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Recognizing Gender-based Sexual Violence

Against Men and Boys in

Vulnerable Situations

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Initial Motivation

My initial motivation for writing about the topic of gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys in this master thesis, is largely because I wanted to continue my research on Gender-based Sexual Violence in Crisis Situations that I did for my bachelor thesis. In addition, have I also worked as a volunteer in a refugee camp in Greece in 2015, where I saw the horrible realities of the people living in the camp. This experience sparked an interest in migration and humanitarian response and led me to volunteer for several organizations that work with and for refugees here in Norway. Thus, have this thesis research been a great opportunity to immerse myself to a greater extent within the field of gender-based sexual violence.

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the debate about refugees, gender-based sexual violence against men and boys, implementation of measures, and how this together affects mental health issues. The measures developed and implemented towards curbing and preventing gender-based sexual violence against men and boys by the aid apparatus in vulnerable situations, seems to be lacking and challenging to find enough research on. By using a qualitative research methodology approach, have I interviewed twelve individuals about their knowledge of gender-based sexual violence prevention measures towards men and boys in a refugee camp in Mytilini, Greece. Findings supporting a lack of attention to address and implement measures for curbing gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys in a refugee camp in Mytilini emerged, and have been discussed in connection to the theoretical perspectives and frameworks of intersectionality and power.

Acronyms

EU – European Union

CAT - Committee against Torture

GBV – Gender-based Violence

GBSV – Gender-based Sexual Violence

GFMD - Global Forum on Migration and Development

ICRC – International Committee of the Red Cross

IMF – International Monetary Fund

MSF – Médecins Sans Frontiers

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

RABITS - Rapid Deployment Border Intervention Teams

UDI – Utlendingsdirektoratet

UN – The United Nations

UNHCR – The UN Refugee Agency

UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund

US – The United States

WHO – World Health Organization

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Addressing Gender-based Sexual Violence

Gender-based violence is said to be “one of the most prevalent human rights violations in the world” according to the United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA, 2017), as it knows no national, economic, and social boundaries, and significantly undermines the security and health of the people affected. Gender-based violence includes sexual, physical, mental and economic harm, as well as threats of violence, domestic violence, child marriage, sexual violence, and female genital mutilation - to mention a few (UNHCR, n.d.b.).

In connection to this, are The World Bank (The World Bank, 2019) affirming that gender-based violence leads to substantial social and economic costs, and in some countries are “violence against women estimated to cost countries up to 3.7% of their GDP”. Gender-based violence might also lead to challenges for the future, as victims of such violence might experience long-term physical and mental traumas and difficulties, while children growing up in homes of violence might end up becoming victims or perpetrators of such violence in the future (The World Bank, 2019).

Addressing gender-based sexual violence specifically, The International Committee of the Red Cross and the Norwegian Red Cross emphasized in their recent rapport that gender-based sexual violence towards women and girls in crisis and conflict is “horrific, widespread, and well documented” (ICRC, 2022b). They further state that sexual violence towards other groups - such as men and boys, LGBTIQ+ people, and other minority groups, are equally devastating but overlooked. In connection to this, are they arguing that the prevalence of sexual violence towards men and boys during a crisis such as detention and migration situations has been severely underestimated due to stigma and social and cultural norms linked to masculinity for male survivors (ICRC, 2022b). Their report is, therefore, an appeal for all states and other actors to take action toward building and implementing non-discriminatory legislation prohibiting gender-based sexual violence toward all people and ensuring that the survivors will have proper access to measures and justice (ICRC, 2022b).

Next, is it also important to emphasize that gender, sexuality, and violence must be understood as three separate concepts that do not necessarily lead to gender-based sexual violence. In other words, is gender, sexuality, and violence – by themselves - three individual concepts separate from gender-based sexual violence (Hilhorst et al., 2018). However, it is

often so that the interconnectedness between these concepts is shaping power dynamics and are affecting the “aid delivery and the politics around it” in humanitarian programming and settings (Hilhorst et al., 2018, p. 5 - 6). In crisis situations and humanitarian settings, gender has often been set as a key factor in relation to mapping out vulnerability – meaning that the humanitarian actors often views women as the most vulnerable and in need of more humanitarian assistance than men (Hilhorst et al., 2018, p. 6). In addition, and in connection to this, is Okoko (2021) also expressing that there is a tendency to internalize “stereotypes of an ideal victim and perpetrator”, in which the female and femininity are perceived as innocent and pure, while the masculine male is perceived as aggressive and the perpetrator of violence and sexual acts. However, this is not a realistic perspective, and it is therefore important to emphasize in any research addressing gender-based sexual violence specifically – such as in this thesis, that the acts of sexual violence are not exclusive to any gender. Both women and men might be sexual offenders and survivors. It is also essential to point out that the concept of masculinity is not homogenous and that there are both a hegemonic and a subordinate form of masculinity that might mediate the relationship between men and women - but also between men and men when it comes to “acting out” sexual violence (Anandhi et al., 2002, p. 4397).

Thus, with these facts in mind, and as a result of my ongoing interest in the topics of gender, gender-based sexual violence, the refugee situation, and implementation of preventative measures, have I decided to bring together these concepts and topics in this master thesis research project. I also firmly believe that addressing these topics, combined with an emphasis on men and boys, is vital to gain more profound knowledge and a broader perspective of sexual violence as gender-biased – meaning that acts of sexual violence might be perceived as something gendered (Okoko, 2021). Thus, and in order to fully grasp the concept of sexual violence as gender biased, I will in this thesis also address the interrelation between the competing notions of masculinities and femininities in connection to acts of sexual violence. I believe this view will bring a richer understanding of the refugees' experiences in vulnerable situations during their refugee journey in connection to gender-based sexual violence.

Lastly, I will also address the topic of mental health in the refugee situation in connection with trauma, sexual violence, and the implementation of measures, as this was a topic that my interviewees mentioned as essential in order to properly understand the refugee reality.

1.2 Delimitation of the Project

While the overarching topic of my thesis is gender-based sexual violence in vulnerable situations, have I decided to delimit this research topic into investigating the occurrence of gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys in refugee camps, with Mytilini on the Greek Island Lesbos as a case study. I have also explored the attention that humanitarian actors have had on gender-based sexual violence prevention in the earlier and now burned-down Moria camp and how this has changed/ evolved since resettling the new camp in Mytilini. Additionally, while gender-based violence is such a complex phenomenon that takes form in several forms of oppression, discrimination, harm, and violence, as mentioned above, have I in this research project, mainly focused my interview questions and attention on the occurrence of gender-based sexual violence in the refugee camps in Mytilini.

1.3 Aims, Objectives, and Research Questions

Thus, in order to narrow down the complex phenomenon of gender-based sexual violence against refugees, as well as addressing the institutional challenges to gender-based sexual violence prevention, I will in my analysis and discussion mainly focus on analyzing the absence of preventions against gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys living as refugees in the camp Mytilini, Lesbos.

The main research questions guiding my analysis will therefore be: «Why have measures to combat gender-based sexual violence against men and boys not been addressed and implemented in the refugee camps in Mytilini, on Lesbos? ». Furthermore, will I also raise the question of whether there are cultural and contextual conditions in Greece that reinforce the lack of attention in this part of the field. Moreover, am I also going to discuss the topic of mental health, as this was expressed by the interviewees as crucial to address in order to implement proper measures for gender-based sexual violence prevention. And lastly but equally interesting, will I also raise the question if the lack of attention towards addressing and implementing measures for sexual violence prevention against men and boys specifically, is linked to gender-biased ideas about who is "the victim" and who is the "perpetrator"?

With these topics and research questions in mind, have I interviewed various organizations, experts, and volunteers in Norway and Greece about the occurrence of gender-based sexual violence in the camps in general, and how they have developed and implemented measures for gender-based sexual violence prevention. My aim was, therefore, not to interview the

people living within this camp about their experience with gender-based sexual violence - I aimed at interviewing the staff in different organizations, and former volunteers that are or have been working in the field with these issues. I decided to do so out of ethical consideration to do no harm to the already vulnerable refugee population, as I do not have the knowledge or experience to talk to vulnerable people about such traumatic experiences. I will address my ethical choices and consideration in more detail in section 4.3.1 Ethical Issues and Considerations in my Research.

1.4 Word Use

In order to make it more comprehensible to follow the content of this thesis, I will in this following paragraph provide a short disclaimer and explanation of some of the words that I have used. I believe such an explanation will be beneficial, as I have used different words to explain/describe certain situations, constructions, and groups of people, throughout this thesis.

I have, among others, used the words refugee, detainee, people fleeing, and people to describe the people fleeing from crisis, conflicts, and persecution throughout this thesis. The word refugee is mainly used when describing different refugee conventions, the refugee journey, the refugee crisis, and so on, if the sources are using the word refugee to describe this group of people. I do recognize that the term of “the refugee” is the official terminology utilized to describe people fleeing from crisis, conflict, and persecution, however, do also recognize that the use of the term “the refugee” have been criticized by several scholars in recent years. With this in mind I have, therefore - to the best of my ability, tried to use the wording of people fleeing, traveling, moving, etc., to describe this group of people throughout my thesis - but have also used the term refugee in certain settings if the structure of the text leads to it. I have written more about the terminology and my reasoning for the word use in chapter 2.3 “The Refugee and the Refugee Crisis”, and the in the paragraphs: “2.3.1 The Refugee” and “2.3.2 What does the term Refugee actually mean?”, in my background section.

I have also used the words detention facility, structure, camp(s), and refugee camp, when writing about and describing the camp(s) that the people fleeing have been and are placed in when coming to Europe, Greece, and Lesbos. I have mainly used the words detention facility, structure and camps in my background section, as this was the words used to describe the structures in the sources. I have also used the word refugee camp in my empirical data section as this was the word used by my interviewee to describe the same structures.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is structured into eight main chapters, consisting of several sections, and underlying paragraphs. These main chapters consist of an introduction, background, theoretical frameworks, research methodology, literature review, data & analysis, concluding discussion, and a last reflection for the future chapter.

The introduction chapter introduces the topics of this thesis and provides an overview of this thesis main objectives, aims, and research questions. In the background chapter, I have sought to present the field for this research, different refugee conventions, the concept of the refugee and the Mediterranean refugee crisis and addressed the phenomenon of gender-based violence. Within the theoretical frameworks chapter, I have presented the theoretical perspectives of intersectionality and the framework of power by Steven Lukes, which I have used to discuss certain situations and concepts in the data and analysis chapter. In addition, have I in the research methodology chapter presented the methodology and methods used throughout my research process, and have discussed my literature used in the following literature review chapter. Throughout the data and analysis chapter, I have presented my data collected during my field fieldwork in Greece, Mytilini, and discussed the data in connection to other research within the field, and the theoretical perspectives and frameworks of intersectionality and power. Lastly have I discussed some concluding points and findings in the concluding discussion chapter, and addressed some of my reflections for the future, for implementing measures for gender-based sexual violence prevention towards men and boys in the camp in Mytilini, in the last chapter of this thesis.

2.0 Background

As this thesis contains many topics - such as sexual violence, mental health and preventive measures to name a few, I will first in this background section introduce the "field" for this thesis. I will start the introduction of the field by providing a short description of the refugee situation in Greece, on the Greek Island of Lesbos, and address the migration crisis and the occurrence of sexual violence. I believe such an introduction will provide a greater understanding of the following background information and the empirical data in later chapters.

Following this, I will focus my attention on addressing the different refugee conventions, legislations, and declarations that have shaped the complex refugee situation in the world today. Such conventions, declarations and legislations include the 1951 Refugee Convention

and the 1967 Protocol, the The Universal Declaration of Human Rights & The International Human Rights Law.

In the last chapters of this background section, am I going to provide a more thorough description of the terminology of “the refugee”. Regarding this, will I provide a description of the official terminology of “the refugee”, discuss the term in connection to stereotypical perceptions presented in the media and the society, and provide some statistical data on the refugee situation. In addition to this, am I going to elaborate on, and clarify the phenomenon of gender-based violence in more detail and address the different international conventions that have been initiated globally in order to curb gender-based violence. Lastly in this paragraph, am I also going to address how the human security discourse in international institutions are creating an understanding of who the victims and who is the perpetrators of gender-based violence.

2.1 An Introduction to The Field

As stated above, will I in this following paragraph provide a short introduction to the field. I am first going to offer some general background information about Greece, emphasizing the country's geopolitical location in the world concerning the routes that people fleeing are taking to escape crises and disasters. I will then provide some background information about the Greek Island of Lesbos and the city of Mytilini and address some of the political and societal effects that the refugee situation has brought about in this area. Lastly in this paragraph, I will address the migration crisis in Greece in connection with acts of gender-based sexual violence, in Mytilini, Greece. I will not go to much in detail on the field in the following paragraph, as this will be addressed to a greater extent in my findings chapter, however, I believe that a short introduction the field is in order to put the following background information in the findings chapter into perspective.

2.1.1 The Geopolitical location of Greece



Image 1. Physical features of Greece, 2022, by Encyclopedia Britannica.

(<https://www.britannica.com/place/Greece#/media/1/244154/62900>).

Greece is a country that is at once European, Balkan, Mediterranean, and Near Eastern, in which it lies at the juncture of Europe, Asia, and Africa (Loring et al., 2023). It shares its borders with countries such as the Republic of North Macedonia, Bulgaria, Albania, and Turkey, and seas such as the Aegean Sea to the east, the Mediterranean Sea to the south, and the Ionian Sea to the west. The land area of Greece consists of “six major regions: the northeastern, the central, the eastern, southern, and western mainland” as well as over two thousand Islands in which hundred and seventy of these are inhabited (Loring et al., 2023).

This geopolitical location of the country in the world - in the juncture between Europe, The Middle East, Africa, and Asia, has become one of many reasons for the influx of people fleeing to Europe through Greece (Cabot, 2014, p. 3). Greece is seen as more accessible than other European states for people coming from the Middle East “because of its proximity and its shared land and sea borders with Turkey” (Cabot, 2014, p. 3). Many people might enter the country by foot over the rivers and mountains in the north, while others reach the islands and mainland Greece from the Turkish coast by boats and rubber dinghies by the seas in the south and east (Cabot, 2014, pp. 3 - 4). Thus, the Greek borders and the Evros River between Greece and Turkey became to be the “most trafficked borders of the European Union” back in

2013, according to Cabot (2014, p.4). Elaborating on this, I will in the following paragraphs address the regions that consist of the most used routes for people fleeing to enter Greece.

The northeastern region

The northeastern region of Greece is considered as the main gateway to the east, marking the end of Europe and the beginning of the Asian continent, and are according to Karakasi & Pavlidis (2019, p.1) the last “major obstacle to overcome before entering the Schengen area” for the hundreds of thousands of refugees taking the eastern Mediterranean route. Karakasi & Pavlidis (2019, p.) further state that it’s the international economic and political situation that determine the movement of refugees in this region into Europe, and it’s the Evros River in the north that are currently considered as an especially trafficked route for people fleeing to cross into Greece, according to Cabot (2014, p.4).

The south and eastern region

Throughout the south and eastern region of Greece near the Turkish coast, is the Islands of Lesbos, Chios, and Samos located (Loring et al., n.d.). Lesbos is an Island situated in the North Aegean sea, are a part of the Eastern Greece, and Lesbos most populated centre is the city of Mytilini placed on the southeastern coast of the Island (Britannica, n.d.a.). Chios is an Island situated 8km of the coast of Turkey in the North Aegean sea, while the Island of Samos are the Island closest to the coast of Turkey only separated by the narrow Samos strait (Britannica, n.d.b. & Britannica, n.d.c.). These Greek islands shares sea borders and close proximity to Turkey and the rest of the Middle-East, which are leading to many people taking the dangerous sea route through the Aegean sea to reach safety in Greece (Cabot, 2014, p. 3).

2.1.2 Recent Political History in Greece

In order to provide a relevant and thorough understanding of Greece`s political history in accordance with this thesis topics, will I in this following paragraph narrow the scope of the country`s political history. I will address the possible underlying cause for Greece`s political marginalization in Europe and elaborate on some of the controversial political tendencies in migration processes after year 2010. According to Cabot (2014, p. 27), Greece has long undergone some powerful symbolic and political tension that has shaped the countries relationship with the European west and the countries to the east. While Greece has not been a colonial country like its fellow European countries, it has been an Ottoman territory for many centuries (Cabot, 2014, p. 27). Modern Greece has thus been characterized as mythologized, backward, and corrupted by eastern influences, making the relationship with the European

core especially marginalized. As a result, the European core has also been “invoking to legitimize the ongoing of outside involvements interests in Greece”, according to Cabot (2014, p. 27). As stated by Herzfeld in Cabot (2014, p. 27), Greece has been depicted as “crypto colonized”, in which a country in a buffer zone between colonized countries has had to “acquire their political interdependence at the expense of massive economic dependence”. Its geographical location and political marginalization due to crypto colonialism have shaped its current relationship with the other European states and the EU (Cabot, 2014, ss. 27 - 28). Greece is now under commitment to the EU and other EU member states, investors, the IMF, and the World Bank. However, due to crypto-colonial relationships has Greece also become depicted as the “undisciplined, allegedly corrupt, and the renegade member of the European community” (Cabot, 2014, ss. 27 - 28). Greece's peripheral geographical location in Europe also affects European legislation and policy, as this has been concentrated mainly on securing, negotiating, and regulating its external borders. Greece, among other peripheral European states, has become a critical site to manage to take control over the persistently transgressed borders. However, as this management of borders intensifies, has the marginality over these border states also been “asserted even more powerfully”, according to Cabot (2014, p. 28).

On top of this, Greece has in recent years also emerged as a controversial country with problematic tendencies to the security and humanitarianism in migration processes (Cabot, 2014, s. 29). The former Papandreou government were, for example, initiating building a fence along the Evros border to Turkey with EU funding back in 2010 – 2011, in which the infamous Mexico/US border fence was used as a model (Cabot, 2014, s. 29). In addition to this, was it in 2010 also introduced a Rapid Deployment Border Intervention Team – in short RABITS, by the Greek Government and the EU's border management agency, FRONTEX (Cabot, 2014, s. 29). Their main task was to assist in deployments and investigating undocumented border crossing. Guards from other EU states staffed the teams and were supplied with equipment from the EU (Cabot, 2014, s. 29). These teams have, however, been under heavy criticism for human rights violations as of late. The New York Times writes in their recent article that the Greek guards have violently pushed refugees back to Turkey while separating children from their guardians and parents (The New York Times, 2023). The agreement between the EU states and the Turkish Government in 2016 - the EU-Turkey deal, have further asserted that any person that had arrived in the Greek Islands irregularly would be sent back to Turkey immediately (International Rescue Committee, 2022). For every Syrian sent back from the Greek Islands, the EU would also accept a refugee that had waited

patiently in Turkey. In exchange for this agreement, Turkey would receive a sum of 6 billion euros from the EU that they could use on humanitarian projects in their country (International Rescue Committee, 2022). Yet, for many deportees, this has only encouraged other means of crossing borders – having to take dangerous journeys through mountain passes and rivers in the North of Greece or by boats over the Aegean oceans in the South (Cabot, 2014, p. 3). However, Turkey has also stopped accepting returnees from Greece these past years, leading people to be stuck in legal limbo in camps in Greece without access to asylum, cash assistance, or proper housing (International Rescue Committee, 2022).

While these problematic tendencies addressed above are only a few among many humanitarian transgressions that emerged to control the Greek and European borders, it has led to “immeasurable cost to people seeking safety and protection,” according to the International Rescue Committee (2022). Thousands of people are trapped in Greece in legal limbo for months and years in horrifying camps, which further negatively impacts “their physical and mental health” (International Rescue Committee, 2022). As emphasized by the International Rescue Committee (2022), the policies above are dangerous, outdated, and unsustainable and essentially undermine the EU’s values of respect for human rights and dignity.

2.1.3 Greece’s Recent Asylum and Refugee Politics

As a follow-up on Greece's political history addressed in the paragraph above, in this following paragraph briefly summarizing Greece's most recent asylum and refugee politics. Regarding this must I emphasize that Greece's asylum and refugee politics have undergone several changes and stages in the years following the 2015 Mediterranean Refugee Crisis. I am not going to address all these stages and changes in this paragraph but will focus my attention on the asylum and refugee politics that might be relevant to this thesis’ topics and discussion.

Bureaucratically Inefficient System

Under international and EU law, Greece is obliged to listen to the claims put forth by asylum seekers and refugees seeking refuge and protection (Cabot, 2014, p. 30). But, as stated by Cabot (2014, p. 31) and exemplified above, has the Greek asylum system for many years been seen as bureaucratically inefficient, raising several red flags in the European and international advocacy communities. An evident backlog of asylum cases, and an appeal process that could take months and sometimes years have often led to many asylum seekers stuck in Greece or

having to move elsewhere in Europe to receive help (Cabot, 2014, ss. 31 - 32). Following this, the UNHCR (2019) stated that an asylum law submitted by the Greek parliament in October 2019 “will reduce safeguards for people seeking international protection and will create additional pressure on the overstretched capacity of administrative and judicial authorities.”. The law notes that if asylum seekers do not comply with certain procedural formalities in their asylum process, their application will be withdrawn and rejected without further investigation (UNHCR, 2019). The law also introduces four different types of asylum seeker cards that would not only increase the administrative workload drastically but would also cause an increase in the response times for asylum applications (UNHCR, 2019). Concerning this, and as addressed in a recent rapport written by the Greek Council for Refugees Legal Unit (2022), more than half of the asylum applications received at the end of 2021 (18,436 of the total 31,787), were still lying unprocessed after 12 months. The Greek Asylum Service were in 2021 also resorting to a non-communicating practice of first-instance decision cases – called fictitious service, on a significant number of asylum cases. This meant that the asylum seeker was not personally informed of the result of the asylum application within the deadline of a possible appeal to a decline (Greek Council for Refugees Legal Unit, 2022). Consequently, does all of these overmentioned points show that the asylum seekers position and situation have worsened in Greece.

Legal Assistance for Refugees

The Greek Council for Refugees Legal Unit (2022) have stated that refugees and asylum seekers are not provided with state-funded legal assistance in their first-instance cases. State-funded legal help is only offered in appeal cases, and the lawyers given are picked from a list managed by the Greek Asylum Service. The refugees and the asylum seekers must then try to get free legal help through an NGO or try to get funds to secure legal assistance from a private lawyer (Greek Council for Refugees Legal Unit, 2022). However, the obstacles are piling up as most of the free legal assistance procedures must be done online, while the fictitious service has made it impossible for people to know if legal help is needed in their cases (Greek Council for Refugees Legal Unit, 2022). As written by the Greek Council for Refugees Legal Unit (2022):

The practice of ‘fictitious service’ of decisions has resulted in the expiration of deadlines for submitting an appeal without the applicant having been actually informed about the issuance of the decision, effectively depriving asylum seekers of the right to an effective remedy.

Lack of proper Assessment

Another issue impacting the refugees and asylum seekers in Greece, are the lack of assessments concerning vulnerability (Greek Council for Refugees Legal Unit, 2022). There were / and are still limited to non-existing psychosocial measures implemented, generally low-quality medical assistance, problems getting referred to a public hospital, lack of medical screening to get psychosocial support, and in general lack of information to receive any kind of help – also in connection to gender-based sexual violence (Greek Council for Refugees Legal Unit, 2022). In this regard, are the Greek Council for Refugees Legal Unit (2022) writing that while there was introduced a “regulatory framework for guardianship of unaccompanied minors” back in 2018, but this is still not operational.

Regulatory Framework for Guardianship of Unaccompanied Minors

This Regulatory Framework for Guardianship of Unaccompanied Minors is built around four pillars for action (European Commission, 2022). These pillars of action are set to ensure the protection and promotion of children's rights, implement a sustainable solution for unaccompanied minors, protect from violence, exploitation, and abuse, and modernize a system for collecting and processing data on unaccompanied minors (European Commission, 2022). However, although such a regulatory framework was to be implemented by the Greek organization Metadrasi, the UNHCR, and the responsible ministries on 1 March 2020, it has been repeatedly postponed, according to a recent rapport published by Save the Children’s European Migration Advocacy Group (2020, p. 23). “This has left a serious gap in the protection of unaccompanied children on both the Greek islands and mainland”, and it is to this day the public prosecutor and other child protection actors with a lack of resources that are set to “be responsible and take key decisions for the unaccompanied child” in Greece (Save the Children’s European Migration Advocacy Group, 2020, p. 23). All in all, are there many consequences of such negligence in implementing a proper framework for unaccompanied minors in Greece and the camp in Mytilini. Such consequences are, thus, also leading to a lack of attention to implement measures for curbing gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys in the refugee camp in Mytilini. I will address this in more detail in the data and analysis chapter.

Limitations to Freedom

Additionally, while the legislations and practices above are only a few of many political changes introduced in Greece throughout the years, it is also important to mention that the

refugee and asylum seekers residing on the Greek Islands or mainland Greece have had to endure other limitations to their freedom (Greek Council for Refugees Legal Unit, 2022). For example, has their freedom of movement been restricted due to COVID-19 preventative measures in which people without a valid asylum seeker card would not be allowed to exit the camp (Greek Council for Refugees Legal Unit, 2022). In addition, are the living conditions in the camps lacking, without proper electricity, lack of living equipment, limited access to education and other activities for both children and adults, and massive walls around some of the mainland camps, which “exacerbate the feeling of isolation” (Greek Council for Refugees Legal Unit, 2022).

Thus, in conclusion, does the current Greek asylum and refugee politics not only leave people in asylum limbo, but is also leaving people without a proper support system in camps that restricts their overall well-being.

2.1.4 The Island of Lesbos, and the city of Mytilini

As described above, is Lesbos a Greek island located in the Aegean Sea close to the Turkish border (Vallianatou, 2022). The island proximity to Turkey to the east, and the European Union to the west, have made the island a particularly key location and entry point for people taking the eastern Mediterranean route into Europe (Vallianatou, 2022). Lesbos became especially known as one of five Aeagean island “hosting EU-funded asylum hotspots”, and an island used as a buffer zone between Turkey and Europe after the arrival of millions of refugees into Europe in 2015 – also called the 2015 Mediterranean “migrant” crisis (Vallianatou, 2022; Spindler, 2015).

Since 2015, have the residents of Lesbos been at the frontline of humanitarian response, securing shelter and providing food, as well as helping people arriving by the sea to their shores safely (Vallianatou, 2022). However, since the signed agreement between the EU states and the Turkish Government in 2016 - the EU-Turkey deal - which stated that “Turkey could take any measures necessary to stop people traveling to the Greek Islands”, the solidarity and hospitable atmosphere in Lesbos has taken a “u-turn.” (International Rescue Committee, 2022). As stated by a local teacher Christos, in Vallianatou (n.d.):

This is no longer the island we grew up on. The refugee crisis acted as a catalyst for all aspects of our society; it brought out the best of us at the beginning, when locals showed spontaneous solidarity to Syrians arriving by boats in 2015. But this protracted situation has turned Lesbos into a toxic political space, a “refugee warehouse” where the EU and the Greek government are testing their anti-immigration policies, letting the far right to spread fear and misinformation among us.

Thus, despite the number of people coming to Lesbos have declined drastically throughout the years, and despite the politics following the EU-Turkey agreement, it has become immensely difficult for the refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers to leave the Island (Vallianatou, 2022). Both locals and refugees have for years demonstrated against regional and international policies forcing people to stay on the Greek Islands in order to receive asylum, and against the creation of new detention facilities – or refugee camps, which have been built on the islands to house the refugees (Vallianatou, 2022). According to the UNHCR (n.d.d.) these detention facilities/refugee camps, is a temporary facility that are built in order to secure housing, protection, and assistance to the people fleeing war and persecution. However, the UNHCR (n.d.d.) also state that such facilities are creating a life in limbo as people living in these camps are usually having to live there for years. In addition to this, are these temporary facilities remaining to be “well below adequate standards”, and as stated by Medecins Sans Frontiers – in short MSF, are the camps on Lesbos and in Mytilini specifically, unsuitable with lack of access to food, sanitation, work, education, and proper healthcare (The Greek Council for Refugees Legal Unit, 2022).

On top of that, Dimari et al (2021, p. 204), state that the increasing trend of different opinion towards refugees at Lesbos are shaping the integration possibilities for the refugees on the island. On the one hand, are the opinions to integrate, and bring refugees into the labor market remaining positive among some of the locals, while others see them as a liability because of the already high unemployment rate among Greeks (Dimari et al., 2021, p. 204). The lack of Greek language knowledge, the refugees living situation, the difficulties to obtaining diplomas of skills, and the lack of counselling support in order to integrate the refugees into the labor market, are a few among many hindrances both locals and refugees face in the integration process at Lesbos and Mytilini (Dimari et al., 2021, p. 204).

Moreover, has the massive influx of refugees to the island also lead to an increase in xenophobia – a hostility to foreigners, which has affected and complicated the integration processes of people into the society at Lesbos (Dictionary.com, n.d.c., & Dimari, 2021). This is largely connected to the integration of refugees in the work-force as mentioned above, as some local people - especially entrepreneurs, believe that bringing the refugees into employment can lead to competition in access to services and jobs (Dimari et al., 2021, p. 205). This trend became especially visible when a mob of around two hundred far-right protesters started to attack the refugee and migrant protestors that had been demonstrating due

to overcrowding in the refugee camp, in the main square in the city of Mytilini in April 2018 (Strickland, 2018).

All in all, does the above-mentioned case of Lesbos and Mytilini show a fraction of the difficulties that the refugee, migrant, and asylum seeker population have had to endure on an everyday basis. With this in mind, I will in the following paragraph draw more attention to my fieldwork experience in the city of Mytilini, the so-called migration crisis, and elaborate on the acts of gender-based sexual violence throughout the migration process specifically.

2.1.5 Greece, Migration Crisis, and Gender-based Sexual Violence

I conducted my fieldwork in the city of Mytilini, on the Greek Island of Lesbos, in September 2022. I had rented a tiny flat with a large rooftop terrace on top of a hill in the midst of the city center, and had a wonderful view over the entire city, the mountains and the coastline. While sitting on this terrace, drinking my morning coffee, I found myself thinking that this place is absolutely beautiful, with its green nature, blue oceans, and white houses with red brick rooftops – the picture-perfect tourist and fieldwork destination that I would be able to enjoy for an entire month by myself while doing data-collection.



Image 2. *The view from my rooftop terrace in Mytilini, 2022, Taken by me.*

While walking through Mytilini, I found it quite absurd to imagine that this city, this island, and the country of Greece had undergone so many years of instability due to the significant influx of people fleeing from conflicts and disasters, coming to Greece and the Island of Lesbos throughout the years. I had of course heard a bit about the magnitude of people fleeing

and coming to the Greece before, as I had volunteered for a refugee organization in Athens back in 2015 and had done some research before my field trip. However, while collecting the data through talking to the local people, my interviewees, and searching for data online, I found myself thinking that this whole situation is surreal. How can it be that so many people have had to flee from their homes due to conflicts and other crisis – having to endure dangerous journeys overseas, everyday traumatic experiences and settling in a foreign country in horrible camps? And what is done to support these people fleeing in order to make them feel safe from acts of violence and seen as humans? Big questions that I will not be able to answer to a full extent in this thesis, however, I will at least try to share of my knowledge about the topics of gender-based sexual violence, refugee men and boys, and preventative measures that I have gained throughout this research project in Mytilini.

Drawing the attention back to the influx of people fleeing to Greece especially, Cabot (2014, p. 3) state that it was throughout the early 2000 that Greece became to be “a problem zone” regarding “questions of immigration and asylum” – which is when people leave their home countries in order to find work, or seeking asylum/ security in another country (Amnesty International, n.d.b.). As described above, is it according to Cabot (2014, p. 3) the geopolitical location of Greece`s land and sea borders into the European Union – In short, the EU, that have made Greece an entry point for people fleeing to Europe. Wars in the Middle East, in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria especially, and the proximity of the boarders with Turkey, are some of the conflicts and reasons for people fleeing to mainland Greece and the surrounding Greek Islands such as Lesbos (Cabot, 2014, p. 3).

However, it was the increasing numbers of people fleeing and reaching the borders of Europe in 2014 – 2015, that dominated the political debate and media at that time and the years following according to Spindler (2015). The large-scale movement of people towards Europe became perceived as a global crisis – the “global refugee and migrant crisis” according to the European and US leaders (Donato & Ferris, 2020, pp. 77 - 79). It was largely Syrians fleeing from a longlasting conflict that began moving towards a hope for safety in Europe, but they were quickly followed by thousands of asylum-seekers from countries such as Iran, Aghanistan, Iraq, and Eritrea among others – also seeking opportunities in Europe (Donato & Ferris, 2020, p. 88).

But as a result of this, the MSF write that the European respons have been to strenghten their borders, and setting up detention facilities outside the European borders in order “to deal” with this influx of people (Medecins Sans Frontiers, n.d.). Not only have the people fleeing

had to endure dangerous overseas and land crossing, being increasingly exposed to “horrific levels of violence, kidnappings, and torture” from traffickers and smugglers, but they are also enduring horrendous conditions in camps onshore – becoming sick and struggling with mental health issues, according to MSF (n.d.).

Considering gender-based sexual violence throughout the migration process specifically, Araujo et al. (2019, s. 11) assert that sexual violence is a problem that arises frequently among refugees – both women, men, and children. Women and girls are submitted to rape, forced marriage, intimate partner abuse, and being forced into sex slavery, while men and boys must endure acts of sexual torture, forced incest, genital mutilation, and rape “as a tactic of war” during interrogations and while in detention (Araujo et al., 2019, s. 2). As a result of this, the consequences for the people affected by these horrible acts of violence and humiliation are devastating and life altering (Araujo et al., 2019, s. 2). While both women, girls, men and boys, might suffer from the same feeling of shame and guilt, women might for example have to carry out unwanted pregnancies and having undergo unsafe abortions, while men might experience sexual dysfunction, leading to increased drug abuse and increased violent behavior, according to Araujo et al. (2019, p. 2).

2.2 Refugee Conventions and Human Rights

In order to fully make sense of the refugee situation, I will in the following paragraphs address the refugee situation from a modern historical perspective. While this is a big task, I have narrowed the scope into addressing the refugee situation following World War II and will elaborate on the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 protocol, and the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights that have sprung out as global guidelines following the World War II refugee crisis.

2.2.1 The 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1967 Protocol

The World War II from 1939 – 1945 forced of millions of people to flee, be deported, or resettling in other places than their home countries in search of refuge from the horrible acts of war (UNHCR, n.d.h., p.1). The aftermath of the war further pushed the international community to set in motion new set of laws, guidelines, and conventions that would ensure that the people fleeing from acts or war and violence would be treated properly, and have their human rights protected. Thus, a diplomatic conference held in Geneva in 1951 adopted a convention coined the «Status of the Refugees» or the 1951 Convention, which was later altered by the 1967 Protocol (UNHCR, n.d.h., p.1). These documents would describe the

meaning of the word «refugee» - in short: people forced to flee their homecountries due to threats of persecution, and include information about the refugee`s rights, protection, and assistance that these people are entitled to (UNHCR, n.d.h., p.1 - 3). The 1967 protocol further broadens the 1951 Conventions geographical and time limits, as the Convention were initially restricted to apply to people that had become a refugee because of events happening in Europe before 1951 (UNHCR, n.d.h., p.4).

There are in total seven chapters in the 1951 Convention - such as chapter two dedicated to the refugees juridical status, and chapter six dedicated to the executory and transitory provisions, while each chapter has several articles (in total 46 related to the refugees in the entire document) and points describing the articles in more detail (UNHCR, n.d.a., pp. 14 - 37). The last pages of the 1951 Convention is dedicated to the “protocol relating to the status of refugees” which emphasizes the importance of cooperation with other nation states and the United Nations, and address that any disputes between nation states in relation to the application of the Conventions articles, must be referred to the International Court of Justice (UNHCR, n.d.a., pp. 46 - 77).

Some of the refugee rights expressed in the 1951 Convention is for example: Article 4 – The right to freedom of religion, Article 21 – The right to housing, Article 22 – The right to education, and Article 16 – The right to access the courts – to mention a few (UNHCR, n.d.h., p.4). Other important points adressed in the Convention were the «obligations of refugees towards their host country», and the principle of non-refoulment found under article 33 (UNHCR, n.d.h., p.4). The non-refoulment principle described that a refugee should not to be sent back to their homecountries if there were any fear of this persons life or threats to their freedom, however, this principle would not be applicable if the person were to be a danger to the host country and it`s society, or had been convicted of a serious crime before entering the host country (UNHCR, n.d.h., p.4). Additionally, the 1951 Convention do also according to the UNHCR (n.d.h., p.2) «recognize the international scope of the refugee problem», and express the utmost importance of «international solidarity in trying to resolve them». In this regard, the Convention provisions are to be applied without any kind of discrimination to religion, ethnicity, and country of origin, and without any discrimination to the refugees age, sex, disabilities, and sexuality (UNHCR, n.d.a., p. 3). Lastly, the Convention put forth some minimum standards when it comes to refugee treatment, such as the right to education, and work, access to courts in order to present their asylum cases, and provisions for documentation such as a refugee travel document (UNHCR, n.d.a., p. 3).

Ultimately are the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol still highly relevant today, as they are according to the UNHCR «the only global legal instruments explicitly covering the most important aspects of a refugee`s life» (UNHCR, n.d.h., p.2). Conflicts, acts of violence, disasters, and persecution are continuing realities going on in the world today, making the refugee protection adressed in the documents much needed for the people fleeing from their home and homecountries (UNHCR, n.d.h., p.2). The 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol have also inspired the development of more regional conventions, such as the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention in Africa, the 1984 Cartagena Declaration in Latin America, and «the development of a common asylum system in the European Union» (UNHCR, n.d.h., p.1). However, in conclusion is the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol remaining to be the only global refugee conventions made, are depicted by the UNHCR (n.d.h., p.1) as the main «cornerstone to refugee protection» in the world today.

2.2.2 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights & The International Human Rights Law

While the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol remain to be the only global refugee conventions made, the Universal Declaration of the Human Right proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, are set to be the universal standard when it comes to secure fundamental human rights “for all peoples and nations” (United Nations, n.d.b.). The Universal Declaration of the Human Right found under the General Assembly resolution 217A states:

That every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction (United Nations, n.d.b.).

The Declaration of the Human Right contains thirty articles which describe the different rights that all people have and must conform to (United Nations, n.d.b.). I will not give a description of all of them here, however, present the ones that might be more connected to this thesis topic of gender-based sexual violence and refugees.

For example, does article one state that all humans are born free, are “equal in dignity and rights”, and should act towards each other “in a spirit of brotherhood”, while article two states that every human are entitled to the universal human rights in the declaration regardless of

sex, religion, language, national or social origin and other statuses (United Nations, n.d.b.). Article three does also communicate that “everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person”, while article five further express that no person should endure any kind of torture, degrading treatment or punishment (United Nations, n.d.b.). Lastly does article fourteen inform that all people have the right to seek asylum in other countries to get away from persecution, if the person have not committed any non-political crimes (United Nations, n.d.b.).

Viewing the universal human rights in connection to sexual violence specifically, is it stated in the International Human Rights Law – that the obligations of governments to protect human rights, that rape, or any kind of sexual violence are seen within the scope of torture, inhumane and degrading treatment (United Nations, n.d.a.). Thus, such inhumane treatment is also “accepted in the case of law” as a violation of the human rights (Pustorino, 2023, p. 127). Additionally, it is also expressed that a rape of a woman in a detention facility - such as a refugee camp, in connection with experiencing humiliation “while in custody by security forces”, are seen as an act of torture under article three in the Declaration of the Human Rights (Dictionary.com, n.d.a. & Pustorino, 2023, p. 127). This approach was further confirmed by the Committee against Torture (CAT) in 2019, in which they decided that all acts of sexual violence subjected to women during the former armed conflict in Yugoslavia – a conflict where rape became to be a well-known practice, was an act of torture (Pustorino, 2023, p. 128). The reasoning behind this was the acts of sexual violence and torture were done intentionally, and had caused the women such “physical and mental pain (...) in order to punish, intimidate, humiliate, and degrade her, representing a form of discrimination on the basis of her gender and ethnicity” (Pustorino, 2023, p. 128).

Consequently, and as stated by Gaggioli (2015, p. 537), rape and other acts of sexual violence are prohibited under International Human Rights Law. Gaggioli (2015, p. 537) further emphasize that this is enforced through prohibition of “torture, inhumane, and degrading treatment”, as mentioned above. It is, however, also enforced through prohibitions of sexual slavery, trafficking, and discrimination as seen in human rights articles mentioned above, and other articles addressed in the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights (Gaggioli, 2015, p. 537). However, while these legal achievements are set to prohibit all acts of sexual violence, Gaggioli (2015, p. 537 – 538) express that the reality is horrifying, and that there is an urgent need to enforce these both internationally and domestically in order to ensure that sexual

violence in any situation are investigated properly and “prosecuted by international judicial bodies”.

2.3 The Refugee and the Refugee Crisis

As the term of the refugee were described in such short detail in the paragraph above, I will in these following sections describe the term in greater detail and provide additional information on today`s global refugee situation. I will also address the refugee journey - seen in connection with sexual violence, and elaborate on the 2015 Mediterranean Migrant crisis and its effects in Greece.

2.3.1 The Refugee

A refugee is, as stated under Article 1A (2) in the Convention and Protocol relating to the status of refugees, a person that have a:

Well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside of the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

In the case of a person who has more than one nationality, the term “the country of his nationality” shall mean each of the countries of which he is a national, and a person shall not be deemed to be lacking the protection of the country of his nationality if, without any valid reason based on well-founded fear, he has not availed himself of the protection of one of the countries of which he is a national” (UNHCR, n.d.a., p.14).

Thus, people that fit in under this definition are officially defined as a refugee, and are, therefore, entitled to the rights presented in the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol. However is also bound to the Conventions rules, duties, and criterias – some also described above (UNHCR, n.d.h., p. 3).

2.3.2 What does the term Refugee actually mean?

While the official terminology of “the refugee” are adressed above, it should also be mentioned that the terminology and labelling of “the refugee” have been under heavy debate and criticized in academic and media circles for many years (Ribeiro, 2019). This debate became especially heated after the so called 2015 Mediterranean “migrant” crisis, in which the media raised some ideological questions connected to the use of different terms to describe these people fleeing (Ribeiro et al., 2019, p. 22). In this regard, Ribeiro et al. (2019,

p.22) state that this debate further lead to “a discursive construction of people on the move” which might lead to stereotypical perceptions and representations of these people in the media, and “different treatment of different groups of people in “host” countries. According to Ribeiro et al (2019, pp. 24 – 25) the ideological debate centers around the question if people on the move are to be labelled as a migrant, refugee, or asylum seeker in the media and academia, or if their labelling are to be fluent depending on the situation these people are in.

While the label “the refugee” have been used as the official terminology to define a person that are fleeing from their homecountries as described in the 1951 Geneva Convention, the term immigrant or migrant have been used to a greater extent in the academic circles to categorize people taking up residents in other countries (Ribeiro et al., 2019, p. 24).

Moreover, is the migrant also sectioned into different types of people on the move, such as international workers, students, lifestyle seeker, as well as refugees and undocumented migrants. However, there has also been some misconstructions of the migrants terminology in the academic circles as the term illegal immigrant have become widespread to define a person that are without valid status (Ribeiro et al., 2019, p. 24). But in this regard Ribeiro et al (2019, p.24) state that a migrant can not be illegal, only their actions can, further emphasizing that its an administrative offence making people overstay their “authorized period of stay” in another country, rather than a criminal offence perpetrated by the migrants. Ribeiro et al (2019, p.24) further assert that its in the media and the public that the perceptions of the migrant, refugee, or asylum seeker are discursively constructed – meaning that the peoples knowledge, and attitudes towards such people might in a great deal be shaped by the media. The media are often portraying such groups of people in a negative way, referring to these people in connection with metaphors of water, disaster, alien, and disease, making them the outsiders and dehumanized in order to “justify their exclusions and mistreatment” in their host communities (Ribeiro et al, 2019, pp. 24 - 25). An example of this can be seen during the 2015 Mediterranean “migrant” crisis, in which Ribeiro et al. (2019, p. 25) argue that the official terminology of refugee were scarcely mentioned - even when naming the crisis. The former British Prime Minister James Cameron also chose to call the people fleeing and seeking to access the UK for a “swarm of migrants” (Ribeiro et al., 2019, p. 26). Such a remark, a few among many, “framed in a discourse of legalities, human rights, and political obligations”, led to a debate in the media circles on how to properly refer to people migrating according to Ribeiro et al (2019, p. 26). In the aftermath of this, the Al Jazeera chose to write a lengthy statement, arguing that:

The umbrella term migrant is no longer fit for purpose when it comes to describing the horror unfolding in the Mediterranean. It has evolved from its dictionary definitions into a tool that dehumanizes and distances, a blunt pejorative. (...) There is no “migrant” crisis in the Mediterranean. There is a very large number of refugees fleeing unimaginable misery and danger and a smaller number of people trying to escape the sort of poverty that drives some to desperation. (...) Migrant is a word that strip suffering people of voice. Substituting refugee for it is – in the smallest way – an attempt to give some back (Malone, 2015).

With this in mind, and as a way to at least try to give something back to these people in a challenging reality, I will throughout this thesis address people that have fled from their home countries due to crisis, war, disaster, and conflict by their official terminology and status of refugee - if the term has been used in that way in my sources. I will however, also address these people as people fleeing, people migrating, people seeking asylum, people travelling or so, as they first and foremost are people as everyone else. And, consequently, people fleeing have not become refugees as a way of choice, but have been forced to become one under duress. Thus, I believe that the action forced upon them should not be used as a label to address these people`s identity in everyday speech, and I will therefore, to the best of my ability, try to address them as people doing a specific action throughout this thesis.

2.3.3 Current Humanitarian Crises and Displacement Statistics

The UNHCR (2022) further state that 72% of the world`s refugees - people displaced across borders, come from only five countries: Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Venezuela, and Ukraine, all countries that have undergone some kind of crisis, war and conflict for many years. The Syrian crisis are now entering its eleventh year, leaving around 14 million people in dire need of humanitarian help, and over half of the Syrian population “remaining displaced from their homes” (UNHCR, n.d.g.). The UNHCR High Commissioner Filippo Grandi has also called the Syrian crisis “the biggest humanitarian and refugee crisis of our time and continuing cause for suffering”, because of the destruction and hardships that the Syrian population has gone through and is still to this day experiencing (UNHCR, n.d.g.). The long-standing unrest, “the collapse of the government, and takeover of the country by the Taliban” in Afghanistan, have also led to concerning consequences, leaving 23 million people facing food insecurity and 3 million children in risk of starving in 2021 according to Amnesty International (n.d.). The UNHCR (2022) further express that this recent conflict and instability in Afghanistan have also led to more than 6 million people being forcibly displaced from their homes. This has, therefore, lead to it becoming one of the “largest protracted refugee situations in the world” – a refugee situation with over 25 000 people from one

country living in exile for more than five years (UNHCR, 2020). Next, is the recent refugee crisis caused by increased violence, flooding, diseases, food shortages and overall deteriorating conditions in South Sudan, said to have led to “a full-blown humanitarian emergency” with over 2.3 million people fleeing the country according to the UNHCR (n.d.f.). The crisis is currently the “the largest refugee crisis in Africa” and the fifth largest refugee crisis in the world (UNHCR, n.d.g.). The current Venezuelan humanitarian crisis caused by violence, soaring crime-rates, gang-warfare, inflation, and lack of essential services, has left 6 million Venezuelans being displaced globally and the crisis becoming the second largest “international displacement crisis in the world” (UNHCR, n.d.i.). The last of the five big refugee/ humanitarian crises in the world is the Ukraine Humanitarian Crisis, which has led to more than “7.8 million individual Ukrainian refugees recorded across Europe since 24 February 2022”, and the crisis becoming the third largest refugee crisis in the world (UNHCR, 2022c). However, among all of these comprehensive crises, it the crisis in the Middle East – in Afghanistan and Syria, that have led to and are still leading to an increase of people fleeing to mainland Greece and the Greek Islands – Lesbos being one of these (Cabot, 2014, p. 3).

2.3.4 The Refugee Situation in the World today

All in all, do the UNHCR (2022) estimates that as of mid-2022 it is around 103 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, of which 32.5 million of these people are refugees, 53.2 million are internally displaced people, 4.9 million are asylum seekers and 5.3 million other people in need of international humanitarian help. These 53.2 million internally displaced people are people that have fled from their homes and settle in other cities, settlements, and internal camps within their own country, while the 4.9 million asylum seekers are people that have fled from their country and tried to seek sanctuary in another country by applying for asylum (UNHCR, n.d.j.). The 5.3 million other people in need of help might for example be stateless people – people or persons that do not have citizenships in any country, such as the Rohingya people a Muslim ethnic minority denied citizenship in Myanmar (UNHCR, n.d.e., & UNHCR, n.d.b.). Consequently, these people have had to flee from their homes due to conflict, crisis, acts of violence, or are targeted because of their ethnicity, religion, sexuality, or political opinions, all fearing for their own or their family’s safety and lives, seeking a safer, better life somewhere else (Amnesty International, n.d.b.).

2.3.5 The Refugee Journey

However, while there might be hope for a better future somewhere else for these people, Amnesty International (n.d.b) express that the journeys towards something else might be filled with danger and fear as people risk being exploited, falling prey to human trafficking, getting injured or die on their journey to safety. In connection to this, the UNHCR (2022d) further express in their new report “Protection, Saving lives & Solutions for Refugees in Dangerous Journeys”, that “more than 3000 people died or went missing” on their route to cross the Central and Western Mediterranean and Atlantic to Europe in 2021. 1924 of these people died or went missing on the Mediterranean routes, while 1153 died or went missing on their journey across the Atlantic from Northern Africa to the Canary Island (UNHCR, 2022d). This is nearly double the number of missing and reported dead people on the same routes as of 2020, which was 1776 (UNHCR, 2022d).

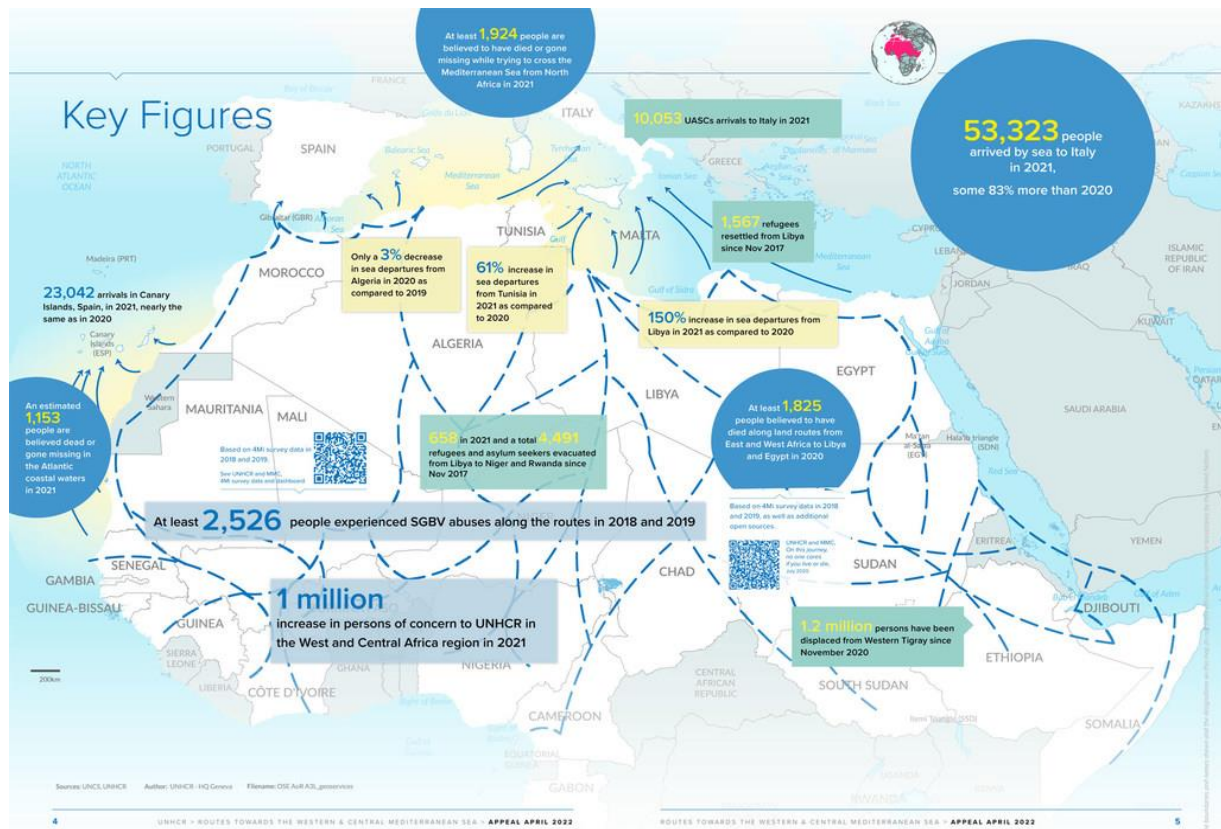


Image 3. Key Figures, 2022, by UNHCR. (<https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/04/1117292>)

The crossing over sea are often taken in inflatable boats packed with other people, and the journey usually takes days from one coast to another as many boats drifts off course or goes missing on the open sea because of deflation or by capsizing (UNHCR, 2022d).

The UNHCR (2022d) further state, that the land routes are even more treacherous, as people have died on their journey through the Sahara Desert, through mountain passes or remote border areas, in detention centres, or being held captive by smugglers and traffickers. People travelling these routes have told about situations and acts of unlawful detention, slavery, forced labour, torture, forced marriage, killings, and gender-based sexual violence among many other human rights violations (UNHCR, 2022d). Addressing sexual violence specifically, it is shown in the picture above that around 2526 people have experienced somekind of sexual violence along the Mediterraneans and Atlantic routes in 2018 and 2019 (United Nations, 2022).

In this regard and as mentioned in the background section above, Araujo et al. (2019, p.10) assert in their study about the prevalence of sexual violence among people fleeing, that «sexual violence is a constant threat throughout the refugee pathway». They also state that sexual violence is especially prevalent towards women and girls, however, sexual violence are also common towards men and boys, and are usually perpetrated by intimate partners, the military, the police, traffickers, and guards (Araujo et al., 2019, p.10). Araujo et al. (2019, p.10) further write, that sexual violence usually occur before the migration process in the refugee`s home country, as the armed conflicts making people flee might «potentiate cultural norms of superiority of the masculine power present» in these conflict affected areas. Araujo el al. (2019, p. 10) exemplify this by drawing forward the atrocities done towards civilian people throughout the armed conflicts and unrest in The Democratic Republic of Congo, in which gang rape, sexual slavery, genital mutilation, and forced sexual encounters between family became widespread. Sexual violence where even prevalent in refugee camps that were set up in DRC, and as mentioned above, usually perpetrated by the people that where supposed to keep them safe – the guards, officers, and the police (Araujo et al., 2019, p.10 & UNHCR, n.d.b.).

2.3.6 The 2015 Mediterranean Refugee Crisis and its Politics

As mentioned above, I will in this following paragraph adress the 2015 Mediterranean “migrant” crisis – or as Spindler (2015) from the UNHCR have called it: “the refugee crisis of 2015” or the 2015 Mediterranean refugee crisis. I will then adress the critique of the handling of the crisis by the European Union and developed countries, and investigate the refugee crisis significance in relation to Greece. As there are a lot of happenings, situations, agreements, summits, discussions etc., going on throughout this whole crisis since it “started” in 2015, I

will only address the highlights that will be relevant for the thesis topics, discussion and analysis in this following paragraph.

As of December 7th, 2015, there were according to the UNHCR, nearly a million refugees and migrants arriving at the borders of the EU, with over 75 percent of these people fleeing from conflict and persecution in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria (Spindler, 2015). But, until December 2015, had the crisis had already gone to many turning points. Some of these were the deaths of over 600 people fleeing outside the shores of Libya in mid-April by a capsizing boat, over 70 people fleeing where found dead in a refrigeration truck in Austria in late-August, while Hungary closed its borders with a fence mid-September (Spindler, 2015). However, it was the dead body of the young Syrian boy, Aylan Kurdi, that had washed up on a beach in Turkey after a failed attempt to reach Greece, that put an international spotlight on the realities of the people trying to flee through the Mediterranean route according to Spindler (2015). As a result of this, the UN set to fore a plenary discussion at the UN General Assembly the 20th of November 2015, in which the discussion were to deal with the “Global awareness of the tragedies of irregular migrants in the Mediterranean basin with specific emphasis on Syrian asylum seekers.” (Donato & Ferris, 2020, p. 77). This discussion were quickly followed by another informal meeting that were to adress how to “consider ways to advance a comprehensive response to the global humanitarian and refugee crisis.” (Donato & Ferris, 2020, p. 77). At one of these meetings, the Turkish deputy minister of foreign affairs expressed an uttmost importance for the attending member states to “share the burden” and “take reponsibility” for this humanitarian tragedy, in which a cooperation between governments, organizations, stakeholders, civil society, and other actors were emphasised (Donato & Ferris, 2020, p. 77 - 78). Additionally, as Turkey had a seat in the Global Forum on Migration and Development – in short GFMD, they had a “unique position to draw these connections” according to Donato & Ferris (2020, p. 78). Turkey were also pushing for positive and forward looking view on understanding the refugee and migration flows, while also rooting for the recognition of migrants and refugees positive contribution in the host societies (Donato & Ferris, 2020, p. 78).

Next, it was held a UN Summit on the 19th of September 2016, in which all the UN member states were to adress the large numbers of refugees and migrants moving through Europe (Donato & Ferris, 2020, p. 95). The overarching aim where to bring countries together and discuss how they together should approach this movement of people in a more “humane and cordinated” way (United Nations, 2016). The outcome of this Summit where the “New York

Declaration for Refugees and Migrants” – a framework with a “Comprehensive Refugee Response” that reaffirmed the “international refugee regime”, and contained a collection of commitments that the member states were to adopt to (UNHCR, n.d.c.). By adopting this declaration, the member states had among other expressed solidarity with the fleeing people, reaffirmed the fleeing peoples human rights, agreed that protection and support by providing shelter is a responsibility that all member states have agreed upon – to mention a few (UNHCR, n.d.c.). The member states had also agreed to conform to the objectives expressed in the “Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework” – which focused on supporting the refugee hosting countries that had taken in a large number of people fleeing, promote refugee inclusion, and together develop “whole-of-society” refugee response out in the communities (UNHCR, n.d.c.). Following the New York Declaration there were also held a Leaders Summit on Refugees the 20th of September, hosted by the UN Secretary-General and seven of the member states (UNHCR, n.d.c.). The overarching aim of this summit were to “increase responsibility sharing for refugees”, and a total of 47 states agreed upon and committed to change their policies so that the refugees would have easier access to education, employment, and other social services (UNHCR, n.d.c.).

Additionally, were the New York Declaration and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework to lead to a proposal of a global compact on refugees that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees were to present in his report under the United Nations General Assembly in 2018 (UNHCR, n.d.c.). This global compact on refugees emphasized the international cooperation between member states and other stakeholders, were set out to implement practical measures, and would ensure that there was an predictable and more equitable responsibility and burden sharing in order to provide sufficient protection to the refugees (UNHCR, n.d.c.).

Donato & Ferris (2020, p. 93 – 94) further write that this burden sharing was something that the European Union took seriously and decided to develop a relocation plan that were designed to relocate around 100 000 refugees and asylum seekers in order to relieve the pressure on the frontline countries. According to the UDI (n.d.a) – Utlendingsdirektoratet, or the Norwegian Directorate for Immigration, one of these relocation programmes were implemented in 2016, in which the asylum seekers in Greece and Italy could apply for relocation somewhere else in the EU through this program. The Greek and the Italian governments could then decide which country that the seeker would be relocated to, and the relocation country could then either accept or decline this request (UDI, n.d.a.). If the

relocation country accepted, the seeker would get their travel booked and be transported in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration – in short IOM (UDI, n.d.a.). The relocation where decided based on four criterias – the countries population numbers, unemployment rate, GDP – gross domestic product, and “past refugee numbers”, which determined each of the states responsibility to take in asylum seekers through this program (Donato & Ferris, 2020, p. 94). The program did, however, fail in 2017, with just a total of 28 000 people that where relocated according to Donato & Ferris (2020, p. 94).

On top of that, there also developed a program by the UNHCR – the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, called the UNHCR resettlement scheme (UDI, n.d.a.). This program resettles refugees “who cannot be offered a permanent solution in the country they are currently in and are therefore offered resettlement in a third country”, and it’s the UNHCR responsibility to submit applications for the refugees resettling (UDI, n.d.b.).

All in all, while there were developed, put in place, discussed, and implemented programs in manifold in order to handle the influx of refugees and migrants following the 2015 Mediterranean refugee crisis, the crisis only “illustrate the weaknesses of the present international system” in many ways, according to Donato & Ferris (2020, p. 94). Donato & Ferris (2020, p. 94) further emphasise that the responsibility and burden sharing that was the cornerstone of programs mentioned above, became absent in both the EU and globally as countries refused to take in their share of refugees through the relocation program, while the “international community failed to provide sufficient support” to the host countries. In other words, and as stated by Donato & Ferris (2020, p. 94 – 95) are the “responsibility for those fleeing the conflicts in the world insufficient, and national interests are taking precedence over working on behalf of the common, collective good”. Thus, with these words in mind, I will in the following paragraph adress some of the critiques to handling of the 2015 Mediterranean Refugee Crisis.

2.3.7 Critiques of the handling of the 2015 Mediterranean Refugee Crisis

As stated by Freedman (2016, p. 19), has the EU`s handling of this crisis and influx of refugees to Europe, been heavily criticized by a lot of different non-governmental organizations – in short NGO`s, human right activists, and other actors helping refugees. The critique is largely connected to the EU`s particular focus on adresssing the prevention of illegal migration, and human trafficking, instead of developing an approach of trying to help and support the refugees that have already taken the route to safety to Europe (Freedman, 2016, p. 19). While there was initially developed an agreement to relocate approximately 160 000

refugees in Greece and Italy to other European states back in 2015, it were according to Freedman (2016, p.19) less than 300 refugees that became relocated as of March 2016. The Obama administration in the US also decided to take in a total of 10 000 Syrian refugees back in 2015, however, 31 out of 50 governors decided to refuse Syrian refugees to settle down in their states according to Donato & Ferris (2020, p. 79). Only 1500 Syrians have been able to resettle in the US since 2011 (Donato & Ferris, 2020, p. 79). Australia is another developed country that decided to strenghten their asylum seeker and refugee policies throughout this refugee crisis, according to Donato & Ferris (2020, p. 79). The Australian Government did, however, decided to grant 12 000 visas to Syrian and Iraqi refugees back in 2017, in which the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection Peter Dutton said that this resettlement was “another chapter in Australia`s proud history of providing safe haven to the worlds vulnerable people” (Australian Government , 2017). Peter Dutton further expressed that:

Australia has long been recognized as one of the best in the world when it comes to the resettlement of refugees. We are also a powerful example of how strong, secure borders are vital to ensuring a well-managed and planned migration program. (Australian Government , 2017).

Interestingly, and as suggested by Donato & Ferris (2020, p. 79), are the portrayal of a global crisis with resettlement issues only being perceived in such a way by developed nations as the the people fleeing were knocking on the European doors/boarders. Donato & Ferris further state that if a similar situation were to happen in Africa, Asia or Latin America, there would not be a global crisis – in fact countries such as Pakistan, Kenya, and Iran have already opened their boarders and hosted over a million refugees each for over a decade already (Donato & Ferris, 2020, p. 79).

Equally interesting and important point addressed by Donato & Ferris (2020, p. 79) are the fact that using the term of the “refugee crisis” when speaking about this crisis, are quite misleading as “it implies that the refugees are the problem”. The people fleeing from crisis, violence, and persecution did not chose to have these violations in their lives which are forcing them to flee from their homes and country (Donato & Ferris, 2020, p. 79). It is a crisis forced upon them and the inability by the national governments and international system to prevent and repond to the crisis that forced these people to flee in the first place, according to Donato & Ferris (2020, p. 79).

Ultimately, and to put all this information about international refugee conventions, legislations, events, changes in refugee flows, and international relations addressed above in perspective, it is essential to emphasize that the bottom line of all this information is the fact that people are fleeing. Without people fleeing there would not be need for refugee conventions, international summits addressing this global refugee crisis, or a term defining a person that are on the run from a crisis that have been forced upon them. Additionally, and in the midst of all of these legislations, events, and situations, there are also violence, threats to safety, trafficking, torture, and so many other acts human rights violations that are shaping the everyday life of these people fleeing. Thus, while I do not have the capacity to go through all every angle, situation, and violations constructing this large complex refugee situation, I will in the following chapter address the topics of gender-based violence, gender-based sexual violence and vulnerability in general, with an specific emphasis on men and boys.

2.4 The Phenomenon of Gender-Based Violence

While I have introduced the phenomenon of gender-based sexual violence from a general perspective in the introduction, I will in the following paragraphs address the concepts of gender-based violence and gender-based sexual violence in connection to global movements and efforts. I will also consider such international efforts on gender-based sexual violence in connection to men and boys during war, conflict and vulnerable situations.

2.4.1 Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Gender-Based Sexual Violence

Acts of gender-based violence and sexual violence have for long been a brutal part of the human history. There have been documented incidents of sexual violence in several ancient Greek texts, in the Bible and in documents and letters from early explorers and acts of sexual violence were mostly linked to conquests, conflicts, and wars (History.com Staff, 2018).

Addressing acts of sexual violence throughout the 20th century specifically, it's the mass rape of women, children and men alike by the Soviet soldier advancing into Germany throughout World War II, and the continuous rape of people during the genocide in Rwanda in 1995 that paints a dark picture in modern history (History.com Staff, 2018).

Feminist and anti-rape movements evolving in the US, gained increased public support and power during the 1960s and 70s, and acts of sexual violence became to be seen as a weapon used to “exert control over women” (Center for American Studies , n.d.). Acts of sexual violence that had been deemed as private before, became highly publicized cases in the media, and data collected by the FBI showed that rape had become to be the fastest growing

crime in the US throughout the 1970s (Center for American Studies , n.d.). These movements lobbying efforts, demonstrations and protests for institutional change and statutory reform led to several victories, and an increased number of anti-rape task forces, crisis centers, and laws to eliminate rape were introduced (Center for American Studies , n.d.). Examples of this being The National Coalition Against Sexual Assault introduced in 1978, Victims of Crime Act of 1985, Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (Center for American Studies , n.d.).

Globally, The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women – in short CEDAW, was adopted by the UN and the General Assembly in 1979, but first ratified by 187 countries in 2014 (Storkey, 2015, p. 9). In connection to this, violence against women became to be acknowledged as a human rights violation by the UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 (Storkey, 2015, p. 9) This further lead to a UN lead Rapporteur on Violence Against Women to be mandated - that would carry out country visits in order to ensure that violence against women were addressed and eliminated (Storkey, 2015, pp. 9 - 10) Additionally, about 89 countries introduced “legislation on domestic violence”, and around 90 countries had ratified laws on “marital rape as an prosecutable offence” by the end of 2005 (Storkey, 2015, p. 10). Furthermore, The Council of Europe consisting of 47 member states, initiated and adopted the Istanbul Convention – “The Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence”, a legally binding framework that would protect all women against any kinds of violence, in 2011 (Storkey, 2015, p. 11). All in all, while these are just a few resolutions initiated globally to curb gender-based violence, the focus on addressing protection against women and “pushing through the boundaries of gender-blindness in legislation” increased rapidly in individual countries and globally throughout the 20th and 21st century (Storkey, 2015, p. 10).

2.4.2 Reconceptualizing Gender-based Violence?

However, as important and pressing these conventions and legislations might be, they are seldom considering the violence that might be affecting men and boys in during war, conflict and vulnerable situations too. The international efforts done to address gender-based violence in war, conflict, and other crisis situations, are primarily addressing the gender-based violence that are affecting women and girls specifically, according to Carpenter (2006, p. 84).

Carpenter (2006, p. 84) further state that:

Although adult civilian men and older boys are sometimes acknowledged as victims of wartime sexual violence, as well as other form of gender-based abuse, these kinds of harms have not generally been analyzed or discussed at length in efforts to counteract gender-based violence in conflict situations.

In this regard, Carpenter (2006, p. 85) argues that "the human security discourse in international institutions" are creating a set understanding of who the victims of gender-based violence are – primarily females, while the aggressors and the perpetrators of such acts of violence are mostly males – excluding civilian men and boys as victims of gender-based violence. Put it simply – the human security discourse is, therefore, creating a gendered understanding of “who is to be secured”, and who these people must be secured from.

Carpenter (2006, p. 86) further expresses that it's only recently that the Liu Institute and the Women's Caucus recognized that the harm that men and boys might be inflicted during wartime – such as forced conscription, sexual mutilation, and sex-selective massacre, might also be qualified as gender-based violence. However, while there has been introduced a move away from women oriented, toward a gender-oriented understanding in gender-mainstreaming projects in humanitarian settings, it should be imagined that gender-based violence towards men and boys would also be addressed and recognized on a greater scale in these settings (Carpenter, 2006, p. 86).

But the reality is unfortunately still, that the concept of gender-based violence are more linked towards addressing violence done towards women and girls specifically. The World Health Organization does, for example, define gender-based violence in connection with violence against women on their website – an easy search on Google: “WHO gender-based violence”, will show this quite effectively. Carpenter (2006, p. 86) also exemplifies that the UNHCR in their 2001 Inter-Agency Lessons Learned proceedings, wrote that “the bottom line is that gender-based violence is predominantly men`s violence towards women and children”. However, it must also be emphasized that the UNHCR have referred to gender-based violence as “harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender” in their description of the term on their webpage (UNHCR, n.d.b.). But in this same description they further state that threats of gender-based violence have increased for women and girls, and they, therefore, are going to increase their implementation of preventative programs for women and girls specifically (UNHCR, n.d.b.).

Interestingly, and in connection to this women-oriented view of gender-based violence, Carpenter (2006, p. 99) write that one of the main reasons for institutions marginalizing “mens`s issues in gender-mainstreaming”, is the fear of losing “already limited funds” away

from projects targeting women issues. Addressing women specifically are, therefore, often used as a strategy by some institutions to keep the women specific initiatives relevant.

All in all, Carpenter (2006, p.99) assert that addressing gender must be done in an inclusive way so that it's not synonymously with either the women or the man, but both. Carpenter (2006, p. 99) further argues that it is only by inclusively defining gender in the human security sphere, that the concept of gender-based violence can be developed to include all the vulnerabilities “of populations across lines of gender, ethnicities, class, age, and other distinctions”.

3.0 Theoretical Frameworks

According to Goodman (in Flick, 2019, p. 127) is the concept of theories used in order to describe the different versions of the world. These versions have undergone several steps of evaluation, construction, reconstructing, and revision, and are not presenting given facts, however, are perspectives used “through which the world is seen” (Flick, 2019, pp. 127 - 128). With this in mind, and in order to discuss and analyze this thesis research aims, objectives, and research questions, I will in these following paragraphs address the theoretical frameworks and perspectives of intersectionality and power. I believe such theoretical frameworks and perspectives are valuable in order to understand the many aspects and factors that are leading to acts of gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys in Greece, Mytilini.

3.1 Intersectionality

One of the main theoretical perspectives that I will be using in my analysis is the critical framework of intersectionality. This framework is especially valuable to incorporate into the analysis of my collected data and the thesis topics of gender-based sexual violence, refugees, and men and boys, as the concept sheds light on several forms of social differentiation. These social differentiations are, among other: gender, race, class, and ethnicity – and the framework takes into consideration how these work and shape “different levels of the social” (Christensen & Jensen, 2019, p. 17). Therefore will this theoretical perspective be beneficial to use as a lens to break the gender bias ideas that might be related to research on gender-based sexual violence.

It was the American jurist, Kimberlè Crenshaw that first coined the term intersectionality in her article “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics”, published in 1989

(Crenshaw, 1989). The term and theoretical perspective were mainly used by Crenshaw to analyze the everyday oppression that black women have had to endure and address the problematic consequences to treating race and gender as a mutual “categories of experience and analysis (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 139). Crenshaw`s (1989, p. 140) theoretical perspective of intersectionality would emphasize how “dominant conceptions of discrimination” condition people to think that disadvantages are “occurring along a single categorical axis”. In other words, by viewing black women`s disadvantages based on a single-axis framework people might think that disadvantages and discrimination are the same for every black woman, however, this is not the case, according to Crenshaw (1989). The reality is that black women might experience disadvantages and discrimination differently as some might be more privileged than others in the society. In connection to this, Crenshaw (1989, p. 140) further state that discrimination tends to be seen in terms of sex or class privilege blacks in race discrimination cases, while the focus is usually on racial, and class privileged women in gender discrimination cases.

While Crenshaw`s view and explanation of intersectionality in her article is limited to black women mostly, her overarching point with this theoretical perspective is to challenge the contradictions and conceptual limitations that a single axis understanding of disadvantages might produce (Crenshaw, 1989). Crenshaw (1989, p. 149) also uses the analogy of traffic in an intersection to address the different kinds of disadvantages and discriminations that people in the society might experience. Like in an intersection with four different directions, discrimination based on race might flow through the intersection in one direction, while discrimination based on sex might flow through in another direction (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 149). Put it simply, are Crenshaw (1989, p. 149) with her intersection analogy suggesting that black women might experience discrimination in “ways that are both similar to and different from those experienced by white women and black men”. Black women`s discrimination is, therefore, much more intersecting and extensive than the general understanding of discrimination might produce – which then again are not properly addressing the black women`s experiences and needs (Crenshaw, 1989, pp. 149 - 150).

The concept of intersectionality has since its introduction in the late 80s also gone through many changes to its use and applicability as a theoretical perspective, according to Christensen & Jensen (2019, p. 28). The perspective is generally understood as a multidimensional perspective on micro, macro, and meso- levels – in which these social differentiations addressed above are on different levels mutually influencing each other

(Christensen & Jensen, 2019, p. 17). In other words, might, for example, the social differentiations of gender and class be seen as “designations of different social structures”, while they might also be seen as different identity components (Christensen & Jensen, 2019, p. 17). However, Christensen & Jensen (2019, p. 17 – 18) also emphasize that the concept of intersectionality should not be only reduced to a concept that addresses a particular disadvantage to specific groups or people. This because it might itself be difficult to predict and decide who the “powerful and privileged and the powerless and underprivileged” are (Christensen & Jensen, 2019, p. 17 – 18). But even so, do Christensen & Jensen (2019, p. 18) not exclude the fact that groups of people and individuals can be discriminated and underprivileged in the society due to different marginalizing mechanisms. In this regard, they further emphasize that the concept of intersectionality is, thus, “a traveling concept that have changed and evolved across disciplines, continents, and different societal contexts” (Christensen, 2019, p. 18).

Consequently, and in order to understand the complex reality and shed light on several forms of social differentiation that the people fleeing are enduring in everyday life, I believe that the theoretical perspective of intersectionality are valuable to incorporate into the data and analysis. I will, therefore, utilize intersectionality as a theoretical perspective to discuss the several intersecting challenges that men and boys must endure within the refugee context.

3.2 Power

The other theoretical framework I will be utilizing in the analysis and discussion of my empirical data, is Steven Luke’s three-dimensions of power. This framework will be used to shed light on the different forms of power dynamics in the refugee context in general, but also in connection to getting access to measures for gender-based sexual violence. The power framework will, therefore, be used as an overarching framework to investigate the institutional power that different international actors and organization are exercising over the people fleeing from conflict, war, and persecution, with an especial emphasis on the people fleeing in the Mediterranean area. I will also narrow the scope, and view Lukes’ power dimensions in connection to vulnerability in the refugee context, as this factor might not only lead to acts of sexual violence but are also leading to a lack of access to preventative measures for sexual violence prevention towards men and boys specifically.

The overarching concept and framework of power is a complex one, and have been defined and redefined by many academics and theorists throughout the years – however, from a

radical view are power according to Steven Lukes, the domination that someone is exercising over someone else (Lukes, 2004, p. 12). Lukes' radical power view recognize this domination, but question how the powerful are able to assert this domination over someone else in order to secure willing compliance, when everyone's "interest is multiple, conflicting and of different kinds" (Lukes, 2004, pp. 12 - 13). Thus, in order to explain the domination that the powerful are asserting over the willing masses while also considering the multiple conflictions that are shaping the power dynamics, Lukes' sketch out three conceptual maps of power views: the one-dimensional view, the two-dimensional view, and the three-dimensional view (Lukes, 2004, p. 15).

The One-dimensional Power View

Lukes (2004, p. 19) describes one-dimensional power as the "view of power that involves a focus on behavior in the making of decision on issues over which there is an observable overt conflict of interests, seen as express policy preferences, revealed by political participation". The conflict of interest is between preferences, which is assumed to be consciously made and acted out by the masses, however, it's the powerful that are asserting their power over the masses in the society through overt decision-making, which makes the masses unaware of their own interests (Lukes, 2004, p. 19).

The Two-dimensional Power View

The two-dimensional power view is described by Lukes (2004, p. 25) as the non-decision-making power. This is based on the fact that "decisions are prevented from being taken on potential issues over which there is an observable (overt or covert) conflict of interest" between the powerful and the masses, as the power is becoming embodied in the masses due to "express policy preferences and sub-political preferences" (Lukes, 2004, p. 25 & 29). In other words, are the power-asserting observable, however, the power is not seen as worthy of public attention and controversy by the masses (Lukes, 2004, p. 24).

The Three-dimensional Power View

The third dimension of power are the power asserted by the powerful over the masses through influencing, shaping, changing and determining the masses wants and desires – in short, the power asserted by controlling the masses thoughts (Lukes, 2004, p. 27). By controlling the masses thoughts and desires, there will be no recognized grievances that might lead to an actual observable conflict between the masses and the powerful (Lukes, 2004, p. 28). Lukes

(2004, p. 28) further express that this exercise of power is also the most insidious form, as the masses are shaped and controlled in such a way that they do not see the power asserted on them and do just accept their role in the existing order of things.

4.0 Research Methodology

In this chapter, I will elaborate on the different methods I used for data collection during my fieldwork in Mytilini in September 2022, discuss the ethics connected with this thesis research, provide an overview of my initial working plan, and lastly address my thoughts and reflections surrounding this master thesis research process.

4.1 Initial Working Plan for the Research Project

To provide an overview of this thesis research project process, I will in this following paragraph describe some of the activities I have conducted and share the initial working plan developed for this project. This is valuable in order to see and understand the full process of this master thesis research.

My research and writing period for this master thesis was set for one year – from May 2022 to May 2023, in which the first months of May and June were used for finalizing the project description and developing interview guides for the people and organizations I would like to interview. After receiving my approval to start the research project from NDS – the Norwegian Center for Research Data, in early June, I contacted organizations and people in Norway and Greece by e-mail, asking them for interviews and knowledge sharing about my thesis topic. While this process was a lengthy one, with many interview rejections due to different reasons, I was able to book a few in-person interviews with a couple of experts and people working in Norwegian organizations that I conducted throughout July and August. Throughout this period, I also transcribed these interviews, read up on my thesis topics, started collecting some of the literature I used in this thesis, and booked my fieldwork stay in Greece for September.

My fieldwork in September lasted approximately four weeks, and I stayed in a small dorm booked through Airbnb in the city center of Mytilini. My dorm location made it easy for me to navigate the city and reach the spots I had my interviews in. While I had initially thought about volunteering in an organization in the refugee camp in Mytilene, I decided otherwise when I arrived in Mytilini, as this would free up my days and make it easier for me to conduct interviews with different people in and around the city. During the fieldwork, I conducted ten

interviews with experts, psychologists, earlier volunteers, and people working in organizations located in Mytilini, in which some of these interviews were done digitally through Zoom, while most were performed in person with people living in the city. In addition to interviewing, I observed the city's atmosphere to get a feel for the people and the area and wrote down my observations in a field diary.

After finishing my fieldwork in Greece in September, I started transcribing the interviews, analyzing my collected data, and finding more background material to apply to this thesis. In addition, were the last weeks of November and December used for constructing a thesis disposition and writing out some of the empirical data in order get an overview of my collected data in connection with my thesis research questions.

Lastly, were the following months of January, February, March, April, and May used to write, restructure, and finalize this thesis. While I have tried to follow my working plan as best as possible, I have, throughout this research project, also faced several challenges that have made the research process more demanding than initially thought. I will address this more in detail in chapter 4.5 Methods and Research Reflections.

Date:	Task:
June 2022	Finalize project description → send this to NSD. Find and read background material. Find and send e-mail to contacts.
July 2022	Find and send e-mail to contacts in Greece and Norway.
August 2022	Conduct interviews in Norway. Book field stay in Greece.
September 2022	Field stay in Greece - +-4 weeks. Transcribe interviews and rewrite observational notes.
October 2022	Conduct more interviews in Norway. Transcribe interviews. Synthesize and analyze data.
November 2022	Synthesize and analyze data. Find and read background material. Start to write the thesis.
December 2022	Synthesize and analyze data. Find and read background material. Join writing seminars. Writing period.
January 2023	Writing period
February 2023	Writing period

March 2023	Writing period
April 2023	Writing period
May 2023	Finalize thesis.

4.2 Qualitative Research Methods & Data Collection

I will in this following chapter address the qualitative research methods used for data collection throughout this thesis research project. Qualitative research is according to, Leseth & Tellmann (2018, p.12), the data collection done by interviewing, observation, and document analysis. Qualitative research provides the researcher a possibility to go more in-depth in the research topic in order to better understand the many different practices and perspectives in the world (Leseth & Tellmann, 2018, p. 12). As I wanted to gain more knowledge of and go deeper into the topic of gender-based sexual violence and the refugee situation, I found qualitative research to be the most optimal methodology to utilize in my research. Thus, I will in the following paragraphs provide more info about the interview guides, and the different qualitative methods used throughout my research project.

4.2.1 Interview Guide

As I followed a qualitative research methodology approach with interviewing as the primary method used for data collection, I developed two interview guides with questions formulated in advance as starting point for the interviews – one in Norwegian for Norwegian-speaking interviewees and one in English for English-speaking interviewees. Typical for an interview guide and structure is that the order of the questions may vary and that the questions may be asked in different ways depending on the flow of the conversation and the interview style that is used/ or has been planned to be used throughout the interview (Leseth & Tellmann, 2018, p. 71). As I had decided to use a semi-structured interview style with open-ended questions to secure openness and flexibility in the interviews, I was therefore open to changing the interview guides and the questions asked throughout the research (Flick, 2019, p. 218).

I set up my interview guides with two parts, which I changed depending on the person I interviewed. If I interviewed earlier volunteers, I usually started with questions about their volunteering experience to get them to open up and talk about their thoughts and perspectives on volunteering with people in the refugee camps. This provided me with a more profound emotional understanding of the refugee situation from a volunteer perspective, as they had with their own eyes seen the realities of the people in the camp. Additionally, and if the

interview led to it, I would in the second part of the interview, ask more general questions about their knowledge of gender-based sexual violence and if they knew about measures for gender-based sexual violence prevention for men and boys in Mytilini specifically.

When I conducted interviews with different experts or people working within an organization, I would, in the first part of the interview, ask them questions about their work and how this work related to the refugee situation and gender-based sexual violence. Before the interviews, and in order to make the interview questions relevant to the person I interviewed, I also read up on their work or the organization they worked in. By doing so, I was also able to edit the interview guide to suit these different people more specifically. This provided me with gained knowledge about their work, which then again helped me to understand their work more deeply. It also allowed me to ask them more probing questions to get more details on the different projects, tasks, or initiatives they have implemented to secure essential needs for people in the camp, but also for gender-based sexual violence prevention measures, particularly (Flick, 2019, p. 217). As most of these experts and people working within organizations had a great deal of knowledge of the refugee situation and gender-based sexual violence, I also asked some general questions about these topics in the second part of the interview.

All in all, I believe that my flexibility to change the interview guides throughout the data collection, helped me secure openness and encouraged the interviewees to provide more detail and go deeper into the topics of the refugee situation and gender-based sexual violence in the interviews (Flick, 2019, p. 218). This also helped me avoid a rigid interview structure that might interrupt the interviewee's points and might have restricted me from getting the data I have collected throughout my data collection process (Flick, 2019, p. 218).

4.2.2 Interviewing

My overarching aim for data collection throughout my research project has been to collect verbal data – which is the data deriving from words by the research participants (Flick, 2019, p. 205). This means that the research participants share their knowledge, perspectives, and experiences on a specific topic, by speaking, and such data collection are usually done through interviews with a single participant, or in groups with several participants, where the participant(s) are answering questions asked by the researcher (Flick, 2019, p. 205). I decided to collect verbal data, as I believed that this would provide me with a deeper and more profound understanding of the refugee's reality in general, but also in connection to experiences with acts of sexual violence.

My collection of verbal data was done semi-structurally, in which the interviews were based on an interview guide with open-ended questions that would provide flexibility and leave more room for the interviewees perspectives and opinions on the topics (Flick, 2019, p. 207). In connection to this, where my style of interviewing set to a more responsive interview style, which emphasize the “importance of building a relationship of trust between the interviewer and the interview object”, and lead to a give-and-take conversation throughout the interview (Flick, 2019, p. 217). This interview style provided me the flexibility to ask specific question to gain more general knowledge about my topics, but also to probe for more information of specific details by asking follow-up questions to the interviewees, as mentioned above (Flick, 2019, p. 217).

Expert Interviews

As this thesis research questions and overarching aim is mainly focused on addressing the institutional challenges to implementing measures for gender-based sexual violence prevention, where my verbal data collection only based on interviews with different experts within the field of gender-based sexual violence, volunteers, and people working within organizations located in Norway, and Mytilini. Such interviews are also called expert interviews, as the experts interviewed usually have a specific skillset, knowledge, perspective, insight, or understanding within a particular field of research because of their professional position or expertise (Flick, 2019, pp. 236 - 237). Incorporating expert interviews as a method for data collection in my research, provided me with valuable data from people that have either worked with refugee´s and/or lived in Mytilini for a lengthy period of time, or expert knowledge about the specific topics in this thesis. Most of the expert interviews were conducted in-person in Norway or in Mytilini, but some of them were also done digitally through Zoom.

Online Interviewing

As stated above, where some of the of the interviews conducted online through Zoom, and the reason for this was that most of the interviewees lived in another country (not in Norway or Greece) and could not meet for an in-person interview. In addition, are Zoom also the only video communication platform applicable to use in research interviews to collect data, according to OsloMet´s routine for classifying data (OsloMet, 2022). The online interviewing through Zoom were done synchronously – which means that I and my interviewee where

available online at the same time and could have a conversation together digitally (Flick, 2019, p. 243). We planned the interview date through e-mail or through messages on WhatsApp and booked the date for the interview directly in Zoom.

While it would have been preferable to meet the interviewees in-person in order to greet them physically, I did not feel that the online interviewing inhibited me in any big way. There were no issues with the Wi-Fi, the sound and picture were great, and I felt that the entire digital interview setting went very well. The only two downsides to online interviewing that I acknowledge, is that I could not observe the full body language of the interviewee which might have been beneficial in order to collect observational data. The other downside is that the some of the digital interviews were conducted quite effectively or dragged out, so that the period of time initially planned for the interviews became shorter or longer. I had planned approximately forty-five-minute-long interviews, however, some of them were finished after thirty-five to forty minutes, while others lasted around an hour. But, despite the shorter interviews, I received answers on all of the questions asked and a lot of valuable data and received a lot of additional information and data on the interviews that lasted longer.

4.2.3 Documents as Data

The other qualitative data collection method I have used during my research and writing of this thesis, is document analysis of already produced data such as journals, articles, books, reports, and statistics, that I have found online through searches at search engines such as Google Scholar, Google, and Oria – the university library search engine (Flick, 2019, p. 376). By using Google, I have been able to find additional information, facts, and statistics on websites of different non-governmental and international organizations such as the UNHCR, The World Health Organization, Médecins Saint Frontiers, Amnesty International, and the UN – to mention a few. These sites and sources have been beneficial to use in order to gain more knowledge about the organizations, their implemented projects to help people fleeing and for gender-based sexual violence prevention, but also to fact check the information provided in the field.

The search engine Oria, have been my main resource to find peer-reviewed articles in journals, digital books, and other e-sources to use in this thesis. A peer-reviewed article is a scholarly publication that have gone through several steps for research quality assessment,

which then again secures high-quality in the novelty, relevance, and significance of the research (AKJournals, n.d.). Using peer-reviewed sources throughout my research and in this thesis have also secured a certain credibility and reliability in my resource use, as the peer-reviewed articles used provides an accuracy to the documentation and are free from errors that might obscure the research reliability (Flick, 2019, p. 379). In addition to the online resources found in Oria, I have also used some of the digital and physical syllabus literature such as books, and articles that I have been provided with throughout my bachelor's program in Development Studies, and master's program in International Education and Development studies. I will go more in detail on my literature and source use in in the literature review section in the following chapter.

4.2.4 Non-Participant Observation

Lastly, I have been doing some non-participant observation in the field/ in the streets of Mytilini. When I came to Mytilini, walked through the city streets and observed the locals doing their everyday business, I also saw several refugee's walking around to the cafes, bars, and restaurants, or sitting on the curbs begging for money. Thus, in order to detect how these people were treated by the locals and the tourists walking the streets, I figured it would be interesting to observe their everyday experience. My aim was, therefore, not to intervene/ talk to the local people and the refugees begging for money, but to observe how the refugees were treated by other people in the streets of Mytilini (Flick, 2019, p. 326). After observing the interactions between the refugees and the locals, were the observational data written down in my field notes and diary book, which helped me to keep and overview of the field experiences, reflections, and observations throughout the fieldwork (Flick, 2019, p. 340).

I collected my observational data in two ways. Firstly, I observed the people sitting and begging for money when I walked past them on my way through the city center. The people sitting and begging for money were mainly a woman with a small child/baby, and they sat in the midst of the busy shopping street in the city center next to an ATM. Some of them held out their hands, asking people walking past for money (usually only tourists), while others sat and looked at the ground. Both the woman and child were dressed in dirty clothes, and you could see that both the women and the child were tired, as the woman had a tired face while the child/baby mostly slept. Observing them in the busy streets, it almost seemed like the women and child had become a part of the environment – they weren't talked to, given money

to (other than by tourists), or acknowledged in any way; however, they weren't shooed away by the locals either. They were just there among all the other people doing their everyday business.

The other observation I marked was the interaction between the people walking around begging for money and the café, bar, and restaurant goers. The people begging for money were mainly small boys or teenagers dressed in dirty clothes. The small boys usually walked over to the people sitting in the cafes and restaurants, while the older boys stood some meters behind and watched the interaction between the boys and the people they asked for money. The boys typically approached tourists, who always gave them some coins, and kept an eye on the staff working in cafes and restaurants. The staff usually noticed the small boys approaching the restaurant goers but did not shoo them away and let them ask the restaurant goers for some money. However, if the boys got too loud and intrusive, the staff went over and gave them a warning and let them keep on doing their business.

Observing these interactions was very interesting. I remember thinking it seemed like the people begging for money might have been doing so for a long time as they almost did it “robotically”. The women and child sitting on the streets always sought attention from the tourists as they knew they would provide them some money, while the boys only sought out tourists in the cafes and restaurants to get money. The locals usually ignored them - not necessarily negatively, but in a way that it seemed like the people begging for money had become a part of the city life like every other local doing their business.

While I have not placed great emphasis on observation throughout my fieldwork, I do still think that it is important to address as it provides some insight into how the refugee population and the local population are interacting in the city of Mytilini – at least from when I was doing my fieldwork in September last year.

4.2.5 Triangulation of Research Methods

As I have utilized three different methods in this thesis research, I believe that its valuable to address the strategy of triangulation of methods for data collection. A triangulation of research methods is a good strategy for extending the possibilities of knowledge production and create a more solid foundation for the findings (Flick, 2019, p. 192). A triangulation of

methods will therefore be beneficial for more “quality in the research”, as the researcher will gain more insight into the topic of research (Flick, 2019, p. 192).

I believe that the use of qualitative interviewing, document analysis, and non-participant observation are all methods that have been advantageous for me to use, as I have gained more knowledge about the occurrence of gender-based sexual violence toward men and boys in the temporary refugee camp in Mytilini on the Greek Island Lesbos. Such methods have provided me with gained expert, local, and lived experience knowledge of the overall refugee situation in Greece and Mytilini, and have provided me with a deeper understanding of the situation for men and boys and acts of sexual violence specifically. Interviewing has been valuable as I have been able to hear stories, experiences, and gain information from people that have been working “hands-on” with the refugee population in Mytilini. Document as data have provided me with additional knowledge about the topics from other researchers, academics, experts, and service providers that are/have been working with the issues of gender-based violence and with the refugee situation. While I have not been doing non-participant observation actively, I believe that this have provided me with additive reflections and thoughts about the refugee situation in Mytilini, that I would not have unless I did such observations. A triangulation of the methods of interviewing, document analysis, and non-participant observation has been valuable in order to understand the bigger picture of the refugee situation and gender-based sexual violence in Greece and Mytilini,

4.3 Ethics in Qualitative Research

While doing research, must the researcher take into consideration the issues of ethics – which is defined by Flick (2019, p. 134) as the “questions of how to protect the interests of those who are ready to take part in a study” in order to prevent manipulated data and research scandals. To secure proper ethical standards to research practice there are introduced a set of eight research ethics principles that the researcher must abide by. I will not go through all of them here, however, three of them state that the researchers must be able to justify their research, explain the aim of the research, and be able to assess the “possible violations and damages arising from their research” (Flick, 2019, p. 135). In addition to these research ethics principles, the codes of ethics are formulated to regulate the relationship between the researcher and the people in the field of study (Flick, 2019, p. 136). The codes of ethics require that the researcher avoid harming the research participants by respecting their need

throughout the research process. In order to do so, all research have to introduce an informed consent – which mean that the research participant must agree to partake in the research and are informed that the research should not invade their privacy or deceive them in any way (Flick, 2019, p. 136). Within the codes of ethics, Murphy and Dignwall (in Flick, 2019, p. 136) also speak of the ethical theory with its four principles: Non-maleficence, Beneficence, Autonomy/self-determination, and Justice. In order to secure non-maleficence, should the researchers avoid harming participants, to secure beneficence – should the research produce positive and identifiable benefit, to secure autonomy/self-determination – are the values and decisions of the participants respected, while justice are set in order to secure that all people are treated equally in the research (Flick, 2019, p. 136).

All in all, are such ethical rules and principles mentioned above put in place to secure proper scientific quality – meaning that the research should contribute to new knowledge to the already existing knowledge “out there” (Flick, 2019, p. 139). The issues of ethics are also important in order to secure the welfare of the research participants – the risks in joining a research process should not be higher than the benefits of joining research (Flick, 2019, p. 139). Thus, in order to secure the welfare, dignity and the rights of the participants, should any researcher provide the research participants sufficient information about the research, inform about consent, and secure that the consent to join the research are given voluntarily (Flick, 2019, p. 139). On the basis of this, I will in the following section elaborate on the ethical issues and considerations that I have had to conform to throughout my research for this thesis.

4.3.1 Ethical Issues and Considerations in my Research

There has been several ethical issues and dilemmas that I have had to consider throughout my research project. The first issue arrived in connection to my research topic of gender-based sexual violence, that are, in general, a very stigmatized topic to address. Addressing this topic together with the already vulnerable group of people fleeing from conflict, persecution, and war - became, therefore, a challenging ethical dilemma that I had to regard when deciding on my research aims (Flick, 2019, p. 140). With this in mind, and in order to secure the welfare and dignity of my research participant in my research, I decided to only speak with professional staff, experts, and volunteers that have worked with or are working with the refugee population about their knowledge of the topic of gender-based sexual violence in the refugee camp in Mytilini. I recognize that it from a research perspective would have been

very interesting to gain more knowledge about gender-based sexual violence and implemented measures in and around the camp in Mytilini from a refugee perspective, in order to understand their lived experience on a deeper level. However, as I do not have the expert knowledge, medical and therapeutic background to talk to people about their possible traumatic experience – both in connection to their experienced trauma with the “refugee situation” and/or acts of sexual violence, I decided that it would be ethically considerate for all parts if I aimed my research towards professionals, volunteers, and experts instead.

Informed Consent

However, despite aiming my research towards experts, professionals, and volunteers instead, there were still ethical considerations that I had to keep in mind in order to secure the welfare, dignity, and rights of my research participants, as mentioned above (Flick, 2019, p. 139). Thus, in order to do so I developed an informed consent form with information about my research aims, research questions, the benefits and risks of joining the research, while also informing that participation in the research would be completely voluntary (Flick, 2019, p. 140). I printed these out, gave them personally to the interviewees I met in-person in Norway and Greece, informed them about the contents in the form, and secured signatures on these before the interviews were conducted. These consent forms were stored in a folder that I kept in my locked room in the dorm I rented in Mytilini. To the interviewees I were to interview online, I sent the consent form, my project description, the NSD form, and the recommendation letter from OsloMet to the interviewees some days before the interview date, and asked them to read through the consent form, print out, sign the form, and send it back to me to be stored in my OsloMet encrypted OneDrive. To one of these interviewees, I also used the Norwegian post offices digital signing online, which secures safe signing through MinID login and deletes the signed document forty days after the signature date (Posten.no, n.d.). After getting the consent form signed digitally, I downloaded the signed form and stored it together with the other forms in my OsloMet encrypted OneDrive.

Participant Communication

In order to safely communicate digitally with my interviewees, I used my OsloMet encrypted student e-mail and the encrypted messenger app WhatsApp for all communication throughout my research project. My student e-mail were used to send forms and documents, book a date for the interview, and ask and answer questions regarding my research project, while WhatsApp were used to ask for directions to the location of the interview.

Interview Recordings

In order to have the opportunity to get all the important data and information that the interviewees shared during the interviews, I informed in the consent form, and asked the interviewees in-person if I could record their voice in the interviews – which they all agreed too. The interviews were recorded using my phone with the downloaded Nettskjema – Dictaphone App – the only approved recording equipment for use at OsloMet for collecting data (OsloMet, 2022). By using the Nettskjema – Dictaphone App, the recordings were delivered, uploaded, and safely stored in the online Nettskjema page - which I could only open by logging in through Feide login with my student e-mail and password (OsloMet, 2022). The recordings could also only be listened to in the online Nettskjema page and not in the App on the phone, which secured that the recordings from being lost if I by any change would lose my phone.

Participant Anonymity

Furthermore, and in order to secure confidentiality and the anonymity of my research participants, I refrained from using the interviewees names, e-mail addresses, occupations, and organizational affiliations throughout the collection and synthetization of the data. I, instead, used a system of colors to separate the interviewees from each other while transcribing the data, to secure total anonymity of my research participants in the analyzation of the data. Thus, in order to secure my research participant's anonymity, I will throughout this thesis only mention them as interviewees, or interview objects (Flick, 2019, p. 136).

4.4 Research & Methods Reflections

I will in this following chapter address some reflections I have made myself throughout this research project. I will address my initial thoughts on expected results, some of my reflections on the thesis topic and the process of working with such stigmatized thesis topics, address my overall research work, and discuss my reflections surrounding methods use.

4.4.1 Expected results

My initial thoughts surrounding this thesis research project was that the research project is highly ambitious in the sense that addressing gender-based sexual violence is a challenging topic to research in any setting. Combining such a topic with refugees – an already quite vulnerable group of people, was something I found challenging ethically in a research setting,

as I wanted to conform to the rules of ethics the best way possible. I also personally found it to be challenging, as I knew that I would be presented with horrendous stories of acts of sexual violence throughout my research. However, despite this, I thought that my results would be beneficial for providing a wider view and understanding of the concept of gender-based sexual violence in vulnerable situations – with a particular emphasis on refugee men and boys in Mytilini.

4.4.2 Thesis Topics Reflections

As mentioned above, were I initially thinking that it would be challenging to do research on such stigmatized and vulnerable topics as gender-based sexual violence towards refugee men and boys in Mytilini. I was both right and wrong in this initial thought. I was right in the sense that gender-based sexual violence is, in itself, a complex phenomenon to address as there are so many factors to keep in mind while addressing and doing research on such a topic. I do first believe that it is important to address and understand the fact that gender, sexuality, and violence are three separate concept that are not necessarily connected to gender-based violence - but might lead to acts of sexual violence in certain situations. The reasons to why, and how sexual violence is happening, are also considerations/ factors that might change depending on which situation sexual violence are acted out in. For example, might the reasons for acts of gender-based sexual violence be totally different during conflict and war, then if it is acted out in another form of crisis situation. However, the overarching reason might also be the same – such as for example to assert power, but there might also be several other different sets of factors that are leading to acts of sexual violence depending on the situation.

As I wanted to investigate the reasons for why there is a lack of measures to combat gender-based sexual violence for men and boys in Mytilini, I had to keep in mind the cultural aspect surrounding sexual violence, as the understanding of the topic of sexual violence are a cultural thing. Understanding sexual violence in one culture, might be totally different in another culture, which might also be a reason for why there is a lack of attention to implementing measures for curbing sexual violence in certain cultures. In addition, you have the gender perspective that is equally important to address. The acts of sexual violence for one gender, might be something different for another gender, and understanding the reason for why sexual violence are happening might be different depending on what gender acts of sexual violence is acted out on.

In addition, were I considering the refugee perspective as well. As mentioned above, are the refugees an already vulnerable group of people that might have experienced several traumatic

experienced due to different crisis situations, throughout their journey to safety and in the refugee camp. Addressing such a stigmatic and traumatic topic with an already vulnerable person, it not something any person should take lightly. I, therefore, decided to angle the topic into investigating measures and service providers instead, which would provide a more general and objective view to this whole refugee situation too. While it would have been very interesting to interview refugees about their experiences, I decided not to, as I do not have the expertise or knowledge to do so and I did not want to retraumatize these people by addressing a topic that might be very difficult for some to talk about. Talking to service providers about gender-based sexual violence was therefore making the research “easy”, in the sense that they had a lot to say about this topic and they all meant that it’s a topic that should be addressed more in the refugee setting.

I had initially decided not to address the topic of mental health to such an extent in my research, but decided otherwise when I started conducting the interviews and got to know how much this topic matters in the refugee situation. All of my interviewees emphasized how important this topic is to address, also I connection to gender-based sexual violence. Thus, it became to be one of the main topics for this thesis research. Gender-based sexual violence is an act of violence that might lead to trauma, which then again might lead to different kinds of mental illnesses and challenges – and in worst cases suicide. Several of my interviewees also told stories of people living in the camps in Mytilini that have had severe mental illnesses due to a lot of traumas. I do, therefore, believe that addressing mental health in connection with gender-based sexual violence is invaluable to do in any research.

4.4.3 My Research Process and Work

My research process and thesis work were both challenging and easy – however a very interesting process. It was easy in the sense that the fieldwork and interviewing went great. I got to speak to a lot of interesting people that had a lot to say about the refugee situation and the topic of gender-based sexual violence. They put me in contact with other interesting people, shared articles and knowledge that helped me to understand the whole situation a lot deeper. I also had a great supervisor that provided me with additional knowledge and helped to keep on track throughout this whole thesis research project. I would not have been able to gain such deep understanding without the help of my interviewees and supervisor.

The research project was also challenging as I have never done this kind of extensive research before. I have realized that it is a lengthy process that need consistent work in order to deliver a thorough research. The writing of the thesis was the most challenging part, as there is a lot

of factors/perspectives/information/data, to keep in mind while writing a research thesis. Writing a thesis while working part time, and having a personal life is also factors that have been sometimes difficult to “juggle”. However, I do think that this whole process has been equally fun and interesting as I have been able to do research on and write about topics that I do find very important to address.

4.4.4 Methods Reflections

I believe that the methods use of semi-structural interviewing, online data, and non-participant observation has been a good use of methods in the research for this thesis. The semi-structural interview style provided me with a lot of valuable knowledge about the refugee situation and gender-based sexual violence. The interview style opened up for additional talk and discussion outside of the questions made in the interview guide, which led to a lot of stories, perspectives, and experiences told by the interviewees about the topics of this thesis, but also additional information about their personal experiences. I believe that this additional information was valuable in the sense that it provided me personally with a lot of knowledge, thoughts, and reflections that I have used in this thesis, and will reflect on further. One of the “negative aspects” of using a semi-structural interview style was that the interviews sometimes lasted shorter than expected, while other lasted longer than expected. However, despite this I do believe that I gained a lot of valuable knowledge in both the shorter and the longer lasting interviews by using a semi-structural interview style.

Using online data – peer-reviewed articles, rapports, web articles, and other online data, have been valuable in the sense that it has provided me with additional information that I have used in this thesis. I believe that the use of online-data has also provided me with a certain credibility and validity of my empirical data, as most of my online data is based on already conducted research or is actual research that have been conducted on gender-based sexual violence, the refugee situation, or both. Such online data are, therefore, validating my data collected throughout my fieldwork.

I do also believe that the “use” of non-participant observation in my research was very interesting, as it sparked thoughts and reflections about the refugee situation in Mytilini that I would not have gained without observing. While I have not weighted this method use the same way I have done with interviewing and digital data, I still believe that it’s a valuable method style in order to understand the interactions between the locals and the refugees in the city of Mytilini.

4.5 Research Quality

I will in this following chapter and paragraphs address some concepts that are used in the assessment of the quality of empirical research (Leseth & Tellmann, 2018, p. 16). The concepts I will introduce is reliability, validity, and generalization, and I will in each paragraph provide a short description of the term and address how the concepts are connected to secure the quality for my thesis research. In addition to these, I will also address the concept of contextualization, as this is a term that is central to introduce in qualitative research.

4.5.1 Reliability

Reliability are a concept introduced in research to assess the research data quality and are largely connected to the research approach (Leseth & Tellmann, 2018, p. 16). You cannot secure reliability in qualitative research by repeating the study and gain the same statistical data as in a quantitative research study, however, the reliability in qualitative studies is instead shown through research reflexivity and transparency (Leseth & Tellmann, 2018, pp. 16 - 17). Such criterions are in qualitative research gained through a thorough description of the research process, and by using a critical lens to describe the reasoning behind the choices that have been done throughout the research process (Leseth & Tellmann, 2018, p. 17).

I believe that my research is reliable in the sense that I have provided a thorough and transparent description of my research process throughout this entire thesis. I have provided sufficient information about my reasoning behind the interest in the topics, and the reason behind my research aims, objectives, and research questions, in the introduction of this thesis. In addition, have I further introduced the field from my personal perspective in the background chapter and been transparent in the reasoning behind the choice of research methodology and methods in this research methodology chapter. I have also addressed the ethical issues and considerations that have been apparent throughout this research process and provided some additional thoughts and reflections to this entire research work, process, topics, and methods used in this research. I will in the following chapter also provide a description of the literature and sources that are used in this thesis and describe the reasons behind the choices of such use of literature and sources. I do, therefore, believe that this research is reliable based on the reasonings mentioned above.

4.5.2 Validity

The concept of validity in research is connected to the data validity to the research aims, purpose, and the researcher's interpretation of the research results. Validity can also be divided into three – concept validity, internal validity, and external validity (Leseth & Tellmann, 2018, p. 17). Concept validity is addressed by introducing the research's topics, terms, and theories, and provided a description on how such terms, theories and topics are used in the research (Leseth & Tellmann, 2018, p. 17). Internal validity is connected to mapping of the research phenomenon's that are supposed to be researched – in other words, if the researcher is doing research on the actual topics of the research (Leseth & Tellmann, 2018, pp. 17 - 18). External validity is connected to if the research can be transferred to other research contexts – how the data be generalized and connected to other contexts that are connected to the same research topics (Leseth & Tellmann, 2018, p. 18).

I believe that I have conformed to the frames of validity within this research, as I have – among other, provided a thorough description of all of the main topics, terms, and theories introduced in this thesis. I have throughout this research also sought to direct my research work towards my research aims, and questions - by questioning my interviewees about the topic of curbing gender-based sexual violence towards refugee men and boys in Mytilini specifically. However, have also asked general questions connected to gender-based sexual violence in order to understand the bigger picture of gender-based violence in vulnerable situations. Thus, can the research also be transferred to other research contexts, as the research provides a general description of the complex phenomenon of gender-based violence. The phenomenon can, therefore, also be researched in other vulnerable situations - such as for example in conflict and war.

4.5.3 Generalization

The concept of generalization is largely connected to the analytical processes of the research and are introduced through the use of theory in order to analyze and gain an expanded understanding of the topics in the research (Leseth & Tellmann, 2018, p. 18). The use of theory in the analysis of the data in qualitative research, will also generalize the study in the sense that the data for a study based on less interviews will be relevant for a study conducted on a larger set of interviewees (Leseth & Tellmann, 2018, p. 18).

Connecting the concept of generalization to my research, have I been using the theoretical frameworks and perspectives of intersectionality and power to emphasize my research aims, objectives, and research questions. The overarching discussion of such theoretical frameworks

and perspectives are in my analysis connected to the question of why there is a lack of attention to implement measures for curbing gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys in the refugee camps in Mytilini Greece. However, have the theoretical frameworks and perspectives of power and intersectionality also been introduced into the discussion of vulnerability, the refugee situation, and cultural contexts. As my research is a qualitative study based on less interviews, it will not be statistically representative for the whole refugee community in other refugee camps. However, by using theories in my analysis, I will be able to generalize my data – address my research within the larger frames of the theoretical perspectives, and thus gain expanded knowledge of gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys in vulnerable situations.

4.5.4 Contextualization of my Research

To contextualize something is to see the overarching meaning or context in order to understand the reason behind a specific phenomenon, topic, word, or situation (Svennevig, 2022). The context is, therefore, the conditions in the environment that are relevant for the understanding or interpretation of the phenomena and are usually gained by understanding the background of the phenomena/ topic/ situation, or word (Svennevig, 2022).

To contextualize topics or a phenomenon in qualitative research are usually done through gathering data about this specific phenomena or topic using methods such as interviewing, observation, or document studies (Leseth & Tellmann, 2018, p. 66). Qualitative research is not based on statistical data to gain knowledge about something as in quantitative research, but is rather connected knowledge collection of experiences, perceptions, values, actions, emotion, etc., that people in the world have (Leseth & Tellmann, 2018, p. 66). Qualitative can, therefore, provide more knowledge and understanding of different people's experiences with different topics, and can through this also show the complexities of the research topic and/or phenomena (Leseth & Tellmann, 2018, p. 66). Interviewing, observation, and document studies, do not capture the whole reality of the phenomena, but provides some additional knowledge and information about the reality (Leseth & Tellmann, 2018, p. 66)

I have throughout this research tried to contextualize the topic of gender-based sexual violence in connection to men and boys and implemented measures in the context of the refugee situation and camps in Mytilini Greece. This have been a complicated task, as the topic of gender-based sexual violence is in itself a complex phenomenon to address.

Addressing this in connection to implemented measures for refugee men and boys in Mytilini specifically, have also been challenging, as there are many considerations and factors to keep

in mind while addressing such research topics. However, I have sought to contextualize the topic in the overmentioned setting by interviewing people that are/ have been working as service providers/in international organizations, or as past volunteers about the overarching topic of gender-based sexual violence in this context.

As mentioned above, can I not claim that this research is statistically representative for the entirety of the refugee population in the global world - or in Mytilini for that matter, as my data are based on interviews with eleven people that have worked or are working as service providers, or volunteers in the refugee camps in Greece. But my aim has not been to collect quantitative data either. I am more interested into knowing the reason for why there is a lack of attention towards addressing and curbing gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys in the refugee camps in Mytilini. Doing qualitative research with interviewing, observation, and document analysis, have provided me with a nuanced, in-depth understanding of the many factors that might be the reasons behind such lack of attention to address the overmentioned question.

Gender-based sexual violence is, in itself, a phenomenon that happens everywhere in the world, however, for this research has the context been set to the refugee situation in Greece and Mytilini. Then, in order to understand the full picture to why there is a lack of attention towards addressing gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys in Mytilini, it has been important to gain an understanding of the Greek societal perspectives on violence, masculinity, and femininity. Such understandings might then again be brought into the refugee camps, which then again might lead to acts of sexual violence and a lack of attention to address the acts of sexual violence.

5.0 Literature Review

I will in this following literature review chapter address some of the literature that I have used throughout my research and in the writing of this thesis. Hart (in Flick 2019, p. 155) defines a literature review and its contents as a selection of available documents on topics, which contain information, data, ideas, perspectives, and evidence, written from a standpoint that express views on the topic, and the review is expressed through an effective evaluation of these documents.

5.1 Literature and Sources used in this Thesis

I will, in these following paragraphs address the literature and sources used in this thesis. The literature and sources used include peer-reviewed articles, relevant books, and additional

online data, and I will in the following paragraphs provide a short overview of the content of the literature and provide a reflection of the use of these sources throughout this thesis. I will then discuss the limitations and quality of the sources used, and address this thesis projects relevance to previous research done within the field of gender-based sexual violence and the refugee situation.

5.1.1 Peer-reviewed Articles

One of my preferred literatures used in this thesis have been peer-reviewed articles published in a journal. As described above are a peer-reviewed article a scholarly publication that have gone through several steps for research quality assessment, which then again secures high-quality in the novelty, relevance, and significance of the research (AKJournals, n.d.). As this have been extensive research, I have used a lot of relevant peer-reviewed articles within the fields of gender-based sexual violence and the refugee situation throughout my research, and I will address a couple of the ones that I have viewed as the most relevant and valuable to use in this thesis research in the following paragraphs.

Primarily, have the research done, and peer-reviewed articles written by Jane Freedman, been important literature that I have used in this thesis. Her articles: “Mainstreaming gender in refugee protection” and “Sexual and gender-based violence against refugee women: a hidden aspect of the refugee "crisis" is both relevant articles that have benefitted my research of recognizing gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys in the refugee setting. I have used her literature when addressing some of the critiques of the handling of the 2015 Mediterranean “refugee crisis”, as she has a critical stand to the refugee situation that I believe is important to address. In addition, have I also used her literature when discussing the international actors funding towards gender-based violence prevention. Her literature is important to use in this thesis, as she takes into consideration a gendered approach while addressing how to implement projects for gender-based violence prevention in the field. Her research and literature are, therefore, not only relevant in connection to this thesis overarching aims, but also important to address, critically reflect on and confront in the implementation of inclusive measures for all genders.

Other important research within the field of gender-based sexual violence and refugees are found in the works of Charli Carpenter. Her article: “Recognizing gender-based violence against civilian men and boys in conflict situations”, have been relevant in order to understand and recognize gender-based violence done towards men and boys specifically in conflict situations. Carpenter argues that the concept of gender-based violence in the humanitarian

sphere is largely connected to females as victims, and men as the perpetrators of such violence, and emphasizes that that men might also be on the receiving side of acts of sexual violence. In connection to this, she asserts that the human security discourse is creating a gendered understanding of “who is to be secured”, and who these people must be secured from. She further questions the international actor’s description of the term of gender-based violence as something only connected to females. However, her main conclusion in her article, is that the human security sphere needs to inclusively define gender the concept of gender-based violence and must be developed to include all the vulnerabilities “of populations across lines of gender, ethnicities, class, age, and other distinctions” (Carpenter, 2006, p. 99). In addition to using her literature in this thesis, I have also found inspiration in the title of her article to use in the title for this thesis, as I thought it perfectly summed up and introduced the overarching topic of this thesis.

In addition to these sources, have I also used a peer-reviewed article written by Araujo et al (2019), to describe gender-based sexual violence throughout the migration process, an article by Chroni & Kavoura (2022) to describe sexual violence in the Greek context, and the research and article written by Gaggioli (2015) when describing sexual violence in connection to the International Human Rights Law and the judicial system. The article by Ribeiro & Perdigão (2019), have been valuable in order to the describe the term “the refugee” and to address the stereotypical perceptions and representations of this group of people. The article by Karakasi et al (2022), have been used while describing the increased cases of violence and femicide in the Greek society in the empirical section of this thesis.

While these are just a couple of the peer-reviewed articles used in this thesis, I believe that these - and the ones not mentioned, have been highly relevant to use to understand the overarching phenomenon of gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys in the refugee situation on the larger scale. Moreover, have the articles used also been valuable in order to understand the Greek context in connection to acts of sexual violence towards men and boys.

5.1.2 Relevant Books

The use of books has not been my main source of literature used in this thesis; however, I have found a couple of books that have been relevant to use in this thesis, nevertheless. One of the books introduced in this thesis, is the book by Elaine Storkey, with the title: “Scars Across Humanity – Understanding and Overcoming Violence Against Women”. This book offers a great researched overview of all aspects of gender-based violence in vulnerable

situations globally. I have used her book when describing the overarching concept of gender-based violence, and gender-based sexual violence in the background chapter of this thesis. Her book does also describe gender-based violence in the refugee situation, especially in connection to acts of violence within refugee camps, which is highly relevant to the research of this thesis. I have, thus, also used her research to describe the gendered paradox in vulnerable situations - such as inside a refugee camp, in the empirical chapter of this thesis.

In addition, are the book “Power – a radical view” written by Steven Lukes used when describing Lukes’ theories of power in the theoretical frameworks chapter. In this book he describes three different dimensions of power: the one-dimensional, the two-dimensional, and the third-dimensional of power. I have mainly incorporated Lukes power theories into the analysis and discussion of the thesis topics. His theories of power address several of the structures of power in connection to acts of gender-based sexual violence in the refugee setting in Mytilini. Such enforcement of power can also be seen in on the larger scale – when addressing the service providers lack of attention to address and implement measures for curbing gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys overall. I will address this in more detail in the analysis and discussion chapter.

The book by Donato & Ferris (2020), “Refugees, Migration and Global Governance: Negotiating the Global Compacts”, provides a great overview of the complex structures of the refugee situation on a global scale. This book is used in this thesis to describe the global refugee situation, the 2015 Mediterranean refugee crisis and its politics, and the global refugee politics that have followed this refugee crisis. This book describes the recent refugee and migrant politics and its effects to a great extent, and have, therefore, been a valuable book to bring into this thesis in order to see the bigger picture of the refugee situation.

Lastly, and in the writing of the Research Methodology chapter, have I mainly used the book “An Introduction to Qualitative Research” written by Uwe Flick. This book provides a thorough description of the different kind of research methodology, research theories, and methods, and have been a valuable source for me when addressing the research methodology and methods used in this research and thesis. In addition to this, have I also used the book by Leseth & Tellmann (2018), “Hvordan lese Kvalitativ Forskning”, when addressing the qualitative research methods and the research quality. I have used this book as it is first and foremost easy to read and understand, and it provides good information into all aspects of the qualitative research processes.

Most of these books have been introduced to me as curriculum in my bachelor's in Development Studies, and master's in International Education and Development at the Oslo Metropolitan University. The book by Storkey was found while doing research for relevant literature for this thesis research.

5.1.3 Online Sources & Literature

In addition to the overmentioned literature, have I also used online sources – articles, rapports, and relevant information written on different webpages as sources in this thesis. Most of the articles, rapport, and relevant information have been found on webpages of international actors and non-governmental organizations such as UNHCR, Amnesty International, the ICRC, The United Nations, The World Bank, European Commision, Medecins Sans Frontiers, and Oxfam – to mention a few. I have also found some relevant information in the New York Times, CNN Greece, UDI, The Greek Council for Refugees, etc., that I have used as sources throughout this thesis. Information from these online sources have mainly been used as additional information to describe certain occurrences or situations.

5.2 Limitations to Sources & Literature Quality

While I personally think that the literature used in this thesis have been relevant and of good quality, it is also important to address some of the limitations to the literature's quality, and sources used. This is important in order to decide whether or not the documents are employable to use in the actual research (Flick, 2019, p. 378). Scott (in Flick, 2019, p. 378), introduces four different criteria's for using document as data in research, in which these are authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning.

Assessing the literature's authenticity is done by checking if there are different versions of the document "out there" – in other words checking if the document used the original document, or if it is a summary of the original document (Flick, 2019, pp. 378 - 379). I have to the best of my ability tried to use and find the original document for use in this thesis, however, have also used summaries to describe certain situations and scenarios. This because the summary has provided me with concrete and easy to understand information about this specific situation or scenario.

The concept of credibility refers to the literature's accuracy of documentation and assess if the document is free from errors (Flick, 2019, p. 379). Due to my lack of knowledge into assessing and analyzing already existing documents and literature, I cannot claim that all the literature used are free from errors. However, I have mainly used literature such as peer-

reviewed articles that have been published in an academic journal that have gone through several steps for quality assessment - which then again might secure the literatures credibility. I have also used books that have been introduced to me through my studies, and other books that are written by researchers. Such books have also gone through several quality assessments before they have been published through a publishing company. I will claim that this also secures the credibility of the literature used in this thesis.

The representativeness is connected to typicality, meaning that the information found in the document are typical within the field of the study (Flick, 2019, pp. 378 - 379). I will claim that the documents used in this thesis conforms to this representativeness, as there have been no atypical information about the topic of gender-based violence found in the literature, that I have not seen in other documents studying the same topic.

The last criteria of meaning, is connected to whether or not the evidence in the document is clear and comprehensible, if the meaning in the document is clear from the author, for the reader, and the objects of the document (Flick, 2019, pp. 378 - 379). I believe that the meaning and evidence in the literature used in this thesis have been clear and understandable, as the topics and the connection with the objects have been described to a sufficient extent in the literature used in this thesis.

5.2.1 Other Reflections to the Literature used.

While I do believe that the sources and literature used in this thesis have been of relatively good quality, I have also made some reflections for the literature that I believe is valuable to point out.

First and foremost are some of the literatures used several years old, which means that some of the points made out might not be that relevant for today's perspectives, views, and understandings of the topic of gender-based sexual violence, and the refugee situation. For example, are one of the articles by Freedman over thirteen years old, and the perspectives on global organizations and their attention to the concepts of gender and gender-mainstreaming, might be outdated in today's research about the same topics. However, despite this, I do still find her points relevant and interesting to address in this thesis as it sheds light on some perspectives that I find relevant to use in my empirical data chapter. In addition, are the book "Power – a radical view" by Lukes nearly twenty years old, however, still very relevant to use in this thesis as his perspectives on power are very much used in today's understanding of the concept of power. Moreover, are the book by Crenshaw from the late eighties, in which she at

that time introduced the theoretical concept of intersectionality in connection to the black women's oppression in America. While the concept of intersectionality has evolved a lot since that time, do I still think that the original understandings introduced in her book are valuable to address and discuss in the analysis and discussion chapter in this thesis.

As specified above, have I also used several online sources, such as articles and information found on the webpages of organizations such as the UNHCR, The UN, the World Bank – and so on. While I recognize that these sources have not necessarily gone through the same quality assessments as peer-reviewed articles, I still think that such sources have been valuable to use in order to describe certain situations in this thesis. These organizations do also have great credibility as they have their own research departments and renowned researchers contribute to your report and policy publications.

5.3 Research Project's Relevance to Previous Research

Regarding how my research project on gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys in vulnerable situations can relate to previous research, I do find my project to be quite relatable to already existing research within the field of gender-based violence. While most of the research within the field of gender-based violence that I have come across when searching for literature, have largely been addressed in connection to conflict and war related situations and women and girls, have the research been valuable to use in in connection to my research topic of gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys. Reading and analyzing previous research has provided me with an overarching understanding of the complexities and factors connected to phenomenon of gender-based violence. My research is, therefore, relevant to previous research within the field of gender-based violence, as it addresses many of the same perspectives. However, it does also to a greater extent address the phenomenon of gender-based sexual violence from a male perspective, which I believe is important in order to understand the whole complex concept of gender-based violence.

6.0 Data & Analysis

I will in this chapter present the empirical data that I have collected throughout my research project and fieldwork in Mytilini, Greece, in September 2022, and discuss this data in connection to the theoretical perspectives of intersectionality and power. I have chosen to divide this chapter into two sections, in which I in the first section will elaborate on the refugee crisis and its significance for Greece, and address gender-based violence in vulnerable situations in the second section.

6.1 The “Refugee Crisis” and its significance for Greece

I will, in this following section and paragraphs address the “refugee crisis” and its significance for Greece. I have approached the refugee situation in Greece with an overarching perspective – meaning that I have presented the refugee situation in its entirety and have not delved on describing every stage of this crisis. I have chosen to do so, as the “refugee crisis” in Greece is a large and complex situation with many factors that have shaped the crisis. Thus, I will in this following section shed light on some factors that have shaped the refugee crisis and provide a description of the refugee camps in Mytilini, Greece.

6.1.1 Capitalization, The EU-Greece Collaboration & Absolute Anonymity

While addressing the long-term refugee situation in Greece, the interviewees mentioned several interesting topics as factors that have shaped the still ongoing refugee situation in Mytilini today. Such factors have also shaped the lack of attention to and implementation of proper measures to curb gender-based sexual violence for men and boys in Mytilini.

“EU is throwing money on Greece.”

This was said by one of the interviewees when speaking about the ongoing refugee situation in Greece. In this regard, this interviewee said that the EU and the European states were paying Greece to be the “prison of Europe”, and that this is a relationship/collaboration Greece is happy to accept as they were in so much debt to the EU. “And now we are out of debt, and that is weird, right? It is, and was, a way to pay their bills”, did this interviewee further state about the relationship between the EU and Greece. The interviewee also mentioned the EU/Turkey deal and the EU relocation programs as the root cause for the ongoing refugee situation in Greece.

Interestingly, are such views also expressed by Vallianatou (2022), who states, "As a result of the EU-Turkey deal, Lesbos and other Greek islands near the Turkish coast have become open-air prisons for refugees and migrants". The EU has externalized migration flows through such agreements “with countries of origin and transit” and is preventing refugees from coming to Europe “in exchange for development aid and other incentives” (Vallianatou, 2022). EU's failure to responsibility sharing and solidarity has also led to discouragement from building well-functioning asylum systems in the countries housing refugees – such as Greece (Vallianatou, 2022). In this regard, I will claim that this is one of the factors for the lack of development and implementation of measures toward curbing gender-based violence for men and boys in Mytilini. Instead of developing a well – functioning asylum system that

are taking into consideration the refugee realities (securing safety, treatment, and support to an already vulnerable group of people fleeing from crisis), are the money and incentives instead used on measures to push people back to the countries they have fled from. And instead of developing measures for gender-based sexual violence and mental health services for men and boys which will provide the necessary support and safety that these people need, are the EU's attention and views narrowed to understand the refugees as problematic (Vallianatou, 2022).

Volunteer Tourism

The “refugee crisis” also led to increased volunteers coming to mainland Greece and the surrounding islands. The media bombarded the “humanitarians of the world” with large headlines, articles, and pictures of crying babies and terrible conditions within the camps in Greece. According to an interviewee, this led to a lot of money coming into the island (of Lesbos), as volunteers “with stars in their eyes” spent their money on housing and buying local supplies and clothes for themselves and the people coming to the islands. This interviewee – that operates an organization in Mytilini said that they had many times had volunteers coming with suitcases of clothes for the children in the camp, asking for the possibility to take a picture with them handing over the clothes to the kids so that they could “get more money from the people at home”. This interviewee called this phenomenon – volunteer tourism, meaning that people came to volunteer on a tourist vacation for a short period but left for their homes after a couple of weeks with a feeling that they achieved something significant and life-changing (for them).

Savior Complex

However, when the media stopped addressing the ongoing issues with the refugee situation in Greece, the volunteers got fewer, many NGOs started to withdraw, and the money flow to the island decreased, said the interviewee. “There's, unfortunately, a bit of a savior complex among the volunteers and the NGOs”, stated the interviewee. “But, despite this, there's still an ongoing need for more services, as this is still an ongoing crisis even though the world has chosen to forget about it”, said this interviewee further. Many of these organizations and actors retracting from the island were also actors providing services for mental health and gender-based violence prevention. Thus, because there is no money to gain from the situation, there's no need to continue the work. In this regard, an interviewee stated: “They are needed in other more popular crises now. This is all business. They are losing money here”.

Consequently, I will claim that the lack of media attention, lack of volunteers, and no money to gain from such crisis, are further leading to lack of attention to implement measures to curb gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys in the refugee camps in Mytilini. As stated by an interviewee must the few organizations and service providers that are left rethink their strategies for implementing measures to the people residing in the camp – and unfortunately are measures towards sexual violence and mental health disregarded.

Absolute Anonymity

Another element I experienced throughout this research project and data collection was the organization's and service providers' need for absolute anonymity. Absolute anonymity in the sense that most of the organizations wanted to remain anonymous in all parts of this research. Although this is a part of my methodology chapter on ethical considerations, I will also claim that this is a finding of mine that is interesting to mention.

While contacting organizations to participate in this research, most spokespersons for the more influential international organizations expressed that they (the organization) needed to remain anonymous throughout this research. Suppose they were to join this research; it became imperative that they were not connected to the refugee situation in Greece or as service providers for sexual violence prevention measures. While the reason for this might be many, were one of the reasons mentioned by the interviewees is that there's "no glory" in working in this refugee situation in Greece anymore. Many organizations still doing their work on the island of Lesbos have experienced a lot of negative coverage in the media and are being blamed for the terrible conditions in the camp and the lack of implementation of measures overall. Thus, many international actors and organizations have either chosen to leave the situation in Greece or have decided to keep their work anonymous from the media. However, there's a lack of mention of the overarching structures that are shaping the refugee situation in Greece on the larger scale in the media too.

Lack of Assistance

A last interesting point made by several of the interviewees, where the overall lack of assistance that the refugees received inside the refugee camps in Mytilini. In this regard, an interviewee stated: "Refugees do not know where to go, and what to do to, and which lawyer to go to. There's lack of assistance and information in any way ". This interviewee have worked as a service provider for an organization located outside the camp in Mytilini for many years and have seen and heard about a lot of people residing in the camp that have had

their asylum requests denied. Their denied asylum requests were largely due to the practice of fictitious service mentioned above, which often meant that the people that had applied for asylum had to start the whole asylum process over again. A process that might take months and sometimes years to get through the system.

In the meantime, the refugees must live in a state of limbo within a camp and a system that are not providing them sufficient information. This interviewee further talked about an older woman that have been working as a volunteer in their organization, that have been living in the camp in Mytilini for over three years waiting for a reply on her asylum request. While I was there talking to this interviewee, this woman was cooking food for the rest of the volunteers and was smiling from ear to ear because she had finally been able to have her second asylum interview in the process of getting asylum. She was so happy that she soon might be able to go meet her family in another European country.

Power

In order to make sense of how such factors are leading to a still ongoing refugee situation and a lack of attention to implement measures to curb gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys in Mytilini, Greece, I will bring to fore the theoretical perspective of power. I will claim by taking into consideration some of these overmentioned factors that there is a tendency of a structural power influence as shown in the two – dimensional power view in this refugee situation. As described by Lukes (2004, p. 25 - 29), is the two – dimensional power view asserted through an observable conflict of interests but are not seen as worthy of attention by the masses.

Discussing the first factor mentioned above, are the EU asserting their power over Greece by promises of reduced debt, increased aid and other incentives, if Greece are agreeing to be the “prison of Europe” (Vallianatou, 2022). They are using their power as an international collaborative organization, managed through several treaties that outline their governing and collaboratory principles for their economic, social, and security policies, to secure that the whole refugee situation are held “outside their borders” (Gabel, 2023). I will also claim that this power is observable in the sense that it is known for the world that the Mediterranean refugee crisis is a real crisis, and it is known that the EU have failed to take responsibility and secure solidarity for the victims of such crisis - as emphasized by Vallianatou (2022).

However, despite this it seems like the world have lost the interest to bring attention to this crisis, and to question the EU’s lack of attention to secure the refugees overall safety and

well-being (Vallianatou, 2022). And in relation to gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys, it seems that they are not developing, implementing or funding projects that are aiming to prevent and curb sexual violence towards men and boys specifically. While it in a recent press release by the European Parliament is stated that “gender-based violence should be treated as a particularly serious crime under EU law”, and it should “address all forms of violence and discrimination based on gender, is gender-based violence under Article 83(1) TFEU defined as “sexual exploitation of women and children” – leaving out the mention of gender-based violence also happening to men and boys (European Parliament, 2021). Further emphasizing this point with a statement about measures for sexual violence prevention for men and boys from an interviewee that have worked within the field of gender-based violence for many years: “I’m aware of pockets of initiatives, systematically there’s none at the global level at the moment.”.

I also think that this power view and use can be seen in connection to international organizations and the media’s appearance in crisis too. Many organizations are often inserting themselves into different crisis with the attention to help and save the vulnerable. However, as soon as the global attention to such crisis have dimmed, some organizations are extracting themselves from the situation as humanitarian organizations today are seemed in larger part driven by where media attention and international focus gains traction for their funding. This point has also been raised in MSF’s annual forgotten emergencies, where they every year raise attention to the ten crisis that are taking place outside the media spotlight (Médecins Sains Frontiers, 2020). My thoughts are that some international organizations are using their reputation as humanitarians to assert and show their dominance and power to the people in the world but are restructuring and relocating as soon as the global attention and capital have shifted to more recent and popular crisis. Such relocation is also rarely prioritized or raised by the media as the humanitarian organizations are globally viewed by the masses as doing work that are deserving of praise.

I must emphasize that these overmentioned points and views are my reflections in connection to the theoretical framework of power and the factors mentioned by my interviewees raised above. However, with such views presented, I will in the following sections introduce the changes, structure, and security in the refugee camps in Mytilini, Greece.

6.1.2 The Camps in Mytilini, Lesbos – Changes, Structure, and Security

The structural changes and the situation in the camps around the town of Mytilini on Lesbos from the "start of the refugee crisis" in 2015 until today, are a complex process to follow as

the changes to the camps have been many, and the refugee situation have gone through several stages throughout the years. Therefore, to get an overview, I asked my interviewees - people who live and work or have lived and worked on Lesbos for many years, about the changes, structures, and security of the camps near Mytilini – in addition to the topic of gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys. In the coming paragraphs, I will thus focus my attention on the notorious camp of Moria and the new and still existing camp in Mytilini, as these were the two main camps that the interviewees mentioned throughout the interviews during my fieldwork.

The Moria Camp

According to several of the interviewees, the Moria camp were the only camp available to settle in for the refugees arriving by sea following the 2015 refugee crisis. The interviewees further expressed that the camp's main structure changed from a military camp to a refugee camp in the early days of the camps establishment and was designed for three thousand people. Addressing this, it is stated in a press release by Oxfam (2020), that the camp's location was originally a former military shooting range, “which had to be swept for landmines, and unexploded grenades before the camp could be built on that location”.

Furthermore, and in the years after 2015, the flow of people to Greece never stopped, and the number of people settling in refugee camps around Greece and on Lesbos increased dramatically. The camp designed to sustain three thousand people quickly became full, and there was no other place for them to resettle than in the olive groves located around the fenced-in main structure of the camp. The massive influx of people to the Island throughout the years put a staggering amount of pressure on the camp's structure and facilities. The people already living in the camp also had to endure increased stress to survive in such a cramped space. In connection to this, a former volunteer that has worked in Moria in early 2020 said:

When I arrived, it was around 21 000 refugees – 15 000 refugees inside the structure. Everybody told me it was lack of everything. Can't sleep as it's so loud. Have to go and pick up the food and wait two hours to get the food. The food is disgusting and bad quality, and everyone wanted a cooking station for themselves but did not get it. Also had to wait a long while to go to the toilet. A lot of issues just continued.

Thus, the influx of people to the camp's primary structure and the olive grounds surrounding the structure worsened the people's living conditions and sense of security. Some people even

had to build their shelters of scraps around the area as there were no more tents to live in, leaving them exposed to the elements and with no privacy in their own space. "It was a life with nothing... utter hell", said one interviewee when speaking about the conditions in the Moria camp back in 2020. Another interviewee that have worked as a volunteer in the camps stated that the people living in these camps, are not at all treated as humans, and that the conditions are a constant abuse every day. Another interviewee further stated: "Imagine staying in the camp for a long time and doing nothing. This makes them sick.". While talking about the conditions, aid distribution and implementation of measures towards bettering the conditions in the camp, this interviewee further expressed that: "Money has been given to provide everything in the camp, but it's not supplied by the government. What is the money spent on?".

The Moria Camp's Main Structure

The "controlled area," with guards on post most of the time, was the fenced-in main part of the camp where the unaccompanied minors, vulnerable women, and children lived. This area was separated into zones, with children 0 - 13 in one zone, boys aged 13 – 18 in another, and single women alone. While the security for the children aged 0 – 13 and the single women was relatively good with guards patrolling both day and night, an interviewee expressed that the safety and supervision for the boys aged 13 – 18 was lacking, leading to many kids using drugs and having weapons inside the premises. In connection to this, an interviewee said: "Many of the kids were high or drunk and fought a lot of the time. There was even a kid that got killed when I was there because he would not give away his speaker. It was very dangerous.". The interviewee further expressed: "...only guards during the day for the others as it was too dangerous in the evening. But there were guards outside the main street, but they didn't care too much.". In this regard, an interviewee even stated that the local police were afraid to go into the camp, and that they only came if there had been deaths or killings that they had to look into.

The Jungle

The olive grounds surrounding the fenced-in Moria refugee camp was called the "The Jungle", by the interviewees. Thousands of people with different backgrounds, ethnicities, nationalities, genders, and socio-economic statuses, living side by side in tents or shacks, with or without their family and friends, and with strangers as their next-door neighbors, inhabited The Jungle. The Jungle was separated into three areas – two managed by different NGOs and

a neutral area controlled by the refugees. The sites operated by the NGOs were divided into smaller zones attributed with numbers, such as zone 1-6 in the fenced-in part of the camp, while zone 7-12 were attributed to the olive grounds/ The Jungle.

The interviewees that work/ or have worked as service providers or volunteers in the camps in Mytilini, also called these three zones The Jungle due to the high population (and increasingly higher population) of people in such a cramped area. The people in The Jungle were living under inhumane conditions with a lack of all necessities - leading to frequent acts of violence due to frustration, trauma, and utter despair. One interviewee even called this area a no man's land, a lawless place without laws, rules, and understanding of rights and wrongs where you could do whatever you wanted with whomever you wanted without the fear of consequence. Some interviewees also called this area hell on earth as there was no sense of safety because of the significant number of people and lack of safety measures. It was said that it at one point was only one checkpoint and around thirty police officers that controlled and secured the grounds inhabited by 25 000 people.

There was also a lack of electricity and lights on the olive grounds, which made it even more unsafe for the people to go outside when it turned dark. One of the interviewees that have lived on Lesbos since 2015 and work in an organization on the Island said: "During the nighttime, it was like lord of the flies in there. It wasn't safe in any way!", further describing that the olive grounds were completely uncontrolled and unsafe for everyone living there. The lack of toilets and shower spaces also leads to thousands of people having to share the few amenities or relieve themselves in the bushes in and around the grounds – further fueling the people's despair and lack of value.

The “new” camp in Mytilini

The “new” and existing camp in Mytilini are a lot different than the overmentioned Moria camp. According to an interviewee that have worked as a volunteer in the new camp for many years, are the new camp structure in Mytilini much flatter – meaning that is it not densely packed with tents with invisible places as in the Moria camp. The layout is more open in the new camp, and most people are living within isoboxes – white containers with a small room and kitchen inside. There are also less people residing in the new camp. Most of my interviewees mentioned that it was approximately around 1500 people staying in the camp at the time I was conducting my fieldwork in September 2022. They further stated that such

change of structure and decrease of people within the camp, where also leading to less acts of violence than before.

However, while people had been acting out violently due to a lack of essential amenities in the earlier camp, where most people today acting out violently due to the lack of mental and emotional support and information about measures. I will address this - with an emphasis on gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys, further down in this chapter.

6.2 Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Vulnerable Situations

I must emphasize that addressing gender-based violence in a vulnerable situation is – as with addressing the refugee situation, an enormous and complex process as there are so many factors that are shaping the phenomenon of gender-based violence. However, with this in mind, I will in this empirical data chapter address the gendered paradox in vulnerable situations and elaborate on the phenomenon of gender-based violence in Mytilini specifically. I will shed light on some of factors that have shaped the lack of attention to addressing gender-based violence in the Greek society in general, and the lack of attention towards addressing gender-based sexual violence against men and boys particularly.

6.2.1 The Gendered Paradox in Vulnerable Situations

In order to raise the question of whether the lack of attention towards addressing and implementing measures for sexual violence prevention against men and boys specifically, is linked to gender-biased ideas about who is "the victim" and who is the "perpetrator", I will in this following chapter address and discuss the gendered paradox in vulnerable situations in connection to the data collected throughout my research. I believe such an introduction is valuable in order to better understand the complexities of gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys in Mytilini, Greece, in the following sections.

In vulnerable and unstable situations such as during war and conflict, the general understanding of moral and social order usually breaks down, often leading to "high levels of abuse, exploitation, rape, and trafficking" (Storkey, 2015, p. 134). According to Storkey (2018, p.134), there lies a gendered paradox here: combatants in conflict and wars are usually male, while the victims of violence and warfare are usually civilian women and girls. Increased tensions and stress during conflict and war leave women and girls more vulnerable and exposed to acts of violence, which also are a leading cause for nearly 80% of all refugees and displaced persons being women and girls (Storkey, 2015, p. 134). Storkey (2015, p.134 - 135) further emphasize that even though gender-based violence is exceptionally high during

conflict and war, fleeing such situations does not guarantee any safety from more acts of violence. Displaced people have to seek shelter in chaotic and structurally unstable camps, living in tents, side by side with other people they have no connection with culturally or historically, having lost their entire sense of security and community from their homeland (Storkey, 2015, p. 146).

Concerning this, Melanie Megevand – a gender-based violence specialist at International Rescue Committee state that “there is a tendency to think that once people have crossed the border, they are safe”; however, “they just face a different violence once they become refugees” (Megevand, as cited in Storkey, 2015, p.146). But, the tendency and evidence from the hundreds of camps established worldwide is that gender-based sexual violence usually escalates inside these unstable camps (Storkey, 2015, p. 146). In connection to this, stated an interviewee of mine that: “In refugee camps the power differential is enormous between people that have very little. If we understand gender-based sexual violence happening from a power perspective, then sexual violence [in refugee camps] happens because of that.” As shown in the following data are occurrences of gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys also happening in the refugee camps in Mytilini, Greece, largely due to power structures and the many other structural and social factors that are intersecting and creating an unstable and unsafe environment.

Furthermore, are Jensen (2019) emphasizing that to understand the entirety of the vulnerabilities that refugees experience, you cannot ignore the issue of gender. Jensen (2019) expresses that: “refugee camps are gendered "based on" rapidly changing social, economic, and geographical structures", a lack of sense of community, and an increased sense of fragility every time new people arrive at the camp. In connection to this, Jensen (2019) argues that in conflict and unstabilizing situations, gender roles often change, in which manhood often relate to violence and aggression, while women and children are seem as vulnerable, weak, and thus becoming easily exploitable. Moreover, are the media also often portraying the women as the mother with child, in which the “amalgamating women and child” are seen as equally and collectively exploitable and vulnerable in the media frame (Jensen, 2019). Thus, the women and children are becoming the “true refugees” – they are the victims of exploitation rather than “the perpetrators of violence and war”, which further reduces the women and children's agency as people with rights regardless of life situation (Jensen, 2019).

However, this does not mean that only women and children are becoming victims of gender-based sexual violence in vulnerable situations (Carpenter, 2006). “Men and boys” have

historically – but also today, as shown in the data in this research, been targeted “for sexual violence in particular and gender-specific ways that deserve the attention of the human rights community” (Carpenter, 2006, p. 94). Carpenter (2006, p. 94) argues that the forms of violence and the meaning behind the acts of violence are, however, different for men and boys than for women and girls in different vulnerable situations. This sexual violence does usually take the form of rape and sexual mutilation while also being forced to rape and do other sexual acts on other men and women to humiliate, conquer, and “feminize” the men and boys' masculinity (Carpenter, 2006, pp. 94 - 95). Men and boys might also be forced to watch their female partners or other family members be sexually tortured and raped by enemy men to inflict psychological harm and trauma (Carpenter, 2006, p. 95). In this regard, Anne Tierney Goldstein (1993, as cited in Carpenter, 2006, p. 97) states:

Men, too, are injured by the sexual assault of women for reasons untainted by offensive, antiquated notions of chastity and ownership. To watch helplessly as someone you love is tortured may be as bad or worse than being tortured yourself, and international law should be able to reach and punish such harm.

Thus, Carpenter (2006, p. 98) emphasize that the measures towards securing medical assistance and psychological support for men and boys in vulnerable situations should also be “addressed in humanitarian programming”. She further states that such measures might not only help the men and boys affected by the atrocities mentioned above but might also benefit the well-being of populations and assist in curbing gender-based sexual violence in vulnerable situations (Carpenter, 2006, p. 98). With this in mind, and in order to draw the lines back to this thesis' overarching aim of recognizing gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys, I will in the following paragraphs address the topics of gender, sexual violence, and preventative measures in Greece and Mytilini specifically.

6.2.2 Greece, Mytilini – Gender, Equality, Violence & Sexual Violence

According to several of the interviewees, there is still lack of gender equality on many levels in the society in Greece - which then again have affected the implementation of measures towards gender-based violence prevention in Mytilini. Elaborating on this in more detail in connection to the data I have collected throughout my fieldwork, are the interviewees that lived and worked in Mytilini for many years stating that they had experienced the Greek society as stereotypical and traditional in the understanding of gender roles, femininity and masculinity. Thus, I will claim that it's the lack of gender equality, a stereotypical and traditional understanding of gender-roles, femininity, masculinity, patriarchy, etc., in the Greek society, are some of the reasons for the lack of effort to introduce measures for gender-

based violence and sexual violence prevention in Mytilini. I will address these topics in more detail in the following paragraphs.

Masculinity & Femininity

According to these interviewees are the society in Greece and in Mytilini specifically, typically male-dominated, patriarchal and gender stereotypical in the sense that the women are the ones that cares for the home and the family, while the men are the strong providers for their families. In connection to this, are they stating that the understanding of womanhood and femininity are mostly linked to submissiveness and softness, while manhood and masculinity are something tough, hard, and aggressive. Such views are further leading to a prevalence of toxic masculinity in the Greek society and in Mytilini, as some men are being overly sexually aggressive and possessive. One of my interviewees had themselves experienced some men being sexually aggressive while this person was going out in the city center at night. This person was, therefore, not feeling safe walking out by themselves in the streets of Mytilini and felt that they had to bring a male friend with them for them to feel comfortable going out at night. In addition, and in connection to this, did an interviewee living in Mytilini mentioned that there have been quite a few incidents of femicide in the Greek community as of late, and had seen several women walking around with bruises and black eyes due to domestic violence in the area that this interviewee lived. Reflecting on the overmentioned understandings and situations, you can see a society characterized by conservatism, and partly gender-based violence-based challenges – a society in which the refugee camp is situated. How then, does all this connect to acts of sexual violence against men and boys in the camp?".

Toxic Masculinity

Furthermore, where sexuality was also mentioned by some of the interviewees as being typically heteronormative in the Greek society – meaning that heterosexuality was viewed as the norm for sexuality (Almás et al., 2021). In this regard, I must emphasize that the concept of heteronormativity is not only present in the Greek society – it is a concept that its dominant in many cultures. However, it do intersects with a certain form for understanding of masculinity that are present in the Greek society today.

Elaborating on this, were some of the interviewees addressing sexuality with toxic masculinity – the dominant form of masculinity where men assert their power through violence, dominance, and control, in which they stated that some in the Greek society viewed heterosexuality as being connected with being masculine and being a man (Dictionary.com,

n.d.b). If you were a man and had another sexuality, or were a man and had been exposed to acts of sexual violence, you were in the eyes of those expressing toxic masculinity not a man anymore, according to an interviewee. In this regard this interviewee further expressed: “I think there is a misunderstanding in [the Greek] society about understanding male sexuality.” – meaning that toxic masculinity has obscured the view of “maleness” and male sexuality as a whole.

When Violence is the “normal”?

To put it all at the forefront, I will therefore raise the question: How could it be focused on gender-based violence in a society where the understanding of masculinity and femininity is obscured, and violence is the “normal”? With this question, I do not claim that the concept of toxic masculinity and violence are practices that is embedded and infused in every part of the entirety of the Greek society – I do not know this to a full extent, however, the question is still valid to raise and discuss based on the data I have collected throughout my research in Mytilini.

Among other, and elaborating on this, did several of my interviewees that have lived and worked in Greece for several years mention that gender-based violence - is in general, not taken seriously by law and law enforcement in Mytilini specifically, and that it is very difficult for local women to get the support that they need in such situations. Most police officers are also male, that do not have the proper knowledge and understanding of gender-based violence scenarios – towards both men and women, to take action. In connection to this, some interviewees also said that some of the police officers do not even care if a person comes to the police station to report and act of gender-based violence, as they believed that this was a private matter that should be sorted out within the four walls of the home.

Structural Challenges

In addition, was it also mentioned by an interviewee that if a survivor of gender-based violence or sexual violence where to press charges against the perpetrator, they had to pay a legal fee in order to get their case to the court – which then against often ended in people not reporting the perpetrators as they did not have the funds to actually do so. Then, I will claim that such cases of acts of gender-based violence will be challenging to acknowledge as pressing matters to address in a society where your concerns are “scuffed under the rug”, and you don’t have the funds in order to get your case through the legal system. Imagine then how

difficult it must be for male and refugee survivors of sexual violence to report acts of sexual violence in a society with specific ideals towards masculinity and violence, on top of this.

Elaborating even further, an interviewee stated that the police do not have a specialized unit for gender-based violence and sexual violence cases, and that if a woman is a victim of such acts of violence, they must go to the hospital and talk to a specialized doctor – a coroner, to receive help. It was also mentioned by an interviewee that it was only one protection actor and one woman shelter for survivors of acts of gender-based violence, sexual violence, and domestic violence in the city of Mytilini. However, these services were completely overrun, understaffed, and without people with proper knowledge about gender-based violence in general – especially acts of sexual violence towards men and boys.

In conclusion were there according to my interviewees not enough services or people with expert knowledge of sexual violence on the Island of Lesbos. The survivors of gender-based sexual violence – both female and male, were therefore not having enough services to turn to in order to receive help for acts of sexual violence.

Patriarchy

As mentioned above, several of my interviewees stated that they have experienced the society in Greece as typically male-dominated and patriarchic. Elaborating on this in connection to acts of sexual violence specifically, do Chroni & Kavoura (2022, p. 2 - 3) state that the common “denominator for preventing people from recognizing, labeling, speaking of, and responding to sexual violence” may in the Greek societal context be due to a collectivist patriarchic society. Patriarchy is defined by Hartmann in Chroni & Kavoura (2022, p. 3) as “a set of social relations that constructs hierarchical structures between men which enables them to take control over women”. Indeed, is patriarchal societies also revealed as highly violent societies according to Chroni & Kavoura (2022, p. 3), which then again leads to a people complied with an hierarchical gender power structure, and a society where gender inequalities is normalized, accepted, and tolerated. Patriarchal beliefs are, therefore, leading to male dominance, a devaluation of girls and women, and are appearing to be the root cause for gender-based violence (Chroni & Kavoura, 2022, p. 3). Thus, I will claim that one of the reasons for the prevalence of, and lack of attention to curb acts of gender-based sexual violence in the Greek society, is due to the fact that the Greek society are based on a traditional patriarchic foundation.

Viewing patriarchy in connection to the theoretical framework of power and its relation to gender-based sexual violence, will I argue that the patriarchy is a social relation structure that becomes embodied in the people, and can be seen in relation to Lukes three-dimensional power view. The third dimensional power assertion is shown through influencing, and shaping the masses thoughts and desires, while patriarchy is constructing a hierarchical structure of male dominance over women through social relations (Lukes, 2004, p. 27 & Hartmann in Chroni & Kavoura, 2022, p. 3). In this regard, Nelson (2021, p. 97 - 98) argue that offences of violence such as gender-based violence, are impacting and influencing the individuals both physically and mentally, and are usually perpetrated by people that have asserted their dominance and power over other individuals. Interestingly, Nelson (2021, p. 98) further state that “identified gender roles and masculinity are factors that are influencing the risk of experiencing or perpetrating acts of violence. Thus, Nelson (2021, p. 98) assert that masculinity, constructed through a belief that the maleness is dominant in the relations between the genders, are “correlated with men’s experiences with violence”. With such points, I will therefore argue that patriarchy can be seen in relation to Lukes third – dimension of power, as the set of social relation that constructs hierarchical structures between genders, are being influenced and shaped into the masses and reinforced in this context.

Stigma

Another topic mentioned by the interviewees as a reason for the lack of focus on gender-based violence in general, and sexual violence towards men and boys specifically in the Greek society (including men and boys residing in the camps in Mytilini), where the prevalence of stigma. Stigma is in the social sciences characterized as something that is classified as deviant by “an agency with the power of definition”, and can lead to a cognitive process in “which one accept this classification” (Lundal & Tjora, 2021). Addressing stigma, an interviewee said:

In Greece it’s very stigmatized to talk about health issues – you’re seen as weak, and especially if you’re a man as you need to be strong and handle things by yourself. Moreover, is it in general also very stigmatized to talk about acts of gender-based violence, sexual violence, and domestic violence in the Greek society.

This interviewee works in a Mytilini based organization that specializes on providing help for people with issues of mental health in connection to gender-based sexual violence. This person further expressed that it is very difficult for them to recruit men to join in on their

sessions, due to increased stigma in connection with the survivors' experiences with acts of sexual violence. The interviewee also explains that this is largely due to an understanding of a normative gender role of "men that does not suffer", and that it is first after suffering for a longer period of time that men take the step to seek help and support for their issues.

In addition, another interviewee that has worked as a service provider in Mytilini stated that: "Men and boys do not come forward if they have been sexually assaulted because of stigma and the toxic masculinity." Toxic masculinity due to an "obscure" view of masculinity and sexuality – they (the straight male survivors) did not want to be seen as gay when they had been raped by other men, and those that were gay did not want their sexuality exposed as that might lead to more acts of sexual violence. In connection to this last point, this interviewee further expressed that:

Sexual violence is a common tool of torture. In my experience, in a lot of African communities, to have sexuality is illegal and the way to punish them is to rape them. Have seen a lot of rape of gay men, a lot of rape as a tool for torture. Another common thing is rape in transit countries in Turkey, especially in jails in Turkey, and rape of African men. African men are also being forced to work in factories being raped by their employers – being used as slaves. A lot of rape of African men in prisons in Turkey.

Thus, I will claim that stigma is - both in the Greek society and in other vulnerable situations as mentioned above, a factor for the lack of attention on acts of gender-based violence and access to gender-based violence measures in general. In this regard, an interviewee also stated that getting access to proper services for gender-based violence and gender-based sexual violence prevention is connected to stigma, and the reason for this is the lack of acknowledgement of these issues. According to this interviewee, due to high levels of stigma and a lack of acknowledgement of gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys, men struggle to articulate their experiences, especially emotionally. This lack of emotional vocabulary leads to a lower understanding of what they have been through, that ultimately results in a lower level of reporting of incidents and help seeking behavior (Linos, 2009, p. 1548).

Evident Increase in Gender-based Violence in Greece

Taking into consideration the several topics addressed above, Karakatsani (2022, p. 1) further emphasizes that there has been an evident increase in incidents of violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment cases, and domestic violence in Greece throughout the years. Exemplifying

this, it was written in a recent article by the Neos Kosmos that the Forensic Service of Thessaloniki estimates that cases of sexual abuse towards young girls in Greece have doubled since the start of the pandemic in 2020 until 2022 (Neos Kosmos, 2022). Since 2020 until October 2022, it has been reported “a total of 72 children with physical injuries”, and 60 underage boys, and 88 underage girls had also been examined for sexual violence – resulting in 60% of these cases being deemed as child sexual abuse (Neos Kosmos, 2022). Such statistics were collected and recorded by the medical examiner and head of Forensic Service of Thessaloniki, who is leading a team of specialist scientists that are working towards shedding light on emotional, physical, and sexual forms of child abuse in Greece (Neos Kosmos, 2022).

These cases - among many other issues, have triggered “a great reaction from the public and the political sphere” in which several #Metoo, women empowerment, and gender equality movements have been developed and applied in the Greek society in order to confront the violence (Karakatsani, 2022, p. 1). However, despite these efforts to make things more equal and shed light on gender-based violence, Greece remains to be at the lowest point with the score of 53.4% on the 2022 Gender Equality Index, while the overall EU average was at 68.6%, according to Karakatsani (2022, p. 1 - 3). Regarding the 2022 Gender Equality Index, it should be mentioned that the pandemic did an impact on the scores in the Index, however, it is also evident in the Index that there has been an increase of exposure to acts of gender-based violence (Karakatsani, 2022, pp. 3 - 4). As specified by Karakatsani (2022, p.4) in connection to this: “According to the Flash Eurobarometer survey, women in the EU believe that COVID-19 has led to an increase in emotional and physical violence in their country. Specifically, in Greece, 9 in 10 women share this view”.

A recent survey about sexual violence and harassment conducted by the Greek survey company PRORATA, also showed that approximately 65% of the female respondents from Greece have been exposed to sexual harassment or sexual violence in their workplace or on the streets (CNN Greece, 2021). The survey also showed that approximately 87% of the female respondents answered that it is very difficult to receive access to justice in cases of sexual harassment and sexual violence (CNN Greece, 2021).

This upsurge in cases of gender-based violence, sexual violence, femicide, and other acts of violence in Greece throughout the recent years, may also be due to increased instability and stress following the COVID-19 pandemic (Karakasi, et al., 2022, p. 86). Social distancing, solitariness, financial stressors, increased consumption of alcohol and drugs, together with

prolonged restrictive measures following lockdown, are all risk factors that Karakasi et al. (2022, p. 86) address as causes for increased violence – especially domestic violence and femicides. In connection to this, do Karakasi et al. (2022, p. 84) also assert that the risks factors for increased levels of violence on a community level comprises of an approval of aggressive masculinity, which might lead to a derogatory understanding of the gender roles. In addition to this, are Karakasi et al. (2022, p.84) further expressing that typically traditional societies with a patriarchal structure might determine the gender and sexual behaviors in the society. All of these factors mentioned by Karakasi et al. (2022, p. 84) are ultimately resulting in a lack of development and establishment of dedicated protection services for survivors of gender-based violence – factors prevalent in the Greek society as I have presented in the paragraphs above. On a broader societal level, are the risks factors that are playing a role in increased incidents of gender-based violence including less access to the judiciary system, perceived impunity for the perpetrators, and a lack of focus into bridging the gender inequality gap – among other (Karakasi, et al., 2022, p. 84).

Consequently, and as evidenced in my data and sources presented above, are there therefore several factors that lead to a lack of attention to acts of gender-based violence and sexual violence towards men and boys in general – and in the Greek society specifically. These factors, together with a lack of acknowledgement and attention are thus hindering the development and implementation of measures towards gender-based violence prevention – and as shown by my data collected through this research, are there a lack of measures for all genders in Mytilini. Factors such as stigma and toxic masculinity are also preventing men and boys from reporting cases of sexual violence and using the few measures provided. Thus, with these societal factors in mind, I will in the following paragraph address the acts of gender-based sexual violence towards all genders in the camps in Mytilini.

6.2.3 Acts of Sexual Violence in the Camps in Mytilini

In the context of sexual violence in the camps in Mytilini, several of the interviewee's stated that sexual violence was "used as a way" to assert dominance and power over other people residing in the camps. Sexual violence was, therefore, used systematically by some to destroy the communities, and "shake" the unity within these camps. In addition, an interviewee also mentioned that sexual violence can be used as a rewards system in crisis and conflict situations and might further lead to pure looting and thuggish criminal behavior. This was also the case in the camps in Mytilini, as several of the perpetrators of sexual violence acts did so in order to assert and grow their power within the camp. Gangs were created by some to

protect the people with the same ethnicities or background, and acts of violence was the means used to control or take revenge on other people with different ethnicities, mentioned an interviewee that have volunteered in the camps in Mytilini for many years.

Rape and Sexual Assault

Elaborating on this, were (and are) rape and sexual assault not necessarily the overarching goal according to several of the interviewees. In other words, were acts of sexual violence not necessarily perpetrated out of sexual gratification, however, it became to be the means and weapon some people use(d) to get attention, power, or to avenge some form of injustice they felt had been committed against them or their ethnic group/ gang or so. In connection to this, an interviewee further explained that raping other people was not just about “the act of raping” – raping to receive sexual pleasure - but was used as a weapon to punish other men and the survivor's family. When talking about rape in Moria specifically, this interviewee said: "They raped as a weapon to demoralize the people around them, but also as a mockery of not being able to protect their loved ones - as a demonstration of power.". In connection to this, another interviewee argued that the power differential and the weirdness of it all are the factors that is leading to acts of sexual violence inside these camps. Typical laws and rules do not apply as usual, and you don't have the social rules and norms of protection you may have in any other situation.

In this regard, an interviewee said about the situation in Moria: "Everything was happening there - a lot of sexual violence and other violence”, further stating that: "The rapes in Moria were horrible with long queues outside the rape clinic almost every morning.". This interviewee further mentioned that only one rape clinic was available for the people within the camp. But, as the acts of violence and sexual violence were so frequent, the staff working within these clinics usually had to work long hours to provide medical and psychological help to those that had experienced sexual violence within or arriving to the camps every day. Emphasizing this, an interviewee said that some of the women arriving to the camps were already pregnant with their rapist`s child, and that the psychological support they needed to handle this was massive.

While most of the survivors of rape and sexual assaults coming to receive treatment and support were usually female, were there also numerous horrible acts of sexual violence done towards men and boys within the camps. However, due to stigma and shame, and fear of retribution, were the male survivors of rape and sexual assault not seeking medical and

psychological help. In connection to this, an interviewee that works in an organization in Mytilini stated that they had heard of terrible cases of male survivors of sexual violence – men and boys that had been brutally raped and mutilated, but who had only sought medical help after days of excruciating pain due to the shame of being raped.

Unwanted Sexual Encounters

Another interviewee that has worked as a volunteer in the camp in Mytilini also mentioned that most people – both men and women, in the camp had experienced some kind of unwanted sexual encounter during their stay in Moria camp or on their journey to Greece. Such unwanted sexual encounters were experienced by their partners, friends, and other people living within the camp, but also acted out by the police, military officers, security guards, and other service providers that were supposed to secure safety and help. Based on this, many people residing in the camps did not have anyone to trust and receive support from, leading to despair and people with mental challenges and suicidal thoughts.

In addition, as it was also mentioned by this interviewee, that most women and girls usually remained inside their shelter and slept with adult diapers to relieve themselves throughout the night. This was a strategy and a prevention measure against sexual assaults on the way to the toilet, as assault and rapes on the way to the bathroom at night were usually very common. The toilets in the camps were usually few, shared by all, and placed in spaces lacking light, which made the toilets a particularly unsafe place to be during the night when it was dark.

Addressing and reflecting on this strategy and prevention measure mentioned above, was it only ever spoken about this in connection to females living within the camp. This, despite the fact that unwanted sexual encounters and rapes also happened to males. Then what could they do themselves to prevent such unwanted sexual encounters? They are not having the possibility to talk to someone about such acts of sexual violence due to the actual lack of services provided for male survivors of sexual violence, but also due to the stigma connected to such acts for being male.

With these overmentioned points, will I in this context bring to fore the theoretical perspective of intersectionality by Crenshaw. While Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality is seen in relation to black women's intersecting challenges, will I argue that it also can be seen in relation to sexual violence and men and boys, as men and boys in the refugee context are also being oppressed due to the several intersecting challenges they must endure. The men experiencing sexual violence in a refugee context are oppressed due to their gender – as being

a man in this context are leading to stigma and shame connected to being a survivor of sexual violence. The feeling of shame and stigma are thus also leading to underreporting of cases of sexual violence towards men and boy as reporting such cases might lead to social consequences and exclusion from the community. The underreporting of cases of acts of sexual violence towards men and boys are also leading to an overall lack of attention to implement proper services for men and boys, leaving men and boys without a support system that can help them with their physical and mental challenges caused by acts of sexual violence. Such physical and mental challenges might then again also lead to increased violent behavior that can lead to other acts of sexual violence towards other vulnerable people. And so it goes on, in an in a continuing cycle of intersecting challenges, despair and violence.

Domestic Violence and Abuse

Due to the fact that the situation in the camps – especially the notorious Moria camps, were chaotic, unclear, and alarming, where the acts of gender-based violence quite numerous and horrible. Most women reported domestic violence and abuse by their partners, family, and close friends, and men were experiencing torture and sexual violence from other men residing inside the camp. Children with and without family were also experiencing horrible acts of violence, both on their way to the camps and inside the camps. An interviewee that works in an organization located outside the camp area, told stories of girls that could not ride a bicycle because of botched genital mutilation.

Sexual Violence towards Men and Boys

Elaborating on acts of sexual violence towards men and boys specifically, several interviewees expressed that other men usually perpetrated sexual violence in order to exert dominance and power over the victims, and the underlying reason for acts of sexual violence being perpetrated against men and boys was that men and boys could not fall pregnant. The consequences of raping men and boys were, therefore, not as visible as it would have been if the rape survivor had been a woman or a girl. In addition - and mainly due to stigma, were the majority of the acts of sexual violence towards men and boys in the camps usually not reported, as the social consequences of doing so would be more severe than enduring “the shame” in silence. As the camps had become like small communities, the feeling of belonging and unity with people with the same ethnicity, culture, and nationality was the only thing people in the camp had left, but reporting an act of sexual violence would disturb this sense of unity and bring shame to their community. Thus, would the fear of being exposed and outcast

for a male survivor of sexual violence be sky-high, as the consequences of reporting such an act would be more severe than to just endure such acts in silence, by themselves. As mentioned by an interviewee in connection to this:

In their minds [the perpetrators] are there no such thing as rape against men. And if a man has been raped, it is less traumatic. The innocence of a female has not been taken, and men should therefore be able to handle acts of sexual violence.

The obscurity of it all lies in the fact that the perpetrators of the acts of violence and sexual violence towards men and boys, were usually perpetrated by other masculine dominant males or older boys trying to assert their power within the camps. “They raped as a weapon to demoralize people around, but also as a mockery of not being able to protect those closest to you - as a demonstration of power.”, stated an interviewee in connection to this. Raping other less inferior men and boys were thus a strategy used to assert dominance or used as a means to avenge different situations – and were usually acted out against men and boys with other ethnic backgrounds. In order to try to understand the reasoning behind this, Carpenter (2006, p. 89) writes in connection to sexual violence towards men and boys in conflict situations, that it is assumed by some people that its only men and boys that carry an ethnicity. Then, in order to “eliminate an ethnic group”, it only “requires the destruction of the male members” (Carpenter, 2006, p. 89).

Discussing Crenshaws theoretical perspective of intersectionality in this context, will I argue that intersectionality can be seen in relation to how images of belonging intersect with power structures connected to masculinity, dominance, and ethnicity. The older and “more masculine” men are asserting their power over less inferior and vulnerable men and boys through acts of violence and sexual violence to feminize and conquer the other men and boys (Carpenter, 2006, pp. 94 - 95). As stated by an interviewee, is the more dominant men and boys claiming their power over other men and boys with another ethnic background, to assert ethnic dominance within the camps. Such acts of sexual violence do also happen inside the structure of a refugee camp, where the only support system people residing in the camps have left is within the community with people from the same ethnic background. But the survivors of sexual violence are usually silenced, as talking about or reporting an incident of sexual violence might shame the entire camp community. Thus, by viewing this within the frameworks of theory, I will claim that both the perspective of intersectionality and the one-dimensional power view is present in the overmentioned situation - intersectional challenges

due to masculinity and ethnicity, and one-dimensional power due to observable physical violence as power assertion.

Sexual Violence towards Unaccompanied Minors and Children

In addition, were sexual violence towards unaccompanied minors – children aged 13 – 18 without an accompanying guardian, also a topic that several of the interviewees mentioned when addressing the realities of the people fleeing and living within the camps. An interviewee stated that around 70% of the children that have lived in refugee camps in Greece - Moria included, have been assaulted under force in one way or another on their way to the camps. The assault was usually perpetrated by smugglers and traffickers on the way to Europe, and most of the unaccompanied minors did not have any other choice than to comply as the smugglers had taken all their possessions, money, and identification papers as collateral. Most of the unaccompanied minors had also lost their families and friends in wars, conflicts, and crisis in their home countries, which left them with no other choice then to travel by themselves without a guardian and leaving them vulnerable for different acts of violence.

This is further emphasized in a recent rapport written by Save the Children´s research team, that: “Children who emigrate to Europe from areas of conflict and deprivation...are at a strikingly high risk of suffering violence – including physical, emotional, and sexual violence and abuse.” (Burgund Isakov et al., 2022, p. 7). Moreover, is it also stated that children migrate due to increased violence in their home countries, but their journeys to safety are only leaving them even more exposed and vulnerable for acts of violence than ever before (Burgund Isakov et al., 2022, p. 7).

Smugglers and other predators on the migration route stalk children of both sexes, particularly those in especially vulnerable situations, while sexual abuse of children is a taboo subject that is very often concealed, even from close relatives. (Burgund Isakov et al., 2022, p. 13)

In addition, is it further written that unaccompanied minors and children are having to exchange sexual favors for protection, promised privileged travelling status, and “free” passes across the borders by the smugglers (Burgund Isakov et al., 2022, p. 13). Even more harrowing, are some children even normalizing such acts of violence as an “expected abuse of power” – but are concealing their abuse due to stigma and taboos, which then again are

making this violence especially hard to identify, according to Burgund Isakov et al. (2022, p. 13).

Addressing the situation for the unaccompanied minors in the camps in Mytilini specifically, said an interviewee: “The unaccompanied minors are unfortunately a very easy prey” – and emphasized that sexual violence towards and among the unaccompanied minors have been happening in the camps in Mytilini. It was also stated by another interviewee that it during the winter of 2019 – 2020, were approximately 3000 unaccompanied minors living unregistered in certain parts of the Moria camp. These minors had no family, friends, or other people to take care of them, and the social workers present in the camps were already understaffed, overworked, and did not have the capacity to take care of everyone. According to an interviewee were the unaccompanied minors and children from age 0 to 18, living together in a closed and separated part of the camp. The youngest children (and girls) were protected by guards all day and night, while the older minors (the boys) were less supervised and protected and could move around as they liked most of the time.

This lack of security and supervision, together with a growing number of young boys living together in containers in the main part of the camp, often lead to different acts of violence and crime in order to survive. “It was a lot of violence, it was no food, no water, and nobody was caring about the people. Too many incidents – fire, murders, rapes, stealing, and stabbings – it was a forgotten place that nobody was speaking about.”, said an interviewee about the situation in Moria Camp.

An interviewee that have lived and worked on Lesbos for several years also spoke about an incident in early 2021 in which a three year old child had been violently raped and thrown into a toilet afterwards. The rape had not been done by the perpetrators out of sexual gratification or to just rape this child, but had been done in order to demoralize and mock other people living in the camp.

Viewing sexual assaults towards unaccompanied minors in connection to intersectionality, will I claim that the unaccompanied minors are under several intersecting challenges that are leading to them to being especially vulnerable for acts of sexual violence. First and foremost, and as stated by one of my interviewees and Burgund Isakov et al. (2022, p. 7), are young children in general often at a high risk of becoming exposed to acts of sexual violence in unsafe situations - especially if they are alone without people to secure their safety. Thus are their young age putting them in a disadvantageous power position among other older minors,

and the lack of safety and support system leaving them increasingly vulnerable towards acts of sexual violence.

Sex-Trafficking

In connection to the points above, were an interviewee also mentioning that, “You even had boys selling younger boys to people outside of the camp, luring them out.” – not as an act of cruelty, but as an act of necessity to make money and survive. “This goes back to the cycle of violence; all the boys raped in the past are now doing the same to other boys.”, stated this interviewee. These boys’ frustration, anger, and shame, over past and current traumas are, therefore, projected on the younger and “more vulnerable” boys, in order to prevent themselves from falling victim to acts of violence, sexual violence, and sex-trafficking. It was also told by an interviewee that some of the rapes towards the younger boys were filmed by the perpetrators and used as a means to pressure the younger boys into selling sex to people within an outside the camp, in order for the perpetrators to make money to survive.

Dancing Boys

In connection to this, two of the interviewees introduced the concept of “Dancing Boys” – also called “Bacha Bazi” and translated to “playful boy”, which is a century old tradition being practiced in certain parts of Afghanistan (Essar et al., 2021, pp. 118 - 119). This tradition refers to festivities where young boys are forced to dress in female clothing and dance before a group of older men, in which the older men are usually projecting “physically and emotionally degrading behaviors” - and sometimes also sexually assaulting the boys (Essar et al., 2021, p. 119).

The interviewees mentioned that they had heard that several of the older boys that came from Afghanistan that lived in the camps had been forced to become a dancing boy in their younger years, which they then again believed might be a reason for these boys acting out and treating the younger boys with violence. When asked if they had heard about situations of such a practice going on in the camps in Mytilini, they said that they did not know but did not exclude the thought of the practice happening in the camps “behind closed doors” and in secret. This was largely based on the fact that the majority of the people residing in these camps were at one point from Afghanistan, and they had also heard about several situations of acts of sexual assaults, rape, and other acts of sexual violence done towards boys by older men in the camps.

Rape, Self-harm & Drug Abuse

While speaking about the topic of sexual violence done towards men and boys in the camp in Mytilini, an interviewee talked about a case of a refugee boy that they have taken in as a volunteer in their organization. This boy had according to this interviewee been raped and abused so brutally and continuously inside the camp that he had developed severe PTSD and had resorted to heavy drug abuse and self-harm to cope with his reality. They had for a long time tried to help this boy by referring him to psychological help – which he had resorted to for a period of time, however, due to constant and ongoing abuse he could not get away from, he had started to act out violently against the other volunteers working within the organization. This interviewee had, therefore, had to relieve him from his volunteering duties in order to secure the safety of the other volunteers, but had tried to provide him with continuing psychological help. However, this boy's reality had started to spiral, and he would not accept the help anymore. The last thing this interviewee knew before this boy cut all contact, was that he had ended up on the streets, homeless, and selling his body to fund his drug abuse.

6.2.4 Trauma, Mental Health & Preventative Measures

Two topics that the interviewees continuously mentioned throughout my interviews in connection to understanding the refugee situation in general and the situation in the camps in Mytilini, were trauma and mental health. They all argued that focusing on mental health issues are crucial in order to plan for and implement preventative measures for overall health of the refugees in the camps, but also in order to reduce and prevent acts of violence in general, and sexual violence in particular.

Trauma

In connection to this, an interviewee stated that some refugees in the camps were and are so traumatized from past and current experiences and situations that they could not properly care for themselves – and certainly not people close to them. “They were never asked why they became traumatized. It was not explored in depth at all. Like, what was missing, what was the surrounding process?”, asked an interviewee when talking about refugees' mental health in Moria camp. They have endured trauma connected to crises, wars, and conflicts in their home countries, trauma on their strenuous journeys to “safety”, and are experiencing everyday trauma when situated inside horrifying refugee camps. Ultimately, according to all the interviewees, there was a massive issue with mental health for the people residing in the

camps in Mytilini, as most people arrived with trauma and secondary trauma with no concrete action to help.

Mental Challenges & Suicide Attempts

Another interviewee stated that even if you came to the camp as a healthy person, you would get mental issues when staying there, and even said that one of the students that the interviewee had tutored had tried to commit suicide because of the horrible situation in the camp at that time. On another occasion, an interviewee and long-time volunteer in the camp described the situation when a man threatened to jump off a building in the city center of Mytilini to get attention to his case and the horrible situation inside the camp. According to the interviewee, the event was filmed and written about in the local newspaper, but nothing changed for the people in the camp. The interviewee further stated that there were at one point three suicide attempts in one week, but none of the organizations and actors in the camp at that time knew how to deal with the suicide attempts – they did not know where to send these people to get help.

Boys, Trauma & Sexual Violence

When talking about young boys in Moria, an interviewee stated: “They have endured so much trauma, being raped and sexually assaulted, having to shower with so many other boys, and having no privacy. Most of them even had trouble sleeping as they were afraid of being attacked at night.”. The boys often resorted to drug use, prostitution, and carrying weapons in order to make money, keep safe and cope with their mental issue - which then again makes the mental situation even worse. As emphasized in the paragraphs and chapters above, the situation for the boys in the camps in Mytilini are leading to increased trauma and mental challenges, which might further lead to them resorting to suicide. “What is weird is the fact that there is a lack of measures towards suicide prevention, even though it could be documented that there were several thousand people who were suicidal”, said an interviewee when speaking about the mental health challenges among the people residing in the camp.

Mental Health Measures in Mytilini today

As mentioned above, were mental health a topic that all of the interviewees mentioned as the most crucial factor to address in order to secure well-being for the people residing in the camp. While several of the interviewees have mentioned that the situation for the people in the camp have, in general, become a lot better in recent years than it was before, they are still

arguing that the acknowledgement and attention to the mental health challenges in the Greek society are inadequate. Elaborating on this, it was stated by several interviewees that the topic of mental health is understood as something stigmatic in the Greek society - it was not something that you talked openly about with your family and friends. Several of the interviewees did therefore say that stigma was one of the main reasons for the lack of proper measures for addressing and preventing mental health challenges in Greece.

In this regard, all of the interviewees also mentioned that the measures towards addressing mental health in Mytilini today, is lacking, understaffed, underqualified, and overwhelmed. The few services provided for mental health in Mytilini – some that I visited and interviewed the staff during my fieldwork, are doing their very best in order to meet the high demand of psychological support that the people residing in the camp are needing. As stated by an interviewee: “there are a psychology team in the camp that try to provide help, however, they are overwhelmed and do not have time to help everyone as everyone in the camp want to have a psychologist.

One of the mental health organizations I were lucky to interview some of the staff in, are looking to provide a holistic approach to their mental health work for refugees – meaning that they provide group therapy, individual sessions with psychologists, social support, and case work. Through their approach they are trying to help the beneficiaries with every part of psychological and social help that they need. They are also recruiting people by going into the camp, informing about their services, and driving the beneficiaries to and from the camp for their individual sessions. In their mental health work surrounding acts of sexual violence specifically, are they working with both the perpetrators and the survivors of sexual violence. They are working to get the perpetrators to understand that there is a consequence of their actions and try to use that to provide the person some tools to deal with their challenges. Interpretation and cultural mediation are also something that they bring into their work too, as they understand that mental health challenges might be understood differently depending on which culture the beneficiary have. In this regard, an interviewee in this organization stated that mental issues in some cultures are seen as connected with possession – of either another person or of a jinn (a spirit), which might be the reason for some people not knowing of or acknowledging mental health at all.

But, despite this organization’s effort, the staff within the camps are lacking experience in how to address mental health in the camp, which they believe are one of the reasons for the continuous acts of violence and sexual violence happening inside the camp in Mytilini. In

connection to this, an earlier volunteer stated that: “it’s massive issues with mental health – both for refugees and volunteers. [An organization – anonymized due to ethical considerations] were the only functional organization in the camp, but they pulled out because of issues with how the camp was run.”. They do still provide medical and psychological help to the people residing in the camp today, but have located their clinic somewhere else, close by the camp instead.

Furthermore, when the interviewees were asked to where people (both locals and people from the camp) go to receive help with mental health challenges, they usually mentioned the hospital, or the organizations mentioned above as the only reliable actors for mental health work in Mytilini. There were other actors that had been trying to provide mental health help for the people in the camp, however, their projects usually failed due to underqualified, overworked, and lack of staff for the long run. In addition, they also mentioned that most people do not know where to receive help for any issue, as there is a lack of understandable information within the camp. For example, do some people not know what mental health or sexual violence are, and they are not receiving information to gain more knowledge of services that can help them with their challenges.

Mental Health & Stigma

While the overall topic of mental health is a complex “issue” within the refugee context in general, I will claim that it is stigma that might lead to a lack of focus and attention on mental health challenges in the Greek society. Thus, I believe that stigma is one of the leading causes for the lack of measures and services for mental health work within the camp in Mytilini. By addressing mental health on a greater scale – providing more information and knowledge sharing and implementing cultural and gender inclusive services within and outside the camp in Mytilini, it will lift the overall well-being of the peoples residing in the camp in Mytilini. This might also lead to less violent acts – such as acts of gender-based sexual violence, as one of the root causes for acts of sexual violence specifically, are usually unresolved trauma and increased pressure and stress following the “refugee experience” as described above. Additionally, and in connection to this, it is also important to emphasize that it is all the acts of sexual violence that people are having to endure, that might lead to increased unresolved trauma, and mental health challenges too. With this in mind, I will in the following section address the international actors funding towards gender-based sexual violence prevention – with a view on some of the structures for funding for prevention measures overall, and address the measures implemented for men and boys in Mytilini specifically.

6.2.5 International Actors Funding toward GBSV Prevention

As a last point in addressing the phenomenon of gender-based violence in this section, I will in this following paragraph elaborate on the international actors' funding toward gender-based sexual violence prevention for refugees and men and boys especially. I will start by addressing some of the overarching deep structures and causes for less funding for gender-based sexual violence prevention measures in general and go more in detail on the lack of implementation of measures toward men and boys in Mytilini in the last paragraph of this section.

A General Description of Gender-based Violence Prevention Measures

Regarding Non-governmental organizations funding towards gender-based violence prevention, Freedman (2010, p.597) states that funds given to some of the NGOs working in the refugee camps might be earmarked and imposed with conditions that further negatively impact the agencies' funding towards projects and activities that are aiming to promote gender equality and gender-based violence prevention for refugees. These ear markings are creating “inequities in the refugee regime”, as the donors giving the funds guide them toward more popular geographical areas or conflicts that might be more politically favorable to them (Freedman, 2010, p. 597). This leads people in need of protection living in less-popular regions to receive less funding for programs securing gender equality and gender-based violence prevention (Freedman, 2010, p. 597). Programs such as these are also often seen as intangible long-term investments with marginal results and are often less favored to receive support from the NGO staff deciding how to spend the NGO`s budgets (Freedman, 2010, p. 597).

Additionally, Freedman (2010, p.597) states that the “bureaucratic structure of” these NGOs and the number of people working within these structures might challenge implementing policies that promote gender equality and gender-based violence prevention measures for refugees. Some reasons for this might be that there are “insufficient key people” in positions at the headquarters to push through gendered policies for implementation. At the same time, most of the staff in power and protection positions in the field might also be male – which might in certain situations not be considering the gendered needs in implementing different projects in crisis and conflict situations (Freedman, 2010, p. 597). Thus, Freedman (2010, p. 597) concludes that the lack of female staff in key positions in the headquarter and the field in different NGOs might lead to such “deep structures” within these organizations. She further expresses that only by introducing more female staff within these structures that gender

mainstreaming principles might be more committed to (Freedman, 2010, p. 597). She bases her argument here on her studies and interviews with several representatives and fieldworkers working for a more prominent international NGO. According to Freedman (2010, p. 597), it was stated by some of the interviewees that they needed to remind and persuade some of their colleagues (in particular male colleagues) to take into consideration a gendered approach while implementing projects in the field. In connection to this, Freedman (2010, p. 598) further states: “It also seems, from the evidence gathered, that female staff is likely to be more aware and more responsive to the demands of gender mainstreaming within their organization and asylum and refugee policies in general”. However, with her arguments addressed, she does not wish to advocate that only women are sensitive to gendered needs in policymaking and implementation of projects in the field. But she does stress that there needs to be introduced a balance between men and female staff in different positions in these international NGO`s (Freedman, 2010, p. 598). Taking a critical stance to her statements and research, I would again like to emphasize that this research is over thirteen years old and that the research within the field of gender and gender mainstreaming have evolved since then. I would also like to stress that her research is based on mainly one large organization operating in the field at that time, and that this does not mean that her statement is valid for all of the organizations working in the field at that time.

However, reflecting on her statements mentioned above, I agree with her statement that it should be a representation of both female and male qualified service providers within the field, as the needs of the beneficiaries might be gendered. Emphasizing this point with an example from my research, it was mentioned by one of my interviewees that most of the women coming to their clinic to receive psychological care after experiencing acts of sexual violence wanted to talk to other women as they did not feel safe and comfortable talking to a man. Men coming to the same clinic also wanted to talk to a male psychologist, as they believed that other men understood their challenges “better”. I would also like to emphasize that my experiences with the different service providers I were in contact with in Mytilini, were taking gender into consideration in their work – meaning that they had both had male and female service providers, and would take the beneficiaries gendered needs into consideration.

Gender-based Sexual Violence Measures for men and boys

Addressing the international actors funding towards gender-based sexual violence measures for men and boys specifically, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Norwegian Red Cross state in their recent rapport:

Many humanitarian agencies not only overlook the needs of females, but also completely overlook men, boys and sexual minority groups as sexual and gender-based violence survivors in their needs assessment, discussions with communities, during data collection and follow-up community-based and humanitarian response programming." (ICRC - Norwegian Red Cross, 2022a, p. 5).

In addition, they write that those services provided to respond to the needs of survivors of gender-based sexual violence are too few and lacking. There is also not enough understanding when addressing the experiences of men and boys and LGBTIQ+ survivors of sexual violence in the humanitarian community, according to the ICRC and the Norwegian Red Cross (2022a, p. 6). Thus, "despite ample evidence of acts of sexual violence against men and boys" in different humanitarian settings and detention facilities, the programs implemented to address and curb gender-based sexual violence are not adequately designed to "meet the needs of these survivors" (ICRC - Norwegian Red Cross, 2022a, p. 13).

The lack of services for men and boy survivors of sexual violence is also leading to a lack of evidence regarding the effectiveness and quality of the services provided – which then again leads to less effort into implementing measures for men and boys specifically (ICRC - Norwegian Red Cross, 2022a, p. 36). In connection to this, The ICRC and the Norwegian Red Cross (2022a, p.36) write in their rapport that sexual health care responses for male victims are usually provided ad hoc, as men and boys tend only to come forward to receive health care when they are experiencing "severe suffering that they cannot treat themselves". The real fear of revictimization, stigmatization, and community rejection is, thus, leading to underreporting and less documentation on cases of gender-based sexual violence done towards men and boys specifically. A point also addressed with my empirical data further up in this text. The result is that the funding for developing and implementing measures addressing gender-based sexual violence for men and boys is limited (ICRC - Norwegian Red Cross, 2022a, p. 41). However, the ICRC and the Norwegian Red Cross (2022a, p.37) stress that it's only by investing in developing and implementing holistic and standalone programs for male and LGBTIQ+ survivors that humanitarian actors can "build competency and meet the specific needs of the survivors". This is also a view that is supported by several of my interviewees. They emphasized that it is only by understanding the overall needs of the

survivors of sexual violence in the refugee context, that the service providers can develop proper measures to curb gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys in vulnerable situations.

7.0 Concluding Discussion

With the data collected and provided in this thesis, I will conclude that there has been an overall lack of attention to implementing measures to combat gender-based sexual violence against men and boys in the refugee camps in Mytilini, Greece. The factors as to why there is a lack of attention to address and implement measures to combat gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys in the refugee camps in Mytilini have also been many.

Among other will I claim the EU-Turkey deal are more centered on pushing the refugees back to the country they fled from instead of focusing on solidarity and refugee well-being. And the EU's lack of responsibility sharing in their asylum policies has also strained the capacity of border countries such as Greece, discouraging them from developing a functioning asylum system that considers the refugee's need for safety and support. An evident backlog of asylum cases leaves people in limbo in horrible camps without proper security, and a lack of vulnerability assessment, legal assistance, and general information about services also leaves the people in the camps clueless and frustrated.

Cultural and contextual factors, such as a typically male-dominated and patriarchic society with a prevalence of toxic masculinity in Mytilini, Greece, also lead to an overall lack of understanding and knowledge of gender-based sexual violence in society. This further leads to a lack of attention to implementing services to curbing gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys. A normative gender role understanding of “men that do not suffer”, together with an obscure view of masculinity and sexuality, also fuels a belief that men and boys cannot become victims of sexual violence. Thus, men and boys in the camp in Mytilini often suffer in silence due to the stigma and shame connected with being a survivor of sexual violence.

In addition, were mental health mentioned as crucial to implementing proper measures for preventing gender-based sexual violence in the camp in Mytilini. Nearly everyone who came to the camps had some mental health challenges due to trauma connected with their journey or had experienced traumatic experiences within the camps. Mental health challenges, lack of information, safety, and support were causes for acts of sexual violence in general, but also towards men and boys specifically within the camps. Moreover, were acts of sexual violence

experienced on their journeys or within the camps also a cause for mental health challenges. But, despite this, was there an overall lack of measures to address mental health challenges. However, to implement proper measures for gender-based sexual violence, it is important to address mental health too, as this might lift the overall well-being of the people living within these camps. This might further lead to fewer acts of sexual violence, as it will provide more knowledge and understanding of their lived experiences and consequences for acts of sexual violence.

Lastly, considering whether the lack of attention towards addressing and implementing measures for sexual violence prevention against men and boys is linked to gender-biased ideas about who is "the victim" and who is the "perpetrator", is it often so that the women and children are portrayed as the true refugees. In contrast, are the men described as the perpetrators of acts of sexual violence. Reflecting on this in connection to the data collected in my research, I believe that these are ideas and understandings that are prevalent in Mytilini, Greece too. As mentioned above is the society in Mytilini typically male-dominated, patriarchic, masculine, and with a heteronormative understanding of sexuality. Combining these factors with a lack of experience and knowledge of acts of gender-based sexual violence for men and boys in society is leading to a lack of attention to implementing services towards curbing gender-based sexual violence towards men and boys. Thus, I will claim that men and boys are not being understood as being victims – or survivors of sexual violence, which, then again, is a cause for the lack of sexual violence prevention measures. Furthermore, is it usually other men are the perpetrators of acts of sexual violence, however, they are themselves becoming victims of a system that is not considering their mental health challenges and overall struggles that might lead them to perpetrate acts of sexual violence.

With these concluding reflections, will I in the last chapter of this thesis, present some thoughts for the future for gender-based sexual violence prevention measures for men and boys in Mytilini, that I have gained throughout this thesis research project.

8.0 Reflections for the Future

First and foremost, will I argue that it should, in general, be developed and implemented a lot more measures for gender-based sexual violence prevention and mental health for the people residing in the camp in Mytilini, Greece. While this might be easier said than done, do I firmly believe that to put an emphasis on mental health and gender-based violence prevention

measures in Greece, Mytilini, will secure the overall well-being of the people residing in the camp, which will further lead to less acts of violence.

In addition, must the measures provided be developed with a holistic and diverse approach – meaning that it should be introduced individual and group therapy sessions with psychologists that can help with the refugees with their psychological and emotional needs. Case work, and social support with social workers, might also help the people residing inside or outside the camp with their overall needs. It is also important to consider the persons ethnical and cultural background, as people with different backgrounds might have different knowledge, and understandings of mental health and gender-based sexual violence.

The measures implemented for gender-based sexual violence prevention should also be gender sensitive, as acts of and challenging regarding acts of gender-based sexual violence are different for men and boys, and women and girls. Thus, should there be developed and implemented separate measures and services for the different genders, which I believe will secure a more secure, open, and comfortable environment for the different participants. In addition, must there be more overall information about the different services provided within the camp. More education and training about gender-based sexual violence, sexual and reproductive health and rights, sexual consent, mental health, and refugee rights – among other, should also be implemented to a greater extent within the camps in Mytilini. I believe that increased knowledge about the overmentioned topics will be beneficial in order to secure more respect and understanding within the camp in Mytilini, Greece.

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