

'Friends that last a lifetime': the importance of emotions amongst volunteers working with refugees in Calais

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### Abstract

The European 'refugee crisis' has generated a broad movement of volunteers offering their time and skills to support refugees across the continent, in the absence of nation states. This article focuses on volunteers who helped in the informal refugee camp in Calais called the 'Jungle'. It looks at the importance of emotions as a motivating factor for taking on responsibilities that are usually carried out by humanitarian aid organizations. We argue that empathy is not only the initial motivator for action, but it also sustains the voluntary activity as volunteers make sense of their emotions through working in the camp. This type of volunteering has also created new spaces for sociability and community, as volunteers have formed strong emotional and relational bonds with each other and with the refugees. Finally, this article contributes to the growing body of literature that aims at repositioning emotions within the social sciences research to argue that they are an important analytical tool to understand social life and fieldwork.

5

Keywords: Calais; emotions; refugees; volunteers

## 23 Introduction

24 On 2 September 2015, front pages of newspapers across the world presented  
25 the tragedy of events in Syria in graphic detail. Photos of the lifeless body of  
26 Alan Kurdi, the three-year-old boy drowned with his mother and brother while  
27 attempting to flee from Syria, were broadcast, revealing the innocent victims of  
28 war. The outpouring of public emotion was palpable. Images of a limp, lifeless  
29 young child, face down in the sea, acted as a powerful motivating force for  
30 many volunteers who wanted to help in the European 'refugee crisis'. Hundreds

31 of people started to help, raise funds, collect aid and join organizations support-  
32 ing refugees across Europe, including in the Calais 'Jungle', which forms the  
33 basis of this article. Emotions are a powerful motivator for mobilization of vol-  
34 unteers and activists (Collins 1990; Jasper 2007), and the so-called 'refugee cri-  
35 sis' is no exception. As Hannah, one volunteer stated, 'My heart was really  
36 moved so that's why I was interested in getting involved and see what I could  
37 do and wherever I could do it' (Personal Interview, June 2016).

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38 Some commentators have suggested that social life is becoming more individ-  
39 ualistic (Giddens 1990, 1991, 1992; Beck 1992). Chouliaraki (2013) observes the  
40 emergence of the 'ironic spectator', an ambivalent figure that remains sceptical  
41 of moral appeals but, at the same time, is willing to offer help towards those  
42 who suffer because of the pleasure of a personal fulfilment. Others have argued  
43 that individualism has resulted in people withdrawing from political life and  
44 voluntarism (Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti 1993; Putnam 2000). Mestrovic  
45 (1997) suggested that this was because we live in a 'postemotional society'  
46 where people no longer emotionally connect with global suffering. Individual  
47 needs and feelings are placed above humanitarian activities because society in  
48 the Global North has become desensitized to the wider issues around the globe.  
49 This is particularly relevant to the 'refugee crisis' as the political and media  
50 have often represented refugees and asylum seekers as criminalized and racial-  
51 ized 'others' (Bhatia 2018). In doing so, refugees and asylum seekers are seen  
52 as dehumanized and unworthy of attention, or worse, as human detritus (Bau-  
53 man 1998). Whilst Mestrovic ignores all the groups working on important  
54 humanitarian issues, like supporting refugees or fighting AIDS, he does identify  
55 the importance of emotion in our identities and what motivates us to link with  
56 others. This article will argue against these positions and highlight that empathy  
57 and emotion are central motivators for those who volunteer their time in the  
58 'refugee crisis'.

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59 This article also argues that volunteering with refugees is infused with emo-  
60 tions throughout the process. It does this in three ways. Firstly, emotions are a  
61 key motivator for volunteers. Empathy and anger were identified as significant  
62 factors for individuals to volunteer their time in the 'Jungle' camp. Secondly,  
63 emotions are so central when volunteering with refugees that it can lead to a  
64 range of challenging and complex negotiations. Volunteers, for example, are  
65 often not prepared for the assault on their emotions. Not only can they hear or  
66 witness traumatic experiences, volunteers also need to manage their own emo-  
67 tions when volunteering and there is a significant amount of 'emotional labour'  
68 (Hochschild 1983) required to control one's emotions. Thirdly, alongside these  
69 powerful feelings, there are also joyous emotions. Volunteering has created  
70 many meaningful moments for volunteers and new and intense friendships  
71 have formed. As Durkheim (1912) argued, the emotional energy generated  
72 through regular interaction helps create a wider affiliation to the group. When  
73 additional emotional ingredients are added to that (for example, the collective

74 witnessing of the refugees' distress), deeper attachments can occur. Generally,  
75 in humanitarian work, aid workers engage with 'distant suffering', such as in  
76 Rwanda, Darfur or in other humanitarian emergencies (Terry 2002). Instead,  
77 the proximity to the UK of the refugee camps in France plays a central role in  
78 this process, as seeing such a degree of suffering on Europe's doorstep  
79 prompted volunteers to take on responsibilities.

80 By arguing that emotions are central to understanding the experiences of vol-  
81 unteers in the 'Jungle' refugee camp, this article makes a contribution to the lit-  
82 erature on emotional sociology. It highlights how difficult situations engender  
83 strong emotional attachments between participants. This article will outline the  
84 wider context for volunteers and the location of the research in the unofficial  
85 refugee camp in Calais called the 'Jungle'. It will then outline a wider sociology  
86 of emotions before presenting the methodology that was used. This will be fol-  
87 lowed by distinct sections that illustrate the importance of empathy as a moti-  
88 vating factor, the importance of emotional labour when volunteering and also  
89 the joyful emotions that result from volunteering.

## 90 The wider context – the 'Jungle' and the refugee crisis

91 In 2015 the numbers of refugees increased exponentially throughout Europe,  
92 with over a million people reaching Greek or Italian shores by boat (UNHCR  
93 2015a). Numbers have grown because of the proximity of the conflict in Syria  
94 and continued conflict and instability in different parts of the world, such as  
95 Sudan and Afghanistan. It is important to bear in mind that Europe takes in  
96 only 6 per cent of the total number of displaced people around the world, that  
97 in total amounted to 65 million people in 2015 (UNHCR 2015b). As Bhatia  
98 (2018) highlights, refugees are represented by sections of the media and politi-  
99 cians as racialized and criminalized outsiders that do not belong within Britain  
100 or Europe. They are invariably represented as an inconvenience, rather than  
101 the real victims of war, rape, physical and sexual abuse or torture and who are  
102 risking their lives to seek asylum. This has been accompanied by a violent  
103 response from police, as both refugees and volunteers have detailed repression  
104 that ranges from systematic harassment, pepper spraying belongings to make  
105 them unusable, to physical violence (Refugees Rights Data Project 2017;  
106 Human Rights Watch 2017).

107 International migration is not a new phenomenon at the Calais border. Since  
108 the 1990s, refugees have been transiting in this town to reach the UK. Since the  
109 closure of the main reception centre in the area, the Sangatte Centre, in 2002  
110 (Fassin 2005; Bhatia 2018), refugees started sleeping rough in the town and its  
111 outskirts. The 'Jungle' was informally established by refugees in spring 2015.  
112 France did not give permission to the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) or other  
113 international agencies to bring humanitarian relief, hence the 'Jungle' was left

114 to self-manage. Sanitation, basic housing and access to food, as well as other  
115 standard international norms for refugee protection and camp management,  
116 were absent (Brimelow 2016). Médecins Sans Frontières and Doctors of the  
117 World were the only international humanitarian agencies operating in the  
AQ3 118 camp. In August 2016, Help Refugees<sup>2</sup> published a census of the 'Jungle' that  
119 counted 9,106 people, including 676 unaccompanied minors, the youngest being  
120 eight years old (Help Refugees 2016). The census also listed 20 nationalities,  
121 the majority from Afghanistan and Sudan, and a small minority from Ethiopia, Iraq  
122 and Syria.

123 The absence of state action to try and resolve this 'crisis' necessitated the  
124 involvement of civil society and thousands of volunteers filled the humanitarian  
125 vacuum (Sandri 2017). Volunteers, mainly British, organized donation distribu-  
126 tions, cooked food, built shelters, provided healthcare but also organized enter-  
127 tainment, such as theatre, music and sport. This informal humanitarian aid  
128 remained highly dependent on donations from the public: in July 2016, for  
129 example, the main warehouse for clothes, tents and food was closed because of  
130 a lack of items to distribute. Fundraising too is subject to public emotional  
131 responses: in September 2015, after Alan Kurdi was found on the beach, one  
132 organization received £14,000 of donations in just one night through an online  
133 fundraising platform. In the following months, fundraising campaigns were not as  
134 fruitful and the organization struggled to fund its activities.

135 Volunteers were never trained in humanitarian aid and the vast majority was not  
136 familiar with the international systems of refugee protection. Given their  
137 inexperience in this field, volunteers had to understand the basics of humanitar-  
138 ian aid very quickly (Sandri 2017). In only a few months, and without any train-  
139 ing, volunteers were in charge of the entire management of the camp. In some cases,  
140 long-term volunteers quit their jobs and moved to the camp to dedicate  
141 themselves fully to the cause.

142 Not all volunteers chose to cut ties with their lives in Britain, though. Many  
143 people occasionally volunteered in Calais without committing to a single orga-  
144 nization, whilst others helped in the warehouses or engaged in fundraising activ-  
145 ities in the UK. Some of these organizations were led by political movements, others  
146 by Islamic and Christian groups, whilst many were civil society organiza-  
147 tions, established spontaneously in the summer of 2015. Some of the initiatives  
148 disappeared throughout the months because of a lack of funding or changes in  
149 the make-up of the camp. Additionally, there has been a growing criminaliza-  
150 tion of volunteers: in Northern France, volunteers face police violence and har-  
151 assment from local residents (Refugees Rights Data Project 2017; Human  
152 Rights Watch 2017); in Southern France, Cédric Herrou, a French farmer  
153 helping refugees cross the Italian-French border, was given a four-month sus-  
154 pended jail sentence in August 2017 (BBC News 2017). Yet, the 'Jungle',  
155 despite its wretchedness, was a place of communality and resourcefulness both of  
156 refugees and volunteers. The camp was dismantled in October 2016 and its

157 camp residents were scattered around France without a real alternative for  
158 resettlement.

## 159 Emotions in sociology

160 Being in the refugee camp in Calais is an emotional experience; both for refu-  
161 gees and volunteers. In contrast to 'rational actor' theories, humans are inher-  
162 ently emotional (Flam 1990). Emotions pervade everyday human interaction  
163 (Kemper 1978; Shott 1979). As Collins (1990: 28) argues, 'Emotions are 'the  
164 "glue" of solidarity – and what mobilises conflict'. The powerful image of the  
165 lifeless Alan Kurdi on the Greek shoreline stimulated worldwide interest in the  
166 European 'refugee crisis'. The drowned child symbolized the lack of humanity  
167 in political responses and led to an outpouring of emotion. Even British news-  
168 papers which can be characterized by a less than positive approach to refugees,  
169 such as the Daily Mail, ran headlines deploring the tragedy of the situation. As  
170 Jasper (1998: 398) states:

171 Emotions pervade all social life, social movements included. The most  
172 prosaic daily routines, seemingly neutral, can provoke violent emotional  
173 responses when interrupted. Unusual actions probably involve even more,  
174 and more complex, feelings. Not only are emotions part of our responses  
175 to events, but they also – in the form of deep affective attachments –  
176 shape the goals of our actions.

177  
178 Emotions are so central to the mobilization and sustenance of voluntary  
179 activity groups in refugee camps that these activities could not exist without  
180 them.

181 Social actors' feelings are complex, multi-layered and often contradictory.  
182 This is especially true of volunteers in the 'Jungle' who were confronted with  
183 extreme stories of human suffering, but also met people, both volunteers and  
184 refugees, whose company they enjoyed. Flam (1990) argues that contradictory  
185 and complex emotions can undermine the group. Yet she refers to pre-existing  
186 emotions brought into the group, rather than those generated within the group.  
187 Emotions emerge through social interaction and are a way of connecting to  
188 another (Katz 1999; Ahmed 2004). Collective activity can generate an emo-  
189 tional sense of belonging (Durkheim 1912) and, in turn, it can intensify individ-  
190 ual emotions: 'human sentiments are intensified when affirmed collectively.  
191 Sorrow, like joy, becomes exalted and amplified when leaping from mind to  
192 mind' (Durkheim 1912: 446). Yet emotions do not introduce feelings into a  
193 social activity, they merely highlight them and enable the researcher to analyse  
194 the wider significance (Katz 1999).

195 Ontologically, emotions are embodied cultural practises. Ahmed (2004: 4)  
196 argues that 'Emotions shape the very surfaces of bodies, which take shape

197 through the repetition of actions over time'. These repetitive cultural practices  
198 create affective ties that help social actors to align themselves socially and polit-  
199 ically. Yet Ahmed (2004) suggests that these emotions exist at the border, on  
200 the surfaces of bodies. Whilst emotions are sensory and pleasure and pain can  
201 be determined through touch and other senses, there is also a visceral aspect to  
202 emotion. As Katz (1999) argues, emotions are accompanied by a physiological  
203 response. When we are angry, our muscles tighten, our eyes narrow with our  
204 blood pressure rising. When we are fearful, our stomach will feel knotted and  
205 constricted. There is a phenomenological way of seeing emotion, that is a uni-  
206 fied physical and emotional entity; 'My body', as Merleau-Ponty (1962: 234)  
207 suggests, 'is not a collection of adjacent organs but a synergic system, all of the  
208 functions of which are exercised and linked together in the general action of  
209 being in the world'. The social actor may be drawing on a cultural language of  
210 emotions, but this is enacted through bodily performance.

211 Emotions have been a peripheral analytical tool in social theory. Despite  
212 brief allusions to 'affectual actions', Weber emphasized the rational aspects of  
213 social life, while Marx's early social ontology highlighted that social praxis was  
214 a 'sensuous human activity'. Sensuousness implies a physical and emotional  
215 response, rather than intellectual. However, Marx's later Materialism virtually  
216 stripped out any indication of emotion even though resentment is a key compo-  
217 nent of class conflict (Barbalet 1998). Of the classical thinkers, Durkheim  
218 (1912) placed emotion central in his later work. Durkheim's influential analysis  
219 of religion highlighted how regular ritualistic interaction generates not only the  
220 totems that symbolize the group, but also the 'collective effervescence' that pro-  
221 vides the glue of solidarity. In the case of the organization we researched, one  
222 of the group's symbol is a red heart, worn as a badge, or forming the basis of  
223 placards at marches. As the heart symbolizes the powerful emotion of love, the  
224 group embodied the importance of emotion as collective identity.

225 The re-emergence of emotion as a central component of social theory can be  
226 traced to the work of Randall Collins (1975). Subsequently, Collins (2004)  
227 draws on the work of Durkheim, in partnership with Goffman's microsociologi-  
228 cal work, to develop interaction ritual theory. Goffman's (1967) interaction rit-  
229 uals highlight the small repetitive actions that underpin everyday interaction.

230 They are rituals because

231 this activity, however informal and secular, represents a way in which the  
232 individual must guard and design the symbolic implications of his [or her]  
233 acts while in the presence of an object that has a special value for him [or  
234 her]. (Goffman 1967: 57)

235  
236 As social actors manage their presentation of self, they engage in patterns of  
237 interaction they deem appropriate for the situation. These patterns of behav-  
238 iour have to be performed and re-performed for there to build an emotional  
239 rapport with others. As Collins (2004) notes in relation to the 9/11 attack, whilst

240 there were the ingredients of emotions, shared focus and bodily co-presence  
241 that temporarily united survivors, there was no regular or ritualistic repetition  
242 that unified them more strongly as a group. In contrast, the volunteers in the  
243 'Jungle' regularly interacted with each other and refugees through voluntarism,  
244 social activities and activism. This sustained regular engagement reinforced vol-  
245 unteers' unity under the emotional stress of the situation.

246 The work of Arlie Hochschild is also significant in the re-emergence of emo-  
247 tions in sociological thought. Hochschild (1983) identifies the importance of  
248 managing emotions in our daily working lives. The concept of 'emotional  
249 labour' is useful when considering volunteers working in the 'Jungle'. This type  
250 of labour 'requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the out-  
251 ward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others' (Hochs-  
252 child 1983: 7). The social actor has to engage in 'emotion work' to manage  
253 feelings. This is part of a process, and 'in managing a feeling, we contribute to  
254 the creation of it' (Hochschild 1983: 18). Although Hochschild focuses on those  
255 working in the service industries, this is also important for those volunteering  
256 their time. Volunteers have to learn to suppress their own emotions when  
257 spending their time with people who have endured traumatic lives. In order to  
258 do this, volunteers utilize 'feeling rules' that 'demarcate how much of a given  
259 feeling, held in a given way, is crazy, unusual but understandable, normal, inap-  
260 propriate, or almost inappropriate for a given social context' (Hochschild 1990:  
261 122). Hochschild (1983) also identifies the importance of collective emotional  
262 labour as a way of supporting colleagues. Teamwork is vital when supporting  
263 others' emotion work. The collective can fuel the anger, or provide support  
264 when managing a complex range of feelings. Given the intensely traumatic  
265 experiences of many of the refugees in the 'Jungle', this requires significant  
266 emotion work from those volunteering. And as many people engaged in volun-  
267 tary activity in this study did not have explicit training in this area, the solidarity  
268 of fellow volunteers becomes ever more important for emotional support.

## 269 Methodology

270 This study is based on participant observation by both authors with one volun-  
271 tary organization that established and provided a range of services in the 'Jun-  
272 gle' from June 2015 until the camp's closure in November 2016. Since then, the  
273 organization has continued to provide services and support for unaccompanied  
274 asylum-seeking children (UASC) in the UK. The group is a collective network  
275 of over 500 volunteers that includes builders, medics, artists, youth workers,  
276 fundraisers and activists. As a grassroots network, it was able to respond quickly  
277 to events on the ground in the 'Jungle' by providing clothing and other forms of  
278 aid, such as shelters, first aid and a safe space for young people. Within this net-  
279 work, there is a core group of about 20 people who regularly volunteer with

280 UASC, coordinate activities, participate in meetings, or attend social events.  
281 Given the racialized and dehumanized representation of refugees and asylum  
282 seekers in the media (Bhatia 2014, 2018), it is important to acknowledge that  
283 whilst the staff is ethnically diverse and it includes refugees or asylum-seekers  
284 too, the majority of volunteers would identify as White European. The authors  
285 are conscious of the power relations that can exist between volunteers based in  
286 Europe and those seeking refuge, and we are aware that these power relations  
287 can impact how volunteers, activists and researchers engage with refugees  
288 (Lumsden and Winter 2014). Ethics need to be placed centrally within these  
289 relationships in order to avoid that refugees may feel exploited or vulnerable  
290 (Pittaway, Bartolomei and Hugman 2010). This is not to deny their agency, as  
291 many refugees volunteered in the project. It is about acknowledging the privi-  
292 lege of the researchers and those volunteers who could freely move across bor-  
293 ders. Following these ethical considerations, the focus of this research has been  
294 placed on the volunteers travelling from the UK to the camp rather than on  
295 camp residents.

296 Both authors are long-term volunteers with this organization and mem-  
297 bers of the core group. As a result, this research stems out of our direct  
298 engagement with this organization. Apart from going to Calais to provide  
299 humanitarian aid, we have also volunteered in the UK, providing support  
300 and assistance for the organization in different forms, including administra-  
301 tion of social media, fundraising, campaigns, protests and emotional sup-  
302 port. As many other volunteers, when we first offered to help we did not  
303 imagine that we would have committed so much of our time to this cause in  
304 the coming months. Because of our involvement – both practical and emo-  
305 tional – we could not pretend to write as neutral observers. Doing research  
306 on a highly emotionally charged topic and, at the same time, feeling those  
307 emotions, has meant that our work is necessarily permeated with feelings.  
308 This, however, does not mean that the findings are not to be trusted or that  
309 our work is less valuable. As Bhatia (2014) argues, emotions are a ‘naviga-  
310 tion system’. They indicate where we are as researchers and in which direc-  
311 tion we should go. Ignoring emotions mutes the research, both the power of  
312 the participants, and the impact of the researcher.

313 Being volunteers gave us the chance to understand the internal dynamics of  
314 the organization as well as comprehending the most critical issues concerning  
315 refugees in Calais. Understanding and not suppressing the emotions that arose  
316 during fieldwork is essential to the knowledge of this field (Holland 2007). This  
317 research, then, is based on the idea that:

318 ..rather than repressing emotion in epistemology it is necessary to rethink  
319 the relation between knowledge and emotion and construct conceptual  
320 models that demonstrate the mutually constitutive rather than opposi-  
321 tional relations between reason and emotion. (Jaggar 1989: 156–7).

322 Nevertheless, when we started writing this article, we reflected that within our  
323 organization volunteers seldom share their feelings with each other. Even  
324 though group members provide extensive collective emotional labour through  
325 solidarity, chats and hugs, deep emotional feelings were not communicated.  
326 Only when volunteers couldn't return due to the traumas experienced, did core  
327 members address these feelings.<sup>3</sup> This might be because similar feelings are felt  
328 within the group and more often, we both find ourselves 'unloading' with other  
329 people who are external to the core group.

330 The content of this article derives from our first-hand experiences, as well as  
331 from in-depth semi-structured interviews carried out by the second author with  
332 five volunteers from the core group in the summer of 2016. Whilst some of the  
333 volunteers did have prior involvement in refugee projects or anti-racism activ-  
334 ities, many were driven by the emotional need to do something for fellow  
335 human beings. With three exceptions, the core group of volunteers did not  
336 know each other prior to going to the 'Jungle'. Yet the group has created and  
337 maintained strong bonds of solidarity and friendship throughout the months.  
338 Due to the previous involvement with the organization, a significant level of  
339 mutual trust was shared with interviewees, which allowed the interviewing pro-  
340 cess to be open and intimate. During the interviews, some of the interviewees  
341 became visibly emotional recalling some of the situations they witnessed in the  
342 camps. Of course, this emotional response was not triggered for the purpose of  
343 the argument. What became striking during the interviews was that the experi-  
344 ence of volunteering in the 'Jungle' is very much tied to emotions and to their  
345 response even outside of the camp. A vast range of words connected to emo-  
346 tions kept surfacing when talking about their experiences, such as 'annoyed',  
347 'bothered', 'angry', 'shocked', 'overwhelmed' and 'heartbroken'. These feelings  
348 are shared by other volunteers (Storm 2016), and they reinforce the importance  
349 of emotions in volunteering. As Pink (2009: 83) argues, interviews are 'social,  
350 sensorial and emotive encounters'. Identifying and understanding the emotive  
351 aspects are crucial when conducting interviews of volunteers in refugee camps.

352 Finally, we would like to make a contribution to 'sensory ethnography' (Pink  
353 2009). For Pink (2009: 10), 'doing sensory ethnography entails taking a series of  
354 new participatory and collaborative ethnographic research techniques in terms of  
355 sensory perception, categories, meanings and values, ways of knowing and prac-  
356 tise'. Whilst we did not use specific participatory activities as a means of data col-  
357 lection, we acknowledge and reflect upon the sensual nature of ethnography in  
358 the 'Jungle'. We would challenge any visitor to the camp to not see it as an assault  
359 on the senses. The sights of the living conditions and despair etched onto the faces  
360 of the camp's inhabitants would be contrasted with the moments of joy when foot-  
361 ball matches took place. The feeling of squelching through cold, wet mud in order  
362 to run errands would sit with the smells of the wood fires burning. When police  
363 fired tear gas into the camp, there was a direct link between the sensual impact on  
364 the body and eyes, and the heightened emotions of those running away.

365 Consequently, the authors also engaged in 'participant sensing' (Pink  
366 2009). This is 'where the ethnographer often simultaneously undergoes a  
367 series of unplanned everyday life experiences and is concerned with pur-  
368 posefully joining in with whatever is going on in order to become further  
369 involved in the practices of the research participants' (Pink 2009: 67). As  
370 this article is not the description of an ethnographic experience in the camp,  
371 but a study of emotions amongst volunteers who spent time there, it is still  
372 important to be aware of the broader sensual experience of being in the  
373 'Jungle' which could have an emotional impact on the volunteers. Drawing  
374 on Katz (1999), ontologically, emotions are embodied. The sensual aspects  
375 of spending time in the 'Jungle' impacted on the emotions and feelings of  
376 those volunteering. Acknowledging and emphasizing these emotional  
377 aspects allows us to develop a deeper understanding of how an intense sen-  
378 sual environment links to our emotional responses. As Pink (2009: 65) iden-  
379 tifies, 'the sensory ethnographer would not only observe and document  
380 other people's sensory categories and behaviours, but seek routes through  
381 which to develop experience-based empathetic understandings of what  
382 others might be experiencing and knowing'. Acknowledging the role of  
383 emotions is crucial in developing that understanding.

#### 384 The importance of empathy

385 Empathy is an important motivator for volunteers joining groups who worked  
386 in the 'Jungle'. Shott (1979: 1328) argues that empathy is 'the arousal in oneself  
387 of the emotion one would feel in another's situation'. Social actors have a physi-  
388 ological response to the joy or despair of another, often those with whom they  
389 share no pre-existing relationship. Reinforcing Bhatia's (2018) argument, when  
390 refugees were explicitly dehumanized, but then humanized through the work in  
391 the camp, there was an emotional reaction. Two events happened that were  
392 considered by our informants as the tipping points, both of which caused mass  
393 public outrage: firstly, when then Prime Minister David Cameron referred to  
394 refugees in Calais as a 'swarm' (BBC News 2015); and secondly, when the  
395 photo of Alan Kurdi was published. Interviewees recalled that at that point  
396 they felt determined to act as they felt it became their responsibility to alleviate  
397 the suffering of refugees. This emotional response moves individuals to act, as  
398 one volunteer stated:

399 I was moved by the cause and once I met the people I was back there  
400 before I had a chance to think about it – my legs kept taking me  
401 there. I don't even know how many times I've been there, months  
402 and months at the weekends but when things were really, really bad,  
403 I took annual leave to manage the situation. (Hannah, Personal inter-  
404 view, June 2016)

405 She openly states that she was moved by the cause and this motivated her to  
406 join the group. She saw the situation on the news and felt that she had 'to do  
407 something about it'. Although this emotional empathic response drove the ini-  
408 tial voluntary activity, it led to face-to-face interactions with people in the camp  
409 and this fuelled her empathic engagement. As Durkheim (1912) noted, sus-  
410 tained, repeated interactions generate a collective emotional engagement with  
411 the group. Hannah's comments highlight how empathy can be an initial motiva-  
412 tor, but this is sustained through repetitive voluntary activity.

413 Empathy is not simply a motivating factor, but places the subject firmly  
414 within the social action. The individual volunteer is not only motivated to act  
415 out of an emotional feeling, but helps the individual to understand and make  
416 sense of the situation. Just as Katz (1999) showed in relation to road rage, an  
417 'attack' on the car becomes an 'attack' on the individual; ontologically, the car  
418 becomes an extension of the self. Likewise, inhuman conditions for refugees is  
419 seen as an attack on the individual volunteer. As Katz (1999: 24) argues, 'we  
420 must understand how becoming "pissed off" is not simply a "release of tension"  
421 or some other negatively defined phenomenon but is a positive affect to con-  
422 struct new meaning for the situation'. Empathy drives the individual to resolve  
423 that embodied feeling. Shott (1979: 1329) highlights that:

424 Perhaps more than any other sentiment, empathy connects us intimately  
425 with others, making us share their distress or pleasure. By relieving the  
426 unhappiness of those with whom we empathise, or increasing their happi-  
427 ness, we relieve or increase our own corresponding feeling.

428  
429 The central factors here are not just about emotionally connecting with some-  
430 one else, but resolving one's own feelings aroused by the situation. As Oliver  
431 stated:

432 It's just my empathy, these people are no different from me, they're hurt-  
433 ing. They ran away from something horrible. If I can help to make their  
434 existence a little bit less uncomfortable then I should do that. We should  
435 all do that. (Personal interview, July 2016)

436  
437 Oliver explicitly explains his motivation as empathy. Ontologically, he identifies  
438 himself and those in the camp as the same. By alleviating their suffering, no  
439 matter how lightly, is a way of making sense of the situation and resolving one's  
440 own emotional reaction to the event.

441 There are two levels of empathy: 'one entails feeling what *we* would feel in  
442 another's situation; the other consists of feeling the emotions *the other person*  
443 feels [italics in the original]' (Shott 1979: 1328). Both locate the individual within  
444 the emotions, but the first is more subjective and identifying how that individual  
445 imagines they would feel in that situation. Clara, project leader, recalls:

446 I can't remember what news report actually made me feel angry or made  
447 me feel motivated to go to Calais. The thing I can remember is walking

448 into the kitchen and saying 'I'm going to quit my job, I'm going to quit  
449 everything and go to Calais because people are being treated like shit in  
450 Calais and it's just the worst thing to hear about it all'. (Personal inter-  
451 view, June 2016)

452  
453 Clara's own feelings of anger at the situation in Calais was resolved by empow-  
454 ering herself to try and do something about it. She felt angry about the condi-  
455 tions of refugees and resolved of herself to lead a response. Yet this was before  
456 she experienced conditions in the 'Jungle' first-hand.

457 The second level of empathy requires a greater emotional connection to the  
458 individuals affected. It requires understanding how the other person feels and  
459 in some cases, this is relatively easy, as Oliver states:

460 Sometimes I feel like shouting and screaming, people don't realise what's  
461 going on so close by. When it rains, I don't find myself being worried  
462 about me getting wet, I'd be thinking about all the people over the tunnel  
463 getting wet. It's really stuck in my heart. (Personal interview, July 2016)

464  
465 One can understand what it is like to be cold and wet. Oliver transferred his  
466 feelings of concern for the weather onto those he knew to be in worse condi-  
467 tions. This intimate understanding of the experience of others may also derive  
468 from a volunteer's experience of volunteering in the 'Jungle' or their own per-  
469 sonal history. Irena affirmed, 'I was bothered about it because [...] it's circum-  
470 stantial, it could happen to everyone and it has happened to me in the past'  
471 (personal interview, May 2016). Having come from a country that experienced  
472 extreme conflict, Irena was able to empathize directly with those in the 'Jungle'.  
473 Empathy derives from subjective feelings of a wider social situation that entail  
474 identifying with others and then utilizing those emotions to make sense of the  
475 situation.

#### 476 The emotional labour of volunteering

477 As noted earlier, 'emotional labour' presupposes the management of emotions  
478 in our daily working life (Hochschild 1983). 'Emotional labour' requires the  
479 control, management and suppression of emotions when engaging with other  
480 people. Although Hochschild focuses on employees managing emotion in the  
481 workplace, the concept is useful for volunteers as they have to interact with a  
482 variety of traumatic experiences. In everyday life, emotions are something that  
483 constantly emerge in interaction with others. Hence, it requires significant  
484 'emotion work' to manage emotions as well as present the emotions that the  
485 individual wants to display (Katz 1999). This is amplified when confronted with  
486 a variety of stories and images from the camp. As one volunteer demonstrates:

487 I think it's traumatic for people [volunteers], they don't expect to see that  
488 stuff and that level of suffering, they don't expect to see people having to

489 go through that experience. [...] I think it burdens people emotionally  
490 and mentally. I've come back and have been ok and then I felt very very  
491 angry. Angry that it's happening, very upset and devastated by seeing  
492 people that are living in those conditions. But then it has motivated me  
493 to go back out there, it's my compassion that moves me and to go back  
494 out and try to do what I can where I can. (Hannah, personal interview,  
495 June 2016)

496  
497 Hannah draws on a range of emotions when referring to the situation in the  
498 camp. Experiencing the conditions is traumatic, yet this leads to a sense of  
499 helplessness then anger. As Katz (1999) argues, emotions are a way of an  
500 individual taking control of the situation. Hannah highlights how getting  
501 angry motivated her to volunteer, which was underpinned by her compas-  
502 sion. The emotional anguish about the 'refugee crisis' needed to be soothed  
503 through the direct encounter with the refugees. This wasn't the selfish, per-  
504 sonal gain identified by Chouliaraki (2013); volunteering was a way for the  
505 volunteers to affect some control of their own emotions by attempting to  
506 have an impact in the camp.

507 The conditions in the camp led many volunteers to be confronted with diffi-  
508 cult emotional situations. Volunteers were not professional humanitarians and  
509 were not trained in how to deal with this type of emotional labour. Volunteers  
510 had to draw on their own 'feeling rules' (Hochschild 1990) in order to navigate  
511 their way through the difficult emotions:

512 The worst thing is that it's there. One of my worst ever experiences was  
513 meeting a kid of fifteen, who came all the way from Syria, his family were  
514 dead. I was going down the queue of people outside the clinic, and I said  
515 'What's wrong with you?' and his eyes filled up and said 'You have to  
516 help me'. He just arrived, his family were dead, he probably just learned  
517 those words, he just wept and wept and wept. He was shaking like a leaf,  
518 the weather was terrible, muddy and wet, and I didn't know what to say  
519 or to do. At that moment, I just knelt in the mud, sat and held his hands. I  
520 don't know how I didn't fall completely and utterly to pieces, but after  
521 that when we got a translator to tell us his story, I felt devastated. (Han-  
522 nah, personal interview, June 2016)

523  
524 Hannah shows the incredible emotional labour undertaken so as not to 'com-  
525 pletely and utterly fall to pieces'. She drew on her own emotional resources to  
526 do what she felt to be the right thing to do in that situation and demonstrate  
527 compassion to the teenager.

528 Creating an emotional connection with the refugees strengthened the volun-  
529 teers' sense of purpose in the camp and made the volunteering experience  
530 more poignant. The informants also stressed that leaving the 'Jungle' was emo-  
531 tionally hard because they felt they were abandoning their friends. Hannah,  
532 talking about her feelings when returning to Britain, said:

533 It made everything else seem a bit meaningless. You come back and  
534 there's almost a sense of guilt sometimes, you feel guilty for what you  
535 have. (Personal interview, June 2016)

536

537 The reflexivity of Hannah reiterated the power and privilege that the British-  
538 based volunteers held. Because of the emotional aftermath many experience,  
539 volunteers with a background in counselling organized support groups that  
540 offered the opportunity to confidentially offload and seek peer assistance after  
541 visiting the camp. In this way, further trusted connections among volunteers  
542 were created, reinforcing the strong sense of mutual solidarity.

543 The joy and sociability of volunteering

544 Despite many of the difficult emotions, volunteering created a significant space  
545 for sociality and new forms of community. People from different backgrounds  
546 organized aid convoys and volunteered together despite their differing motives  
547 and outlooks on life (Sandri 2017). Simmel (1949) argued that a shared sense of  
548 purpose helped foster a sense of 'sociability'. On one hand, this can be political.  
549 Maeckelbergh (2009) points out that the commitment to a particular cause that  
550 rejects inequality inevitably creates unity between individuals. Offering time,  
551 ideas and skills for a particular purpose creates social, affective, and self-  
552 making effects (Malkki 2015). As Taylor (1989: 769) argues, in relation to the  
553 women's movement:

554 Personal ties of love and friendship among members were an important  
555 cultural ideal. A willingness to shape personal relationships around the  
556 cause was, in large measure, what made possible the intense commitment  
557 of members.

558

559 This point was also made by Oliver, 'I don't think at any point in my life in such  
560 a short amount of time I ever made so many new friends that are all so warm  
561 and caring and just brilliant' (personal interview, July 2016). Meeting people  
562 who shared a similar set of cultural ideals was an important aspect of sustaining  
563 personal friendships.

564 The intense emotion that emerged in the camp helped foster this sense of  
565 community. Durkheim demonstrated that the emotional energy of the gather-  
566 ing fuelled a sense of group affiliation and belonging. This sentiment was clearly  
567 expressed by Oliver:

568 When you go through such incredibly emotionally experiences, you bond  
569 very quickly. A lot of us have very strong bonds with each other. I'm sure  
570 there's friendships that have been made in the last year that will last a life  
571 time. (Personal interview, July 2016)

572

573 These regular interactions fostered new and intense relationships and friend-  
574 ships. Emotion helped forge the sense of belonging amongst the various

575 volunteers, but these extended beyond weekends spent in the 'Jungle'. Malkki,  
576 in her ethnography of Finnish Red Cross humanitarian aid workers, notes a  
577 strong desire among her informants to feel 'part of something greater than  
578 themselves' (Malkki 2015: 9). Similarly, for many volunteers in Calais, one of  
579 the motivating forces behind the work in the 'Jungle', was the wish to 'be on  
580 the right side of history', a sentence we heard many times at volunteer meet-  
581 ings. This example signals a strong sense of community based on the work with  
582 refugees in Calais.

583 The improvised nature of the camp and voluntary activity offered many  
584 memorable moments. Despite the traumatic aspects, these also provided oppor-  
585 tunities for fun, laughter and joy. As Hannah recalls:

586 We had a great weekend where we played football and there were women,  
587 kids, people from all the globe playing football and everyone forgot every-  
588 thing for a while. Those are the meaningful things to me, being united and  
589 connected, having a laugh, sharing stories and sitting around after the foot-  
590 ball, eating oranges, everybody relaxing and chatting and be able to have  
591 a heart-warming kind of experience. (Personal interview, June 2016)

592  
593 A simple game of football provided an opportunity to escape the harsh conditions  
594 of the camp, and to unite and connect with others from all walks of life. The post-  
595 match oranges also gave an opportunity to bond and, more importantly, it gave  
596 an opportunity to reflect on the warmth and compassion of those taking part.

## 597 Conclusion

598 In this article, we have shown that rather than being an obstacle to research, emo-  
599 tions can open up new levels of enquiry. We wish to make a contribution to the  
600 repositioning of emotions inside of the social sciences, both as a subject of study  
601 and as an intrinsic part of fieldwork. The case of volunteering with refugees in  
602 the 'Jungle' has shown that emotions are one of the greatest motivators for 603  
action. Emotions emerged as a way of taking control of the situation (Katz 1999). 604  
Volunteering can be seen as a way to channel feelings that linger in someone's 605  
life and are otherwise unable to take form. Empathy, we argued, is a multi- 606  
layered emotion that motivated people to go to the 'Jungle' camp and, at the 607  
same time, it is a way to connect with others, be it refugees or volunteers. In this 608  
connection, and through the practical engagement with the 'refugee crisis', volun- 609  
teers found ways to resolve feelings of helplessness, heartbroken-ness and anger 610  
related to the current situation in Europe. This emotional engagement has also 611  
created communities of volunteers who have shared their feelings, both before, 612  
during and after their experiences in the camp. Volunteers are part of the same 613  
'emotional labour' (Hochschild 1983), inasmuch they have to negotiate between 614  
the refugees' suffering and their own anguish about being in the 'Jungle'.

615 However, joyous emotions are also at the centre of this experience: volun-  
616 teers have created deep and meaningful emotional connections with each other  
617 and with the refugees. The fact that they shared the particular experience of  
618 going to the 'Jungle' has fostered relationships that have become central in the  
619 volunteers' lives. These conflicting and contradictory emotions emerged during  
620 our research and are best exemplified by Irena:

621 I met some fantastic people. Regardless of how bad it was, on the way  
622 there and back we laughed because laughter is the best way to deal with  
623 stress. And I know this, even during the war for months everything is so  
624 bad but you get hysterical and you laugh, and it's a human condition. I  
625 really cherish those moments when you cry and laugh at the same time. 626  
(Personal interview, May 2016)

627  
628 In our experience as researchers and volunteers, there is very high level of  
629 mutual trust and affection between volunteers even though their relationships  
630 are relatively new. Having shared other people's suffering has meant that vol-  
631 unteers have formed strong bonds with each other. All in all, we have argued  
632 that emotions necessarily need to be taken into account when looking at experi-  
633 ences of volunteering with refugees because they are central to volunteers'  
634 actions, as motivators, sustenance for the group and they help to make sense of  
635 the situation.

636 (Date accepted: April 2018)

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challenging comments on an 643 earlier  
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like to thank the anonymous reviewers  
for 645 their constructive reviews in  
making this 646 paper better.

647 2. Help Refugees is a charity that  
began  
648 in the summer of 2015 to provide  
aid to

the 'Jungle'. They have since  
expanded to support refugee  
settlements in Paris, Greece,  
Turkey, Syria and Lebanon.

3. Some volunteers from the wider  
net- work of 500 did not return to the  
camp because of the emotional  
impact, but for the purposes of this  
article, we have focused on those  
who were members of the core  
group and consequently, returned to  
the 'Jungle' regularly.

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