes of the responders.

Structural forces are even more complicated to explain and apply definitions upon, as structure itself is more of an “epistemic metaphor of social scientific discourse”, rather than a “precise concept” (Sewell, 1992, p.2). Although perhaps an inadequate definition, structure, in an abstract sense, could be described as “any recurring pattern of social behavior; or, more specifically, to the ordered interrelationships between the different elements of a social system or society” (Scott & Marshall, 2009). Within structuration theory, structure is defined with a slightly differing connotation. Structure attains attributes of influencing and being influenced simultaneously when it comes to society and social change, the aforementioned duality which will be further elaborated below. In Giddens’ words, structure is defined as “rules and resources, recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems. Structure only exists in memory traces, the organic basis of human knowledgeability” (Giddens, 1984, p.377). Thereby, structure could be described as a non-physical existence that commands over allocative resources, referring to control over objects, goods or materials and authoritative resources, generating command over persons or actors (Giddens, 1984, p. 33). This invisible existence is revealed by every day human activities and is regulated by rules and regulations, Bills of Rights, policies etc. (Sewell, 1992). In a sense, structure could be roughly described as the sum of rules that govern a society. Again, following Giddens’ definition, the existence of structure is subject to the human knowledgeability, the human actor thereby affects the structure while structure itself is subject to change with social interactions, as human agents aware of their actions affect the structure (Giddens, *ibid*).

This recurring pattern serves as one of the foundation pillars in a Giddensian framework and it’s of paramount importance in this research. Immigration rules, laws, regulations and bureaucratic issues, all affect the refugees’ experiences in great depth and following the Giddensian framework, they are in turn affecting the structure itself as they interact and navigate their lives through these structures. This intertwined relation is an example of what Giddens refers to as ‘duality of structure’ (Giddens, 1984). Signifying the interaction and

interrelationship of structure and agency: “Structure as the medium and outcome of the conduct it recursively organizes; the structural properties of social systems do not exist outside of action but are chronically implicated in its production and reproduction” (Giddens, 1984, p.373). With this conceptualization, the perspective of the relationship of actor’s agency and the structures that it is exercised in, shifts. Following this frame of thought, as the refugees live and navigate through the society, within the structures, laws and rules that affect them, they affect and reproduce these structures themselves, while structure itself, shifts by social interactions, exercises of change. There is a mutual relationship between agency and structure, which can either reproduce, maintain or change the structure. What this framework offers to this research is a perspective of not victimizing the refugee as a powerless being, neither pointing a dialectic finger to the structural forces, but looking at the finer details, the outcomes of this relationship, the settling dust of this duality of structure.

After having established the foundations with agency, structure and the duality of structure, a return to the aforementioned issue of consequences in structuration theory. Awareness of the consequences, or at least the potential consequences signify a knowledgeable actor. An agent who can exercise his potential power, to exercise his agency, presupposes intentions, a reasoning behind the act and an expected outcome, a premediated consequence. Which raises though, the issue of unintended consequences. An action may provide a calculated result, but it may also produce an unexpected, unintended outcome. Giddens uses the term of ‘homeostatic loops’, as “casual factors which have a feedback effect in system reproduction, where that feedback is largely the outcome of unintended consequences” (Giddens, 1984, p. 375). These unintended consequences can be the result of intentional actions, which presupposes a knowledgeable agent, but can also be the outcome of an agent who does not exercise agency, meaning unintended consequences from unintended actions, or lack of actions thereof. This enables a perspective of research into the results of the actions, rather than the actions themselves, the motive or the lack of it by the agent.

The Concept of Stuckness

As mentioned in the introduction of the theoretical chapter, stuckness as a concept was not a deliberate choice, it was placed in sight by the interviewees themselves, in their unawareness. Descriptions of stuckness were present in all of the interviews more than a few times and even, precisely the exact word was used. While

as a theoretical concept stuckness has versatile attributes, yet the state of waiting is a common fundamental in every form of stuckness encountered, along with spatial and temporal characteristics.

Stuckness has been utilized in various research in versatile fields of study. Emma Russel and Maria Rae (2019) investigate through radio broadcasts and podcasts from and through prison environments' narratives of 'indefinite stuckness' as an existential state, common both to Aboriginal prisoners and detained asylum seekers in Australia and how the manifestations differentiate (Russel & Rae, 2019). With Australia being the area of research again, Straughan et al (2020) explore mobile work households and the politics of waiting through lens of gender, gathering data from fieldwork with mobile workers' female partners that stay at home, revealing how stuckness is experienced and exaggerated by the mobility of the husbands, both spatially and temporarily (Straughan E. et al, 2020). Regarding the issue of living the experience of stuckness, Jefferson and Segal (2019) expand the understanding of the concept drawing data from ethnographic research from people living under compromised conditions in Palestine and Sierra Leone, shedding the light on how time and space is experienced through stuckness outside of institutionalized spaces (Jefferson & Segal, 2019).

Two insights on the issue of stuckness as a theoretical concept will be treated with greater clout within this research. Hage's (2009) approach on 'stuckedness' and governmentality contribute enormously to this discourse showing how stuckness not only is rapidly reproduced due to living crises, but also normalized, which sets the foundation for stuckness as an experience to be endured, or as he phrases it, 'waiting it out', instead of being treated as a state that someone needs to escape from (Hage, 2009). Through this perspective, the issue of agency and passivity is raised, in a sense, Hage (2009) bridges politics with stuckness (Hage, 2009). Although being stuck gives breath to an image not only of geographical and temporal immobility but also to a sense of lack of options, Hage (2009) argues that the "heroism" of enduring this state of exercising no agency, is the last resort of agency itself, "asserting some agency over the very fact that one has no agency by not succumbing and becoming a mere victim and an object in circumstances that are conspiring to make a total agentless victim and object out of you" (ibid, 100-101). Hage (2009) uses as examples extreme conditions where endurance is portrayed as stuckness but also expands further that "the social and historical conditions of permanent crisis we live in have led to a proliferation and intensification of this sense of stuckedness" (ibid,

97). This notion of stuckness as an expression of agency is of pivotal importance to this research, along with the conditions of crisis in everyday living. Adapting this conceptual framework of stuckness in this research in combination with the Giddensian framework, allows me to delve deeper into the data with an enriched perspective on refugees' agency. In a simplified manner, it opens a path of researching not only through words and actions, but also through the unspoken and the perceived inertia of these people and the manifestations of stuckness.

The second insight on stuckness that carries heavy significance in this research is from Jefferson et al (2018), where the focus is shifting on those who are stuck, escaping the notion of stuckness from spatial and expanding it to an elaborate comprehension of how temporality is of vital importance that entails stuckness (Jefferson et al, 2018). Their research breaks through the notion of understanding stuckness through spatial restriction, to enter into the temporal aspect of being stuck in time, existentially and socially, enabling a deeper layer of understanding stuckness as a result of deprived progress and probable future (Jefferson et al, 2018). Moreover, the insights of Jefferson et al (2018) enrich the Giddensian framework as they also contribute to the relationship of structure and agency:

“While there are clearly structures that bear down on people and undermine their aspirations to move when they wish or stay when it suits them, we cannot assume anything about (human) agency only by exploring the institutions that confine them. Instead, we must explore, empirically, the means by which these structures of confinement are lived, negotiated, resisted and/or reproduced in daily life and through social practice” (Jefferson et al, 2018).

Additionally, “To be stuck is a quality (not simply an effect or a product), we argue, of confined lives worthy of further exploration” (Jefferson et al, 2018). Investigating with a Giddensian framework how refugees with disabilities experience living in Greece conforms by adopting and adapting this notion of understanding stuckness, expands and aligns stuckness with structuration theory as it enables the same perspective of approaching the data, through a perspective focused on the interrelation, on the interplays of the dynamics between structure and agency.

Social Identity as a concept

Originating from psychology studies, social identity theory examines the relationship among individuals and groups. Initially developed by social psychologists Henri Tajfel and John Turner (1979), social identity theory investigates the understanding of how people perceive and interact based on the social groups that they are associated with (Tajfel et al, 1979). Referring to an individual's conceptualization of self and their tendency to categorize themselves to various social groups, at the center of this theory lies the concept of "social identity" as an individual's self-conceptualization of identification according to the social group they are part of (Tajfel et al, 1979). Social identity theory posits as powerful force that shapes individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors within and between groups. By understanding the intricacies of social categorization it can provide an insight to the complexities of shaping self-identity.

Social identity theory has been the seed for a plethora of empirical research, exploring its applications and connotation across multiple domains of research, such as intergroup dynamics, prejudice, stereotyping, racism, group cohesion, intergroup conflicts and identity-based motivation (Stott et al., 2020; Ostrov, 2013; Wagner et al., 2009). Abrams and Hogg (2006) conducted studies on the role of social identity in intergroup relations and group processes regarding social identifications (Abrams & Hogg, 2006). The results of their research shed light on the complexities of social identity and its consequences regarding intergroup behaviors. Additionally, Turner et al (2003) are delving deeper into the social identity perspective regarding intergroup relations, providing a theoretical depth on social identity theory and its importance in understanding intergroup dynamics (Turner et al, 2003). In recent years, social identity has also been utilized in research regarding health and overall well-being. Examining the social cure, Haslam et al (2009) emphasize on the impact that social identity has on an individuals' not only mental, but also physical health. Their work highlights the importance of social identification and social connections in amplifying a person's health and well-being (Haslamm et al, 2009).

The concept of social identity as developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979) arises as a complex conceptualization that affects attitudes, behaviors and intergroup relations while, within its core, rests the premise that individuals naturally engage in a cognitive process of categorizing themselves and others into

social groups (Tajfel et al., 1979). Through this social categorization, people develop a sense of "us" versus "them," leading to the formation of social identities. According to Tajfel and Turner (1979), "Social identity refers to the individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups, together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership" (as cited in Hogg and Terry 2020, p. 122). As a powerful social psychological framework, it can shed light on how and why individuals' self-perceptions are shaped, on the cognitive processes and social dynamics that underlie group memberships and intergroup relations, as well as behaviors and viewpoints within and between social groups (Tajfel et al, 1979). Additionally, social identity theory contributes to defining an individual's self-concept that derives from their membership in various social groups (Tajfel et al, 1979

In order to grasp a better understanding of the interlocutors' experiences, this research adopts the approach of Jenkins (2004) regarding social identity. His argumentation resides within the notion that people are part of societies, of collectives (Jenkins, 2004). The social identity is not just an individualistic process, it happens within a whole, from the interplays, the connections and the results of the friction between the individual and the social dynamics (Jenkins, 2004). In light of this understanding, it is important when researching about social identities to approach investigative equally the individual and the social level, as they are intertwined, two forces constituting one complex dynamic (Jenkins, 2004).

In a way, this approach of researching social identity conforms with structuration theory. Parallelizing structuration with Jenkins' (2004) approach, the collective dynamic aligns with structure while the individualistic one with agency (Jenkins, 2004). This parallelization becomes even more evident with Jenkins' (2004) suggestion of three 'orders' of understanding social identity (Jenkins, 2004). The "individual order" consists of the inner dialogue of a human, an agent, an actor (Jenkins, 2004). The analogy here resembles with human agency in structuration. An agent's knowledgeability, the discursive and practical consciousness, the calculation of indented outcomes and consequences, all happen in the inner dialogue, the inner voice of a human. The institutional order consists of the "human world of pattern and organization, of established-ways-of-doing things" (Jenkins, 2004, p. 39). Again here the analogy aligns with structure, as a set of "rules and resources, recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems" (Giddens, 1984, p.377). Both

definitions share the characteristic of navigating life through repetitions of regulations, “recursive” and “patterns”, “rules” and “established-ways-of-doing-things”. Jenkins’ (2004) depiction of the institutional order resembles structure as a template of living, rules and structures that map out the every-day life, recognized as such by the individuals, similarly as how actors recognize structure which “...exists only in memory traces” (Giddens, 1984, p. 377). The “interaction order”, as Jenkins (2004) explains it, consists of the interplays of the dynamics between people, between agents (Jenkins, 2004). The interaction order resembles Giddens conceptualization of integration where integration is defined as exchanges of practices between actors, or actors and collectivities (Giddens, 1984, p. 28). In a simplified manner, they both draw significance from two different theoretical points of departure to the importance of human-to-human interaction, either in identity formation or in creation and reproduction of social systems.

With a similar notion as the duality of structure, where the interplays of agency and structure feedback into each other, Jenkins’ (2004) approach could be described as a triadism of orders, the individual, the institutional and the interaction. In a sense, similar to how Giddens approaches the structure-agency debate as a holistic process and not as individual factors of agency and structure but looking at the outcomes of the interplays between them, so does Jenkins in regard to social identity. Researching not only within the individual for the self-identity, nor only between agents, but also between the individual and the social world, the repetitive arranged actions, the established patterns of rules where life is experienced within (Jenkins, 2004). This approach to social identity, as an added conceptual layer on the theoretical framework structuration, enabling this research to take a more detailed look of how the interviewees define themselves, what are the frictions that take place while navigating their lives within Greek society, how the institutions affect their manifestation of social identity and the feedback in between these dynamics.

Of course, the social identities that a person can adopt vary and are not numerically restricted. A refugee, a migrant, an asylum-seeker, a foreigner, father, son, woman, mother, unemployed, homeless, handicapped, all can be simultaneously or consecutively present and be impactful on humans’ perception of themselves. Consequently, the identity adopted also affects the way agency is exercised and sometimes even a

complete lack of identity may be observed either because of absence, denial or incompatibility of the means to identify (Ballentyne et al, 2021).

Analysis

Introduction

With the theoretical foundation of this research laying on structuration theory, stuckness and social identity, the analysis of the experiences of refugees with disabilities in Greece will proceed in the following chapter.

At the bedrock of my theoretical framework lies the theory of structuration and its overarching understanding that structure and agency are intertwined and interrelated, bilateral and symbiotic. Within this context, both the capability and the potential of human action are perceived as a dynamic relationship between structure and agency, and structure is conceived as being malleable by exercises of agency. Approaching the analysis with this perspective lens, brings forth the recognition that the structures should be explained and analyzed alongside the expressions of agency. It is important to be highlighted that following the Giddensian approach, structure is not investigated as a source of constrain, but as a dynamic potential within itself to always be both constraining and enabling, unseparated from the agent, since they are both reproducing social practice and yet, parts of it (Giddens, 1984, p. 25). Following the same notion of thought, stuckness and social identity contribute to the foundational theoretical framework of structuration. Stuckness is approached as a duality and investigated as such, a potential last resort of expression of agency and simultaneously, as a condition that may be structurally imposed. Social identity enriches the analysis by contributing to the inquiries of how and why agency is exercised and affected, or not, by investigating the understanding of who the person feels to be, which social group does it feel affiliated to.

In the following analysis, the theoretical chapter will be informing the analysis both in terms of context as well as in terms of formation. The three theoretical themes will be approached as thematic levels where each one will be utilized to analyze the data deriving from the interviews through thematic analysis, primary data of Greek and international laws and secondary data of previous academic research. At this point it's important to

be mentioned that the primary data have been approached inductively using thematic analysis, identifying patterns and common topics that determined the theoretical themes. Additionally, the analysis ensues with a latent approach, extending to an interpretive level of implicit meanings, looking into and beyond the statements, between and inside the implications of words and meanings, which constitutes the researcher as a part of the process (Taylor & Ussher, 2001). Moreover, parts of the interviews will be utilized in different parts of the analysis, meaning that the interviews will not be presented as a continuum but as stated earlier, conceptually divided (for a continuous reading of the interviews refer to Appendix A).

Layers of structuration

To begin with the analytical part of my research, a clarification/reminder that none of the names used are the actual names of the interviewees, per their request, but, their age, gender, form and reason (whenever possible) of disability and country of origin are factual, with their consent. Additionally, the terms PAA YPA (Temporary Number of Social and Health Security for Foreigners) and AMKA (Registered Number of Social Security) number will be seen frequently as part of the answers as well as the questions within the interviews. For ease of comprehension of the analysis, AMKA is the national insurance number, which applies also to Greek nationals, it is issued by the Greek government and without it, access to healthcare is only of emergency nature and legal employment is impossible (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2019). PAA YPA number is a temporary social security number for asylum seekers, which gives them access to public health care services, in essence, a temporary AMKA but exclusively for foreigners (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2022).

Throughout the analysis, I will present how the interviewees' experiences are affected by structures of Greek society alongside with how their actions, or inertia, contribute to either reproducing or resisting these structures. It is important to be highlighted at this point that during the analytical chapter, the perspective is focused both on the view of the interviewee, or in Giddensian terms, actors' 'knowledgeability' at a discursive consciousness level, "What actors are able to say, or to give verbal expression to, about social conditions, including especially the conditions of their own action; awareness which has a discursive form" and, at the 'practical consciousness' level, "What actors know (believe) about social conditions, including especially the conditions of their own action, but cannot express discursively;" (Giddens, 1984, p. 374-375). As elaborated in

the theoretical framework, discursive consciousness allows an insight to what is said, the words and the answers themselves, while the practical consciousness, permits the research to delve into a deeper layer of analysis in combination with a latent approach, to what is not being said, either in unreported beliefs, conditions and viewpoints.

Initially, all interlocutors have been asked the question of educational and work experience background and then their current immigration status in Greece. On the first interview, Aamir, a man at 56 years of age, having physical disability in both legs, visual and hearing impairments, with 3 years of education in Afghanistan which stopped because of the war and a farmer at profession for most of his life, when answering the second question, in regard of immigration status, provides the following answer: “So I have received my documents here in Greece like ID card, as refugee and my passport as well. But I am not allowed to travel in any country.” (Appendix A, p. 1).

Early in the first interview, a complicated issue arises. Legally, any person recognized under international protection within the state of Greece, has the right to travel (My Rights and Obligations as a Recognized Refugees - UNHCR Greece, n.d.). The interviewee in this specific interview is absolutely aware, hence the “but” in his reply, indicating that he is aware of his agency, an obvious expression of which is his motive to move away from Greece, a motive that will also be presented later. The point here is, that an interplay of structure with agency can already be observed. Although it is of his legal right to travel, a right recognized both by him and the government, this right is structurally obstructed to be exercised. When asked, as a follow up question, to explain the reason why he can’t travel although he has received refugee protection status, he was completely unaware of the reasons why, indicated by the characteristic shrug of the shoulders, accompanied with a golden silence and a distinct disapproval in his face. Remarkably, the same reaction was exercised by the UNHCR interpreter as well, showing a crack in his position as an in-between of the language barrier. On the same question, Maryam, the mother of a three-year-old boy with physical disability because of growth and development issues replies shortly and reluctantly “Yes” (Appendix A, p. 5). In a similar way, Abdullah, male from Syria with physical disability because of right hand amputation due to shrapnel from bombing, replies briefly and abruptly: “I got my asylum in Greece; I got my ID and passport.” (Appendix A, p.7).

Deeper research into the actual process of acquiring the travel documents in the Greek system sheds more light on these aforementioned reactions. As a European member state, Greece indeed complies entirely with the Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees recognizing the right to travel, yet a separate process is required to acquire the travel documents (UNHCR - The UN Refugee Agency, n.d.; Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου, 2023). In order to apply for the travel document, there is a set of criteria and procedures that an individual has to take in order to go through the process, as well as a waiting time and a fee that needs to be paid (Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου, 2023). It's worth mentioning that the only way to learn the exact price of the fee is by communicating with the migration services themselves via phone call or physical presence at their offices, an important factor both because that's an extra bureaucratic step, while we live in the digital post-Covid era, and because as indicated later, the economic factors are of huge importance.

Although already analytical issues arise, there is a strong correlation with further interview questions, as the narrative of the experiences unfolds allowing the investigative light to be shed deeper by engaging with both primary and secondary data. The next question in all three interviews was a description of the process that the interviewees went through since they arrived in Greece. Aamir replies, again, with disapproval and almost fatigue emerging from his characteristics:

“So, when we arrived in Greece in 2018 with my family including my wife and four children so one of my child he was born in Greece at the beginning when we arrived. The process in Greece was very difficult, we had to be and waiting and waiting until we will receive our document... So we were waiting until the end of 2019 until we give our interview so unfortunately because of the COVID-19 the process was stopped so unfortunately I have to be waiting until 2021 and in 2021 we received all of our family documents from Greek government as refugees.” (Appendix A, p. 1).

In the same question, Abdullah replies:

“First of all I arrived at Samos island, I stayed there for about 8 and a half months, then I left the island for Athens. So, the whole process, took me about two years and a half to get there.” (Appendix A, p. 7).

It could be logically argued that the act of making someone wait, is an expression of power when seen from the perspective of the one who exercises the power, not to be confused with the act of waiting itself, since the perspective differentiation is of great significance within this research. Waiting is immanent within bureaucracy, after all, the control of time is characteristic of bureaucracy (Giddens, 1984, p. 152). The same attributes can be found in the procedures of seeking asylum. Waiting for the interview, waiting for the decision, waiting for the services, for the bureaucratic cogwheels to turn; waiting, in loss of control of time in aspiration for a safer future. With bureaucracy becoming the medium of control, adopting a Giddensian perspective, it is an expression of structural power. Giddens defines structure as “Rules and resources, recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems. Structure exists only as memory traces, the organic basis of human knowledgeability, and as instantiated in action” (Giddens, 1984, p. 377). Disintegrating Giddens’ definition, it is not only the laws, policies, regulations or legislations (“rules and resources”) that constitute structure, but there are the attributes of repetition (“recursively”), of awareness (“memory traces”) and the embodying (“instantiated”) within action (ibid). Rules and regulations are interpreted, transformed to actuality with bureaucracy as one of the mediums, repetitively, the embodying of which rules and resources, regarding this research, is present at the “memory traces” of asylum-seekers and refugees through their exposure to the administrative mechanisms, shifting policies and legislations, hotspots, asylum services etc.

At this point, since engaging with authorities and administrative bodies in Greece has emerged as an issue in this analysis and its significance has a continuous gravity subsequently, it is of necessity for some essential information regarding the bureaucracy in Greece, since it will be approached as a manifestation of structure.

Bureaucracy

The Greek public administration is characterized as a bureaucratic, highly centralized, inflexible and inefficient system (as cited in Chatzoglou et al, 2013). There is a plethora of articles and research regarding Greece and its bureaucracy, mainly within the economic field, as the economic crisis of 2009 and its longstanding impact on the Greek economy was a generator for many researches to take place (Spanou, 2008;

Papaconstantinou et al. 2013; Introna & Petrakaki, 2014; Lampropoulou & Oikonomou, 2016; Lampropoulou & Oikonomou, 2020; Capano et al, 2023; Falaras & Moschidis, 2023).

The asylum procedures of course don't escape from the bureaucratic obstacles. Heath Cabot (2012) conducts a research with a differentiated ethnographic methodological approach on the limbo of the Greek asylum procedures, by ethnographically following the lives of 'pink cards', the id document for asylum seekers in Greece, and conducting interviews with owners of the cards (Cabot, 2012). With a theoretical setting in Foucault's governmentality, the findings shed a light between agency and structure, as it is shown that the object itself as a product of bureaucratic entanglements becomes a carrier of reconfigurations, reinforcements and undermining of power (Cabot, 2012). Katerina Rozakou (2017) investigates the irregularities of bureaucracy from the Greek state in the island of Lesbos, one of the main islands as a point of entry to Europe hence, the first experience of many asylum seekers with Greece and subsequently, Europe (Rozakou, 2017). Based also on the Foucauldian theoretical perspective of governmentality and approaching methodologically the issue by conducting fieldwork ethnographic research and interviews with state agents (police officers), non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations' personnel, she exhibits how the imaginary of an ideal bureaucratic all-knowing state is a fantasy that both the agents, or 'border-crossers' as she addresses them, and the state's actors officials strongly believe in, meanwhile being absolutely aware of the fact that it is indeed, a fantasy (Rozakou, 2017). Researching the housing and accommodation mechanisms of the Greek state to manage the inflow of refugees during 2015 and 2017, Kourachanis (2018) deploys field research and semi-structured interviews to exhibit on the second part of his research, among other findings, major foundational, coordinative, administrative and bureaucratic issues at the hotspots as well as lack of basic human living conditions (Kourachanis, 2018). In the chapter Asylum Procedures in Greece: The Case of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Minors from the book *Asylum Determination in Europe*, Giannopoulou and Gil (2019) investigate the experiences of young unaccompanied minors that are trying to acquire asylum (Giannopoulou & Gil, 2019). Applying ethnographic research with questionnaires, open discussions and semi-structured interviews, from a theoretical perspective of approaching the child as an actor and investigating the perception of 'clandestine' in Greece, writes characteristically when presenting the experience of 16-year-old Ali "All he

saw was a complicated bureaucratic system that was unsympathetic towards him, and adults who do nothing to help” (Giannopoulou & Gil, 2019).

Quite recently, Johan Ekstedt (2023) investigated the caseworkers of European Union Asylum Agency in Greece, calling for academic attention to the bureaucratic configuration of practices in asylum cases procedures (Ekstedt, 2023). Establishing the research with the theoretical framework of Street-Level Bureaucracy, where public servants act as in-betweeners of the policy makers and the civilians in order to creatively resolve procedural issues, Ekstedt (2023) applied an ethnographic field-work research with semi-structured interviews between 2019 and 2023 and among the findings it's observed that “the highly compartmentalized nature of the bureaucratic work removes both the ability and incentive to act on discretionary power in a way that can be characterized as ‘creative reinterpretation of policy’” (Ekstedt, 2023). Interestingly, Ioannidis et al (2018) deploying a Foucauldian theoretical lens of biopower and counter-conduct, investigate the micropolitics of borders through migrants’ resistance and leftist asylum caseworkers as street-level bureaucrats, who while creating cracks in the ‘Fortress Europe’ by acts of resistance, solidarity and denial of replicating border violence, they often tend to fortify, unwillingly, biopolitical technologies of governing as they utilize the same bureaucratic tools through their own humanitarian sense and justice (Ioannidis et al, 2018). Although the theoretical framework applied is entirely different, there are two points from the interrelation of these two articles that need to be stated. With a common link on street-level bureaucracy, both articles present among their findings that street-level bureaucracy in the Greek region has proven beneficial, both for the state and the asylum-seekers (Ioannidis et al, 2018; Ekstedt, 2023).

Margarita Lipatova (2022) researches the recent changes in Greek asylum policies and their effects on refugees’ and asylum-seekers’ experiences (Lipatova, 2022). With a theoretical foundation on Hage’s two modes of ‘Waiting’ and applying an ethnographic fieldwork research with a phenomenological approach for the duration of one year, her research contributes to a firsthand understanding of the experiences and of the impact that bureaucratic obstacles have on refugees and asylum seekers (Lipatova, 2022). Her findings are underlined with the subject of agency, as the uncertainty that was created by the government’s withdrawal from supporting humanitarian aid to refugees triggered uncertainty regarding their rights and in combination with a hope for a

better future, lead to an act of demonstration with a collective march in 2019, with the hope to open the borders for the Balkan route (Lipatova, 2022). Restricting refugees and asylum-seekers from the recognized right of free movement within the country, the Greek state applied heavy profiling to means of transportation to North Greece where the march was scheduled, while the monthly scheduled cash transfers from UNHCR were paused (Lipatova, 2022). Without approaching the political reasoning of such governmental decisions and the possible political motives, there are evidence of expression of the duality of structure. Structural hinderances resulted in knowledgeable actors exercising agency by protesting collectively, in discursive consciousness, with expectations of calculated outcomes to claim their rights and a better possible future. In turn, structure itself shifted, with unintended consequences of movement restriction and profiling producing homeostatic loops.

As presented above, the Greek government has, for a long time, been bureaucratically burdened, but in this case, the significance is drawn on the impact that bureaucracy has on the experiences of refugees with disabilities. Whether it is intentional or not from the side of the Greek government, utilizing bureaucracy as a course of action to make the living of refugees and asylum seekers unbearable, escapes the scope of this research and enters a different investigative dimension. The outcomes nevertheless are important as they manifest into the lives of the interviewees. Bureaucracy when approached as a structural expression is affected and affecting, following the duality of structure but, at the same time the outcomes of bureaucracy in the experiences and navigating every-day living of the interviewees are multifarious, creeping in diverse layers through the navigation of life as a refugees with disabilities in Greece, such as healthcare, exhibited below.

Access to healthcare

Greece is responsible for facilitating the needs of persons that express willingness for asylum in its area, according to Dublin Regulation, as a signed party of the main human rights and legal frameworks regarding refugees (European Commission n.d.; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, n.d.-a). In accordance with the legislation of 1951 Convention, refugees should enjoy equal treatment as Greek citizens in regard to education, employment, vocational training, social and health assistance (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, n.d.-a). Additionally, in accordance with Article 33 of the National Law 4368/2016, health care

and pharmaceutical access without costs is legally constituted for vulnerable and without insurance social groups, including asylum seekers and their families (Law 4368/2016, Article 33 on Free Access to Health Care Services, n.d.). According to the above, the legislation should ensure that asylum seekers and refugees can have free of charge access to medical and hospital care. Special allowances should be provided for large families and to people with special needs and disabilities. Despite the legal framework though, as analyzed below drawing primary data from NGO and other stakeholders' inputs as well as the experiences of the interviewees themselves, the reality is vastly different.

Phenomena of discordant application and discrimination regarding these legal provisions enact as barriers in claiming such support, as there have been cases where even allowances for public transport have not been provided to people with identified special needs (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, n.d.-a). Moreover, even when attempting to acquire the Social Security Number (AMKA), refugees and asylum-seekers faced barriers due to administrative incompetency and upfront denial to apply the existing legislation (Médecins Sans Frontières International, 2016; Hellenic League for Human Rights, 2017; SolidarityNow, 2017). The difficulties that the process of acquiring AMKA raised, lead to a joint statement by twenty-five NGOs appealing to the authorities for intervention in order for the actual legislation to be administratively applied (Hellenic League for Human Rights, 2017).

Complicating the issue even further, the Greek government proceeded to the revocation of access to AMKA for asylum seekers on the 11th of July 2019. No procedure was introduced in replacement for the acquisition of AMKA, meaning that there was absolutely no option for access to healthcare for asylum-seekers (Διεθνής Αμνηστία, 2019). Article 55 (as replaced by article 59 par.2 of L.4939/2022) of the Greek International Protection Act (IPA), came as a replacement of the AMKA by introducing the Foreigner's Temporary Insurance and Health Coverage Number (PAAYPE), entering force on the 1st of November 2019, although the implementation mechanisms remained inactive until the 31st of January 2020 when the Joint Ministerial Decision 717/2020 officially enabled the mechanism (Greek Council for Refugees, 2023a) . PAAYPE would be issued by the Asylum Services at the time of completing the asylum application and would remain active as long as the international protection applicant's card. In a sense, the expiration date written on

the card itself validated the expiration date of PAAYPE. Renewal of PAAYPE would be automatic with the renewal of applicant's card and deactivated automatically upon rejection of the application or upon positive decision of granting international protection, in which case, the PAAYPE would turn into AMKA after communication of the applicant with the asylum services to initiate the procedure, although it's supposed to happen automatically (Refugee Info Greece, n.d.). Due to Covid-19 challenges, throughout 2020 and 2021 the Greek Asylum Services were paused, asylum documents were automatically updated online, yet that was not the case for the PAAYPE number. The expiration date of the PAAYPE number is connected to the expiration date stated on the Asylum Seeker's card itself, leading to deactivation of the PAAYPE number while the asylum card was valid. Since the automatic extension did not include the PAAYPE number but only asylum documents which subsequently, rendered asylum-seekers that were legally residing in Greece to not have access to fundamental health and social services (Greek Council for Refugees, 2023a).

The complications don't stop here. During Covid-19 the Greek government issued yet another, new form of social health security number, temporary again, specifically for the vaccination of refugees, titled PAMKA. Since the announcement of revocation of granting AMKA to refugees in 2019, up until 2022, there was an ongoing issue with the electronic database of asylum services and the Social Security Electronic Governance (IDIKA). Upon interconnection of the two electronic services and in an effort to automatically update PAAYPE, the IDIKA platform recognized previous issuing of social insurance numbers as already existing (either AMKA, PAMKA or PAAYPE), rendering impossible the issuing of new identification documents, as well as renewal of PAAYPE (Refugee Support Aegean, 2022).

Simplified and in practice, for people that arrived to Greece between the gap period of the 2019 revocation of AMKA without a replacement mechanism for PAAYPE, for people that received negative asylum decision and their PAAYPE was ceased but later filed a subsequent application within the same period and the period of Covid-19, for those who received a positive decision following a subsequent asylum application and for those whose Asylum Seekers Card expiration dates on the card seemed as expired, despite the fact that the cards were automatically renewed during Covid-19 (the PAAYPE wasn't), this situation rendered impossible the issuing of PAAYPE, meaning that there was no access to healthcare services

whatsoever, except for cases of extreme emergency (Refugee Support Aegean, 2022). The turmoil that these procedures created, alongside with the issue of bureaucratic hinderance which was presented above, facilitate as a foundation for hereafter.

During the interviews, the refugees would be asked at some point to describe the process of acquiring the PAAYPA number. Aamir replied trying to describe what happened as best as his could:

“So unfortunately, they give us a PAAYPA when we receive our Greek documents as refugees, but they never inform us we have our PAAYPA, that was the problem. And after when we receive our refugee document, so as refugees we came and asked, if we received our AMKA number. Because of that, at the beginning, they didn’t inform us about our paper, now the moment I have a big issue problem with my AMKA, my AMKA is not working at the moment.” (Appendix A, p.1).

Not being aware of the nuanced details of the Greek legislation updates at the time of the interview and amongst the confusion of the situation itself and the interpreter’s slight difficulties with the English language, a follow up question to clarify further was asked. The interpreter, escaping again his role as a medium of the language barriers, explains further with the help of Aamir next to him:

“That's the problem because when he received at the beginning at Lesvos the PAAYPA, the office they do not inform him he has a PAAYPA number so when he came here, until now, a few months ago we asked him if he has a PAAYPA, he told me no, he doesn't. So now we try to find the solution, so we contact with IDIKA and the asylum office, so now asylum office they say us that he has a PAAYPA without him knowing that. Because of that the IDIKA now has stopped his AMKA, now he has a problem with his AMKA. We have to find a solution for him to convert it.” (Appendix A, p.1).

A repetition for optimal comprehension, IDIKA is the Social Security Electronic Governance in Greece. In a sense, what had happened was that Aamir was never informed about PAAYPA when he received his asylum card, meaning that when he was asked about PAAYPA by IDIKA he knew nothing about it. A reminder that when granted asylum PAAYPA is converted to AMKA upon the applicant’s request. Asylum Service is

responsible for issuing PAAYPA, while IDIKA for issuing AMKA. When he was asked by IDIKA for PAAYPA (in order to be converted to AMKA) he knew nothing about it, which led to a problem with issuing his AMKA. When Aamir contacted back to Asylum Services, they told him that he has a PAAYPA number and he just didn't know about it, but the process of AMKA was already ceased because of his declaration of not having PAAYPA to IDIKA. When asked as a follow up question to this situation if he had access to healthcare, Aamir replied:

“At the moment... since if I'm not mistaken since the end of August or September, I have a problem. I cannot do anything because my AMKA is stopped at the moment, that has been for 6 months already” (Appendix A, p.2).

Follow up question again regarding if he ever received medical treatment before receiving AMKA or PAAYPA, Aamir informs the discussion:

“When I was living at the camp in the island, I was going at the doctors like MSF sometimes, NGO doctors. At some points in emergency situation, I was going at the hospital as well for emergencies, only emergencies. But until before few months ago me and with Mr. Kostas (UNHCR's social worker) we went together at the hospital for a special like ear doctor, the doctor said he your AMKA is not working we cannot do anything” (Appendix A, p. 2).

In a different question regarding daily challenges, Aamir returns to the topic:

“... So as I already mentioned about my problem, the most problematic at the moment is my AMKA. At the moment I have to go for my eyes therapy, one of my eyes I cannot see at all. I have a therapy for my eye before three months, now I have inflammation. Because of my AMKA I cannot go at the doctor, I have been to the doctor twice, but the doctor told me your AMKA is not valid, you have to make first your AMKA and after you have to come.” (Appendix A, p. 3).

From a structural standpoint, we see a continuously shifting of structure, rules and resources in an everchanging shifting with new procedures, new laws, different pathways alternating and the agent being inert between this legislative and bureaucratic turmoil. Actor's knowledgeability is consequently affected, in the case

of Aamir, he knows he has the right to access to healthcare, but he is not aware and at the same time in ignorance on how to exercise his claim. Yet, had he been properly informed about this elaborate process when he received his PAAYPA number he would have access to healthcare services which in turn can be shifted, through a structural point of view, had he exercised his agency, in an effort to increase his knowledgeability and enact on discursive consciousness, he would have affected both the structure as he would not have found himself in this bureaucratic loophole, while also having access to healthcare, potential alleviating at least the issue of his eyes and thus, enabling his agency further.

In the same question, regarding the process of acquiring PAAYPA, Maryam shares her experience with these words:

“So, at the beginning it was very difficult for me. Until I was 8 months pregnant, I didn’t know that I have a child with disability because we didn’t have that PAAYPA or AMKA number, everywhere we were going at the public hospital they were not helping us because we didn’t have PAAYPA or AMKA. My financial situation was very bad, I couldn’t go at the private doctor” (Appendix A, p. 4-5).

And also, Abdullah’s response to his experience with the process:

“I had to send an email and wait, for like, who knows, sometimes a month, two months, three months, to just get an appointment, to make the PAAYPA, but without any response. Then I tried by myself, on my own, to go there, they just kicked me out. Even if I had an appointment, it’s not that easy to get it. Maybe if by email you get an appointment, but without one they didn’t allow you to come in.” (Appendix A, p. 8).

With the aid of UNHCR personnel, Aamir tries to gain his AMKA but with inadequate knowledgeability. Because of asylum services’ lack of information, he finds himself ahead of a new set of constraining rules and procedures that he has to go through in order to have access to a fundamental standard of health service. In a sense, he is aware of his power as an agent, but he is unaware of how to utilize it. Action, as an exercise of power, fundamental for the agency of an actor, is itself the medium of a knowledgeable agent, an actor that can enact his agency to affect a ‘state of affairs’. Here, Aamir is lost; he lost the capability to make a difference to a course of events, the state of affair, and when an agent is unable to exercise some sort of power,

if he loses the capability to ‘make a difference’, an agent ceases to be as such (Giddens, 1984, p. 14). The same situation applies to Maryam and Abdullah as well. Maryam while pregnant, enacting agency by trying to access the hospital for her and her kid’s well-being, she couldn’t make a difference neither to her situation nor the structural constraints of the hospital’s set of rules where she was denied of health services. In the same notion, Abdullah decides to take the matter in his own hands multiple times as he mentions, by emailing them and personally going to the Asylum Service himself, trying to enact his agency in order to have access to the PAAYPA number which is required both for employment and health access. Again, his act of agency is futile, non-affecting the state of affairs in any way, the act of agency from knowledgeable actors enacting on discursive consciousness expecting intended consequences proves to be insufficient in affecting structures.

Accommodation and financial support

The issue of housing and economic difficulties was also identified as a recurrent pattern throughout the interviews. Similar to bureaucracy and healthcare access above, follows the analysis of this issue with a combination of primary and secondary data, through the viewpoint of structuration.

The program ESTIA which was active since 2015, providing housing and access to medical care to vulnerable asylum seekers such as people with disabilities, survivors of torture and families with many children, after being transferred from UNHCR to the Greek to the Ministry of Migration and Asylum (UNHCR, 2020), was announced that it would cease in February 2022 (European Website on Integration, 2022). Residents were evacuated with a few days’ notice without any provision for the vulnerable groups (FenixAid, 2022). In addition, one of the pillars of the ESTIA program was to support refugees financially, both in the housing scheme and in camps (European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 2021). It’s worth noting that even while the program was active and under the implementation of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, after legal recognition of protection was granted, asylum-seekers were immediately evicted from their residence and the ESTIA program, meaning financial assistance and integration services (Vlassopoulos, 2023).

In replacement of the program ESTIA, the Greek government launched the program HELIOS (Hellenic Integration Support for Beneficiaries of International Protection), funded by Ministry of Immigration and Asylum and implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (European Website on

Integration, 2019). Among the services provided, integration-related education and professional counseling, is also accommodation support (European Website on Integration, 2019). Most of the refugees were unable to enroll to the HELIOS program, because the accommodation assistance has as pre-requirement to first find the accommodation, pay the rent and sign the contract (which in most of the cases is months of advance payments) and then make an application to HELIOS to refund the amount (Vlassopoulos, 2023).

The issues arising from the above governmental actions can be reflected in the interviews as well. One of the main questions asked to the interviewees, would be to give a description of their living situations and area. Following is Aamir's description of his living situation:

“So, when we arrived here in Athens I was with my family here, all of us 6 person. Until then, they were supporting us, like, they were supporting us from caritas NGO. They were giving us a room with all our family, and we were living at the same house with my family. So, we were waiting until we receive our ID card and passport. When we received our documents, they told us you have to leave, you have to leave our building our apartment from NGO. So unfortunately, my family they left they left Greece and they left for other countries, and I was alone until now. One day I am living with a friend, one week I am living with another friend and one month I'm living with someone and other one week I'm living at the park like that... it's this situation, my situation it is really difficult.” (Appendix A, p. 2).

A note here that when Aamir is mentioning Caritas NGO they have actually been partners of the ESTIA program and when he mentions HELIOS as an NGO, he is referring to the program itself. The lack of awareness of the above indicates lack of knowledgeability, as confusion arises for him in the roles of the partners implementing the accommodation programs. When as a follow up question he was asked if he received any information from Caritas upon his eviction, Aamir replies:

“When the Caritas NGO, they informed us we have to leave the apartment from the building we left. They informed me from Caritas we have to apply to another NGO, called Helios. So we went to Helios NGO and they told us we have to pay some money and we have it and we at the beginning at the beginning we have to pay some money like 1000 euros or something like that, and after when you pay 1000 euros they will give you

a room. So at the beginning we told them to Helios NGO we will pay you after, at the moment we don't have. So we stay for four or five months at Helios NGO apartment, and we didn't have money to pay them and they told us you have you have to leave right now our building. So unfortunately my family because this is our situation was very bad my family they fled Greece for other countries and I stay until now by my self with a lot of difficulties" (Appendix A, p. 2).

In the same question, regarding the living situation in terms of housing and accommodation as a mother of a minor with disability, Maryam replied: "We are just living; we are just alive." (Appendix A, p. 5). When during the interview a follow-up question was asked to Maryam, regarding this phrase, she replied hesitantly and almost annoyed:

"As I mentioned before, don't think that I am just asking or saying about my financial situation. But I am really shy about that, saying again, mentioning again these sentences. My financial situation is too bad, the salary of my husband is too low, the milk or pumpers the baby needs or some clothes or something else, everything is too expensive. At the same time the Greek authorities here, like public health or any authority do not work well. If they want to help us, they know about the situation of my son, because my son was born here in Greece, but everywhere we are going at the hospital, you have to be waiting for 3 or 4 months or more, and everywhere we are going, it needs 3 months 4 months or more... When our financial situation is too bad and we have to borrow money from other people...." (Appendix A, p. 5).

Accordingly, Abdullah's reluctant response: "I am living with my friends. Just an accommodation." (Appendix A, p. 8). And regarding his living conditions:

"First of all, I am facing how to get any kind of income. Even if I could get a job.. I am trying, I keep trying but it's not easy.. When you get amputation.. So.. nothing. This is main thing that I am facing, for now. And on top of all this insanity, seems to me like no chance to be in this society at all, but I keep trying, so let's see." (Appendix A, p. 9).

Addressing these issues was not an easy process for the interviewees. As it is evident from the above, hesitancy and shame for sharing these personal issues of every-day living were omnipresent in the voices and the looks. The body language reflected the words themselves. In the case of Aamir, although the word itself was avoided among trebling pauses in his voice, he has rendered homeless. Meanwhile Maryam, proud and at the same time very hesitant to disclose the difficulties they are facing, reveals that she and her husband have been borrowing money, pausing the flow of her reply at that exact point, while showing a refusal to elaborate the discussion further. In Abdullah's case, although he mentions that stays with friends, there was also an evident hesitancy of elaborating further on his living situation. From a structural point of view, the effects of these structural changes at the lives and subsequently to the experiences of these people are evident. The ESTIA program has seen its closure and the HELIOS's program requirements are difficult to be met by the interviewees since financial assistance programs are paused. The "command over allocative resources, over goods and materials, authoritative resources generating command over actors" is evidently having an effect on these people's agencies (Giddens, 1984, p. 33). Following the duality of structure, there are signs of restrain over agency, from homelessness to difficulties of coping financially through the day, their agencies are constrained without any knowledgeability of acting upon this.

Expressions of Stuckness

At this point of the analysis, having situated the correlations of structuration with the experiences of the interviewees regarding bureaucratic issues, access to healthcare, housing and economic difficulties, venturing to approach stuckness analytically is facilitated.

As explained in the theoretical part of this research, stuckness is approached as a concept, informed by structuration theory. Stuckness according to Hage is reproduced due to contemporary living crises and frequently normalized (Hage, 2009). Additionally, stuckness as a concept within this research entails both the attributes of being stuck with no way out, or in a Giddensian perspective, lack of agency and absence of action by the actor, as well as the last resort of agency itself, "asserting some agency over the very fact that one has no agency by not succumbing and becoming a mere victim and an object in circumstances that are conspiring to make a total agentless victim and object out of you" (ibid, 100-101). Focusing on the interrelations and the

interplays of the dynamics between structure and agency, while approaching stuckness as a quality instead of as an effect or a product, opens the path for “exploring empirically the means by which these structures of confinement are lived, negotiated, resisted and/or reproduced in daily life and through social practice” (Jefferson et al, 2018).

The financial situation of these people is a parameter that can't be disassociated when approaching to understand stuckness as a quality. Quotes and analytical points from the previous analytical chapter are relevant to this one as well, to avoid repetition there will be referring back to the points themselves. Before endeavoring the analysis of quotes from the interviews, a few more parts of the that are interrelated. The last questions before closing the interviews would be a bit more abstract. The penultimate question revolved around how they see their nearest future and also, what do they think they would need to make it true. Below are the responses of each interviewee, starting with Aamir's response:

“So I have no filter at the moment I can't I can't see anything so I was thinking if I am allowed to talk about that, to go to my family, because my family can support me with that issue, what I have at the moment. Now, I cannot see any future for me, because I am not allowed to reach my family. Also, as I need my family to support me, my family also need me to be with them. But, every window is closed at the moment for me.”

(Appendix A, p.3)

Following the order the interviews were conducted, Maryam's reply:

“I can share with you but I can't say about my child, he is with disability, but he is very smart, he has me. I haven't thought about me until now, but I am thinking and saying all the time thank you God, at least my child is very smart. For me I haven't thought until now, but I am super sure my child when he grows up, he can do and can continue his education because he is very smart.” (Appendix A, p. 6)

And Abdullah's:

“No clue, honestly. No clue.. I can't even imagine what it is, im not sure. But, let's say, I would like to be a coach for a team. Like a team coach, that's what I used to be, back home. To make it true, I don't know, maybe a chance.” (Appendix A, p. 10)

Stuckness as a word implies spatial immobility. In this case we don't have immobile people, all of the interviewees are unrestricted in the spatial sense of mobility, meaning that they are not institutionally restricted, in prisons or refugee camps at the time of the interview. Yet, drawing inspiration from Jefferson et al (2018), "To be existentially and socially stuck is not just a question of being stuck in place but equally about being stuck in time" (Jefferson et al, 2018). In this research, the empirical data exhibited above correlate with that questioning.

The experiences of the interlocutors exhibit common attributes of social and existential stuckness. In Amir's case, there is a spatial restriction as well, yet structurally imposed. Although he is able to move freely within Greece, for reasons that he doesn't even have knowledge of, he can't travel outside of Greece. When Aamir is not a guest to friends' houses, he sleeps in parks, practically, he shares in shame and explanatory way, that he is homeless. In his case, the phrases that he uses and the experiences that he shares indicate stuckness not as an act of agency, in the form of Hage's description as the last resort of agency itself, but because there is no alternative option for him. He does not see "any future for himself" and feeling that "every window for him is closed", meanwhile his only hope at this point is to be with his family, in order to be with them and be supported by them. Unaware of the reasons why he can't travel, he only knows that the Greek state is not allowing him to do so. Jefferson et al (2018) suggest that "We need to understand how temporality always already animates stuckness..." (Jefferson et al, 2018). In the example of Aamir, we see a perpetual temporal pattern of forceful waiting throughout his sharing of experiences in Greece. Waiting in total for three years to finally get his asylum documents, waiting for PAAYPA, then waiting for AMKA, then waiting for AMKA to be fixed. In Aamir's case there is a lack of actor's agency, in Giddensian terms, he is not only unable to alter the state of affairs, but also unaware and perhaps, even unwilling of this very potential, to exercise power as knowledgeable agent affecting structure. He only needs to escape from this situation he is in and to reach his family. The only last resort of his agency is the endurance of this situation of stuckness itself, as Haage describes stuckness, enduring or 'waiting it out' (Hage, 2009), he exhibits no signs of grasping even glimpses of agency, such as asking a question to the asylum services regarding health insurance since he is facing so many health issues. When taking into consideration structuration theory and the duality of structure where the everchanging interplays between human agency and structure are affecting each other, the very structures that

shape people's actions can either be resisted or reinforced, constrained or enabled by the actions themselves, the potential is ambiguous. In Aamir's case, although he is "waiting out", his course of action enables and maintains the constraining structures, his experience of stuckness is not a form of 'waiting it out' where the 'out' itself is an empowered agency, rather it is an escape from the current structure he is in to a different one, closer to his kin.

Maryam's case is, in a way, distinct among the interviews as she is not a person with disability herself, but a mother of a minor with disability. Her perspective of the experience as a caregiver of a person with disability in seek of asylum, nevertheless, is substantial. In a similar notion, with shame overarching above her replies and body language, stuckness is ever-present. Phrases such as "we are just alive" and the economic difficulties she and her husband are facing trying to raise a minor with disability as refugees in Greece are substantial evidence of existential and social stuckness. Having faced the same obstacles, forced to wait, finding herself as a pregnant woman and as a mother temporally stuck multiples times, stuckness for her as well seems to be the last resort of agency itself, 'waiting it out'. The differentiation here is that the 'waiting it out' leads to stronger acquisition of agency, for her son. She has aspirations of him to have education and trusts in his smartness. In a way, 'waiting out' transcends her agency to her kid, she endures stuckness in a social and existential sense hoping that her son will become what in her awareness in this research is frequently referred to as a knowledgeable agent, able to affect structure with his own agency, capable to reproduce, maintain or resist structures.

Lastly, in Abdullah's case a similar pattern is observable. He has found himself multiple times stuck, in the sense of time, by waiting bureaucratically for asylum decisions, for PAAYPA, for AMKA. He has found himself socially stuck unable to get a job, but he has also found himself stuck in trying. Although he is facing more or less the same structural constrains, he keeps trying to find the structural enablement. As an actor, he is exercising his agency to the best of his abilities, trying to affect the structure that affects his actions with knowledgeable actions, aware of his intentions and the potential consequences of his efforts. His expression of stuckness calls for attention to a detail, it is not the last resort of his agency, he is still acting, he is still trying to

exercise action. Yet, he is stuck, socially and existentially, he is enduring stuckness, he is waiting it out but at the same time he tries to break away from it, like a last straw before the last resort of agency.

Social Identity

As presented in the theoretical framework, social identity as a concept, enriches this research by allowing a more nuanced investigation to an individualistic level. By utilizing a perspective refined by social identity, inquiries of how the interviewees conceptualize themselves, how and why are their behaviors shaped in a social context through their interactions with society and institutions, what are their viewpoints of the society they are navigating their lives in, can be approached.

In conjunction with structuration and stuckness, venturing to understand the construction and expression of each individuals' stratifications of social identities brings this research a step closer to understanding their experiences themselves. Following the theoretical themes, the analytical part of social identity will be dissected according to Jenkins (2004) three orders, the "individual" order, the "interaction" order and the "institutional" (Jenkins, 2004).

Individual Order Approach

As a reconfiguration of thought, as individual order Jenkins (2004) defines "the individual order is the human world as made up of embodied individuals and what-goes-on-in-their-heads" (Jenkins, 2004, p. 39). In each interlocutors' case, what goes inside their head is a hovering step among the context of their answers. Some quotes of the interviews have already been presented but parts of them might appear again, since the investigative lens in this part is different, yet other parts will be presented for the first time within this research. The sequence of presenting parts of the interviews will follow the order as the previous analytical parts.

Although the semi-structured interviews sometimes turned into a discussion, the design of the questions was such that the inquiries would serve as anchors, points to return to. Since the individual order approach is an insight to the inner thoughts it should be mentioned at this point that none of the interviews was without emotional charge and that emotional charges carry investigative significance. All of the interlocutors were feeling quite hesitant to answer most of the questions, with the difficulties they are facing, human pride and

dignity can bring forth feelings of shame, it is to be expected in a way. One of the questions would be how the interlocutors see themselves as parts of the local society and how do they feel about the area they live in.

Aamir's response on the question:

“So I haven't a problem with the Greek people around me. So the problem with me is not the Greek culture or the Greek people, the problem is with me, about my disability problem, what I already have. So I had a lot of problem I couldn't hear because I... I have problem with my hearing. So that that means I couldn't, I couldn't be useful to learn the Greek language. Now after my therapy, I now I come here I can go to learn Greek language but the problem now is my about the facility. If I have a place to stay I can go to learn the language” (Appendix A, p. 3).

It is evident that in Aamir's case, when approaching to comprehend his social identity from an individualistic point of view, he identifies himself primarily as a person with disability. Indeed his physical condition is such that the daily challenges could be overwhelming. Unable to see (Appendix A, p. 3), unable to hear, with physical disability, homeless, unable to receive any healthcare to alleviate his conditions, there is not much space left to identify as anything else. Every day physical difficulties define his existence as an individual. Even within the replies themselves, from the selection of words and the interrupted flow of his answers, the fact that the problems he is facing define him, is evident. At the above quotation he starts by saying “... the problem is with me and about my disability problem what I already have”, and at the end of his answer “If I have a place to stay I can go to learn the language”. His inner thoughts, his inner voice, the internal dialogue is scattered around different problems that leave no margin for self-definition other than a problematic one, “... the problem is with me...” (Appendix A, p.3).

The lengths that his living situation extend to, are also evident on the last part of the interview. As a closing question, it was always asked if there is anything the interviewee thinks that he would like to add, something that might have been missed or not asked during the discussion. In his reply to that question, Aamir makes a cry for help, if there is anything that could be done on a personal level behind the screen, either with his documents or with his financial situation:

“What type of question could I have.. So with a lot of difficulties I am facing every day.. I just want to ask you both if it is possible for you to speak, to help, to find a solution with my documents here, with the problem I have for a long time. That is the one problem, the other problem is about my financial situation. So my financial situation, it is zero.. When I am saying zero it is really zero, I just need a support, even from government, even from you, even from someone else... I just really really need it right now.” (Appendix A, p.3).

It's not that he was not aware of my role, as a student doing a research, the scope of the interview was explained to him in his own language, it was evident after all from the tone of his voice, he knew he was stretching his hand out, a cry for help, a cry to regain some dignity, perhaps even an effort to reidentify himself in a different way.

Maryam's case could be characterized as somehow unique. She is not the person with disability herself but she is the mother of a minor with disability. Her inner thoughts, the inner dialogue isn't an exact representation of the individual order approach, but nevertheless, as a caregiver and a mother there is context that can contribute to comprehending the experiences of refugees with disabilities in Greece, from the perspective of a mother. As mentioned in the previous analytical chapter, Maryam's thoughts reside with her son. As a mother, her agency is sacrificed in hope for an empowered agency of her son, a sacrifice of agency in a metaphorical way. Following are her answers that reflect it: “Fortunately my son is not going to be sick like other children. He had a surgery a few months ago but at least he is not getting sicker, he is healthy...” (Appendix A, p. 7). And

“I can share with you but I can't say about my child, he is with disability, but he is very smart, he has me. I haven't thought about me until now, but I am thinking and saying all the time thank you God, at least my child is very smart. For me I haven't thought until now, but I am super sure my child when he grows up, he can do and can continue his education because he is very smart.” (Appendix A, p. 6).

“I haven't thought about me until now”. That phrase came as a reply when she asked about how does she see the nearest future. She hasn't thought about her future, she hasn't cared for it, her inner dialogue has been occupied with the caring of her child, with his medical issues, with the economic issues, with the beauracritic

issues, establishing life in a ground that could definitely be not characterized as fertile. The inner voice of hers, hesitant and proud, doesn't speak for herself, she thinks and worries about her son, her self-defined identity is that of a recognized asylum-seeker mother to a son with disability.

When Abdullah was asked about the challenges he is facing in a daily basis, among the lines of his answer, the following segment can be found:

“...I am trying, I keep trying but it's not easy... When you get amputation...So...Nothing” (Appendix A, p. 9).

The ellipses are not to indicate a purposely omitted text, they are the actual pauses, the imprints of his voice sunk in his thoughts, the look of the eyes evading the camera, a gravitational pull of shame submerged in thoughts, pushing his look away from a student in a screen connected to the North of Europe and pulling it into a corner of some random room in UNHCR's offices in Athens. The inner dialogue becomes loud, even louder than his voice itself. The self-identification as a disabled person is as evident as the resistance to it (the rest of the answer was also utilized in a previous section and can be found in the Appendix A, p. 9). In this reply, Abdullah is describing his efforts to find a job, any type of income, he insists on how he keeps trying. There is the inner dialogue, the other gravitational pull, an inner fight of self-identification. A person in absolute self-awareness of his medical condition, of his status as a recognized refugee, as an unemployed young man, but also as a human who tries, he resists the difficulties, the constrains, he enacts his agency to the best of his capabilities.

Interaction order approach

In Jenkins' (2004) approach, the “interaction order” is engaging with the interrelations between people, the dynamics between individuals (Jenkins 2004, p. 39). A question in the interview correlating with that approach was about the Greek society and their experiences as parts of it. Same sections of these answers were used earlier, but the perspective in this part is different.

Aamir clearly states that the “problem is not with the Greek culture or the Greek people, the problem is with me” (Appendix A, p. 3). When approaching the issue of interaction with the local society, as forms of communication, the verbal, or at least, an eye related non-verbal communication would be required. In Aamir's

case, he has both hearing and sight issues. Although he has no problem with the Greek people, it is a safe assumption to make that his interactions, the engagements and the dynamics with the local society would be not recognized in full. Additionally his homelessness adds an extra layer of invisibility, which although it has researching significance by itself, the endeavor to characterize the interaction itself deems inadequate (Gutiérrez, 2022).

Maryam's and Abdullah's replies offer a common investigative potential and they will be utilized in conjunction. Maryam's reply when asked if she sees herself and her child as part of the local community, in terms of interacting with Greek people and the local society: "Most of Greek people are so kind and they are so kind with us.. But, some of them are like this (showing a grumpy and aggressive face)" (Appendix A, p. 5).

With Abdullah's reply on the same question, a small discussion was sparked, breaking a barrier of hesitancy that was overarching for the most part of the interview. Sections of this part of the interview have been presented before, but in order to facilitate the uttermost understanding, the whole part follows.

Interviewer's questions in italics:

"Would you say that you see yourself as a part of the local Greek society in Athens, where you are living. In terms of interacting with other people and so on.

-Not really.

-How come? Could you elaborate on that please?

-Sure. For example sometimes when I am walking on the street there are many times Greek people that avoid me... It's not like its easy to feel part of this society.

- Do you speak any Greek?

- I am trying.

-So you communicate in English ?

-Yes, that's correct.

-How does work out for you? Do you think it helps to interact with people? Do you feel they are interacting with you in English?

-It should be, its not but it should be.

- A bit of a follow up question on that, what kind of challenges do you face in a daily basis? Of course that includes anything, from your disability to social challenges.

-First of all, I am facing how to get any kind of income. Even if I could get a job.. I am trying, I keep trying but it's not easy.. When you get amputation.. So.. nothing. This is main thing that I am facing, for now. And on top of all this insanity, seems to me like no chance to be in this society at all, but I keep trying, so let's see.

(Interpreter discusses with interviewee if he would like him to stay through the interview, since the interviewee speaks fluent English and that makes the interpreter redundant. Abdullah decides to continue without the interpreter)

-To continue on what you were saying earlier, a follow up question. In any given day of your life in Athens, the main challenges that you are facing are economical?

- It's not only economical. It's also weird looks... *(making an angry facial expression)*

-You mean like of racist nature?

-Yes, totally. So, even with that racism, when you try to make any nice touch with them, a nice way to communicate, still, nah.... Still no... You are like a weirdo, still out, don't touch.

-So, do you see yourself as an outsider of this society? Would you say it's because of your disability or like facial features?

-Both of them.

-Legally speaking, are you allowed to obtain a job in Greece?

-Yes.

-Considering that even Greeks can't find a job, we can only imagine how hard it must be for a refugee to find a job there.

-In addition to being a disabled one” (Appendix A, p. 9)

As order of interaction, Jenkins (2004) describes the constitution of relationships between people. From the above compartments of the interviews, in Maryam's case there is a duality. She recognizes the kindness of people in her interactions with them, which seems to be where the attention is mostly drawn in this answer, but there is also a significant recognition of aggressiveness towards her. Taking into account that she is a mother with a minor with disability, receiving angry looks by locals, it is a safe interpretation to make that these aggressive looks could be of xenophobic nature.

This interpretation could be supported by Abdullah's answers as well. He as well recognizes the same aggressive looks, along with, what could be characterized from his words and the expressions he indicated at the time of interview, as avoidance towards him. When specifically asked if he means looks “of racist nature” he explicitly replied positive. Additionally, describes actions of agency in his interaction with the local society, approaching with kindness to communicate in English but still his efforts have been futile. Overall, in Abdullah's case, the interactions as efforts of enabling relationships and interplays with other people leave him in dismay, while Maryam, seems to be the only one who had some forms of positive experiences when interacting with the local community.

Institutional approach

For the institutional approach a moderately different path of analysis will be followed. The interactions of the interviewees with administrative services have already been presented in previous sections of the analysis. Instead of directly analyzing parts of the interviews, sections of what has already been presented will be analyzed, enriched with Jenkins (2004) perspective of the institutional approach.

One of the premises of institutional approach in Jenkins' (2004) conceptualization of identity formation is that

“Identities exist and are acquired, claimed and allocated within power relations. Identification is something over which struggles take place and with which strategems are advanced – it is means and end in politics – and at stake is the classification of populations as well the classification of individual” (Jenkins, 2004, p. 56).

In the cases at hand, stratifications of this premise can be observed. The aforementioned power relations are omnipresent throughout every interaction of an individual, actor, agent, with administrative services. From the asylum services to the doctor of the hospital, there is a power relation defining the interaction with the asylum seeker and the patient, a power which descends from higher positions to the employee, to the doctor. The interviewees are aware, without stating it, in regard to their knowledgeability in practical consciousness, that is not the doctor or the clerk that denies the health service itself or the issuing of health insurance number. It is a set of rules that these people follow, power relations of which, they only see the outcome at the face of the person providing a service.

Finalizing the issue at hand, identity formation from an institutional approach, again the issue of knowledgeability in practical consciousness is raised. The interviewees know that any Greek citizen has AMKA, they also know that as legal residents of Greece they should enjoy equal social security rights as Greek nationals, social protection, access to healthcare and public services. Yet, the experiences they share show that they are institutionally dictated otherwise. This contradiction generates identity formation and even, “classification of populations and individuals” (Jenkins, 2004). They know that Greece, as a European country, is supposed to provide the above, yet, they are also aware that some law, some legislation or policy update, some administrative reason, has rendered the situation unable to be as such. Institutionally, they are identified as bothersome, unwanted, not desired, unwelcomed to the doorstep of a dignified life.

Conclusion

Based on three semi-structured interviews and supplementary data framing the realities of their stories, this thesis has been an exploration of the living situations, the navigation through society, the daily difficulties, the entrapment between structural mechanisms, the self-identification and the entrenchment of agency throughout each of these conditions.

By applying reflexive thematic analysis on the interviews, the identified themes informed the theoretical framework which was based on structuration theory as a foundation and stuckness with social identity as conceptual pillars, enabling this research to approach the agency of those people as a duality, as an effect to structure and an outcome of it. Initially the issue of bureaucracy is raised as a structural manifestation, hindering actions of agency and access to healthcare and social services, as well as being a source of economic and accommodational distress. It is observed that the interviewees' knowledgeability is affected as all of the interviewees were unaware of how to gain access to healthcare and how to acquire any of the forms of a social security number, to allocate resources. Moreover, it can be noticed that even in acts of agency, as knowledgeable actors acting on discursive consciousness and expecting calculated outcomes, there is no effect on the 'state of affairs' which, in terms of structuration, means that an agent ceases to be as such.

Similar patterns are observed when applying the theoretical lens of stuckness. Aamir has practically been rendered to homeless, adding an extra layer of invisibility, being already a refugee and a person with disabilities. His manifestation of stuckness is expressed as a loss of agency which is bureaucratically, economically, socially and structurally caused. In Maryam's and Abdullah's experiences stuckness as 'the last resort of agency itself' is expressed. Maryam as a mother of a minor with disability is 'waiting it out', enduring in hope for her son to be an empowered actor, with better education and better chances of affecting and navigating the world, possibly able to affect the 'state of affairs'. Abdullah is enacting his agency in any way he can, trying to get his AMKA by contacting and presenting himself to the asylum services and trying to be employed. He is also waiting it out, in the sense of enduring social, economic and existential stuckness, but he is still trying to act, it's not his last resort, it might be a thread before the last.

In a similar notion, within the division of “orders’ when approaching social identity, similar patterns are distinguishable. In the individual level, Aamir and Abdullah both identify themselves as disabled, yet Aamir’s disability extends physically, existentially and socially, while Abdullah’s extension of his disability is only about his missing arm. Maryam identifies herself as the mother of her son, her own identity unrelated from motherhood, is inconceivable by her. In terms of the ‘interaction order’, Aamir has no issues with the Greek society, but his health conditions and homelessness are his main issues. Abdullah feels unwanted, an outcast even when attempting to interact with locals while Maryam, has mixed experiences spreading from kindness to angry looks. Regarding the institutional approach, they are obstructed systematically and structurally from claiming rights that they theoretically have, yet, to practically employ them into their everyday living is institutionally impeded. The approach of institutional order in identity formation correlates with the aforementioned issue of bureaucracy, where most of the daily issues in the experiences of the interviewees begin.

Overall, the outcome of the acts of agency from the interviewees, whenever appearing, seem unable to make a difference on the course of events. Moreover, expressions of stuckness are applicable for all of them and there are similarities between them regarding their social identity within the Greek society. These key points of the analysis give formation to the following pattern, which of course, is not a generalization of every refugee with disability living in Greece, but a pattern among the interviewees of this thesis.

When structural constraints lead to actors unable to change the state of affairs, the complications arising from the interplays of structuration with social identity and stuckness seem inextricable. The intertwinements arising from their interconnections feed into each other making it unclear where this thread starts and where it ends. A situation where an agent’s actions are structurally constrained may both be causing expressions of stuckness and disempowering social identity. A situation of an agent with a disempowered social identity may both be causing expressions of stuckness and deteriorating of agency. A situation of stuckness may both be causing a disempowered social identity and be the cause of an actor that is unable to change the current state of affairs, to make a difference.

In relation to the experiences of the refugees with disabilities in Greece, this vagueness of reciprocal influences, intersects their everyday living. Taking into consideration the duality of structure and the reasoning that an agent stops being an agent when he can't allocate resources to make a difference, in conjunction with stuckness as a situation of enduring, perpetuates this situation by constraining their already constrained actions further. From inaccessibility to health and social services to financial and accommodational distress, from expressions of stuckness to struggles of social identification and inability to act as an agent, there is a perpetual infiltration of one aspect into the other. Hence that inertia creeps. It's penetrating from one layer of living situation into another and prolonging these experiences.

As a closure, an addressing to the needs of the refugees with disabilities, outside theoretical and analytical influences. As stated earlier, the final question for each interview was if the interviewees would like to add anything, anything that might have been missed from my side. Below is the quote from Abdullah, expressing his thoughts regarding the governmental decisions affecting his life, which in a way, is an epitome of the experiences of all three interviews:

“The most important thing for me, is just being respectful. You are not helping me with any type of things, just let me feel respectfully, you know? This is the main thing for me, my dignity” (Appendix A, p. 12)

Further research

I believe that this research topic can expand in multiple investigative paths. Considering the previous syllogism regarding the intertwinements of the living conditions in conjunction with structuration, stuckness and social identity, it would be quite interesting for a further investigation from a reverse way of thinking. For example, a study on inclusion of refugees in a local community and the effects in the expression of stuckness (or agency, or both). Since the issue of agency in refugees with disabilities is not frequently investigated and highly interesting, a participant observation of refugees with disabilities volunteering, for example, with other people with disabilities or in open collectives of providing to the poor (which are extremely common in Athens,

especially for refugees) and the impact of such acts of volunteering on the refugees with disabilities agency, expressions of stuckness, social identity formation.

Apart from ideas on topics for further research, I would like to expand on the possibilities of further research in terms of theory and method. The migration policies of Greece and their effects on disabled refugees and asylum seekers, in combination with Foucauldian premises such as governmentality and biopower could potentially be proved as a quite generative match. Additionally, a significant amount of time has been invested throughout this thesis on Critical Disability Theory (CDT) and its applications as a methodology. At the core of CDT lies the premise that it “involves scrutinizing not bodily or mental impairments but the social norms that define particular attributes as impairments, as well as the social conditions that concentrate stigmatized attributes in particular populations” (Schalk, 2017). The fact that the literature around it is concerned predominately on theoretical discussions, constituted it a quite audacious and yet quite thrilling attempt for this thesis, yet the time constrains opposed an application of this method. Nevertheless, the theoretical premises and the fact that it’s recently discussed, but not yet, applied as a methodology in an empirical research constitute it quite thrilling choice for future research.

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