



LUND UNIVERSITY

Why do volunteers help?

*A qualitative study of volunteers' reasons to help in the
reception of refugees in Malmö 2015*

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TKAM02 - Spring 2016

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Abstract

Why do volunteers help? A qualitative study of volunteer's reasons to help in the reception of refugees in Malmö 2015.

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The purpose of this master's thesis is to explore the experience of people who helped in the refugee reception in the city of Malmö, Sweden, in the fall of 2015. The thesis delves into the reasons and motivations to why volunteers decided to help. These are primarily analysed through Marcel Mauss' gift-exchange theory where volunteering is seen as a gift; and secondarily by Erving Goffman's dramaturgical analysis. The study shows that there is an exchange being made when volunteering, although the helper does not get something material back, but they get to feel or be seen in a certain way by others. With a cultural analysis perspective the author uses the knowledge obtained from the research to suggest different ways of making it applicable both in volunteer organisations and in the academia.

Keywords: cultural analysis, gift-exchange, dramaturgy, volunteering, qualitative research.

Abstract in Spanish

¿Por qué ayudan los voluntarios? Un estudio cualitativo de razones para ayudar en la recepción de refugiados en Malmö 2015.

Isabel Rescala

El propósito de esta tesis es explorar la experiencia de las personas que ayudaron en la recepción de refugiados en la ciudad de Malmö, Suecia, en el otoño de 2015. La tesis se profundiza en las razones y los motivos de por qué los voluntarios decidieron ayudar. Éstos son principalmente analizados a través de la teoría del intercambio de dones de Marcel Mauss, en éste caso el trabajar como voluntario es visto como un don; y en segundo lugar por el análisis dramatúrgico de Erving Goffman. El estudio muestra que se crea un intercambio al ser voluntario, aunque el ayudante no consigue algo material de regreso, sino se llega a sentir o a ser visto de una manera diferente por otros. Con la perspectiva de análisis cultural la autora utiliza los conocimientos obtenidos de la investigación para sugerir diferentes formas en las que éstos son aplicables tanto en las organizaciones de voluntarios como en el mundo académico.

Palabras clave: análisis cultural, intercambio de dones, dramaturgia, voluntariado, investigación cualitativa.

Abstract in Swedish

Varför hjälper volontärer? En kvalitativ studie av volontärers anledningar till att delta i flyktingmottagandet i Malmö 2015.

Isabel Rescala

Syftet med denna masteruppsats är att undersöka mänskors upplevelser av att delta i flyktingmottagandet i Malmö under hösten 2015. Uppsatsen studerar motiveringar till varför volontärer beslutat sig för att hjälpa. Dessa analyseras främst genom Marcel Mauss teori om gåvosystem: volontärarbete, eller att hjälpa, ses som en gåva i uppsatsen. Motiveringarna analyseras också genom Erving Goffmans dramaturgi. Studien visar att det skapas ett utbyte genom att jobba som volontär, även om hjälparen inte får något materiellt tillbaka, får den känna sig eller ses på ett visst sätt av andra. Genom ett kulturanalytiskt perspektiv använder författaren kunskapen som erhållits för att föreslå sätt på vilka denna kan göras tillämpbar både för frivilligorganisationer och inom den akademiska världen.

Nyckelord: kulturanalys, gåvosystem, dramaturgi, volontärarbete, kvalitativ forskning.

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my warmest thanks to those who made this research study possible and assisted me in my work. Thank you to all informants who agreed on being interviewed and gladly shared their thoughts and experiences of volunteering.

I would especially like to thank my supervisor Jessica Enevold for being firm, supportive and always encouraging me to write more. Thank you for your thorough reviews and feedback, which helped me build this thesis. I am grateful for your advice and that you made time to help me when needed.

I also want to thank Charlotte Hagström for helping me find a new path when I felt lost and Katarzyna Herd for working with my ideas, giving great title suggestions. A huge thank you is also directed to student counsellor Anna Bursteds for helping me structure my work, and myself.

Thank you to my classmates Marie Lindbäck, Jennifer Tong and Carissa Typaldos who I worked with innumerable hours in the library. Thank you for your company, interesting discussions and inputs, and for making the thesis writing fun at times.

Last but not least I want to thank my friends and family. Especially my mother Gunvor Larsson for always being there, and my partner Sebastian Ivarsson who has had to put up with a lot of my writing anxiety. Without you both I am not sure this thesis would have been written.

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved grandmother Elfriede who passed away during this period of time.

Malmö, 2016-06-01

Isabel Rescala

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No man is an island entire of itself; every man
is a piece of the continent, a part of the main;
 if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe
is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as
 well as any manner of thy friends or of thine
own were; any man's death diminishes me,
 because I am involved in mankind.
And therefore never send to know for whom
 the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

Meditation XVII
- John Donne (1624)

What if I had not been there?

It is a rainy October evening at Malmö Central. Sabina and I are standing at platform number four, accompanying Delal from Syria who we have met two hours earlier and who we have managed to help out. A month has passed since the first refugees arrived in Malmö, and I am part of a project researching activism and volunteering in the refugee reception.

Sabina was a child when she came to Sweden in the early nineties as a refugee from the “Balkan wars”. She remembers how she was received upon arrival “there was structure, it was the state that met me, not a person.” She believes it is problematic that the refugees arriving these days would rather trust *her* than large, well-known organisations. “My mother would never have followed a private individual and let herself be informed and given directions by them.” Back then, she and her family spent their first night in a military tent in Rinkeby before being put on a bus to northern Sweden. Now many of the refugees are spending the night at volunteers’ homes before continuing their journey. “Believe me, I wish that I [...] so I do this mostly because I see how dangerous this is and there really are people who abuse the system.” Sabina is afraid that another individual in her position might trick or mislead the refugees. She wishes that she did not have to help, but that someone from the Red Cross would do it instead.

She asks “what time is it?”

- “Quarter to eight.” A couple of minutes later the train arrives from Copenhagen. A train attendant tells us that we need to get to the front set of the train, which is the one that will continue all the way to Kalmar. We look for one of the doors with a lower platform and walk quickly towards it. Delal gets in, I push her trolley with luggage inside and tell her where to sit.

“Get off now!” Sabina is afraid the train will leave with me in it. I get down on the platform, and we both wave goodbye to Delal. Somewhere on the way to Kalmar she will get off the train and find her relatives who are waiting for her, so we hope. The train attendant says she will look after Delal and thanks us for leading her to the correct train set, and we thank her.

As the train leaves the platform, Sabina exclaims “Now we have done a good deed today. Well done!” She gives me a hug and continues, “are we done for today, or what?” We have spent about three hours walking back and forth at the station looking for and helping refugees

who need guidance. I actually feel quite tired so I nod in agreement. When we walk upstairs she reflects on the past hours, “my heart aches, if I had not been here now...” She sounds sad and exhausted, and I try to console her.

Spending the evening volunteering with Sabina made me wonder: why are people here to help? This is what inspired my master’s thesis, in which I explore volunteer’s motivations for helping.

1. Introduction

In this chapter I explain further what was happenings in the city of Malmö, when and why I was there, and how I ended up writing this thesis. I declare the aim of my study and its delimitations, that is, what I chose not to write about and why. Then I give an overview of the thesis' disposition and describe the forthcoming chapters.

1.1 Background

In the fall of 2015, large numbers of refugees began arriving to Malmö due to war and conflicts in Syria (Ahola 2015; Rodgers, Gritten, Offer & Asare, 2016). The first wave of refugees arrived between the 6th and 7th of September (Runol & Johansson 2015; Rydhagen, Rankinen, Dahlkvist, Malmgren & Samuelson, 2015). Barely a week before, a picture of a boy lying face down on a Turkish beach was published (Smith, 2015). From the very start all kinds of people have engaged in trying to help the refugees. According to volunteers, who I met while doing fieldwork, the reception and helping appears to have started with individuals who went to Malmö central station; consequently they wrote call outs on social media where they implored others to come to receive and guide the refugees. Many of the people who got involved this way at Malmö central station later became part of the ad hoc organisation Refugees Welcome to Malmö, and started a Facebook page (Refugees welcome to Malmö, n.d.).

In a news article a journalist reflected on why these networks and organisations saw it as their task to help, the “[l]owest common denominators are probably ideological conviction and organisational habit: people in the non-profit sector are skilled in acting quickly and their high confidence might bottom in the conviction that one stands for the *good*” (Hökby, 2015:22). The engagement of the volunteers appeared strong, actually so strong that news magazine Fokus in December 2015 decided to appoint the collective of helpers to the "Swede-of-the-Year-Prize" for their efforts in helping and integrating refugees (Fokus, December 10, 2015; Adolfsson, 2015).

Around the same time that refugees began arriving, my internship at the Regional Museum of Kristianstad began; I became part of a research project with the aim to explore the subject of activism in the development of the refugee situation in and around Malmö. The objective was to study activist practices: how was activism produced in the process of volunteers working

to support the arriving refugees? Interviews and observations that were part of the conducted fieldwork to understand activism are the starting point for this thesis.

Why did I get engaged in the occurring refugee situation? Why did I help? As a researcher I believed it was important for me to understand what the group we were investigating experienced. I wanted to know what it was like to be a volunteer or even an activist; as a private individual I felt the need to act, to play my part. Knowing that I may not always have time to do volunteer work or help in other circumstances, I felt this was the right time and the situation called for it. Somehow I was killing two birds with one stone. My first engagement might have been as a researcher but I kept coming back as a fellow human being. Instead of damaging my research, this dual position rather favoured it, as I got to experience helping more often, which also facilitated the collection of material. I was able to use my own experiences as a significant departure point: What were my initial reasons for helping? Was I being selfish in using the experience for my own work as researcher? Did I do it to make myself feel good? A lot of questions ran through my mind. Why did all those volunteers decide to help? Who volunteered? What did it mean to be a volunteer? I wanted to know more and this is what I explored further in my thesis.

1.2 Aim

The research that I did together with a team of other students from MACA for the Regional Museum in Kristianstad was set on understanding the ad hoc activism in Malmö around the refugee situation from September to December 2015. In my thesis I develop the work we did, focusing more on the volunteers themselves: how do they construct themselves as volunteers? Thus, I explore the motives behind helping and how this helping is done. The results of my research may be used in understanding helping practices and how volunteering or aid-work can be improved and made more effective. As a consequence, organisations may improve their recruitment processes, appealing to what actually motivates volunteers to help.

1.3 Delimitations and clarifications

During fieldwork my colleagues and I interviewed people who identified themselves as either *activists* and *volunteers* or just volunteers. Some did not even see themselves as volunteers, but just as fellow human beings. Activists tended to be more politically involved than the people who just identified as volunteers or fellow humans. What they all had in common is

that they did volunteer work, meaning that they helped refugees in different ways without getting anything (material) in return. It became clear that activists also engaged in volunteer work while the ones who only called themselves volunteers were not as politically engaged as activists. Indeed the word activist originates from being active, which both activists and volunteers have been (activism, n.d.), but I use the word “volunteer(s)” as an umbrella term to represent both activists and volunteers (and fellow human beings) in this thesis.

Throughout the thesis I refer to three places where fieldwork has been conducted. When talking about the central station in Malmö, I will refer to it as Malmö C or the station. In connection to the station, about 200 meters away, the city of Malmö later opened a larger center for receiving refugees, which was called Posthusplatsen, or PHP. Last but not least Kontrapunkt, an organisation, culture house, and social centre which has also been highly involved in helping refugees.

My colleagues and I talked to people who do not belong to the larger more known NGOs that are involved in helping refugees. My focus has been on the smaller actors involved in the “refugee crisis,” because their presence was significantly higher than other organisations when I conducted my fieldwork. Most of the informants were active either as volunteers at Kontrapunkt or at Malmö C through Refugees Welcome to Malmö, which will be abbreviated to RWtM. Several large Swedish newspapers use the term “refugee crisis”, for example Svenska Dagbladet has an entire section named *Refugee Crisis [Flyktingkrisen]* where all news articles on the topic are filed (Svenska Dagbladet n.d.). In this thesis, besides using the term refugee crisis, I also use the term *refugee reception*, as that is what I have studied: the volunteers receiving and helping refugees.

Moreover, my research focused only on those who offered help to refugees. Although it might have been fruitful to find out why people did not help, as anthropologists Patricia Sunderland and Rita Denny put it: “information garnered from those who do not like something is also relevant to understanding the cultural picture” (Sunderland & Denny 2007:60), there simply was not enough time or space to render the other side of the story. But, due to time limitations this has not been possible. Neither did I focus on the people receiving the help, the refugees, although it could have been of use to know how they have received and perceived the help they got.

1.4 Disposition

The following chapter delves into the theoretical perspectives I use as a base for analysing my material: first I present earlier research on volunteering; second I describe in more detail the main theories of this thesis. In chapter three, accounting for methods and material, I portray the organisations and places where most of my fieldwork was conducted; then I describe how the fieldwork was done and which methods have been most helpful; the chapter ends with a discussion of reflexivity, ethical issues, and how I, as researcher, affected the field. The analysis begins in chapter four with a description of how the helping started. I discuss why the informants got engaged in helping refugees in Malmö, and I describe what factors affected the volunteers' decision making and their helping practices through the gift-exchange theory (Mauss 2002). Is helping done only to benefit the refugees? In chapter five, I problematize the way the helping is done and how the informants talk about it. Does helping others benefit one's image? Is it perhaps a performance? Does everyone get help? Chapter six analyses why it became hard to recruit volunteers when the Swedish borders closed. The thesis ends with a conclusions part where I discuss the three earlier chapters and how this acquired knowledge can be applied by volunteering organisations and museums or to inspire future research.

2. Theoretical Perspectives

In this chapter I present the thesis' theoretical points of departure. In the first subchapter I introduce a sample of research conducted on altruism and empathy in the field of psychology, and more selected literature will be referred to later in the analysis as a complement. Then I present previous research focused on volunteering from a cultural analytical perspective. In the following subchapters I describe more in detail the three main theories that I use to analyse my findings.

2.1 Previous research: Altruism, empathy and volunteering

Volunteering can be understood in many ways. Within psychology, the study of behaviour and mind, there has been a vast amount of research on altruism, empathy, helping and its motivations. Prosocial behaviour, a voluntary practice which is done to benefit another (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010), comprises various actions that are “defined by society as generally beneficial to other people and to the ongoing political system” (Piliavin, Dovidio, Gaertner, & Clark 1981, p. 4. In Dovidio, 2000: 324). “Helping” and “altruism” are two main types of prosocial behaviour. Helping is “an intentional action that has the outcome of benefiting another person” (Dovidio, 2000:324). In psychology altruism comprises the motivation behind helping, where internal motivation is seen as “a critical feature of altruistic helping” (Dovidio, 2000:324). The American social psychologist Daniel Batson describes altruism as “a desire to benefit someone else for his or her sake rather than one’s own” (2011:3) and “*a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing another’s welfare*” (2011:20) in contrast to egoism or egoistic helping where the ultimate goal is to increase one’s own welfare (Batson, 2011:20; Dovidio, 2000:325).

Empathy is defined as “an emotional reaction to the comprehension of another’s emotional state or condition that is the same or very similar to the other’s state or condition” (Eisenberg, 2000: 179). It is therefore not only the understanding of what someone else might be feeling but also “the affective experience of the other person’s actual or inferred emotional state” (Eisenberg, 2000:179). Simplified, the capacity to place oneself in another's position and feel what they are feeling. Empathy is related to, and can often be the origin of, other similar emotional reactions; it “is likely to turn into either sympathy or personal distress (or both)” (Eisenberg, 2000:179).

Since studies in psychology mainly investigate individuals rather than individuals within a group, and I operate within a framework of cultural analysis, I now continue with research from similar areas like ethnology, anthropology and sociology.

According to the cultural and psychological anthropologist Douglas Hollan, ethnographic studies explore what empathy means in a cross-cultural context (2014). Definitions usually emphasise that empathy is “a way of recognizing and assessing what another person is thinking, feeling, doing, or intending from a quasi-first-person perspective, and that this process involves both cognitive and emotional aspects” (Hollan, 2014:231). Empathy is also defined by “the maintenance of a clear cognitive and experiential boundary” between the empathizer and the object of empathy, so that the empathiser can always differentiate between their own thoughts and feelings and the thoughts and feelings of the other (Hollan, 2014:232). The philosopher Karsten Stueber talks about “basic” empathy and “reenactive” empathy (Stueber 2006, in Hollan 2014:232-233). Basic empathy comprises all sensory and perceptual systems that help us understand that another person is in some emotional or intentional state. In contrast, reenactive empathy relates to “all other cognitive, emotional, and imaginative capacities that allow us to use our own first-person, folk psychological knowledge and experience as actors to model and understand the experience of others” (Hollan 2014: 233). Hollan underscores that the concept of reenactive empathy accentuates how empathic knowledge and awareness are culturally and historically bound, meaning that the subjects of our empathy and we, the empathizers are “people who think, act, and feel in very specific culturally and historically constituted moral worlds” (Hollan 2014: 233).

Ethnologist Karsten Andersen (2016) writes in his bachelor thesis *Hvornår bliver noget vigtigt?* (When does something become important?) about how creating a refugee housing in a little village in Sweden in 2015 changed the community’s social values. Andersen (2016) departed from a concept called the *turning point*, a significant milestone in a person’s life which changes their view of the world from where it was before. In this case something that made his informants engage with the newcomers in their little village. Andersen (2016) conducted qualitative interviews with volunteers engaged in the refugee housing were he carried out his fieldwork. This is similar to my research where I interviewed the volunteers engaged at Malmö C and Kontrapunkt, the people that work closest to or with the refugees. Anthropologist Tomoko Hayakawa (2008) explores volunteerism in Britain through the theory of gift exchange by looking at “giving without receiving” (2008:19) in her dissertation

Volunteerism in the Inner City: An Anthropology of Giving. Hayakawa (2008) asks if volunteering is a gift or an exchange; and concludes that the experience of volunteering does not fit into the concept of the perfect gift (Malinowski, 1922), which is "unconstraining, unconditional, spontaneous, and an expression of immaterial and positive sentiment to the receiver"(Hayakawa 2008: 265-266); neither does it fit into that of exchange (Hayakawa, 2008:266). Instead, she argues, both ideas play a part in volunteering, but none of them alone can entirely explain the "essence" of volunteering. In *Rethinking voluntary work* sociologist Rebecca F. Taylor (2005) investigates volunteers' motivations and relation to voluntary work through Bourdieu's (1990) concept of habitus. She claims that individuals' understanding of volunteering is reflected in one's values and way of thinking, which are structured by one's background.

With my cultural analytical perspective, in contrast to psychology, I studied the daily life of a specific group of people, in this case the volunteers who engaged in the refugee reception in and around Malmö C. However, I conducted research on an "out of the ordinary situation", this was a temporary social phenomena and it eventually faded away. The people involved managed to create a structure during the three most active months (September-November), and it is their temporary daily lives and actions that I analyse in this thesis.

2.2 Mauss and the Gift Exchange theory

One day doing fieldwork, a colleague in the research team I belonged to had an interesting exchange of words while interviewing Ulla, a volunteer, about traveling to Malmö from Kristianstad to help:

Interviewer: It costs money for you to come down here.

Ulla: Yes it does

Interviewer: And time and...

Ulla: But that is my gift to them. It is my gift.

Interviewer: Right. And you get something back of course.

Ulla: Absolutely, I do.

When going through the interviews that my colleagues and I did, I could not help but notice that many of the interviewees talked about what they got back from helping the refugees, an exchange was being made. Even though the question above can be perceived as leading it

was an interesting dialogue, and possible to understand with the help of sociologist Marcel Mauss' theory of gift exchange (2002), as described below.

"There are no free gifts", anthropologist Mary Douglas claims in the foreword to Mauss' *The Gift* (2002:xii). The gift exchange is seen as a system of total services in which there is a shared sense of 'reciprocity' that is constructed with three types of obligation: to give, the required initial step in creating and maintaining social relationships; to receive, because to refuse to accept is to refuse such relationships; and to reciprocate, to demonstrate one's freedom, honour and wealth (Mauss 2002). Therefore the receiver of a gift is obliged to give something in return to be able to maintain a social contract between groups and individuals. Mauss opposes Malinowski's (1922) idea of a pure gift, which is unplanned and unselfish; instead he claims that "all gifts are constrained and interested however unconstraining and disinterested they appear" (Hayakawa 2008:22).

In *The Gift*, Mauss (2002) does not tell the reader what a gift really is; he does not give a definition. Since he left the definition open, it was possible for me to see the many forms of help given by volunteers as gifts: creating an exchange of gifts between volunteers and refugees (the receivers). However, the refugees who were helped during the fall of 2015 were not really in a position to reciprocate this help, or this gift, which is the requisite for an exchange to be "an exchange". Thus I needed volunteers to explore this further. If they did not get something in return, then what did they get? Which is why I bring volunteers reasons to help into analysis in this thesis. Knowing that the refugees were unable to reciprocate the help given, could the volunteers have seen another benefit for themselves when helping? One that was not necessarily material? Hence I explore my informants' motivations and experiences of volunteering to see if their actions were performed with the expectation to get something in return. Did they hope to feel or be seen in a certain way when and after helping? "By giving without taking, one can show his generosity, wealth and superiority, [but also] show the inferiority of the taker" (Hayakawa 2008:22). Hayakawa stresses therefore that an exchange is not only positive, but may show an imbalance of power. What happens in the interaction between volunteers and receivers? What do volunteers and or activists gain and lose when helping others? To what extent and in what ways do volunteers see "helping" as a "gift" as Douglas and Mauss see it? And what are the theoretical implications? Could helping be seen as a gift given to another person? According to the quote above, it can. In that case,

is the gift given also benefitting the giver? Can what is gained be a motivation for the volunteer to help, resulting in a non-altruistic behaviour?

2.3 Goffman and the presentation of self

While doing fieldwork I noticed that volunteers behaved differently depending on where they were, who was present, and who was being helped. Sociologist Erving Goffman dramaturgically analyses structures of social encounters in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1990[1959]), using theatre as a metaphor. He describes how an individual's capacity to give impressions consists of two kinds of "sign activity: the expression that he [or she] gives, and the expression that he [or she] gives off" (Ibid.:14). The book concentrates on the second, more theatrical and situational kind of sign activity. To *give off* comprises an ample set of actions that by others can be seen as characteristic of the person acting, with the assumption that the actions were performed for other reasons than just *giving* an expression. In other words, he analyses the different roles individuals take on when in front of different audiences to see how reality is constructed, the way they behave in these contexts he calls performances.

A performance, that is, taking on of a certain role on a certain stage, can result in benefitting the performer and/or a community. There are seven components that are considered in a performance: (1) *Belief in the part one is playing*, the individual, who Goffman calls performer, can be taken in by their act, sincere, or be cynical about it, meaning that there is a lack of inward belief in one's role (Goffman 1990:28). A cynical performer is not necessarily interested in misleading the audience (the observers present) for his/her private gain, but they might be doing it because they consider it to be for the good of the audience or the community (Ibid.:29); (2) *Front* is the expressive equipment employed by the individual during their performance which works in a common and fixed pattern to delineate which direction the performance will take (Ibid.: 32); (3) *Dramatic realization* refers to the enhancement of the performers actions and aspects that they want the audience to know so as to be sure to convey the right message to the audience (Ibid. 40); (4) *Idealization* happens when performers tend to show an idealised view of a situation to make sure that the observers understand them (Ibid.:44); (5) *Maintenance of expressive control* is the necessity to stay in character, the performer needs to make sure that the right cues are sent out. As human beings we have many impulses and our moods and energies vary from time to time, but as characters

in front of an audience we cannot expose ourselves to ups and downs (Ibid. 63-64); (6) *Misrepresentation* is the risk of sending out the wrong message. The audience or the observers tend to evaluate a performance as genuine or false, and it is commonly in the performers' interest to be believed in, whether they are genuine or not (Ibid.:66); (7) *Mystification* happens when the performer hides certain information from the observers by creating a distance between them. This is done to either increase the audience's interest in the performer or to prevent disclosing information that could harm the performer's act (Ibid.:74-75). These terms will be discussed further in chapter five where I use them to analyse interactions made between volunteers at Kontrapunkt and RWtM.

2.4 Bauman and the individualized society

Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman's ([2001]2013) book *The Individualized Society* consists of texts published over a decennium in which he discusses the threats that individualization poses against the ability to handle what makes a society a society, meaning that which keeps people together. With the fragmentation of society and collapse of institutions on which the community earlier could support itself, people find themselves alone with too much responsibility and uncertainty (Jarrick 2003). He claims that eternal discontentment is generated out of the never settling struggle between security and freedom (Jarrick 2003). However, I find Bauman's (2013) ideas of "individualization" useful for discussing why people began helping/volunteering and then consequently stopped volunteering when they no longer were getting something out of it.

Bauman presents interesting ideas in this book, but does not offer any empirical studies of his own as evidence or examples. He discusses other people's work. He writes about how people live in uncertainty, but from a Western perspective leaving out the rest of the world where others might live with other kinds of uncertainty.

3. Methods & Material

This chapter presents the places where my research was conducted, and how I collected my fieldwork material. I then address reflexivity and ethics and discuss how I, as a researcher, affected the field; and how the field has affected me. Finally, I introduce the reader to autoethnography, and what it means to use myself as "research tool".

3.1 Presenting the field

Here I offer a brief description of the places and organisations where I conducted my fieldwork. Malmö was described as an activist fortress by one of my informants (Interview 6). The Social Democrats won the most recent local government election almost a third of the votes (val.se, 2014), which makes Malmö a "red city" (Interview 6), meaning that it leans somewhat to the left in the political field. There is a great amount of left oriented activism in Malmö that has been engaged in helping refugees and Romani people (Kontrapunkt; Solidaritet med EU-migranter, n.d.), which might attract other people with a similar mind-set. It seems like being a Malmö citizen implies that one will behave in a certain way, Malmö is expected to help.

Refugees Welcome to Malmö and Malmö Central

The central station in Malmö is a public area like any other train station and is located north of the city center. A couple of years ago it underwent some renovations resulting in a bigger and brighter space. Through a large glass hall the old station building became connected to the new underground tracks where the trains from Copenhagen stop and then continue further north in Sweden. These were the trains in which the refugees would arrive. The glass hall was the place where most of the refugees dwelled before continuing their journey. Outside of the station, also underground, a new bicycle garage was built. It was in this area that RWtM temporarily resided in two rooms belonging to one of the entrepreneurs working there. A former bicycle repair area became a wardrobe and the RWtM organisation was housed in an office opposite to this space. On the eighth of October a new arrival centre for refugees was inaugurated at Posthusplatsen, about 200 meters from the station (Alesmark n.d.).

RWtM is a new help organisation created for the specific reason of helping the refugees who arrived to Malmö in the fall of 2015. Some of the people who were at the central station first decided to gather their forces and work together, and these people are now part of the board.

Over 700 volunteers engaged through RWtM to help. They have mainly communicated on Facebook through a public group called *Refugees welcome to Malmö* (sic.), which at the point of writing has 10,169 members. Later, a closed group was created, only for the active, or wishing to be active, volunteers which currently has 762 members (April 2016). A booking system was created so that people wanting to help could sign up for different shifts. There were three main activities one could subscribe to as a volunteer for RWtM at Malmö C: by the train tracks one could work as an “informant” (See Appendix #1), to receive the refugees when they got off the train, lead them upstairs and inform them (the title was later changed to “guide”); in the wardrobe one would sort clothes and help refugees find garments they needed, and provide them with toiletries; and at the café at PHP one would cook coffee, tea, and hot chocolate for the refugees and distribute fruit.

Kontrapunkt as space and organisation

Kontrapunkt is a bit harder to find in comparison to the central station, it is a 15-minute car ride away. It is located in an industrial area in southern Malmö and has been a culture house and social center for a couple of years. Here activists and other organisations use the facilities to have meetings and create space to work. The facilities consist of three spaces, two designated for the more creative activities and one for the social center, where I conducted my fieldwork. Kontrapunkt describe themselves as a cultural platform that promotes the free and unestablished cultural life, with particular emphasis on being an underground scene for subculture with local and global roots (Kontrapunkt, n.d.). Their values are based on a strong belief in people and their right to self-government in a “true democratic spirit” (Kontrapunkt, n.d.). Before they housed refugees, they hosted a soup kitchen four or five times a week, made possible by food donations. Over 1100 volunteers helped and around 17000 refugees were helped during the refugee reception in the fall of 2015; on the three first months of the reception they cooked 1000 portions of food daily (Interview 12). Kontrapunkt created an online form, which the person wanting to help had to fill in; there one could specify where one preferred to help, and, since Kontrapunkt were highly involved in helping Romani people at the time, one could also specify if one just wanted to help refugees or both refugees and Romani people. At Kontrapunkt one could work in the kitchen, cooking food; in the café, serving coffee and snacks; in the wardrobe, helping people find new clothes and other necessities; as cleaners; as hosts, welcoming the people arriving and fixing beds; or if one had a driver's license, as drivers.

Both places organised other activities in which one could help as a volunteer, but these were not bookable like the ones I just mentioned. My impression was that both organisations lacked active volunteers most of the time. Perhaps this was due to their lack of formalised or standardised recruitment procedures. As a result it was more like a trial and error when people came to do volunteer work: some people behaved and did what they were supposed to; some “just came because it [was] nice to be [t]here” (Kontrapunkt 2015, November 8), “just to hang out” or “just to chase girls” (Interview 12) and were accordingly asked not to come back (Kontrapunkt 2015, November 8; Interview 12).

3.2 Gathering material

The data collection on the refugee reception for the Regional Museum in Kristianstad was extended through a two months period of time (September-November 2015). Data collection for the thesis has been on-going since September 2015 to the end of April 2016. I used qualitative methods of collection, and adapted them to each particular environment and setting I found myself in since “[t]he underlying issue is always: what are the questions that need to be answered” and what is ”the best method under the given conditions” (Jordan & Lambert 2009: 110). I established my role as that of student and volunteer when doing fieldwork. This was how I introduced myself when I met new people and while volunteering at RWtM and Kontrapunkt to.

Most of the collected material comes from interviews conducted for the Regional Museum’s project with volunteer workers and activists. Interviewing is ”a process in which interviewer and interviewee are both involved in developing understanding, that is constructing their knowledge of the social world” (Davies 2008: 108-109). These were done in the form of *semi-structured interviews*, I had prepared a list of questions I wanted to ask similarly to structured interviews, but I was ready to formulate new questions if other interesting and/or useful topics were introduced by the interviewee (Davies, 2008: 106). Fourteen interviews with sixteen informants (two interviews were done in pairs) were conducted over a two-month period of time in the Skåne region with people who were involved in the refugee situation in Malmö. Two additional interviews were conducted in the beginning of 2016.

“Culturally meaningful speech occurs, whatever the context. The point is to appreciate the context and its telling details and to analyse beyond the face, denotational value of words in ways that highlight and untangle the embedded cultural assumptions” (Sunderland & Denny, 2007:193). The greater part of the interviews were conducted by me. This was an advantage

since I had the opportunity to meet the informants in person, and see how they expressed themselves with the help of body language and how they moved in different spaces. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Through my interviews I tried to grasp and create a context for my informants' experiences.

Six interviews were done ad hoc when I was out in the field because I happened to get the opportunity to talk to these people while doing observations: two shorter interviews were conducted at Malmö C; three shorter and one longer interview were conducted at Kontrapunkt. This was of convenience since I was able to see how exactly my informants were helping and how they behaved when doing so. It was also a disadvantage considering that there were times when the informant had to focus their attention on something or someone else during the interview. The fact that other people, volunteers, were around might have affected my informants in a way that they may not have been as honest because of the knowledge that someone else was listening. As a point in case, I note that on two occasions other volunteers even interrupted my informants to have their own say on the subject. The remaining interviews were conducted out of field and were booked with volunteers I met while volunteering myself. Ten informants were women between the ages of 20-65 approximately. Eight informants were men between the ages 20-45. Some interviewees asked to be anonymous; therefore all will remain anonymous, and were given other names. Most interviews were held in Swedish with the exception of two which was both of convenience for the informant and the interviewer.

Professor of Management Studies Barbara Czarniawska describes fieldwork as “an expression of curiosity of the Other – of people who construct their worlds differently than we researchers construct ours” (2007:9). I really wanted to understand what my informants were going through and *participant observations* were therefore remarkably meaningful in this research. One needs to be present to understand what is being researched, and “it is *in* the field that the actual production of accounts can be studied” (Czarniawska, 2007:9). Through participant observations I also got to meet people who would then become future interviewees, as mentioned above. Considering that ”the opportunity for an interesting conversation is unpredictable” (Wilk, 2011:18) and could happen anywhere, I took every spare moment I had to talk to people that were around just to have an informal conversation and find out why they were there. The participant observations were conducted at two different venues. Fifteen hours were spent at Malmö Central, either in the wardrobe which

was set up by Refugees Welcome to Malmö (where refugees could get clean clothes and other necessities), or at the train tracks (where volunteers would receive refugees that arrive with the trains coming from Denmark). Another eight hours were spent at Kontrapunkt, where refugees could spend the night and get food before going to the Migration Agency or continuing their journey to another country.

If I kept going back I thought I could gain the status of insider, which would be of convenience (Labaree 2002: 103). There are advantages of being an insider: "they are part of the context, they understand the local culture, they know about the speakables and the unspeakables" (Jordan & Lambert 2009:107). I would have access to informal information and that would help me to better interpret the "culture-based cues" (Haniff: 1985 referred in Labaree 2002:104) created in these different rooms and spaces. On the other hand the outsider "can often see patterns and connections that for the insider are 'invisible in plain sight'" (Jordan & Lambert 2009:107). Looking back, I would say I ended up as an inbetweener; almost every volunteering shift I did I was paired up with different people, so it was easy to become "one of the volunteers," especially at Malmö C and RWtM considering that it was a new organisation. But at Kontrapunkt I felt more of an outsider, they had a more defined structure and steering committee, and people were more acquainted with each other.

Since I live in Malmö, therefore the refugee reception study being a local project, I did not have the experience of going "'away' to a place called 'the field' to do ethnography" (Wilk 2011:17) and then come back to write an ethnography based on my fieldwork; I tended to write notes on my phone of things I saw and heard that I did not want to forget. Professor of Anthropology and Gender Studies Richard Wilk mentions that "globalisation, new forms of media, and accelerated travel and migration have both dissolved and complicated the separation between 'the field' and 'home'" (2011:18). Several times a week I got off the train at the central station on my way home, so each time I took the opportunity to walk around and see what was happening. I usually wrote down how many volunteers, and other authorities were present and looked at what they were doing. Once, I spent three hours at Kontrapunkt trying to get in touch with a possible interviewee, which enabled me to walk around the place, looking at everything going on, following different people, which is a bit similar to the technique of studying people on the move that Czarniawska calls *shadowing* (2007).

After I interviewed one of the volunteers that mainly worked at the central, she invited me to join her when she volunteered at the tracks, being one of the first people the refugees would meet when getting off the train in Malmö. My first impulse was to shadow her, but I soon realised that it would be impossible: my informant was expecting me to participate, and there were no other volunteers around and several refugees needed help. This research experience turned out to be more of a *go-along*, a mix of participant observation and interviewing through which “ethnographers are able to observe their informant’s spatial practices *in situ* while accessing their experiences and interpretations at the same time” (Kusenbach, 2003:463). This session was also recorded and transcribed.

Last but not least, netnography became fruitful way of collecting material. Online newspaper articles that touched the topic of activism or volunteering were important for understanding how media portrays helping and how volunteerism was constructed. Additionally I collected several online publications and statements made by significant actors that were involved in helping refugees in Malmö during the fall of 2015, most of which published through social media. The amount of material on the topic published online is vast of course, which made it nearly impossible to discern the most important and accurate information.

3.3 Reflexivity and Ethics

How have I affected the people I have interviewed, observed and followed? People seemed to become more aware of what they said and did when I was around. The simple fact that explored the reasons my informants engaged in volunteer work could at times be perceived as me wanting to confront them. I therefore tried to make the interviews more of a dialogue, becoming a “collocutor” (Brembeck 1992:19, in Ehn & Löfgren 1996:132; Ehn & Löfgren 1996), offering my interviewees my feelings and thoughts before or while doing volunteer work to inspire them to be as honest as possible when sharing their experiences. Lecturer in Sociology and Anthropology Charlotte Aull Davies (2008) writes that ”what the respondent says is a representation of social and cultural realities,”(2008: 107) and those were my key concerns since “[t]he smallest details of daily life tell us stories about much larger national and global changes” (Hult, 2008:45, in ETN JOB). By this I mean that I tried to avoid influencing the informants and making them feel that they had to give answers in a certain way (Davies 2008: 107). But my questions have also prompted them to reflect on their actions and have maybe given a new meaning to their helping.

Almost all informants that were interviewed for the Regional Museum's project were chosen, either because I saw their active presence on Facebook, or because I happened to start a conversation with them while volunteering or doing fieldwork and realised they could be of interest. Choosing who to interview has both been an advantage and disadvantage, sometimes I had an idea of what would be said in the interview which then would not meet my expectation. I believe it was good to first observe, as an outsider, trying to assess who might be a good person to talk to. Most of the time I made the right choices. One person was recommended by another interviewee and the last one was assigned to me by one of the organisations I researched. Being assigned a person to interview shows the status I have as a student; the person who had a more "important" position in this organisation did not have time to speak to me and made me therefore settle with another person if I wanted to get an interview. Although the assigned person might not have had as much insight as the other, the interview still ended up being useful.

When doing fieldwork in familiar places, or places close to home, there is a high probability that you will meet your informants several times after the research is over. "The division between the personal and the professional is just as tenuous as the difference between public and private" (Wilk 2011: 21). Some of my informants were already acquaintance, and I became friends with others on Facebook, after interviewing them. They opened up their entire private world, and allowed me to see who they hung out with and what other activities they engaged in; it made me feel as if I never really exited the field.

Researchers work almost like therapists (Ehn & Löfgren 1996:133); some people that I talked to had not had the chance to thoroughly reflect on what they had been through, what they had seen and experienced. As a consequence, when they talked to my colleagues and me it seemed as if they felt a little bit lighter after the interview. One of my interviewees mentioned that RWtM failed to arrange for some kind of professional support for the volunteers, somebody to talk to about the events. These interviews could thus, in a way, be seen as therapeutic, in that they entailed talking about how they felt; what had been good or bad or a hardship. Some interviews were almost like confessions. People forgot that I was a researcher and I got the impression that they sometimes might have "said too much." Taking this into consideration, I have accepted my informants' wishes to omit certain parts of their interviews. The names I use when referring to my informants in this text are fictive since most of them preferred to remain anonymous.

3.4 My experience - autoethnography

By autoethnography I mean that I used myself as a source and research tool, combining “cultural analysis and interpretation with narrative details” (Chang, 2008:46). Doctor in Anthropology Elizabeth Chin writes that an important step to develop an understanding of how others move through the world in distinct ways is to first understand how one’s own culture and predispositions frame and condition how one engages with the world (Chin, 2011:48). Autoethnography is a method for studying this, and a method that is increasing in use in cultural analytical research; it may work as a point of departure for, or an example of general points of view or attitudes (Ehn, 2011). Here, I use autoethnography to complement my other material. As pointed out above, engaging and volunteering sharing my experiences helped me come closer to my informants.

Through fieldwork we learn to know and understand others, whether they are near or more distant (Van Maanen 1988:2). To live with and to live as the ones being researched can be transforming, since that which once was foreign for the researcher inch-by-inch becomes more familiar. As I mentioned earlier, I also volunteered to understand what my informants went through. ”When we write about ourselves, we also write about others” (Ellis, 2007: 14). Using autoethnography as a method has helped me understand events using myself as a research tool, reflecting on my own reactions and thoughts while being in different scenarios (Ellis, 2007: 13), by analysing and interpreting them within a larger sociocultural context (Chang, 2008:46).

Wilk discusses how ethnography has almost vanished as an independent professional practice; instead it has developed into a “part of the daily practice of living in a complex world full of information” (Wilk 2011: 15). He also mentions how his ”ethnography now seems more like the constant continuous process of digestion, the rumbling, mostly unconscious and sometimes uncomfortable process which takes material, extracts something, and gets rid of the rest,” (2011:15) instead of exploring new fields and asking questions. I can relate to this idea in my own research work. I have not yet had the opportunity to experience the difference between ’the field’ and home since I have been researching people in my own city in the areas where I move. To write field notes is not that much different from writing a diary of my life. When doing ethnography it can sometimes be hard to differentiate between my life and the field, as it is so close to me. In my spare time it has been hard not to think of the project and I have frequently faced situations or people that remind me of it. I have often

thought to myself: "should I write this down?" I have barely had time to read fiction, which I usually do to relax, since the research began, because there is always something else to read that could be related to the topic under investigation; fieldwork seems to comprise "every single activity of the day." (Wilk 2011: 20). I decided to go along with it, and tried to be as aware and self-reflexive as possible while pursuing the aim of the thesis.

The three following chapters contain my analysis of the fieldwork I have done. I use the metaphor of *waves*, inspired by how Swedish media has termed the large amount of refugees fleeing to Europe and Sweden as a refugee *wave* [flyktingvåg] (von Hall: 2014) or *stream* of refugees [flyktingström] (TT: 2015). The first wave of refugees caught the city of Malmö off guard. Not until Malmö managed to set up their reception center PHP did the situation become manageable; at least there was more preparation for receiving the people arriving after its opening. When the government introduced identification controls on trains in the middle of November (sverigesradio.se, 2015) there was a significant decrease in refugees arriving at Malmö C, so work at PHP and Kontrapunkt became calmer. The border controls marked the beginning of the end of the refugee reception at the central station and Kontrapunkt, therefore my last chapter, following up on the stream and wave metaphors refers to the peace and quiet after a *storm*, but this silence could also be the beginning of a new storm.

4. The first wave - realising that something has to be done

“The qualitative methodology used in cultural analysis can describe both a level of observation – what you actually see – and, by analysis, a level of meaning of connections and concepts” (Sylow 2008:15). In this chapter I recount how some of my informants first got engaged in the reception of refugees and I begin the analysis with the help of gift-exchange theory (Mauss 2002) in combination with the psychological terms of *bystander intervention and cost-reward analysis* (Dovidio, 2000:325).

Most of my informants had read about the war in Syria, but it felt distant to them at first, as in they could not imagine it would reach Sweden. Then a picture of a drowned boy on a beach in Turkey had appeared in the news. It seemed to be a defining moment for many volunteers, it was mentioned in almost every interview I conducted. All of a sudden everyone was aware of what was happening. Newspapers wrote that refugees were on their way to Sweden. Some of them even included suggestions on “how to help” by listing aid organisations to which one could donate money (Lundin, 2015; Skoglund, 2015). The fact that everyone would help was indisputable; the boy had become a symbol for the “refugee crisis.” This picture can be seen as the starting point for the large movement of engagement that arose in Sweden and more specifically in the city of Malmö in the beginning of September 2015. The war acquired a face, it became real, and immediately came closer to Swedish homes. Some of the informants who described themselves as more aware of the war situation than “less informed” Swedes were almost glad that the picture was shown: finally the others would wake up (Interview 3, 4, 7). The picture was described by many as a wake up call to act, to help. Everyone was engaged, the citizens of Malmö “had been smitten by the *great desire to help*” (Interview 11). There were so many people that wanted to help, but a lot of them did not really know how or where to start.

In psychology, according to a *decision model of bystander intervention* (Latané and Darley, 1970, in: Dovidio, 2000:325) a person may or may not help depending on a series of decisions made beforehand: the person must notice that something is wrong; they must define it as an emergency; then the person must determine if personal responsibility should be taken; then decide how to help; and finally decide to act on their decisions. If the person decides against any of these steps it means that no help will be given (Dovidio, 2000:325).

In the context that I studied the intervening bystander could be seen to include both the volunteers and the Swedish government. The volunteers saw that something wrong was happening in the beginning of September, defined it as an emergency by announcing it on social media, they took personal responsibility and began to intervene in anyway they could. It is interesting that many saw it as their personal task to help and did not see it as primarily somebody else's, especially not the city of Malmö's. "The politicians do not care to be here, right? If we [the volunteers] are not here [helping], then who will?" (Interview 1:2). The local government, on the other hand, might have seen, what everyman's speech turned out to be called the "refugee crisis" as an emergency. But did not take responsibility as fast, maybe because in believing that others, the volunteers, would take action they diffused their own responsibility (Dovidio, 2000:325). (It took more than a month for the city to set up a reception center close by the central on the 8th of October 2015.) A *cost-reward analysis* of helping, also from the field of psychology, takes on an economical view of how people behave. According to such an analysis people are driven by self-interest to augment their rewards and decrease their costs when deciding to help. One might lose time or be endangered for helping or might feel guilt and shame for not helping. One could also get self-praise or fame for helping (Dovidio, 2000:325), like being interviewed on the news or for a newspaper and therefore feel and be seen as a good person.

The decision model of intervention and the cost-reward analysis together could be comparable to the gift-exchange theory presented by Mauss in anthropology (Mauss, 2002), in which gift giving involves obligations in communities to give, receive and reciprocate gifts. Helping, through volunteering in Malmö, could here be seen as a gift, although the helper, or the giver of help, is not necessarily expecting something [material] back from the receiver, perhaps merely gratitude. But the helper expects to feel in a certain way or to be seen in a certain way because of their act of helping. To give something is to give part of oneself (Mauss, 2002:16), although in giving [help] one's self is also made.

4.1 How they became engaged

Friday the eleventh of September was the day my research started, and I went to Malmö C to take a look at what was happening. I had been there the days before but had not actively engaged in anything. I had just been another commuter who was awed by how many more people than usual had gathered and were busy in and around the station. Two days before I had walked past a table that stood in the middle of the glass hall where someone had tried to

put the food, donated by others, in order. I remember I had arrived home and cleared my cupboards of food that could be donated, and walked all the way back. The table in the glass hall was gone that Friday, but another food service had been set up outside of the glass hall, and that is where I started. Some people had managed to borrow an outdoor bar from a nearby restaurant. Here the refugees gathered to get some food and rest before continuing their journey up the country or before applying for asylum in Malmö. People were sitting down at fold-up tables talking while others, the volunteers, walked around checking on everyone. The atmosphere seemed good, people were laughing, and the sun was shining.

They happened to be there

One of the first people I met was Mary, who was standing behind the bar, rather stressed, waiting for more coffee to arrive so that she could continue serving. Mary had heard the news about refugees moving through Europe. She knew what they had had to go through to get to their final destinations, and she had happened to be on the same train from Copenhagen as the first refugee family. An unaccompanied 16-year old was on that same train:

I [Mary] asked him “what do you know about Sweden?” He answered: “nothing, is there anyone who knows, I heard my family is in Stockholm, I haven’t seen them in two years.” Then, of course I said “you are staying at my place!” I took the family with me and I thought to myself that I would try to get in touch with the organisation I knew of. (Interview 1:8-9)

It seems as if Mary just happened to be in the right place at the right time. She had very little time to ponder what to do and did what she thought was the best at the moment. Many of the people working with Mary the day I met her had been there since Monday working all possible hours and shifts. They had just showed up and done whatever had been needed. Some had taken time off from work, whereas others were skipping school: “I’m a student and a service manager, and I want to use my skills to help people. So it’s easy for us who have some kind of organising ability to try to coordinate everything. But nothing was planned, this was spontaneous” (Interview 2:9). Mary told me that RWtM was spontaneously created as a group on Facebook for all of those who wanted to help the refugees who were arriving at the central station, and at that point it was not yet an organisation. According to Mary, in the last four and a half days, the volunteers had helped about 5000 people, either by assisting them in finding the right train or buying tickets for them with donated money. She also expressed the concern that the weekend had then arrived and that there were no more available tickets to

buy. She began to realise that she and the other volunteers would have to find a place to stay for all these people.

They were already helping other groups in need

Around the same time, only 15 minutes away, at Kontrapunkt, the organisation had decided to reorganise their activities, so that they would be able to focus solely on the refugee reception. In their online newsletter they wrote that it was “obvious” that they would help, which, among other things, meant that they were helping people to spend the night there (Kontrapunktmalmo, 11 September 2015). For Bashar, who previously had worked in disaster areas in his home country in the Middle East, it simply felt “natural” to help (Interview 12). Perhaps that is also why he was attracted to working at Kontrapunkt: he described how there really was no discussion whether they would help the refugees or not – it was taken for granted. Since Kontrapunkt at the time was already helping homeless and Romani people, it followed that they would help the incoming refugees too.

Were used to acting, standing on the “front line”

Some of the volunteers who also called themselves activists described how they were used to always standing up against injustice, especially when others kept quiet. Ulla described how she always wanted to be on the front line and how she had always reacted when something was going on (Interview 14). Helping was a way for her to take a political stand. Also Emma saw herself as a “freedom fighter” (Interview 6), and helping refugees was a cause she believed she should be engaged in.

Had experienced something similar

As mentioned before, Sabina was a refugee from the “Balkan Wars” in the nineties. Two other interviewees, Said and Amir, have roots in the Middle East and although they did not arrive to Sweden as refugees and have lived most of their lives in Sweden. They felt connected to the

uncertainty [that arises] when you arrive at a new place, this fear that you don’t know anything and don’t know the language. To need help with every little thing that has been self-evident earlier in life. I can recognise that, and it awakens something, I think, within me, unconsciously that is, that... I cannot just look. (Interview 4)

Here empathy seems to be what makes them act. They have lived through similar experiences and know what it is like to come to a new place, not knowing the language, not knowing anyone. “Affectively, the need or distress of others elicits empathic arousal” (Dovidio, 2000:328). So they are not only acting on (imagined) empathic feelings but also on experience.

They saw the opportunity to do good for others while benefitting themselves too

Kristina described Facebook as an indispensable tool when she remembered how it all began. All kinds of people, acquaintances of her acquaintances, posted statuses like, “we need clothes,” “we need food,” “refugees are arriving wearing only flip-flops and shorts to the station,” “we need money, they want to travel further but cannot afford a ticket to Stockholm or Finland...” Kristina told me how, when she read all this, she thought to herself, “good! I need to clean out the closet!” (Interview 11), and so she did. She then went to the station with her and her husband’s clothes and although it was bit bustling and noisy, and people did not really know who was doing what, she left them there. Then she went home again and called her parents, siblings and other relatives to make them do the same, and told them she would pick up their clothes the next morning.

Many others also saw the opportunity to empty their closets. Bags of clothes were delivered every day and soon piled up. On RWtM’s Facebook page was a list of necessities that were currently asked for, and it was updated daily. Often there was a shortage of men’s clothes and the warmer garments. The problem in some cases was that people did not always donate garments that could be of use to the refugees. Instead they gave away unwearable clothes, unfitting for the season like bikinis, flip-flops, shorts, tops, dresses, etc. Some garments were even worn out. I opened some of these bags myself, and immediately realised that the clothes would not be of any use and probably would cause more problems since they would need to be stored somewhere. Presumably, the only one getting something out of this “help” was the donor, who got to act and feel like a concerned fellow human; I discuss this somewhat bleak assumption more in depth in chapters 4.3 and 5.

In contrast to these one-time helpers, Kristina was one of those who kept coming back and assisted RWtM in becoming more organised. Similar to Mary, Kristina used her organising skills to improve the work that needed to be done.

A way to give back

“In that separate existence that constitutes our social life, we ourselves cannot ‘lag behind’ [...] We must give back more than we have received” (Mauss, 2002:84). Many of the volunteers expressed that they had had, and still have, a good life in comparison to the refugees and that helping them is a way for them to give back to society. Since the volunteers feel they have had a fairly good life so far they felt they must give back to a greater extent, for example by sacrificing part of their day-to-day activities.

Facebook caught also Camilla’s attention; she saw that help was needed at the wardrobe. She had collected clothes for another cause and did not have more to donate, but still wanted to help so she decided to go there personally. Furthermore, she was accustomed to working with clothes and realised that she could be of good help in the wardrobe.

Of course everyone wants to feel like they are doing their bit. So in a way it could be an egoistic thought, but I believe that it is ultimately about if I help now, I hope that someone thinks the same. If I get unlucky sometime, I hope someone thinks the same and helps me. So somewhere there is the idea of, like, the good forces. And that they have to come from all sides [...] and you don’t have to give up that much. You can give up things that are less important, like watching Netflix on my free time, instead I can be down there and help. And meet a lot of interesting people at the same time. So yeah, it might actually be egoistic. But that depends on what interests one has, I like meeting people so... (Interview 3:7-8)

Camilla was quite straightforward about her helping; it had to fit her schedule and it was easier to do if she enjoyed it. She was also hoping that her actions would benefit her in the future if she would happen to find herself in a similar situation, implying thus that the favour could possibly be returned by someone somewhere in the future. Seen through Mauss (2002), she might be expecting an exchange: if she gives help now she might get, perhaps even greater, help in return.

4.2 Taking responsibility when no one else does

It appears as many of the informants saw their role as irreplaceable. They had to act and do everything that was possible to help since they felt no one else was doing it, not even the government. As stated earlier in the thesis, Sabina reflected after helping a Syrian woman, “if I had not been here now...” nobody else would have (Interview 5). Other informants found it hard to leave the volunteering space as they seemed to believe that no one would do a better job than they did.

In a casual conversation I had with a friend a reflection arose around this phenomenon: she thought that “perhaps the refugees need[ed] to be seen suffering, and sleeping at the station for the local government to take action, because while they are helped by volunteers the city can relax; there needs to be chaos” (Researcher’s field notes). The volunteers were not afraid to take responsibility. If they did not do it, then nobody else would do it (Interview 1; Interview 5). The volunteers’ chain of thought made it even harder to actually leave the central station or Kontrapunkt, feeling that without them things would fall apart. Kristina, who eventually became a volunteer coordinator for RWtM had to create a rule that no one was allowed to volunteer more than three shifts a day (nine hours in total); she had to personally control that people did not work overtime, but admitted that it was even hard for her to follow that rule (Interview 11). The actions of the volunteers at Kontrapunkt and RWtM seemed to indicate that if one started to take responsibility, then others were inspired to take it too. Noticing this, I thought to myself that most people probably want to help others, but they just do not know how, and they are possibly afraid of the outcomes of it. Later, in conversations, some of my informants confirmed this for me, and it definitely rang true based on my experiences before and after having become engaged in volunteering.

“Gifts circulate [...] with the certainty that they will be reciprocated. Their ‘surety’ lies in the quality of the thing given, which is itself that surety.” (Mauss, 2002:45) The volunteers, not necessarily expecting material reciprocity, often express that they are certain that they will get some kind of satisfaction or well-being in return. How much they spend, or sacrifice themselves, for the cause will also result in their own greater fulfilment, to some extent. However, they also say that if they give too much of themselves they will feel drained.

Some interviewees expressed a concern of getting too involved. They looked at the disadvantages of helping, and one was negative to being in direct contact with refugees for the fear of the experience becoming too emotional (Interview 5). Most of my interviewees showed that most of the volunteers ended up getting more involved than they had initially anticipated.

I think more like “what is the solution - or what do I want to do? What can I see?” you know, instead of focusing... because it becomes like too much and then I become paralysed. I would have never stood there if I had felt that it was completely pointless. I don’t know... At the same time you need to find some form of activism where you feel that “this gives me something,” you kind of need to get something back. It’s shitty, but then you might get something if others help too, if you get a positive... If you get to do something you are good at. (Interview 6)

The person interviewed here seems to begin the reflection seeing her help as a non-selfish act, but then suggests that she needs there to be some kind of meaning, reward or return in order to continue helping. Mauss writes that “in every possible form of society it is in the nature of a gift to impose an obligatory time limit,” (2002:45) meaning that a gift cannot be reciprocated immediately. The volunteer’s case is different; their gift is repaid instantly by the reactions they get from the people they help. The fulfilment experienced when helping the refugees is what makes the volunteers come back.

4.3 Showing that you are a good person

Continually, during fieldwork, I noticed people uploading pictures of themselves while volunteering, or with the people they had helped. Others posted screen shots of their phone showing that they had donated money to some of the organisations that were involved in the refugee reception, often with the result that their contacts praised their efforts.

In the picture below, someone has donated 200 Swedish crowns to UNHCR, an action which generates the automatic response: “Thank you for helping those fleeing across the



Picture: Screen shot of a text message, published on Instagram.

Mediterranean. You are a hero. Sincerely, Sweden for UNHCR.” The person, or donor, then has proceeded to upload the print screen to Instagram, which is a mobile photo sharing and social networking service. When sharing the picture, the person decided to comment it with “You can too”. Consequently 31 people “liked” the picture, and here one can only presume that they did so because they liked the action or they agreed with the statement. One person even felt compelled to write the comment “I just did the same, but the frustration from not doing more made me sign up the whole family for the Red Cross welcome committee. Like coffee and a hug.” According to Erving Goffman (1990[1959]), when an individual shows themselves in front of others there frequently is an interest to pose in a certain way, to give a

certain impression, so that the observers perceive them in a particular way. No matter what the motive behind the picture was, the person will get something in return; they will be seen as someone and in some ways be seen as a helper and a good person. The fact that another

person commented on it and told about their deeds in return shows that the picture created a certain effect.

A similar trend on the dating app Tinder; a blog called *Humanitarians of Tinder* was created in 2014 where people could send in profile pictures of “(predominantly white, middle-class) Tinder users posing with (predominantly poor, barefoot) kids in foreign countries” (Dewey 2014). Recently some pictures appeared of people clearly helping in the “refugee crisis” (See Appendix #2). Another commenter, sardonically, touches on the same issue “it's noble and admirable to try to help struggling people, but is the goal to help, or is it to get a cute photo opportunity that will one day hopefully get you laid?” (Mathews 2014). The creator of the page also commented the picture trend:

I'm sure a lot of these people are perfectly nice people, perfectly good people. But, you know, when you put something like that on there, it turns whatever you were doing that was maybe selfless or well intentioned into something that's very superficial, you know. And it's a shame. (Clarke, March 3 2014)

The first day, while interviewing Mary, another volunteer interrupted our conversation to inform me that she had “booked an infinite amount of busses these last days and sent people wherever they want” (Interview 2). When speaking about the potlatch, a ceremonial feast where possessions or goods are given away, Mauss (2002) refers to it as “the basic act of ‘recognition’, military, juridical, economic, and religious in every sense of the word. One ‘recognizes’ the chief or his son and becomes ‘grateful’ to him.” (Mauss, 2002:52) By giving help as a gift, and publicizing it through Instagram, Tinder, or talking about it, the volunteers become recognised as good persons or citizens through the gratitude expressed by the refugees and other people who see the volunteers helping. Perhaps the volunteer interrupted the interview because she also wanted recognition for her good deed. In comparison, the people that Hayakawa (2008) interviewed (when she researching their motivations to volunteer) did not speak about their volunteering activities with other people, they did not see any meaning in doing so. My informants on the contrary were more positive in telling others about it; perhaps because they were part of history in the making, or so that other people would also see it as important.

The sociality of volunteering

Kristina and Sabina often invited new people in their social circles to volunteer. If you happen know someone who is engaged perhaps you will be inspired too? “Those who are actively involved in social networks are more likely to volunteer and to stick with it” (Hayakawa 2008, referring to Putnam’s (2000) theory on social capital: 52). If someone sees a picture uploaded by a friend who is volunteering one might become inspired to do the same.

When talking about the *kula*, a system of inter- and intratribal trade, in the Trobriand Islands, Mauss writes that “[i]n appearance, at the very least, the *kula* [...] consists in giving by some, and receiving by others.” (Mauss, 2002:28) Those who are givers one day become the recipients another day. In Malmö in the refugee reception, the ones who gave first, that is, the volunteers, also became the receivers of benefits, for example feeling good about themselves. When Mauss describes the act of giving in the *kula* he mentions that “[t]he aim of all this is to display generosity, freedom, and autonomous action, as well as greatness. Yet, all in all, it is the mechanisms of obligation, and even of obligation through things, that are called into play” (Mauss 2002:29). These aims could be found in the volunteer’s actions. They displayed their generosity through their help: they showed that they were generous with their time and that they chose to spend it on helping the refugees. Their actions reflected greatness, which made them better persons. But, as Mauss (2002) writes, there is also an obligation involved, to gain this greatness and show how generous they really are, they *have* to help.

So, the question here is if the desire to reach greatness comes first, and therefore (the obligation to) help is a vehicle for this, or if it indeed is the desire to help which comes first and the greatness is both obligatory and a side effect? Bashar told me how some refugees, at Kontrapunkt, were not so eager to receive help when they believed that the volunteers were paid to help. This could be understood as them being unwilling to commit themselves: to accept a gift is to “commit oneself” (Mauss 2002:40). The refugees’ attitude changed when they found out that the volunteers were there by their own free will and did not get anything [material] in return (Interview 12).

Emma, one of the volunteers who described themselves as activists, offers another interpretation of helping in contrast to the volunteer who interrupted one of my interviews

and the people who uploaded pictures of their volunteering. She gave a more altruistic reason for helping, which shows how these different acts can be ambiguous:

I guess I feel that it is very important to see the encounters... And not necessarily write something about that encounter, it's like this: "do it because you are genuinely interested or because you feel with this person." Empathy, I think, is what we forget. We might take a detour, but they can really give so much more. Encounters like that. (Interview 6)

Emma says that what she needs to get back are “the encounters.” I found it interesting how she expressed that empathy is something that one needs to be reminded of, as if it was not always there or perhaps only for certain people or individuals. She continued to describe how her feelings differed from encounter to encounter; sometimes she felt uplifted and other times heavily burdened. These feelings also turned into a kind of wake up call for her, making her realise that she had a pretty good life in comparison. What first was seen as a loss became a gain when she felt she attained personal development.

Clearing one's conscience?

Reasons why the interviewees have been helping are, as mentioned earlier, driven by the increased awareness of the war in Syria and the refugees' situation and the efforts to, *sometimes* empathically, understand what they are going through. The realization of one's own privileges in Sweden together with the frustration of seeing the government and the city of Malmö react haltingly increased the will and responsibility of the volunteers to act as fellow human beings. The feeling of increased xenophobia in Sweden had also made several volunteers react, to show that they did not agree with such views, by welcoming refugees: “You will never convince a Swedish Democrat to stop being a Swedish Democrat by sharing and liking things that Swedish Democrats do not agree with” (Interview 11), one needs to act, to help. Like Camilla, who spent several hours working in the RWtM wardrobe, many talked about an inner drive, which kept them going even though they felt that they could not cope anymore. Common for all was feeling good about themselves when they were helping or had helped.

Everyone can help in their own way, that's how it is. But I rather think that I feel it is my duty as a human and I do not mean it from a religious point of view, because I'm not religious but... That collective way of thinking, I probably have it since my childhood. That, yes, of course you must help. So it's probably not about me feeling good because I help, I would perhaps feel bad if I did not help. Do you understand what I mean? Yes it's probably more like that... That I would feel a little bad if I did not do it. For that is what you should do, yes, if you can. (Interview 3)

When asked how they felt about helping, some volunteers expressed how helping is something internalised; that they have learned that they must do. They also described it as the appropriate thing to do. Helping has at some point become part of the volunteers' "habitus" (Bourdieu, 1977; 1990), sometimes learned during childhood. Their view was that as long as you had the possibility to help you should do it.

The forming of this habitus is likely structured by Sweden's history of helping, taking in refugees during WWII, the Iran-Iraq war in the 80's, the Balkan Wars in the 90's, and the Iraq War in the 00's (Sweden.se, n.d.). According to this theory of Swedish helper-habitus, Swedish people would help because that is what they have done before, and what they should do also this time around, in this war. From this follows that volunteers originating in Sweden help others to help maintain the good view they have of themselves and the view they want others to have of them. So are they doing good for the sake of others because that is what they traditionally should do, although perhaps not really wanting to do it, but because not helping would be frowned upon? Are they in the end helping so that they would not come off as bad persons or represent Sweden as a bad country?

Kontrapunkt interviewed their own volunteers to find out why they were helping. In their responses I came across an interesting reflection:

There are really two reasons why I do this. An altruistic cause, and one that is perhaps a bit more selfish. The altruistic reason is, of course, to do something for someone else. I have spent a lot of time doing things just for my own sake. And I've certainly had to do them, but you can't just do things for yourself. Therefore, it is good to work in the kitchen, so that my skills can be of use to others. Then of course, there is the selfish reason too. I feel the need of a context, something that we might all need. Simply working together with others is very rewarding. (KontrapunktMalmo, December 3 2016)

This volunteer describes how both an egoistic and altruistic reason to help can coexist and how small actions can be very rewarding. By just being there, this volunteer gains a sense of belonging while doing good.

To conclude, some of the "gains" or "rewards" the interviewees have attained by helping were several. One of them was the feeling of being needed and of doing something meaningful for someone else. This also located the volunteer in a position of more power in relation to the refugee. It made them feel as being part of a group or like-minded people who worked

for a common goal. It generated personal development and many interviewees expressed that they experienced an inner growth while becoming aware of social injustices. They also got a reputation as a “good-doer” and champion (or fighter) of their ideals. This reputation could then lead to the possibility of influencing others and achieving political change. In some cases they got to be part of documentaries, exhibitions, newspaper articles (and even master theses). The “costs” or “losses” the interviewees experienced were: the loss of money; some volunteers had taken days off from work and used their own money for donations. They lost individual time, those who did not take time off from work did volunteer work in their free time instead, which resulted in not having time to see family and friends. There was a risk of violence present, as mentioned earlier, because they could find themselves in conflict with people who did not agree with what they were doing. Moreover, illness, working long days with little to no rest sometimes resulted in burnouts. Kristina, for example, told me how she used to go to yoga classes for her well-being, but as her workload increased in RWtM, yoga was the first thing she stopped doing because of the shortage of time. She also said that she knew of others who even got divorced, drove their company into the ground, had big problems of different kinds at work, who screwed up their studies and needed to repeat a semester, “I know several who have it like that” (Interview 11:6).

5. The second wave - finding structure, dealing with the situation

In this chapter I describe how the helping was organised, who predominantly helped, and who was predominantly helped during the refugee reception. Then I compare the RWtM's wardrobe with Kontrapunkt's "free-shop" to show differences in helping.

On the 8th of October the city opened Posthusplatsen (PHP), a temporary reception center made out of barracks located about 200m from Malmö central station; that day I also did a go-along with Sabina. Supposedly PHP would help create more structure in the reception of refugees, but that evening only Sabina and I were present at the station. She was not pleased when other volunteers were not doing what they were supposed to, merely hung around drinking coffee, speaking to other volunteers. At one point she did not even want to wear RWtM's name tag because she felt ashamed and did not want to stand for what they did if it only meant hanging around PHP socialising with other volunteers and not helping the refugees. At that point she did not want to be associated with RWtM. Sabina saw herself as more serious in her helping than many others, and her understanding of volunteering became more negative during that volunteer shift.

Sabina became very active in suggesting to RWtM's board members ways in which they could improve their information to volunteers and reception of refugees, which shows again how volunteers took matters into their own hands. She told me several times of the long email conversations she had with one board member who she described as the more attentive one. Before we said goodbye after helping Delal she told me she would email some members again as she thought the way people had behaved at PHP and the station was "beyond contempt" (Go along, 2015). Later on, directions written by Sabina on how to act at the central were published in RWtM page.

It is important to keep track of train arrivals mainly from Copenhagen, but also trains from cities where boats arrive. I tend to move around at the station in between arrivals to see if I can help someone who looks confused. I stand on the platform or upstairs by the escalator, waiting for people. The majority of people seek and approach you on their own. I only speak English, Swedish and Balkan languages but I often use body language and it has worked great. I believe it is important to signal that you are available, by eye contact, or through a RWtM sign etc.

The primarily inform them on where Posthusplatsen is, that the Migration Board is around, but often little about the rules or laws that they themselves ask about. Many have, in my experience, asked me whether or how they can continue their journey. I give them this information, but I have not done more than showing the way to Skånetrafiken/SJ/the tracks or alike.

Networking has worked perfectly for me, and many evenings it has been crucial for a good job. Before each session, I try to somewhat familiarise with the policemen on the spot. Through a flexible dialogue with them I have experienced that we have been able to help each other. I usually ask them for help, I ask them to be more visible in certain places than others and so on. I usually talk to the young people moving in the station and together with the police try to get them to register. Some police officers really see volunteers as an asset, and not an obstacle. Others unfortunately do not. Networking with staff from the City of Malmö (in white vests) at the main hall has also been important; we occasionally divide who does what and how. I think this is one of the most important elements when so many people are arriving. (Directions written by Sabina for RWtM)

Seen through Goffmans dramaturgical analysis (1990) one could say that Sabina failed to maintain her *expressive control* when she got angry; she stepped out of *character*, of her *performance* as a volunteer. She had invited me to see how volunteers worked, I was her audience, and on that evening none of the volunteers were doing what they were supposed (also failing to stay in character) to, which made her utterly disappointed. The quote above shows what *she* thinks the ideal, or a “good,” volunteer should do to maintain their expressive control, to stay in their *role* (Goffman 1990:63) to avoid misrepresentation and, to not send the wrong message (Goffman 1990:66). The “wrong” message could for example be that passers-by (audience) would think that the volunteers did not do what they were supposed to. If people performed properly their roles as volunteers they would end up benefitting themselves as individuals and the entire organisation (Goffman 1990). “Sometimes when we ask whether a fostered impression is true or false we really mean to ask whether or not the performer is authorized to give the performance in question” (Goffman 1990:66), and the audience, or passers-by, may not primarily be interested in the performance itself; since there were not really any specifications on who should volunteer it may be fair to say that some are less apt to do it. Sabina’s sincere belief in her performance became “cynical” at one point (Goffman 1990:28), since the other volunteers were not properly portraying her reality of volunteers as helpers. Therefore she did not want to wear her RWtM-tag which could be seen as part of her “personal front,” meaning accessories or items that are strongly recognised as being part of the performer (Goffman 1990: 34). Signs, tags, shirts and vests with “Refugees Welcome to Malmö” can be seen as signals of a certain performance, at the station, indicating that the bearers belong to a group of people who act under these signs and the stage of helping, and the observing audience expects them to act accordingly. As a way to try to go back to her performance as a volunteer and make me, as her audience, believe in her act, Sabina tried to alert me to other things she was engaging in. In the next section I continue to discuss who may wear in Goffman’s (1990) words a “personal front” of this type.

5.1 Who is allowed to help?

It is more than two hours before I start, maybe about an hour before I need to get going, but I already feel impatient and nervous. I can no longer concentrate on what I am doing at the moment. I cannot stop thinking of how things will go when I volunteer for the first time at Kontrapunkt. Will it be okay for me to be there? Or will people look down on me for not being there before? How will I be received? I try to remind myself that this is for a good cause, it is not about me, I will hopefully be helping someone. I will be glad I did it when it is done. On the online-based schedule I wrote that I would preferably work in the “free-shop.” Will I get to work there? What responsibilities will I have in that case? What tasks will I have to do? Who will I meet? (Researcher’s field diary, Malmö, December 2015)

Before my first shift at Kontrapunkt I felt quite nervous; the times I had been there before I had felt inadequate, I almost had a bad conscience for walking around observing what others were doing. I also felt like they thought ‘why now?’ that I should have been there earlier. Hannah, one of the volunteers I met while observing had expressed an uneasiness of not knowing the “basic Kontrapunkters” (meaning the people who “are *always* there,” Interview 10), and not feeling entirely welcome because of not being there as often as them and therefore not really belonging to the group. I had been influenced by her and was worried that I would not feel welcome either, therefore I opted to dress more like the people I had seen working there earlier (thus wearing a similar “personal front” (Goffman 1990), I was also performing). Camilla once described a “typical activist” as a young woman who, amongst other things, wore “a knitted sweater and boots” (Interview 3), so I opted for something similar to blend in. Additionally I was somehow afraid that people would recognise me as the researcher and therefore ask what I was doing there, that they would not believe in my performance as a volunteer.

Goffman (1990) writes that when a person plays a part they implicitly ask the observers or the audience to take the performance seriously (Goffman 1990:28). A performer can fully believe in their own act, meaning that they are sincerely persuaded that the “impression of reality” which they stage is “the real reality” (Goffman 1990:30). However, when a performer is not at all convinced by their act and has no eventual interest in the belief of their audience, they are called cynical (Goffman 1990:28).

At the reception I got a volunteer tag and was told that I would be working at the café. I had no experience of this, and hoped someone else could show me the basics. Once in the café an older lady who had been there an hour already explained what needed to be done behind the

bar. She said that she had always wanted to help, but, alluding to having been kept away by having a family, it was only until later in life that she got the opportunity to volunteer. In informal conversations I have had with friends and acquaintances about helping, they always mentioned that they would have liked to engage in helping refugees. But many of felt their greater responsibility lay in taking care of other parts of their life, their children, old parents or their huge workload.

There were usually three or four other volunteers working at the café and the kitchen (which were connected) when I was there. Both times the kitchen staff did not really have to do so much as the volunteers in the shift before them had already prepared dinner, so they only needed to reheat it before serving. One of my tasks in the café was to wash the dishes in the dishwasher located in the kitchen. While I was waiting for the dishwasher to finish, a kitchen volunteer who I had not spoken to before broke the silence, maybe trying to make small talk: “This is so sick, I keep getting these messages from Studentkortet to buy and buy, all the time. Meanwhile, we are in the middle of this.” I interpreted “this” to be his volunteering at Kontrapunkt. I interpreted the utterance as containing an expectation of me to respond in agreement. The volunteer was in a sense inviting me to take part in their performance, in the process of inviting me to make conversation. He was at the same time implying that he was not one of those who would fall for such things as mindless consumption. I eventually answered: “I know, I get them too.” I felt it was something I should say in a place like this, as part of the performance of a volunteer or an activist, and here specifically they would get the response they were looking for. In this place a whole “performance team” worked together to arrange an act (Goffman 1990:85). Here people were aware that they were doing something good, they got to belong to a group of “good-doers.” As Dovidio claims when writing about prosocial behaviour, “[c]ollectivistic cultures have stronger social responsibility norms than do individualistic cultures” (Dovidio, 2000:327), and maybe this is the kind of conversation that should happen in such a place. Kontrapunkt might be one of the most prominent organisations for helping refugees, perhaps because they had a defined culture, more defined than for example RWtM which had been created ad hoc. Kontrapunkt already had a set of rules in place on how one should act, and help.

Being a good citizen by helping

It is feasible to hypothesize that some volunteers with an immigrant background might feel a need to show that they too could be good, like the Swedish good-doers. Sabina felt a responsibility to help others like she had been helped when she first arrived to Sweden. She condemned other immigrant groups who were not there showing their support implying that they had forgotten what they had been through or if they were not thankful enough:

Please, where is everybody? Here I can feel my responsibility. It's like 'have you forgotten!?' How easy is it to forget? Apparently it's very easy to forget. (Interview 6)

Contrary to what Sabina expressed, Kristina described how in the very beginning of the refugee reception there were “more immigrant teenage boys present and helping.” It is important to mention that there was always a great mix of people, but this group stood out in the early reception phase, the first wave. As time passed by and volunteers became more organised, this group of volunteers was replaced by more and more retired Swedes. Kristina noted how “the immigrant boys were interested in helping when there were no rules to follow” (Interview 11), before PHP opened. In comparison the retired Swedes wanted more structure and even asked for printed pamphlets in which all activities and directions were described. They wanted everything to be highly organised. She even organised “tours”, so that people could come and look at how the helping was done in each station, before one decided to engage (Interview 11). This leads me to other questions: Would one decide not to help if it did not fit one’s taste? Did helping need to be made comfortable? Kristina also expressed how difficult it was at times to recruit people to take shifts at the tracks, were one needed to be outside. It was not as difficult to have people take shifts in the new cafeteria at PHP (Interview 11), one got to be inside, sheltered from the wind, serving and drinking coffee, which may be seen as more comfortable.

Hannes, who was a board member in RWtM expressed how over time they realised that not everyone was suitable for volunteer work

Yeah, so we've had the police inform us that, “you know, just for your information that guy there working in the kitchen, he's in our records. And you may want to check him out.” Stuff like that. Then there was this conflict the other night, between some of our volunteers and some of the city's people... got into a nasty verbal fight, throwing bad words around in Arabic and no one else understood what they were saying. So now all four of them are suspended for the time being, so we can find out what happened. It's so frustrating. I have better things to do. (Interview 16:6)

Kristina later explained to me that some of the immigrant boys present in the very beginning were doing such a great job that they were later employed by the city of Malmö to keep on helping the refugees at PHP. This created some jealousy among the ones not employed, and some of the employed became a bit "cocky"; and these two facts sometimes created conflicts (Interview 11). In a similar way Bashar told me how at Kontrapunkt some volunteers "just come to hang out, and some volunteers come just to chase girls" (Interview 12:15), and were consequently asked to leave the premises. Seen through Mauss' (2002) theory, these people had other underlying reasons to help; some of them realised that they could gain something more from helping.

Women, women, women...

Overall the great majority of volunteers consisted of women, especially in RWtM. When I asked Kristina about this she replied with more questions:

Why is that? Why do women carry the world on their shoulders? Why are we the ones who are so nurturing? Why would there have not been any wars if we had run the world? No, I don't know, I can only confirm that that's how it is. And many of my petitions on Facebook have been precisely about this "Guys, where are you?" "Where are the men?" and "We need you here!" Because we mostly receive boys and men, "you are needed in this space" in this organisation, at this location.

Seen through Goffmans (1990) perspective of the dramatic performance one could say that the women helping the refugees assisted in reproducing an idealised act or view of women's role as nurturing "and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society" even though they may not behave like this as a whole (Goffman 1990:45).

Camilla told me of different encounters she had had while volunteering. She was impressed by several women who had been around, and that she did not really expect would come to help. One time, there was a middle-aged woman who did not correspond to her "generalised image of an activist," this woman was "fancy with designer clothes, but was down to business in the wardrobe anyways. She did not care if her cardigan got dirty, she was like, hard-core!" (Interview 3:11). Another time, a woman just stopped by the wardrobe and asked what they needed to restock on, she then returned with

bags, I don't know how much she had shopped for, but it involved many thousands, bags with new men's underwear, socks, and all kinds of toiletries. And she was like 'well, that's the least I can do, can I do something else?' (Interview 3:12)

At the same time, other women offered whatever little they had, like an old woman who brought her husband's old knitted sweaters, saying that "perhaps they will be of use to someone" (Interview 3:12). In comparison there were hardly any stories like these told about men.

Additionally, there were always teenage girls around when I was volunteering. For example, a 16-year old was appointed site manager for PHP the evening I did my go-along with Sabina, and Sabina was not amused. Kristina told me how there were teenage girls who were at the station and PHP day and night helping people. Because of the ethical implications involved when interviewing minors and time limits I did not interview any of these girls, but this could be an idea for future research.

5.2 Who is allowed to receive help?

Something caught my eye, some bickering not too far away from me: a man with a cane was hassled to leave by one of the volunteers standing behind the bar counter. I found the situation weird, since people had gathered here to help other people, why was that man not allowed to be here as well? When I asked the volunteer about what just had happened I was informed that the man was an EU-migrant [Romani], who apparently had begged for food. I asked if he was not as much in need as the refugees? According to the young man behind the counter, the man had been there [central station] several times asking for and taking food. "But would he not count as a refugee, then?", I asked and the volunteer replied "In that case I am also a refugee, he is already living here." A woman beside him, also a volunteer, nodded in agreement, the man had been there too often, she explained that the people who donated the food expected it to be given to refugees, so they had to keep that promise. The food that was left was then donated to the homeless. (Researcher's field diary, September 2015, Malmö)

According to Kristina, RWtM had problems with Romani and homeless people who also wanted to get clothes. Every time I volunteered at the station there would be a discussion on whether we should let Romani people enter the wardrobe, or not, and whether we were allowed to give them clothes and toiletries. Eventually it was decided that individuals of both groups were allowed to enter and "get what was necessary for their own personal needs, once" (Interview 11:4). This rule was difficult to follow since there tended to be different volunteers at the wardrobe each day and, as Kristina describes it, some Romani people would

come back several times to get new things (Interview 11). If one of the volunteers had been there before and recognised a person wanting to get inside, we would kindly ask them to come back another day. Deciding who would be allowed to enter was usually quite hard to do for most people.

Volunteers behaved differently with the ones being helped depending on who it was: a refugee, Romani, or a homeless person. “The higher the rank” or status of the person needing help (refugees had the highest status, meaning that at the time they were in the most need of help), the more likely they would be better attended (Goffman 1990:39).

To help those who are identified as the most vulnerable is perceived as central in both Christian and in socialist tradition. During the three busiest months in the refugee reception Kontrapunkt decided to help the refugees first and foremost, suspending their usual soup kitchens that they normally opened on weekdays.

As I mentioned in chapter five, some people donated unwearable clothes that were either worn out or out of season (since weather was beginning to get cold).

Sometimes [the help] felt misdirected. People that like, just cleaned out the basement and some clothes are not washed – and that’s not so damn nice! But ultimately, I think it has to do with how they see at the people arriving. They don’t understand that these are like regular Swedish families but from another country [meaning middle class] that are fleeing, they think these are people who come from nothing. [...] That’s why people have reacted like ‘but they have mobile phones!’ – So what? Of course they have mobile phones, we are not alone in the world to have mobile phones. So I think it is more about how well informed you are about who are fleeing right now. And why they flee. (Interview 3:12)

One day when I was volunteering a young man entered and asked if he could take a bag, and of course we let him. He then proceeded to select and put clothes in it, and leave. This was a common procedure, a person in need would collect the items they needed and then put them in one of the bags that also had been donated. The man later returned with the bag filled with new clothes, which he gave to us. He probably mistook the purpose of the wardrobe, and none of us volunteering questioned why he was there, we thought he was a refugee, but he obviously was not. My and the other volunteers’ preconceptions of who was or what a refugee looked like made us not notice, until afterwards. Perhaps I was the only one who

noticed this, but I decided not to make a fuss about it maintaining my “expressive control” staying in *volunteer character* (Goffman 1990) and continuing helping others.

Normally people in need were allowed to be inside the RWtM wardrobe for as long as they wanted to find something of use. Sometimes there would be so many people wanting to enter the wardrobe that one of the volunteers would have to stay in the middle of the entrance blocking the way, and then ask the people crowding outside to form a line. I had to do that a couple of times; when letting in a new person I then had to time them, each person got five to ten minutes to start with, otherwise the other people waiting would start to protest. If the person inside the wardrobe had not found the right clothes after ten minutes they would have to go outside and stand in line again, so that someone else could get a chance to look for something. This strategy was usually applied when there were younger volunteers. As time passed by and the retired people started volunteering another strategy was introduced:

The first time I was there they were allowed to go inside by themselves to dig and take clothes, which I didn't think was ok. Because people have a tendency to just pull out things, right? But they find absolutely nothing. And so, I stood there for three hours folding and stacking in, folding and stacking in... and sorting clothes out. It's mission impossible. The next time I was there, and the second and third time, I thought the system was better. For they had closed off the entrance so it was a counter, so that the people were outside had to tell me what they needed, and so I picked and gave it to them. It was much better. (Interview 14:5)

Some of the retired people were a bit scared of the refugees and other people needing clothes. On the second day of my volunteering go-along with Sabina at the central station we went down to greet the people at the wardrobe. This time there were two old ladies working. They had closed the wardrobe because they felt overwhelmed by the people entering; they wanted to keep it like that until a guard or a police officer was present, but that “was not their duty” (as told by a police officer, Researcher's field notes). Other volunteers complained about having to fold clothes all the time almost wanting to ascribe the quality of being messy to the people arriving, but Camilla who worked at a clothing store dismissed this by saying “everyone does that when looking for new clothes” (Interview 3). In the next section, I compare how the wardrobes at RWtM and Kontrapunkt were maintained and inhabited in order to show possible differences in the construction of “helping” and volunteering.

5.3 Case study - two helping spaces

When conducting fieldwork my colleagues and I tended to approach people we thought were activists, we had given them that role already, based on our own set of “rules”, before approaching them. Some said that they did not see themselves as activists, rather volunteers or just fellow humans, but others accepted the role and acted accordingly; as is the case I will describe here. Goffman (1990) notes that there is a “popular view that the individual offers his performance and puts on his show ‘for the benefit of other people’ (Goffman 1990:28). Perhaps the volunteers put on an act for me, and tried to realise my expectations. First I will describe the rooms and then how people acted in them.

As described above, “front” is the expressive equipment that an individual uses in their performance (Goffman 1990:32). A front includes: (1) setting which tends to be geographically stable (Goffman 1990:33), like the wardrobes or other volunteering spaces, the individual begins a specific act relevant to this place, and ends his or her performance when leaving; (2) personal front, accessories or items that are strongly identified with the performer (Goffman 1990:34), which divides into appearance and manner. Appearance is the part of an individual’s personal front which tells of their social status and temporary “ritual state,” for example whether they are in a formal situation or informal recreation (Goffman 1990:35); and manner alerts the observer of what kind of role the performer will play (Goffman 1990:35).

“Free shop” (wardrobe) at Kontrapunkt

On arriving at Kontrapunkt and after walking past its reception, I saw a double door of dark wood ajar, and wondered if I had permission to go inside. I peeked in and in a dull cold light I saw two men in their early twenties sitting behind a booth. They looked up and greeted me, so I entered. The floor was made of concrete and in the high ceiling hung a long office lamp. This was where people could find new clothes to wear; it was called the “free shop.” To the right from the door was the booth, on which several laminated A3 paper sheets were laid. These sheets contained information on what products one could pick out: shampoo, hand cream, soap, deodorant, diapers, etc. Under each picture, someone had written the name of each product in three different languages: English, Arabic, and possibly Farsi; some included Swedish. The names were written with a marker that had smudged the lamination. Alan and Kevin sat on chairs behind the booth while I walked around in the room, behind them was a

shelf that covered the entire wall and was full of storage boxes containing the aforementioned toiletries, and much more. These boxes had nametags made out of tape, mostly Swedish and sometimes in Arabic. “The idea is that the refugee (or other person in need) first would point at the picture of the product they want and then it is the volunteer’s job to hand it out, the refugees are not allowed to take anything by themselves” (Researcher’s field diary). I had seen that Kontrapunkt was very fussy about cleanliness in the kitchen and I wondered if anyone thought of cleaning these cards. Several rows of two-floored clothing rails stood on the left side of the entrance. Someone had pasted a hand drawn picture of the clothes on the wooden pillars sustaining the bars of the garments hanging on each rail, to make finding the right garment easier. It seemed like this construction was built for this purpose only. The room did not feel welcoming at all, I experienced it as scary and dark, and it smelled stuffy. The floor was dirty and probably even dustier than I perceived in the dim light. The room had no windows. No one could see what was happening in there, neither could those who were inside look out.

It was only us three in the free shop but Alan informed me that they had already helped about 50 people that day (Interview 8). We talked about helping, volunteering at Kontrapunkt and why they were there, Kevin stated that

a large part I think is acting, a large part of these people wanted to be part of a group, cause I feel like the people who scream the loudest do the least. They're just like, they come to the parties and they go to the demonstrations, but you don't see them here. So I feel like there's a big part of activism that just kind of wants to look active, and then there's a quieter part that is actually [working]. That's my perception of it. (Interview 8:4)

Alan then continued

like he's saying, there are these people who probably do care, who want to be the loudest and think that they're helping change the world, but they're just going upon it the wrong way or they're just doing it with the wrong intentions. They're doing it because they want the recognition of them doing something to actively change something, right? So yes, there's always going to be different motives behind other people, other activists, what they do and why they do it, right? But I've found that being here uh in a place like this, these people are here because they want to help, like he's here because he wants to help [pointing at Kevin], not because he wants to be heard, otherwise he'd be out there on the streets yelling. (Interview 8:4)

Kevin meant that it was more important to be present at a place like Kontrapunkt and not only being out on the streets, but while I was there no one entered and they were sitting down the entire time; they were simply hanging out with each other.

According to Goffman (1990) “[a]pppearance and manner may tend to contradict each other” (1990:35). At the free shop, the volunteers’ appearance and manner were not really consistent; they had their tags on, which indicated that they would be working for the organisation. But they were just sitting there, even though they were supposedly in the middle of their performance. To me, as I understood volunteering at the time, what they said was not coherent with what they were actually doing. Goffman (1990) would call this a misrepresentation, where I as the audience felt that the impression the volunteers, performers, were making appeared as false (Goffman 1990:66).

On the other hand they were very friendly and accommodating towards me, which made me have sympathy for them; as Goffman notes “we often feel differently about those who misrepresent themselves to forward what they feel are just claims of a collectivity, or those who misrepresent themselves accidentally or for lark” (Goffman 1990:67). They did not have any control of people coming and going, and it could just have been unfortunate that I happened to visit them right then when there was no one present whom they could help. In doing ethnography, not being able to be present at all times could be a disadvantage. But since, I as the researcher cannot possibly be present all the time I can only describe and analyse what I did see, or what I was told had happened. The day I visited might just have been a less busy day for them and not so representative of their whole range of activities.

When I was about to leave the free-shop, a man and a woman entered, guided by a person I had previously seen in the reception area. She said that the woman needed something to wear. Kevin walked up to them, without saying anything and pointed at the clothing racks. He then stood behind the woman while she looked around. I perceived it as a more passive way of helping in comparison to what I had seen other volunteers do. Perhaps my presence made them uncomfortable, and their behaviour become more fumbling in comparison to the volunteers at RWtM’s wardrobe that I describe in the following section.

RWtM’s wardrobe at Malmö Central

RWtM had managed to borrow a room from a bicycle carrier company to operate in. It was one flight of stairs down, located by the underground bicycle parking just outside Malmö C. From the stairs, I made a U-turn to the right and found myself standing in front of the entrance. Two automatic glass doors opened blowing hot air each time. The room was

perhaps ten square meters. Opposite this room was the company's office. They had let RWtM borrow some of this space as well in order to manage their external communication and other administrative tasks. This wardrobe also smelled stuffy and dusty. Men's pants, jackets and coats were all placed against walls, they hung on rods and were divided by gender. Someone had drawn a man on a piece of paper and pasted it on the wall over the men's jackets; the same had been done over the ladies' jackets with a woman in the picture instead. Donated children's clothes were placed on shelves; over each pile of clothing was a drawn picture describing what kind of garment it was and what age it was suited for. Shoes of all sizes were lying on the floor next to the shelves. Three shelves crammed with toiletries and baby food and other baby products stood on the right side of the entrance. In the middle of the room was a bar from which assorted shirts (mostly for men) hung and a table with baskets containing socks, tights, briefs and panties, bras, gloves, hats, some belts and toys. The room was also full with boxes and bags of donated, unsorted clothes, which were placed under the clothing rails and the table so that no one would step on them or open them. The refugees were allowed (at that time) to try everything out for themselves, but they were not allowed to touch the toiletries. One of the volunteers who seemed to have the most experience said it was for the best if the volunteers handed out whether it was razors, shampoo or wet wipes, so that the refugees (or whoever was in need) would not take too much of anything. In my field diary I had scribbled down "some things are so well hidden, I wonder if they ever will be distributed. The volunteers on the next shift might not even find them..." (Researcher's field diary, November 2015, Malmö).

That time there were four volunteers present, all women, and they were all trying to communicate with the people that they were helping at the moment. There was no opportunity for me to interview them, instead I casually chatted with them. They seemed to be in a good mood, always in motion. One of the women had a cast on one of her legs, yet she walked around easily. In this room there was no space for seating in comparison to the free-shop at Kontrapunkt, perhaps this made it easier to remain active during the volunteering shift. Or they were simply putting up their performance in an astounding way, an "idealisation" of how a volunteer should be helping (Goffman 1990:45), perhaps even exaggerated way. Camilla described:

When helping I have met a couple of people who would gladly, I don't know... bask in the glory a little? You know, instead of saying "oh welcome, take over here I'm tired because I have been working for 12 hours, and I have to go and eat" they will stay there for another five hours, although

they really shouldn't. Then it is about not wanting to give something up, and that's selfish. "No, I will suffer." You know. (Interview 3:8)

In Goffman's (1990) words she did not believe the volunteers performed the way they should. She thought they were insincere, not performing for the good of the audience, but for themselves – thus excluding this from her construction of what a volunteer was or should do. "If an individual is to give expression to ideal standards during his performance, then he will have to forgo or conceal action which is inconsistent with these standards" (Goffman 1990:50). Seen through Mauss (2002), the volunteer sacrificing, might be expecting a greater reward in exchange for their gift of themselves and their time.

Wardrobe-Case Comparison

Both rooms were similarly organised, many of the furniture used to store clothes and toiletries had been donated by volunteers. Kontrapunkt's free shop was larger in size, which gave a sense of it having a better structure and system; meanwhile I got the feeling that the volunteers at RWtM's wardrobe could not really estimate how many things they had or needed, they were so overwhelmed by things in such a small room. The free shop was significantly darker which could have had a calming influence in the volunteers making them more laid back. The fact that there was no possibility to look at them from outside to see if they were acting, or performing, like they were supposed to might have helped. Whereas at RWtM's wardrobe located at Malmö, a public area, the volunteers felt more exposed or observed (Interview 11). One of the walls was a window, which allowed people from outside to watch the volunteers working.

Dramatic realization includes "signs which dramatically highlight and portray confirmatory facts that might otherwise remain unapparent or obscure" (Goffman 1990: 40). The performer must deliver their act in a confident way for the observer to trust and believe it, and sometimes they must be able to deliver it in a split second during the interaction. Seen through Goffman (1990) the two volunteers at Kontrapunkt failed to deliver their performance with confidence, they seemed somewhat insecure when their help finally was needed. In comparison, the volunteers at RWtM were continually performing in an assertive way. The women, as performers, were showing the aspects that they wanted the audience to see and to know. When a performer wants to accentuate something they will continue with the dramatic realization, in this case helping the people in need. "For if the individual's activity is to become significant to others, he must mobilize his activity so that it will express

during the interaction what he wishes to convey" (Goffman 1990:40). This is what I saw the women do. As audience and researcher I felt convinced, and people who wanted to become volunteers did too.

The volunteers seemed to be more casual at Kontrapunkt than at the central. Perhaps Kontrapunkt is perceived as a more relaxed space by the ones working there. While the central station is not really a place where one tends to be around when not having the need to take a train or a bus somewhere. This is also reflected in how some volunteers might not be always doing what they should at Kontrapunkt (KontrapunktMalmö, November 8, 2015; Interview 12) but just hanging out. Kontrapunkt was more structured since they already had a tradition of helping, like Emelie puts it:

It's very easy to be here, it's so, there's structure and it's easy to organise oneself, like, to come here and help and just work a little. Sometimes I've felt like, it became very difficult and abstract to help, but here things are really concrete like, "come here!" and then you help a little. I have some spare time and I can spend it here [helping]. People are needed and I want to, I know that there are a lot of people who need relief. So it feels quite easy, it's an easy way to engage. (Interview 9:2)

But one has to make an effort to get to Kontrapunkt, it is further away from the city center and some might call the area where it is located as a bit "dodgy." Still it seems like Kontrapunkt has high credibility and status. The fact that Sabina not only helped at Malmö C in person, but also raised 11,000 Swedish crowns and collected food to donate to Kontrapunkt is noteworthy, "because money needs to go to the organisations that need it the most" (Interview 5). At the same time she was also very eager in recruiting friends, family and acquaintances to volunteer for RWtM. Perhaps she did not feel, as she told me some of her recruits did not feel, comfortable at Kontrapunkt even though she thought Kontrapunkt was doing the better job or sacrificing more (Interview 5).

At both of the two wardrobes that I compared, the male volunteers in particular appeared rather passive. Perhaps the men at the free shop were not used to perform this kind of help, or they found it difficult to communicate. The women seemed more confident and did whatever they could to help. As I mentioned earlier, women throughout demonstrated a greater engagement at least in numbers than men, and thus turned out to play a significant role in the refugee reception. In other words, women dominated both sites.

Over all, being at Malmö C made RWtM more exposed to threats than Kontrapunkt, Kristina told me of some of the rules, the volunteers were not allowed to bring hot food or buy milk from the nearest shop: “it was feared that there would be some sort of attack on PHP, poisoned fruit or poisoned food. If only one restaurant donated left overs from a buffet, and these had salmonella, the city of Malmö would be held responsible” (Interview 11:9). When I was at Kontrapunkt a second time I accompanied the volunteering chef, who was reheating food, and all of a sudden three men showed up unannounced with a food delivery from a restaurant nearby. The chef decided to also serve the food that was just brought to him. Kontrapunkt did actually have a specific volunteer/employee who handled the food deliveries, so they must have known that they were trustworthy, but it did not seem as controlled as at RWtM and PHP. Kontrapunkt was further away from Malmö C, one had to make an effort to get there, which would make it easier for somebody who for some reason would want to sabotage the refugee reception to do harm to the refugee center at Malmö C.

6. After a storm...

In this chapter I first portray how some volunteers had difficulty in leaving the helping spaces. Then I describe what happened after Sweden began closing its borders, and fewer and fewer refugees arrived. I then discuss what happened when the original appreciation or recognition for helping disappeared. For my analysis, I lean on Bauman's (2013) take on the individualised.

6.1 Not being able to leave

Why did volunteers have trouble leaving the “volunteering spaces”? Many interviewees described how they felt a need to come back, again and again, to volunteer. Helping others created a great sense of accomplishment in them. I remember how happy *I* felt after my first hours of volunteering; I noted in my field diary: “of course I would do it again!” (Researcher’s field diary, September 2015, Malmö). Said described to me how he became energised each time he helped someone, even though sometimes dozens of people arrived all at once with a train. He worked “long, long hours interpreting and dealing with everyone around,” and he would just keep going, not going home or handing over the workload to others.

Afterwards when they have sat down in the train because they are traveling further, that’s when you see this happiness, and gratitude. Just like that, and that has been invaluable to me. For me it’s been an absolutely fantastic feeling, and you don’t feel that you are tired. (Interview 4:14)

In contrast, Sabina wished for the Red Cross and the Migration Board to do all the work she was doing. She pointed out a few times how she did not really enjoy volunteering and that she had barely seen her friends and family since she had started. She also mentioned that she was afraid to get engaged in the beginning for the fear of the experience becoming too emotional, considering her past.

But then when I meet these kids I think like "but how can you not go there, when you have been there once?" It's like a compulsion... I do not know if it's an addiction or that I almost feel guilty, that I feel bad if I can't. It's like this: time, I have, but it is the energy that I sometimes lack. Time can always be set aside, it is a priority issue. (Interview 6:7-8)

Not being able to turn off their need to help, makes the volunteers’ performance more sincere. In line with Goffman’s argument (1990), it is as if they constantly remained in

volunteer character. Helping could be seen as a performance aimed at being viewed as a better person.

Feeling appreciated was another factor that made people continue volunteering, but it was perhaps not talked about very much, like in Alan's case

One thing that I have to admit, like it's definitely amazing helping other people, but at the same time there is a little part of me that really likes the appreciation too. Like they are very thankful for everything that we do for them. Earlier on there was a little girl who came in with her mother and I'd given her one of those heart mirrors and a nice little heart brush, and you should've seen the smile on her face. It was just, just honestly it felt so good just to make a little girl that happy, and it was as simple as giving her a brush and a mirror, you know. [...] People are just so thankful for what we are doing for them. So that's kind of one of the reasons why we're here too. (Interview 8:2)

It was almost as if he was not allowed to confess that he was getting something in return from helping, as if it was something that was not spoken about at Kontrapunkt.

Bashar, who was very engaged at Kontrapunkt, working as a coordinator, felt huge responsibility to be present as much as possible. Because of his past experiences he made helping people his life quest.

When I was in a bad situation, nobody came to help me, so then I realised how much it is needed. So I decided that I would make it to my life aim to help others, because no one helped me. So if I were like them [who did not help him], then what would be the difference between them and me. (Interview 12:6)

He did not feel that anyone else would be able to do his job. He would work 19 to 20 hours a day, because he felt that if *he* did not show up "things would stop" (Interview 12:5). To see that his efforts made people happy would make him happy. But, what happens in cases where this kind of gratification and satisfaction do not materialise?

6.2 The lack of immediate satisfaction or instant gratification

On the 11th of November, the Swedish government announced it would begin closing its borders and the police would arrange passport controls on the trains from Copenhagen. Passengers who could not show a valid ID on the train had to get off at Hyllie station, two stops before Malmö central station, and be taken care of by the police (Sveriges Radio, November 12, 2015). This meant that fewer refugees began arriving at Malmö C, and consequently there were fewer people and tasks to take care of at PHP. Bauman (2013) writes

that in contemporary society people find themselves alone with too much responsibility and uncertainty,

In these times of uncertainty and precariousness, transience acquires a ‘strategic edge’ over durability. It is no longer clear what is the cause and what is the effect. Are the fragility and vulnerability of the human condition the summary result of common life policies that do not recognize long-term purposes and values that are hard to earn and preserve? Or is it rather that people tend to prefer short-term satisfactions because little in the world is truly durable and few objectives may be relied on to outlive the effort needed to fulfil them? (Bauman 2013:186)

Volunteering, seen from this perspective, can be seen as a way to feel less solitary. As explained by Kristina who volunteered for RWtM, if a volunteer organisation has an aim, a requirement or a need they must fulfil, (in this case helping refugees), and the need disappears, “there will be problems” (Interview 11). The volunteers that still stuck around at RWtM at this time, started turning against each other and sometimes against the organisation’s management, as of lack of other things to do. She described how she experienced volunteering in the beginning, or in theoretical terms, how it was “performed” earlier (Goffman 1990).

It was like an instant benefit effect! I could make a call out for strollers on Facebook and get five strollers to the station the same day. And on the evening when I was in the wardrobe a refugee family would arrive, you know, who has carried two, or three children on shoulders or in their arms on foot through the whole of Europe. And we would be able to give them a twin pram and a set of diapers and clothes for the kids and new shoes and jackets to the parents. It was so incredibly rewarding! All volunteers would fall into that seat "I can't go home, because I feel that I am doing good, I am making an impact. Oh, I can handle a few more hours, I will work a few more hours." (Interview 11:5)

Here, Kristina taps into topics that I mentioned before; almost always there seemed to be a shortage of volunteers, but without enough refugees present it became even harder to recruit them; the passion seemed lost and the volunteers began to disappear altogether. In February 2016, the closed group on Facebook for active volunteers at RWtM had almost 800 members, but the organisation was unable to fill the 33 hours they had planned to put in every week for sorting clothes; it seemed as if it was not as exciting to volunteer anymore, when there were only things to deal with and no people.

Nevertheless, some volunteers, for example Sabina and Camilla, found meaning in doing the “boring” tasks like sorting and folding clothes, making sandwiches, etc. others, volunteering

was only worth it when they could help the refugees personally. All the other work that had to be done around the helping, mostly sorting clothes, was not experienced as “exciting or cool” (Interview 11). Even though sorting clothes in the end benefitted the refugees, it was not something they could see the benefits of personally; they were no longer able to meet and see the refugees’ reactions. As Bauman puts it ”[d]elay of satisfaction has lost its allure: it is, after all, highly uncertain whether the labour and effort invested today will count as assets for as long as it takes to reach reward” (Bauman 2013:184). The volunteers’ unwillingness to participate when there was no instant gratification was obvious. This yearning for gratification can also be understood in Mauss’ (2002) gift-exchange terms: several volunteers expressed that they were “exchanging more than a product of hours of working time,” (Mauss 2002:99). That is, they were giving something of themselves, their time and their life. Thus, they wanted to be rewarded for their “gift.” “To refuse [them] this reward [was] to make [them] become idle or less productive” (Mauss 2002:99). As Bauman also explains “if the pleasure derived is not up to the standard promised and expected, or if the novelty wears off together with the joy” then there is no sense in staying, it is better to find something ”new and improved” instead (Bauman 2013:185). When they were only left with sorting clothes, the volunteers no longer received the immediate satisfaction and gratification to which they were used when helping refugees, and therefore they became disinterested. They were no longer getting anything in exchange. If they wanted to see the benefits of their work they would have to wait for longer, and the time they offered was then experienced as wasted.

For volunteers, there must be a challenge otherwise they will not come. They need to be kept warm, they must be encouraged, they must be justified, there must be a challenge and there must be an immediate benefit that they can see in their help, otherwise they will not come. And it became very obvious when we moved to Svärterminalen, one could sit a three-hour shift at the station and not meet a single refugee, because none arrived. But 15 minutes after you had gone home 20 refugees could arrive. But people were not willing to do it. People were not willing to sit and be bored by chance. (Interview 11:11)

Along these lines, it appears that some volunteers seemed to have entertained a romanticised notion of their help work. When there were no more people to help, as when Sweden “closed” its borders, they were reluctant to do other work that might not be as exciting. But which still was important done behind-the-scenes work, that of course also counted as volunteer work and would help the organisation they were engaged in. Similar to what I have argued earlier, and in Goffman’s (1990) terms there was no audience, who could see them do

good and be good people. So the volunteers need to find a new purpose, and a new audience for which they can perform.

6.3 Finding a new meaning, returning to daily life

To speak with Bauman, in a "modern" and "individualised society" it is perhaps more difficult to find a context or a sense of belonging (Bauman 2013).

Modern culture, instead of concerning itself primarily with what binds us to each other, aims to free us from others, to emancipate us from social ties, which it views as unacceptable constraints. The end result of this process is that any social ties must become voluntary. This great gift of modernity is the exit, universalised: our personal relationships are freely chosen, and assumed by them. (Godbout 1998: 162)

Working as a volunteer seemed to have given those who participated both a sense of belonging and satisfied their need to feel needed. To them, volunteering seen as a gift, helped create new social bonds rather than free them from them, as Godbout (1998) speaks in the quote above. Below I discuss further what happened when the volunteer's "purpose" to act stopped existing altogether.

RWtM was created ad hoc the refugee crisis. Their main objective was to help the refugees arriving at the time. When refugees decreased in number by the end of 2015, RWtM were at loose ends, without a clear purpose. They realised they would have to restructure their activities and find a new reason for existing. They had created an organisation and felt they could not just leave what they had built up. When there were no more refugees to attend, RWtM were suddenly left with a large amount of clothes and other necessities that they had gathered over time, and something needed to be done with them.

On the 10th of March 2016 Årets Opinionsbildare [The-Year's-Opinion-Leaders] (Årets Opinionsbildare, n.d.) announced that RWtM had won the prize of "grassroot [organisation] of the year" as recognition for their contribution to the refugee reception. People had been asked to nominate organisations and apparently RWtM had received hundreds of nominations. This was the jury's verdict:

Because you have, tirelessly and with passionate commitment, worked for people on the run who have come to Malmö and Sweden. With the help of your volunteers you managed to engage many people in a short time and showed a true grassroot engagement, and created emergency help to people in emergency times. RWtM have, together with the whole asylum rights movement, demonstrated

that love is the greatest, and the heart does not hold any limits. (Svensson, 11th March 2016).

This description could very well have been used to describe Kontrapunkt's work. It is possible that RWtM won this prize because they were more visible than Kontrapunkt, since they resided at the central station. Possibly they might also have been a political aspect involved; Kontrapunkt might have been regarded as too far to the political left to get a prize, whereas RWtM had a close collaboration with the city of Malmö. Nevertheless, it was remarkable that Kontrapunkt was not mentioned at all.

In an interview for a Swedish newspaper (Sydsvenskan) Alexandra, one of the RWtM volunteers present at the prize ceremony, expressed how it felt to receive the prize:

It means recognition and it means that we ourselves realise what we have done. We have always said that we have done what was needed and we did not think of it as such a big deal. When it then gets attention, it means a lot and you get a different perspective on what happened and what was accomplished (Svensson, 11th March 2016).

It was an interesting personal expression. Even though the person believed in the organisation and in the work they had done, it became even more important when someone else recognised their efforts. Bauman claims that “[r]eason is what we hope will tell us what to do when passions have been tamed or extinguished and no longer propel us” (Bauman 2013:208), which can be used to understand the prize as a confirmation that they should keep on doing what they were doing, even though they had lost many volunteers. Seen through Goffman (1990), they needed (and were given) an audience for which to perform their roles as volunteers (first to other volunteers and refugees) even after the initial waves; their performance now gained an even wider audience. Seen through Mauss (2002), the gift of helping (refugees) had, in addition to their own feeling of being and doing good, now given them the external recognition, a prize and their good-doing being seen by the greater public.

Alexandra also informed the newspaper that they had started working primarily with distributing the supplies that were left, and were still being donated to RWtM, to different refugee accommodations across the county of Skåne. For winning the “grassroot of the year” prize RWtM was also awarded 10, 000 Swedish crowns, which, she speculated, could probably be used to purchase things that they did not get donated, there was for example always a shortage of shoes (Svensson, 11th March 2016). Alexandra mentioned that they

would probably also reach out to other organisations working with refugees and assist them with more volunteers (Svensson, 11th March 2016) which is similar to what Kristina told me when discussing RWtM's future (Interview 11).

Reorganisation at this "post-reception"-stage seemed easier for Kontrapunkt who had existed for several years already; they had only put their usual activities on hold. On the 20th of January they announced that they would go back to their normal services after having decided that they would no longer offer shelter to refugees (KontrapunktMalmo, January 20, 2016). This primarily meant that after "a break for some rest, reflection and evaluation" (KontrapunktMalmo, May 11, 2016) they would start with their weekly soup kitchens for the homeless, again opening up their premises for different activist groups during daytime and arranging cultural events in the evenings again (Interview 12).

Bashar was pleased with the outcomes of Kontrapunkt's engagement. Even though they had had no previous experience of helping so many people, and despite language barriers and cultural differences, they had managed to do their work. "We achieved something, we were able to help them, and if you compare the resources we had and the government had, we have done more than them" (Interview 12:9). He also emphasized that they were able to set up "Sweden's largest soup kitchen, on a leftist organisation level," which he said was a grand achievement (Interview 12:9).

7. Conclusions

If we never tried to seem a little better than we are, how could we improve or ‘train ourselves from the outside inward?’ (Charles H. Cooley 1922. In Goffman 1990:44)

The aim of this thesis has been to explore why people, the volunteers helped, why they decided to engage and how they constructed themselves as volunteers. The research was made possible through fieldwork conducted in the fall of 2015 and spring 2016. The fieldwork was based primarily on observations and participant observations conducted at two volunteer organisations, RWtM and Kontrapunkt and by interviews with the volunteers engaged in these volunteering spaces.

The analysis began in chapter four, where I presented why the volunteers got engaged in helping and how they did so. They felt a responsibility to take action when no one else did, which corresponds with their helping *habitus* (Bourdieu 1977;1990); empathic feelings derived from a shared experience were also strong motivators. With the help of Mauss (2002) I looked at volunteering as a gift and discussed what was exchanged when volunteering. The volunteers would give help, their time and of themselves, and in exchange they would get to feel better about themselves, knowing that they had accomplished something.

In chapter five I described how the volunteers organised and constructed themselves. With Goffman’s (1990) dramaturgical analysis I showed how different roles were performed. Volunteers performed differently depending on what setting and what audience was present. One of these roles was that of the “good volunteers” “doing good.” Through their performances volunteers got confirmed that they were being “good.” Those who were not perceived by other volunteers as performing the “good volunteer” were no longer welcome as helpers in the organisations. The role of the receiver of help was also defined. Some volunteers preferred what could be called “orderly” receivers. A difference was made between the people who they believed truly needed help, the refugees, and those who they sometimes perceived as merely greedy, the Romani.

The last chapter dealt with the situation that arose when the borders closed by the end of 2015, and refugees decreased in numbers. There was no purpose to volunteer anymore because, as I have shown, the costs (like time and money) were higher than the rewards

(gratification, satisfaction, appreciation, direct contact with refugees). Volunteers would get “nothing” in exchange for their effort, and there was no longer a possibility to perform the “good volunteer” for others. To be able to continue performing, feeling needed and belonging to a group, volunteers needed to restructure their activities and organisation to find new purposes to work for.

Through my fieldwork I learned what an important part the volunteers played in receiving and helping the refugees in Malmö. They actively worked as mediators between refugees and the authorities. For example when the Migration Agency set up a table at the central station to which refugees were to go to get information, there was no interaction between the people standing by the table and the refugees whatsoever. Not until the volunteers took the initiative to introduce them, did interaction take place

A common feature among the people with whom I had more in-depth interviews was that they often tried to get other people involved in helping. They were, so to say, pioneers in their social circles. They were the ones who made friends and family become more active. Maybe they were driven by the desire of being the first in doing something, to reach “transcendence” (Bauman 2013), or “greatness” (Mauss 2002). But perhaps it was only a personal need to always be the first at something? Many pointed out how they were there when the first refugee arrived or the first in their group to post something on Facebook about it. Some people, as mentioned earlier, even posted pictures of themselves helping or a picture as a proof that they had donated money to a cause. I posed the question, did they do it to engage others or did they do it to portray themselves as better persons, not necessarily in comparison to others, but to enhance their own image - the image of a good person, or a good citizen? Even if it was mostly about making other people care and get involved one cannot help noticing how the people helping did in some ways “become” “better” persons. People become good because they have shown to be good, through their performances declared Goffman (1990). As the above quote by Charles H. Cooley stated, if we did not try to be seen as good, or better persons, then how would we then ever become good?

Volunteering in Malmö brought together people that would have never met if it were not for their common desire to help. People from different ethnicities and ages bonded through the

work they did together. For example, immigrant boys met and cooperated with middle aged and retired ethnic Swedes as one volunteer told me (Interview 11).

The women I talked to seemed to be less satisfied about their efforts in helping, they always had a feeling that they could do more. However, the men who were interviewed were more often content with what they had achieved, whatever small or big action they had performed.

In sum, probably more questions than answers have emerged throughout the process of writing this thesis, which just proves to show how very complex the issue of volunteering and helping can be. Based on my studies, I could argue that the feeling of belonging to something is a strong motivation to help, and that the realization that you are working together for a greater good is alluring and sometimes even romanticised. I could also argue that helping seems to be a basic human need, like giving love and being loved. People I have worked with and studied see themselves as world citizens and have expanded their personal boundaries to include empathizing for more than friends and family, people from all walks of life, proving yet again, as the poet John Donne wrote in 1624 that, “no man is an island.”

7.1 Applicability

In applied cultural analysis, which is the vein I have worked in for this thesis, ”ethnographic examination” is combined with application (Cefkin 2009:17). Academic analysis is supposed to be transformed into practical knowledge (Hjemdahl, 2011:74), and as a cultural analyst my work is also to supply ”insight” (Cefkin 2009:13). In my thesis case, conveying an understanding of the volunteer’s motivations for helping can be of use to aid-work organisations, for example when recruiting new helpers.

Inspired by one of my interviewee’s account, I conclude that help organisations should have a clear aim or purpose for how they wish to help refugees and other people in need, and that this is to be communicated to everyone before admitting them as volunteers. This, to avoid recruiting people who join to help for the ”wrong” reasons (Interview 7). Clear directions on what each individual is supposed to do would also be of use, so that new recruits would know what to expect, and it might avoid a loss of volunteers in the future because of confusion or unclear aims or tasks. What is right and wrong for every particular organisation should be

decided by the organisations beforehand, so that people do not make decisions that are not in line with the organisation's purpose.

Finally, to get more people to help, volunteering organisations should try to make helping as easy as possible; when there are less obstacles in the way to actually help, more people will do so.

7.2 Future research

I suggest that further research be done on how to keep the “passion” alive among volunteers when the rewards of volunteering are not as immediate. Other research questions may include how volunteers could be “challenged” to want to engage and contribute again, once their cause has “cooled off” and the help they used to provide is not needed anymore. How can the organisation evolve into working with a “new” kind of help, and new activities? Maybe this could help these organizations better fill the gap between governmental authorities and/or activity centres and the refugees?

Based on my observations, it would be interesting to investigate further why such a great number of teenage girls got engaged. Another urgent issue would be hot to make volunteering more gender equal or neutral: how to recruit more men as volunteers?

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Interviews and go-along

Interview 1 Two volunteers (September 2015) Interviewer Isabel Rescala
Interview 2 Mary (September 2015) Interviewer Isabel Rescala
Interview 3 Camilla (October 2015) Interviewer Isabel Rescala
Interview 4 Said (October 2015) Interviewer Isabel Rescala
Interview 5 Sabina (October 2015) Interviewer Isabel Rescala
Interview 6 Emma (October 2015) Interviewer Isabel Rescala
Interview 7 Amir (October 2015) Interviewer Isabel Rescala
Interview 8 Alan and Kevin (October 2015) Interviewer Isabel Rescala
Interview 9 Emelie (October 2015) Interviewer Isabel Rescala
Interview 10 Hanna (October 2015) Interviewer Isabel Rescala
Interview 11 Kristina (January 2016) Interviewer Isabel Rescala
Interview 12 Bashar (February 2016) Interviewer Isabel Rescala
Interview 13 Karsten (October 2015) Interviewer Daniel Mårs
Interview 14 Ulla (October 2015) Interviewer Daniel Mårs
Interview 15 Malin (October 2015) Interviewer Daniel Mårs
Interview 16 Hannes (October 2015) Interviewer Carissa Typaldos
Go-along with Sabina (October 2015) conducted by Isabel Rescala

Unpublished material

Field notes, field diary and observations from fieldwork conducted between September 2015 to February 2016, in the author's possession.

APPENDIX #1

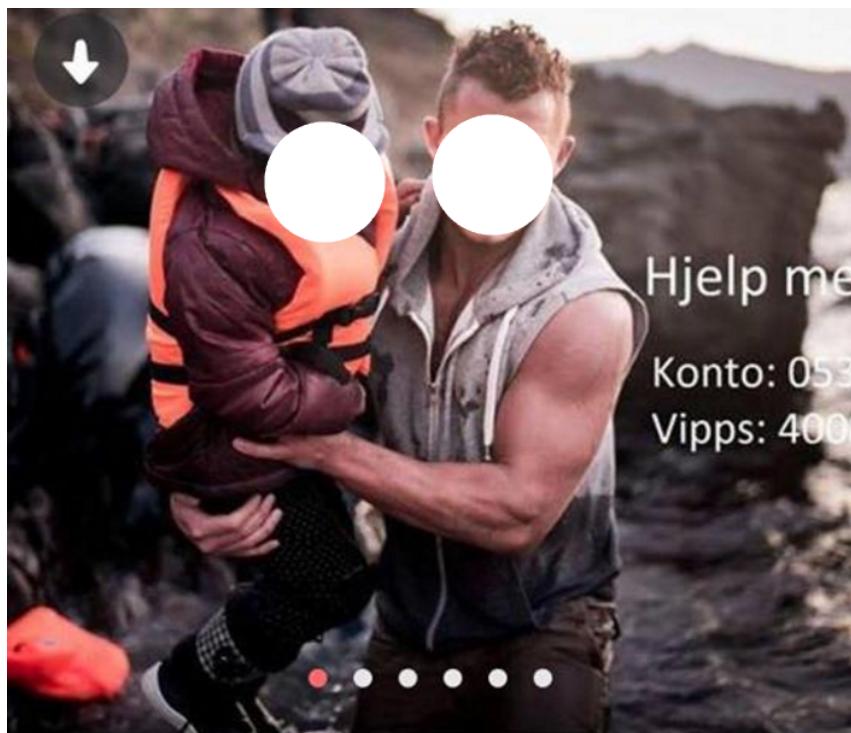
Picture of booking system

The screenshot shows a booking system interface with the following details:

- Top Navigation:** All Spots (selected), My Spots (1), Swap, Save, >
- Spots List:**
 - Informatör** (12:00am - 3:00am): Filled: 1 of 8. Status: [REDACTED] is signed up. Sign Up!
 - Informatör** (3:00am - 6:00am): Filled: 1 of 8. Status: [REDACTED] is signed up. Sign Up!
 - Informatör** (6:00am - 9:00am): Filled: 1 of 8. Status: [REDACTED] is signed up. Sign Up!
 - Informatör** (9:00am - 12:00pm): Filled: 0 of 8. Sign Up!
 - Informatör** (12:00pm - 3:00pm): Filled: 1 of 8. Status: [REDACTED] is signed up. Sign Up!
 - Informatör** (3:00pm - 6:00pm): Filled: 2 of 8. Status: [REDACTED] is signed up. MySpot (1) (with edit and delete icons). Sign Up!
- Add Comment:** Got a comment? Type it here!
- Participants:** You (1 spot), [REDACTED] (1 spot)
- Bottom Spots:**
 - Informatör** (6:00pm - 9:00pm): Filled: 0 of 8. Sign Up!
 - Informatör** (9:00pm - 12:00am): Filled: 0 of 8. Sign Up!

APPENDIX #2

Picture of man saving refugee published on <http://humanitariansoftinder.com/>



[REDACTED], 30



Self-Employed

BI Norwegian School of Management

37 kilometers away

Humanitarianman. eventvrer. livsnvter.