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Redefining Humanitarianism In the Making:

Grassroots/Volunteer Organisations in Samos (Greece)

Yaël Parrotta

THE GRADUATE INSTITUTE GENEVA

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Redefining Humanitarianism in the Making: Grassroots/Volunteer Organisations in Samos (Greece)

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Email: globalmigration@graduateinstitute.ch
Website: http://graduateinstitute.ch/globalmigration

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ABSTRACT

The “European Refugee Crisis” witnessed European states adopting specific policies aimed at securitising and externalising of the bordering of migration. One of their main consequences resulted in the creation of “hotspots” where living conditions and rights of “people on the move” quickly started to deteriorate. As a result, civilian movements, and later on grassroots/volunteer organisations which are the focus of this paper, stepped into the humanitarian void left by states and traditional actors and soon reshaped the way humanitarianism was understood and practised. Drawing on the work done in the field of critical humanitarian studies and building on interviews and active participation during six weeks of fieldwork, this paper argues that looking at the humanitarian practices of such organisations in the specific context of the Samos hotspot (Greece), allows us to go beyond some of the structural and underlying flaws of traditional humanitarianism and to redefine it.

KEYWORDS

Humanitarianism, Grassroots/Volunteer Organisations, Migration, Refugees, Crisis, Hotspot

BIOGRAPHY

Yaël Parrotta graduated in September 2020 with a Master degree in International Affairs from the Graduate Institute in Geneva. During her studies, she mainly did research on conflict transformation, humanitarian practices and migration issues. She is currently working as an academic intern at the Humanitarian Diplomacy Section at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). She is particularly interested in issues related to humanitarian or peacebuilding policies both relevant in migratory and protracted conflict contexts.

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Choukran, Tashakor, Merci!

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AO - Asylum Office

ARSIS - Association for the Social Support of Youth

AS - Asylum Service

ASF - Avocats Sans Frontières

EASO - European Asylum Support Office

EU - European Union

FRONTEX - Frontières extérieures - Agence Européenne pour la gestion de la coopération opérationnelle aux frontières

FRC - First Reception Center

IOM - International Organization for Migration

IRC - International Rescue Committee

METAdrasi - Action for Migration and Development

MSF - Médecins Sans Frontières

NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organizations

NGO - Non-governmental Organization

PRAKSIS - Programs of Development, Social Support and Medical Cooperation

RIC - Reception and Identification Center

RIS - Reception and Identification Service

SV - Samos Volunteers

UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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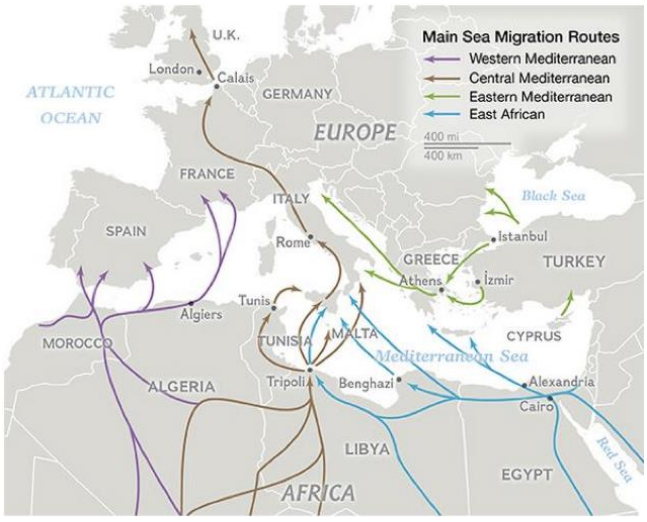
1. GROUNDING THE RESEARCH

> "If we are to talk of crisis, it is more useful to talk of the very visible crisis in European values and responsibilities" (Burrell 2018, 46).

1.1 The "European Refugee Crisis" & the EU Securitization of Migration

With more than 1,032,408 land and sea arrivals in Europe through the Mediterranean migration routes (see Figure 1) in 2015[1], the "European Refugee Crisis", as it was then labelled by the media and political actors (Burrell et Hörschelman 2019, 46), had started. This 2015 peak was the result of older and longer trends that started to surge in 2011 following the onset of the Arab Spring and the flight of thousands of Tunisians to Italy; the 2011-2012 related collapse of Tunisian and Libyan externalised controls opening the gates for thousands of Sub-Saharan Africans fleeing protracted conflicts and related economic insecurity, who were already present in those countries, to try to reach Europe (Pallister-Wilkins 2016, 1); the migration of millions of Syrians fleeing the civil war in Syria, and the continuous deterioration of living conditions for Afghans in Afghanistan and Iran. Moreover, Frontex - the European Border and Coast Guard Agency - created in 2004 and aiming to prevent and reduce illegal migration at the external borders of the EU, had already started its cooperative operations in the Mediterranean Sea in 2006[2].



(Figure 1. *Mediterranean Sea Routes*)[3]

[1] UNHCR. (2020). *Operational Portal Refugee Situation-Mediterranean Situation*. [online] Available at: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean [Accessed 16 April 2020].
[2] Frontex. (2006). *Frontex Annual Report* [on line]. Warsaw. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/200801/20080111ATT18445/20080111ATT18445EN.pdf , [Accessed 16 April 2020].
[3] IOM UN Migration. (2015). *The World's Congested Human Migration Routes in 5 Maps*. [on line] Available at: https://weblog.iom.int/world%E2%80%99s-congested-human-migration-routes-5-maps [Accessed 16 April 2020].

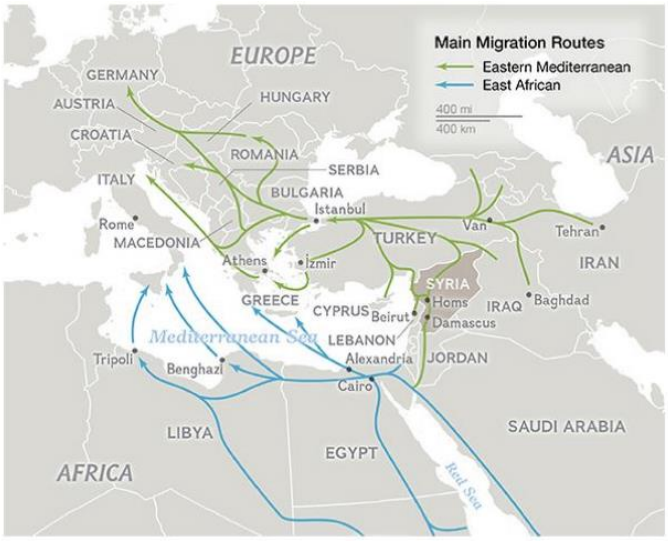
As some authors suggest, resorting to the notion of "crisis" was the most popular way of "describing arrival of people seeking refuge in Europe the past few years" (Ansems de Vries and Guild 2018, 3). This labelling was not apolitical but rather instrumentalised by agents such as governments, parties or media in order to designate the "Mediterranean as a particular type of space of intervention (…)" (Pallister-Wilkins 2016, 313). Resorting to "crisis" helped entrance into the world of "emergency" and portrayal of refugees as "threats" which, in turn, caused a response to this situation with solutions found above politics. Thus, the "crisisisation" of migration flows in the Mediterranean impacted not only the policies adopted by the EU to handle the situation at its Mediterranean borders, but also the delivery of humanitarian aid (Ticktin 2016, 262) as "with an expressed dual aim of 'saving lives and securing the external borders' (...) the EU (...) employing the language of emergency and humanitarianism, used this as an opportunity to crystallize over 20 years of EU policies aimed at the externalization of migration" (Davitti 2019, 1779). With the securitization of the European Fortress and the externalisation of bordering and migration (Bigo 2014; Huysmans 2006), emerged a "violence of indifference" to the fate and rights of migrants themselves (Bigo 2014) best exemplified by "the Left-To-Die Boat"[4] case of 2011.

1.2 Greece, the Hotspots System & Humanitarianism

Greece is part of the Eastern Mediterranean migration route (see Figure 2) which was already considered in 2014 to be for several years one of the most important gateways to reach Europe[5]. However, Greece was already receiving large numbers of migrants in the 1990s due to the Yugoslavian wars as it shares borders with Albania in the North. In the mid-2000s, however, migration shifted east via Greek and Turkish land and sea borders[6] and Greece became the epicenter of the Eastern Route as soon as Central European countries started to close their borders, with a decrease following mid-2016 due to the adoption of the EU-Turkey Statement (see section 4). As a result, since the beginning of the "crisis", Greece has received a total of approximately 1,199,787[7] people on the move, more than any of the other bordering countries. Facing the pressure put on certain receiving countries, one of the immediate

[4]Forensic architecture, *The Left-to-die Boat*. [on line] Available at: https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/the-left-to-die-boat
[Accessed 25 April 2020].
[5] FIDH - MIgreurop - REMDH. (2014). *Frontex - Entre Grèce et Turquie : La Frontière du Déni*. [on line], Available at:
http://www.migreurop.org/IMG/pdf/rapport_fr_grece_turquie_site-2.pdf [Accessed 25 April 2020].
[6]Angeli, D., Dimitriadi, A. and Triandafyllidou, A. (2014). *Assessing the Cost-effectiveness of Irregular Migration Control Policies in*
Greece. [on line], Available at: https://www.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/MIDAS-REPORT.pdf
[Accessed 25 April 2020].
[7] IOM. *Flow Monitoring*. [on line] Available at: https://migration.iom.int/europe?type=arrivals [Accessed 16 April 2020].

consequences of the securitization of migration and the externalisation of bordering in Europe was the creation of “hotspots” in 2015 (see Figure 3) with the launching of the European Agenda on Migration[8]. The initial idea was to help Italy and Greece “which were facing disproportionate migratory pressures at the EU’s external borders (...) to identify, register and fingerprint incoming migrants, channel asylum seekers into asylum procedures, implement the relocation scheme and conduct return operations”[9].



(Figure 2. *Eastern Mediterranean Route*)[10]

(Figure 3. *Hotspots in Greece and in Italy*)[11]

[8] Luyten, K. and Mentzelopoulou, M. (2018). *Hotspots at EU external borders - State of play*. [on line], Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/623563/EPRS_BRI(2018)623563_EN.pdf [Accessed 25 April 2020].

[9] European Council on Refugees and Exiles, (2020). *Reception and Identification Procedure Greece*. [on line] Available at: http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/asylum-procedure/access-procedure-and-registration/reception-and [Accessed 25 April 2020].

[10] IOM UN Migration. (2015). *The World’s Congested Human Migration Routes in 5 Maps*. [on line] Available at: https://weblog.iom.int/world%E2%80%99s-congested-human-migration-routes-5-maps [Accessed 16 April 2020].

[11] Luyten, K. and Mentzelopoulou, M. (2018). *Hotspots at EU external borders - State of play*. [on line] Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/623563/EPRS_BRI(2018)623563_EN.pdf [Accessed 25 April 2020].

Greece counts five hotspots in its five Aegean islands (see Figure 3). At first, Greece and its five hotspots were only transit spaces used by migrants in order to continue moving into Europe (Afouxenidis, Petrou, Kandylis, Tramountanis and Giannaki 2017, 15). However, with the adoption of the EU-Turkey Statement in March 2016, Greece shifted away from being a "transit country" (Afouxenidis, Petrou, Kandylis, Tramountanis and Giannaki 2017, 11) to become a "temporary residence"[12] for thousands of migrants. What followed this structural change is twofold. Firstly, migrants began to be blocked for several months or even years on the islands waiting for their status to be defined[13]. Secondly, it revealed the fact that governments were completely overwhelmed by this influx of people and the administrative duties linked to it because they were incapable or unwilling to deal with it[14]. Following this change, images and news about the disastrous conditions of migrants in the Greek hotspots started to emerge. The securitization and externalisation path chosen by the European Union to manage migration flows since 2015 and the humanitarian void (McGee and Pelham 2018, 22) left by traditional actors, paved the way for the emergence of a so-called "new humanitarianism" (Cantat and Feischmidt 2019, 380) where civil/local engagement (Vandevoordt and Verschraegen 2019, 48) and later on "grassroots/volunteer humanitarianism" (McGee and Pelham 2018, 22) emerged and challenged the way in which humanitarianism was practised (see section 2.4 & 2.5).

1.3 Situating the Research

This Master dissertation focuses on humanitarian practice in the context of migration on the island of Samos - one of the five Greek hotspots. It builds on the academic work done in the field of critical humanitarianism studies and more precisely about humanitarianism, its structural roots, and its contested political nature. It also builds on recent academic work since 2015 regarding the emergence of a new type of humanitarianism in the context of the "European Refugee Crisis" (see section 2.4 & 2.5). The fundamental aim of this research is to capture changes in the contemporary humanitarian world and to *understand how these new kinds of humanitarianism practices challenge some of the underlying flaws of traditional humanitarianism*.

In order to do so, I use Samos as a case study to try to understand what the current humanitarian action, as practised there, can tell us about humanitarianism as a whole and

[12] A Drop In the Ocean, *Samos* [online] Available at: https://www.drapenihavet.no/en/locations-3/samos/ [Accessed 11 November 2019].
[13] Amnesty International. (2017). *A Blue Print For Despair: Human rights impact of the EU-Turkey Deal* [on line] London: Amnesty
International ltd, Available at:
https://www.amnesty.ch/fr/themes/asile-et-migrations/forteresse-europe/docs/2017/consequences-desastreuses/170214_rapport-eu_turquie-1.pdf [Accessed 11 Nov. 2019].
[14] Collett, E. (2016). The Paradox of the EU-Turkey Refugee Deal. *Migration Policy Institute*, [online]. Available at: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/news/paradox-eu-turkey-refugee-deal [Accessed 11 Nov. 2019].

some of its challenges. I choose to look at Samos because hotspots - at least theoretically - are creating in their own structural condition a space of humanitarianism (see section 2.3). Moreover, as opposed to its well-known sister Lesbos, Samos has been less studied and mediatised. Finally, its configuration, its camp location and other factors differ from the rest of the Greek landscape (see section 4). Thus, it is of academic worth and relevance to see how, at the borders of Europe and in this context, humanitarianism is practised.

This dissertation tries to answer two questions in order to understand *how these new kinds of humanitarianism practices challenge some of the underlying flaws of traditional humanitarianism*, which are:

- *How does current humanitarian practice in Samos challenge the fundamental asymmetries of relationships in humanitarianism?*
- *How does the current humanitarian practice in Samos interact with politics?*

In order to answer those questions, I resort mainly to primary sources obtained during a six-weeks fieldwork period spent on the island of Samos (see section 3.1).

1.4 Structure of the Paper

The following section reviews the literature in the field of critical humanitarianism studies and highlights the most common criticisms of traditional humanitarianism and its practices. It also details the literature that has emerged since 2015 about the practice of humanitarianism in the context of the "European Refugee Crisis", thus giving the theoretical framework in which, I entrench this work. The third section presents the methodology used for this dissertation and my position as both an ethnographer and NGO volunteer in Samos. The fourth contextualises Samos to set the frame in which humanitarianism is practised. The fifth part consists of the analysis of what has been observed and experienced in the field, whilst the final part concludes the dissertation by answering the research questions and opening new pathways for further research in the field of humanitarianism studies in the context of migration.

2. NAVIGATING THE WORLD OF CRITICAL HUMANITARIANISM STUDIES

> "By virtue of their relative informality, spatial proximity and volunteer activism, [grassroots humanitarianism] not only stand in tension with the violent border sovereignties of neoliberal states, but open up the inchoate possibility for political struggle and refugee-centered claims-making over the right to inhabit the 'exceptional' space of the camp" (McGee and Pelham 2018, 22)

2.1 Critical Humanitarianism Studies

In the 1980s, following the rise of contemporary humanitarianism and its multiple failures in contexts such as concentration camps during World War II, the Biafran war, or following the increase of natural disasters, humanitarianism studies soon emerged as a proper academic field (Barnett and Weiss 2008; Fassin 2013, 43; Pries 2019, 10). Since that time, debates have characterised the field when trying to understand and define humanitarianism and its core components. Following this questioning, the field of critical humanitarianism studies soon emerged with the work of famous authors such as Didier Fassin, Ilana Feldman, Liisa H. Malkki, Miriam Ticktin or Craig Calhoun. In the frame of those critical studies, humanitarianism has been defined as being at the same time rational and emotional (Fassin 2013). Rational, in its application of universal principles and emotional, as it refers to personal sentiments and those related to the need to save others and mostly to save strangers (Fassin 2013, 38; Brun 2016, 394). Based on that conception, humanitarianism was often said to be focused on "short-term relief work aiming to save strangers' lives" (Brun 2016, 402).

2.1.1 Depoliticisation, Institutionalisation & Top-Down Structures

That relief-oriented definition of humanitarianism (Barnett 2005, 724) grounding its actions on principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality, supposedly rendered humanitarianism an apolitical species (Sinatti 2019, 140). In fact, humanitarianism's main goal was taught to be one of providing relief and saving the lives of people without taking into consideration the underlying causes or structural factors leading to the crisis, or trying to alter the order in which humanitarian action was delivered thus creating a "humanitarian space" isolated from politics (Barnett 2005, 724).

Apart from the supposedly depoliticised nature of humanitarianism, the second consequence of the core humanitarian principles' logic was that it established strong structural relations of inequality of lives and patterns of domination between the humanitarian worker providing the aid and the recipient of the aid (Fassin 2011; Fleischmann and Steinhilper 2017). This top-down structural feature of humanitarianism was also reinforced in the 1990s during the emergence of rationalising, bureaucratising, and professionalisation trends that emerged in the field due to donors' expectations (Barnett 2005, 729). In fact, the professionalisation and institutionalisation of humanitarianism (Sandri 2018; Sinatti 2019, 140), measuring impacts and the effectiveness of humanitarian aid as well as giving priority to organisations' survival and funding (Barnett 2005, 732-733), soon took the lead over solidarity and the fundamental ethics of care lying at the heart of humanitarianism and changed the dynamics in the way people receiving the aid were considered and subjectivised.

2.2 Subjectivisation & the Politicised Categorisation of "People on the Move"

When entering the field of migration study, the subjectivisation of the recipient of aid is even more strongly reinforced. In fact, as humanitarianism is thought to be focused on saving lives, migrants are categorised as mere recipients of aid, the ones who need to be saved or spared from suffering, stripped away from their historical and structural contexts (Malkki 1996), devoid of their political and social personality, and thus reduced to what has been theorised as a "bare life" (Agamben 1998; Sinatti 2019, 140) where only their biological life - "the life in the name of which they are given aid" - matters in opposition to their biographical life - "the life through which they could, independently, give a meaning to their own existence" (Brun 2016, 398, Fassin 2011). Hence, their condition is depoliticised (Malkki 1996; Sandri 2019, 140) and they are thought to be devoid of power and agency.

This kind of phenomenon, apart from the structural top-down feature of humanitarianism, is also made possible because of the normative and legal frameworks surrounding migration and the way in which "people on the move" are categorised. As emphasized by Sigona (2018): "how we label, categorize and, in turn, differentiate between those on the move (...) has enormous implications on the kind of legal and moral obligations receiving states and societies feel towards them." In the context of the "European Refugee Crisis", there has been a very strong tendency by media, politicians and even the general public to differentiate between "refugees" and "migrants" and to portray the latter as "economic migrants" or "illegal migrants" - and thus "bad migrants, motivated only by self-interests" (Pace and Severance 2016, 70). Such characterisations were used as a means to "justify policies of exclusion and containment" (Crawley and Skleparis 2018, 48), where migrants are deprived of their rights and decent living conditions. Despite the political construction and instrumentalised process of labelling (Zetter 2007), the problem with this categorisation between "migrants" and "refugees" or "voluntary" vs. "involuntary migration", that is also used and practised by some humanitarian actors, is that it fails to grasp the paradox and "complex social realities" behind decisions to leave (Bocco 1994, 14-15; Crawley and Skleparis 2018, 55; Zetter 2007, 175). It pictures migration as a "binary, static and linear process" not taking into account what happens in the "in-between" spaces of the migration journey (Crawley and Skleparis 2018, 55/59) but, most importantly, it produces a way of seeing the migrant stripped of his/her biographical life, reinforcing his/her depoliticisation and subjectivisation, which leads to the production and explicit, as well as tacit, acceptance of discriminatory and harmful policies or behaviours against them.

2.3 The Hotspot and the Camp As "Spaces of Exception"

Another factor adding to the depoliticisation and subjectivisation of migrants that was part of the humanitarian response to the "European Refugee Crisis", was the creation of hotspots. As stated earlier in this paper, hotspots were created to "identify, register and fingerprint incoming migrants, channel asylum seekers into asylum procedures, implement the relocation scheme and conduct return operations"[15]. However, in the case of Greece and mostly due to the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement in 2016, hotspots soon became sites of protracted violence, "rejection, detention and illegalization" (Ansems de Vries and Guild 2018, 5-6) where migrants found themselves in "legal limbo" (Fotaki 2019, 322) living in conditions of indignity, which soon became the norm and key features of the Greek camps' representation. In fact, hotspots are "spaces made of a combination of functions designed with the purpose of controlling or interrupting people's mobility, collecting their personal and biometric data (see Pallister-Wilkins 2016) for the management of 'crisis' and in the hope of rendering them knowable and pliable to the sovereignty of European member states and EU border and asylum practices" (Pallister-Wilkins 2018, 2). By their design and necessity, hotspots have been defined as spaces of humanitarianism (Pallister-Wilkins 2018, 2). As Agamben explains, the normalisation of these kinds of policies or practices is made possible by framing such settings as a "space of exception" (Agamben 1998) where biopolitics prevail (Foucault 2008), thus calling for extraordinary measures to be implemented. This phenomenon and its justification were reinforced by the constructed narrative of "emergency" in which a response portrayed as humanitarian was being enacted, leaving no space for futurisation of the future of migrants (Brun 2016; Calhoun 2008, Richey 2018, 641).

When traditional humanitarianism is considered and practised by most humanitarians as an apolitical species only responding to "crisis" and "emergency" without questioning the setting in which it is intervening, Fassin stresses that humanitarianism as a politics of life is not simply about whose lives can be saved, but also about bearing witness (Fassin 2013, 501). In that sense, humanitarianism is not only concerned with saving the lives of others but also about testifying in the name of others. This process, if carried through to its completion, should see the humanitarian worker engaging with the structural conditions through which migrants are subjectivised and thus recognise that humanitarianism also has socio-political effects (Vandevoordt 2019, 251-252). Following that argument, it questions the assumption that humanitarianism is a set of politically neutral and impartial practices (Fleischmann and

[15] European Council on Refugees and Exiles. (2020). *Reception and Identification Procedure Greece*. [on line] Available at: http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/asylum-procedure/access-procedure-and-registration/reception-and [Accessed 25 April 2020].

Steinhilper 2017, 20) but that both "humanitarianism and politics are tending to merge" and that "political life continues to arise even in the camps" (Fassin 2007, 509).

2.4 The "European Refugee Crisis" & the Emergence of "Citizen Aid"

In the wake of arguments such as Fassin's, and building on the work done by the previously mentioned authors in the field of critical humanitarian studies, literature has emerged more recently precisely questioning the three identified structural elements of humanitarianism; its self-proclaimed apolitical nature, its dominative stance and subjectivising feature, and its institutionalised and professionalised feature. This literature has emerged following what has been labelled as the "long summer of migration of 2015" (Oikonomakis 2018, 67). During that momentum, Europe saw the emergence of a new kind of humanitarianism towards "people on the move" (Cantat and Feischmidt 2019, 380) where "citizens and NGOs stepped in" to provide some help with new forms of solidarity (Vandevoordt and Verschraegen 2019, 48). With the rise of civil initiatives (Haaland and Wallevik 2019) or citizen aid movements (Fechter and Schwittay 2019), humanitarianism, in its traditional conception, was being challenged. In fact, these *ad hoc* and spontaneous civil engagements produced new forms of solidarity (Rozakou 2012, 2016, 2017). Far from institutionalised and/or professionalised structures, they challenged the depoliticisation and dehistoricisation of the structural and political causes of the suffering it sought to address (Vandevoordt and Verschraegen 2019, 105) by resisting the narrative and practices imposed by the EU and by engaging horizontally with refugees thus breaking the top-down structures of humanitarianism and creating what has been labelled "subversive humanitarianism" (Vandevoordt and Verschraegen 2019, 104).

2.5 Greece & the Development of "Grassroots Humanitarianism"

However, with the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement in March 2016, "the people who until then had been in transit were immediately transformed into people who were there to stay" (Oikonomakis 2018, 66). As a result, most of the civil movements that grew out of this long summer of migration either collapsed or started to adapt to the new situation that the agreement had created. In fact, out of the "many solidarity initiatives working in Greece, many decided to not enter officialdom, perceiving that they would thus legitimise the government's policies of closed detention centres" (Oikonomakis 2018, 78). Acknowledging the change in the dynamics of migratory movement in Europe and more specifically in Greece with the creation of hotspots, and the incapacity or unwillingness of governments to provide the help needed, some scholars have started to label the humanitarianism practised at hotspots, such as Lesvos for instance, as well as in other setting like the Calais Jungle in France, as "grassroots humanitarianism" (McGee and Pelham 2018, 22), "volunteer humanitarianism"

(Sandri 2018) or “vernacular humanitarianism” (McGee and Pelham 2018, 25; Rozakou 2017, 99). This new form of humanitarianism is understood as challenging the “established schemata of humanitarian action” (Rozakou 2017, 99) and its “bureaucratized principles, and modes of actions” by resisting “the institutionalization and the professionalization of volunteerism” (Rozakou 2017, 100). It is more informal (Rozakou 2017, 99), spatially close to the context it is trying to address, and functioning on independent volunteering work (McGee and Pelham 2018, 22; Rozakou 2017, 100). Moreover, it is *ad hoc* (Kitching, Haavik, Tandstad, Zaman and Darj 2016), more flexible, less subject to conditional funding, and based on an ideology no longer promoting charity but solidarity. This solidarity is understood as emphasising “lateral and anti-hierarchical relatedness” (Rozakou 2017, 100) thus challenging “the hierarchies of humanness” and transforming the relationships in the humanitarian world by empowering migrants and being inclusive (Haffar 2016, 103; McGee and Pelham 2018, 32). According to some authors, and in the same vein as the work done by some scholars about humanitarianism and civil initiatives, this new kind of humanitarianism challenges traditional humanitarianism in two ways. With “its informality, volunteer humanitarianism provides an alternative to the ‘humanitarian machine’, as it offered humanitarian aid to refugees without the institutional structures and expertise of established aid organisations. Secondly, it stands as a symbol against the strict and violent policies of migration across Europe” (Sandri 2018, 66). Thus, this so-called new humanitarianism that is established through grassroots NGOs also challenges not only the professionalisation and institutionalisation of humanitarianism, but brings politics back into the field of humanitarianism. Then it looks at how it can create “an alternative kind of socio-political space, one based on the coexistence of refugees and other actors” and how it goes beyond the notion of “bare life” (Sandri 2018, 70). Doing that allows for the creation of an “ethics of care” and the restoration of the biographies of the people involved in the practice of humanitarianism by building new kinds of relationships among actors (Brun 2016, 405). This in turn challenges the notion of “space of exception” and participates in the construction of grassroots humanitarianism as an ethico-political project (Fechter and Schwittay 2019, 1775) where humanitarianism and politics interact and horizontal humanness relationships take place.

2.6 Working Definitions

The broader definition of *humanitarianism* used by Barnett suggests that humanitarianism is about “any activity that is intended to relieve the suffering, stop preventable harm, save lives at risk, and improve the welfare of vulnerable populations.” (Barnett 2013, 383). However, acknowledging that what relates to “humanitarian” is a cultural construct and a reflection of structural changes (Calhoun 2008, 1) shaped by the context in which actors are evolving, we

believe that humanitarianism is not simply about activity but also, as Belloni suggests, about "worldview, aspirations, professional vocabularies and actions" (Belloni 2007, 451), which allows for multiple "humanitarianisms" (Rozaku 2017, 99) to exist and even sometimes co-exist. Keeping this in mind will help us to identify what kind of humanitarianism is practised on Samos and what it can tell us about the definition of humanitarianism itself.

As Rancière suggests when he talks about politics: « c'est cela la politique : trouver une manière de faire ce qu'on n'est pas supposé faire, d'être là où on n'est pas censé être »[16]. Thus, when trying to understand what political relates to, I have decided for this paper, to use the definition proposed by Rancière (1995) and based on his notion of disagreement, to define *political* as the action of reframing the real as summarised by Ticktin (Ticktin 2016, 267) and/or "the possibility of altering, reforming, or contesting hegemonic structures towards a more egalitarian order" (Fleischmann and Steinhilper 2017, 22). In the case of migration, by their actions or simply by their presence, humanitarian organisations can perform this disruption of the natural domination or order as "naturally" imposed. As suggested by Vandevoordt and De Praetere: "subversive humanitarianism" is about "a morally motivated set of actions which acquires a political character not through the form in which these actions manifest themselves, but through their implicit opposition to the ruling socio-political climate" (Vandevoordt and Verschraegen 2019, 105).

3. GETTING INTO THE SHOES OF AN ANTHROPOLOGIST

> Ethnographic insights (...) go beyond abstract theoretical claims and the perils of generalizations. They contextualize humanitarianism and bring to the fore different cosmologies and configurations of humanitarian action (Rozaku 2012, 564).

As stated earlier in this paper, the main goal of this research is to understand *how these new kinds of humanitarian practices challenge some of the underlying flaws of traditional humanitarianism*. In order to find answers to this question, I decided to do qualitative research and to look at a case study - Samos - to understand what the current humanitarian action, as practised there, can tell us about humanitarianism.

3.1 Resorting to Qualitative Methods & Fieldwork in Samos

Once the idea of the paper was outlined, then came the question of selecting the relevant research design to try to answer the research questions. After reviewing the literature and understanding that most of the observations and findings about humanitarianism came from

[16] Rancières, Jacques. Rencontre avec Jacques Rancière. In: *Ballast*, 2015, 2 (3), pp. 58-73.

anthropological and ethnographic work, and hearing the call for more in-depth qualitative data (Fechter and Schwittay 2019, 1771) in the study of the current practice of humanitarianism, it soon became clear that I would be analysing a case study and would resort to qualitative methods. In fact, as the quote above suggests, the strength of qualitative research is that it provides a complete picture of a particular phenomenon in a precise context. Moreover, the nature of the research questions suggest that this study is not interested in looking at the effects of humanitarianism but rather in describing the way humanitarianism is practised on Samos. Thus, doing ethnographic fieldwork using participant observation (Bernard 2006) and interviews as qualitative methods to gather data, seemed to be the most appropriate way of answering the questions.

Choosing Samos as a case study over the other "European Refugee Crisis" sites was straightforward. In fact, I had already been volunteering on the island in January 2019 for two weeks (from 6 January to 22 January 2019). Moreover, as stated earlier in this paper, as opposed to its well-known sister Lesbos, Samos had been less studied and mediatised, which represented a real opportunity to see if what emerged in the literature since 2015 was applicable to this context and to see if it had anything else to tell us about humanitarianism. Thus, in autumn 2019, I decided to go back to Samos for a period of two months (from 13 January to 15 March 2020)[17] and to do fieldwork there. In order to facilitate integration in the setting that I was observing and to have a better understanding of the different dynamics taking place, the idea of working for an NGO also became obvious to me.

3.2 Active Participation, Informal Discussions & Semi-Structured Interviews

Working for the NGO I was already working with in 2019 was really helpful in becoming an active participant in this context (Spradley 1980, 60). I was not only observing the work that this or other NGOs were doing, engaging in interactions with the camp and local population, or other NGOs' actors but I, myself, became a "humanitarian" and thus took part in some aspects of life of the other "humanitarians" there (Bernard 2006, 347).

In addition, I gathered fieldwork data in jottings and fieldnotes (Lofland 2006, 109-110) based on what I saw and heard during the day. I mainly collected from a lot of informal discussions and talks with the camp population or other NGO workers and also conducted fifteen semi-structured interviews[18] (Bernard 2006, 212) mixing precise and descriptive questions (see Annex 1). The interviews were held with international and community volunteers working for different NGOs active in Samos. All of the data produced from the field

[17] However, due to the rise of the Covid-19 pandemic, the tensions on the islands, and the risk of locking-down the islands, I had to leave earlier and thus left on 2 March 2020.
[18] Regarding the interviews, three interviews were cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic increase in Europe and the fact that most NGOs started to enter a phase of "emergency".

research is used in the fifth section of this dissertation (analysis part). Apart from that, I also resorted to other primary sources (such as reports, official statistics, and videos) and secondary sources (such as newspapers articles) to build section 4 and the introduction (see section 1). Finally, I resorted mainly to secondary sources (academic articles, book chapters, books) for the literature review (see section 2) and the methodology (see section 3).

3.3 Research & a "Double Casquette"

Practically, what happened in Samos is that I was working for the NGO from Monday to Sunday (Thursday being the day-off) from approximately 7:00am to 3:00pm, as a translator English/French, receptionist and later logistical and volunteer coordinator. Before I started my work there, and for evident ethical reasons, it was made clear from the beginning and before meeting the main coordinator, that the information I obtained from my interactions with the camp population or volunteers resulting directly from my working position, were to be excluded from this paper. Thus, the data gathered during this fieldwork came principally from data gathered after my working hours and/or during my days off. However, it should be pointed out here that working for this NGO was extremely helpful in getting access to certain actors (i.e., volunteers, NGO workers, people from the camp population etc..), to create trust relationships and collect general information about the context.

However, it was sometimes difficult to remain focused on the research and the fieldwork as sometimes the NGO worker casquette took the lead over the other role. In fact, by interacting so much with the people you are trying to understand and, at the same time, the context you are trying to study, makes it harder to take a step back. Moreover, as it was my first fieldwork experience, it was difficult in the beginning to keep track of each interaction or observation and to know what mattered and what did not. Sometimes, it was not obvious that what I was seeing, doing or hearing mattered. Finally, having this "double casquette" could also have reinforced my subjectivity towards the analysis of the context. In fact, putting aside the social and cultural person that the researcher is before being a researcher, having the status of "humanitarian", even though I tried as much as possible to leave it aside, and acting as such, might have affected the result of my research (Peshkin 1988, 17).

4. INTRODUCING SAMOS AS A CASE STUDY

4.1 Introducing Samos

As stated earlier in this paper, Samos is one of the five hotspots in Greece. It is located in the area of the Aegean Islands and was historically part of the Eastern Mediterranean Migration Route for thousands of people on the move throughout the centuries. At its nearest point, it is

separated from Turkey by a distance of 1.7km in the area of the Mycale Strait. The smuggling centre before departure for the five islands, as opposed to Istanbul in the case of land border crossings, is the city of Izmir (see Figure 4). After their arrival in Izmir, migrants are directed by smugglers to one of the five islands depending on the smuggler they choose and the day that they decide to leave (see Figure 4). In the case of Samos, most of the boats crossing from Turkey to the island leave from Kusadasi (see Figure 4), thus once they enter Greek waters and if they have not been intercepted by the Turkish Coast Guards in their own national waters, most of the boats are picked up by Frontex or the Hellenic Coast Guards in the North-East, and to a lesser degree in the East waters of Samos (see Figure 5)[19].

After the island of Lesbos, which is currently hosting a total number of 21,147 migrants, Samos has the second-largest island migrant population with a current total number of 7,505 people[20], which is more than the local population of Vathy of about 6,500 inhabitants[21]. As of March 2020, and before the Coronavirus outbreak, 844 people had arrived in Samos[22] compared to 11,375 in 2019, 14,969 in 2018 and 6,077 in 2017 (see Annex 2). In terms of asylum applications, since the signature of the EU-Turkey Statement in 2016, approximately 24,502 asylum applications were submitted to the Asylum Office in Samos[23].

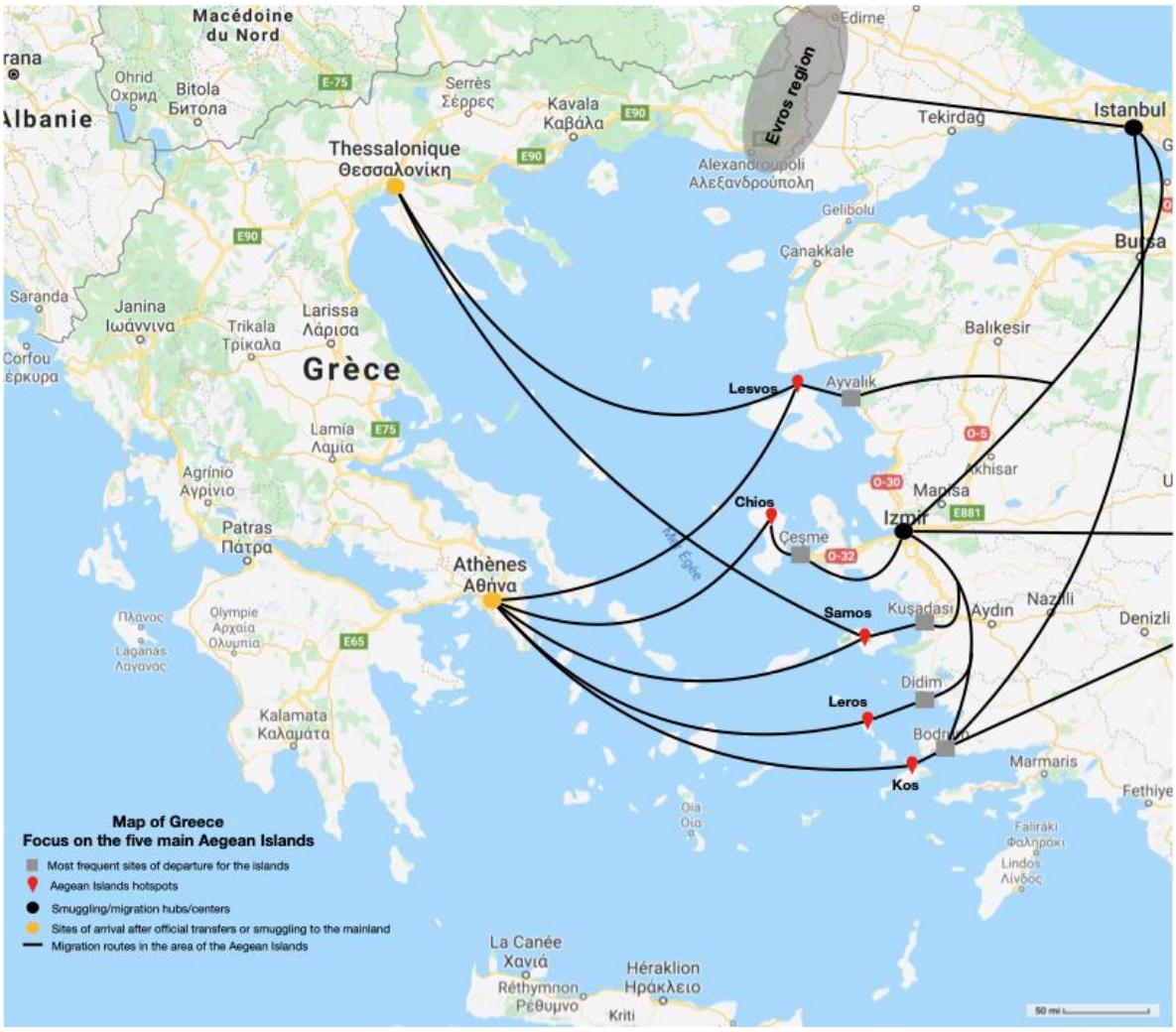
[19] However, since the decision of Turkey to open the gates on 27 February 2020 and to stop intercepting boats, and with the outbreak
of the coronavirus since March 2020, there has been some reports suggesting that Greece was pushing back boats after entering the Greek waters and putting migrants back on boats even after they reached the land (see https://aegeanboatreport.com/weekly-reports/).

[20] Aegean Boat Report. (2020). *Monthly Statistics March 2020*. [online] Available at: https://aegeanboatreport.com/monthly-reports/ [Accessed 11 May 2020].

[21] Carlier, R. (2019). Reportage : à Vathy, les habitants partagés entre colère et exaspération (4/4). *InfoMigrants*. [online] Available at: https://www.infomigrants.net/fr/post/21525/reportage-a-vathy-les-habitants-partages-entre-colere-et-exasperation-4-4 [Accessed 11 May 2020].

[22] Aegean Boat Report. (2020). *Monthly Statistics March 2020*. [online] Available at: https://aegeanboatreport.com/monthly-reports/ [Accessed 11 May 2020].

[23] Hellenic Republic Ministry of Migration and Asylum. (2020). *Statistical data*. [online] Available at: http://asylo.gov.gr/en/?page_id=110 [Accessed 11 May 2020].



(Figure 4. *Map of Greece - Focus on the 5 Aegean Islands*)[24]

[24] All the elements on the map have been added by myself, the map in the background is a screenshot taken from Google maps [on line]
Available at:
https://www.google.ch/maps/place/Gr%C3%A8ce/@38.3880859,24.3177677,7z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x135b4ac711716c63:0x363a1775dc9a2d1d!8m2!3d39.074208!4d21.824312 [Accessed 11 May 2020].

(Figure 5. *Map of Samos*)[25]

4.2 Locating the Camp

As stated in the above section, the island of Samos is hosting a camp located on the edge of the town of Vathy - also called Samos - which is the chief town of the island (see Figure 5). The camp has an official capacity of 648 people and is an old military base. Contrary to what may be believed, the camp was not opened in the wake of the "European Refugee Crisis" but already in 2007 (Chalalet and Jones 2015, 445) because migration flows have been part of the Aegean Islands picture for many years. However, there are three important factors that explain why its existence did not became viral in the media prior to 2015/2016.

First of all, historically, the numbers of people arriving were extremely inferior to the ones the islands witnessed in 2015. Secondly, before the peak of 2015, migration was kept out of sight because the camp was a closed facility, which meant that people could not go in and out of it. Finally, before the EU-Turkey Statement, people were not staying on the island for more than two to three days and were then leaving for Athens or Thessaloniki. Thus, up until summer 2015, the camp remained a closed facility. However, due to the rise of people coming and the EU-Turkey Statement, it became logistically and legally impossible to keep them trapped in. In fact, as explained by one of the interviewees:

> (..) when you have like 500 people arriving in the day, and the camp is full, you just had people sleeping in the streets. It is what was happening back then. That's why they created this temporary camp in the port [managed by UNHCR] to try to shelter people until they could move on. After the deal, they closed the facility because it was part of the agreement and then, for a while, it was completely closed and no one could go in and out [of the official camp]. But (...) people wanted to go out, so the first thing that happened is that in the furthest away corner of the camp in the back, they cut holes in

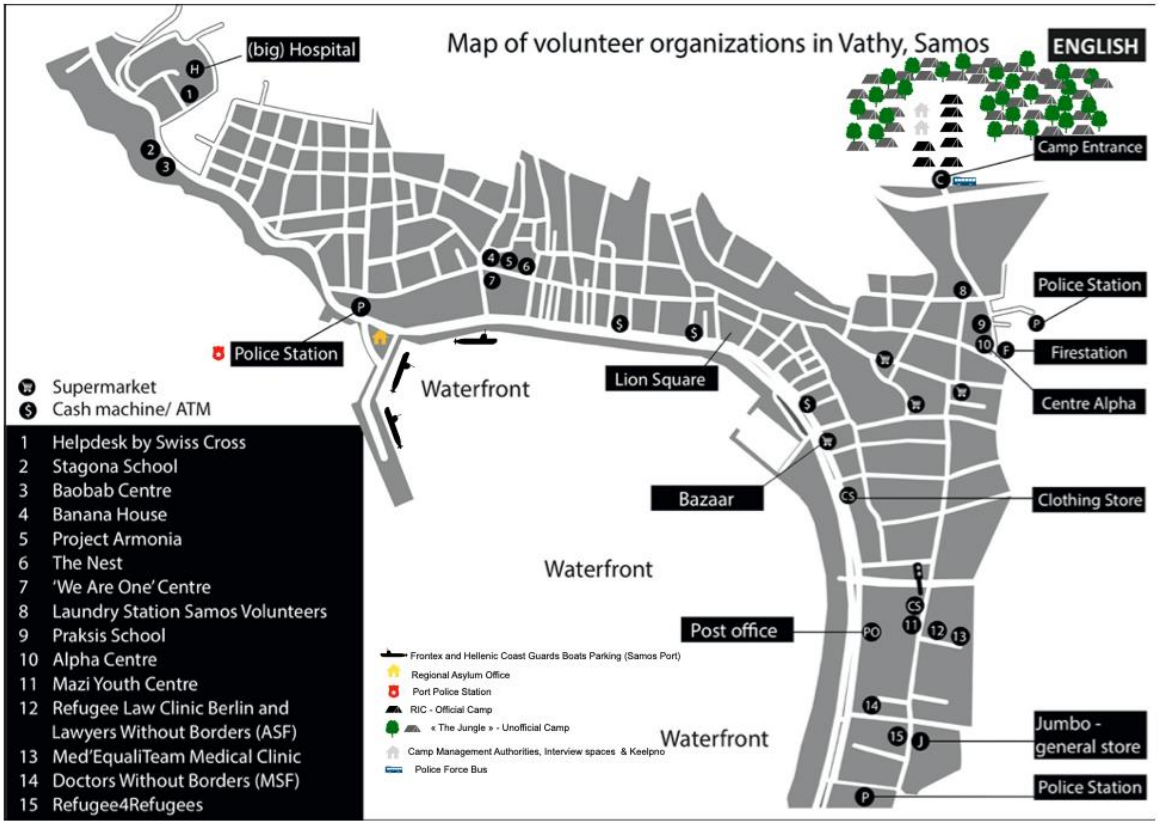
[25] All the elements on the map have been added by myself, the map in the background is a screenshot taken from Google maps [on line]
Available at:
https://www.google.ch/maps/place/Gr%C3%A8ce/@38.3880859,24.3177677,7z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x135b4ac711716c63:0x363a1775dc9a2d1d!8m2!3d39.074208!4d21.824312 [Accessed 11 May 2020].

> the fence and people were going out through the back and the police they let them do it, because they wanted to keep the peace in the camp. (...) Also, at the beginning, legally, you can only detain someone in administrative detention for the first 25 days, after that you need to have another reason to detain them. So, after 25 days, people who were getting the papers could go in and out but it meant that the police had to check everyone who was coming from in and out and they just didn't do it...the gates just stayed open[26].

Thus, since the end of 2016, due to what is stated above and criticisms from the local population and the international community, the camp in Samos is no longer a closed facility. It is now a Reception and Identification Center (RIC) put in place in December 2015[27] - initially called First Reception Center (FRC) - in order to afford reception and identification procedures to newly arrived people (see Annex III). The RIC is managed by the Reception and Identification Service (RIS)[28] whose mission is to "manage third country nationals who cross the Hellenic borders without legal documents and/or procedures, in an effective manner and under conditions that respect their dignity, by placing them in first reception procedures"[29] and then direct them to other agencies depending on whether they ask for asylum or not. Managed by a camp director from the RIS, the camp is logistically run by the army. Up to the end of 2018 some NGOs were given access to work in the camp, but that ended due to a camp director's decision. The RIC provides spaces for asylum interviews and medical checks and collaborates with the Regional Asylum Office of Samos whose office has been located at the port since January 2016 as part of the hotspot approach (see Figure 6).

With the incapacity to cope with the rise of new arrivals since 2015/2016 and the length of asylum procedures, the "official camp" (see Figures 7 & 8) soon became overcrowded and an unofficial camp, called "the Jungle" (see Figures 7 & 9) by migrants, soon emerged next to and around the official one. The Jungle is composed of tents or whatever migrants can find or buy to build a shelter whereas the official one is composed of containers. Finally, what makes the RIC of Samos so special is its location in comparison to the other islands. In fact, the camp is located on the edge of the town (see Figures 10a & 10b) and this has caused mixed feelings, anger and resentment from the local population and the municipality against migrants but mostly against the Greek government (see section 4.3).

[26] Interview M4.
[27] Asylum Information Database. (2020). *Reception and Identification Procedure Greece*. [online] Available at: https://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/asylum-procedure/access-procedure-and-registration/reception-and#footnoteref15_m4opac0 [Accessed 11 May 2020].
[28] See Figure XIII for the mapping of actors.
[29] EASO. (2019). *2020 Operational & Technical Assistance Plan Agreed by EASO and Greece*. Valletta Harbour and Athens, p. 19. [online] Available at: https://easo.europa.eu/sites/default/files/operating-plan-greece-2020.pdf [Accessed 11 May 2020].



(Figure 6. *Map of Volunteer organisations in Vathy, Samos*)[30]

(Figure 7. *Official Camp*)[31]

[30] All the colored elements, the boats and legends on the map have been added by myself. The map itself was made by HelpRefugees to summarize the different NGOs present on the island and to be given to people from the camp. I took one map from the clinic where I was working and scanned it.

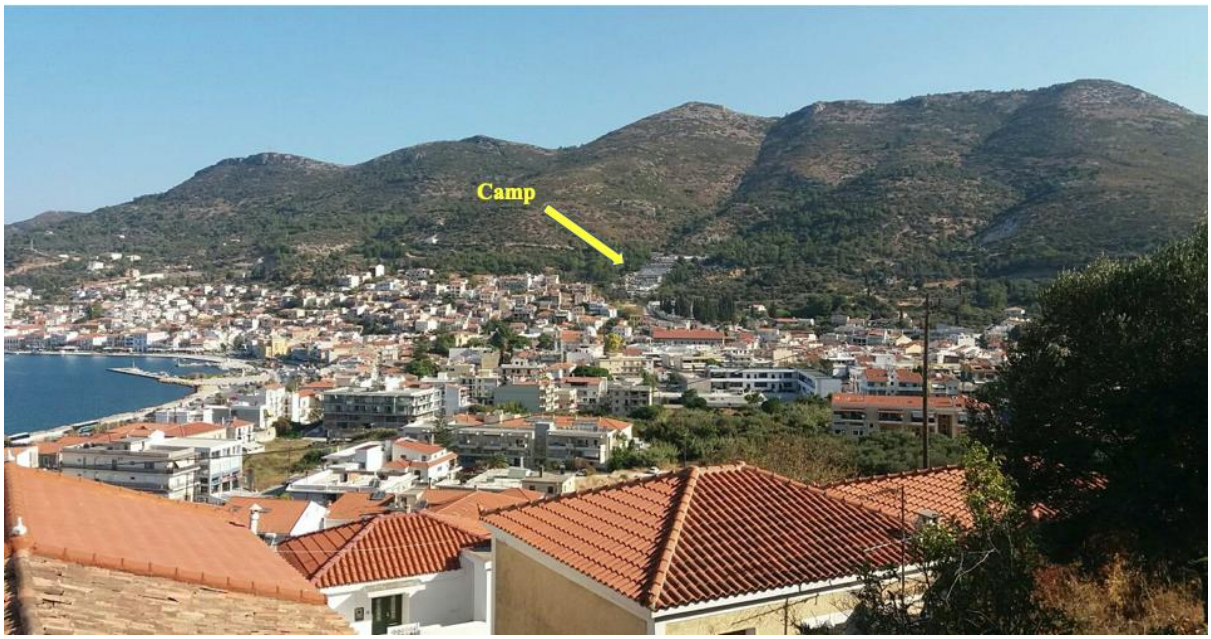
[31] The yellow words and arrows were added by myself. The picture is a screenshot from a YouTube video whose source is as follows:
Euronews. (2019). *Grecs et migrants sur l'île de Samos : une colère partagée*. [video] Available at: https://www.youtube.comwatch?v=XAXnw01IGlA [Accessed 11 May 2020].

(Figure 8. *Official Camp*)[32]

(Figure 9. *"The Jungle"*)[33]

[32] I took this picture in 2019 from the top of the official camp and from a path that circles around the camp and the jungle. However, the
path is now occupied by new tents. In the background, there is the town of Vathy.

[33] I took this picture in 2019 from the top of the Jungle and from a path that circles around the camp and the jungle. However, the path is
now occupied by new tents. In the background, there is the Sea and the town of Vathy is hidden by the trees.



(Figure 10a. *Camp location from an opposite point of view*)[34]

(Figure 10b. *Camp location from a point of view within "the Jungle"*)[35]

[34] The yellow arrow and "camp" word were added by myself. The picture is a screenshot taken from an article and its source is as
follows: Kontrafouri, F. (2018). Samos refugee camp in Greece: Rodents, snakes and rotting food. *CGTN.com*, [on line] Available at:
https://news.cgtn.com/news/3d3d674e336b6a4d7a457a6333566d54/share_p.html [Accessed 11 May 2020].
[35] aid hoc. (2020). *Aktuelle Situation auf Samos*. [on line] Available at: https://aidhoc.org/2019/05/08/aktuelle-situation-auf-samos/ [Accessed 11 May 2020].

However, this specific configuration will change because the Greek government has decided to build a new closed camp (see Figure 11) in Zervou (see Figure 5) in November 2019 to be achieved by the end of Summer 2020 despite numerous protests from the local population (see section 4.3).

(Figure 11. *Closed Camp in Zervou*)[36]

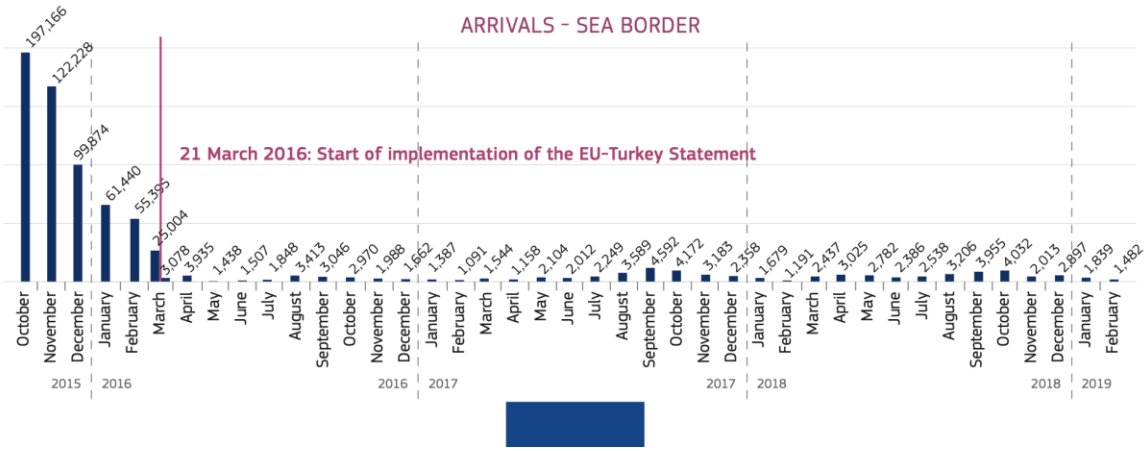
4.3 The EU-Turkey Statement of 2016 - Samos: A Political Setting

On 18 March 2016, an agreement was signed between the European Council and Turkey whose aim was to stop irregular migration flows from Turkey to Europe. According to the statement "all new irregular migrants and asylum seekers arriving from Turkey to the Greek islands and whose applications for asylum have been declared inadmissible should be returned to Turkey"[37] in exchange for € 6 billion support from the EU to Turkey[38]. This agreement has had two main impacts for the island.

First of all, after the implementation of the statement on 21 March 2016, there was, supposedly thanks to it, a massive drop in daily arrivals to the islands from 6,360 in October 2015 to 83 in March 2016 (see Figure 12). What followed is that the situation in Greece was

[36] AFP. (2020). Migrations : sur l'île grecque de Samos, la colère monte contre un nouveau camp. *Le Point International*. [on line] Available at: https://www.lepoint.fr/monde/migrations-sur-l-ile-grecque-de-samos-la-colere-monte-contre-un-nouveau-camp-22-02-2020-2363988_24.php [Accessed 9 May 2020].
[37] Corrao, I. (2020). *European Parliament Legislative Train 8 Towards a New Policy on Migration*. p. 3. [online] Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/api/stages/report/current/theme/towards-a-new-policy-on-migration/file/eu-turkey-statement-action-plan [Accessed 11 May 2020].
[38] European Commission, (2019). EU-Turkey Statement Three years on. p.3. [online] Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20190318_eu-turkey-three-years-on_en.pdf [Accessed 11 May 2020].

no longer considered as a crisis[39] and the European Union soon declared Greece responsible for managing the flows and taking care of the migrants on its islands.



(Figure 12. *Arrivals per month and implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement*)[40]

The main consequence of this was that the Greek government took over and started to mandate some Greek or international organisations to work in the camp and as a consequence of this decision, most of the funding allocated from the EU to non-governmental organisations was redirected to the Greek government in 2017 causing some of them to leave the islands.

In the case of Samos, the second consequence of the agreement was that it completely changed the dynamic of humanitarian assistance on the island. In fact, at the beginning of the crisis in Summer 2015, the response to the flows was provided by many local groups who emerged on the island and became active in providing basic needs such as clothes or food, and the help was coordinated by the municipality of Samos with few international volunteers showing up to help[41]. Moreover, as the camp was completely overcrowded, an emergency camp was opened in the old port of Samos and was run by UNHCR. However, as stated by one of the interviewees:

> (...) Then, the EU-Turkey deal happened and with it, everything changed, because the camp became closed from one day to another. The camp at the port was closed very quickly, there was just few dozen people that took a bit longer for them to be transferred but what it meant also is that from one day to another, people could not go out anymore of the camp that we have now today and also for us and all the groups, they could not continue their work because they were not allowed to go in anymore. Also, there was...all the groups back then, they decided to take a position to protest against the closed facilities and not to engage with activities in the camp. What happened then is

[39] Guariat, V. and Staikos, A. (2019). Grecs et migrants sur l'île de Samos : une colère partagée. *Euronews*. [online] Available at: https://fr.euronews.com/2019/05/10/grecs-et-migrants-sur-l-ile-de-samos-une-colere-partagee [Accessed 11 May 2020].

[40] European Commission, (2019). EU-Turkey Statement Three years on. [online] Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20190318_eu-turkey-three-years-on_en.pdf [Accessed 11 May 2020].

[41] Interview M4.

> that it really changed the whole dynamic on the island. The municipality who was coordinating or co-coordinating these groups, they disengaged very quickly[42].

Moreover, as stated earlier, because the hotspot approach was put in place, migrants started to spend months or even years on the island waiting for their asylum application to be processed. With this change of dynamic following 2016, most of the local groups soon started to disengage as well because they needed to go back to work and, later on, because they started to be tired of the situation and the ever-increasing flows [43]. Moreover, as the Greek government took over, a break in collaboration between the government in Athens and the municipalities on the islands[44] started to emerge over the years, which resulted in increasing protests from the population of the island against the government[45] as they felt sacrificed[46] and abandoned[47]. Tensions also started to rise from migrants against their living conditions on the island[48], which made the situation even more strained. The increasing tension and dissatisfaction also led to the recent rise of resentment against NGOs and some incidents at the beginning of 2020. In Samos, a group was created on Facebook called *Stop Invasion Samo*s which associated pictures of migrants or NGO workers with disrespectful or racist sentences[49].

The situation caused by migration, but mostly because of the mismanagement of these arrivals by the European Union and the Greek Government, contributed in July 2019 to the

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[42] Interview M4.

[43] Carlier, R. (2019). Reportage : à Vathy, les habitants partagés entre colère et exaspération (4/4). *InfoMigrants*. [online] Available at: https://www.infomigrants.net/fr/post/21525/reportage-a-vathy-les-habitants-partages-entre-colere-et-exasperation-4-4 [Accessed 11 May 2020].

[44] Georgiopoulou, T. (2020). Mayors to petition PM over migration. *Ekathimerini.com*. [online] Available at: https://www.ekathimerini.com/248726/article/ekathimerini/news/mayors-to-petition-pm-over-migration [Accessed 11 May 2020].

[45] AFP-JIJI. (2020). Villagers on Greece isle of Samos up in arms over new camp plan. *thejapantimes*. [online] Available at: https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/02/25/world/social-issues-world/villagers-greece-isle-samos-arms-new-refugee-camp-plan/#.Xrj_Ir86-u5 [Accessed 11 May 2020].

[46] *« Les gens voient que rien ne change, ils se sentent négligés par le gouvernement grec et les politiciens qui promettent toujours que la situation va changer et que les réfugiés vont être transférés ailleurs,"* déclare Alexandros. *"Du coup, plus personne ne veut aider et ceux qui veulent encore aider sont perçus comme des gens qui n'ont aucune considération pour l'île, pour sa prospérité ».*
Guariat, V. and Staikos, A. (2019). Grecs et migrants sur l'île de Samos : une colère partagée. *Euronews*. [online] Available at: https://fr.euronews.com/2019/05/10/grecs-et-migrants-sur-l-ile-de-samos-une-colere-partagee [Accessed 11 May 2020].

[47] Kolasa-Sikiaridi, K. (2016). Mayor of Samos on Refugee Crisis: « We have been left alone to manage ». *GreekReporter*. [online]
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[48] Ekathimerini.com. (2019). Hundreds of migrants protest conditions on Samos. *Ekathimerini.com*. [online] Available at: https://www.ekathimerini.com/236842/article/ekathimerini/news/hundreds-of-migrants-protest-conditions-on-samos [Accessed 11 May 2020].

[49] Two of my colleagues have been tagged by this group on Facebook while I was there but as of May 2020, this Facebook page was cancelled.

election of a right-wing parliament[50] and a right-wing municipality on the island of Samos. This political change which developed over the years led to a tougher migration policy, increasing controls and pressure on NGOs, and the adoption of a new bill on 21 October 2019 which entered into force on 1 January 2020 that made it easier to detain asylum seekers for longer periods, scrap important protections for vulnerable people and introduce several procedural changes that impede access to a fair asylum process and compromise the right of appeal[51]. It is also following this hardening of migration policy that it was decided to open closed camps on Lesbos, Samos and Chios and thus build *de facto* detention facilities[52].

4.4 Arriving in Samos: The Beginning of a New Journey

Before presenting the analysis of the data regarding the NGOs working on the island, it seems relevant to understand what happens to migrants once they leave the Turkish coasts and arrive in Greek waters[53]. Most of the time, boats are picked up directly by Frontex or the Hellenic Coast Guards. Sometimes, however, if there are no boats at sea, and their diesel runs out, migrants have to call a Greek number that they are given before departure. On very rare occasions, boats land directly on Greek land. Once they are found, migrants are taken by boat to the Port of Samos. From there, they are brought by car to the camp and most of the time, on the same day, they go to the police station inside the camp. There, they undergo police registration for which they need to give their fingerprints. After police registration, the people are given an A4 paper with their picture on it and their personal details. Most of the time, they sleep the first night at the police station and are given a blanket the following day. They have to manage on their own to find a place to go and they need to approach NGOs such as Refugee4Refugees to be given a tent, sleeping bag and some non-food items as the camp does not provide these things anymore. As stated by one of the interviewees: “You find help with your country community, help to buy tents, to find a place, to go to NGOs. You have to wait to understand from people, how the situation is going. (...) There is line for food, to see the doctor, there is line to register yourself. Everything is line.”[54]

[50] BBC News. (2019). Greek General Election: Five things that swung the vote. *BBC News*. [online] Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-48859282?intlink_from_url=https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/c7zpz3qp2lnt/greek-election-2019&link_location=live-reporting-story [Accessed 11 May 2020].
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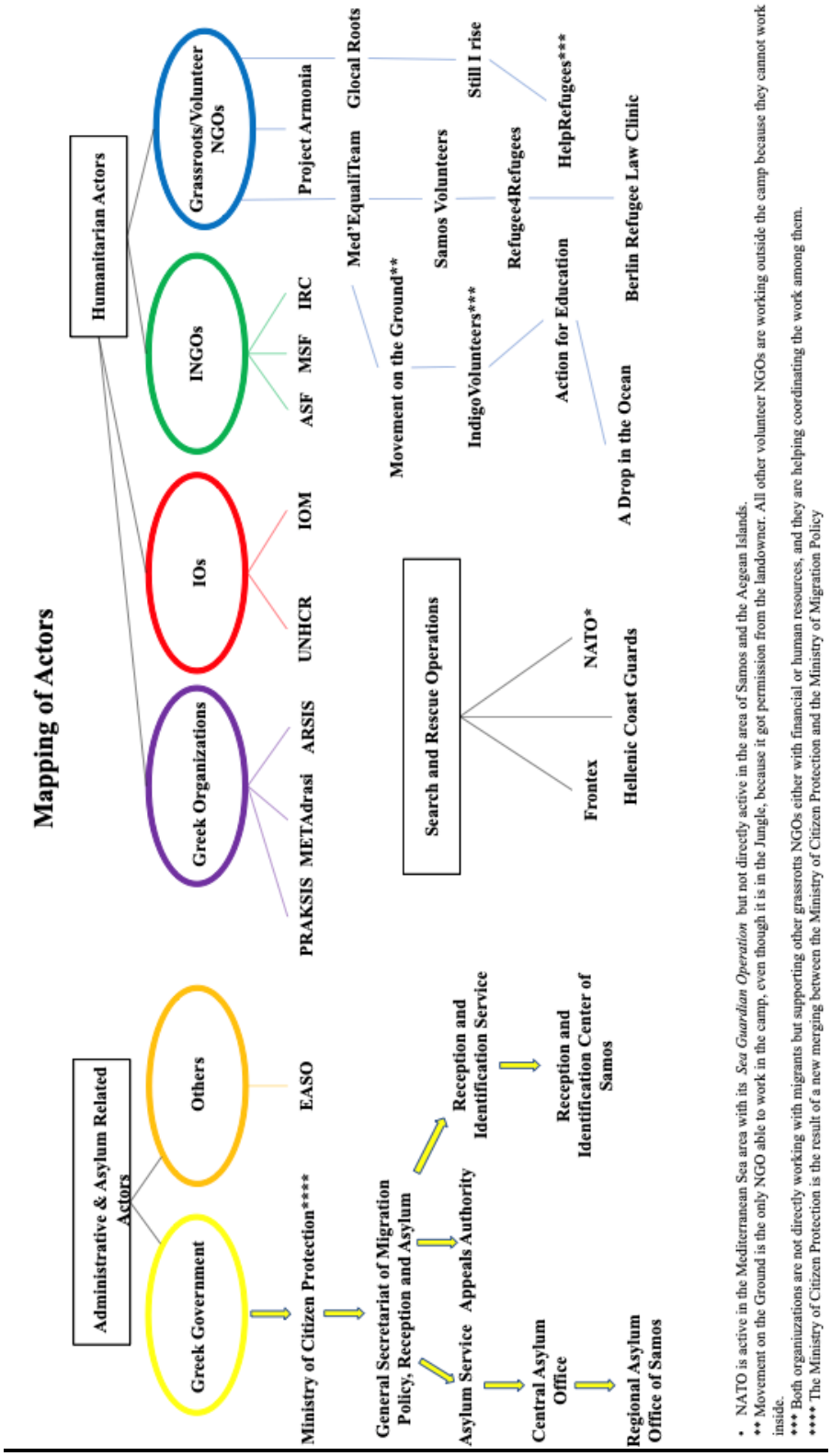
[52] ReliefWeb. (2019). Greece: Put Rights at Heart of New Border Plan. [online] Available at: https://reliefweb.int/report/greece/greece-put-rights-heart-new-border-plan [Accessed 11 May 2020].
[53] What is stated in the following paragraph is a summary of different talks I have had with people from the camp concerning their arrivals on the island and with one of the lawyers working at the Berlin Refugee Law Clinic (NGO working in Samos) who explained to me the procedures as well.
[54] Interview M1.

As they have the police paper, they have to wait for what they call the “small interview”, which is the full registration that lasts approximately forty-five minutes and in which they have to say if they want to apply for asylum or not. After this registration by the RIS, they are given an “Ausweis”, which is a kind of identity card that they must always carry with them. This carries their personal details, date of arrival, the programmed date for what they call the “big interview” which is the interview with the Asylum Service (AS) that will serve as the basis to determine whether or not they can be granted asylum. Here it should be stressed that all this, from the police registration to the interview and the final answer, can take several months and often years due to the understaffed agencies and the inefficiency of the different processes[55]. As stated above, starting from their arrival and because of the length of procedures and the strategy of the camp management, most of their time is spent waiting.

4.5 Mapping the Actors

As stated earlier, at the beginning of the “crisis” it was mostly local groups with very few international volunteers coordinated by the municipality of Samos that were active on the island and provided basic needs to migrants. However, after the agreement most of the groups disappeared except one: Samos Volunteer (SV) which was created at the end of Summer 2016 by a few international volunteers who had stayed on the island. Up until early 2018, with the arrival of the Berlin Refugee Law Clinic in February 2018, there was only SV left. However, following the increase of people, the non-supply of basic and non-basic needs by the camp authorities and the impossibility for SV to cover all the needs, it called on other organisations to come to the island and help[56]. This call was successful and other organisations mostly arrived in 2019 until there were 12 in January 2020. In order to understand who are the actors involved on the island and their area of work see Figure 13 and Annex 5.

[55] However, since 1 January 2020 with the introduction of the new law as stated in section 4.3, 2020 arrivals have been prioritized and must have their asylum procedure to be completed within 20 days from first registration to decision, which means that all the 2019 will have to wait (Interview M2). For the detailed process of the asylum procedure on the islands see Annex IV.
[56] Interview M4.



(Figure 13. *Mapping of Actors*)[57]

[57] Self-made table based on online research, the ESAO 2020 Operational plan, and what I witnessed on the island.

5. BRINGING DATA TO LIFE

5.1 Volunteer Organisations & Addressing Asymmetries of Relationships

5.1.1 Going beyond "Refugeeness" & Defining Humanitarianism

One of the common traits between the different grassroots or volunteer organisations working in Samos is the way in which they perceived the population they were helping or supporting. Indeed, there was a very strong way of considering the population from the camp first as humans and not only as refugees, migrants or asylum seekers. As stated by one of the interviewees: "People who are running the projects are really aware of wanting the people in the camp to not feel like "refugees" but to feel like people, like normal people...to be a mother, a sister, to have a husband, to be an architect AND to be a refugee not just seen as A refugee."[58]

This was echoed by the deliberate decision and usual practice that I also started to adopt while working there, to call them "camp residents" and not refugees, migrants or asylum seekers. Even though they recognised that in the normative framework these differences in wording could make sense, they felt that such labels or categorisations were not relevant to the delivery of their work as they were there to support every person regardless of their status. Moreover, for some of the volunteers, using these terms were felt as "patronising"[59] by not taking into account migrants' lives as the following quote highlights:

> I think it is easy when you refer to people as a group - refugees, asylum-seekers, - to see them less as individuals and I think it is important then to keep reflecting on the decisions we make as an organisation, me as a person, how I approach people (...) we sometimes forget that a lot of them are highly educated people that had perfect jobs and that are put in a situation...they didn't want to be in and it doesn't mean that they are less than us, and they are also individuals. Yes, I think sometimes, even though that's really hard and I don't know the answers for it, but to keep seeing them as individuals and not take over everything and also that they have autonomy and authenticity as well, that they keep being human beings as well[60].

This way of seeing or defining the camp population was the direct result of the belief-systems lying at the core of each organisation and the way in which they perceived humanitarianism and themselves in this setting. When asking them about what humanitarianism meant to them, three of the respondents suggested the following that reflected the general view:

> For me, it means that you are working in solidarity with people who are in need and you want to help them but not like in an arrogant way more to try to empower them and to support them.[61].

[58] Interview F8.
[59] Interview F9
[60] Interview F9.
[61] Interview F2.

> For me at the moment, it means on the one hand to help people, to support people that are in really difficult situations by covering basic needs but also not just basic needs anymore. It also means to support people, to empower them, so that they can make their own decisions and they can help themselves basically.[62]

"I call us as humanitarian organisations because to me, it means being human, which is like a Human helping a Human not necessarily with emergency aid, with anything."[63]

Regardless of which grassroots volunteers I was talking to, there was really this idea that they were there to support migrants, to work in partnership *with* them and not to work *for* them. This belief-system allowed for the design of horizontal delivery of the humanitarian action. One that was not considering the humanitarians as the giver and the migrants as the mere recipients of the aid. Horizontal because they were trying to empower migrants through the different activities put in place, but also by involving them in the organisations through the integration of "community volunteers" who were volunteers coming from the camp as opposed to "international volunteers" which were the ones coming mostly from western countries.

5.1.2 "Community Volunteers", "Do No Harm" & the Paradox of Equality

All the grassroots NGOs had "community volunteers"[64]. They were working in the organisations as translators, language teachers, cooks, or doing different tasks such as welcoming and registering people when coming to the organisations, taking care of the place, doing clothes or non-food items distribution, etc. When discussing the reasons for the integration of "community volunteers", all organisations acknowledged that they were simply needed and a necessity for the good functioning and sustainability[65] of the NGOs and the activities because they were the ones with the knowledge of the language, the culture, the situation and the needs. Moreover, it was also a way to address their boredom, which was one of the most important issues that migrants were facing on the island. A view that was shared by the "community volunteers" themselves and the population from the camp. As one of the "community volunteers" explained when I asked him about grassroots NGOs resorting to community volunteers, he told me: "The migrants that are working in the NGOs, they are the hands of the NGOs in the camp and can solve problems towards this people. Like a channel to make a way inside the camp with this people to see what is the problem."[66]

[62] Interview F5.
[63] Interview F8.
[64] All grassroots groups had "community volunteers" but one organisation had only one "community volunteer" because they preferred
to have volunteers with a relevant professional background as it was considering it to be more important regarding the population that it was taking care of. This NGO was also the one who had started an institutionalization and professionalization move.
[65] Interview F3.
[66] Interview J1.

Moreover, one of the interviewees suggested that resorting to "community volunteers" was a way to "*create an equal treatment between everyone*" emphasising that she would not like it if it was *"just some white people telling people what to do*"[67], which goes back to the refusal of having patronising and top-down structures in their organisations in order to have a real partnership between the outsiders and the insiders. However, there were two ways in which organisations were dealing with and integrating "community volunteers" into the organisations and this was THE very big topic during my time there. In fact, it was the time where a lot of discussions among grassroots, and within them, took place about drafting - or not - regulations or codes of conduct establishing the kinds of relationship that should exist between the "community volunteers" and the "international volunteers".

Most of the grassroots were considering "community volunteers" as full members of the team and as "equal to the western volunteers"[68]. They included them in talks when taking decisions regarding the activities provided, engaging with them socially outside of working hours by going out for drinks, watching films, organising dinners and so on, and in a few cases even hiring "community volunteers" as coordinators. As one of the interviewees declared regarding her organisation's position towards "community volunteers":

> Most of our group, we really try not just to integrate but include the people. We're having dinners with them, we're having outgoings with them, of course, it is not always all of the team, but in the end of the day, they know that they are all invited and that who wants to join, can join. I mean when you stay here so long, you cannot say "ok, we work together so long but we are not friends", and as I said, it is based on trust all the work we are doing.[69]

This allowed some of the community volunteers, as suggested by one of them, to feel part of a family[70].

However, as a grassroots group founder told me when talking about the evolution of the grassroots movement since 2015:

> So, in 2015, it was super chaotic, but it was just like this huge solidarity movement, people just came because they saw the pictures on the newspapers or on TV, and they wanted to do something. (...) Then, groups started to professionalise a bit, some started to implement regulations, rules, policies within the groups, some more than others, and for me when I came to Samos, I was very quite over shocked to see, because here, I think, some of the small grassroots have implemented regulations that are actually from the large NGOs and even gone a bit overboard, like it becomes...also because we work with community volunteers they have had rules that you are not allowed to talk to a community volunteer after working hours even though you are on the same team during

[67] Interview F2.
[68] Interview F2.
[69] Interview J2.
[70] Interview F6.

> the day and things like that, which to me obviously is like crazy but there are few groups like that. This is something obviously that you would never have seen in 2015.[71]

In fact, in some other grassroots NGOs, there were some limits put between the "community volunteers" and the "international volunteers" mainly because they were afraid that not having regulations could do more harm than good. The "Do No Harm" concept was really at the heart of each of the organisations. Moreover, as much as grassroots humanitarianism is adaptive and flexible due to its non-institutionalised practices, the fact that it is also based on volunteering, allows for more freedom in responding to the needs and more horizontal relationships with the camp population. A few other groups believed that these same strengths could also be harmful towards the community as two of the interviewees put it:

> Before I came to Samos, I would say definitely we [the international, community volunteers and camp population] are equal and I think that it is still how I think about it, but I do realise now that it is complicated sometimes. (...) We don't have equal rights; we don't live in a similar situation. But then again, we are all human beings so I feel like in that sense, the same things apply for everyone. So, yes, I don't know, it is a difficult one.[72]

> As much as I appreciate when people say "we are equal", "we are the same", bla bla bla, we are not. I have a passport that allows me to fly back home if my mom is sick tomorrow, people we support, don't. (...) I don't want it there to be, but there is a power imbalance and if you say "oh no, we are all the same, doesn't matter where we are from", it is a lie. I think, you should recognise this and act accordingly. It does not mean "oh you are a beneficiary and you say I serve you". You should still treat people with dignity and respect but you should always keep in the back of your head I am a professional here, I am here to support people the best I can, but I am not their mom, their sister, their grandmother or whatever. (...) You want them involved, you want them empowered, but you want it in a professional way not in the way like "we are the same, go out and drink, go party, let's do this, this and that" because…. yeah.[73]

Interestingly, when talking about this topic with "community volunteers" themselves, it appeared that imposing such rules were more harmful in the symbolic impact that it had on them by taking them back to their refugee, migrant or asylum-seeker status. Moreover, they were also already aware of these structural differences between them in terms of their restricted mobility and undefined status. However, going to work or going to community centers was a way to be treated as truly equal and to go out of that status-predefined condition. One of the community volunteers I interviewed used to work for a grassroots organisation that had imposed strict rules regarding behaviour outside working hours but which relaxed most of the regulations before he left for another organisation after one year working for them and discussing with the coordinators. When we talked about the subject of the place occupied by "community volunteers" he told me:

[71] Interview F5.
[72] Interview F4.
[73] Interview F10.

> You know, when I started working with XY, I thought I was part of them, but after a while, I saw no. I am not part of them. All the time, they told me about equality. All the time they told me about a family. But what I could see is not equality...as an example, they call community volunteers and they call them European people volunteers (...) But! both of us, it is the same thing. (...) Another thing, we had another chat group, another meeting. One for the people from the camp - refugees - and one for international volunteers (...) And then, I could see they could not come outside with us even, even for a drink, for what reasons? Because we are refugees? (...) It was difficult for me, because I said to myself "for what reasons, we cannot go outside with the volunteers...maybe I am different?" "For what reasons they cannot accept ME in their social media?" I asked the coordinator in front of everyone "What is the difference between me and him?" And he couldn't answer me...and someone said "He cannot accept you in the social media because if they accept you in the social media, you can see his pictures and also you can read his background" and that I said "Ok, what is the difference between me and him? We are both men" and then, he couldn't answer me. The man, he answered my question "Because, I choose to come here to help but you had to come" and also, he said to me "I have a passport and I can travel, but you don't have a passport" and I got super angry and I said to him "how many people are living in the camp? 8000? 6000? How many community volunteers do you have? 15. Also WE choose to come here to help and you cannot tell me about helping.[74]

It was really an interesting finding and paradox to see how grassroots organisations were trying to be horizontal and empowering. This was done by not having heavy internal structures, integrating migrants in the organisations and sometimes decision-making processes, considering the humanitarian workers and the camp population as both equally humane. But at the same time acknowledging in some cases that there was an underlying structural inequality between an international and a community volunteer, which called for rules to be implemented in order to protect the community volunteer from potential harm caused by the international one. This latter element was really interesting in questioning the pros and cons of resorting to volunteering. Pros being the flexibility that it allows, raising awareness when going back home, allowing grassroots groups to function because of the lack of funding, but most importantly showing genuine solidarity with the people. However, the cons being the lack of accountability sometimes, the risk of causing more harm than good because of the lack of information or inexperience of some volunteers, or the risk that their behavior can harm if one got too attached. Those are some of the reasons why two of the grassroots organisations and, interestingly, the ones from which the two previous quotes have been taken, have started to professionalise their volunteering practices by resorting to volunteers who had relevant professional backgrounds in their countries or by having codes of conduct that regulate relationships.

[74] Interview F1.

5.2 Acting as both a Humanitarian & a Political Actor

5.2.1 Acting in a Political Setting & Going Beyond Neutral Volunteering

When trying to understand what could relate to politics or be of a political nature when humanitarianism should be politically neutral and genuinely moral, the first thing that came out was that all the respondents acknowledged that the situation on the island was the direct results of political interests and decisions that impacted the context in which they were evolving and their work: “In this context, our work is inherently political, these conditions that exist here, only exist because of political decisions because of policies, like the EU-Turkey Statement is that big politics that is responsible for these conditions here.”[75]

Moreover, all of them were aware that they were doing a “state job”[76] and that by being there and acting as they did, they were also part of the state’s disengagement from its moral and legal obligations towards migrants. This aspect was really something that they all had in mind and that was also a dilemma for them: “Well, we have all filled gaps that should have been filled by more formal actors. Now, in my mind, in my belief, NGOs should not exist, not even the big ones, it should be governments looking after their own people and in this case, refugees.”[77]

> For me, in this context now, how I feel now, is that, that’s important that we don’t take over too much things from the government or whatever and that we should always keep in mind that we are here temporary (...) that if we are here, we should fill in the needs that are really needed (...) To help out with making the situation here as dignified as possible and as humane as possible but yes, keep in mind that we are temporary yes, I think that, that is very important.[78]

Another aspect through which politics manifested itself was related to volunteering. For most of the respondents and the volunteers I have been talking with, the reasons to come were often based on two grounds: a moral obligation and a practical one. The latter being mostly about the possibility to gain some experience in the field of humanitarian action while the former was really about a feeling of moral obligation to show the people who were coming how the situation was dealt with was not representing everyone’s belief and thus a way to show solidarity with them: “We are all here, because we believe that what is going on here, is wrong.”[79] “I think it was important that there are people who come and show as well as humans like “ok, not everybody is against you.”[80]

[75] Interview F5.
[76] Interview F2.
[77] Interview F10.
[78] Interview F9.
[79] Interview F10.
[80] Interview F7.

However, volunteering was also used as a way to bring more awareness once they were going back home by making the situation well known. In fact, volunteers were supposed to be both acting as witnesses of the situation on the island and spokesperson in the name of the migrants as they could not talk for themselves.

> I think volunteering brings around so much more awareness and understanding that even if there was a solution it would be nice to have volunteering alongside anyway just because I mean there are so many people that come out here and then can go back and explain the situation like…when you see boats of migrants only of men on the frontpage of a newspaper, they can say, "yeah maybe but when I was there, many boats had men, women and children on" which is the reality as well. So, I think it is really important that people could see this and actually stop, help to stop the incitation...it is not even a word but the inciting hatred basically.[81]

"The refugees themselves they don't have the voices to be heard (...) we have to try as much as we can, otherwise, yes like, who is going to know, like no one is going to know about what is happening here."[82]

Moreover, it was also very clear from them that they were actors with two sides. One side considered as fully humanitarian and that related to their daily work. In fact, all of them defined themselves as principally humanitarian actors because of the actions and practices they were doing everyday: distributing food, clothes, curing people's diseases, teaching languages and so on. However, they acknowledged that they had a political side as well, but characterising this side was not the same for everyone and it divided grassroots organisations into two groups.

5.2.2 *de facto* vs. Active Political Involvement

One group of grassroots organisations considered that they were *de facto* political actors. According to them, what gave them a political attribute was mainly the fact that even though they did not act as proper activists by targeting the states and policies, or making petitions and so on, by their own presence, they were contesting the way in which the European Union was dealing with the situation. To them, however, it was secondary to all that they were doing. They were first of all humanitarian actors providing needs and recognising refugees as humans, and then indirectly political actors but not as a purposeful action or focus. One of the interviewees perfectly summarized the feeling and the perception that this grassroots group had about this topic:

> You're, you're naturally, if you are here, even by...I never thought about this until very, very recently. I never thought of myself as an activist ever and someone said to me that I was an activist and I was like...maybe I actually am just by default..by anyone coming here, you are, you are being an activist, you're taking action and you're doing something

[81] Interview F8.
[82] Interview F5.

> you believe in and telling about it most likely so...yeah, I...I always thought activist of the hard cause..as a sort of scale but actually, we are all being activists in that way. There are some groups obviously that are advocacy groups but then the rest, by default, they are maybe doing it, indirectly, yeah.[83]

For the other grassroots group, however, it was explicitly part of their job to adopt a more political stance and to advocate for the people and against the situation on the ground as outlined by one of the interviewees:

> At the moment, I think our role is definitely to support the people in their daily struggles like just with literally basic needs things like diapers, like sanitary pads, food, things like that, legal aid, all the medical aid, all the things people need. Then, the second point I think is awareness, advocacy, making sure, for us mainly in country X because that is where we are based and where we have the connections, making sure people hear about this, like often, I go talk at universities, I go talk with political parties, like with interested people, this kind of things, I find it very, very important that we do this and if everyone does that in their countries, we can raise more awareness. Then, yes, the third thing is definitely directly on a political level, that we get involved more, that we, like one is advocacy, showing also what policies, like what for example the EU-Turkey concretely like practically has for, what the implications are for the daily life of people in Europe like all these kinds of things.[84]

When asking them about being political, most of them naturally associated this term with advocacy, which was interesting because after analysing their daily work, belief-systems or speeches, it appeared to me, that it was much more than that. In fact, coming back to the first part of the analysis and the inclusion of the camp residents and them being stripped away from their refugee, migrant or asylum-seeker status was also a political act. Moreover, as stated earlier, coming to the island because what was happening did not fit their values or what they believe the European values should be, was also a political decision and not only a moral one. Deciding not to be working in the new camp if it is a detention facility as some grassroots groups are thinking, or not to officially register as one group did, is also a highly political act. In fact, with all these actions and not only by their presence, they are contesting political practices that they do not agree with.

After reviewing the interviews and their practices, it interestingly appeared that, even though they are grassroots organisations motivated by beliefs and bottom-up pushes, politics or "political-something" is seen as something negative, and if not negative, something that some groups are not really comfortable with. However, one of the interviewees also talked about this topic and how grassroots organisations related to things that have or imply a political character. According to her, this has to do with how grassroots organisations define themselves as humanitarians and mostly how they define humanitarianism:

> For me at the same time, humanitarianism should also mean, I know many people don't see it that way, but for me it also means trying to address the structures that actually

[83] Interview F8.
[84] Interview F5.

> leads to this situation and that forces people to be in this situation. (...) As I said in the beginning, I do believe that actually everywhere humanitarian action is inherently political, so by saying like “we are not political”, I don’t think it is possible (...) I think we have to be political, we also should be more transparent about it, it is way more important than yes trying to hide it. I think a lot of people maybe just don’t realize it but I think that is probably worse.[85]

6. CONCLUDING THE PAPER

If this research has taught me anything, it is mostly that humanitarianism is a mosaic of practices. That it is permeable and constructed by the people who practise it and the context in which it is set. Moreover, the movements that emerged also showed that there are other ways in which humanitarianism can be shaped. However, it seems that regardless of the form it takes - civil engagement, grassroots organisations, big NGOs or institutions - it always has advantages and disadvantages.

What mostly came out of this research is that the grassroots movement really questions and tackles the asymmetries of relationships and the inequality of lives when delivering the aid by re-humanising people from the camp and horizontally engaging with them. However, when it comes to the position of volunteers in the organisations, some treated them in a different way even though good intentions were behind it, which was really interesting and also paradoxical. Moreover, grassroots organisations also showed how humanitarianism can interact with politics, but more than that, how it is deeply rooted in the political realm, either due to the context in which it is evolving or simply because of the actions - going beyond advocacy - that are undertaken in the explicit or implicit contestation of some policies or political decisions.

When going back to the definition of humanitarianism, it really appears that it is more than a simple set of actions but that it is defined by the belief-systems at the core of each individual’s values that will then be transcripted in a movement or an organisation and then formalised as a practice. Thus, I share the view that humanitarianism is about actions, worldviews and vocabularies. Moreover, when going back to the definition of subversive humanitarianism as being “a morally motivated set of actions which acquires a political character not through the form in which these actions manifest themselves, but through their implicit opposition to the ruling socio-political climate” (Vandevoordt and Verschraegen 2019, 105), I would slightly modify it by suggesting that subversive humanitarianism is about “a morally and politically motivated set of actions which acquires a political character through the form in which these actions manifest themselves - such as the inclusion of migrants, not registering, being bottom-up and not collaborating with the government for instance - and their explicit or implicit opposition to the ruling socio-political climate”. In fact, resisting

[85] Interview F5.

professionalisation and institutionalisation or deciding to remain small and to be grassroots is made on purpose. It is a purposeful choice - might it be moral, political, or both - and both the form and the how matter.

This research was also very interesting in questioning the political neutrality of volunteering and it also revealed how grassroots groups on the island, as opposed to other islands, were acting as a network, which unfortunately could not be further explored in this research. For further research, it would be interesting to look at volunteering and its different dimensions more deeply, to look at how grassroots groups interact with each other and build networks and to see if here as well, they can go beyond the traditional competition between big NGOs or institutional organisations. Finally, it would also be interesting to do even more qualitative research in order to define humanitarianism for what it really is (i.e. a set of practices and ideologies evolving in the world of politics).

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8. ANNEXES

Annex I - Example of an Interview Guide[86]

Interview guide used in February 2020 with a NGO coordinator (female, active in Samos for three years) working for a community center
Introductory/personal questions Can you introduce yourself and present your background?
Why have you decided to become a volunteer? / What were your motivations?
Why Samos? How did you end up in Samos?
How would you describe the situation in Samos?
Do you think that Samos is an island or that the situation is at it is, both have an influence on the way humanitarian action is practiced?
NGOs working dimension related questions
Can you describe the organisation that you are now working with?
What are the main goals of the NGO?
Can you describe the structure of XX?
Can you explain how XX evolved among time?
What are your interactions with local authorities?
What are the organisation's relations with the local population?
Would you consider that there is collaboration/cooperation among the NGOs?
Volunteering related questions
What do you think about this idea of having community volunteers and why you do have community volunteers?
On the other side, what do you think about international volunteers coming?
Would you consider that a way towards professionalization is better or do you think that a work based on volunteering is sustainable and should be targeted?
Humanitarianism/political related questions

[86] It should be stressed here that during most of the interviews, the interview guide order changed and that new questions emerged in
reaction to what the interviewees were saying and that other questions were not asked because the respondent answered them while answering another question. However, it was the way in which the questions were designed and thought.

What does “humanitarianism” mean for you?
How would you describe the humanitarian action or practices here in Samos?
Would you consider the work done by XX or other NGOs with which you worked as more humanitarian or more political, or both?
What is for you the limits, if any, of the current humanitarian practice, or its downsides, or things that could be improved?
Concluding questions
As you have been here for so long, what are the most important changes that you witnessed among time?
Thank you very much for all your answers! Is there anything that you would like to add?

Annex II - Arrivals and Transfers per Island since 2017

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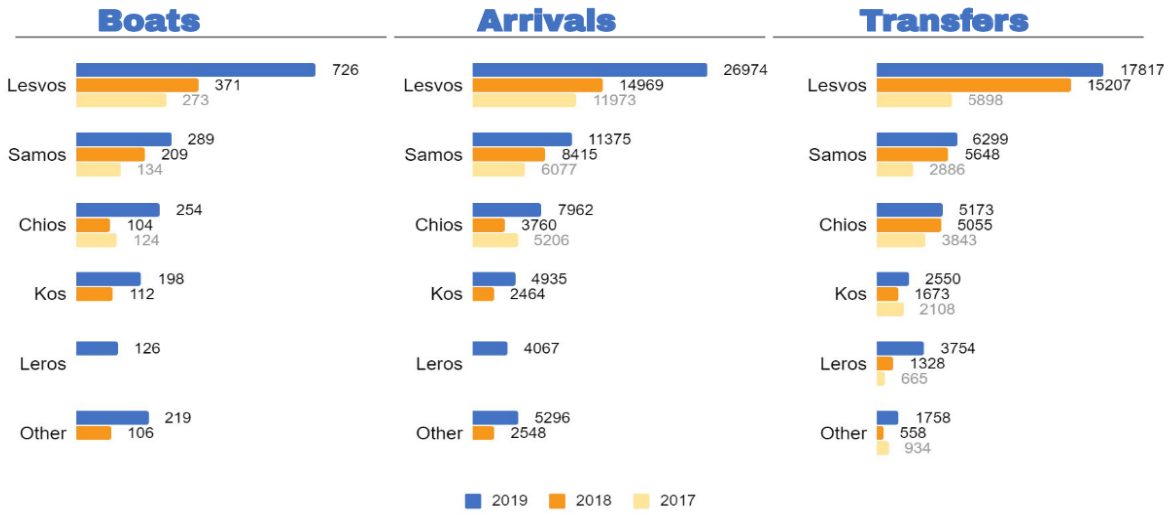
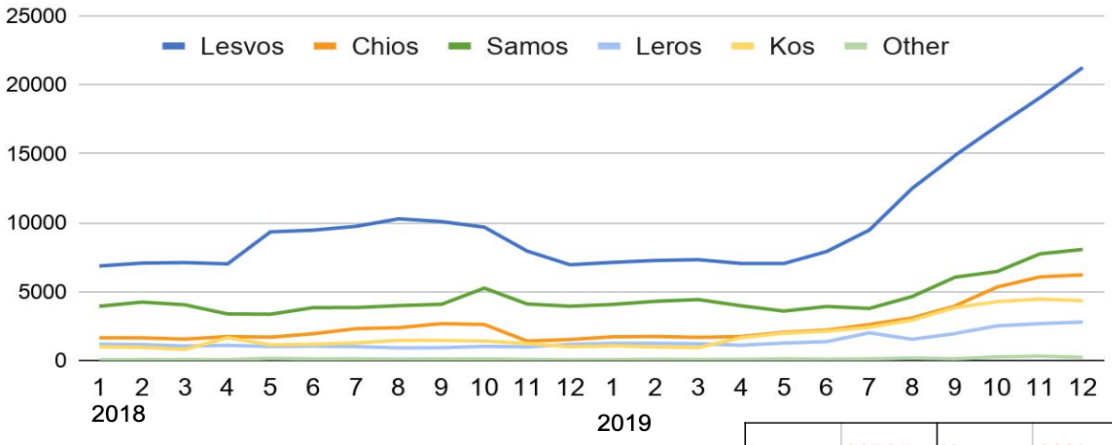
Arrivals and transfers by island

In 2019 37351 people were transported to mainland, from the Greek islands. Transfers have increased 26.8% compared to 2018, when 29469 people were transported. In 2019 population on the Aegean islands has increased by 186.7%, from 14615 to 41899 people. Greek government's efforts to reduce population on the islands has failed massively.



Population on each island



Official capacity on the islands is 9209 people. Today's population exceeds this by 355%.In the end of 2018 total population was 14615, one year later its 41899, population has increased by 27284 people this last year on the Greek Islands.

Lesvos	20785	Kos	4119
Samos	8064	Leros	2757
Chios	6078	Other	96

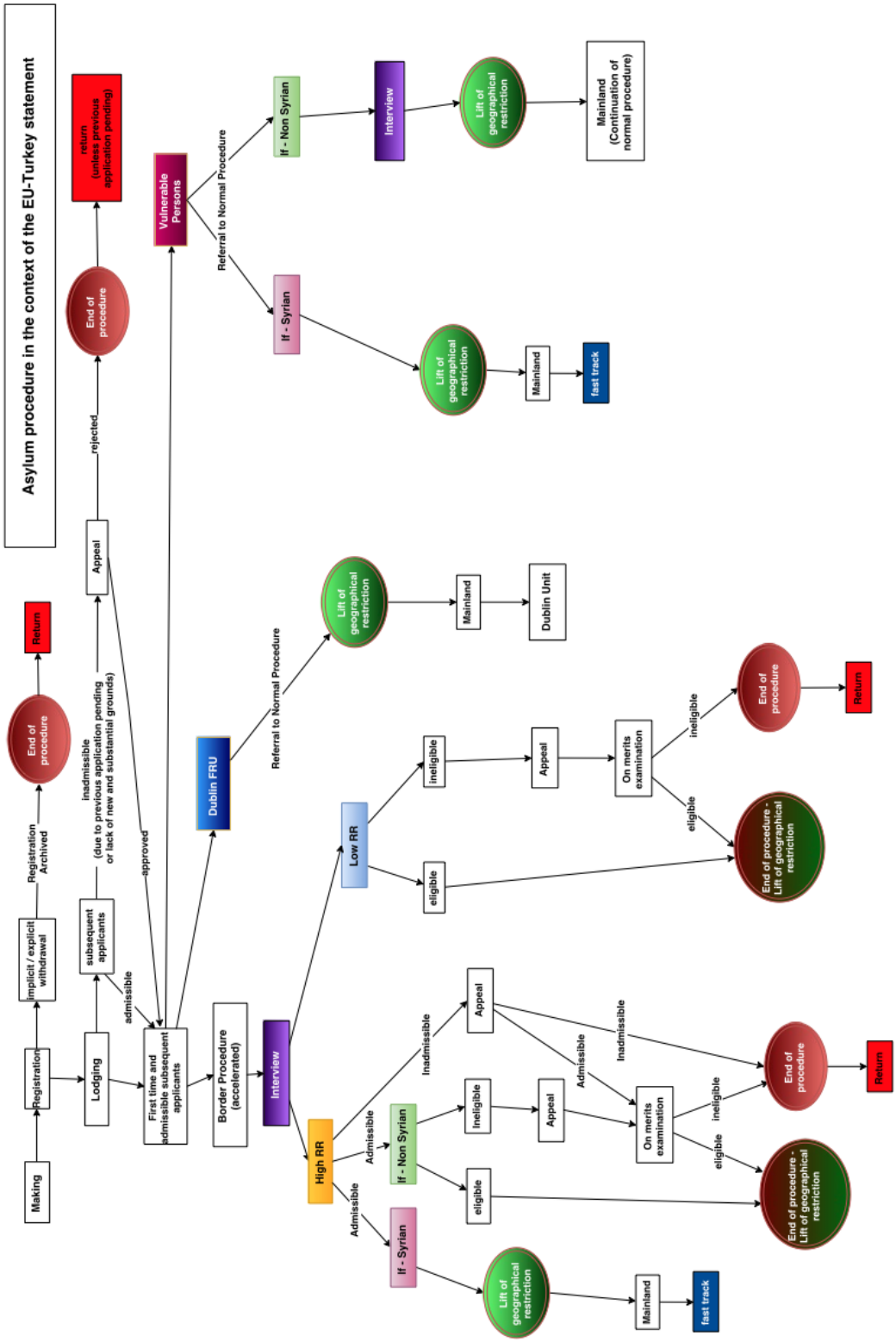
Source: Aegean Boat Report. (2020). *Annual Reports 2019 1#*. [on line] Available at: https://aegeanboatreport.com/annual-reports/ [Accessed 9 May 2020]

Annex III - Reception and Identification Procedures to be provided by the RIS

> Moreover, Article 9(1) L 4375/2016 provides: "All third-country nationals and stateless persons who enter without complying with the legal formalities in the country, shall be submitted to reception and identification procedures. Reception and identification procedures include:
>
> a. the registration of their personal data and the taking and registering of fingerprints for those who have reached the age of 14,
> b. the verification of their identity and nationality,
> c. their medical screening and provision any necessary care and psycho-social support,
> d. informing them about their rights and obligations, in particular the procedure for international protection or the procedure for entering a voluntary return program,
> e. attention for those belonging to vulnerable groups, in order to put them under the appropriate, in each case, procedure and to provide them with specialised care and protection,
> f. referring those who wish to submit an application for international protection to start the procedure for such an application,
> g. referring those who do not submit an application for international protection or whose application is rejected while they remain in the RIC to the competent authorities for readmission, removal or return procedures."

Source: Asylum Information Database. (2020). *Reception and Identification Procedures Greece*. [on line] Available at: https://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/asylum-procedure/access-procedure-and-registration/reception-and#footnoteref15_m4opac0 [Accessed 9 May 2020].

Annex IV - Asylum Procedure on the Aegean Islands



Source: Hellenic Republic Ministry of Immigration and Asylum. (2020). *Flowcharts of the Asylum Procedure in Greece*. [on line] Available at: http://asylo.gov.gr/en/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Islands-procedure.pdf [Accessed 11 May 2020].

Annex V - Categorization of Volunteer/Grassroots NGOs working on the island[87]

Educational Support	Medical Support	Legal Support	Basic Needs Support	Well-Being & Recreational Support	Local Organisations Support
Samos Volunteers - Educational activities (language classes) ¨ Workshops in partnerships with Med'EqualiTeam for Women Health and Refugee Law Clinic Berlin for legal advices	**MedEqualiTeam** - Access to primary health care for patients living in the camp	**Berlin Refugee Law Clinic** - Space for judicial assistance and information on the Asylum process	**Refugee4Refugees** - Clothes distribution - Hygiene items distribution - Non-food items distribution (tents, sleeping bags, mattresses)	**Still I rise** - Mazì Youth Center providing in addition to classes, a safe space for children	**Help Refugees** - Help local organisations with funding, material aid or volunteers
Action for Education - Education Centre (Banana House) for young people between 18-23 years old (and on Sundays for women and under 18 years old teenagers) → The Nest, kindergarten project for kids between 2-7 years old (but currently closed by authorities. However, they are trying to reopen) - Computer Lab → computer classes for adults (run in cooperation with We Are Once)	**MSF** - Psychological support and women health	**Avocats Sans Frontières** - Space for judicial assistance and information on the Asylum process	**Project Armonia** - Safe space providing food for "children, pregnant as well as breastfeeding women, people with disabilities, physically impaired people and elderly"	**A Drop In the Ocean** - Safe space for recreational activities (sports and arts) for children and their mothers - Fitness classes for men and women	**Indigo Volunteers** - Match volunteers with"grassroots charities" - Coordination between volunteer organisations working in Samos - Workshop to volunteer organisations staff
Still I Rise - Informal education programme for children aged between 11 and 17 years old	**MSF** - Psychological support and women health		**Samos Volunteers** - Laundry space in collaboration with MSF for people to wash their clothes.	**We Are One Centre (Glocal Roots)** - Safe space where women with their children "can cope with stress, anxiety and trauma through mindfulness, bodywork and peer -to peer groups"	

[87]Self-made table based on NGOs websites and what I witnessed on the island.

	IRC **-** Mental health support			**Samos Volunteers** - Drawing, music animations	
				Movement on the Ground - Waste Management project in the camp to improve the sanitary and living conditions of migrants	

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