Exploring Trauma: Refugee Students in Education through Teachers' Eyes
The case in Greece

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Abstract

Humans' nature combined with the appropriate triggers can ignite the innate aggression that everyone bears from birth. This fact can explain merely humans' thirst for power and destruction. Thus, the ongoing conflicts have resulted in the movement of large populations over the years. The most vulnerable victims of war's aggression are the children. These children bear severe war-related traumas, as they have lost or, even worse, witnessed the death of a close family member. To escape and protect themselves, they subject themselves to dangerous journeys. When they arrive in Greece, one of the reception countries of the Eastern Mediterranean route, to integrate into Greek society, they gain access to education as soon as possible. However, because of their war-related traumas, their integration becomes more difficult. Researchers mention that in general these traumas seriously impact refugee children's school life. Signs of depression, fear, and violent behavior can be observed in these children according to some teachers, as it will be shown in the fieldwork conducted in Greece in the context of the present thesis. The Greek government, following the EU's guidelines and in collaboration with other stakeholders tries to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for war-affected children, helping them to overcome their past traumas and build a better future. However, for the Greek Government's effort to be successful, we have to understand exactly what types of trauma these children display, and whether Greek teachers are well-trained to recognize these war-related traumas.

Tags

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Preface

Every step or every action we take in our lives is a journey that we have to go through. Every journey teach us a lesson which may be a small one or it may cause big changes in our lives. If you read this thesis out of interest or because you have to grade it, you surely can understand that this is the end of this journey for me. The end of this journey is written in the airport, as I am waiting to board to the airplane and return back to my home country; the place from where this journey started. This journey lasted for two years and after these years, too many things happened; some of them extremely good and some extremely bad; many travels around Europe, a Master's program abroad in the Netherlands, new international friends, a loving partner, an internship in Brussels, and the loss of a close relative which left a painful mark on me. There were many times that I was thinking to give up. However, I am glad that I didn't. I am also grateful for every experience I have gained through this year and my master's program played a really important role in my personal growth and allowed me to combine my passions for education and immigration.

Immigration is a journey as well but most of the time is a forced one. This mostly happens because of survival reasons such as economic reasons or because of severe war conditions. So the seeds of the aforementioned passions were planned some years ago when I was working as a Russian teacher. One day my mobile phone rang, but I didn't recognize the number so I was hesitant to answer the call. Eventually, I did, and on the other line of the phone, a man's voice could be heard. He was a father of Russian descent who had recently moved to Greece with his wife and his nine-year-old son before the beginning of the war in Ukraine. The child and his parents didn't speak Greek, yet they came to me seeking help to teach their son the language and help him adjust to the new Greek school setting. They wanted to help him integrate smoothly and build positive relationships with his classmates. However, the boy felt isolated because he couldn't communicate with his peers, and none of them could understand him either. I explained to them that I wasn't trained to teach Greek as a second language but they insisted as it was too difficult for them to find a teacher of Russian origin, to teach the Greek language. As a teacher, I felt a responsibility to assist him. This experience made me more aware of the difficulties encountered by immigrant children, leading me to link this issue with a significant concern in Greek society: immigration.

At this point, I would like to personally thank those people without whom this thesis assignment would have never been completed. First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Niels M. Terpstra for all his support and guidance. He was the one who every time put me on the right path and did not let me get lost during this process. Moreover, I would like to thank Ms. Athina Balopoulou who was my supervisor during my internship at the Unit of Justice and Home Affairs in the Permanent Representation of Greece to the EU. She guided me through the practices concerning legal migration and she allowed me to experience by myself, through participation, how counselors of each European country gather together to negotiate and to finally reach a consensus. Additionally, many thanks to Dr. Smaragda Kazi, Professor of Developmental Psychology at the Department of Psychology at Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences. Her help in analyzing the psychological aspect of this thesis assignment was immense as I am not an expert in psychology and I approached this research project from the perspective of a Human Geographer.

Furthermore, I want to say "thank you" to all the participants from the 2nd Greek Intercultural Education High School of Athens and other schools for their participation in this assignment. Without their cooperation, I would not be able to come to these conclusions. Last but not least, I would like to thank my family and my partner for all the mental, emotional, and financial support during these two years. This assignment is dedicated to my mother who unfortunately left us too soon.

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1. Introduction

As history repeats itself and humankind, as it seems, never learns from its mistakes, huge populations continue to live on the brink of destitution. Every day, from one "corner" of the world to the other, from the Middle East and North Africa to Eastern Europe and North Asia people are seriously affected by war practices. We are now witnessing the detrimental effects of violent conflicts in the face of the most modern wars such as the Ukrainian-Russian one which turned full-scale in 2022 and the Israeli-Hamas which has been reignited in October 2023.

These two major wars (Europe Between Two Wars, n.d.) are affecting not only Europe but most importantly the populations that had to flee from their countries to save their lives and the lives of their loved ones. One common outcome of war except for the human casualties, which amount to both civilians (who do not actively engage in war practices) and soldiers (Walzer, 2006), is that a huge amount of people leave their country of origin to save their lives and survive through this extremely tough period of their lives. Due to these population movements, all European countries have been affected seriously, in one way or another, as each country has to stretch their policies and laws to assist the refugees by providing help with humanitarian actions, such as food and accommodation, but also by assisting them to integrate into their national population. One of these European countries is Greece, which will be examined later in this paper.

Greece consists one of the main immigratory routes and thus many refugees arrive in the country, including infants, kids, and adolescents. Due to the large immigration flows, a challenge that Greek society and refugees face is their adaptation and integration into Greek community. Therefore, the practical problem that this thesis will attempt to answer, is young adolescents' adaption and integration into Greek schools, by examining and understanding war-related traumas that these children may bring in their education. Schools, as a small-scale organized social structure, function as a stepping stone for children to be able to integrate into the broader society. Research in the school context may provide valuable information about children's later transition to adult life.

This type of research is not widely spread. Outside of the Greek context, some research has been done abroad, mostly by psychologists and psychiatrists and less by some stakeholders such as UNICEF, UNHCR, IOM, etc, and even less in other scientific fields such as linguists. Still, a lot of research should be carried out, as children are usually underrepresented. In the Greek field, in the last few years, some psychology researchers have started to shed light on this "uncharted territory"[1]. The purpose of this research paper is to add data to the preexisting research by focusing on what is happening in Greece, especially in Greek schools.

The knowledge gap that exists is the possible traumas that refugee children bear with them after being removed or having escaped from the war-affected territory. To solve to some extent the practical problem of adaptation and integration, this knowledge gap should be researched. If these traumas have not been identified, children will not receive the care and guidance they need, resulting in an even more difficult (and maybe fragile) adaptation process. As it was already mentioned above, this research is focusing on schools as they consist a smaller part of the society. Even though theoretical terms about war traumas exist, two points should be made: (a) more research should be done on our theoretical knowledge, as it is relatively new and not deeply researched area and, thus, there is a limited amount of relevant academic research papers, and (b) there is a clear lack of empirical knowledge of the specific case that is under investigation, the case of Greece. Still, even though the existing theoretical knowledge is limited, the current research will make full use of it and it will be based on it.

The objectives of this research paper will be presented in this paragraph. The main research question is "What traumas immigrant /refugee adolescents (aged 13-15), coming from war-afflicted areas, carry into their education as perceived by teachers in public schools in lower secondary education in the Greek territory?". This research question will be answered in the following chapters. However, to understand the broader "picture" two crucial, additional sub-questions, directly related to the general context of the present thesis, will be addressed.

The first sub-question is "What are the general immigration flows in Europe in general and in Greece in particular?". The second sub-question is "What are the actions that International, European, and specifically Greek stakeholders take to help refugee children to integrate better into Greek society?". Even if these actions are already known, this question is posed to give a better idea of what guidelines exist in the European and Greek context and in what extent they are applied. In the following sub-chapter, the first sub-question will be addressed, by presenting the general picture of immigration flows from 2022 to 2024 in Europe.

[1] Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation funded this research project. The results have not been uploaded yet online. However, more information can be found at the following link: http://www.psych.uoa.gr/units/research-centers/resilience/myr.html

1.1 General immigration flows in Europe

According to Frontex and its preliminary calculations, in 2022, irregular border crossings (330,000) into the EU reached their highest level since 2016, and the third-country nationals who were reported more frequently were of Syrian, Afghanistan, and Tunisian nationality (EU's External Borders In 2022: Number of Irregular Border Crossings Highest Since 2016, n.d.-b). In the latest Frontex publications, in the year 2023, Europe experienced a notable surge in irregular migration, mirroring the geopolitical complexities in neighboring regions (Frontex Annual Brief: Comprehensive Overview and Outlook for 2024, n.d.-c). Detected irregular border crossings exceeded 420,000 (Frontex Annual Brief: Comprehensive Overview and Outlook for 2024, n.d.-d).

In January-November 2023, Syrians continued to dominate as the most reported nationality for the fourth consecutive year, totalling 100,000 IBCs[2], representing an increase of over 8,000 compared to the same period in 2022 (Frontex Annual Brief: Comprehensive Overview and Outlook for 2024, n.d.). Notably, the number of Syrians surged on the Eastern Mediterranean route, particularly through direct crossings from Syria and Lebanon, contributing to the approximately 60,000 IBCs reported in 2023 (Frontex Annual Brief: Comprehensive Overview and Outlook for 2024, n.d.). Among those crossing were some Syrians, Afghans, and Palestinians who had departed Palestine before October 7, 2023 (The Middle East Crisis, n.d.), with direct arrivals of vessels from Lebanon, Libya, and Syria observed in higher numbers (Frontex Annual Brief: Comprehensive Overview and Outlook for 2024, n.d.). However, the rise in total migrant detections in 2023 was primarily fuelled by African nationalities, comprising nearly half of all detections and surpassing those of Asian origin.

For 2024, European border management is expected to face a complex geopolitical environment, marked by the potential escalation of migration and cross-border criminal activities. Foreseen challenges are expected to predominantly influence the Central and Eastern Mediterranean migratory routes, with the possibility of spill-over effects onto the Western Balkans (Frontex Annual Brief: Comprehensive Overview and Outlook for 2024, n.d.-e). The greatest migratory pressure is anticipated to once again manifest primarily at sea borders, partly due to ongoing endeavors aimed at fortifying land borders with fencing (Frontex Annual Brief: Comprehensive Overview and Outlook for 2024, n.d.-e). In the very first two months of 2024, the Eastern Mediterranean emerged as the second busiest migratory route, witnessing a substantial increase with detections exceeding 9,150 in the initial two months of the year, more than doubling the previous figures (Irregular Border Crossings Down in Central Med, up in Eastern Med and Western Africa, n.d).

This torrential movement of millions of people from their home country to "new" Western lands has brought about geopolitical changes and has led to a burst of nationalism and the rise of extreme right-wing parties (Archakis, 2014). Nowadays, however, things seem to be changing. Europe has come to the realization that it is getting old (Liboreiro, 2023). The movement of people is getting easier and faster because of the dire need for capable and competent people to support the existing workforce. EU at the moment lacks in number of people being at the age able to work (Liboreiro, 2023) due to the low birth rate (Eurostat, 2024) and is in need of finding ways to enable refugees to successfully integrate into society.

1.1.1 The Flow of Refugee Children in Europe

According to UNHCR, obtaining precise data on unaccompanied[3] minors and separated[4] children proves challenging (UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency, n.d.-b). This happens because of the three following reasons; First, these statistics are only available from a restricted number of countries granting asylum (UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency, n.d.-b). Second, the reliability of the age and family status information provided by the asylum applicant may be questionable[5], and third, there is confusion between countries as there is a use of different definitions and data collection methods (UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency, n.d.-c). Since the focus of this assignment is mostly on separated and unaccompanied refugee children, it would be appropriate to examine how much their immigration flows changed through the years 2020, 2021, and 2022, as these data were available online from international organizations such as UNICEF, UNHCR, and IOM.

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[2] Acronym of Illegal Border Crossings

[3] As it is used in the paper: "An "unaccompanied child" is a child separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by any other adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so." (UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM's Factsheet., n.d; UNHCR - The UN Refugee Agency., n.d.).

[4] As it is used in the paper: "A "separated child" is a child separated from both parents or from his/her previous legal or customary primary care-giver, but not necessarily from other relatives. This may, therefore, mean that the child is accompanied by other adult family members." (UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM's Factsheet., n.d.)

[5] This information was also given by the participants during the fieldwork in Greece, which will be analyzed later in this paper.

In 2020, according to the preliminary calculations from January to June 2020, 6,177 children, 2,302 of them were unaccompanied or separated, arrived in Southeast (Greece & Bulgaria), Southern (Italy & Malta), Southwestern Europe (Spain), and Cyprus (UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM's Factsheet, n.d.). More specifically, 2020 is the only year among the other two that the majority of immigrant or refugee children (3,875) are accompanied by at least one close family adult (UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM's Factsheet., n.d.). However, by the end of this year, the number would change dramatically, as a serious increase was generally observed in the children's arrival which was around 10,533 (UNHCR et al., n.d.).

The data collection for 2021 between January to December showed a serious increase in children's arrivals by 44% in comparison to the ones in 2020 (UNHCR et al., n.d.). From the same immigratory routes as they were mentioned above Bulgaria, Italy, Greece, Spain, Malta, and Cyprus "received" 24,147 children, amongst them, 17,185 were children who arrived alone and trespassed the borders of each country of the ones above (UNHCR et al., n.d.). An even higher increase was observed in the year 2022 in comparison to 2021, particularly the exact percentage was 46% up (Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe: Accompanied, Unaccompanied and Separated: Overview of Trends (January - December 2022) - World, 2023c). Around 35,170 children arrived in the same countries, with 23,514 of these children being separated or unaccompanied (Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe: Accompanied, Unaccompanied and Separated: Overview of Trends (January - December 2022) - World, 2023c).

Keeping in mind the aforementioned numbers, it is obvious that the challenges that Europe is called upon to face are great. These numbers will continue to increase in the next years due to the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and North Asia. Many more people, and especially children will be severely affected by war hostilities and they will be forced to travel under dangerous conditions.

1.1.2 Immigration Flows in Greek Territory

Moving now more specifically to the Greek territory and starting from the late 1980s, Greece has undergone a swift evolution into a fresh immigration hotspot, fuelling its population expansion (Papadopoulos et al., 2013; Recent Immigration Flows to Greece, 2024b). In 2015, Greece experienced a significant surge as more than one million people entered or passed through its borders, seeking asylum from conflicts in their home nations, notably from Syria, Pakistan, Iraq, and Afghanistan, on their way to European territories (Maligkoudi et al., 2018). More precisely, in the Greek territory, the higher immigration rate was indeed in 2015 with 856,723 sea arrivals and 4,907 land arrivals (Situation Mediterranean Situation, n.d.-b).

Coming closer to the present, in 2020 the immigration flows are far from immense but still not least important. This year the sea and land arrivals were in total 15,696 (Situation Mediterranean Situation, n.d.-b). The difference between these two specific years is incomparable. However, it should not be forgotten that in March 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic started causing a "life pause" from one edge of the world to the other. The movement regulations were even stricter than they used to be. Many countries closed their borders and many more checks occurred. This serious incident may be one of the reasons that immigration flows were shorter that year and the following one with a total of 9,157 sea and land crossings in 2021(Situation Mediterranean Situation, n.d.-b).

Nevertheless, in 2022 the immigration crossings are almost double that of the previous year with 12,758 sea arrivals and 6,022 land arrivals (Situation Mediterranean Situation, n.d.-b). In total, 18,780 immigrants entered the country. The last year that there is a collective image of how many immigrants traversed the Greek borders is 2023. According to UNHCR's Data, in 2023 a higher rate of immigrants' arrival was observed. 41,561 immigrants arrived from the sea and 7,160 from the land in Greek territory and in total 48,721(Situation Mediterranean Situation, n.d.-b). An increase of almost 3 times can be observed from the previous year to 2023. Moving a little further the first two months of 2024, the arrivals were calculated to be 7,111 in total (Ministry of Migration & Asylum., n.d.). Of the 7,111, 2,239 were refugees deriving from Africa (1.028) and Asia (928) (Ministry of Migration & Asylum., n.d.). Considering these numbers, Greece constitutes one of the first reception countries through the Eastern Mediterranean route (Della Cooperazione Internazionale, n.d.-b).

1.1.3 The Flow of Refugee Children in Greek Territory

Of special interest is the immigration flows of children, focusing on the years 2020,2021 and 2022. In this case, there is also access through the Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum to the statistics for the year 2023 about unaccompanied children, as there is no distinction between unaccompanied and separated children in the Greek context.

Starting from 2020, according to UNHCR, UNICEF, and IOM between January and June, around 3,340 children entered the Greek borders through land and sea areas (UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM's Factsheet., n.d.). Among them, 391 children were separated and unaccompanied (UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM's Factsheet., n.d.). The majority of these children were Afghans, Syrians, Congolese, Iraqis, and Palestinians (UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM's Factsheet., n.d.). 82% of all children were between the ages of 5 to 14 years old, and 81% of all children's arrivals were boys (UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM's Factsheet., n.d.). By the end of the year of 2020, the total number of children's arrivals was 4.602 (UNHCR et al., n.d.).

In 2021, between January to June around 2,258 arrived in the Greek territory by land and sea including 638 unaccompanied and separated children (UNHCR et al., n.d.). As it is observed, there is a decrease in half than the previous year. The majority of different nationalities were almost the same as the ones in 2020 with the only difference being that Somalians were in it. Congolese and Palestinian children were not the majority in this case (UNHCR et al., n.d.). 38% of children who were accompanied and 13% who weren't, were between the ages of 5-14 (UNHCR et al., n.d.). Once again, the majority of the children were boys (72%) and girls 28% of the total arrivals until June 2021.

The final data which were published by IOM, UNICEF, and UNHCR, were about the whole year of 2022. This year, from the coastal and land borders, traversed the Greek territory 4,616 children (Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe: Accompanied, Unaccompanied and Separated: Overview of Trends (January - December 2022) - World, 2023d). Among them, 48% of them were separated or unaccompanied minors (Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe: Accompanied, Unaccompanied and Separated: Overview of Trends (January - December 2022) - World, 2023d). The majority of the children hailed from Afghanistan, Somalia, and the Syrian Arab Republic (Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe: Accompanied, Unaccompanied and Separated: Overview of Trends (January - December 2022) - World, 2023d). 29% of all children were between the ages 5-14 and lastly, compared to the previous two years the percentage of boys who arrived in Greece, has slightly decreased to 68% and accordingly in girls, there is a small increase in their arrivals (32%) (Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe: Accompanied, Unaccompanied and Separated: Overview of Trends (January - December 2022) - World, 2023d).

As for the year 2023 and the first months of 2024, statistics referring only to unaccompanied children can be found on the website of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum. According to these statistics, in 2023 unaccompanied minors were 1.987 in total with 84% of them being boys. (Ministry of Migration & Asylum., 2023). 11% of them were younger than 14 years old (Ministry of Migration & Asylum., 2023). From 2020 to 2022, the total number of children in the Greek territory shows slight changes in each year, but the number of separated and unaccompanied children has shown a big increase from 391 (UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM's Factsheet., n.d.) to 2,231(Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe: Accompanied, Unaccompanied and Separated: Overview of Trends (January - December 2022) - World, 2023).

Taking into account all the aforementioned statistics, the Greek Government has had and still holds the obligation to take action, develop new policies, and assemble teams of experts to support these children, providing them with care, psychological assistance, and adequate education.

1.2. Children's rights: International, European, and Greek Stakeholders and their actions

In the following section, the second sub-question will be addressed, namely "What are the actions that International, European, and specifically Greek stakeholders take to help refugee children to integrate better into Greek society?". Children's rights and the actions of various stakeholders (international, European, and Greek) will be discussed. As it is already mentioned above, this sub-question will give a better idea of the existing guidelines from the United Nations, European Actors, and the Greek Government's actions. Therefore, through these guidelines and children's rights, it will become apparent to what extent they are applied.

Child rights constitute an integral aspect of human rights (EU Action on the Rights of the Child, n.d.; EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child, 2017; EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, 2021). As it will be seen from the theory's chapter, children's rights in armed conflicts are widely trampled and this results in causing multiple traumas in them. Nonetheless, what are the children's rights and how do the United Nations and European Union deal with this serious issue? What actions do the United Nations, European Union, and other stakeholders take to ensure children's safety and respect for their rights?

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child[6] (The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Children's Version, n.d.) and UNICEF, the definition of a child is every human being under the age

[6] The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child represents a significant commitment from nations to safeguard the rights of children (The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Children's Version, n.d.). It defines who children are, enumerates their diverse rights, and specifies the responsibilities of governments (The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Children's Version, n.d.).

of 18, unless the individual under the applicable law turns into adulthood earlier in their life (Convention on the Rights of the Child Text, n.d.). Every minor should be protected from having to deal with any type of discrimination (Convention on the Rights of the Child Text, n.d.) All humans have the fundamental right to life, let alone children, and it is essential for governments to secure their physical integrity and development in the best possible way (Convention on the Rights of the Child Text, n.d.). Moreover, the other two principles of UNCRC should be taken into consideration before any EU or Member States' actions. The one of the "Best interest of the child" and the other of the "Respect for the views of Children" (Articles 3 & 12 respectively) (EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child, 2017). However, in this chapter, not all children's laws will be discussed but the ones that are mostly applicable to children suffering or have suffered from war and harsh war conditions[7].

Refugee children have the right to be protected and have rights similar to every child living in the reception country (Convention on the Rights of the Child Text, n.d.). The government in cooperation with NGOs and other stakeholders such as The United Nations should "trace" the parents or any other family members of the refugee child with the goal of their reunification (Convention on the Rights of the Child Text, n.d.). As it will be observed in theory, living with caring and loving parents is essential for children's well-being and their healthy mental development. Therefore, during the war children must be protected and not participate in war practices before the age of 15 (The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Children's Version, n.d.-b; Convention on the Rights of the Child Text, n.d.-b). The examples of child soldiers are not few. In countries such as Afghanistan, Yemen, Sudan, South Sudan, Myanmar, Somalia, Chad, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (The United Nations, 2014) that are affected or have been affected by war, many child soldiers have been and still are reported. A characteristic example is the one with the abducted girls referred to as Aboke Girls in Northern Uganda who were abducted from the Lord's Resistance Army and were transformed into killers (Slim, 2008). These war practices cause huge emotional damage, moral injuries, and traumas in children.

Children must be protected from violence, sexual abuse, exploitation, kidnapping, and trafficking (The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Children's Version, n.d.-b; Convention on the Rights of the Child Text, n.d.-b). During their trip to another country, war-affected children usually fall victim to traffickers and illegal organizations. These children have been sexually abused, exploited, and may work in extremely harmful conditions. Nevertheless, it is their right to be protected from "harmful work", and to be offered a safe home, food, clothing, and health services (The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Children's Version, n.d.-b; Convention on the Rights of the Child Text, n.d.-b).

As it was mentioned earlier, from 2020 to 2022, only 43,001 were unaccompanied or separated children who traversed EU borders. Some of them in order to survive, they were involved in violent practices such as the aforementioned example of the Aboke Girls in Northern Uganda. To recover, reintegrate, and come back to an emotionally and physically healthy ordinary life, these children must be looked after by caregivers who respect them in all aspects of their lives (The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Children's Version, n.d.-b; Convention on the Rights of the Child Text, n.d.-b). For the reintegration process to be successful two additional children's rights must be applied and respected: the ones of "access to education and aims of education" (The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Children's Version, n.d.-b; Convention on the Rights of the Child Text, n.d.-b).

These two articles (the 28th & 29th) of the Convention describe and attempt to secure the right of children to go to school and have access to it without this becoming a great stress and frustration for them, their parents, or their guardians to cover the entailed costs (The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Children's Version, n.d.-b; Convention on the Rights of the Child Text, n.d.-b). It should be the state's responsibility to offer tuition-free primary education and a broad range of secondary education options, including vocational training, without having to pay for it (The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Children's Version, n.d.-b; Convention on the Rights of the Child Text, n.d.-b). Additionally, they should offer financial support to children who need it (The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Children's Version, n.d.-b; Convention on the Rights of the Child Text, n.d.-b).

Another consideration is that the government must implement measures to promote consistent school attendance and decrease dropout rates (The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Children's Version, n.d.-b; Convention on the Rights of the Child Text, n.d.-b). This is a phenomenon that is quite common among refugee students as they usually abandon their countries to be safe and when they arrive in a new country, they try to figure out how they are going to survive and make money, leaving school as their last priority or it doesn't even cross their mind as a priority. Dropouts are still a major problem as it will be indicated in the theory below and as it will be observed in the fieldwork in Greece later in the paper.

[7] Nevertheless, all these laws are applicable to every child without no discrimination but in this research project the focus is on war affected children.

Article 29 of the Convention, "Aims of Education" concerns the comprehensive development of the child's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their utmost potential, coupled with culturing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Children's Version, n.d.-b; Convention on the Rights of the Child Text, n.d.-b). The Government's directives have to prepare children to be responsible citizens in a free society marked by understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among diverse groups and indigenous persons, alongside nurturing respect for the natural environment (The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Children's Version, n.d.-b; Convention on the Rights of the Child Text, n.d.-b).

Furthermore, in the Convention's Article 29 paragraph C it is mentioned that during their education all children should respect the different cultural identities, languages, and national values or the values of the other nationalities (The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Children's Version, n.d.-b; Convention on the Rights of the Child Text, n.d.-b). Adding to those as mentioned earlier, no child should be denied to speak its minority language, practice its religious customs, participate in cultural and or art events, play, and rest as suggested in 30 and 31 of the Convention (The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Children's Version, n.d.-b; Convention on the Rights of the Child Text, n.d.-b). Respect for these rights is vital for the proper development of children.

More specifically, as far as the war-affected children are concerned, the UN Security Council has created a working group on "Children and Armed Conflict". One of the group's main responsibilities is to come up with recommendations to the Council on potential actions to improve the safeguarding of children affected by armed conflict (United Nations Security Council | Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, n.d.). This involves suggestions regarding appropriate directives for peacekeeping missions and recommendations concerning the involved parties in the conflict (United Nations Security Council | Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, n.d.). In the spring of 2000, the "Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict" was signed by the General Assembly, and its implementation started in February 2002 (Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, n.d.). The protocol's objective was to safeguard children from being enlisted and utilized in hostilities (Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, n.d.).

Particularly, this Protocol concerns the actions required to be taken by the Member States to protect children and respect their rights in times of war (Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, n.d.). Some of them are the following: States are not allowed to enlist children under the age of 18 for deployment to war zones or recruit individuals below this age threshold (Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, n.d.). It is mandatory for the states to adopt comprehensive measures, including legislative actions criminalizing the recruitment of children under 18 and participation in hostilities, to prevent such recruitment (Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, n.d.). Additionally, any government must ensure that any human being under 18 who has been involved in hostilities receives support for their physical and psychological recovery and is reintegrated into society (Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, n.d.). Furthermore, non-state armed groups are strictly forbidden from recruiting as soldiers or utilizing individuals under 18 in armed conflict, regardless of circumstances (Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, n.d.).

On its part, the European Union complies with The United Nations Protocol and recommendations. It respects all these children's rights, strongly supports international cooperation among the EU Member States, and tries to help them eliminate children's illiteracy and ignorance through policy. However, before organizing all its actions, and designing and implementing its policies on the rights of children, the EU should follow the four basic principles of UNCRC mentioned at the beginning of this chapter (EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child, 2017).

Thus, the EU over the years has designed and implemented many policies, initiatives, and tools to safeguard children's rights in general and provide help to all Member States which became reception countries for the refugees and their families or the separated and unaccompanied children who traversed the EU borders illegally. Before diving into some of its actions, some of the EU Guidelines should be mentioned.

These guidelines bind the EU to address the immediate, medium, and lasting repercussions of armed conflict on children (Children's Rights and Armed Conflict, n.d.). Thus, their goal is to encourage governments and organizations globally to enforce humanitarian and human rights laws safeguarding children from the repercussions of armed conflicts (Children's Rights and Armed Conflict, n.d.). Additionally, they endeavor to halt the enlistment of children into the armed forces and ensure accountability for crimes committed against children (Children's Rights

and Armed Conflict, n.d.). To achieve the protection of war-affected children, the EU utilizes specific tools to co-operate with non-EU countries "such as diplomatic mediations, transnational alliances, political discussions, courses for handling crises and protecting minors" (Children's Rights and Armed Conflict, n.d.).

In the territory of the EU Member States, the EU uses other tools and recommendations to help refugee children to reintegrate into a new environment for them. Thus, the EU has taken a lot of actions in the domain of education. As it was already mentioned above education is a human right and children's rights are human rights. For this and many more reasons, children should belong in an environment where they can grow, develop their skills, broaden their horizons, and co-live harmoniously with their peers. Before the end of 2020, the European Commission had its updated vision for the "European Education Area" and actions to be executed until 2025, and among Member States additional goals have been set for 2030 (School Education Initiatives, n.d.). Some of them are to reduce the percentage of 15-year-old students poorly performing in reading, mathematics, and science, which are considered basic skills, and to eliminate the percentage of students who abandon education until 2030 (School Education Initiatives, n.d.).

The EU tools as proposed in the European Educational Area are available for use not only among EU Member States but also in groups providing education all over the world (School Education Initiatives, n.d.). At the EU level, the primary objective is to endorse a comprehensive approach to education and training while providing support to Member States in monitoring and analyzing processes by developing school education policies (School Education Initiatives, n.d.). One of the most important guidelines of The EU is "quality and equality in education and training" (School Education Initiatives, n.d.). This guideline focuses on important skills and basic knowledge that students should obtain and combat early school dropout rates (School Education Initiatives, n.d.). Additionally, multilingualism in educational settings is promoted, and "supportive learning environments" are created (School Education Initiatives, n.d.). Last but not least, top importance is given to the welfare and mental health of students (School Education Initiatives, n.d.), especially to those who have been affected by war conditions and difficulties during their trip to EU territory. These children to be able to reintegrate, overcome their traumas, and live a happy and stable life, need to be in a stable environment. So, in the next section, the Greek National Law about refugees, their protection, and the actions of the Ministries of Education, Religion Affairs, and Sports and Migration and Asylum will be discussed.

1.2.1 Greek Ministries' actions regarding the refugees' protection and education

As was outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was adopted in 1989, governments must take every possible measure to ensure that every child within their countries can fully access and enjoy all their rights (The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Children's Version, n.d.).Thus, in this sub-chapter, the actions of two Greek Ministries will be examined according to Greek Law and the guidelines from the EU, as mentioned above, concerning refugees' protection and education. These two ministries are the following: The Ministry of Migration and Asylum and the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports.

Even if the researcher is going to mention the actions of both, she will focus mostly on the Ministry of Migration and Asylum as she had the opportunity to arrange an interview with an employee who is specified in the domain of unaccompanied and separated children. This interview lasted for an hour. All the information that will be presented was gathered through the interview and internal documents to which the researcher had exclusive access. In the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, the unit of the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons & Institutional Protection is responsible for the protection and atypical education of unaccompanied and separated children in cooperation with other institutions.

Generally, this unit coordinates, monitors, and supervises actions and agencies related to unaccompanied and separated children in the territory of Greece. At the same time, it coordinates activities for the implementation of initiatives and programs. It constitutes the National contact point between local, European, and International services and stakeholders. The National Strategy of the Unit is based on three guidelines concerning children's protection; i) Guaranteeing the full protection and advancement of children's rights, ii) ensuring prevention and effective safeguarding against all forms of exploitation and abuse, and iii) upgrading and processing the data collection for unaccompanied minors and the accommodation facilities. According to the last census which took place on the 1st of March 2024, only in the Attica Region, the one where the research is taking place, 1.266 spots for residence are offered in accommodation structures, supervised semi-independent living apartments, and emergency accommodation structures. This unit serves as a permanent entity for overseeing and assessing hospitality centers.

The General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons & Institutional Protection has additional responsibilities such as managing accommodation requests for unaccompanied minors within suitable accommodation settings while prioritizing requests according to vulnerability criteria. It coordinates all transitions, placements, escorts, and

accommodations for unaccompanied minors in temporary housing, long-term residential centers, or supervised apartments for semi-independent living and gathers, analyzes, and disseminates quantitative data on unaccompanied children, derived from housing requests forwarded by relevant state and non-governmental entities, in partnership with the Coordination Service's Department of Studies and Analysis. Last but not least is the coordination of the necessary steps for executing initiatives and programs within Greece, such as the voluntary relocation program under transnational agreements or other efforts related to the reception and care of children.

The unit of Integration and Support of Unaccompanied Minors is also part of the General Secretariat and it is responsible for Education, job counseling and preparation, sports and cultural activities, and community awareness at the local level concerning the refuge population but focusing almost exclusively on unaccompanied minors. More specifically, concerning education three different actions are provided by the Ministry of Migration and Asulym. Refugee and/or unaccompanied children gain access to typical education after close cooperation between the two aforementioned Ministries. Assistance is provided to accommodation facilities by partnering with Atypical Education organizations to facilitate home study and remedial teaching programs. Additionally, the unit organizes and offers training and educational sessions to enhance and develop the skills of teachers working in the accommodation facilities. Furthermore, the unit offers vocational counseling and technical training to unaccompanied minors by collaborating with organizations and NGOs, while with the support of UNICEF, the Ministry of Education Religious Affairs and Sports, and DYPA[8] a Vocational (Technical) Education Guide was developed. Lastly, this unit coordinates local government agencies responsible for offering integration services and opportunities such as cultural and sports activities.

The Institutional Protection Unit which is under the Ministry of Migration and Asylum is responsible for ensuring the best interests of unaccompanied children, the unhindered access to their rights, the coordination of all relevant and competent entities, and the implementation and promotion of the National Guardianship System[9]. Moreover, the unit identifies institutional deficiencies and suggests creating mechanisms, procedures, or structures to ensure institutional safeguards for protecting minors' rights. Two additional actions of the unit are to recommend and assess the adoption of legislative and administrative measures aimed at promoting the priorities of the National Strategy for the protection of unaccompanied minors or in any case affecting unaccompanied minors. At the same time, this unit collaborates with local and central government authorities to implement the objectives outlined in the "National Strategy for Protecting Unaccompanied Minors". Lastly, this unit serves as a central hub for cases concerning unaccompanied minors under review by European and international courts or other relevant institutions.
In 2021 the Special Secretariat and UNHCR designed and implemented the National Emergency Response Mechanism. According to the national law 4760/2020 (Νόμος 4760/2020 (Κωδικοποιημένος) - ΦΕΚ Α 247/11.12.2020, n.d.), the National Emergency Response Mechanism's purpose is the detection and the prompt referral of homeless unaccompanied minors or those living in precarious conditions for immediate placement in emergency accommodation facilities (Νόμος 4760/2020 (Κωδικοποιημένος) - ΦΕΚ Α 247/11.12.2020, n.d.). Its responsibility is to collaborate with relevant agencies and authorities to plan and implement specialized interventions aimed at detecting and relocating unaccompanied minors in danger or minors who are victims of violence, human trafficking, exploitation, or abuse to secure shelters (Νόμος 4760/2020 (Κωδικοποιημένος) - ΦΕΚ Α 247/11.12.2020, n.d.).

Before moving on to the actions of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports, one last action of the Ministry of Migration and Asulym, which should be mentioned, is the program called "Mentorship". In this program, 6 mentors of refugee or immigrant descent offer their services to empower and support the unaccompanied minors. It gives them comfort to receive support from people with similar backgrounds. These mentors encourage the unaccompanied minors to participate in everyday life and they inform them about available programs and activities. Last but not least, these mentors assess the existing needs to provide the necessary information to the policymakers subsequently.

Concerning the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports, the researcher did not have the opportunity to arrange an interview and discuss the actions taken from inside the Ministry to help refugee students have proper access to education, better integration, and in general to adjust to a "normal" and healthy pace of life. According to the Ministry's official website, many actions take place supporting the right to education and the inclusion of refugee children in the Greek educational system (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024). Their educational policy's main goal is to create and form the intercultural and inclusive school of the 21st century by providing quality education and strengthening the teaching skills of teachers (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024).

[8] Public Employment Service

[9] National Guardianship System is defined as the official legal guardian of unaccompanied minors.

In the years 2021-22, thanks to the actions of the Ministry, 95% of the refugee children enrolled in school, and 75% of them continued their studies without dropouts (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024.). These percentages were the highest through all these years, but the Ministry continues to strengthen its actions in order to achieve its goal and 100% of the refugee children continue their studies (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024.). Schools have been manned with many teachers and a new service started to be offered, the one of interpretation (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024.).

One of the Ministry's policies is the Reception Classes which have been designed for students with little or no knowledge of the Greek language (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024.). In these classes students attend intensive Greek language lessons for 15 hours per week in a separate class, but within the school. During the school day though, they participate in other courses as well such as mathematics, physics, informatics, music, physical education, etc (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024.). The Ministry has also formed the typical education DYEP[10] which sometimes takes place in the school enviornment during the evening for multiple reasons (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024.). However, it will not be discussed here in detail as it is not a main action of the schools on which the research is focusing but of the reception centers.

Other services that are provided are the supporting educational material for students from IEP[11] and the "Accelerated Learning Program" for high school students which was developed and formed by IEP in cooperation with UNICEF and the University of Thessaly (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024.). This program was created to tackle the challenges of educational inclusion in lower secondary education for adolescent students with refugee or immigrant backgrounds (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024.). Many of these students not only struggle to learn the major language but face significant barriers in accessing other school subjects (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024.). As it will be observed and mentioned below in the theory chapter, these obstacles often arise from extended periods of interrupted education in their home countries, during their refugee journey, and their initial settlement in Greece (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024.).

Training programs and support materials are also provided to teachers to better help their refugee students integrate into Greek schools and everyday life (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024.). One of them is "Training for Integration" and the primary aim of the program is to improve the skills of teachers and educational staff in their contact with multilingual and multicultural learning environments (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024.). This initiative seeks to support refugee or immigrant students by improving school attendance, reducing dropout rates, and enhancing their academic outcomes (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024.).

An additional service that the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports offers in cooperation with other agencies is psychoemotional support (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024.). KEDASY are centers for Interdisciplinary Assessment Counseling and Support (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024.). Psychologists and social workers offer assistance to students to foster their balanced psychosocial development and advancement, while also ensuring equitable access to education for all students without any exceptions (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024.). These centers offer guidance to teachers on embracing diversity and promoting inclusive practices, empowering specific individuals or vulnerable groups within the school community, and handling crises (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024.).

After mentioning all these EU guidelines, children's rights, and actions from international and national stakeholders, it is time to examine what is happening in practice. As expected, not every action is perfect and it is reasonable that not everything works perfectly. At a national level, all these agencies and stakeholders do their best to achieve their goals and help the people who need it, but not all problems are solved.

Three main issues have been observed through fieldwork though. One of these is the number of children in the Reception classes. As mentioned above, Reception classes are offered to children who have no or little knowledge of the Greek language. For a reception class to be created, the minimum number of children should be seven. This parameter creates a serious issue for refugee children who are left behind, as they cannot participate and attend regular classes because they do not know the major language and this may cause a serious decrease in self-esteem or even to lead them to give up on school and education in general. Additionally, Reception classes do not start at the same time as the other regular schools. Usually, at best, they start 2-3 months after the start of the academic year and this does not help foreign students at all, as students get discouraged, do not pass exams, and may end up repeating the same school year. Children who have already suffered from the atrocities of war are in a

[10] The DYEP functions as a pre-integration program, addressing not only the cognitive needs of refugee children by teaching Greek as a second language but also familiarizing them with the school environment and its dynamics. However, its primary focus is on providing psychosocial support to children, fostering their sense of identity in their new surroundings, and helping them regain a sense of stability, which they may have lacked (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024.).

[11] Institute of Educational Policy

new country and trying to adjust to a new environment, and are not being helped by this situation. On the contrary, facing difficulties in the school environment makes their psychological condition worse.

The paradox here is that psychological support is taken so much for granted that it is not carried out properly. As foreign students' psychological condition gets worse, even the existence of KEDASY is not enough at all. Schools, especially intercultural ones, should have psychologists inside the territory of the school to help students and at the same time, the teachers. Sometimes, teachers have to act as psychologists inside schools without having the proper training for it and sometimes they need psychological support as well. Every day, they come into contact with many refugee students who bear their traumas and their behavior may cause problems in the territory of school as will be seen later in the research's observation and results. Some children receive psychological support in some Hospitality Centers but still, there is a need for more.

Lastly, the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports, in cooperation with Metadrasi[12] with the support of UNICEF, provides translation and interpretation services in schools (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024.). The provision of this service is partially true. Interpreters and translators provide their assistance when foreign children come to school to register and translate the documents needed for their registration or when informational meetings about school activities or children's progress are organized. Apart from these occasions, teachers do not have any additional assistance, and they try to teach their students by speaking in Greek, English, or any additional language they may be familiar with. Teachers may also use body language and gestures in an attempt to make their students understand what they want from them. In this case, it is apparent, to some extent, that teachers are not always well prepared or specifically trained to properly teach their refugee students in these conditions, a fact that will be seen in the end of the theory section as well.

In the following chapter, war-related traumas on young adolescents in the school territory will be discussed. However, these will be observations and assumptions of scholars and teachers observed through various research projects and academic papers over the years.

[12] Metadrasi is a non- governmental organization focusing on immigration practices.

2. Theory

As it was discussed in introduction chapter, the immigration flows are and will remain huge considering the ongoing tensions in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and North Asia. In general, the number of children who traversed the European borders was vast in 2022 (35.170 in total/ 23.514 separated or unaccompanied) (Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe: Accompanied, Unaccompanied and Separated: Overview of Trends (January - December 2022) - World, 2023c). Accordingly, the latest and most important observation was that separated or unaccompanied children in the Greek territory in two years, from 2020 to 2022, showed an increase 570,6% (Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe: Accompanied, Unaccompanied and Separated: Overview of Trends (January - December 2022) - World, 2023e).

The numbers are towering and a high percentage of these children may display types of war-related trauma. For this reason, the theory of war-related traumas on young adolescents of foreign descent will be presented next and in-depth, as it constitutes the main topic of this research project. The preceeding presentation of the legal context regarding recommendations, guidelines, and legal rights of children as defined by the United Nations and other European stakeholders and as applied in the Greek context contributed to placing the main research question of this paper into context, and it will help in deciphering the distance between reality from a legal context.

As per UNICEF, one out of every ten children globally resides in regions impacted by armed conflict, posing risks to their survival, growth, and future prospects (Children's Rights and Armed Conflict | EUR-Lex, n.d.-b). To ensure the well-being and structural integration of these children, who are among a significant proportion of people seeking Asylum in reception countries, the most important step is to give them access to education (Koehler & Schneider, 2019; Bragin & Opiro, 2012). It is a pivotal step for three main reasons: i) all children and adolescents possess an inherent human entitlement to access education, ii) as the population of Europe gets older and shrinks, sufficient education plays a decisive role in achieving socioeconomic success and mitigating disparities within European communities and iii) Young asylum seekers and refugees possess unique social and emotional requirements that quality education can assist them in addressing and overcoming (Koehler & Schneider, 2019; Fazel et al., 2012). As Diab et al. (2015) mention "schools are natural environments to rebuild the shattered worlds of traumatized children.". This action, of course, does not solve all the problems that arose from war for these children, but it is the fastest way to help them take control of their lives again and return back to normality.

From the moment that a war starts until the moment that refugee children are registered at schools, the majority of them have experienced and witnessed at least the death of a family member, have lived in terrible conditions, through constant bombings and gunshots, and have traveled under tremendously dangerous paths alone or with human traffickers who have exploited them by making them work in inhumane and abhorrent conditions or by abusing them mentally or physically. These young adolescents have suffered a lot and carry with them a lot of traumas that have to be dealt. These war-related traumas cannot only be healed with access to education but also through many sessions with psychologists and a stable environment around them. School constitutes a stable environment and it is a first step for these children to reintegrate and experience how it is to coexist in a small society. It has been argued that providing immigrants with quality education can be considered as a profit rather than a cost, considering that the individual will have the appropriate tools and qualifications to enter the workforce of the migrated country (Eres, 2016). Therefore, the expenses can be considered as an investment, the fruits of which will be collected if time and care are dedicated (Eres, 2016). This has already been recognized by some recipient countries and has been put on the political agenda as an issue with foremost importance in order to find a way to offer the migrants proper education delivered by experienced teachers under competent school leadership (Eres, 2016). Even though the cost of educating non-native people can exceed the the amount of funding disposed for natives, in the long term good quality education will ensure the social inclusion of the migrants and will enable them to assist in the country's economic growth and innovation (Koehler & Schneider, 2019).

Having mentioned all the above, in this chapter, the main theory that will be discussed is the principal war-related experiences and traumas of young refugee adolescents, as observed in the school territory through the years, as well as their adaptation to it. For this research paper, young adolescents until the age of 15 are defined as children. They are defined like this, as until the age of 15 they are considered minors, whose responsibility and right is to attend school and not to work.

2.1. The outcome of persistent conflict in shaping of children's behavior

Refugee "children are not children anymore" (Rizkalla et al., 2020). These children arrive in the reception countries either alone, either with some members, or with their whole family. In these countries, they come across many challenges such as unemployment, accommodation, security, access to the healthcare system, education, and socialization (Eres, 2016). These challenges seriously affect children (Eres, 2016) and lead them to feel that they have to find a way to provide for themselves and their families as if it were their responsibility (Rizkalla et al., 2020). Additionally, foreign children deal with stress when they have to adapt in a new culture and learn a new language (Eres, 2016; Qin, 2009). By putting an extra burden on them, migrant children encounter difficulties in learning, behavior, and emotions (Eres, 2016; Qin, 2009).

For these children to be offered suitable and efficient help, first it should be understood why they behave the way they behave and what factors play an important role in their increasing traumas. According to Fonagy & Target (1997), children understand the world through their family and the love they receive. Children typically begin by assigning names to individuals before identifying objects in their surroundings (Fonagy & Target, 1997; Bragin & Opiro, 2012). Generally, this phenomenon is called "symbol formation" (Fonagy & Target, 1997; Bragin & Opiro, 2012). As time passes and children grow up and become mature through the care and love of their family, they realize that they are thinking beings and have reflective thinking (Fonagy & Target, 1997; Bragin & Opiro, 2012). This phenomenon is called "reflective thinking" (Fonagy & Target, 1997; Bragin & Opiro, 2012). If the process of symbolic formation fails to be developed, it will lead children to "show what they are feeling" by acting "instead of speaking" and communicating their needs (Fonagy & Target, 1997; Bragin & Opiro, 2012). Consequently, the reflective function will also be affected and these children face great difficulties in processing their "experience or expressing it" (Fonagy & Target, 1997; Bragin, 2005; Bragin & Opiro, 2012).

A significant outcome of persistent conflict is a reduced capacity for children to acquire symbol formation skills and participate in reflective thinking (Bragin & Opiro, 2012). Thus, the immediate effects involve a lack of focus and academic underachievement, whereas prolonged effects concern a diminish of child's proficiency in handling complex social interactions and have an impact on cognitive flexibility (Siegel, 1999; Bragin & Opiro, 2012). In the school territory, for example, the short-term effect may be that refugee students might gaze at the information displayed on the blackboard without comprehending it, and the long-term one is that they present great difficulty engaging in abstract thinking (Bragin & Opiro, 2012). Usually, refugee students who attend classes with many students find it almost impossible to learn how to think and better digest the material (Perry, 2002; Bragin & Opiro, 2012). Additionally, immigrant students are usually subjected to racial prejudices and assaults (Archakis, 2014) from their local classmates as they need some time to integrate into the reception country to learn and understand the language. Thus, they end up thinking of themselves as unintelligent, that they have been left out, and eventually, they cease any effort and then quit school (Perry, 2002; Bragin & Opiro, 2012).

It is common for students, in regions affected by armed conflict, to face disruptions to their education (UNICEF, & OSRSG-CAAC, 2008; Bragin & Opiro, 2012). These disruptions may last for months to years. Eventually, when these students abandon their country and travel to another to avoid war, in a short period they will receive a place in the reception country in order to continue their education. For them, it is difficult to sit in a classroom quietly, concentrate, and learn (Macksoud, 1993; Bragin & Opiro, 2012). Persistent intrusive thoughts, heightened vigilance, and enduring melancholy plague these foreign students who have encountered violence, making it challenging for them to maintain focus during lessons and learn (Macksoud, 1993; Bragin & Opiro, 2012). Distraction helps them in a way not to think of previous challenging and "painful memories" derived from war, of pressing family issues or they become paralyzed as they get overwhelmed by the challenges of learning (Bragin & Opiro, 2012). Research that took place in Jordan showed that refugee students from Syria, came across difficulties in education and they could not adapt properly to their new school (Rizkalla et al., 2020). These children were facing struggles in concentration, and attention, they could not memorize the learning material (Rizkalla et al., 2020) and also presented poor emotional management (Rizkalla et al., 2020). Thus, this situation could result in academic underachievement, dropout from school, and overwhelming despair among refugee students (Bragin & Opiro, 2012).

2.2 The complexity of multilingualism and war-affected children's identity in schools

The barrier of the foreign language also plays an important role. Children, who have suffered from the atrocities of war, have already faced a lot of difficulties, such as displacement, poverty, lack of health services, etc, and they still face them when they enter a new environment, a new culture, and a new language (Anderson, Hamilton,

Moore et al, 2004; Maligkoudi et al., 2018). Teachers used to be afraid that the bilingualism of their foreign students could impede the learning of the dominant language (Maligkoudi et al., 2018). Furthermore, an observed phenomenon in Greek schools is the use of Greek as the primary language of instruction in general classes, assuming it is the students' first language, despite the presence of students for whom Greek is a second language (Maligkoudi et al., 2018). If this practice is not carefully considered by the teachers, in combination with refugee students' low self-esteem, it may affect them and cause negative views towards the school and in general the society around them (Maligkoudi et al., 2018).

The educational strategies of monolingualism and multilingualism are promoted in schools in reception countries but each in different ways. Multilingualism is promoted in two ways; i) to students who already speak the national language or ii) nowadays in intercultural schools. However, monolingualism is what mostly prevails in schools, troubling refugee students with their integration and causing confusion about their identity (Γκαϊνταρτζή et al., 2011). Refugee children, to integrate better into the school territory and connect with their classmates, need to know the majority language (Γκαϊνταρτζή et al., 2011). Due to this reason, students of foreign descent feel stressed and confused as they have to give up on their identity. Additional confusion and stress are caused to them as they don't practice their native language (Γκαϊνταρτζή et al., 2011) which leads them to further depression and isolation.

2.3 Increased risk of mental issues, fear and insecurities in war-affected children

Research indicates that children linked to armed groups are at an increased risk of mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress, and aggression, which can endure for extended periods (Betancourt et al., 2010; Murphy et al., 2017). More specifically, the most common of them among young refugees are PTSD and depression (Hodes & Vostanis, 2019). Many of them can demonstrate as well panic attacks and insecurity (Rizkalla et al., 2020). Unaccompanied adolescents present a higher risk of depression (Hodes & Vostanis, 2019). Similar results appeared during World War II (Macksoud, 1992) and in the research of EUAA for the case of Ukraine (European Union Agency for Asylum, 2024). Ukrainian children who have suffered from war also display intense and enduring fear, fatigue, anxiety, stress, and uncertainty (European Union Agency for Asylum, 2024). The examples that demonstrate all these behaviors and reactions are not few as is seen in the cases of Syrian refugees in Jordan and Ukraine (Rizkalla et al.,2020; European Union Agency for Asylum, 2024). All the aforementioned behaviors and reactions cause high levels of dropping out of school but they are not the only ones. In the following paragraphs other war-related traumas, such as increased fear, behaviors, and facts will be presented.

Fear and insecurities are other common problems that refugee adolescents have to face. During conflicts, communities' cohesion is disrupted, chaos prevails and it has been observed that many young and older adolescents are abducted (Bragin & Opiro,2012). The war triggers widespread panic and fear, especially among children, due to significant human and material losses, life-threatening dangers, and the inability to escape the besieged area (Diab et al., 2015). For minors, war can also spark feelings of insecurity and lead children questioning caregivers' ability to protect them (Diab et al., 2015). Thus fearing abduction, they are compelled to leave their homes at night to seek safety (Bragin & Opiro, 2012).

These adolescents or the ones who have been saved from abduction, come back to their community but they are deeply traumatized by the horrors they have endured (Bragin & Opiro, 2012). Having lived through these incidents, children are constantly restless and on alert. According to a study on middle-school children, after the bombing of Oklahoma City, it was discovered that the three most common children's reactions were fear for the safety of a family member, fear for a friend's safety, and experiencing nervousness and fear accompanied by a rapid heartbeat (Shaw, 2003). Many refugee students show increased "bombing fear" (Rezkalla,2020) which in combination with PTSD, may cause additional fear of loud noises. Moreover, Hodes & Vostanis (2019) support the idea that young adolescents, who have experienced war, may feel an "increased fear of separation". Additional insecurity is caused to refugee children when they have to give up their native language and generally their identity to shape friendships and integrate (Archakis et al., 2018). The fear of incapability to learn the majority language creates an extra fear for them as they are afraid that they will not be able to integrate with local peers (Archakis et al., 2018) and that they will be perceived as unwelcome outsiders (Qian & Walker, 2015) and fall victims of bullying.

2.4 The benefit of education and the difficulty of refugees' integration

Moving further, as mentioned above, the most effective way to put refugee adolescents back on track and provide them with a stable and "normal" life is to be placed as soon as possible in the school environment and blend in with local peers in the reception country. Another benefit of education is its ability to diminish racial discrimination and

reduce “prejudices against immigrants” (Simopoulos & Alexandridis, 2019). However, teachers should handle the integration of their foreign students and social interaction with local peers with care. Many researchers advocate the belief that integrating refugees and asylum seekers into the educational system requires a comprehensive structural approach that prioritizes supporting refugees and empowering them to cultivate their knowledge (Maligkoudi et al.,2018; Hamilton & Moore, 2004; Hayward, 2007), as on the one hand, refugee students enter a new environment bearing with them lots of war-related traumas and challenges. On the other hand, local students may express resentment towards foreign students and bully them.

One of the most difficult challenges in integration, according to researchers, is discrimination (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Mogli et al., 2020). Research findings confirm that discrimination is the greatest barrier to the adaptation of refugee and immigrant students. It has lasting effects on their self-esteem, social interactions, motivation, and academic performance (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Mogli et al., 2020). As already mentioned above, another one of the challenges in integration, that refugee students have to face is the knowledge and use of majority language (Archakis et al., 2018). The difficulty of learning a foreign language, coupled with the difficulty of effective expression and communication, creates an extra difficulty in their integration, leading many to become isolated (Archakis et al., 2018). This situation exacerbates the trauma that refugee students already have. Some of them attempt to abandon their culture and language in order to adapt better and integrate faster. Still, this approach can lead to "social insecurity" and simultaneously cause significant identity issues (Archakis et al.,2018). Nevertheless, despite immigrants' considerable efforts to learn the dominant language, achieving native-like proficiency may still not be enough for successful integration(Archakis et al.,2018). However, with activities assigned by teachers, children who struggle to connect or isolate themselves can benefit themselves, other classmates, or the broader community (Bragin & Opiro, 2012).

A study in Shanghai revealed that foreign students experience such significant tension with local students that some schools have implemented separate timetables for the two groups, even within the same age cohort. This division has led to minimal social interaction and hindered integration between local and foreign students (Qian & Walker, 2015). Such incidents reflect immigrant students' negative experiences with members of the majority, including adjustment difficulties, psychological issues stemming from their schoolmates' rejection, and denigration by the dominant group (Archakis, 2014). Another study of refugee adolescents from the Middle East revealed a significant correlation between experiences of discrimination and internalizing symptoms, while externalizing symptoms were linked to school exclusion (Montgomery, 2008; Eruyar et al.,2018).

Moreover, another reason that young refugee adolescents do not integrate well into the environment of the reception country is that many of them want to relocate to another European country with their families or to connect with other family members who have already settled there (Maligkoudi et al., 2018). This action can impede their successful integration into any school and society if they constantly move.

2.5 The attitude of war-affected parents towards their children and the mental state of the former

Another factor that plays a very important role in their refugee children’s lives is their parents. Of, course as is seen above in Greece and generally in Europe many young adolescents arrive unaccompanied at the borders. The separation from their parents in combination with their experiences of war deepens their trauma. In World War II children’s forced separation from their parents showed serious mental issues such as depressive episodes, violent behaviors, and setbacks in previously achieved developmental milestones (Macksoud, 1992). Some of these children take the responsibility to take care of their siblings or other family members as they are separated from their family or have experienced their parents' death (Mogli et al., 2020). Losses from family members, as well as the loss of home, community, country, and culture, can lead to sadness, grief, and even depression (Hodes & Vostanis, 2019), and in general, these children often experience a loss of social stability and educational opportunities (Mogli et al., 2020; Boyden et al., 2002).

On the other side, refugee parents may behave positively or negatively towards their kids in times of war. Some parents, even if they have suffered from war atrocities, manage to socially support their children and help them create better interactions and relationships in the school (Hodes & Vostanis, 2019; Beiser et al., 2011). They provide them with security, confidence, and comfort (Diab et al., 2015). These actions have a positive impact on the mental health of a child who has suffered from war practices (Hodes & Vostanis, 2019; Beiser et al., 2011). Barder (2001), in his research, after taking a sample of 6.000 children aged 14, concluded that effective parenting, strong family social integration, high levels of parental education, and religious commitment significantly protected Palestinian children's mental health amidst military violence (Diab et al.,2015).

Despite their best efforts, some refugee parents inadvertently cause further emotional harm to their traumatized children, exacerbating their already severely damaged sense of self (Rizkalla et al., 2020; Diad et al., 2015). Parents keep their children home, not allowing them to associate with their peers in order to protect them from facing hostility and be exposed to negative influences. They also hesitate to send them to school and complain about the lack of child-appropriate activities to keep children occupied (Rizkalla et al., 2020). This type of parental supervision, combined with the sense of isolation that children feel, could have multiple repercussions on their "cognitive, behavioral, emotional, physical, and social development" (Rizkalla et al., 2020). Research has also been done on refugees' parental control (Rizkalla et al.,2020). As is shown, war-affected parents may not think of the reception country as a secure setting to nurture their children, fearing that their children could face violence, bullying, or other forms of "mistreatment" (Rizkalla et al., 2020).

Another fact that should be taken into account, is the mental state of the refugee parents. Some of them have severely been affected by the atrocities that have experienced during the war. Some parents confront mental issues such as anxiety, depression, PTSD, etc. This is what was discovered in previous research on earlier "waves of Rohingya refugees" (Khan et al., 2018; Riley et al., 2017). The tense situation in Myanmar not only causes trauma to its citizens but also additional stress as they live in refugee camps (Khan et al., 2018). These people need to face uncertainty, food shortages, and fears about safety as well (Khan et al., 2018). These concerns can easily be transferred and worry children, particularly those who are older and more perceptive of their environment (Khan et al., 2018).

Respectively, these children often endure emotional distress, hyperactivity (Rizkalla et al.,2020), anxiety disorders, bad mood, and increased risk of unpredicted reactions (Hodes & Vostanis, 2019; Eruyar, Maltby, et al., 2018; Panter-Brick et al., 2014) Children also witness intense disputes, conflicts, frustration and aggression which can sometimes escalate into violence and more specifically into domestic violence directed to them (Hodes & Vostanis, 2019; Panter-Brick et al., 2014; Catani et al., 2008; Timshel et al., 2017; Rizkalla et al., 2020). To evade domestic violence in their homes, children had to keep to themselves, avoid expressing themselves and their needs, adjust to the strained household atmospheres and keep up with the current circumstances (Rizkalla et al, 2020). These enforced conditions can halt children's development, increasing the chances of presenting emotional and behavioral problems, such as isolation depression, and anxiety, as well as enhancing their vulnerability to physical harm and injuries (Rizkalla et al, 2020). Thus, children become recipients of their parents, care providers, and siblings' trauma and suffering, and in this way, they go through war trauma both directly and indirectly (Diab et al., 2015). Strong family bonds are vital for children's healthy development, particularly during wartime when their sense of security is most vulnerable (Diab et al., 2015, Peltonen et al., 2010).

2.6 Violence as a war-affected children's communication tool

In times of war, violence is the dominant element. Children who have been born and raised in a violent atmosphere may have more possibilities to behave violently. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that they are more than just the outcomes of the violent environment surrounding them (Bragin & Opiro, 2012). To understand their behavior, violent or not, and to be supported many other parameters should be examined, such as their territory, their family, their culture, and community in combination with the atrocities they have faced and the problems they have overcome through war (Bragin & Opiro, 2012). Keeping that in mind, it can be considered that all these aspects of their community work as protective measures and "guidelines" that give these children the strength and the will to overcome the difficulties, caused by the war conditions, and find some purpose in their existence (Bragin & Opiro, 2012). Thus, one of the main characteristics of war-affected children is resilience (Bragin & Opiro, 2012).

Resilience refers to the ability to withstand and even thrive in adverse conditions, demonstrating positive growth and development (Bragin & Opiro, 2012). On the other hand, as is already mentioned in the sub-heading of depression, a serious consequence of ongoing conflict is a diminished ability for children to develop symbol formation and engage in reflective thinking (Bragin & Opiro, 2012). Thus, the problem starts when children are unable to perform the function of "symbol formation" which leads to scenarios where they express their emotions through actions rather than verbal communication (Fonagy & Target, 1997; Bragin & Opiro, 2012). Consequently, this leads to the wrong or nonexistent reflection of their thoughts. When children struggle with cognition, they may exhibit disruptive behavior in school due to feelings of anger and frustration stemming from their difficulty comprehending lessons (Bragin & Opiro, 2012). Additionally, when conventional forms of thinking are unsuccessful, they may resort to repeating behaviors associated with their past experiences of violence (Bragin & Opiro, 2012). It has been observed that some children believe they have the ability to influence their environment (Bragin & Opiro, 2012). This phenomenon is called "self-efficacy" (Bragin & Opiro, 2012). Thus, even if they cannot express what

they want through communication and negotiation, as they have not achieved previous developmental milestones, they will try to obtain it through violence.

Every individual possesses an inherent degree of innate aggression from birth but witnessing or experiencing violent incidents triggers aggression in individuals who are constantly exposed to them by "stimulating this internal aggression" (Bragin & Opiro, 2012). Thus children may engage in violent incidents and become aggressive towards their classmates or even teachers. This emotional arousal may manifest as feelings of anger and restlessness, accompanied by intrusive and unwelcome violent thoughts (Bragin & Opiro, 2012). Consequently, children may experience a sense of guilt or shame, perceiving themselves as bad for harboring such distressing emotions and thoughts (Bragin, 2004; Bragin & Opiro, 2012). Refugee children's violent behavior can occur from other dimensions as well. The displacement and the trip to another country may be very dangerous (Rizkalla et al., 2020) but they had to make difficult decisions for their survival.

Refugee children may experience extreme poverty and be forced to work under inhumane conditions or may fall victim to violence in the refugee camps (Rizkalla et al., 2020). Unaccompanied refugee minors represent a uniquely vulnerable population (UNHCR, 1997). These young refugees, separated from their parents and caregivers, who may have passed away, frequently endure treacherous journeys, which can subject them to further mistreatment and adversity (Bronstein et al., 2012; Hodes & Vostanis, 2019). Consequently, these children can become aggressive and experience additional trauma because of family stressors such as "harsh parenting style, parental control, and parentification" (Rizkalla et al., 2020) as was already mentioned above.

Many are the examples of refugee children who, in one way or another engage in violence. According to previous studies, parents who survived the Holocaust experienced such trauma that their behavior had negative effects on their children (Rizkalla et al., 2020). In these children, depression and aggressive behaviors were observed (Rizkalla et al., 2020). Similarly, the children of war veterans grappling with PTSD were also inclined to exhibit aggressive and neglectful behavior (Rizkalla et al., 2020). In another study, refugee children in Jordan, affected by the armed conflict in Syria, endured horrific conditions, witnessing atrocities, violence, and mass killings (Rezkalla et al., 2020). They faced severe hunger, and deplorable living conditions, and were subjected to physical abuse, imprisonment, torture, and sexual violence (Rezkalla et al., 2020).

2.7 Harsh conditions causing self-destructive beheaviors and teachers' role in refugees' lives

Throughout their escape and while residing in refugee camps, refugee children have faced harsh weather, poor-quality food and water, difficulties navigating the camp, and the constant threat of kidnapping (Rezkalla et al., 2020). These circumstances led to physical injuries, limb amputations, malnutrition, illnesses, and overall deteriorating health (Rezkalla et al., 2020). As expected, these children showed signs of serious psychological imbalances such as panic attacks, behavioral regression, anxiety, depression, and PTSD (Rezkalla et al., 2020). According to the American Psychiatric Association, reckless and self-destructive behaviors are components of PTSD and their understanding is crucial to understanding adolescent development (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Hodes & Vostanis, 2019). Some adolescents, as will be observed later, subjected themselves to violent behaviors, meaning self-injuries, and suicidal thinking. This was the reality for some children as well in Ukraine (European Union Agency for Asylum, 2024). Young adolescents, who talked openly, acknowledged feeling overwhelmed by high levels of stress, constant anxiety, hopelessness, panic attacks, depression, and suicidal thoughts (European Union Agency for Asylum, 2024). It is only reasonable, as these young adolescents experienced extremely traumatic events such as constant fear about losing their lives or the ones of their relatives and friends, about being hostages or forced to participate in violent practices, uncertainty, bombing and shelling, hiding, and living in basements without having food or water, unable to sleep or "see the sun for months" (European Union Agency for Asylum, 2024).

Armed conflict poses unique risks to children's well-being, including the recruitment of child soldiers, the use of sexual violence as a weapon, the deprivation of basic needs and education, and forced displacement (Hart,2015). Children who have experienced war, relive or reenact traumatic events through violent or fantasy play (Macksoud,1992), along with aggression, behavioral issues, bedwetting, stuttering, nightmares, sleep disturbances, social withdrawal, and isolation, feelings of insecurity, and suicide attempts(Rezkalla et al., 2020). An additional symptom of depression and in general poor mental health is reduced enthusiasm for previously enjoyable activities (Macksoud,1992). However, reactions such as bedwetting, nightmares, and sleep disturbances cannot be observed in schools. It is also recognized that refugee children and young people in resettlement countries face other issues related to despair and hopelessness which sometimes leads to self-injuries and "severe chronic fatigue syndrome"

(Hodes & Vostanis,2019; Patel & Hodes, 2006; Plener et al., 2015). These behaviors were documented in Scandinavia (Hodes & Vostanis,2019; Aronssn et al., 2009).

A young Palestinian woman expresses that the disruption of education for months or even years because of war fills them with fear that their aspirations will fade. Instead of receiving an education, they are maturing in ignorance. This lack of knowledge and hope causes many to be enticed into violence and risky behaviors, thereby continuing the cycle of conflict (OSRSG-CAAC, 2007; Bragin & Opiro, 2012). According to Macksoud (1992), numerous authors report that children who have witnessed violent acts, such as torture, brutal arrest, or execution of parents or relatives, exhibit symptoms of depression.

Teachers play a crucial role in their refugee students' integration well-being. Teachers were unprepared and "scared" for many years to deal with and teach these children. Teachers used to see bilingualism of immigrant students as a challenge that may cause additional problems for them, and that is the main reason these children face learning difficulties (Gkaintartzi & Tsokalidou, 2011). These teachers used to have unfavorable views on linguistic and cultural diversity, as for them, was the major problem in their classrooms (Gkaintartzi & Tsokalidou, 2011). Even if they were positive about linguistic and cultural diversity, some of them don't believe in intercultural education, thinking that practices like these could slow down the learning of the majority language (Maligkoudi et al., 2018). Thus they do not promote intercultural education through their "teaching practices" (Maligkoudi et al., 2018).

Others used to prohibit their refugee students from using their native language, as it was not the majority language and the other students could not understand them (Maligkoudi et al., 2018). The socking part here, was that they were aware that these children might be left behind, but they didn't show any interest in changing or being more flexible in their education practices (Maligkoudi et al., 2018). It seems that this attitude derived from teachers who had not received additional training in secondary language and they continued to teach their students only the majority language believing that it was not their responsibility to teach their native languages but to their parents (Gkaintartzi & Tsokalidou, 2011). These educators often believed that there was no need for additional training on multilingual teaching practices (Maligkoudi et al., 2018). Naturally, these teachers could not understand that education should focus on children's needs and experiences, in order to be successful and fruitful (Maligkoudi et al., 2018). On the contrary, teachers' values and mentality, which are hard to change, have a great impact on their teaching methods, unintentionally neglecting students' perceptions (Maligkoudi et al., 2018).

After examining all these war-related traumas on children around the world and teachers' incapability in intercultural teaching, the case in Greek territory will be presented. In the next chapter, the one of methodology, it will be discussed how the research was conducted, what are the difficulties that the researcher encountered and eventually what were the results that appeared in the Greek context.

3. Methodology

Now, having discussed the main theory and the traumas that refugee children have faced, we'll shift the focus to the Greek school and what types of trauma refugee students manifest according to their previous experience. Do foreign students properly integrate into the Greek community or the trauma of war and constant moving does not allow them to live a happy life by integrating into the Greek culture, creating strong relationships, and setting and achieving goals?

3.1 Fieldwork in Greek Territory

The purpose of this research is to try to understand what traumas immigrant/refugee adolescents (aged 13-15), coming from war-afflicted areas, carry into their education as perceived by teachers in public schools in lower secondary education in the Greek territory. Additionally, it will be examined if the war-related trauma that refugee children bear in Greek schools is the same as the ones provided in theory or if there is any differentiation between them. More precisely, the research focuses on three main behaviors that can derive from war-related traumas: Depression, Fear, and Violent Behaviors. As will be seen later, the data were approached and analysed in a qualitative way. The research took place only in the capital of Greece for two reasons; The huge concentration of immigrant and refugee population and the limited time of the researcher in the territory of Greece. The initial step was to get approval for the research from the Greek Institution of Educational Policy (ΙΝΣΤΙΤΟΥΤΟ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΤΙΚΗΣ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΗΣ - Ινστιτούτο Εκπαιδευτικής Πολιτικής, n.d.-b). Eventually, such approval was not necessary as the research focused on the teachers and how they perceive the trauma that their immigrant or refugee students carry into their education and not on children directly[13]. The advice from the Institution was to think of schools as an autonomous administrative unit and contact directly the school principal for approval.

Little did the research start; it was clear that finding suitable participants would be challenging as teachers with such experience are quite few. To start connecting with possible participants, the communication started with Refugee Education Coordinators. These people are public teachers who, among other responsibilities, coordinate the education of refugees in any region of the country. After communicating with them, the initial plan needed to be slightly changed as it would be almost impossible to find teachers with the work experience required in general public schools. The majority of adolescents of immigrant or refugee origin, who have been accepted into schools, receive tutoring in reception camps or Intercultural schools[14]. They may be accepted in general public schools randomly as a school in the specific region has free space for some more students; an action that is not suitable for an adolescent who has suffered from the atrocities of war.

Therefore, the researcher decided to slightly alter the sample and communicate with the directors of intercultural schools to ask them for participation in the research. This is when the real struggle started as the majority of them were unwilling to participate in the research with even creative excuses. Some directors said that they didn't have time to participate and they would have participated only if the researcher was part of a public research center. Another director mentioned that they don't have students of immigrant or refugee origin at all, a fact that through the course of the research was proven to be just an excuse to refuse to participate in the research.

However, after a lot of calls and efforts on the part of the researcher, some intercultural schools and independent teachers agreed to participate with pleasure. Starting from the intercultural schools, the researcher had the opportunity, in two of them, to spend one entire week during the operational hours of schools to conduct interviews with the headmaster and the rest of the educational staff and to observe the behavior of the immigrant/refugee students during their breaks from the educational process and in physical education class that was taking place in the yard of the school. More information about these schools will be given in the following sub-chapters.

3.2 Interviwees

The detection of independent public teachers occurred in a twofold manner; Through communication with N.G.Os, who introduced the researcher to teachers who used to work in reception camps and now work in public schools, and during a Dissemination Event in which researchers from National and Kapodistrian University of Athens presented their findings on the subject "Immigrant and Refugee Adolescents' Resilient Adaptation: Who does well and

[13] If the research had been focused on children directly, the approval would be mandatory as the research would not continue without it.

[14] Keeping in mind that in each case, many different factors are taking place for immigrant/refugee selection (such as the period of staying in Greek territory, etc.).

why?"[15]. At the end of this Dissemination Event, teachers with the expected working experience answered questions and shared their experiences from teaching immigrant and refugee students. After their speech, the researcher managed to approach them and some of them agreed to participate in this research. Additionally, the researcher approached teachers already working in intercultural schools as it is already mentioned above. All these teachers derived from different backgrounds with different studies and specializations such as mathematics, physics, biology, literature, foreign languages, etc.

3.3 Questionnaires

Two questionnaires were developed; In the first one, the researcher wanted to collect the demographic information of the interviewees and examine their age range, sex, working experience in teaching refugee students, the most common origins of their students, and in what type of schools they had worked in (public schools, intercultural schools, Second Chance schools[16] etc.), (see Appendix A). The second questionnaire focused on the three domains mentioned above (Depression, Fear & Violent behaviors). These three domains were selected because they were the most common distinctions that could be found in many academic research projects (American Psychiatric Association, 1013; Archakis, 2014; Archakis et al., 2018; Betancourt et al., 2010; Bragin, 2004; Bragin, 2005; Bragin & Opiro, 2012; Bronstein et al., 2012; Catani et al., 2008; Timshel et al.,2017; Rizkalla et al., 2020; Riley et al.,2017; Slim,2008; Perry, 2002; Plener et al., 2015; Murphy et al., 2017; Eruyar, Huemer & Vostanis, 2018; Hart, 2015; Macksoud, 1992; Macksoud,1993; Montgomery, 2008; Panter-Brick et al., 2014; Patel & Hodes, 2006; Peltonen et al., 2010; Shaw, 2003; Hodes & Vostanis, 2018; European Union Agency for Asylum, 2024). Sometimes to cater to the requirements of the interview, the researcher chose to omit certain questions or introduce additional ones strategically, guiding the interviewee to stay focused on the central topic and avoid straying from it.

3.4 Procedure

The collection of the data occurred through semi-structured interviews[17]. Before the beginning of each interview, all participants completed a short demographic questionnaire[18]. On average the interview time was 30 to 40 minutes. Even if the interview was designed to last shorter, during the interview, the interviewees most of the time felt comfortable and kept the discussion going longer. The interviewer decided to take advantage of it because the more comfortable the interviewee was, the more information was willing to share. The most surprising fact was that the majority of the interviewees, after the end of the interview and the closing of the recording, wanted to share more information about the bad experiences they had faced with their students feeling safer and not exposed. For this reason, only the information which has been recorded will be used in this research paper.

The participants who took place in the research were 20 in total. Amongst them were 16 women and 4 men. Their age range was from 30 to 65 years old with 45% of the participants being in their fifties. Teachers' educational experience, educating adolescents of immigrant and refugee origin fluctuated from two months to 35 years. As for the students and their countries of origin, the majority of participants (90%) had experience in teaching students deriving from Iran, Afghanistan, and Syria. 75% of teachers had taught refugees from Ukraine, Russia, and Georgia, and lastly, 65% of them had taught immigrants from Pakistan, and 60% and 55% had refugee students from Sudan and Iraq respectively. In lower percentages, participants had experience in teaching students from countries such as Armenia (45%), Congo (30%), Uganda (20%), Yemen (15%), Azerbaijan (15%), Rwanda (15%) and Egypt (15%). The majority of participants claimed that they teach an average of 60 students from war zones each year with the rest of them (25%) conceding that they don't know.

[15] Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation funded this research project. The results have not been uploaded yet online. However, more information can be found at the following link: http://www.psych.uoa.gr/units/research-centers/resilience/myr.html

[16] Second Chance schools are innovative schools for adults who did not have the chance to complete the mandatory nine years of education. More information can be found here: https://www.inedivim.gr/en/programmes-actions/second-chance-schools

[17] The researcher had prepared one semi-structured interview questionnaire and when it was found appropriate the researcher slightly changed the questions or did not ask some of the questions as she tried to make the participants feel safe to talk without her intervention.

[18] Both of the questionnaires can be found at the bottom of this paper.

4. Results

In this chapter, the analysis of the interviewees' answers and the results of the fieldwork will be presented. However, before this another observation should be added here. In the chapter theory, we saw that in general teachers were untrained and unprepared to teach their foreign students and help them integrate in the community of the reception country. This was also the case in Greece as well. Teachers did not want to promote refugees' language and culture as they thought that this action may cause problems and difficulties to their students, as by practicing their language they would not be able to learn the majority language and eventually they would not be able to integrate. As it seems though, it was only teachers' ignorance and lack of proper training.

During the fieldwork, it was observed that teachers' attitudes had completely changed. Nowadays, teachers treat the children's foreign language and their different cultures as tools for integration in Greek schools. Teachers promote interculturalism and in this way try to eliminate discrimination between children and racist attitudes. Teachers appear to put in genuine effort. Before sharing their knowledge with students, they research the cultures of their foreign students. This helps make these students feel included and not left out. Additionally, it familiarizes and unites the other students. Naturally, their efforts are not enough to eradicate every bad behavior or action but it is a great start and a better way to achieve a better and more inclusive climate in the school environment. Undoubtedly, these findings cannot be generalized but show a slight change with a huge future impact on Greek society.

The analysis of the interviewees' answers was a long and hard process. The first step was for the interviews to be transcribed. This was a long-lasting procedure. During this step, the researcher listened multiple times to each recorded interview trying to catch every single detail; From Keywords and phrases to the tone of the interviewee's voice and indirect statements. After multiple categorizations and constant changes, the researcher concluded in the results presented below, that each category included behaviors that were conceptually coherent, exclusive, exhaustive, objective and homogeneous. To ensure the validity of the categorization, as the researcher is not familiar with Psychology but with Human Geography, a second researcher familiar with Psychology studies was asked to independently code the transcribed answers. The researcher's agreement was 97% and the disagreements were resolved by discussion between the two researchers. As mentioned above the study focused on three primary dimensions: Depression, Fear, and Violent behaviors. Through the interviewees' responses, specific sub-dimensions within each broader category were identified (see Appendix B and for a sample interview see Appendix C). Firstly, the percentages will be presented and each category will be discussed separately.

4.1. Depression

In the first category of depression, 60% of teachers positively replied that their war-affected students of refugee origin showed signs of depression with 15% of them mentioning that they have refugee students who are diagnosed with depression by psychologists. On the contrary, 15% of them applied negatively to the appearance signs of depression and 25% of participants admitted that they could not acknowledge depression signs in their refugee students. Here another factor should be taken into account though. According to Hodes, Vostanis (2019), and other researchers, depression tends to decrease over time with resettlement and social integration. However, this can be achieved when resettlement pressures have significantly increased (Hodes & Vostanis 2019). For this reason, teachers cannot exactly understand the size of trauma as some of their students had already managed to integrate better and create friendly relationships. Some of them, according to teachers, have arrived in the country but due to several reasons, they weren't registered at school in the first place. This may have allowed them, to experience and explore the broader Greek community.

Teachers who showed a positive attitude highlighted that they were not experts in the field of psychology and wanted to disclaim responsibility. Additionally, they mentioned other possible reasons besides war which will be discussed later in this section. After processing the data given from the semi-structured interviews four broader categories have been observed that show possible signs of depression: i) Facial expressions, ii) Lack of concentration and frustration, iii) Isolation, and iv) problems in the learning dimension.

4.1.1 Facial expressions

The majority of teachers (40%), who replied positively, recognized facial expressions as a possible indicator of depression. More specifically, one of the indicators was that war-affected adolescents may cry at an unexpected time

during the conduct of the course by remembering a traumatic experience from their past. Another sign that strengthens this category is that adolescents affected by war do not laugh and the expression of sadness is stuck in their faces.

4.1.2 Lack of concentration and frustration

Moving to the second category the lack of concentration was identified by the majority of teachers (55%). 45% of teachers mentioned that their war-affected students suffer from "frustration". In this sector, the separation of further adolescents' reactions was observed as well. Except for the frustration, on the one hand, students showed signs of disappointment and sorrow but on the other hand, students showed signs of increased irritability, nervousness, anger, or even explosions of the latter. Teachers mentioned that some of their refugee students some days of the week are energetic, and talkative, participating in activities and playing in the yard of the school and the rest days of the week, they select not to talk and/or participate in the school activities by isolating and closing into themselves. During these days their interest in previous joyful activities was lost. Additionally, some teachers (50%), during the interviews, conducted in schools, mentioned that some of their refugee students present signs of fatigue and that they sleep during lessons, without being able to keep their eyes open.

4.1.3 Isolation

Keeping in mind the aforementioned, isolation is the next broad category that justifies teachers' perception of possible signs of depression in their foreign students. In particular, 70% of teachers believe that isolation is a sign of depression. According to them, signs of isolation are when children do not want to talk to their teachers or to their classmates and during the conduct of the courses. 45% of teachers highlight that their refugee students refuse to participate in the educational process and the latter shows signs of resignation. 35% of the teachers support that many students of refugee origin show great difficulties in being integrated into the school environment. However, 40% of the teachers observed that their refugee students show signs of isolation during the first months of their school admission. By the end of the school year, these students have created a circle of friends and they have become more open in communicating with their classmates, and in participating in school events and activities. As teachers mentioned, "These children evolve into different children by the end of the academic year". Nonetheless, for this to be achieved teachers put a lot of effort into organizing discussions during the educational process and group activities to reinforce the friendly relationships among their students.

4.1.4 Learning dimension

A final possible sign of depression is problems in the learning dimension. 45% of the teachers talk about "school leakage" meaning dropouts. With this term, teachers describe that many refugee/ immigrant students even if they have been admitted to attend school courses, eventually they stop to attend for multiple reasons. Some of them are, for example, their transfer to camps away from the capital, the end of some refugee assisting programs, their acceptance in other countries where they can reunite with their relatives, or their need for money which leads them to search for work. Additionally, some teachers (40%) support that some refugee students stop attending their school classes as they didn't have previous experience in attending before in their country or they did not attend for a long time because of war conditions that they have experienced. Entering their first learning environment at the age of 13 usually causes disappointment and frustration to refugee students as some of them do not even know the alphabet.

The rest of the teachers (15%) supported that their immigrant students do not show signs of depression and the others (25%) mentioned that they don't know if their students show these signs. To justify their arguments all of them believe that all these children's behaviors arise from the fact that they don't know the language of the reception country and in our case the Greek language. As refugee students cannot communicate, they feel that they are in an unfamiliar environment and therefore they cannot connect and be integrated into the school environment. In their view, these behaviors do not show signs of depression as it is logical for students to act that way since they are not able to communicate in Greek. 25% of teachers share a second belief about what activates these behaviors in their refugee students. According to them, adolescence for some children is a strange and turbulent period when many hormonal and physical changes take place. Thus, their behavior constantly changes until it is completely shaped by the end of this period.

4.2 Fear

In the second category of fear, 70% of teachers replied that they have seen their refugee students experience fear. 20% of them replied negatively and the rest mentioned that they didn't know if their students expressed fearful behaviors. Considering the positive answers of the teachers four categories were distinguished and categorized that show phobic behaviors: i) aggression, bullying, denial, and audacity, ii) fear of intense stimuli and hyperactivity, iii) generalized insecurity, and iv) fear between family values and religion.

4.2.1 Aggression, Bullying, Denial, and Audacity

According to teachers who agreed with the statement that "war-affected children who have been in adverse circumstances and have suffered verbal and physical violence often show phobic behaviors", some of them (40%) mentioned that these students show signs of aggression, audacity, and denial. 20% of them, mentioned the fear of bullying from other classmates with a different nationality.

One positive element that was observed by some teachers (20%) was the fact that some Greek students or students with a different ethnicity not only did not bully their classmates who could not understand the language and participate but they showed a climate of solidarity by helping their classmates with their homework or by translating what the teacher said in languages such as Farsi, Ukrainian and Russian.

4.2.2 Fear of Intense Stimuli and Hyperactivity

Moving on to the next category all of the teachers (70%), who replied positively to the statement, mentioned that they had noticed signs of fear and discomfort towards loud and sudden noises or voices to their refugee students. Teachers mentioned three common examples. One of them was derived from the National Holidays. During these days military parades take place in many cities in Greece. In these parades, many air force pilots with military aircraft participate. As the helicopters pass by the noise, they make is quite loud and scares the refugee students. Even if the teachers have already warned their students the trauma, they bear is so big that it does not allow them to think logically and react calmly. One teacher mentioned that once their school participated in one of the parades. When the helicopters passed over their heads their Syrian students panicked and stopped the parade. Some of them started crying and others started searching for shelters.

The second example was connected to the military exercise of "Parmenion" (Redefined, 2023). In this specific military exercise, the civil defense sirens are tested and activated. During the activation of the Sirens, the training of Hellenic Armed Forces Personnel is divided into planning, coordination, and conduct of joint operations. These sirens could be heard all over the capital, so the teachers warned their students in advance. However, they were not able to stop the fear and panic caused to their refugee students.

The third example was the volume of the voice of the teachers in the classroom. If the teacher expressed him/herself loudly or raised their voice suddenly the students who had experienced severe war conditions were hiding under their desks or they were leaving the classroom. So, the teachers try to talk and teach calmly in order not to trigger their war-affected students.

Additionally, 30% of teachers mentioned that their students show fear in sudden movements or actions of appropriate affection from the first to the latter. These students express the fear of being beaten. According to teachers and what their students have told them, during their travel, traffickers treated them violently and inhumanely. They were victims of traffickers' violent behaviors. Characteristically, teachers mentioned that "many children tighten up when you go to hug them or they distance themselves". Lastly, some teachers supported, without giving further examples or explanations that some of their students are hyperactive and this is the way they deal with fear.

4.2.3. Generalized Insecurity

In this category, 35% of the teachers supported that their war-affected students show various signs of insecurity. Some of their students are afraid of leaving school. As these students enter the environment of school which is a stable environment and provides them with a sense of safety, they do not want to find themselves again in an unsafe and unstable environment which will cause them distress. Due to this insecurity, many of these students ask their teachers about their progress on a regular basis.

4.2.4. Fear between Family Values and Religion

The last category that was distinguished was the one of Fear between family values and religion. This category is not addressed directly to the fear deriving from war but it shows the differences between a Mediterranean Country and Countries from the Middle East and North Africa such as Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. The connection between Muslim religion and family in these countries is stricter than in a European country where other religions appear, and disrespect for them is something that usually is not forgiven. Nevertheless, teachers declared that even though families from the Middle East are stricter than the ones of European origin, the parents of these children who have managed to travel with them, try to help their children to adapt better to the Greek community in order to protect them from facing the problems that they had to face. It seems that some refugee parents are highly educated, more ideologically flexible, and try to leave behind the religious and social doctrines with which they grew up. However, sometimes children seem to be confused about the limits that should exist between their religion and their parents. This confusion sometimes leads to fear. In order to understand though, the flexibility of some Muslim fathers, they did not impose that their daughters wear Hijab or Tudong.

4.2.5 Reasons that refugee children are not fearful

As it was already mentioned above, 20% of teachers believe that their war-affected students do not show signs of fear. On the one hand, they supported the notion that these students have long been removed from war zones by the time they are accepted into schools. In this way, their wounds have partially been healed. On the other hand, the teachers supported the idea that simply these students are "hungry" for knowledge and they want to seize the opportunity that is given to them.

Lastly, half of all the participants supported two notions. The first one was the notion that these adolescents, who derive from war-afflicted areas, are bolder and have more endurance. These students, before taking this role, had to deal with serious problems such as survival. They slept in the wild, they were closed in transport trucks for weeks or even for months, and they had to cross the sea in inflatable boats. After living in such difficult conditions, they were not afraid to deal with simpler everyday problems.

The second one may seem paradoxical but it has a very concrete explanation. According to teachers, their Ukrainian students do not show signs of fear and in general, they don't depict the image of a refugee child. How is this possible thought, considering that the Russian-Ukrainian war started in 2022 and continues until 2024?

Four EU Member States border with Ukraine: Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania (European Union Agency for Asylum, 2024). According to EUAA, Poland was the main gateway for Ukrainians to the European Union (European Union Agency for Asylum, 2024). The majority of the Ukrainian refugees were collected there, firstly to protect themselves from war and secondly, with the belief that they would return soon to their country. By comparing the statistics of these two countries, in Poland, the Ukrainian refugees fluctuated by 956.633 (Situation Ukraine refugee situation., n.d.), and in Greece 24.954 (PDF Viewer | Global Focus, n.d.-b). Due to the statistics and the geographic position of Greece the amount of Ukraine refugees is quite small.

Teachers claimed that their Ukrainian students arrived in Greece before the beginning of the war and as justifications, they mentioned that the majority of the Ukrainian parents were highly educated and left the country in advance for safety reasons. They also touched on the issue of the social and economic status of Ukrainians by mentioning that the majority of these children arrive at school by the family's car.

4.3 Violent Behaviors

Moving on to the last broader category, the one that focuses on the violent behaviors of the refugee adolescents in the Greek school territory, 80% of teachers replied positively to the researcher's statement; "War-affected children who have been in adverse circumstances and have suffered physical violence often show signs of violent behaviors towards themselves and people around them". The rest of them (20%) replied negatively. With the term "violent behaviors", the researcher examines two aspects of violence: the physical and the verbal.

All the teachers who replied positively mentioned that verbal violence is more common to these students than physical violence. Nevertheless, even if physical violence is not so common, this does not mean that it is completely rare or absent. Thus, this is the reason we should include it in this research. Throughout the teachers' answers, six categories of violent behaviors have been observed. These six categories are the following: i) Racial violence and Effervescence due to war in Gaza, ii) Verbal violence in the mother tongue, iii) Misunderstandings due to polyphony, iv) Violent play, v) Self-harm, and vi) Intimidation.

4.3.1 Racial violence and Effervescence due to war in Gaza

As one teacher said in the interview, intercultural schools have positive and negative aspects[19], meaning that these schools do not have a major ethnicity prevailing in their students but many minor ethnicities. On the one hand, this allows children to broaden their horizons and learn about new ethnicities, cultures, customs and make friends worldwide. On the other hand, these multiple ethnicities due to differences in their culture and the trauma, they bear, from the war cause frictions between them which sometimes leads to racial violence, physical or verbal. According to the teachers (40%), this is a common phenomenon in intercultural schools or other types of schools in which refugee or immigrant students are part, especially among Arabic-speaking Muslim countries.
Teachers mentioned that they try to cultivate a calm environment in the school and in general, they have achieved it through many discussions and actions. However, it is easy for refugee and immigrant students to be triggered through various events. During the interviews, a characteristic example that triggered the refugee and immigrant students from the Middle East was mentioned. At the beginning of October 2023, the war between Israel and Hamas burst out in the Gaza Strip. Teachers described that this week, the school territory seemed like a "minefield". The effervescence in the school this specific week was so huge, that teachers stopped multiple fights and led three students to the hospital with scars, swollen faces, and broken hands and legs:

"This week was awful. When I was returning home on Friday, I remember myself crying in the elevator. I needed to decompress. I haven't faced so much violence in my life!"

-Physical education teacher-

4.3.2 Verbal violence in the mother tongue

Moving on to the next pattern, that was observed, focuses on verbal violence in the mother tongue. 40% of the participants highlighted that their students very often lash out at them in their mother tongue. In this way, they know that they won't receive any punishment or reprimand as the Greek teachers do not understand their native languages. This phenomenon usually happens when their refugee and immigrant students experience explosions of anger and are aggressive.
In this category, another aspect should be added. Teachers have mentioned that there is one specific swearword in the Farsi language which has sparked many violent fights. According to them and what their students have told them in the Islamic world if someone uses this specific word it is considered disrespectful and the other has the moral obligation to punish him with death seeking revenge and clearing the name of his family from the impiety. It's not common for Muslims to express themselves in this way in the school environment but over the years it has happened many times and it makes it a pattern. It constitutes a serious reason for engaging in a fight.

4.3.3 Misunderstandings due to polyphony

Another broader category that could be considered as a sub-category in verbal violence is the one of misunderstandings due to polyphony. In these school environments, for teachers and students to communicate, there is a mix of multiple languages such as Greek, English, native, and body languages. Due to this mixture, sometimes the meaning of the discussion is lost and many misunderstandings arise which could lead to a verbal or even more physical fight. According to the participants (40%), this is a common phenomenon in schools. Additionally, in Arabic–rooted languages misunderstandings happen due to the existence of the same words with different meanings, which can also lead to a verbal or even a physical fight. However, the real reason that the participants mentioned these misunderstandings, is because they believe that their refugee students search for a way to vent and decompress from their war-related traumas. Sometimes, it seems that their anger and restlessness do not arise from a specific person or reason but it is accumulated pressure deriving from their traumatic experiences.

[19] Additional problems arise for teachers as well such as the difficulty in teaching in many languages at the same time including body language, as the majority of the students when they arrive at schools cannot communicate properly in Greek or English. However, this is not the case in this paper.

4.3.4 Violent play

75% of teachers replied that they have seen their refugee and immigrant students play violently. Most of the time, teachers stop their students before their playing escalates to an actual fight. If the teachers are not vigilant and do not act immediately the consequences could be severe.

4.3.5 Self-harm

During the interviews, the educators were hesitant to admit that they had seen some of their students harming themselves. Only 20% of them openly admitted it, the rest of them simply implied it. One of the participants mentioned that once she lived a very traumatic experience. She had a student from Syria. This student was severely traumatized by the war hostilities that he had experienced in Syria before trespassing on the Greek borders. He had witnessed the death of his family and he was the only one who survived. Once she stopped this adolescent from committing suicide by falling from the second floor of the school. The rest of the 20% manifested that they have seen cuts in the hands of their war-affected students.

4.3.6 Intimidation

In general lines, the competent institutions that are responsible for the education of immigrants and refugees try to place these adolescents mostly in intercultural or other relevant schools and not in general schools, the ones that the majority of Greeks attend the classes. Due to this reason, these adolescents come into contact with a small number of Greeks in the school environment. Thus, no bullying has been observed from this minority towards the other minority but on the contrary, the few Greek students who are in these schools show a climate of solidarity and try to help their foreign classmates with the teachers' guidance. Nevertheless, 25% of the teachers supported that they have encountered bullying from one racial group to another, especially from Ukrainian adolescents to their classmates of African origin.

Lastly, 20% of the teachers who mentioned that their refugee immigrant students do not act violently gave multiple reasons. Some of them claimed that the adolescents who have suffered from war atrocities are the kindest and they don't express themselves violently. Others supported the idea that these children pass through their adolescence phase and that the latter don't express themselves more violently than the average adolescent is expected to do. Lastly, one of the educators simply mentioned that she had never seen her students act violently throughout her educational experience.

5. Conclusion

In the last few years, an increase in refugee children has been observed in the territory of Europe. As conflicts around the world continue, it is inevitable to expect a further increase of immigrants from third countries' populations crossing the borders of the European Union, especially of children. In an attempt to address this critical situation, the aim of the present research project was to answer the following question: "What traumas immigrant /refugee adolescents (aged 13-15), coming from war-afflicted areas, carry into their education as perceived by teachers in public schools in lower secondary education in the Greek territory?". To be able to answer the research question, two additional sub-questions were posed which are: (i)"What are the general immigration flows in Europe in general and in Greece in particular?", and (ii) "What are the actions that international, European and specifically Greek stakeholders take to help refugee children to integrate better into Greek society?".

As for the first sub-question, up to date it has been registered that, in 2023, the non-European population was 3 times more than in 2022 in Europe (Irregular Border Crossings Down in Central Med, up in Eastern Med and Western Africa, n.d; Frontex Annual Brief: Comprehensive Overview and Outlook for 2024, n.d). In Greece, the population of refugee children increased from 2020 to 2022 by 571% (Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe: Accompanied, Unaccompanied and Separated: Overview of Trends (January - December 2022) - World, 2023; (UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM's Factsheet., n.d). This means that the population of refugee children increased almost six times in two years. Many of these children bear with them war-related traumas and it is difficult for them to return to ordinary everyday life.

As for the second sub-question, these actions are published on official pages on the internet (Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, n.d.; EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child, 2017; Children's Rights and Armed Conflict, n.d.; School education initiatives,n.d.; United Nations Security Council | Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, n.d; The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Children's Version, n.d.-b; Convention on the Rights of the Child Text, n.d.-b; Νόμος 4760/2020 (Κωδικοποιημένος) - ΦΕΚ Α 247/11.12.2020, n.d.; Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024). However, for this project, the purpose was to provide knowledge and a better idea of what guidelines exist in the European and Greek context and in what extent they are applied, before delving into the main research question.

Children's rights are an inseparable dimension of human rights. (EU Action on the Rights of the Child, n.d.; EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child, 2017; EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, 2021). United Nations and other stakeholders prioritize their respect and safety. Children must be protected from any type of violence (The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Children's Version, n.d.-b; Convention on the Rights of the Child Text, n.d.-b), and discrimination (Convention on the Rights of the Child Text, n.d.).

Actions are required to be taken by the Member State to protect children and respect their rights in times of war (Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, n.d.). Governments are not allowed to exploit children as soldiers under the age of adulthood (Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, n.d.). As child soldiers are not few (The United Nations, 2014), they must be immediately removed from war hostilities, receive mental and physical support and reintegrate into society (Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, n.d.).

The European Union complies with the United Nations Protocol and recommendations and to secure children's well-being, the EU and the other Member States take into consideration the principles of UNCRC. The one of the "Best interest of the Child" and the one of the "Respect for the views of children" (EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child, 2017). Moreover, for the reintegration process to be successful the principles of "Access and Aims of Education" must be applied and respected (The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Children's Version, n.d.-b; Convention on the Rights of the Child Text, n.d.-b). The UN guidelines commit the EU to address the immediate, medium, and long-term effects of armed conflict on children (Children's Rights and Armed Conflict, n.d.).

In the Greek context, for the protection and well-being of refugee and/or war-affected children responsible are the Ministry of Migration & Asylum and the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs & Sports. In the Ministry of Migration & Asylum, the unit of the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection is responsible for their protection and atypical education in cooperation with other institutions. Following the UN guidelines and principles, this Unit is primarily responsible for coordinating, monitoring, and overseeing activities and agencies involved with unaccompanied and separated children within Greece. It manages the coordination of

activities related to the execution of initiatives and programs in tandem. Additionally, a program called “Membership” was created. In this program, six mentors with refugee or immigrant backgrounds provide their services to empower and support unaccompanied minors.

As for the Ministry of Education, its main policy is to create and form an intercultural and inclusive school for the 21st century by delivering quality education and enhancing teachers' instructional abilities (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024). Reception classes have been designed for refugee students with little or no knowledge of the Greek language (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024). In the years 2021-2022, due to the actions of the Ministry, the percentages of refugee children’s enrollment in schools and continuation of their studies without dropouts were the highest. In cooperation with other agencies, they support students with educational material (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024.). Training programs and support materials are also provided to teachers to better help their refugee students integrate into Greek schools and everyday life (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024.). Last but not least, the ministry offers, in cooperation with other agencies, psychoemotional support to children and teachers (Προσφυγικό και Εκπαίδευση, 2024).

According to theory, war-affected children have endured significant suffering (Macksoud, 1992; Mogli et al., 2020; Hodes & Vostanis, 2019; Diab et al., 2015). They have usually faced war hostilities and multiple atrocities firsthand, such as witnessing a family member’s death (Mogli et al., 2020; Hodes & Vostanis, 2019; European Union Agency for Asylum, 2024), constant bombings, and gunshots. Many of them have traveled alone confronting numerous dangers such as starvation, lack of water, and severe weather conditions (Rizkalla et al., 2020; Bronstein et al., 2012; European Union Agency for Asylum, 2024, Hodes & Vostanis, 2019). Others have fallen victim to human traffickers, facing exploitation through forced labour (Rizkalla et al., 2020; Bronstein et al., 2012; Hodes & Vostanis, 2019), sexual abuse, and various other forms of abuse (Hart, 2015; Macksoud,1992). These children often show serious mental and physical traumas (Bragin & Opiro, 2012).

Persistent conflicts “shape” children’s behavior in various ways. Often, they feel responsible for protecting their families (Rizkalla et al., 2020), which causes stress and evokes difficulties in expressing emotions and in assimilating new knowledge. In some children, symbol formation is not typically developed because of war conditions and instead of expressing their needs verbally, they express them physically (Fonagy & Target, 1997; Bragin & Opiro, 2012). Their reflective function may also be damaged, and these children may be almost unable to think critically about their experience or communicate it to others (Fonagy & Target, 1997; Bragin, 2005; Bragin & Opiro, 2012). Children who have underdeveloped the function of symbol formation may also express themselves through violence as they are not capable of verbal communication, and it is more familiar to them (Fonagy & Target, 1997; Bragin & Opiro, 2012). Other traumatized children may display self-destructive behaviors (Bragin & Opiro, 2012; European Union Agency for Asylum, 2024), causing harm to themselves. The lack of these abilities leads to a lack of concentration, frustration, and academic underachievement (Siegel,1999; Bragin & Opiro, 2012). Additionally, “chronic fatigue syndrome”, which is a usual symptom of depression can contribute to lack of concentration and lead to academic underachievement (Hodes & Vostanis, 2019; Aronssn et al., 2009). Having faced these ordeals, children, who already carry war-related traumas, enter a new environment and encounter new challenges related to the host country's language and culture (Qin, 2009). During this process, some of these traumas may be newly manifested or be exacerbated.

Refugee students face problems when they come across the majority language of the reception country (Gkaintartzi & Tsokalidou, 2011). A lot of stress and confusion leads them to get more depressed and isolated as they do not speak their native language and, in a way, they feel that they are losing their identity (Γκαϊνταρτζή et al., 2011). Adding to this, as they do not use correctly the majority language they tend to be alone and to be unable to form friendships with their classmates (Archakis et al., 2018). Additionally, the aforementioned about lack of concentration and frustration may lead refugee children to further isolation, which is also a symptom of depression Hodes & Vostanis, 2019; Aronssn et al., 2009). These children may struggle to connect with their classmates and integrate into the school society (Archakis et al., 2018). Failing to do so, they decide to remain silent and withdrawn (Archakis et al., 2018). In conclusion, war-affected children are at great risk to develop mental health issues, such as anxiety, aggression, fear, fatigue, uncertainty, and most commonly depression and PTSD (Betancourt et al., 2010; Murphy et al., 2017; Hodes & Vostanis, 2019; European Union Agency for Asylum, 2024). As far as, the emotion of fear is concerned, although it is a common finding in relative research, so far it has not been analyzed further or in depth (European Union Agency for Asylum, 2024; Diad et al., 2015; Bragin & Opiro, 2012; Shaw, 2003; Archakis et al., 2018; Rizkalla et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2018).

War-affected parents seem to play a very important role in their children’s lives, either positively or negatively (Hodes & Vostanis, 2019; Beiser et al., 2011; Diad et al., 2015; Barder, 2001; Khan et al., 2018; Rizkalla et al., 2020; Eruyar, Maltby et al., 2018, Catani et al.,2008; Timshel et al.,2017; Peltonen et al., 2010; Panter- Brick et

al., 2014). Therefore, parents' mental health should also be taken into account, as they were victims of war as well, and some of them had been severely affected. Their worries can easily pass to their children causing them additional anxiety and hyperactivity (Khan et al., 2018).

Because of all the trauma that refugee children bear and the difficulties that they have faced, many International, European, and Greek stakeholders have gotten into motion to secure children's rights, protect them, and cover their needs. Children are human beings and they have rights (EU Action on the Rights of the Child, n.d.; EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child, 2017; EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, 2021). The articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The children's version,n.d.) must be taken into account and be respected by any EU country and Member States' actions. Hence, the Greek Government organizes its programs and actions by taking into consideration these articles and guidelines to promote the welfare of the refugee children who have come to the Greek territory. The Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs, and Sports also provides training programs to support teachers in multilingual and multicultural learning environments.

According to theory, the most effective way to help war-affected children to adapt and integrate into a new place and return to an ordinary life is to place them in a school environment (Fazel et al., 2012; Diad et al., 2015; Koehler & Schneider, 2019; Bragin & Opiro,2012). Schooling, in addition to providing a stable context (Koehler & Schneider, 2019; Bragin & Opiro, 2012), can also, through the educational process, reduce racial discrimination, which is a major barrier, and can help refugee children to better integrate into the new small society and support them to build friendships. Teachers also play a very important role in these children's lives. In the past, teachers were unprepared to deal with the latter, provide them with proper education, and adjust to their needs (Maligkoudi et al., 2018; Gkaintartzi & Tsokalidou, 2011; Eres, 2016). Given the importance of schooling, the main research question of the present study regards how teachers perceive the traumas that war-affected children bear. For this purpose, interviews were conducted with Greek teachers involved in the education of those students. Demographic data of the teachers were collected, and semi-structured interviews were recorded and analyzed in depth regarding their experiences in their interaction with war-affected children. The method applied was qualitative.

Greek teachers, even if they do not have expertise in psychology, through their observations and examples can give us a picture of what is happening in schools where refugee students attend classes. They declare that signs of depression, fear, and violent behaviors are observed in the school environment which comes into agreement with the aforementioned theory. Nevertheless, these behaviors are not observed on a daily basis. Some sudden events may flare them up, such as the outbreak of the war in the Gaza Strip. This sudden manifestation of intense behaviors can be explained by considering the fact that these foreign students who have suffered from war hostilities enter a "resilience mode" (Bragin & Opiro, 2012). This means that having faced all this violence physically or mentally, some of these students are not afraid to face new challenges.

Most teachers stated that their students show signs of depression albeit strongly disclaiming that they are experts. Four indicators of depression were mentioned by them; i) Facial expressions, ii) Lack of concentration and frustration, iii) Isolation, and iv) Problems in learning. Since the teachers are not psychologists, they try to understand what their students feel through their behavior. It is observed that refugee students often present destructive behaviors. As all human beings express their feelings with facial expressions, refugee students also express part of their feelings through their faces by crying or feeling moody and anxious.

Considering the lack of concentration and frustration, teachers' observations are consistent with the theory (Siegel,1999; Bragin & Opiro, 2012). According to teachers' views, many foreign students find it difficult to stay focused during the course (Siegel,1999; Bragin & Opiro, 2012). They also declared that there are times when their students are filled with energy and are willing to participate during the lesson while other times, they are in a bad mood, and not willing to communicate, participate, and focus on the lesson. Therefore, this frequent switching of emotions may lead to academic underachievement.

Immigrant children become frustrated with school failure. They experience many negative feelings such as intense anger, shame, and incapability. Consequently, many of these children may think that school is pointless and eventually they may end up abandoning school, a fact that is linked to the learning dimension of depression and the high rate of dropping out. However, this is not the only reason that a refugee child may decide to abandon school as some of them have to help their families and end up working or staying home to take care of their siblings. Another factor that can contribute to a lack of concentration is the "chronic fatigue syndrome" mentioned above that people with depression usually face (Hodes & Vostanis, 2019). This is also common for refugee students as it was observed by the teachers.

Refugee children according to Greek teachers show signs of isolation. Isolation may derive from the fact that they do not understand the majority language and thus they are not able to communicate with their classmates.

Alternative explanations were provided by Greek teachers. These children may be too adsorbed in a state of depression and they are not able to externalize their energy or they are preoccupied and worried about other issues, such as their reunification with their family who may be in another country. The most important observation in Greek schools though is the following one. According to teachers, refugee children usually show signs of isolation during their first months in the school environment. By the end of the academic year, children were different. They have made friends and they have been integrated into the school life. This observation reinforces the notion that the faster refugee children leave the war-affected environment and gain access to education, the quicker they integrate into the new society and their well-being will be positively affected (Koehler & Schneider, 2019; Bragin & Opiro, 2012).

In the research in Greek schools, it was observed by teachers that refugee children show signs of fear as well. They noted that refugee children express their fear through aggressive behaviors, fear of being bullied, denial, and audacity. Children, who have fallen victim of traffickers, are afraid of being victims of their classmates' bullying. However, a positive observation was that Greek students or others of foreign descent do not bully their refugee classmates who do not understand the majority language. Instead, they demonstrate a surge of solidarity and make efforts to help. Regarding the fear of intense stimuli, it was observed that refugee children experience the fear of loud and sudden noises. This is a new finding, not mentioned in relevant research so far. In the present study, the fear of bombing and related sounds was observed. According to teachers, refugee adolescents who fear loud noises have faced severe war hostilities such as bombing. Additionally, in the present research, fear in response to sudden movements was observed but at a lower rate than the one of sudden noises. Refugee children who face this type of fear are afraid of being beaten as they have experienced violent behaviors from traffickers.

Hyperactivity of refugee children, as reported by Greek educators, is found to be consistent with theory. Children exhibit hyperactivity when they must deal with fear (Rizkalla et al., 2020). In some cases, Greek teachers mentioned that adolescents' hyperactivity may result from their parents as the latter face many difficulties in protecting and nurturing their children. Parents' intense reactions cause fear to their children which leads the latter to deal with it by being hyperactive (Rizkalla et al., 2020).

As per generalized insecurity, although teachers reported students' fear of leaving school, no other pattern was observed, only many general insecurities. An important observation, however, is one of fear between family values and religion. As already mentioned, this kind of fear does not exactly derive from war hostilities but from the diversity of cultures; the Greek one which is closer to European culture, and the Muslim ones from the Middle East. The most important observation here is that most parents who derive from the Middle East, want to help their children integrate and have a better future ahead without having to experience again war, poverty, and starvation.

Based on the findings of the present research, the rest of the teachers (20%) replied that their students do not show signs of fear. This observation was interesting because this amount of teachers unanimously declared that these children, affected by war atrocities, do not show signs of fear as they are more resilient (Bragin & Opiro, 2012). This was their explanation for the non-existence of fear in them.

Finally, 80% of the teachers mentioned that their refugee students express themselves violently. Nevertheless, the interesting part here is that these students engage more in verbal violence than in physical; a fact that was not mentioned in the theory above as there was no distinction between these two types of violence. Additionally, this observation impresses, as according to theory, the improper function of "symbol formation" leads adolescents to express their thoughts and feelings through actions and not words (Fonagy & Target, 1997; Bragin & Opiro, 2012). Thus, it was expected that these adolescents would engage more in physical violence.

Exploring verbal violence in greater depth, an important result is that refugee children use their mother tongue as a way of violence towards teachers or other classmates. As for the teachers, these students feel free and safe to vent to the latter as they know that their teachers will not understand their words. As these children were exposed to war and in every human being exists an inherent degree of innate violence, these students need to vent often as they experience explosions of anger or frustration. As for their classmates, focusing mostly on Farsi-speaking students, these students can ignite physical violence through their sayings because of the use of a common word that shows disrespect for the family.

Physical violence can be ignited as well, because of misunderstandings due to polyphony. Languages from the Middle East show similarities to one another. Due to this, some words may have the same pronunciation but different meanings which can lead to misunderstandings and eventually to a physical fight. Another observation is that war-affected, students engage in violent play (Macksoud, 1992). This result is in agreement with the theory. However, due to teachers' vigilance violent play does not escalate into further fights.

According to self-harm, war-affected students display self–injury. It is important to note though, that this is not a common phenomenon and suicidal actions among these students are even rarer. Another last observation is

that Greek students show solidarity with other minorities. However, it was a striking finding that war-affected children bullied other war-affected classmates. In this research, it was observed that Ukrainian students mocked and threatened students of African origin or with darker skin which led to racial intimidation (Archakis,2014). According to teachers, Ukrainian students do not look like children who have been seriously affected by war. There are two reasons that this may happen. The first reason is that most Ukrainian refugees were collected in neighboring countries hoping that they would return to their country after the war. The second reason is that Ukrainian children who have entered Greek education, are children who arrived in Greece before the outbreak of the war. Their parents are usually highly educated and in good economic status, thus they could predict the beginning of the war and protect their children from war atrocities.

In the Greek context, many advances have occurred. Teachers use their foreign students' language and culture as actual material for their courses. This action brings two positive outcomes. On the one hand, the Greek students get familiar with other ethnicities and explore the different cultures and religions. Thus, a positive attitude towards others is promoted. Local children are not afraid of their foreign classmates, they can empathize more with them and eventually create meaningful relationships. On the other hand, intercultural education assists refugee students in better integrating into the school community by helping them understand Greek culture. More importantly, it enables them to do so without losing aspects of their own identity or feeling pressured to adopt an identity that does not suit them. It seems that there are changes in teachers' previous views and teaching methods.

The researcher's internship in the unit of Justice and Home Affairs gave her the chance to do research and examine the difficult issue of immigration from the perspective of the policymakers in the European Union. It was a great opportunity to be witness to the heart of decision-making processes and get to understand the European guidelines and the efforts of the Greek Authorities to abide by and implement them. Even if it started with many difficulties and limitations, went well and out of it many interesting results came to the surface. The most significant problem that the researcher encountered was that it was quite difficult to find participants willing to help and share their knowledge and experience. The school directors were usually not willing to participate or let their teachers contribute to this research. The unwillingness is sadly a reality in Greece, as usually people face a lot of issues that they have to deal with and there is no time or interest to participate in surveys.

To conclude, even if many changes have happened through the years, many more should occur in the future. As it was seen earlier, in Greece, only the population of refugee children increased from 2020 to 2022 by 571% (Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe: Accompanied, Unaccompanied and Separated: Overview of Trends (January - December 2022) - World, 2023; (UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM's Factsheet., n.d). The percentage is a considerable one and because of that, these children's integration into the reception country is essential. On the one hand, the integration should be fast, for the proper and harmonized operation of the reception country in order to have the financial resources and infrastructure to support and assist the refugees. On the other hand, it is necessary to ensure the well-being of refugee and their return to the "casual" pace of life.

Refugee children, to integrate fast and overcome their traumas to an extent, need to have access to education (Koehler & Schneider, 2019; Bragin & Opiro, 2012). As mentioned above, the governments, who have to consider refugee children's education, should think of proper and quality education as an investment with long-term benefits (Eres, 2016). This investment will help the economy and in general the whole society (Eres, 2016). By giving opportunities to refugee children, the latter will invest back into society in the future, from their work (Koehler & Schneider, 2019) and services to the general problem of low birth rate in Greece. However, to provide quality education and additional support for them, many things should be considered. The government should ensure that all schools have psychologists and social workers especially when it comes to intercultural education schools where immigrant students carry a lot of war-related psychological traumas. Psychological services should be available to all, regardless of whether they are requested by an immigrant student or teacher, as many times teachers are asked to take on the duties of a psychologist without having the appropriate training and expertise. Moreover, teachers sometimes also need to take out the steam, as during the courses they need to intervene and stop refugee students' unwanted or bad behaviors.

Another investment that the Greek government should make is the proper training of teachers in intercultural education. As is already observed, things have changed over the course of years. Some years ago, teachers were not trained to teach and deal with war-affected children (Gkaintartzi & Tsolakidou, 2011; Maligkoudi et al., 2018). They thought that their culture and language would bring serious problems to their integration into reception countries (Gkaintartzi & Tsolakidou, 2011; Maligkoudi et al., 2018). Nowadays, this perspective has changed as teachers need to adapt to socio-political changes to practice their profession and help foreign students to learn and "flourish". Globalization, whether through legal or illegal immigration, conflicts or not, has become a new reality that started some years ago. So, now more than ever, quality intercultural education is needed.

Despite these positive changes, the state must continue to develop educational programs for teachers and actively promote interculturalism. However, for these seminars and training sessions to be truly effective, it is crucial to understand the war-related traumas and experiences that immigrant students bring with them into the school environment. This way, researchers, psychologists, and teachers will be able to help more effectively these children integrate better into Greek society.

Further research should be done in many areas. In a broader sense, verbal violence should be further analyzed. What are the reasons that it appears in the first place, for example? Additional studies should be done in schools in Greek territory concerning war-related trauma, as Greece is one of the first reception countries in the Eastern Mediterranean route and many more refugees are expected to come and traverse the borders (Della Cooperazione Internazionale, n.d.-b). Psychologists, human geographers, and teachers should conduct cross-departmental research to have solid results. The latter should be done to create an efficient educational model to help refugee students adapt and integrate better into Greek society. Lastly, additional data should be gathered and better designing of teachers' educational training should be done, to be better prepared to help refugee students build an everyday life in Greek society.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Questionnaire -
Introductory Questions

1. Sex/Gender:

☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Other……

2. My age is:……

3. How many years of experience do I have in teaching children affected by war?
……

4. What kind of schools have I worked in:

☐ Public High schools
☐ Intercultural schools
☐ Reception Centers
☐ Vocational High schools
☐ Other……..

5. What countries do my students derive from:

☐ Pakistan
☐ Iran
☐ Iraq
☐ Afghanistan
☐ Yemen
☐ Georgia
☐ Azerbaijan
☐ Armenia
☐ Syria
☐ Ukraine
☐ Russia
☐ Rwanda
☐ Uganda
☐ Sudan
☐ Other……

6. How many foreign war-affected students do you teach per year?
……..

Appendix B

Questionnaire

"What type of trauma immigrant children (aged 13 – 15), coming from war-afflicted areas, carry into their education as perceived by teachers in public schools in lower secondary education?"

CATEGORIES EXAMINED

1. Depression
    a. Do you agree or disagree and why with the following statement? Please justify your answer by giving an example:
    "My war-affected students show signs of depression during the educational process".

        i. Additional questions:
            a. What kind of signs of depression have you noticed during the educational process?
            b. Do children have difficulty concentrating in class?
            c. Are your war-affected foreign students showing signs of isolation? And if so, do you think it is a sign of depression or it is caused by other factors (e.g., family)?
            d. Have you noticed signs of depression in your war-affected students by feeling like they don't belong anywhere as they can't participate in class or communicate with their classmates and by extension connect with them?

2. Fear
    a. Do you agree or disagree and why with the following statement? Please justify your answer by giving an example:
    "War-affected children who have been in adverse circumstances and have suffered verbal and physical violence often show phobic behaviors."

        i. Additional questions:
            a. Do you think these children often show signs of insecurity, and if so, what signs?
            b. Have you ever noticed your students show fear in more intense movements or gestures that are made, without necessarily being directed at them?
            c. Have you noticed your students showing phobic behaviors when they hear loud noises?
            d. Have you noticed your students becoming victims of bullying and hostile behavior from Greek students?

3. Violent Behaviors
    a. Do you agree or disagree and why with the following statement? Please justify your answer by giving an example:
    "War-affected children who have been in adverse circumstances and have suffered physical violence often show signs of violent behaviors towards themselves and people around them."

        i. Additional questions:
            a. According to research, if parents of children have been in war zones and experience PTSD then their children are likely to display violent behaviors or even violent play. Have you come across anything similar?
            b. Do you think that violent behavior of students can increase due to challenging family situation (bad behavior from parents to children, increased stress from the former, and violent behaviors towards their children)?
            c. Do you think that because of a challenging family situation, children can more easily become recipients of violent behavior from those around them?
            d. Have you noticed racist attitudes of violence from Greek classmates towards foreign students?

→ In your experience, what are the common experiences and events that your war-affected students present or have gone through?

Appendix C - Interview

-Interviewer: Well, we focus on 3 categories. The purpose of the survey is to identify…to answer that question. (“What type of trauma immigrant children (aged 13 – 15), coming from war-afflicted areas, carry into their education as perceived by teachers in public schools in lower secondary education?”) The 3 main pillars of research abroad have been observed to be depression, fear, and violent behaviors. Basically, I have an opening statement and underneath that some additional questions, you will tell me depending on your time, whether we shorten the interview or spread it out a little bit in time.

-Interviewee: How does it help you? To shorten it will make it easier for me because I have secretarial work to do now and I have a class afterward.

-Interviewer: Good, we'll do it as quickly as possible.

-Interviewee: Good.

-Interviewer: Well, the initial statement is, "My refugee students show signs of depression during the educational process". Hold that, think about it, keep an example in your mind, and let me read you the rest of the questions. Think about it and give me an overall answer.

-Interviewee: Yes, so what I relate to more? Out of the alternatives that you give.

-Interviewer: Yes

-Interviewee: Okay, tell me.

-Interviewer: "What kind of signs of depression have you noticed during the educational process?" the first question. "Do children show difficulty in concentrating in class?” is the second. "Do the children show signs of isolation? And if so, do you think it is a sign of depression, or is it caused by other factors such as family? (Rizkalla et al.,2020) " For example, sometimes parents may say to the kid that “you are from a different/higher social class or a different kind of kid”. “Don't get involved with the other kids”.
-Fourthly, have you noticed signs of depression in your students in that they feel like they don't belong anywhere as they can't participate in class or communicate with their classmates and by extension connect with them?

-Interviewee: That children who come from war-afflicted countries have a...err.... reduced so how shall I say..., correlation with other students. They don't laugh, they don't play at least at first. They also have a strong skepticism, that is to say they are the children who have these signs of intense depression that we say. But slowly this is overcome with an effort made by the teachers, to integrate them, to talk to their classmates, and to leave this whole part behind and slowly this is achieved over time. So, that's all I have to say.

- Interviewer: So, do you agree with the above statement that they are showing signs of depression?

-Interviewee: Yes, they do in the beginning but slowly they get over it. They join.
- Interviewer: Have you noticed any particular signs of depression? How do you notice it yourself?

-Interviewee: They sit in isolation, don’t laugh, don't talk to other classmates, and a strong effort is needed when it comes to getting closer to them and approaching them. And this, of course, implies reduced attendance in class, lack of attention, etc. Their mind is somewhere elsewhere. Their psychology is very heavily affected, and the courses require and....and have certain requirements, namely to be free of this burden in order to be able to attend. Well, the signs are, they are in these kids strongly apparent in the beginning. Some of them even cry, they have more immediate symptoms like that. They cry a lot. They think there's something wrong with them, when of course that “something” isn't there. It's only in their minds. And I told you that this is something they overcome in time. The school manages to get them out of this situation. With help from all the teachers, their classmates, from the whole educational system in which they are trying to integrate.

- Interviewer: Very good. If you have nothing else to add, we'll move on.

-Interviewee: No, no.

- Interviewer: Well,(moving on) to the next pillar of fear, children who have been affected by the war, where they have been in adverse conditions and have suffered verbal and physical violence, often show fear behaviors. Well, the next questions are: do you think that these children often show signs of insecurity and if so, what signs have you (observed)? Have you ever observed your students showing fear in strong movements or gestures made without necessarily being directed at them, or similarly if they have shown fearful behaviors when listening to loud and or sudden noises? And if you have noticed that they have been victims of hostile behavior or bullying from the few Greek students you have here.

-Interviewee: Yes, the truth is that in too loud sounds and voices these children react badly. They are very afraid. A typical example is when we had some rehearsals here for a National celebration[20] on March 25th when they heard airplanes they were scared. "Madam Madam, war, war!" they were screaming. The ones from Syria with the Syrian war, I remember that vividly. Uh yes, they show strong signs of fear! And mostly they don't want to hear shouting. If you shout at them strongly, the ones who have just come from a war country become completely disoriented and very afraid. This is true, so they want calmness and to get away from images, sounds, etc. that remind them of wars, and that is what we are mainly aiming for, i.e. to get rid of texts that have warlike content and so on. I remember in literature when we had strongly emotional texts and so on or even films, we try not to show them, especially in the classrooms where these children are. Our third classroom includes the new students who do not know the Greek language.

-Interviewer: Right good, so is there any other example of insecurity that you have noticed? That you have seen?

-Interviewee: Well yes, consequently all the other things that we said before, that is they don't play, they sit very thoughtfully, they don't laugh so what we said before the symptoms are, but in intense sounds, voices and so on yes. Now, as far as what you say here about bullying by Greek students and so on we are a school that has few Greek students. But with the very few we have, we've had no problems.

-Interviewer: Okay, then and the last pillar is violent behaviors. The statement is "War-affected children who have been in adverse circumstances and have suffered physical violence often show signs of violent behaviors towards themselves and people around them." And if you've noticed now… I don't know if you have knowledge in this regard, if the parents of the children have been in war zones and they carry PTSD, what we call post-traumatic shock and stress, then if the children are likely to display violent behaviors or even violent play towards others if you've noticed anything similar and what example you might have?
-Do you think that violent behavior of students can increase due to challenging family situation (bad behavior from parents to children, increased stress from the former, and violent behaviors towards their children)?
-And… Do you think that because of a challenging family situation, children can more easily become recipients of violent behavior from those around them? And finally, okay, you told me you don't have many students of Greek descent, but if you've noticed any racist violent behaviors from Greek classmates to refugee students.

- Interviewee: Yes. Look, the main pillar for the development and growth of a child is love in the home and affection and calmness. That's what the school is trying to overcome, because certainly those children who come from war-afflicted countries are certainly tortured, and tested very much on such issues. They show they are more prone to violent behavior than the other children who have been more integrated, but a lot of work it is needed to calm them down, to make them understand that the environment accepts them and that they are (the teachers) there to help them. So, in this case, they are slowly calming down as well, meaning they want their time in essence. They may be scared, especially the boys to sit on their edge and so on, but when they are given an opportunity but not all, certainly they can manifest violent behavior, which becomes an attempt afterward as much as we can with discussion with examples and so on to suppress it or with initiatives that we give them to do. That is, a child who cannot stay in the classroom, is aggressive towards others and so on, we try to calm him in other ways, either by assigning him some tasks here at school, by trusting him for things, and so on, so we try to mitigate this a little bit to the issue as much as we can, without having psychologists because in our school we do not have a psychologist to help us and as teachers, we try as much as we can to help in this area, that is, to calm these children down as much as possible. Because these explosive behaviors certainly hide some trauma behind them. They're not random. We are trying to open this issue, to discuss it, to create a climate of trust for the child in school and love and acceptance so that they can also calm down and eventually in this way we somehow manage to calm them down.

[20] The 25th of March is considered a National Celebration Day as in 1821 it was the Greek Revolution against the Ottoman Empire and the liberation from 400 years of Greek slavery. During this day, many parades take place in the Greek territory. Military soldiers and Air Force pilots participate as well in the parade.

- Interviewer: Good. But have you noticed that it is common as a reaction in school or nevertheless it is not so common and it happens in very exceptional cases?

-Interviewee: No, I would say there are only a few cases because, the rest of them we can prevent by talking to the children, especially the new children, especially when they come from war-torn countries. Because we approach them a lot, all the teachers talk to them, hug them and that still matters, while in fact this hugging should be avoided, there is hugging in every way. From the language, from the tone, from a gesture we will make, a laugh, etc. and I believe that the child needs these things in order to be able to integrate and understand that it is an environment that accepts and embraces it above all else. In other words, we are trying here to gain a little bit and what the family does not give, cannot give, especially when it comes from a war-torn country that is usually a single-parent family or a child may be in a reception center (an unaccompanied minor) and we do not know whether the child lives in appropriate conditions, the appropriate acceptance, etc. We try to fill in these gaps as much as we can. Apart from the cognitive which is also imperative and mandatory so.

- Interviewer: Very good. Finally, one last question, more comprehensive, is that in your experience, what are the common experiences and events that your students who have been affected by armed war present or have experienced… common patterns that you have observed over the years?

- Interviewee: Uh... common patterns that they have... There have been instances where children have come from Albania for example and they tell you: "Madam, I came on foot. I had nothing to eat, we hid in the bushes at night and were cold. I don't know how I got here, how I managed to get here!" And especially when old students come here, they especially thank us, because it was the school, this place that...the first welcoming place that was able to make them feel accepted and understand that they have an entity, that they have a personality, these people and they are not anything that they run around like this and that...so just to survive. Another pattern again is of children coming from the East who often come in boats, they have experienced danger very strongly. These children actually need much time to forget and as long as they can forget this experience, which was very traumatic.... And... we're trying to put all of that behind us and say that from now on they are in a safe place and that they can go on with their lives as normal.

-Interviewer: Very good.

- Interviewee: Now these are other experiences. A typical example I remember of a student back in the old days, he was from Afghanistan. He had experienced the war very, very intensely. And I remember that his psychology was very bad. He was staying in a reception center… the center had not informed us that the child had psychological problems and so on and he was sitting in isolation. We talked to him, but he didn't answer and at one point I remember…He had put a desk through a window to jump out and we jumped in at the last minute. That's why I say that our role in the school is also very, very difficult. And I wish there were people who could understand what we go through and how multidimensionally we work within these schools, the intercultural schools. Because you have to be present in every action, in every thought, for every child individually, because every child is something special. We are not a conventional school where more or less the problems are common and they can be dealt with more easily. Protocols exist etc. There are particularities here, every child is different. We ought to respect it, lean on it, and help it as much as we can. That's what I wanted to say.

- Interviewer: Very good! If you have nothing else to add, that's all.

- Interviewee: Not if you want to ask me anything else. Have I covered you?

- Interviewer: I think you have covered me. Thank you very much for your time.

-Interviewee: Me too, and I wish you good luck with your research!