Part-time Humanitarians

International volunteers in the humanitarian response to the ‘European refugee crisis’ in Greece

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This thesis is submitted for obtaining the Master’s Degree in International Humanitarian Action. By submitting the thesis, the author certifies that the text is from her hand, does not include the work of someone else unless clearly indicated, and that the thesis has been produced in accordance with proper academic practices.
ABSTRACT

Focusing on the case study of the so-called ‘European refugee crisis’ in Greece since 2015, the research highlights new insights into the motivations, experiences, and challenges of international volunteers in humanitarian relief operations. Unlike previous analyses on volunteer motivations, this study’s analytical framework is built on a combination of the functional (psychological) and symbolic (sociological) approach to the theory of motivation. With the help of Clary and Snyder’s Volunteer Functions Inventory, seven motivations of volunteers are outlined. Further, volunteers’ challenges, including psychological stressors are identified with the help of the Maslach Burnout Inventory. Building on a mixed methods research design, 66 responses to an online survey were enriched with data from six in-depth interviews.

The study displays volunteers’ typical socio-demographic characteristics to be young, female European students, who come to Greece on their own, who finance their stay through personal income, and who tend to stay between one to three months. The analysis reveals volunteers’ motivations to be first and foremost altruistic; however, internationals are also influenced by other, more self-centered motivations, including their desire to learn through hands-on skills, and to advance their career. Motivations to prolong their volunteer commitment or to return to Greece particularly include social bonds built during previous engagements, the incentive to reduce feelings of guilt over being more fortunate than others, and the desire to relive experiences of increased self-fulfillment and personal growth. Dividing the sample by gender and age illustrates somewhat differing motivations among the sub-samples, leading to the conclusion that volunteers’ motivations are diverse, multifaceted, fluid, and placed somewhere along a spectrum between altruistic and egoistic aspirations.

The study of people’s experiences overall suggests high satisfactions among the volunteers; however, sentiments of feeling at times overwhelmed and stressed are very present among most volunteers, regardless the length of their stay in Greece or their performed activities. The workload, a too heavy burden of responsibility, lack of sufficient time to reenergize, lack of managerial support, and conflicts among volunteers particularly have the potential to lead to emotional exhaustion, depersonalized behavior, and challenges when returning home.

Keywords: European Refugee Crisis, Greece, Functional Theory of Motivation, Volunteer Motivations, Volunteer Challenges
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PREFACE

I well remember the news images of thousands of people arriving in unseaworthy dinghies on the shores of the Greek islands in the Aegean Sea in 2015. I was in my final year of my undergraduate degree and ready to take a couple of weeks off to travel to Lesvos and help. After I realized what three weeks would cost, I initiated an art project with unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors in Malmö, Sweden, instead and wrote my Bachelor thesis on the visual securitizations and the constructions of othering processes of Pulitzer Price-winning photographs about the so-called ‘European refugee crisis’.

In June 2016, I left for Greece the first time and spent two months on Lesvos island with other international volunteers. Despite the popular belief that the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016 entirely restricted irregular migration, boats continued to arrive, yet, in much smaller numbers. During the days, we hiked to secluded beaches and cleaned them of what migrants and asylum-seekers had left behind: dinghies, life vests, personal belongings. During the afternoons, we organized childcare activities for 100 unaccompanied minors in a nearby camp. During the nights, we oversaw the Aegean Sea to watch for crossing boats. Over time, I became a team leader for a boat landing team and got used to sleeping fully clothed, next to a radio, waking up by the single sound of a text message to quickly provide humanitarian relief response to those arriving.

I left Lesvos but had a hard time caring about things my fellow peers put meaning into and stayed in close contact with other volunteers I had met during my summer on Lesvos. About to finish the first semester of my Masters in International Humanitarian Action, I returned to Lesvos in December 2017. Originally planned to work as a volunteer in a clothing distribution station, I was asked to coordinate a newly opened warehouse outside Moria detention center. I quickly found myself working three jobs as a distribution, volunteer, and emergency coordinator, sleeping three hours a day, assisting those who continued to arrive at night, coordinating up to 30 international volunteers, and turning the warehouse distribution from a room full of hundreds of unsorted carton boxes to a more shop-like distribution with proper shelves. Having been thrown into new situations every day, I totally burned out, left the island, and continued studying.

The situation in Moria and the stories I heard from residents who are forced to stay there were horrifying and left me speechless. Standing on an open field, between human feces, due to the
camp’s lack of toilets, I promised myself to give back something to the island and its community that had taught me so much. This desire served as the underlying motivation for writing this thesis, built on the premise that understanding volunteers’ motivations, experiences, and challenges will ultimately provide better targeted aid as volunteers need to feel well in order to successfully assist others.

My first-hand information as a volunteer in Greece in 2016 and 2018 does not serve as primary data, but provides background knowledge to better understand and interpret people’s responses and to be able to put shared memories into context. Nevertheless, I must fully acknowledge my own biases and understandings of the situations, as well as my own role, my motivations, experiences, and challenges as a young, white, female, German volunteer in Greece.
1. INTRODUCTION

Volunteerism entails a huge personal contribution by volunteers in terms of time, energy, and resources. Particularly in today’s increasingly individualistic and materialistic society, the idea that individuals make personal sacrifices to strangers thus begs the question of why people choose to spend some of their free time performing unpaid work as volunteers\(^1\).

The year of 2015 saw hitherto unprecedented numbers of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers fleeing war, armed conflict, persecution, and violence in the hope of finding a safer and better life in Europe. Europeans well remember the images of thousands of people arriving in unseaworthy rubber boats in Greece or walking along the highways towards Northern Europe, Germany and Sweden in particular.

The so-called ‘European refugee crisis’ not only lead to political implications that are still being felt all around Europe, including the rise in right-wing populism, the externalization of border control, the securitization and criminalization of search and rescue activities on the Mediterranean, and the reintroduction of intra-European national border checks, but also mobilized thousands of Europeans and non-Europeans to volunteer locally and internationally in the humanitarian relief response.

Humanitarian aid in places such as the make-shift camp of ‘the Jungle’ in Calais at the French-British border or the search and rescue operations on the Greek islands in the Aegean Sea “were almost entirely provided by volunteers who were not professionals in the field and had never previously engaged in humanitarian aid work”\(^2\). Besides the ‘traditional’ humanitarian actors, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the refugee relief activities in Greece were particularly characterized by local grassroots groups, newly founded non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and thousands of international volunteers who had spontaneously decided to travel to Greece to offer help\(^3\).

1.1 Problem Formulation, Aim, and Research Questions

For non-profit NGOs who are entirely dependent on private donations, volunteers are indispensable and important human resources\textsuperscript{4}. Particularly in the 2015 humanitarian response to the ‘European refugee crisis’ in Greece, where, as the following chapter will highlight, big organizations failed to act in a timely manner, ad hoc support by private local citizens and international solidarity movements with thousands of spontaneous volunteers became inevitable\textsuperscript{5}. Although no absolute figures of the number of internationals who volunteered in Greece since 2015 are available, public discourse generally refers to the thousands\textsuperscript{6}. As such a degree of mobilization of private citizens as humanitarian volunteers has not been recorded at this scale before, the research therefore sets out to understand the motivations, experiences, and challenges of international volunteers in the humanitarian response in Greece.

The study is three-fold, firstly aiming at shedding light on the socio-demographic profile of volunteers who traveled to Greece, secondly, at understanding their motivations, and lastly at researching the experiences and consequences humanitarian volunteers faced during and after their engagement.

Thus, the research is guided by the following three research questions and one operational question.

1. **What are the socio-demographic characteristics of international volunteers who volunteered in Greece in response to the ‘European refugee crisis’?**

2. **What motivated internationals to volunteer in Greece?**
   2.1 *What incentivized volunteers to prolong their initial stay or to return to Greece for another volunteer engagement?*

3. **Which challenges did international volunteers face?**


Accordingly, the case study on volunteers’ motivations, experiences, and challenges in Greece initiates new knowledge production about the role of international volunteers in humanitarian emergencies and allows for more successful volunteer management in the future.

1.2 Relevance to Humanitarian Action

A study on volunteer motivations, experiences, and challenges is scientifically relevant to the field of humanitarian action in order to ensure the survival of humanitarian projects, efficient project designs, and successful volunteer management. Due to the ever-increasing competition between organizations given limited funding, non-profits and local NGOs are highly dependent on free volunteer labor. Understanding people’s motivations behind wanting to become involved and dedicating time and resources into providing unpaid labor allows for a more targeted recruitment and placement process within organizations. High turnovers of volunteer staff are costly in terms of the time needed to recruit and train new volunteers. Gaining advanced knowledge about the initial motivations and possible challenges of volunteers can thus ultimately reduce such constant changes by aiming at satisfying their aspirations and by ensuring an effective placement of candidates in appropriate positions. This will also allow individuals to feel more comfortable, thereby reducing attrition and possible burnouts.

Secondly, for many future career humanitarians, volunteer experiences are often a way ‘into the field’ and a means to gain first professional experiences. Understanding that people’s vital motivations may have not been solely altruistic but also career-oriented is essential. Particularly young volunteers, who are potential future professional humanitarians are ultimately shaped by their first encounters in the humanitarian field, which may influence their forthcoming career experiences and expectations. Furthermore, the protractedness of the humanitarian response in Greece, growing needs, and limited resources and funding require grassroots organizations and

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12 Marta et al., “Volunteerism During Young Adulthood: An Italian Investigation into Motivational Patterns”, p. 224.
NGOs to continue to remain fully dependent on volunteers as sources of unpaid labor in the foreseeable future. The high demand for prospective volunteers remains present.

Lastly, as international NGOs (INGOs) committed themselves to the localization of aid at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, namely to improve their partnerships with local and national NGOs as to better respond to their leadership\textsuperscript{13}, it is not just in the interest of small and local organizations to understand their volunteers’ motivations. This knowledge is also essential to big humanitarian actors as to better understand their local partners’ needs.

1.3 Outline of the Thesis

Following the introduction, chapter two provides a brief overview of the so-called ‘European refugee crisis’ and the humanitarian response to those arriving in Greece. Chapter three reviews the literature on volunteer tourism, highlights volunteers’ previous engagements in humanitarian emergencies, discusses psychosocial challenges of volunteers after their return back home and situates this research within the existing academic work. The theoretical framework of the functionalist theory of motivation is outlined in chapter four. Following, the methodological choices are highlighted and the research’s results are presented thereafter. Chapter seven discusses the survey questionnaire and in-depth interviews’ findings. The thesis is concluded by summarizing the analysis’ results, providing recommendations, and presenting future research topics in chapter eight.

2. CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

The following chapter provides an overview of the research’s context of the so-called ‘European refugee crisis’ and the local and international humanitarian relief response activities to the arrival of thousands of migrants and asylum seekers on the Greek islands since 2015.

2.1 The ‘European Refugee Crisis’

Migration is certainly not a new phenomenon, although it is oftentimes presented as such. In fact, people have moved from one place to another in pursuit of a better and safer life elsewhere since the beginning of humankind. Due to its centrality and location between the European, African, and (near) Asian continent, the Mediterranean Sea in particular has been the port of Europe for mass migratory movements for thousands of years.\(^\text{14}\)

Although no particular point in time can be established as to when the so-called ‘European refugee crisis’ started, most Europeans point to the iconic image of Alan Kurdi, a three-year-old Syrian boy, who drowned in the Mediterranean Sea on September 2, 2015, when he and his family tried to reach Europe on a rubber boat from Turkey. Shortly afterwards, 71 migrants were found dead in a truck that had been abandoned beside a highway in Austria.

The year 2015 saw forced displacement worldwide at a record high, with 65.3 million individuals, including refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and asylum seekers being forcibly displaced due to persecution, conflict and violence.\(^\text{15}\) Consequently, hitherto unprecedented numbers of migrants entered the European Union (EU) irregularly through its eastern Mediterranean Sea borders. Particularly the short distance from Turkey to the Greek islands of Lesvos, Chios, Leros, and Samos made these places the epicenters of the crisis. Initially, the EU’s response was characterized by the absence of a common policy until it implemented its hotspot approach, aiming at rapidly identifying, registering, and fingerprinting incoming migrants on the islands.\(^\text{16}\) While the approach was initially thought to be linked to the

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relocation of eligible asylum seekers among European countries, insufficient relocation pledges from EU Member States rendered this approach challenging\(^\text{17}\).

As migrants kept arriving by the thousands, German Chancellor Angela Merkel acknowledged that the majority of them envisioned Germany as their final destination. The German Government subsequently adopted Dublin Regulation’s Article 17, which protected Syrians who applied for asylum in Germany from being sent back to the EU country of their first entry as the regulation generally foresees. Instead, they were allowed to apply for their official status in Germany\(^\text{18}\). However, within months, the public perception among European citizens shifted from initial compassion and empathy to sentiments of perceived threats, national security concerns, and quests for more state sovereignty. In the meantime, Hungary and Serbia closed their borders and EU Member States implemented identity checks, thus rendering it virtually impossible for migrants to continue their journey up north.

Further, as to significantly restrict the number of migrants arriving by boat, the EU signed a statement with Turkey on March 20, 2016, establishing a procedure to rapidly “return […] all migrants not in need of international protection crossing from Turkey into Greece and to take back all irregular migrants intercepted in Turkish waters”\(^\text{19}\). In return, Turkey would receive 6 billion Euro and in exchange for those returned, it would officially transfer registered Syrians from Turkey to Europe. While the agreement was celebrated among EU Member States as a tool for managing migration – and indeed drastically reduced the number of boat arrivals – human rights organizations widely criticized it for identifying Turkey as a safe country and for forcefully returning people\(^\text{20}\). Further, the EU-Turkey statement altered the function of the hotspot approach by shifting its intrinsic work of relocation to admissibility and return, and ultimately to a ‘containment and detention policy’ by transforming the registration camps to closed facilities\(^\text{21}\). Within the fast-track border procedure on the Greek islands, migrants are now indiscriminately placed in prolonged immigration detention without adequate access to


\(^{21}\) European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), *Opinion of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights on Fundamental Rights in the ‘hotspots’ set up in Greece and Italy*, Vienna, FRA, 2016, p. 16.
protection, information, or even basic services such as adequate and safe washing facilities, housing, and food\textsuperscript{22}.

2.2 Humanitarian Response to the ‘European Refugee Crisis’ on Lesvos

No one seemed to have been sufficiently prepared for the large number of people that arrived on the Greek islands between the summer months of 2015 and the signing of the Turkey statement in the end of March 2016. Over 800,000 people entered the EU through Greece, most of whom passed through the island of Lesvos in the north of the Aegean Sea\textsuperscript{23}. Due to Greece’s struggle with its own financial crisis and economic hardship, it was impossible for local authorities to accommodate and register those arriving\textsuperscript{24}. Initially, the humanitarian response to the arrival of up to 7,000 migrants on a daily basis on Lesvos was thus first and foremost provided by private Greek citizens, including local fishermen and villagers, until international volunteers started to arrive in late autumn 2015.

Traditional humanitarian organizations were blindsided by the sudden arrival and were criticized for seemingly being better situated to deal with displacement in outside-European and less developed contexts than at the European borders\textsuperscript{25}. Consequently, it took the traditional agencies a considerable amount of time to establish programs in Greece. During this time, locals and international volunteers stepped in and filled the gap in providing for humanitarian needs, including search and rescue operations on sea, sorting clothes, distributing food, providing shelter, providing legal aid, or offering language classes\textsuperscript{26}. Managing the response thus fell almost exclusively on the shoulders of volunteers and local communities, which, despite the improvisational nature of their involvement, made a great humanitarian effort to manage the situation, at the same time when the official political or administrative reactions of the Greek or the European authorities remained strongly inadequate, if not entirely absent\textsuperscript{27}.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{26} Trihas and Tsilimpokos, “Refugee crisis and volunteer tourism in Lesvos, Greece“, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Ibid.}
\end{flushleft}
The all-volunteer organizations and grassroots NGOs that were founded were locally based, autonomous, volunteer-run and non-profit groups that were informally organized and increased in size and complexity over the course of the crisis. The heavy media attraction of the crisis ensured a continuous recruitment of international volunteers from all over the world, who spontaneously bought plane tickets and traveled to the Greek islands to volunteer in response to the images they saw on the news. As such, these volunteers can be described as spontaneous volunteers, referring to an impulsive and unplanned type of volunteering which occurs typically in response to sudden needs in crises and disaster situations where high numbers of short-term volunteers offer their help.

However, due to the spontaneity of the response, inexperienced individuals set up uncoordinated responses on Lesvos through ‘trial and error’ approaches which led to conflicts between the over 100 NGOs and to disputes with traditional humanitarian players. Frictions took place particularly between professionals and the volunteers who were eager to respond rapidly, while the professionals started working on setting up the humanitarian cluster system that would render the response more efficient and sustainable in the long-run. However, conflict emerged above all due to the competitiveness over limited funding and donations.

Once NGOs had established a smooth system of cooperation and division of labor to cater to all clusters effectively, the signing of the March 2016 EU-Turkey statement yet again brought about changes to the newly established structure. In critique to the system of detention, crucial organizations such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), who provided essential medical aid to migrants, discontinued their services. Simultaneously to the significantly reduced number of boat arrivals, the absolute number of those who lost their lives at sea decreased and the international media started to pay attention to other crises around the world. As a result, the vast majority of NGOs left the islands and private donations dropped drastically. Yet, people continue to arrive and are, due to the hotspot approach, indefinitely stuck on the islands while humanitarian needs remain pressing and the local detention centers are characterized by overcrowding, insecurity, and frustration.

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30 Trihas and Tsilimpokos, “Refugee crisis and volunteer tourism in Lesvos, Greece”, p. 43.
3. LITERATURE REVIEW

To systematize the existing research on volunteer motivations, experiences, and consequences, the concept of volunteering is firstly outlined.

Volunteering is (a) a noncompulsory, voluntary (free will) activity or effort that is (b) directed by an individual toward a person, people, or situations outside one’s household or close family that is (c) intended to be beneficial to another person or persons, group/organization, the local community, the larger society, and/or the ecosystem at some scale of magnitude, (d) with the activity being unpaid (unremunerated) financially or in-kind to the full, current market value of the activity performed, leaving a net cost to the volunteer. Consequently, a volunteer is someone who assists others without expecting a compensation for such work. Nevertheless, this does not mean that volunteer work is without consequences for the volunteer. In fact, it is widely believed that both the recipient and the volunteer mutually benefit from the helping relationship.

Building on this understanding of volunteering, the literature review firstly sets out to introduce and to critically discuss the concept of volunteer tourism, referring to those who combine tourism and volunteer activities during their holidays. While much research is available on volunteers in general, little has been studied on the role of international volunteers in humanitarian emergencies, which is outlined in the following discussion. Ensuing, the challenges and psychological implications of returning home after humanitarian missions are highlighted. Finally, the rationale of this research is explained in light of relevant literature on volunteering in the humanitarian field.

3.1 Voluntourism

Volunteering and tourism are long-established concepts. Volunteer tourism, or voluntourism, however, has only evolved in the new millennium, when US Americans from all around the country mobilized and traveled to New York City to assist in the wake of the September 11 crisis relief. Since then, short-term volunteer tourism, with engagements of typically less than

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32 Smith and Van Puyvelde, “Theories of Associations and Volunteering”, p. 61.
four weeks, has become a global phenomenon as an alternative to mass tourism. As an industry worth an estimated US$2.6 billion per year\textsuperscript{35}, voluntourism has thus been criticized by scholars such as Mostafanezhad as representing the privatization of humanitarianism\textsuperscript{36}.

Wearing, a leading scholar in volunteer tourism defines volunteer tourists as

\begin{quote}
those who volunteer in an organized way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of a certain environment or research into aspects of society or environment\textsuperscript{37}.
\end{quote}

Other scholars, including McGehee and Santos\textsuperscript{38} have added the aspects of having to use and spend resources to travel to foreign places in order to assist others. Besides Brown’s argument of wanting to “travel with a purpose”\textsuperscript{39} or Coghlan’s conclusion of intending to “make a difference during the holidays”\textsuperscript{40}, Wearing identifies seven motivations which tend to incentivize people to volunteer abroad during their vacations: altruism, travel and adventure, the structure of the program, the right time and place, personal growth, cultural exchange and learning, and professional learning\textsuperscript{41}.

Callanan and Thomas\textsuperscript{42} recognize three types of volunteer tourists: shallow, intermediate, and deep volunteer tourist. Shallow voluntourists are those who are dominated by personal interests and who are seeking sensations, as compared to deep volunteers who think more about the assisted community\textsuperscript{43}. Similarly, McGehee, Lee, and Clemmons\textsuperscript{44} divide people into the three categories of vanguards, pragmatists, and questers. Accordingly, vanguards are young and highly motivated individuals who seek physically and mentally intense experiences,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{36} M. Mostafanezhad, \textit{Volunteer Tourism: Popular Humanitarianism in Neoliberal Times (New Directions in Tourism Analysis)}, Burlington, Ashgate Publishing Group, 2014.
\item \textsuperscript{37} S. Wearing, \textit{Volunteer Tourism: Experiences that Make a Difference}, New York, CABI, 2001, p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{39} S. Brown, “Traveling with a Purpose: Understanding the Motives and Benefits of Volunteer Vacation”, \textit{Current Issues in Tourism}, 8(6), 2005, 479-496.
\item \textsuperscript{40} A. Coghlan, “Volunteer tourism as an emerging trend or an expansion of ecotourism? A look at potential clients’ perceptions of volunteer tourism organizations”, \textit{International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing}, 11(3), 2006, 225-237, p. 225.
\item \textsuperscript{41} Wearing, \textit{Volunteer Tourism: Experiences that Make a Difference}, p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{43} S. Wearing and N. McGehee, “Volunteer Tourism: A Review”, \textit{Tourism Management}, 38, 2013, 120-130, p. 123.
\item \textsuperscript{44} N. McGehee, S. Lee, and D. Clemmons, “The Mystery of the Voluntourist: Utilizing Pearce and Lee’s Travel Career Pattern Model to examine Motivations Typologies, and Preferences of Potential Voluntourist”, USA, Greater Western chapter of the Travel and Tourism Research Association, 17-20 March 2009.
\end{itemize}
pragmatists are middle-aged, working individuals, who desire to build a connection with the host community, and questers are older volunteers, who are mainly motivated by altruism\textsuperscript{45}. Despite these general groupings, Mostafanezhad\textsuperscript{46} argues that the vast majority of voluntourists are young, white Westerners from relatively privileged backgrounds and 80 percent are women. She traces this development back to popular sentiments about female celebrity humanitarians, such as Angelina Jolie who spark excitement, especially among young women\textsuperscript{47}.

Initially, much had been written by Broad\textsuperscript{48}, Broad and Jenkins\textsuperscript{49}, or Stoddard and Rogerson\textsuperscript{50} about volunteer tourism as an ideal way to explore the world without negative consequences. Studies addressed volunteers’ altruistic motivations, their ability to ‘give back’ to the community and their possibility for self-development. Shortly afterwards however, scholars, such as Caton and Santos\textsuperscript{51} started to adopt a more cautionary stance and described cases of neo-colonialism; Vrasti\textsuperscript{52} argued that volunteer tourism creates yet another layer of dependency, and Palacios\textsuperscript{53} highlighted the potential of exploiting host communities.

Problems about volunteer tourists include their minimal or non-existing requirements for specific skill sets to participate in programs abroad, a lack of expertise, their unfamiliarity with the local language and customs, as well as their short stay\textsuperscript{54}. According to Guttentag\textsuperscript{55}, international volunteer tourists tend to bring publicity and thus aid advocacy activities, yet, unskilled volunteers also have the potential to further impede working progresses by ‘standing in the way’ rather than providing valuable support. Coghlan\textsuperscript{56} adds that while many

\textsuperscript{45} McGehee et al., “The Mystery of the Voluntourist: Utilizing Pearce and Lee’s Travel Career Pattern Model to Examine Motivations Typologies, and Preferences of Potential Voluntourist”.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 485.
\textsuperscript{48} S. Broad, “Living the Thailife – A Case Study of Volunteer Tourism at the Gibbon Rehabilitation Project, Thailand”, \textit{Tourism Recreation Research}, 28(3), 2003, 63-72.
\textsuperscript{49} Broad and Jenkins, “Gibbons in the Midst? Conservation volunteers’ motivations at the Gibbon Rehabilitation Project, Phuket, Thailand”.
\textsuperscript{52} W. Vrasti, \textit{Volunteer Tourism in the Global South: Giving Back in Neoliberal Times}, Oxon, Routledge, 2013.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.
voluntourists are strongly committed on site, they indicate less long-term interest in supporting the programs once they have returned home.

Mostafanezhad\textsuperscript{57} further identifies a clear ‘geography of compassion’, referring to the aspect that individuals often have the urge to volunteer abroad rather than at home as compassion is felt towards ‘the Other’ and particularly towards the Other’s children. Many voluntourists insist that they can do more good in less developed countries than in their home country where regulations and laws often (importantly and necessarily so) impose restrictions on unskilled volunteers to engage in certain activities. Knott\textsuperscript{58} therefore argues that the much-quoted truism of ‘it is better to do something than nothing’ allows people to believe that any behavior is acceptable and that such assumption undermines any critical thinking about people’s own behaviors and possible negative consequences of actually doing more harm than good.

### 3.2 Volunteers in Humanitarian Emergencies

Although volunteering in emergencies, disasters, and situations of crises almost always occurs, Aguirre and his colleagues\textsuperscript{59} argue that professional emergency managers generally tend to ignore it. Consequently, the role of untrained and spontaneous volunteers is typically never explicitly outlined or even included when contingency plans or disaster response plans are developed as mitigation and crisis preparation strategies. However, particularly in situations of crisis, when infrastructure and plans break down, private individuals tend to often fill the gap as first responders and emergency volunteers\textsuperscript{60}.

As previously touched upon, the September 11 attacks in New York City in 2001 first saw private citizens volunteering in crisis response, which has since been repeated particularly during the humanitarian emergency of Hurricane Katrina in Florida and Louisiana in 2005. Similar to the ‘European refugee crisis’ in 2015, US American volunteers were attracted through mass media and other communication channels, which provided horrific images and


\textsuperscript{60} Aguirre et al., “Spontaneous Volunteering in Emergencies”, p. 314.
around-the-clock coverage of the hurricane and its destruction, inspiring many to get involved in the relief efforts\textsuperscript{61}.

However, studies on volunteer involvements in national humanitarian emergencies have not only been restricted to the global North. Albahari and Schultz’s\textsuperscript{62} qualitative analysis of ‘Nafeer’, a spontaneously created response by Sudanese youth to the 2013 Sudan Floods concludes high levels of organization and effectiveness in delivering aid to the affected populations which, overall, met international standards. According to the authors, independent, community-led initiatives such as Nafeer which are implemented by spontaneous volunteers can hence be significant actors in humanitarian emergency responses\textsuperscript{63}.

Despite this positive outlook, experiences of international volunteers in humanitarian emergencies have not always been successful. Notably the response to the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, which at one point saw more than 10,000 NGOs\textsuperscript{64} and gave the country the name of ‘the Republic of NGOs’ resulted in organizations and international volunteers essentially supplanting the role of the state\textsuperscript{65}. As with non-emergency volountourists, current debates about the involvement of volunteers in humanitarian emergencies generally lack the discussions around ‘doing no harm’. In her article on the role of independent volunteers in humanitarian crises, Watts\textsuperscript{66} stresses that particularly the exceptional situation of crises and disasters tends to reinforce non-procedural responses in the name of ‘every life counts’ and of the humanitarian imperative of ‘doing good’ and of having generally good intentions. Jobe’s\textsuperscript{67} research on the disaster relief in post-earthquake Haiti reveals that international medical volunteers not only arrived in Haiti to volunteer without any means of verifying their credentials and skills and eventually became huge liabilities to their hosting organizations, but that they also created unrealistic expectations among the affected population as to what they could actually deliver.

\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Ibid.}, 247.
\textsuperscript{66} Watts, “The Role of Independent Volunteers in Humanitarian Crises”.
\textsuperscript{67} Jobe, “Disaster relief in post-earthquake Haiti: Unintended consequences of humanitarian volunteerism”, p. 3.
3.3 The Effects of Volunteering on the Volunteer

The effects of volunteering on the volunteer have increasingly attracted academic attention. Wilson and Musick\textsuperscript{68} highlight that volunteering is generally said to increase mental health in the long-run due to more social interactions, self-validating experiences, personal growth, and the feeling of being able to make a difference. Especially advocacy-related work, as revealed by Wearing and McGehee\textsuperscript{69}, has the potential to result in changed behavior of the volunteers relating to decision-making processes, purchasing decisions, and relationships with family, friends, and coworkers. Nevertheless, during the process of performing the activities, volunteering can also be highly stressful and possibly even traumatizing, and returning home to one’s daily routine is not always easy either.

Kagitcibasi\textsuperscript{70} and Adler\textsuperscript{71} introduce the processes of ‘deculturation’ or ‘cross-cultural readjustment’, which entail the emotion of feeling trapped between two cultural settings, that of the host community and that of the volunteer’s home country, making it particularly difficult for voluntourists once they return. Social media and other forms of technologies have not been able to mitigate the feeling of isolation but instead increase the challenges of re-entry. Due to the constant access to information and due to being able to stay in touch with people on-site or with other volunteers who experience similar emotions, feelings of isolation, disconnection and the sentiment of ‘feeling out of place’ are constantly being re-evoked and maintained\textsuperscript{72}. Adler\textsuperscript{73} thus concludes that the transition to re-enter into one’s own culture is often perceived to be more difficult than moving to a foreign place in the first place.

Particularly in the humanitarian field, Eriksson and her colleagues\textsuperscript{74} reveal that aid workers can potentially be exposed to personal traumatic events which will significantly influence their ability to work. While trained staff have to undergo security safety trainings and generally have access to psycho-social care, independent volunteers lack these support systems. Having conducted interviews with volunteers in Greece for a journalistic article, Kantor\textsuperscript{75} reports that many volunteers eventually showed signs of secondary trauma stress, compassion fatigue,
chronic exhaustion, burnout, or detachment given their close involvement with migrants who have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Hearns and Deeny\textsuperscript{76} stress that many volunteers felt the desire to delay flights, to return to Greece, or to change up their entire life plans to dedicate more time to the volunteering cause as they were unable to disengage themselves from the crisis.

3.4 Situating the Research

Extensive research has been conducted on internationals, who spend their holidays ‘commercially volunteering’ abroad. Due to the growing industry of voluntourism, scholars have started to analyze the consequences of such volunteer involvements for the local population; however, much remains to be done in order to arrive at concrete recommendations for the sector. Still, the area of volunteering internationally, specifically with migrants and asylum seekers has only been little explored\textsuperscript{77}. Further, although a limited amount of studies, focusing on the role and involvement of volunteers during the Sudanese Floods, the September 11 attacks, and Hurricane Katrina disasters exists, these volunteers were pre-dominantly nationals and did not travel to foreign places to offer their services. To my knowledge, research on the involvement of internationals non-professional volunteers in humanitarian responses is nonexistent.

Given this review of relevant literature in the field of volunteer motivations and their challenges during and after humanitarian emergencies, the research sets out to provide enhanced knowledge about this new, yet popular phenomenon of non-professional, spontaneous, international volunteering in humanitarian emergencies. Due to the recentness of the ‘European refugee crisis’, the case study of Greece has not been extensively researched. Given its protractedness, the research results may directly contribute to an enhanced recruitment process of prospective volunteers in order to ultimately ensure more successful aid deliveries and the well-being of both the volunteers and the service recipients.

Further, to my knowledge, previous studies have adopted either broad quantitative research methods including survey questionnaires or conducted few in-depth qualitative interviews to


elaborate on the motivations and challenges of volunteers. As such, this research is unique in that it adopts a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods in order to triangulate the data and ultimately enhance its credibility.
4. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The following chapter outlines the analytical framework of the study. Building on general motivations of volunteers and the volunteer process model, the functional theory of motivation with its distinct psychological and sociological approaches is presented. Contrary to most researches, who see the two viewpoints as mutually exclusive, this study’s analytical framework is built on a combination of the perspectives. In the following, critical perspectives on volunteer motivations are discussed.

4.1 Volunteer Motivations

Generally, the study on the motivations of volunteers is multi-disciplinary and has been discussed by sociologists, political scientists, psychologists, and economists. From the economists’ perspective, individuals always engage in volunteering as ‘unpaid work’ as to invest in their human capital and ultimately gain benefits, such as training, skills, connections, or the provision of public goods. Sociologists maintain that people volunteer to foster social bonds, ties, and relationships in order to increase their sense of belonging and group integration. The political science perspective, in turn, argues that volunteering provides a means for people to claim their rights and to be part of an active civil society in order “to instill civic values, enhance political behavior and improve democracy and society.” Psychologists identify motivations as “individual tendencies or dispositions to act in certain ways, usually linked to situations with one degree or another of situational specificity or generality.” Types of motivations are thus attitudes, habits, personality traits, and intentions. According to Kleiber and Walker, motivations (or needs) are factors that compel people to take action. This process occurs in two stages: first, due to a disequilibrium, which may be physiological (such as hunger or fatigue) or psychological (such as loneliness or boredom), people feel the urge to

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79 Ibid., 415.
80 Ibid., 417.
83 Ibid.
correct the existing imbalance\(^{85}\). Therefore, individuals adopt a specific action which is seen to correct this inequality (such as eating to satisfy one’s hunger or socializing as to not feel lonely). If individuals recognize a chosen action as satisfying their need, it will be repeated in the future, while negative feedback results in the behavior being abandoned\(^{86}\). In contrast to general motivations which are no longer pressing once the chosen action satisfied the need, leisure research reveals that satisfaction of one’s need can often actually heighten the initial motive\(^{87}\). Once extreme athletes have accomplished their motivation and satisfied their needs, they may have even stronger desires to continue their activity. The decision to volunteer and to continue to help is thus influenced by whether a particular activity fits with the volunteer’s own needs, desires, and goals\(^{88}\).

Despite the popular assumption that volunteers generally ‘aim to do good’, some scholars argue that when left to their own will, people will always seek to maximize their self-interest\(^{89}\). These scholars maintain that volunteerism is exclusively “practiced to promote one’s own interests, needs, and wants”\(^{90}\). Building on this, volunteers always expect to gain something in return, such as for career aspirations, which applies particularly to young people, self-fulfillment, which women are oftentimes motivated by, or personal development, which concerns particularly men\(^{91}\). Typically, volunteer motivations are hence characterized by an altruism-egoism dichotomy. Contrary to the exclusive ‘black and white’ approach, some scholars have started to acknowledge volunteers’ tendency to adopt more fluid motivational positions among the continuum between altruism and egoism\(^{92}\), as the following description of the volunteer process model with its functional theory of motivation highlights. Further, Jong\(^{93}\) argues that volunteer activities are not less ‘authentic’ if carried out because of selfish motives. She reasons that altruism and egoism are not mutually exclusive and that more self-centered motivations should not be discarded as negative as such, since volunteer activities are ultimately provided,


\(^{86}\) Ibid.


\(^{90}\) Ibid.


regardless of people’s initial motivation. As long as one assumes that volunteering will ultimately benefit those assisted, self-interested or egoistic motivations are thus not something bad per se.

4.2 Volunteer Process Model

In 2002, Omoto and Snyder\(^\text{94}\) developed the Volunteer Process Model, which takes different activities and psychological processes into consideration. The three different stages of volunteers’ ‘life cycles’, namely antecedents, experiences, and consequences thus outline different periods of volunteer experiences. At the individual level, the *antecedents* stage is concerned with volunteers’ demographics and particularly with their motivations\(^\text{95}\), which will be informed by the two approaches of the functional theory as outlined hereafter. The *motivation* stage addresses the experiences of volunteers during their activities, which may either promote or deter continued involvement\(^\text{96}\). Satisfactions or dissatisfactions of volunteers in relation to their expectations play an important role at this stage. The final level of the Volunteer Process Model are the *consequences*, which focus on people’s changed attitudes, knowledge, and behavior resulting from their volunteer engagement\(^\text{97}\).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Volunteer Process Model (Omoto and Snyder)(^\text{98})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Antecedents</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➤ Socio-demographic characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➤ Motivations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➤ Expectations</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4.2.1 Functional Theory of Motivation

In a nutshell, the functionalist theory of motivation pursues to understand “the psychological and social needs and goals, plans and motives that individuals are attempting to satisfy through


\(^{95}\) Ibid., 849.

\(^{96}\) Ibid., 851.

\(^{97}\) Ibid., 852.

\(^{98}\) Ibid.
their beliefs and behaviors. The functional approach is based on the development of individualized attitudes (or psychological needs) and how those, subsequently, prompt behavior. Katz identifies three pillars of functionalism. His first assumption is that attitudes are functional and thus always serve as a purpose for a specific behavior and that such attitudes are individual due to personal experiences and socio-cultural factors. Secondly, similar attitudes may result in different behaviors among different people and thirdly, individuals’ motivations are complex and non-exclusive to single aspects.

Ergo, the functional theory of motivation is built on three premises. People, first and foremost volunteer in order to satisfy their psychological and social needs and goals. Secondly, same or similar acts of volunteering may serve different functions for different people; they may thus carry out the same actions for distinct motives. Thirdly, as the functional approach is a multi-motivational perspective, the same individual may have different motives which may be primarily engaged by different volunteer activities. This aspect thus speaks to the previously outlined altruism-egoism debate and the argument that motivations are rather multifaceted, diverse, and complex and that most volunteer motivations can consequently not be identified as exclusively motivated by selfless or selfish desires. However, there are differing views of motivation depending upon whether one embraces a symbolic (sociological) or functional (psychological) approach, both of which are highlighted hereafter.

4.2.1.1 Functional Approach

The psychological perspective of the theory on volunteer motivations sets out to shed light onto the reasons and purposes that generate actions. As highlighted, people are inclined to volunteer if they believe their engagement will serve their psychological needs. Based on

102 Ibid.
many empirical studies on the motivations of volunteers, Clary and Snyder\footnote{Clary and Snyder, “The Motivations to Volunteer: Theoretical and Practical Considerations”.} developed the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI), which sets out six separate categories of motivations generally held by volunteers, namely values, understanding, social, career, protective, and self-enhancement.

*Values* motivations are specially related to altruistic and humanitarian motives\footnote{G. Clary, M. Snyder, R. Ridge, J. Copeland, A. Stukas, J. Haugen, and P. Miene, “Understanding and Assessing the Motivations of Volunteers: A Functional Approach”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74(6), 1998, 1515-1530, p. 1516.}. Being driven by the desire to care for people around oneself and in one’s community, including a physical place such as one’s neighborhood or a social category, such as the LGBTQI+ community are thus often mentioned as volunteer incentives\footnote{Musick and Wilson, *Volunteers: A Social Profile*, p. 58.}. Value motivations can however also include the desire of individuals to act out their own values\footnote{Ibid.}. Teske\footnote{N. Teske, *Political Activists in America: The Identity Construction Model of Political Participation*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 125.} elaborates that the desired goal of, for instance, eradicating hunger can thus serve as an internalized value itself and may inspire people to act and get involved.

*Understanding* motivations relate to incentives of learning about different people, places, cultures, skills, or oneself\footnote{Musick and Wilson, *Volunteers: A Social Profile*, p. 58.}. It is the opportunity to welcome new learning possibilities that would otherwise go unused\footnote{Ibid., 59.}. People who volunteer with patients with AIDS/HIV learn more about the disease, as do those who volunteer in less developed countries, who learn about new cultures and customs. Volunteer work can however also enhance experiences of physical and mental challenges, such as apprehension during protests or the adrenaline rush of participating in search and rescue operations\footnote{Ibid., 60.}.

*Social* motivations include the desire to fit in and build relationships with members of groups important to oneself\footnote{Musick et al., “Volunteerism During Young Adulthood: An Italian Investigation into Motivational Patterns“, p. 223.}. Meeting people, bonding with like-minded peers, and finding a place of belonging are incentives that tend to motivate people to volunteer. Further, social motivations are also connected to the desire to meet the expectations of people close to oneself or to gain their social approval by engaging in volunteer activities\footnote{Ibid., 59.}. The social aspect furthermore includes the motivation to share experiences, knowledge and skills with others who are

\begin{itemize}
    \item \footnote{Clary and Snyder, “The Motivations to Volunteer: Theoretical and Practical Considerations”.}
    \item \footnote{Musick and Wilson, *Volunteers: A Social Profile*, p. 58.}
    \item \footnote{Ibid.}
    \item \footnote{Musick and Wilson, *Volunteers: A Social Profile*, p. 58.}
    \item \footnote{Ibid., 59.}
    \item \footnote{Musick et al., “Volunteerism During Young Adulthood: An Italian Investigation into Motivational Patterns“, p. 223.}
    \item \footnote{Ibid., 59.}
    \item \footnote{Ibid., 60.}
\end{itemize}
similarly affected, as well as the desire to volunteer for a cause from which one has benefitted in the past\textsuperscript{121}.

*C*areer related motivations are connected to acquiring skills, expertise, and networking opportunities through volunteer activities. Particularly young people, who have yet to enter the labor force, often indicate career motivations for volunteering\textsuperscript{122}. While most individuals feel generally uncomfortable to name such motivations for volunteering over altruistic motives, many non-profit organizations or colleges specifically advertise volunteer commitments as ways to ‘get one’s foot in the door’\textsuperscript{123}.

*Protective* motivations enable individuals to deal with their inner conflicts, troubles, or stress such as emotional needs, feelings of incompetence, or helping people work through their own problems\textsuperscript{124}. For some, volunteering can even have therapeutic outcomes when trying to learn to move on after the loss of a loved one, drug abuse, or mental or physical illness. Similarly, supporting others through volunteer activities can also be a form of coping. Abrahams\textsuperscript{125} reveals that many women volunteers in rape crisis centers are survivors of sexual and gender-based violence themselves and use the volunteer experience to heal from their own experiences. In addition, protective motivations may also serve to lessen feelings of guilt for being more fortunate than others\textsuperscript{126}.

The sixth motivation is *self-enhancement*, which refers to the possibility of growing and enhancing personally and of gaining personal self-esteem, sets out to improve one’s self-image and to achieve ego-fulfilment\textsuperscript{127}. The emotion of ‘feeling useful’ is thus an often-mentioned motivation, as well as feeling important and good about oneself\textsuperscript{128}. Satisfying these motives is thus at the heart of self-enhancement motivations\textsuperscript{129}. Similar to understanding motivations, they also provide volunteers with the opportunity to gain new perspectives on things\textsuperscript{130}.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{121} Musick and Wilson, *Volunteers: A Social Profile*, p. 60.
\item \textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 61.
\item \textsuperscript{123} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 62.
\item \textsuperscript{126} Clary et al., “Understanding and Assessing the Motivations of Volunteers: A Functional Approach“, p. 1518.
\item \textsuperscript{127} Snyder et al., “The Functional Approach to Volunteerism“, p. 371.
\item \textsuperscript{128} Musick and Wilson, *Volunteers: A Social Profile*, p. 63.
\item \textsuperscript{129} Marta et al., “Volunteerism During Young Adulthood: An Italian Investigation into Motivational Patterns“, p. 223.
\item \textsuperscript{130} Musick and Wilson, *Volunteers: A Social Profile*, p. 63.
\end{itemize}
Over time, other scholars have added a seventh motivation of community concern to the list. It maintains that people volunteer out of a sense of obligation to or concern over a community or social group\textsuperscript{131}, which relates back to both values and social motivations.

In general, all of the seven motivations can be organized into two types: self-focused and other-focused motivations, with understanding, social, career, protective, and self-enhancement motivations benefitting one self, whereas values and community desires are mainly guided by the incentive for others\textsuperscript{132}.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functions served by volunteering according to the Volunteer Functions Inventory (Clary and Snyder)\textsuperscript{133}</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Values</strong></td>
<td>Volunteering provides the opportunity to express important values such as altruism and humanitarianism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding</strong></td>
<td>Volunteering provides the opportunity to learn more about the world and to exercise often unused skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social</strong></td>
<td>Volunteering provides a social opportunity to meet people and to strengthen social bonds and relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Career</strong></td>
<td>Volunteering serves as a way to gain career relevant experiences, skills, and contacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Protective</strong></td>
<td>Volunteering reduces negative feelings such as guilt and lingers personal problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Enhancement</strong></td>
<td>Volunteering leads to personal growth and self-fulfillment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Community)</strong></td>
<td>Volunteering serves as a way to express concern for people close to oneself or to one’s community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{4.2.1.2 Symbolic Approach}

The sociological perspective on volunteer motivation is different from the psychological one, as sociologists voice their skepticism about how relevant motives actually are in explaining patterns of social behavior\textsuperscript{134}. Although sociologists do not deny the existence of people’s motivations, the perspective is critical in taking motives as sufficient explanations for behavior,

\textsuperscript{131} Marta et al., “Volunteerism During Young Adulthood: An Italian Investigation into Motivational Patterns”, p. 223.

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{133} Clary and Snyder, “The Motivations to Volunteer: Theoretical and Practical Considerations”.

\textsuperscript{134} Musick and Wilson, Volunteers: A Social Profile, p. 69.
as the basis for people’s actions can be feigned, mixed, unacknowledged, or unconscious\textsuperscript{135}. In Western societies such as the United States, with a strong culture of benevolence, people may be inclined to claim compassionate feelings for doing voluntary work when they are actually engaged in the activity mainly for career purposes\textsuperscript{136}. In Sweden’s egalitarian society, on the other hand, people may feel social pressure to avoid talking too much about their ‘self-less’ actions\textsuperscript{137}. Consequently, sociologists criticize the strong emphasis on motives alone. Instead, they argue that people choose to indicate their motivations that seem most persuasive given a specific social situation and interaction\textsuperscript{138}. From the sociological point of view, people therefore are influenced by their learned behavior, culture, education, ideology, and socio-economic surroundings and constantly re-interpret and socially construct their internalized understandings of the world\textsuperscript{139}. Therefore, the sociological perspective stresses the importance of taking external influences, which direct and drive specific actions into account\textsuperscript{140}.

Although the two approaches to the theory of motivation are closely connected, they differ in one specific aspect: While the psychological viewpoint maintains that motivations are preexisting and propel people to take actions, sociologists, such as Wuthnow argue that motivations are “interpretations by which people make sense of what they are doing”\textsuperscript{141}. Consequently, to sociologists, motivations are context specific, socially constructed, and depend on the ability of being able to speak a social institution’s ‘specific language’\textsuperscript{142}.

Through one’s upbringing, parents, schooling, and the involvement in other extra-curricular engagements in social institutions, people learn, adopt, and internalize specific ‘scripts’ which enable them to put their feelings and motivations into words\textsuperscript{143}. Making sense of one’s motivations and actions is thus achieved “through the webs of language in which we live”\textsuperscript{144} and through our internalized contextual understandings and re-interpretations of and reflections on situations and events\textsuperscript{145}.

\textsuperscript{135} Musick and Wilson, \textit{Volunteers: A Social Profile}, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 69.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., 72.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., 77.
\textsuperscript{142} Musick and Wilson, \textit{Volunteers: A Social Profile}, p. 72.
\textsuperscript{143} Wuthnow, \textit{Learning to Care: Elementary Kindness in an Age of Indifference}, p. 62.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 78.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 62.
Building on these assumptions, sociologists have therefore identified several social and demographic attributes of individuals, including their gender, race, age, education, income, employment, marital and parental status, and religion, all of which tend to influence people’s interpretations and understandings of their motivations to volunteer. Studies have identified that people across different social groups have different inclinations to volunteer. Accordingly, “the desire to do good is more or less evenly distributed, but the resources to fulfill the desire are not”. While African Americans and other minority groups have been found to be just as strongly motivated as other US citizens to volunteer, they do so at a lower rate, highlighting the existence of structural barriers to their participation. Low-income earners and people of lower social status have less free time to volunteer and simply need to earn money for their provided work. Similarly, due to traditional societal gender norms, which see women as nurturers and responsible for the care of others, women tend to be more inclined to volunteer than men. People in their early twenties account for the smallest percentage of volunteers, while those with a college degree are more than four times more likely to volunteer than those with less education. From this perspective, sociologists have therefore “been preoccupied with understanding who volunteers, that is, the social profile of volunteers.

4.2.2 Critical Perspectives

Typically, volunteering has been described as a ‘good’ and desirable activity. Nonetheless, as the literature review chapter on the effects of volunteering on volunteers detailed, a tendency exists towards highlighting positive outcomes and rewards over maladaptive responses to volunteering. Kulik argues that this lack of comprehensive research on burnout in volunteering is a result of the seemingly paradoxical combination of ‘burnout’ and ‘volunteerism’. As volunteering is defined as a free-will activity benefitting others, it is...
generally assumed that such engagement cannot constitute a stressing factor. Stress emerges when individuals’ personal coping strategies to a specific incident or chronic situations are exceeded\textsuperscript{155}. While there are effective and ineffective coping strategies, depending significantly on the immediate context\textsuperscript{156}, stress can lead to poor mental health, burnout, or even PTSD\textsuperscript{157}.

Referring back to Omoto and Snyder’s Volunteer Process Model, at the consequence stage, mental health implications, including stressors and even burnout are hence possible challenges for volunteers. The most widely used framework to analyze burnout is Maslach and her colleagues’ Maslach Burnout Inventory, which defines burnout as a “psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with people in some capacity”\textsuperscript{158}. *Emotional exhaustion* includes the loss of energy, as well as the feeling of being powerless and worn out, *depersonalization* relates to negative attitudes toward others and irritability, while *low personal accomplishment* refers to feelings of incompetence and of failure\textsuperscript{159}. In terms of physical reactions, all of these three aspects of burnout may result in physical exhaustion, insomnia, increased use of alcohol and drugs, and marital and family problems\textsuperscript{160}.

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### Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach et al.)\textsuperscript{161}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional exhaustion</th>
<th>Loss of energy, physical and psychic exhaustion, feelings of being worn out and powerless</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depersonalization</td>
<td>Negative attitude toward others, distancing, irritability, callousness toward people one is serving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low personal accomplishment</td>
<td>Feelings of incompetence, low assertiveness and self-esteem, ineffectiveness, cognition focused on failure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., 3.

\textsuperscript{157} Eriksson et al., “Trauma Exposure and PTSD Symptoms in International Relief and Development Personnel“.


\textsuperscript{160} Maslach et al., *Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual*, p. 193.

\textsuperscript{161} Moreno-Jiménez and Hidalgo Villodres, “Prediction of Burnout in Volunteers”, p. 1801.
4.3 Building an Analytical Framework

Although not a theory as such but rather a model, the Volunteer Process Model constitutes the overarching analytical framework to this thesis. Divided by its three volunteer stages of **antecedents**, **experiences**, and **consequences**, the analysis is thus three-fold.

As the three research questions perfectly align with the Volunteer Process Model’s stages, the antecedent stage particularly devotes itself to the research questions of: (1) **What are the socio-demographic characteristics of international volunteers who volunteered in Greece in response to the ‘European refugee crisis’?** and (2) **What motivated internationals to volunteer in Greece?**

As the discussion of the functional theory highlighted, the symbolic and the functional approach on motivations are not necessarily opposing each other, although they are generally seen as being mutually exclusive\(^{162}\). In fact, the two can work in symbiotically. While the sociological view looks at resources available and at peoples’ places within social structures, providing insights into how people come to volunteer, it lacks an understanding of why they did so. The psychological view with its Volunteer Functions Inventory, on the other hand, explains why people volunteer but does not demonstrate how they got the possibility to do so in the first place\(^{163}\). Relying too heavily on motives to explain volunteer behavior results in overlooking the fact that volunteering is broadly patterned, following socio-economic, gender, racial, and other contours in the human population\(^{164}\).

The **experience stage** relates to the operational question (2.1) **What incentivized volunteers to prolong their initial stay or to return to Greece for another volunteer engagement?**, and is making use of the Volunteer Functions Inventory to understand volunteers’ motivations. Lastly, research question three: **Which challenges did international volunteers face?**, relates to the consequences stage and is researched in light of the Maslach Burnout Inventory. It is not the incentive of this research to determine the rates at which or the degrees to which volunteers possibly experienced stressful situations that may have led to burnout symptoms, yet, the inventory provides a valuable framework and structure to detect stressors and burnout behavior among the volunteers.

The above described analytical framework to this research is visualized on the following page.


\(^{163}\) *Ibid.*

Volunteer Process Model

**Antecedents**

1. What are the socio-demographic characteristics of volunteers?

2. What motivated internationals to volunteer in Greece?

**Experiences**

2.1 What incentivized volunteers to prolong their initial stay or to return to Greece?

**Consequences**

3. Which challenges did international volunteers face?

---

Socio-demographic characteristics

Volunteer Functions Inventory

- Values
- Understanding
- Social
- Career
- Protective
- Self-Enhancement
- Community

Maslach Burnout Inventory

- Emotional Exhaustion
- Depersonalization
- Low personal accomplishment
5. METHODOLOGY

The following chapter on the research’s methodology describes the adopted case study and mixed methods research design. Following, the two method choices of survey research and semi-structured interviews are introduced and the chapter is concluded with an acknowledgment of the study’s delimitations.

5.1 Case Study Research Design

As to analyze the outlined research questions, a single case study research design is adopted in order to provide detailed and intensive analysis of a single case\(^\text{165}\). The country of Greece and the international humanitarian response to the ‘European refugee crisis’, which, first and foremost played out on the Greek islands and its mainland, illustrate a unique case to highlight the involvement of international volunteers in humanitarian emergencies. As aforementioned, until then, volunteers had been involved in humanitarian emergencies to some extent, however, these individuals were typically nationals of the affected state itself. The example of Greece thus illustrates a unique case, interesting to investigate, given the new phenomenon of the involvement of thousands of international citizens in the humanitarian response to arriving migrants and asylum seekers. Nevertheless, due to the selection of a single case, the research’s conclusions are only relevant to the selected situation and cannot be taken out of context or applied to a wider and more general sample. Generalizing and assuming that the same motivations may guide international volunteers during other humanitarian emergencies would therefore be misleading\(^\text{166}\).

5.2 Mixed Methods Research

Oftentimes, academia divides itself among the two seemingly mutually exclusive research methodologies of quantitative and qualitative approaches to social science research\(^\text{167}\). Until the 1980s, purists strictly argued for an incompatibility of the two research designs\(^\text{168}\). However,


\(^{166}\) *Ibid.*, 190.


Increasingly, mixed methods research is being carried out where researchers explicitly combine quantitative and qualitative aspects of a study\(^{169}\). Mixed methods designs are hence adopted as to combine the two research strategies and as to “allow the various strengths to be capitalized upon and the weaknesses [to be] offset somewhat”\(^{170}\). The idea behind mixed methods is thus to triangulate the data gathering and data analysis processes. Predominantly quantitative research designs, generally associated with positivist researches that are numerical, precise, generalizable and consequently carry high reliability\(^{171}\) can thus be ‘mixed’ with qualitative research characteristics, focusing on in-depth and rich information about context-specific phenomena as to comprehend and interpret social constructions and local understandings\(^{172}\). The process of combining both methodologies is believed to significantly enhance a study’s results and the analysis’ validity and reliability\(^{173}\). Given the outlined research questions and the analytical framework, the sequential process of enriching quantitative data with thorough in-depth qualitative information is the most advantageous research strategy. Therefore, this mixed method research sets out to firstly access a wide range and large number of eligible respondents through an online survey questionnaire, followed by a more exhaustive enhancement and illustration of the quantitative data through qualitative interviewing.

### 5.2.1 Online Survey Questionnaire

Questionnaires are particularly well situated in finding out about peoples’ attitudes, motivations, and backgrounds on a wider and more generalizable scale\(^{174}\). Particularly research question one, which asks about the demographic characteristics of the international volunteers in Greece, requires a more quantitative data gathering method in order to draw credible conclusions from a bigger sample.

The outlined analytical framework, with constitutes the basis of this research’s analysis, inherently guided the formulation of the 36 survey questions. While the first eleven questions asked about volunteer’s socio-demographic characteristics, including their gender, age, nationality, occupation, as well as about the year of their volunteer engagement in Greece, the location of their volunteer work, and the activities performed, the following 25 questions

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\(^{171}\) Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, “Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time has Come”, p. 18.


\(^{173}\) *Ibid.*, 635.

addressed volunteers’ motivations, their experiences, and challenges. Applicable questions from Clary and Snyder’s Volunteer Functions Inventory were used to provide respondents with possible multiple choice for different answers to questions about their initial motivations to volunteer, as well as for questions on their motivations to prolong their stay or to return to Greece at a later point in time.

As to gain insights into people’s experiences and challenges, several questions inquired about volunteers’ satisfaction with the work of their organizations, the team work, as well as their own work. Further, closed questions with multiple answer possibilities aimed at understanding reasons and stressing factors that may have contributed to volunteers having felt overwhelmed at times. The three indicators for the Maslach Burnout Inventory, namely emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low personal accomplishment were hereby included in the response possibilities.

Except for a few yes/no questions, the possible response options generally used the Likert scale of ‘strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree’ or provided multiple response options as described before, including the possibility to choose ‘other’ should the given responses not have included the respondent’s desired answer.

After a pilot questionnaire had been tested with five volunteers, an online self-completion survey questionnaire was shared with former and current international volunteers in Greece. For many volunteers, the public Facebook group ‘Information Point for Greece Volunteers’ was the first point of entry for getting into contact with NGOs and learning more about the ‘European refugee crisis’. At the time the questionnaire was shared, the group consisted of 11,694 members. Within 24 hours, the questionnaire had already received 29 responses. Following up, I reposted the link on my private Facebook profile, reminding and urging my private Facebook friends, many of which had volunteered in Greece as well to participate. After six days, it received 67 responses and the survey was closed. One Greek respondent had to be excluded from the final sample of 66, as he did not fit the criteria of being an international volunteer.

This non-probabilistic convenience sampling method was entirely dependent on people’s own motivations to participate and to complete the online questionnaire. Due to Facebook’s algorithms and the opt-outs for not receiving notifications for new posts in particular groups,

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175 Bryman, Social Research Methods, p. 328.
the link certainly did not reach all group members or friends. Taking also into consideration that some of the members may have not actually volunteered in Greece or are bots and spam accounts, the response rate is appropriate for a Master dissertation which is significantly restricted in its scope. The questionnaire responses were anonymized by myself and subsequently analyzed. All statistical analyses were conducted with the statistical software IBM SPSS 25.

### 5.2.2 Semi-structured Interviews

While the online questionnaire provided the advantage of shedding light onto the research questions through a wider sample population, the adoption of closed questions did not allow respondents to further elaborate on their answers. Qualitative research maintains that “the social world must be interpreted from the perspective of the people being studied, rather than as though those subjects were incapable of their own reflections on the social world.” The emphasis is therefore on understanding people’s attitudes and motivations instead of measuring them.

The final question of the survey questionnaire included a call for volunteers to participate in interviews as to further elaborate on their motivations and challenges. 42 people initially came forward and showed interest, out of which 19 were subsequently contacted for follow-up interviews, based on a quota sampling method in order to reflect the online survey questionnaire’s sample population, including people’s gender, age, nationality, and occupation. Given people’s availability, six interviews were consequently conducted. The final choice of the six informants is representative for the overall questionnaire sample population, however, the choice of the research informants was entirely left to myself, which increases selection bias and must be handled with caution when drawing overarching conclusions from the specific research’s sample. Given the limited time and resources available and the rather homogenous questionnaire sample population, the sample size of six informants seems appropriate as to ensure my close involvement with the participants and the subsequent thorough interpretation of the rich data.

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Through the semi-structured questioning of six informants, the interviews therefore provide further context to the questionnaire results and allow for deeper understanding and elaborations. Much like the survey questionnaire, the semi-structured interview guide was inherently influenced by the analytical framework of this study. The interviews were therefore divided into the three conceptual parts of prior, during, and post-volunteer’s time in Greece. This structure allowed me to firstly inquire about people’s initial motivations, then proceed with their experiences and, if applicable, their motivations to prolong or return. The end of the ‘during’ section, naturally led to discussions around people’s experiences and challenges they faced during and since their time in Greece.

Except for one face-to-face dialogue, the interviews were conducted via video calls on Skype and were recorded and subsequently transcribed by myself. On average, the interviews lasted 45 minutes and they were all conducted in English. All informants were asked to sign an informed consent form prior to the interview. Concerning the ethical considerations of qualitative data inquiry, the data gathering process required the guarantee to strictly adhere to the principle of anonymity and confidentiality at all times. Particularly questions on informants’ challenges during their time in Greece involved people’s reflections of some traumatic and stressful events, some of which they had not fully processed or shared with anybody else before. I was aware of my responsibility in ensuring people’s anonymity and of guaranteeing their feeling of safety and I provided as much space as possible. To safeguard people’s identity, their names were changed and the organizations they worked with were not mentioned.

5.3 Delimitations

In addition to the shortcomings and limitations of both qualitative and quantitative research designs, as well as the lack of generalizability of single case studies and the choice of non-probability sampling techniques, all of which do not allow for making wider and more general assumptions based on the research findings181, the research is inherently delimited in its scope.

The case study on the humanitarian response to the ‘European refugee crisis’ in Greece only includes international volunteers, who had been engaged in volunteer activities between the summer of 2015 to the end of April 2019. As such, the study is delimited to non-Greeks and to those who volunteered in Greece as part of an NGO rather than independently. As the link to

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181 Bryman, Social Research Methods, p. 205.
the online survey was shared in a public Facebook group, I was furthermore dependent on people’s honest self-identification as international volunteers and trusted that the survey had not been misused. Further, those without Facebook profiles or those not member of this particular group were excluded in the process of convenience sampling.

Besides these concerns, the rather long timeframe of almost four years poses questions as to how detailed volunteers still recall their initial motivations to volunteer. Several years since their first volunteer engagement and long times of reflections may have resulted in changed assumptions and believes of initial motivations. Shye further points to the possible desire of research participants to report motivations that would make them look better and to highlight particularly altruistic motivations, which some of the interviewees may have been particularly prone to. In addition, as highlighted by the sociological point of view on volunteer motivations, people may have not always been fully aware of their own motivations.

Lastly, the concept of volunteering itself may have limited the scope of the research as its definition developed in Western settings. Schwingel and her colleagues point out that in some Latin American countries, the concept of volunteering is only viewed as a system of wealthy individuals who are helping the poor, while supporting someone’s family, neighborhood or community is not considered to fall under this category. In addition, in India the term for volunteering is social work and in Russia there is no word for volunteers at all. All of this may have resulted in the challenge that some international volunteers might not have felt addressed and included in the concept and may have consequently not participated in the survey.

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6. RESULTS

The following chapter presents the findings of the data collection process through the online survey, as well as through six semi-structured interviews. The data gathering was inherently influenced by the analytical framework and was guided by the three research questions. Firstly, the survey results are presented, followed by the qualitative findings of the six interviews.

6.1 Survey Results

The online self-completion survey questionnaire was shared with former volunteers and received 67 responses within six days, one of which had to be excluded from the final sample of 66 due to the respondent’s non-fulfillment of the required premise of being an international.

6.1.1 Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationalities</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US American</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwegian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swiss</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austrian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>66</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Nationalities of sample population

Of the 66 survey participants, the vast majority of 56 respondents were female (84.9 percent), while 10 were male (15.1 percent). With 19.7 percent each, US American and British citizens constituted the largest population of the sample, followed by 10 German volunteers (15.1 percent). Taken together, volunteers from these three countries made up 54.6 percent of the overall survey population. Given the responses of 13 US American, six Australian, and one Russian volunteers, 30.3 percent of the sample were non-European citizens, while 46 participants (69.7 percent) were from European (EU/EEA/CH) countries.

Though the median volunteer was 28.8 years old due to the two extremes of 18 and 70 years, 70.8 percent of the survey respondents were between 18 and 28 years old at the time of their first volunteer engagement in Greece and most people were between 22 and 24 years old.
A great majority of 84.9 percent indicated to be single, while 9.1 percent were married, and each 3.0 percent were either divorced or widowed.

Further, the majority of respondents held an undergraduate/ Bachelor degree (54.6 percent), compared to 16.7 percent, who had a high school diploma, and 28.8 percent, who had a Masters or PhD certificate. Building on these numbers, half of the respondents indicated to be students (52.3 percent). The educational sector cluster, including teachers, historians, and anthropologists stood at 10.6 percent and the health care sector (doctors, nurses, psychologists) constituted 6.2 percent, while two informants (3.1 percent) were retired.

Of the overall population, 81.8 percentage had previous experiences of living abroad for at least three months before their time in Greece, 80.3 percent had previous volunteer experiences, and 81.8 percent of the volunteers traveled to Greece on their own.

The majority of the sample population volunteered in 2018 (59.7 percent), followed by 50.9 percent who had volunteer experience from the year 2016. 26.3 percent volunteered in 2017, 14.0 percent had been in Greece in 2019 and only 5.3 percent of the respondents had worked there in 2015. 53.0 percent volunteered on the Greek islands, 34.9 percent on the mainland, and 12.1 percent of the respondents volunteered in both locations.

On average, internationals volunteered for 21 weeks; yet, given the outliers of one week and 208 weeks (nearly four years), this result is misleading. The majority of 56.1 percent of the volunteers were in Greece for a duration of three to twelve weeks, while the most common durations were 4 weeks and 12 weeks with 10.6 percent each, closely followed by 20 weeks (9.1 percent).

57.6 percent of the population volunteered in Greece once, while the number of volunteer engagements of the 42.4 percent of internationals who volunteered twice or more varied from two to twelve commitments. Yet, the vast majority of those (78.6 percent) volunteered only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>52.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational sector</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care sector</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social care sector</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative sector</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction sector</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer service sector</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal sector</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Age at first volunteer engagement in Greece
twice or three times. Of the overall sample, 54.6 percent prolonged their original stay and 43.9 percent returned to Greece at a later point at least ones.

A majority of 69.7 percent of the volunteers distributed clothes during their time in Greece. Other common volunteer duties included educational support which 59.1 percent performed, food distribution (51.5 percent), as well as providing childcare and female-friendly spaces (47.0 percent).

When asked to identify how they financed their volunteer commitment in Greece, 72.7 percent of the sample indicated personal savings, followed by 40.9 percent who used their personal income. 21.2 percent of the sample population received financial support by family members or their parents, while 15.2 percent of the research participants received stipends or donations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteer Activities</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Percent of Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sea Rescue</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boat Spotting</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Support</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Support</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>59.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female-friendly Spaces</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Distribution</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>51.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing Distribution</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>69.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecological Activities</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy/Communications</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Support</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Support</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translations</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrations</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>294</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>445.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Activities performed by volunteers (multiple answers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financing Sources</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Percent of Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Income</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Savings</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>72.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Crowdfunding</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/Parents</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stipend</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>123</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>186.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Sources used to finance volunteer time (multiple answers)

6.1.2 Motivations

With 43.1 percent, the sentiment of European solidarity scored highest when asked why volunteers had chosen Greece over other migration hotspots in the world. Furthermore, 41.5 percent indicated that Greece’s proximity to their home country made the country an attractive volunteer location.
Given possible motivations to choose from, 89.4 percent of the respondents highlighted general concerns about the situation of migrants and asylum seekers as one of their motivations for volunteering in Greece. Compassionate feelings toward people in need had been indicated by 81.8 percent of all respondents. 68.2 percent saw volunteering as a moral obligation, 59.1 percent were incentivized to volunteer in order to gain new perspectives, and 53.0 percent indicated that volunteering let them to learn new things through hands-on experiences.

As previously outlined, 54.6 percent of the survey respondents prolonged their volunteer engagements in Greece. Motivations that were most prevalent for the prolongation were particularly to continue the work they had begun (68.4 percent), having had experienced personal growth (63.2 percent) and having felt guilty for being able to leave Greece and continue their own life while the migrants and asylum seekers they had worked with had to stay (60.5 percent). Further, the idea that longer volunteer engagements would render higher impacts was also mentioned by 60.5 percent of the survey respondents. Still, half of the respondents
(50.0 percent) acknowledged that they had felt good about themselves during their time in Greece and wanted to relive this feeling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivations to Prolong</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Percent of Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to continue the work/project I had begun</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>68.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt that if I left, no one would be there to help</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I made friends in Greece who volunteer</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt good about myself during my time in Greece</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to continue to learn</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longer experiences would help me with my future career</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt guilty that I could leave while the refugees and migrants that I worked with had to stay</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>60.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I experienced personal growth and felt more self-fulfilled</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt that longer involvements would have higher impacts</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>60.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>413.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Motivations to prolong volunteer time (multiple answers)

43.9 percent of the sample returned to Greece at a later point in time to volunteer again. Volunteers indicated their incentive to build on previous experiences (75.0 percent) as the most common motivation to return. Further, 57.1 percent believed that being able to build on previous knowledge and experiences would allow them to be more efficient from the start. With 46.4 percent each, volunteers also highlighted their motivation to continue the work and project they had begun, as well as having had experienced personal growth and the feeling of increased self-fulfillment during their first time as a volunteer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivations to Return</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Percent of Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to continue the work/project I had begun</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I made friends in Greece who volunteer</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt good about myself and wanted to relive this feeling</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to build on previous experiences in Greece and improve my impact</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional experienced would help with my future career</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt guilty that I could leave while the refugees and migrants that I worked with had to stay</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I experienced personal growth and felt more self-fulfilled</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt that my knowledge of the context would allow me to be more efficient from the start</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>367.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Motivations to return to Greece as a volunteer at a later point in time (multiple answers)
6.1.3 Experiences

77.3 percent felt strongly supported or supported by their loved ones, including their family, partners, and close friends. Still, a total of 10 respondents (15.2 percent) did not feel so.

43.9 percent responded that the task that they were performing had matched their previous skills and expertise extremely or very much, compared to the same amount of people (43.9 percent) who thought that their tasks only matched their previous experience moderately or slightly. 51.5 percent could present personal certificates or training that had helped them to perform their volunteer work, 21.2 percent of which had professional certificates and training and 15.2 percent of which had academic certificates. Consequently, data on volunteers’ satisfaction with their own work in Greece revealed that 80.3 percent were very satisfied (33.2 percent) or satisfied (47.1 percent). Asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with their host organization’s work, 80.0 percent signified having been very satisfied or satisfied.

Of the respondents, a small majority of volunteers (25.8 percent) continues to be in contact with people they met in Greece on a yearly basis, whereas 22.7 percent talk on a more regular, monthly basis. A considerate amount of 30.3 percent continues to be in touch with other volunteers, migrants, and asylum seekers at least once a week.

6.1.4 Challenges

Just little over half of the sample population (51.5 percent) received training from their volunteer organizations prior to their arrival in Greece, which 44.4 percent perceived as satisfactory, compared to 30.6 percent who felt neutral about it, and 22.2 percent who were dissatisfied with it.

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Figure 1: Level of support received by loved ones (family, partners, close friends) in decision to volunteer

Figure 2: Degree to which performing tasks matched previous skills and expertise

24.2 percent of the volunteer population indicated that they had felt overwhelmed very frequently or frequently. 47.0 percent answered that they felt so sometimes. Asked about the support volunteers had received from their organizations, 36.5 percent of the respondents felt satisfied, 30.2 percent felt neutral about it, while 22.2 percent voiced moderate or strong dissatisfaction about the support.

Following up on the sentiment of having felt overwhelmed, respondents highlighted having felt so particularly in relation to their workload (44.8 percent), due to a lack of time to reenergize (41.4 percent), too heavy burdens of responsibility (39.7 percent), a lack of managerial support (34.4 percent), and conflicts among the volunteer group (36.2 percent).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors for overwhelming feeling</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Percent of Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imprecise description of tasks and responsibilities</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too heavy burden of responsibility</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>39.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different expectations</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of day-to-day organizational structure</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of managerial structure or support</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts among the volunteer group</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of sufficient time to reenergize</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>41.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural differences</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling homesick</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal reasons</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>186</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>320.7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Factors for feeling overwhelmed (multiple answers)

When asked specifically about their satisfaction with the amount of free time people had, an equal number of volunteers (31.9 percent) responded that they had been satisfied with it or felt neutral about it.

The vast majority of 56.1 percent indicated that their alcohol consumption remained the same compared to the time before volunteering, with 19.7 percent of the respondents recognizing that their consumption increased. 54.6 percent of the respondents were non-smokers, however at the same time, 28.8 percent acknowledged that their smoking consumption, including smoked substances, had increased during and since their time in Greece.
6.1.5 Comparative Analysis

Given the study’s analytical framework of the theory of motivation with its functional and symbolic approach, respondents’ characteristics were cross-analyzed as to identify potential motivational differences as the sociological approach suggests. Dividing the sample among gender, age, European citizenship, or whether internationals volunteered on the islands or mainland illustrated no considerable dissimilarities in terms of people’s ways of financing their volunteer time in Greece, or how satisfied people were with their host organization’s work, with the support they received from it, or their satisfaction with the teamwork among the volunteers. However, the different sub-samples displayed some variances concerning volunteers’ motivations and challenges faced.

6.1.5.1 Gender

Recalling the female-screwed sample population of 56 respondents, compared to 10 males, the following results must be taken with caution when comparing people’s responses by gender, however; however, the results still provide some valuable insights.

Comparing the reasons for why volunteers chose Greece over other migration hotspots in the world, the aspect of European solidarity scored highest among both genders with 40.0 percent of the female respondents and 60.0 percent of the male ones agreeing with the statement. For 50.0 percent of the males, the easy accessibility of the country was the second-most important decisive argument, whereas 38.2 percent of the female respondents specified they had chosen Greece based on others’ recommendations.

When comparing females’ and males’ motivations to volunteer, both highlighted altruistic motivations (compassionate feelings toward people in need, concerns about migrants and asylum seekers, and volunteering as a moral obligation) as their three main motivations. However, following, females highlighted their desire to gain new perspectives (62.5 percent) and to explore their own strengths (41.1 percent). The same motivations scored 40.0 percent (gain new perspectives), while none of the male respondents wanted to explore their own strength. Instead, males highlighted their desires to learn new skills through hands-on experiences (40.0 percent) and to gain overseas experiences (30.0 percent).
Males and females also scored differently when asked about their frequency of having experienced overwhelming situations. While 28.6 percent of the females indicated having felt overwhelmed very frequently or frequently, and 41.1 percent recognized having experienced this sometimes, 80.0 percent of the male respondents felt so sometimes, yet no one experienced this feeling more frequently. Analyzing the factors that led to people’s overwhelming feelings, both genders’ main stressor was the workload (44.9 percent for females, 44.4 percent for males). However, for females, too heavy burdens of responsibility scored alike, closely followed by the lack of time to reenergize (42.9 percent). Males identified conflicts among volunteers as a significant stressor (44.4 percent) and a lack of time to reenergize (33.3 percent). A too heavy burden of responsibility was only identified as a challenge by 11.1 percent of males.

Concerning volunteers’ changed alcohol or smoking consumption, 61.1 percent of the females said their consumption had remained the same, compared to 20.4 percent, whose consumption had increased and 9.3 percent, whose consumption had decreased. In comparison, 30.0 percent of the male respondents’ consumption decreased, compared to 20.0 percent whose consumption increased and 40.0 percent, whose consumption remained the same. As for female volunteers’ smoking habits, the majority of respondents indicated to be non-smokers; however, of 30.4 percent the consumption had increased. 60.0 percent of the males were also non-smokers and 20.0 percent acknowledged that their consumption had increased.

6.1.5.2 Age

As 70.8 percent of the survey respondents were between 18 and 28 years old at the time of their first volunteer work in Greece, a comparative study among different ages was divided below (18 to 28 years) and above the age of 28 (29 to 70 years), which was also the average age of the volunteers.
The activities performed as volunteers did not vary to a high degree. In both groups, clothing distribution and educational support scored the highest. While those above 28 tended to be more involved in female friendly spaces (57.9 percent), the younger ones assisted mainly with the food distribution (54.3 percent).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finance Resources</th>
<th>Percent of Cases Under 28</th>
<th>Percent of Cases Over 28</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal income</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal savings</td>
<td>84.8</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online crowdfunding</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/parents</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loan</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stipend</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>187.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>178.9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 10: Resources used to finance volunteer time in comparison*

Those 29 or older financed their volunteer work through personal income (63.2 percent), whereas the 18 to 28-year-olds did so particularly through personal savings (84.8 percent).

When asked about their motivations for having chosen Greece, 46.7 percent of the under 28-years-olds stressed European solidarity as a decisive factor. By recommendation (44.4 percent) and the proximity of Greece to people’s home countries (37.8 percent) were also among the top responses. In comparison, 47.4 percent of the volunteers above 28 identified the proximity of Greece to their home country and its easy accessibility as reasons for having volunteered in Greece, as well as the sentiments of European solidarity (36.8 percent).

Both age samples identified altruistic motivations as their main ambitions to volunteer. However, for the younger sample gaining new perspectives (58.7 percent), acquiring hands-on skills (54.3 percent) and advancing their career (30.4 percent) were other popular motivations. In contrast, those 29 years old or above were incentivized by their desire to explore their own strengths (47.4 percent) and by their wish to feel needed (26.3 percent).

52.6 percent of volunteers over 28 years frequently or sometimes felt overwhelmed, while 80.4 percent of those under 28 indicated this. While the younger volunteers’ stressing factors were related to the workload (45.5 percent) and too heavy burdens of responsibility (43.2 percent), the older respondents indicated conflicts among the volunteers as their main reason (61.5 percent). The workload, the lack of day-to-day structures, and a lack of time to reenergize each received 46.2 percent of all responses.
6.1.5.3 European Citizenship

With 13 US American, six Australian, and one Russian volunteers, 30.3 percent of the sample were non-European citizens, while 46 participants (69.7 percent) were from European (EU/EEA/CH) countries.

While respondents’ initial motivations to volunteer in the ‘European refugee crisis’ did not differ, Europeans indicated having chosen Greece due to feelings of European solidarity (50.0 percent), the proximity to their home country (47.8 percent), and Greece’s easy accessibility (39.1 percent). In comparison, non-Europeans arrived in Greece mainly based on other people’s recommendations (42.1 percent), due to non-specified other reasons (31.6 percent) and interestingly, with 26.3 percent each due to Greece’s proximity to their home country and sentiments of European solidarity. Combining volunteering with holidays in Europe was also mentioned by 26.3 percent of the non-European volunteers.

Comparative data on the frequency of feeling overwhelmed did not indicate any considerable variations among Europeans and non-Europeans, however reasons for such feelings differed. For non-Europeans, lack of sufficient time to reenergize was a major stressor (58.8 percent), compared to 34.1 percent of Europeans who said so. Further, the workload, heavy burdens of responsibility, lack of managerial support, and conflicts among volunteers were recognized by each 47.1 percent of the non-Europeans as stressors. 43.9 percent of the European volunteers, on the other hand, identified the workload as a main reason, followed by high levels of responsibility (36.6 percent).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors for overwhelming feeling</th>
<th>Percent of Cases</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Europeans</td>
<td>Non-Europeans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>47.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imprecise description of tasks and responsibilities</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>47.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different expectations</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of day-to-day organizational structure</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>41.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of managerial structure or support</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>47.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts among the volunteer group</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>47.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of sufficient time to reenergize</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>58.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural differences</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling homesick</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal reasons</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>302.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>364.7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 11: Factors for overwhelming feelings among Europeans and non-Europeans in comparison*
6.1.5.4 Volunteer Location

53.0 percent of the sample population volunteered on the Greek islands, 34.9 percent on the mainland, and 12.1 percent did both. Although the location of people’s volunteer activities are not socio-demographic characteristics, a comparative data analysis revealed distinct challenges among the volunteers.

When comparing data depending on respondents’ locations, it can be noticed that 62.5 percent of those who volunteered both on the Greek mainland and on the islands indicated that they felt very frequently or frequently overwhelmed, compared to 21.7 percent of mainland volunteers. Only 17.1 percent of volunteers who worked exclusively on the islands said so. Reasons for these feelings included among all three samples, the workload (40.0 percent mainland; 45.2 percent islands; 57.1 percent both locations) as well as a lack of time to reenergize (35.0 percent mainland; 41.9 percent islands; 57.1 percent both locations). Contrary to the responses from volunteers from the islands and from those who volunteered in both locations, mainland volunteers stressed conflicts among volunteers as the main reason (45.0 percent) and the lack of managerial support (35.0 percent), while heavy burdens of responsibility was mentioned by 30.0 percent. For 41.9 percent of the island volunteers this was a main stressor, as well as for 57.1 percent of those having volunteered in both locations. Concerning people’s satisfaction with their available free time, 30.4 percent of those on the mainland were either neutral or dissatisfied about it. 45.7 percent of the volunteers on the islands in the Aegean Sea identified this stressor, compared to 52.5 percent of the volunteers who worked in both locations.

While the vast majority of island and mainland volunteers’ alcohol consumption remained the same (63.6 percent mainland; 57.1 percent islands), 57.1 percent of the respondents from both locations acknowledged that their consumption had increased compared to their drinking behavior before their time in Greece, while no one’s consumption decreased. The smoking consumption for volunteers for all three locations increased, however the most significant change could be detected from data of volunteers who worked on the mainland and islands (50.0 percent). 25.7 percent of island volunteers and 26.1 percent of volunteers on the mainland’s smoking consumption increased in comparison.
6.2 Interview Results

Following the online survey, the socio-demographic data of 42 individuals who had indicated interest in a follow-up interview was compared as to arrive at an interview sample that was somewhat representative of the questionnaire population in terms of people’s gender, age, nationality, and occupation. This chapter introduces the six informants and summarizes their motivations, experiences, and challenges raised during the interviews.

6.2.1 Informants

Given the survey population sample, the six interviewees were comprised of one US American, one British, one German, one Italian, one Spanish, and one Austrian volunteer. Given the rather homogenous survey sample, where 84.9 percent of the respondents were female, 53.6 percent were either US American, British, or German citizens, 70.8 percent were between 18 and 28 years old, 84.9 percent were single, and 52.3 percent were students, the choice of six interviewees who, to varying degrees, fall within these popular categories seems appropriate. Ergo, due to the quota sampling technique, the informant selection can be assumed to be representative of the survey population.

6.2.1.1 Emma

Emma is a 23-year-old British woman, who was 19 at the time of her first volunteer engagement in Greece back in 2016. Having intended to stay for only two weeks, she extended to five weeks, returned a second time in the winter of 2016 and a third time in 2018, when she prolonged her original stay from one to eight months. Each time, she volunteered with the same volunteer-run grassroots organization on Samos island, where she was involved in activities for children and in providing basic education to women. Over time, she also became the responsible person for the organization’s laundry station, which allowed camp residents to wash their belongings.

Despite being quite young, Emma came across as very mature and reflective of her role as a volunteer in Greece. Her sister had volunteered in Athens before and had told her about her experiences, allowing Emma to reflect upon her role and motivations extensively before leaving for Samos.

There's kind of the argument of why you're not focusing more on your local community, why are you going to, kind of, what you could describe as ideal Greek island, in order to do this. But to be honest, after the first time that I did it… it was very clear to me that we
were the only group on the island who was doing anything… out of locals… even nothing was happening. So that guilt, an idea of not doing something close to home left. There's also the argument of spending lots of money to volunteer when you could do the kind of help in other ways… that again… my second and third times… I was… my rent was paid for, I was just living using money for the food I was eating, so I didn't feel that form of guilt either. I do question… kind of… I do question it quite a lot though…

During her time on Samos, she seemed to have thought about her behavior a lot which became clear when she spoke about an incident when her organization’s behavior in the camp could have instigated risks for other people as “we were causing such a… such a ruckus basically”. Emma also argued that “you can meet a lot of people where you question why they’re there – a lot of young people. People can be labeled as, like white savior where it’s clear that they don’t respect the people around them.” She added, “you get a lot of people who come and they want to hear personal stories… they want to get invested… that’s a blanket ‘No!’ […] You don’t need to be there as some crazy therapist, who’s not gonna help”.

She repeatedly acknowledged that her actions and motivations were not only altruistic but also, in her words, “selfishly” influenced by her desire to grow and to experience strong social bonds. Throughout the interview she stressed the strong friendships she built during her time as a volunteer with “like-minded young people”, most of which are still very present in her life. Emma also elaborated that her alternative to not prolonging her stay on Samos would have been to return to the United Kingdom: “I had no plan and while I didn’t have a plan I thought it would… it was like the most useful thing I could do while I didn’t know what I was going to do”. She added: “Also, I felt very disgusted by Brexit. […] The emotions behind Brexit, kind of, made me feel more valid in like volunteering, because it’s kind of standing against becoming a smaller little England and more, kind of… more caring”.

A second reoccurring pattern was her focus on personal growth that she experienced during her time, as well as being more useful due to the knowledge acquired during the previous times. Having had the chance to volunteer with the same organization three times she explained: “I felt like every time I went, it [the organization] kind of grew up a bit and I grew up a bit with it”, which allowed her to gradually take over more responsibilities. It became clear that she was very aware of her responsibility – not just in relation to her role but also in respecting people’s dignity and belongings – when we discussed her work at the laundry station: “The biggest danger is misplacing a bag because then you’ve lost the only item of… like, someone owns in the world”. 

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Still, these burdens of responsibility also overwhelmed her at times. She mentioned two incidents when she felt unequipped and unprepared for the tasks that were assigned to her; however, she knew that others had even less experience so she took it upon herself to complete them. Emma mentioned that she felt stressed and particularly emotionally overwhelmed when having been put in the situation of having to be the person to decide who gets to access services and who does not. “Everyone is desperate for laundry. Everyone has a story. Everyone should get it and you have to be the person who says ‘No’. And I was that person every single day, surrounded by where they were living. Um… so seeing true realities of what’s going on and I’m the one who’s having to make flippant decisions about who can and cannot get stuff… And that became very, very overwhelming”.

When asked how she coped with these feelings, she smiled, laughed, and said “we would get pretty out-of-control drunk” and she would process the experiences by talking about them with two fellow volunteers, she became very close with, as well as by trying to find physical space and distance. Still, she left the island because she burned out and could not function any longer. Emma mentioned that she was not the only one who had experienced this but that the rate of burnout was very high among long-term volunteers. She therefore suggested a system with forced breaks that would urged volunteers to make sure to take time off and not to be afraid to ask for what they want and need.

6.2.1.2 Rachel

Rachel is a 70-year-old US American retired nurse who volunteered for five weeks on Lesvos island in 2018 with her adult son. Living on different continents, the two wanted to meet for Christmas in Europe and after Rachel’s plans of volunteering in the humanitarian response to the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh did not materialize, they agreed to meet in Greece instead and volunteered with a search and rescue organization in the north of Lesvos island.

Quite at the start of the interview, Rachel elaborated that she had spent much of her adult life volunteering with immigration in multiple places around the world. Currently living at the US-Mexican border, she continues to be actively involved. Through her various engagements, Rachel grew quite critical of humanitarian action: “One of my critiques of this kind of work is that the organizations are really not flexible enough. They get a big infrastructure and their funding in place and then they can’t move.”. She stressed that what she found in Greece was that “the need was really not there anymore” as “it all seemed like a big waste of time” and they therefore left the organization after one week to volunteer with the small, refugee-run
organization. Located in the capital of the island to distribute clothes to people living in Moria, the biggest detention center on the island, Rachel described her experience with the organization more positively due to the need of really being present and due to having been able to “actually work with refugees. So, you got to meet people that were living in the camp”.

When asked about Rachel’s initial motivation to volunteer in Greece, she highlighted that the first organization’s publicity information still indicated that people were crossing from Turkey. However, when that was not the case, she grew frustrated

…there were no boats coming across there. There just were absolutely none in… in the two weeks before we came and the three weeks that we were there, there was zero boat crossing in that area. And so, it didn’t make a lot of sense to me to have people there continually. […] And I guess, I guess, I didn’t expect that. I thought that people were still coming across.

She was also surprised by the short distance from Turkey to Greece: “I guess I didn’t know that it was so close that you could see the houses in Turkey.” She further voiced frustration at the lack of information the organization was having about what was happening in Turkey and wanted to go to Turkey herself to get better informed; however, the US-Turkish relations at the time rendered this impossible.

I mean, it just wasn't the place for me. And finally, there was a one day that I just, I just had enough and I would’ve left earlier, except my son was like, ‘No you know we, we agreed to do this blah blah blah blah’. And finally, I was like, ‘No I can't be here anymore, this is just too ridiculous’. It was one day we were out. Me and another woman during the day. And my understanding was, not one single person had crossed during the day for the last six months. Now that's ridiculous to spend your resources to a place, day after day after day, it's like ridiculousness. And, and it was so foggy that the only thing that we could see was a very small part of the, you know, really tiny part of the sea in front of us, below the cliff. And they insisted that we stay, you know. And I'm like, ‘This is stupidness’. This is really stupidness. It was raining, too. And it was cold. And it's like, oh no, this is just beyond the pale. And, and so people get locked into their thing and you know and I think okay, maybe, you know, all these people will save one life, you know, but it… I mean, there's so much need, there's so much need that to be wasting, you know, hours and hours and hours of volunteer time and who knows how much money and just spinning your wheels is, is to me, is ridiculous.

Responding the question whether she critically reflected upon her role as a volunteer, Rachel explained that one can only help those right in front of oneself but that it is people’s moral obligation to do whatever they can. When asked whether she might be interested in returning
to Greece later, Rachel said that lately she had started thinking about it, mostly because it seemed like such a nice place compared to the time she had at the Mexican-Guatemalan border, where she volunteered as well.

6.2.1.3 Marie

At 22, Marie is already an outspoken left-wing political activist, who studies in a small town in Germany. She volunteered three times in a squatted hotel in Athens, which is inhabited by some 250 residents, refugees and volunteers alike, since the financial crisis in Greece.

With the arrival of migrants and asylum seekers in Germany in 2015, Marie started volunteering locally with a student initiative, where she continues to run a women’s café for refugees, which she initiated with a friend of hers; an experience that allowed her to feel confident about and prepared for her time in Greece. During the 2018 summer break, “I really wanted to do something nice during my holidays, so I was looking for a new challenge, more or less”. When a potential internship did not work out, she learned about the squatted hotel from a friend and decided to leave spontaneously within one week. She stressed: “But my motivation was definitely to just see a different country and like… a more European view of the situation and to be closer to the real… like emergency. So, it’s very different… I mean in Greece, you know, to that, that in Germany”.

Although she did not have too many expectations, she was aware of the political implications of the association and the radical left-wing political views of most of its volunteers, some of which associate themselves with the Antifa movement. And although “of course it’s pretty cool to live in a squatted house for a while, you know. It’s like the ultimate thing to do if you’re a leftwing person”, she still reflected a lot upon the legal implications of her presence there.

What I thought about a lot was that… you know, it’s an occupied hotel. So, I really thought about what is going to happen if I got evicted when I’m there. What’s my situation then?

That was something I actually contacted a lawyer about before I went.

Her day-to-day responsibilities included up to three hours of security and kitchen shifts a day, which left the volunteers overall with a lot of free time to either hang out with residents, explore Athens, “stroll around outside, maybe drink a coffee…” or to go out at night. Still, Marie described her time as “an extreme experience”: “You’re surrounded by people all the time. It’s not like, I mean, of course the work is repetitive at some point if you cook every day. That’s not very exciting. But it’s more like you’re never alone”; a feeling that she described to be at times very overwhelming. Throughout the interview, Marie stressed the strong community
feeling that exists among volunteers in the hotel. This strong feeling was also a motivation for Marie to return twice and she described her experience of being remembered when she returned with shining eyes.

It’s like the best thing that happened to me ever. I think to be part of such a community and even… I mean, of course, there are conflicts and not everyone gets along with everyone but it’s just this feeling of solidarity and that we actually struggle together and we are all fighting for the same things. And… that’s just… you’re part of such a big family.

She further highlighted that she had experienced a cultural shock and felt overwhelmed when she travelled to Athens the first time, although she persisted that she never felt at risk.

I thought travelling within in Europe cannot be so different. I don’t know. Athens is just, you know, oh wow… it’s just very different. And the, the area where City Plaza is, it’s very, very different from all the tourist places. There are many migrants, many poor people, lots of drug addicts. And that really got me. And then, if you’re like a blond woman in Greece, it’s also a tough thing sometimes.

Repeatedly, Marie pointed to her changed behavior since her return from Greece: “I went to travel Australia after my graduation for half a year… didn’t change me like in comparison with my three weeks in September, it was like… you cannot even compare it. [...] If you have had the experiences I had… you cannot go back at some stage”. Her changed behavior also makes it harder for her now to volunteer locally, where she has the impression that other volunteers are lacking the European perspective.

I wouldn’t say it [the time in Greece] radicalized me… definitely not… but like, I have very strong opinions on things now… [...] And that is kind of hard for me at the moment to… to deal with people who haven’t experience that because I’m not flexible anymore in terms of what parties you can vote for and when people say ‘The CDU\textsuperscript{186} is not so bad’, I’m like, ‘Okay, what the fuck?’, like how can you even say that?!

She further described the volunteer time as an eye-opening experience about how privileged she is with her “small plastic card with my name on it and saying I’m German”, when she travelled with her Afghan friend, who was the only one stopped and checked at the airport security check. During her time in Athens, she also experienced the limits of what she could achieve, because “you cannot do so much. Like you really want to do a lot and you really want to save the world but it’s just not possible”.

\textsuperscript{186} The Christian Democratic Union (CDU) is a center-right conservative party in Germany’s parliament, which has been in government under Chancellor Angela Merkel since 2005.
6.2.1.4 Luca

Luca, an Italian student, who was 24 years old at the time of his volunteer engagement on Lesvos in 2016, spent eight weeks working for an organization in the north of the island. From the very start of the interview, Luca stressed his European citizenship and the responsibilities that come with it. He saw his volunteer time as a political statement against the EU’s response to the crisis, which he perceived as inhumane and wrong.

As a citizen of the European Union, I feel that we have the possibility to shape it, not only to live it. And so, I decided to do something. I had the possibility to have one free summer and I decided to volunteer. […] I feel that it's really shameful what we [the EU] are doing there and that we are tackling the issue from a short-term perspective and not a long-term perspective. That it’s inhumane to take people and to bring them into a prison, that is supposed to have few hundred people and put few thousand people in there and to leave them without any kind of explanation… to live there in dire conditions. I really believe in the European Union but I’m really, I'm really, really against what they're doing there right now and… I will always tell people that it's true that really a lot of bad things are happening around the world but we… sometimes we don't realize what is happening inside the European Union… right next to your door.

His main objective to volunteer was “wanting to do something”, to help others; however, he also acknowledged that this aspiration and his volunteer work ultimately shaped him and that it was a great personal experience through which he accomplished personal growth. Luca recognized that he “probably helped myself more than other people because I changed a lot in those months but I think that I do, I did… while I was working there, I always tried to look at things from their perspective and not from mine”.

Working with a lot of internationals, he stressed that he only had very few negative experiences, yet he voiced criticism at those who were coming there just to put the experience on Instagram. […]. A lot of people who arrived there, really wanted to be with the migrants and to see how the life of a refugee is or to have a more… a stronger experience. And so that’s something that I always found… kind of disappointing, because for some people you could see that they were there to live the experience for… because of the experience itself and not because of what the value of the actions were.

When asked about whether he had reflected critically about his role as a volunteer, he not only questioned his own motivations and behavior during his time in Greece towards those who
arrived, but also in regard to the local Greek population. Luca explained that while volunteers travel to Greece for a few months and are then able to leave and go about their daily lives, the Greek population, and particularly those on the islands, who are highly dependent on tourism, are “actually living the migration crisis because they are the people who are on the island every single day of their lives. [...] So that’s something that we should be… we should think about more carefully”.

Although his workload was not overwhelming per se, the fact that Luca knew what would happen to the people who arrived and who were overjoyed for having survived the sea crossing was emotionally draining.

The fact that we have to say to these people that now they are going to Moria, the detention center of the island, and you know they were going to stay in the center for months, if not years without knowing what was happening to them… that was emotional… that really changed me.

Guided by the new perspectives he gained as a volunteer in Greece, he started his Masters, focusing on international relations and migration. “Like when you read a paper or research about migration… you can still remember that what you are writing concerns people… it’s not up in the air”. Despite his personal learning, Luca argued that those lived experiences also allowed him to inform other people about it. Due to the current political discourse in Italy, where many people are critical towards immigration and pursue an ‘Italians-first’ mentality, Luca maintained that his experiences allowed him to visit schools and cultural centers and to tell people about his first-hand encounters. Initially unsupported by some of his family members on grounds that “there are many Italians, who are suffering, who are poor”, he said that having been able to show photos and tell stories allowed them to appreciate more what he did.

Altogether, he ended the interview on a hopeful and urging note, stressing that his time in Greece gave him hope in humanity.

You know that the persons that you're living the experience with are a certain kind of persons, not everybody's like that, but still, at the same time you can see that when they will be back in their countries, they will make a difference. They will make a difference. Hopefully!

6.2.1.5 Ines

Ines is a 35-year-old Spanish woman, who was the field coordinator for an organization in Lesvos in the summer of 2016 on a voluntary basis. Although her experience in Greece was
generally positive, throughout the interview, Ines repeatedly highlighted having been put in positions of having had to take drastic decisions about overwhelming situations that she was ill-equipped, untrained, or not prepared for. Her time in Greece also marked shortly after the signing of the EU-Turkey Statement in March 2016, which significantly changed the crisis’ characteristics and humanitarian response to it.

During her gap year, when travelling the world in 2015, she saw thousands of migrants and asylum seekers stuck at the Budapest train station on their way to northern European countries.

I was looking there and I was like: ‘Oh, I wish I could be the kind of person that is useful in this situation and not the one that is staring at them, like feeling pity’. So, I just went to the supermarket and came back with a lot of milk and stuff and feeling… like useless, I felt very useless.

She continued travelling and on top of the Himalayas, after having done “crazy stuff that I didn’t feel like I could do before”, she felt incredibly empowered and decided to be the person she wanted to be. Ines applied to become a volunteer in Greece and was originally thought of to be the coordinator for the organization’s ecological project, cleaning the beaches of life vests and dinghies and other items that migrants had left behind.

…but then I arrived and the field coordinator said: ‘You look very… kinda bored. So, good luck, I’m leaving’. Yes, so, I didn’t know anyone on the island or anything. There was nothing written down. I didn’t know where the coordination meetings were or which organizations were working or what was our area that we had to cover, what was our role on the island… there was no procedure about how to know if a boat was coming or not, you had to be lucky enough that someone would tell you and then you would look for yourself.

Thrown into the deep end, Ines was entirely dependent on locals and previous volunteers to explain her new position to her. During her time, the July 2016 military coup in Turkey took place. Ines described this event as one of her most memorable nights of her two and a half months on Lesvos.

We had a long day and it was twelve in the night and we were having beer, I think, and we were watching TV and there was, like fireballs. I received a call from the organization and they said: ‘There has been a coup in Turkey… there are supposed to be half a million people on the other shore that might cross tonight. If it’s gonna happen at any time of the history, it’s gonna be tonight’.
At that time, she was working with around 15 to 18 young volunteers, who had not been trained on night boat landings and the team was ill-equipped in terms of curial material required, such as blankets and torches. In the end, only one boat arrived the next morning and overall the situation remained under control.

In another incidence, she went against her organization’s protocol, which did not allow volunteers to head to a village in the north-west of the island, due to previous violent attacks by locals against volunteers, who they thought allured migrants to continue to arrive. However, after having been told by UNHCR that

…if you don’t come, no one goes… they [the migrants] are left alone, you are the only ones in the island… if you don’t come then no one is gonna be there and no one is gonna be spotting… so I’m like ‘Ok, I’ll go and I’ll probably find some more crazy people to join me’. But yeah, of course, this was stressful for me.

With time, she started to critically reflect upon her role as a volunteer on the island and discussed the topic in detail with a close friend she had met on Lesvos. The two debated about potentially staying longer and about their true intentions behind it:

… or were we just becoming addicted to the feelings: community, being joyful, doing something good?… You really feel, I really felt that for the first time in my life that I was in the place that I had to be and that’s a powerful feeling… it’s addictive, I think.

Despite her overall positive descriptions about her time on Lesvos due to her personal growth and the strong social bonds, she also acknowledged her feeling of being overwhelmed and overworked. “It was like a 24/7 job that you are happily to… that you don’t feel it’s a job, it’s your life. It’s demanding. I remember to feel exhausted, that I only had one free evening that I took for myself in two and a half months… like 3, 4 hours that I was not working”. She continued:

I was too emotionally attached to the island, to the people, to the job, to everything. Like, way too much. And that was not good. It’s not good for my health and in the end, it’s not good for all the people here. It was a mistake of my character that I couldn’t control, it was so overwhelming, everything was so overwhelming. If I went back, I would try to meditate more or try to take a little more free time, that might have been useful, maybe.

Due to the heavy burden of her responsibility of having to be on guard at all time and being called out of bed for boat arrivals at night, she slept with the radio next to her head. Returning home, Ines said she felt lost, describing her feelings as “very powerful… […] it was difficult
to find meaning in some stuff that you found meaning before… and so, for example, I didn’t want to go back to my job… I needed a new career”.

6.2.1.6 Anna

The 32-year-old, Austrian anthropologist Anna volunteered in Greece three times, twice in a camp on the mainland with an NGO in autumn 2017 and spring 2018, as well as once on Lesvos island at the community center in the winter of 2018. Her interview was particularly characterized by her openness to address stress factors and her adopted coping strategies of how to tackle sentiments of overwhelming feelings and potential burnout.

Having gotten involved in the local response to the ‘refugee crisis’ in Vienna in 2015, Anna aspired to become a professional humanitarian aid worker. Based on recommendations of career aid workers in Jordan to gain a European perspective on migration response first, she started volunteering in Greece. She wanted to understand what was happening at Europe’s doorstep and to see it with her own eyes. Northern Greece seemed like the easier choice as a way for her into the field, as she assumed it to be calmer and not as tough and chaotic as the situation on the Aegean islands.

When asked, whether she reflected on her role, she specified that she did not do so before her arrival to Greece but that she had thought about it a lot since.

I really asked myself: Is this really helpful what I’m doing here? Can I really make a difference for the people here? […] In the long run, does it really make sense to go abroad as a volunteer? Or would it be better to make a difference at home? Because we have a lot of refugees in Austria.

She stressed the need to be aware of volunteers’ role as they are not going

…to save the world and you can’t change the situation for refugees. You can give your time and you can spend time helping them to have at least a couple of hours when they can relax, when they can do something different, you can share your skills, but you won’t change the situation and you have to be fully aware of that.

Anna elaborated that based on her experience, volunteer work in Greece in general entails a strong “hands-on mentality” by volunteers, a commitment to do as much as possible, much like “jumping into the cold water and just go with the flow and try to swim. […] A lot of volunteers struggle with it because they need more instructions and more briefings on how to do it specifically”.

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Through personal encounters with migrants and asylum seekers, she heard horrific and traumatizing stories about crimes, torture, rape, and losses of family members.

It would have been enough to just hear his story but seeing the bruises on his body really made it real somehow. And I really, I had, I… I started crying really when I heard his story. This was really hard to deal with.

Anna explained that she found it difficult to tell people at home about her experiences. She said, she eventually stopped talking to friends who had not volunteered themselves and consulted a professional psychologist instead, who offered consultations for volunteers free of charge.

Of course, they’re interested and they ask you questions but once you start telling stories, you… they have this strange expression on their face that they don’t really understand what you’re talking about.

During her time in Greece, she also had the possibility to participate in a free four-hour workshop on self-care for volunteers, run by two retired psychologists with years of experience in working with traumatized refugees. The workshop allowed Anna to learn helpful strategies on how to deal with new situations and on how to be aware of her bodily signals when she was feeling stressed, such as sleeping or eating disorders, feeling physically exhausted, or overreacting.

Anna further elaborated that she thinks particularly short-term volunteers are prone to work until they are entirely exhausted. Due to their limited time in Greece, they aspire not to miss a single moment and to work as much as possible, resulting in a complete ignorance of taking time for themselves.

If your body tells you that you should step back because you’re tired, you can’t eat, you can’t sleep, you ignore them because, ‘Oh, I’m just here for three weeks. I have to stay there because all of the people can deal with the situation perfectly. So, I have to do this too’. There’s a lot of pressure put on yourself, I guess, that you have to be in the field, and don’t step back.
7. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Building on the presented results to the survey questionnaire and the material gathered through the qualitative interviews, this chapter discusses the findings. The section is thereby particularly guided by the analytical framework to the study, intending to provide answers to the research questions by discussing the results with the help of the theoretical understandings of the functional, as well as the symbolic approach to the theory of motivation and its critical perspectives. To recall, the research questions to the study are as follows: (1) What are the socio-demographic characteristics of volunteers?, (2) What motivated internationals to volunteer in Greece?, (2.1) What incentivized volunteers to prolong their initial stay or to return to Greece?, and (3) Which challenges did international volunteers face?.

7.1 Social Profile of the Volunteers

Building on the results gathered through the survey questionnaire, the vast majority of volunteers in Greece are female, they are in the beginning of their twenties, college-educated, single, and from an affluent European middleclass that can afford to travel to Greece and work for free, financed by their personal income and/or savings. These results are also reflected in other scholarly articles. In informant Anna’s words: “It’s a privilege to go volunteering abroad. Not everyone can afford to stay there a specific amount of time. It costs a lot of money and you need free time”.

During her interview, Emma mentioned her surprise about the lack of men. “So, the majority of the camp is men and the majority of volunteers are women. That’s just interesting”. When asked about this aspect, Anna elaborated that she was not at all surprised about this as “volunteering is female... Maybe it’s a female thing to care about others, I don’t know. But it sure doesn’t surprise me at all”. In line with Mostafanezhad’s study, gender-traditional societal structures, as well as female celebrity humanitarians spark particular excitement among young women to volunteer abroad.

Of the non-Europeans, the majority of volunteers arrived based on recommendations and combined their volunteer work with tourism in Europe. Little over half of the population volunteered exclusively on the islands. The two interview informants who volunteered on the

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Greek mainland both stressed that they particularly chose not to work on the islands which they perceived as tougher, more stressful and overwhelming.

Being aware of volunteers’ general socio-demographic characteristics allows non-profit organizations to better target volunteers by using recruitment means that speak particularly to young, female students and that address their particular motivations and challenges as outlined below.

7.2 Motivations

7.2.1 Functional Approach

As to provide systematic insights into what motivated internationals to volunteer in Greece, the following sub-chapter makes use of Clary and Snyder’s Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) with its typical volunteer motivations of values, understanding, social, career, protective, self-enhancement, and community motivations.

7.2.1.1 Values Motivations

Across the comparison of the sample’s motivation, compassionate feelings toward those in need, such as being concerned about the situation of migrants and asylum seekers, and seeing volunteering as a moral obligation continuously scored highest. These two motivations are clearly linked to the VFI motivation of values, which sees volunteering as an opportunity to express important values, such as altruism and humanitarianism. Volunteers of the sample population clearly highlight their desire to do good. Interestingly, only five respondents said that their religious belief influenced their desire to volunteer, which can also be included in the value factor section. Compared to popular academic literature, which generally maintains that volunteers tend to be rather religious\(^\text{189}\), the study’s findings do not support this claim. Nevertheless, the questionnaire did not include a question about people’s religious sentiments, which would have provided further insights at this point.

7.2.1.2 Understanding Motivations

The VFI’s understanding motivation, referring to the opportunity to learn new aspects and using typically unused skills, relates to people’s aspiration of wanting to learn through direct hands-on experiences, gaining overseas experience, exploring their own strengths, and learning how

to deal with a variety of different people. Of the four statements, more than half of the respondents agreed with and acknowledged that volunteering allowed them to gain new perspectives and that they learned new things through direct experiences. The other two motivations were significantly less substantial in motivating people to volunteer in Greece, however, they should not be disregarded. All in all, after the value factors, the understanding motivations scored second highest among all comparative analyses.

Particularly the data gathered from the interviews underlines how important the understanding motivations are to volunteers. Emma repeatedly stressed that her time on Samos allowed her to “learn things just by being there, you can’t really learn otherwise… you become a very useful person”, and Marie highlighted her motivation in learning new insights about the ‘refugee crisis’ from a more European point of view. Anna raised the motivation of having wanted to be there in order to see the situation with her own eyes and to ultimately better understand it. She elaborated: “If you want to get the bigger picture, you really need to get to know the people behind the statistical numbers because we always throw ‘the refugees’ into one pot”.

7.2.1.3 Social Motivations

Thirdly, social motivations, maintaining that volunteering provides social bonds and strengthens social relationships are reflected in the statement that people’s friends volunteer as well. Only 7.6 percent of the survey population agreed with this provided answer. Yet, when asked about motivations to prolong their stay in Greece, 42.1 percent approved the argument, as well as 21.4 percent of those who returned at a later point in time. These findings thus refer to the aspect that the vast majority of volunteers travelled to Greece on their own and were not initially incentivized to volunteer due to pre-established social bonds. However, friendships that were developed with people in Greece during their first time as volunteers significantly influenced volunteers’ decisions to prolong or return.

Emma and Marie in particular, and Ines to a lesser extent, strongly stressed the social bonds established and maintained during their time in Greece. Emma and Marie both made strong friendships with other volunteers and asylum seekers and continue to be in close contact with them. In their interviews, both of them specifically highlighted these social factors, having played crucial aspects in their motivation to return to Greece. In Emma’s NGO, everyone received a bracelet as a sign of being part of the group and Marie repeatedly referred to her co-volunteers as “an amazing big family”.

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7.2.1.4 Career Motivations

Further, the motivation that volunteering serves as a way to gain career relevant experiences, skills, and contacts, was mirrored in the responses that volunteering helps respondents advance their career, as well as that this work allows them to explore different career options. Only one out of five volunteers recognize these motivations as particularly important in their decision to volunteer. Nevertheless, of those who prolonged their stay, over half of the respondents acknowledged that one of their motivations was influenced by the factor that longer experiences would help them with their future career. For those who returned this aspect was also a reason to return to Greece. While Emma touched upon it, Anna particularly highlighted her aspiration to become a professional humanitarian in the future and having been guided by recommendations to gain first experiences through volunteer work in Greece. Both Marie and Luca were inspired by their volunteer time to take up Master studies that are addressing social inequalities and migration.

The fact that informants openly acknowledged their career aspirations in face-to-face interviews, while survey respondents did not do so in a more anonymous data gathering process is somewhat striking and possibly even unusual. One possible explanation may be that having been given several responses to choose from in the form of closed-ended question, respondents could directly compare all answers and weigh them against each other. In such comparison, altruistic motivations naturally score higher than self-centered ones, such as career objectives in order ‘to not look too selfish’. Yet, when simply asked what incentivized informants to volunteer in Greece, the interviewees may have mentioned the ambition that came first to their mind.

7.2.1.5 Protective Motivations

The protective motivation of the VFI addresses the idea that volunteering reduces negative feelings such as guilt and lingering personal problems. Only 6.1 percent of the respondents agreed. Yet, 60.5 percent of the international volunteers who returned, admitted having been guided by their feeling of guilt for having been able to go about their daily lives while the migrants and asylum seekers they worked with had to stay in Greece. Half of those who returned agreed as well. These numbers clearly indicate that protective motivations very well play a role in people’s decisions to volunteer in Greece. Again, as for the social motivations, previous volunteer engagements in Greece significantly increased such aspirations due to having been able to establish personal connections and relationships with migrants. During the interview, Ines particularly pointed out that she felt guilty for being ‘useless’ when she first met stranded
migrants and asylum seekers in Hungary. Based on that feeling, she decided to become a volunteer in Greece. Although protective motivations could be detected indirectly, Ines was the only one particularly articulating these types of motivations.

### 7.2.1.6 Self-Enhancement Motivations

Self-Enhancement motivations relate to the assumption that volunteering leads to personal growth and self-fulfillment. Naturally a more self-centered motivation, one-fourth of the sample population agreed with the statement that volunteering made them feel needed. Additionally, half of the international who prolonged recognized that their time in Greece had allowed them to feel good about themselves, as well as that they had experienced personal growth and increased self-fulfillment; all of which were feelings that they desired to relive. These emotions are particularly well-mirrored in Ines’ comment about having become ‘additive’ to the feeling of joy and feeling needed.

Emma also highlighted that one of her motivations to continue to return to the same organization three times was the possibility to ‘grow’ and to gradually being trusted with greater responsibilities. These thoughts can also be detected in Luca’s account of

> …how grateful they were for something that for us was nothing. Because we… we were not giving our stuff. We were there and like… this experience that for us was like an occasion to enrich ourselves. But for them was like something… really, really… the best thing that could happen to them in that moment, it was us. And there was really something.

Although he acknowledges that he did not have a lot to offer, his experience that those arriving were grateful for volunteers’ presence, resulted in an increased feeling of his own self-fulfillment.

### 7.1.2.7 Community Motivations

Community motivations maintain that volunteering serves as a way to express concern for people close to one’s community. The aspect of European solidarity scored highest among all samples, when asked about why volunteers chose Greece over other migration crises hotspots. In addition, all informants but Rachel highlighted strong aspirations of having volunteered in Greece to support the local Greek population. Further, volunteers saw their work in the ‘European refugee crisis’ as a political statement and civic duty. Many of these aspects were particularly vocalized by Luca and Marie, both of who do not agree with the EU’s response to the crisis. Emma also pointed out her discomfort with Brexit; for her, volunteering in Greece was not only motivated to escape from the ‘Brexit bubble’ but also to take a stance against the
UK’s restrictive immigration policies. Marie and Luca also saw their volunteer action as an active stance against the EU’s policies. Although Rachel did not particularly point out these aspects, she did repeatedly indirectly voice clear criticism against the US Government and President Trump’s anti-immigration stance.

For Luca, the community factor also included educating his own community about his experiences. He repeatedly stressed that his volunteer engagement not only shaped him and taught him, but that this increased knowledge ultimately further aided his community in Italy through his storytelling about his time in Greece. His motivation was thus to cater to his community by being able to provide insight experiences and knowledge upon his return.

Altogether, the analysis of volunteers’ motivations is in line with the popular discussion on altruistic versus egoistic motivations. Instead of this black-and-white truism, scholars acknowledge volunteers’ tendency to adopt more fluid motivational positions among the spectrum between altruism and egoism. Although altruistic and humanitarian motivations are mentioned by the vast majority of respondents as their motivation for having volunteered, other more self-centered motivations are also acknowledged. This clearly indicates that volunteers’ motivations are diverse, fluid, and placed somewhere among a spectrum between altruistic and more self-centered incentives. In Emma’s words: “I think you can’t deny the selfish reasons for doing it [volunteering]. I think it’s important to make clear on my part, at least I think… I think a lot of my motivation was selfish…”. Nevertheless, these career, self-enhancement, or social motivations, particularly in close combination with humanitarian aspiration, are not less valid and must be openly addressed and recognized by organizations.

7.2.2 Symbolic Approach

In contrast to the functional approach, the symbolic approach to volunteer motivation maintains that people’s motivations are inherently influenced by their socio-demographic characteristics. Although such analyses generally involve more demographic characteristics than this study adopted, the scope of this research included four aspects: gender, age, European citizenship, and people’s volunteer location. While the latter two sub-sample’s motivations do not display major differences to the overall sample, dividing the responses by gender and age reveals aspects that are in line with academic literature on volunteer motivations.

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190 Hustinx, “Individualization and New Styles of Youth Volunteering: An Empirical Investigation”. 
Dividing respondents’ answers by gender, the comparative analysis illustrates that volunteers’ motivations indeed differ slightly. Besides the altruistic factors, which both genders consider as most important, females are also driven by their desire to gain new perspectives and explore their strengths, whereas males want to learn new skills and to gain overseas experiences. Throughout the literature, scholars such as Gillespie and King\(^\text{191}\) have recognized that men are twice as likely to give ‘obtaining job training and skills’ as a reason for volunteering compared to women. Although Anderson’s research\(^\text{192}\) dates back to 1978 when different societal gender roles were present, his conclusion that women often engage in volunteer work for self-fulfillment and personal development to feel useful and needed, seems to still reflect such aspects of societal expectations of traditional gender roles of women as nurturers. Anna concluded that ‘volunteering is female’, seemingly implying that it comes more natural to females to volunteer as they tend to care more about their social environment and are willing to devote more of their free time for such causes.

Dividing the sample by age further reveals motivational differences, except for altruistic motivations, which score highest among both sub-samples. Those volunteers, who are 28 years or younger are particularly incentivized by understanding and career motivations, namely acquiring new relevant skills, as well as advancing their career. Older volunteers, on the other hands, are motivated by self-enhancement and understanding ambitions as every forth volunteer agrees with the statement that volunteering let them feel needed, and almost half of the sub-population wished to explore their own strengths. Interestingly, literature oftentimes argues that older volunteers are less likely to be motivated by self-enhancement or personal development factors\(^\text{193}\) which is not reflected in this study’s results. This differing conclusion may be due to the selection of sub-samples. Generally, when dividing by age, older volunteers start at the age of 55 and above. However, due to the vast majority of this sample being 28-years-old or younger, these conclusions provide some valuable insights, yet should be analyzed with caution.

Overall, the findings of the comparative analysis of sub-samples are in line with the symbolic approach of theory of motivation which argues that given people’s distinct demographic attributes, their motivations and (more importantly) their understandings of their motivations differ among distinct social groups. The comparative analysis of the sample data therefore

\(^{191}\) Gillespie and King, “Demographic Understanding of Volunteerism”, p. 806.
\(^{193}\) Ibid., 3.
underlines the need not to understand the functional and the symbolic approaches to the theory of motivation as mutually exclusive, but rather, as outlined in this thesis, to build an analytical framework which combines the two approaches.

7.3 Challenges

Generally, the volunteers’ experiences in Greece are positive. A vast majority of the respondents are satisfied with the work of their organization and ultimately with their own work. Nevertheless, the findings about people’s experiences in Greece also reveal that one-third of the population experienced sentiments of feeling at times overwhelmed and stressed. The most significant factors having contributed to these feelings are the workload, heavy burdens of responsibility, lack of time to reenergize, lack of managerial support, as well as conflicts among volunteers.

One in five volunteers also recognized that they had different expectations, a sentiment which Rachel clearly displays. Having had assumed that many boats were still arriving, she grew increasingly frustrated when this was, to her understanding, not the case. During the time she was there, I was working on the island as well. The weeks she highlighted actually saw an unusual high amount of boats arriving for this time of year. On New Year’s Eve 2018 alone, 174 people arrived in one night.

7.3.1 Low Personal Accomplishment

Recalling the Maslach Burnout Inventory and its three indicators of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low personal accomplishment, the latter refers to feelings of incompetence, low assertiveness and self-esteem, and ineffectiveness. Overall, the sample population did not display symptoms of low personal accomplishment. Instead, the vast majority of four out of five volunteers stated that they felt satisfied or very satisfied with the work they did and accomplished in Greece. The interviewees further underlined these results, all of which stated having felt content with what they had achieved. Still, several informants acknowledged the limits of what they could do and recognized having felt restricted in their accomplishments due to the lack of funding, resources available, or time, yet no one indicated having been unsatisfied with their work.
7.3.2 Emotional Exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion includes the loss of energy, physical and psychic exhaustion, and feelings of being worn out and powerless. Although such feelings are difficult to examine through quantitative data gathering, the survey results identified a lack of sufficient time to reenergize as one of the major stressors for volunteers. Particularly Ines’ account of working two and a half months without a break exemplifies this notion. Interestingly, Emma’s experience was that particularly long-term volunteers were prone to feeling physically exhausted and without any energy after several months, as they are asked to gradually take over more responsibilities and would find themselves in situations that they often could not decline. These obligations also include having to take decisive decisions about who would get to access a service, or in the case of Luca, about having to tell those arriving that they would be indefinitely detained on the islands. Emma in particular underlined feeling overwhelmed as she had put very high expectations onto herself and wanted to live up to those; a phenomenon many long-termers experience. On the other hand, Anna argued that long-term volunteers actually have the possibility to take days off, since they are less in the mental mindset of having to work non-stop due to rather short stays in Greece, as short-term volunteers oftentimes perceive it.

Certain volunteer activities such as search and rescue missions on the sea or assisting those who arrive by boat require volunteers to be awake in a blink of a second and to significantly cut down on their sleep. Physical exhaustion is a widespread challenge among volunteers in Greece. Anna and Marie emphasized that although their work on the mainland was not physically demanding, they felt out of energy every night, as working without breaks during the day and constantly being surrounded by lots of people was tiring. Except for Rachel, the other five informants also shared housing with their fellow volunteers, oftentimes even rooms, which further results in a lack of private refuge to be alone, reflect, and process.

7.3.3 Depersonalization

Negative attitude toward others, distancing, irritability, and callousness toward the people one is serving are indicators of depersonalization; a behavior Anna recognized a lot in herself and in other volunteers. She recalled several instances when volunteers overreacted in specific situations due to physical and emotional exhaustion. Although negative attitudes toward others generally did not result in bad behavior towards migrants and asylum seekers, having constantly felt stress and having been ‘on the edge’, as well as simply due to having been surrounded by others around-the-clock, led to conflicts among the volunteers. Almost 40 percent of the survey
respondents recognized such disputes as factors for having felt uneasy during their time in Greece. Marie mentioned such frictions three times during her interview, however, always dismissed it as minor things and provided explanations. As volunteering is generally perceived as assisting others, negative outcomes or even conflicts are generally not associated with it and are often not addressed directly.

Regardless of people’s duration of their volunteer commitments or the activities they were performing, stress emerges when individuals’ personal coping strategies to a specific incident or chronic situations are exceeded\(^\text{194}\). It is therefore important to recognize that people’s thresholds are very different and are individually dependent on the ability to adopt coping strategies and previous experiences. Some volunteers might reach this point after two weeks of working without a break, while other may be able to cope for longer. Coping strategies adopted seem to have been an increased smoking consumption, as well as for some, extensive drinking of alcohol as Emma acknowledged. Other strategies included ‘escaping’ the everyday responsibilities to a day at the beach, making music, being alone, and processing events through talks with other volunteers who experienced similar emotions.

7.3.4 Returning Home

As already touched upon in the chapter on the effects of volunteering, volunteering abroad may come with the experiences of ‘deculturation’\(^\text{195}\) or ‘cross-cultural readjustment’\(^\text{196}\), which entail the emotions of feeling trapped between two cultural settings upon people’s return home. The six informants in particular raised those issues, with several of them having had experienced troubles finding meaning in their everyday life and conversations upon their return; an aspect Marie extensively elaborated upon. Anna described her experience of returning as a ‘culture shock’ and half a year after her return she acknowledges to not fully having been able to process her entire experiences. Emma recalled having felt lost for several months and of not knowing what to do with herself, which was also experienced by Ines, who started a new career after her return.

Although experiences of volunteers are generally positive and internationals continue to refer to their time in Greece as ‘the time of their lives’, the emotional and physical consequences are


\(^{195}\) Kagitcíbasi, “Alienation of the outside: the plight of migrants”.

\(^{196}\) Adler, “Re-entry: Managing cross-cultural transitions”.

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rarely being addressed, but are widespread and very present. The discussion reveals that one out of four volunteers felt overwhelmed frequently or very frequently, with half of the sample population having felt so at least sometimes. The interviews further underline and outline the longer-term mental health consequences of people’s volunteer commitments which may have significant consequences for longer period of times. Despite the widespread occurrence of such stressing factors which might lead to burnout, hardly any organization provides support to their volunteers during and after their time in Greece.
8. CONCLUSION

8.1 Summary of the Findings

8.1.1 Socio-demographic Characteristics
The analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data presents a clear picture of typical socio-demographic characteristics of internationals who volunteer in Greece. Generally, these volunteers are young, female students who tend to stay for one or three months, distributing clothes and providing educational services. They have experiences of living abroad, have volunteered before locally or internationally, and come to Greece on their own. Their stay in Greece is generally financed through personal income. Although the majority of volunteers are European, a considerate number of internationals also travel from the United States and Australia to assist in the humanitarian response. Typically, but not necessarily so, those individuals combine their volunteer work with tourism in Europe.

8.1.2 Motivations to Volunteer in Greece

8.1.2.1 Functional Approach to Volunteer Motivations
Building on the presented data and the study’s analytical framework, the research reveals that people’s motivations to volunteer in Greece are first and foremost altruistic and humanitarian. Nevertheless, more self-centered motivations, including the desire to understand and to learn more about the ‘European refugee crisis’ and to acquire hands-on skills are also prominent ambitions among the volunteers. A considerate number of internationals also acknowledged that volunteering helped them in their future career and in finding career options. Fourthly, an important sentiment, particularly among European volunteers is their motivation of a community feeling and the perceived obligation as EU citizens to take a political stance against the EU’s response to the crisis as part of a wider European solidarity movement.

Besides the altruistic motivations of generally wanting to do good, volunteers main incentives in prolonging their activities in Greece and/or in returning are social motivations. Although these ambitions are not detrimental in deciding to volunteer in Greece in the first place, they are a crucial factor in both prolonging and returning as a volunteer. Interview informants repeatedly stressed the strong social ties and bonds they built with people they met in Greece and every third volunteer continues to be in close contact with their friends on a weekly basis since their return back home.
Moreover, protective motivations, which are desires to reduce guilt over being more fortunate than others also play a crucial role in volunteers’ motivations to return or prolong. The difference between initial motivations and incentives for returning or prolonging can be explained by acknowledging that having built social bonds, not only with other volunteers but also with migrants and asylum seekers, allows volunteers to engage in direct and personal encounters. This enables them to get to know ‘the person behind the numbers’, thus developing emotional connections and emotions, including feeling guilty for being able to leave and simply going about their daily lives while the migrants and asylum seekers have to stay.

Although self-enhancement motivations of achieving personal growth and increased self-fulfillment are also recognized by one-fourth of the sample population before their first volunteer engagement in Greece, these motivations are significant in people’s motivations to return or prolong. Having had the chance to experience such positive emotions, volunteers have a strong desire to relive them.

As such, the research’s findings are in line with the idea that volunteer motivations cannot simply be classified in exclusive altruistic or egoistic terms, but should be seen as diverse, multifaceted, fluid, and situated among a spectrum between the two extremes. While altruistic motivations remain the most important incentives for internationals to volunteer in Greece, the other, more self-serving motivations must also be recognized and must not be regarded as less valid.

8.1.2.2 Symbolic Approach to Volunteer Motivations

Taking people’s distinct socio-demographic characteristics into consideration illustrates that motivations are indeed not naturally given but influenced by individuals’ distinct features. The research reveals that females and males differ in their motivations to volunteer in Greece. While both genders identify understanding motivations as second most important to altruistic ones, females are more inclined to volunteer to gain new perspectives and explore their own strengths, while males desire to learn new skills and to gain overseas experiences. This phenomenon has been explained due to traditional societal gender-roles, which, recalling the ‘typical’ characteristics of volunteers in Greece, are still present in today’s Western societies.

Dividing the sample by age, further highlights that motivations vary among different age groups as younger volunteers are particularly incentivized by career and understanding motivations, as compared to older volunteers, who have strong self-enhancement and understanding aspirations.
Overall, the findings of the comparative analysis of sub-samples are in line with the symbolic approach to the theory of motivation, therefore underlining the need not to understand the two approaches to the theory of motivation as exclusive but rather to allow them to build onto and to complement each other.

### 8.1.3 Challenges Faced by Volunteers in Greece

Building on the outlined analytical framework, the analysis of the mix methods research demonstrates that volunteers are overall very satisfied with the experiences they are having in Greece and with the work they are conducting.

Still, sentiments of feeling overwhelmed and stressed are widespread and common among volunteers. The study reveals that stressors are particularly related to people’s workloads, too heavy burdens of responsibility, lack of sufficient time to reenergize, lack of managerial support, as well as conflicts among volunteers. Although volunteers do not display low personal accomplishment, as the vast majority of survey respondents and interviewees are very satisfied with the work they accomplish, they demonstrate strong degrees of emotional exhaustion and depersonalizations, two stress indicators that may lead to burnout. The emotional state of feeling lost, isolated, and directionless is further highlighted by many of the informants, who ended up consulting professional help, started new careers, or are still in the phase of allowing themselves to process the experienced.

### 8.2 Recommendations

Following the conclusion of the study’s results and feedback from interview informants, key recommendations should be considered by non-profit organizations operating in Greece to improve their future recruitment processes and to better match volunteers’ expectations with their needs. This will ultimately provide better targeted aid.

#### 8.2.1 Pre-departure Process

The interviews revealed that five of the six informants chose the NGOs they worked with due to satisfying communication between the organization and the prospective volunteer prior to their arrival in Greece. Taking the time to respond to volunteers’ questions provides the internationals with the sufficient confidence before their departure for Greece. It is therefore also recommendable to set up a FAQ (frequently asked questions) section on the NGO’s
webpage, which prospective volunteers can be directed to. Answers could address basic questions including which vaccinations are needed, what to bring, how to get to the organization, and what accommodation possibilities are available.

During the application process, volunteers should be provided with the space to openly address their (diverse and multiple) motivations in wishing to volunteer in Greece. The organization’s information handout should include a detailed description of the specific day-to-day tasks that volunteers perform in order not to create wrong expectations. Further, it should include an explanation of the NGO’s role in the area and its limitations in terms of its actual humanitarian outcomes. Outlining volunteers’ tasks and duties further provides those interested in volunteering with the opportunity to specifically outline matching skills and expertise. This does not only increase efficiency and efficacy of the organization’s work but will also increase volunteers’ satisfaction.

The application process should include requiring volunteers to provide a criminal record certificate, official credentials and certificates should they be relevant to the volunteer task, such as medical certificates for medical volunteers. Moreover, all volunteers should be asked to take a comprehensive online training prior to their arrival in Greece. Many of them are offered online for free and introduce the volunteers to basic humanitarian principles, the Code of Conduct, as well as to protection risks.

8.2.2 During the Volunteer Engagement

The analysis revealed many of the stress indicators evolve around the workload, conflicts, insufficient time to relax, or a lack of managerial support. Every organization should have a designated volunteer coordinator, whose responsibilities include ensuring a proper induction of new volunteers to the project and to the rest of the team. This individual should be specifically recruited instead of being promoted. Oftentimes long-term volunteers are asked to gradually take over more responsibilities and take up higher positions, some of which they are not trained for which may lead to volunteers’ burnouts, conflicts among the group, and ineffective aid deliveries.

Further, team meetings should be held on a regular basis and in a professional manner. Volunteer coordinators should be trained to address conflicts among the volunteer group openly, respectfully, and directly. Oftentimes, stress and physical exhaustion may push people
to their breaking points and small misunderstandings end up causing conflicts. Frictions among volunteers must be solved quickly before provided services may end up being impaired.

A volunteer coordinator’s tasks moreover entail ensuring that volunteers have clear schedules with designated times to reenergize, away from the camps or other activities. Mental health consequences, as well as sentiments of feeling overwhelmed and stressed should be discussed openly. Further, self-care trainings and workshops should be provided to volunteers on a regular basis. Such trainings are delivered by several NGOs, who are specialized on self-care for volunteers and are provided free of charge.

8.2.3 After the Volunteer Engagement

Previous volunteers oftentimes have specific motivations to return to Greece, as outlined in this thesis. And though many may not return, NGOs should actively build on these established social bonds for advocacy purposes, to generate donations, and to attract new volunteers. It is therefore recommendable to ask volunteers to join a newsletter emailing list, which continues to send out regular updates about the NGO’s work, including calls for volunteers and donations. Asking former volunteers to join a closed Facebook group, which allows internationals to stay in contact is also an effective solution. Through occasionally uploading photos and posting updates, volunteers continue to be engaged in the work with the organization and may be motivated to return. Lastly, setting up a ‘buddy system’, which connects former and current volunteers to prospective ones allows people to stay in close contact with each other, to learn from previous experiences, and to support each other.

8.3 Future Research

Given the study’s limitations, not every aspect of volunteers’ motivations, experiences, and challenges in Greece could be taken into considerations. Thus, future research could adopt a more long-term comparative study of motivational changes among volunteers given the year they volunteered in Greece. Research questions could therefore address aspects such as whether motivations among volunteers who arrived in 2015 differed to those who had been to Greece the first time in 2018. Further, a more politically focused research could address the aspect of European solidarity as a main motivation to volunteer in Greece.

While this research’s incentive was to explore people’s motivations and experiences as to allow for a better targeted recruitment and ultimately a better humanitarian aid, the study did not
actually examine the effectiveness of community-led organizations’ work in Greece in response to the ‘European refugee crisis’. Recalling the outlined disputes among organizations, as well as between established humanitarian actors and small NGOs, research is needed to analyze whether the provided humanitarian aid is in line with the Sphere Standards and successfully addresses humanitarian needs. In addition, a more comparative research design could study the collaboration among different grass-roots organizations in Greece as to determine possible ways to achieving greater efficiency.

Lastly, research from a purely psychological perspective is necessary as to investigate the short and long-term mental health implications, including stress, traumatic events, burnout, and possible even PTSD of young volunteers who worked in Greece.