



3rd EUMIGRO Conference

"Migration and integration in the European Union
– facts, figures, challenges and policy responses"

26.03.2019, 09.00–18.00

SGH Warsaw School of Economics

Warsaw, Al. Niepodległości 128, Building C, Auditorium I

Negotiating migration in Greece: agency, structures, and policymaking

Dr. Anna Visvizi

Deree College -The American College of Greece

B-in-EU Jean Monnet Module Co-ordinator



Jean Monnet Module on European Union
and active EU citizenship for business students:
an interdisciplinary approach



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A few points of introduction

1. The twin refugee and migration crises that peaked over the period 2015-2016 revealed that Europe, including the EU and non-member countries, was unprepared to address the unprecedented influx of migrants in a timely, coordinated and sustainable manner.
2. Several factors contributed to that, including most profoundly misperceptions about the nature of migration flows that Europe was exposed to.
3. As a result, responses to the twin crises were misguided. E.g. although migrants moved across Europe in an absolute disregard to borders and the Schengen regime, the policy responses have remained limited to the space within states.
4. Only gradually more comprehensive ways of addressing the challenge of irregular migratory flows have been negotiated by the key EU-level actors.
5. Substantial research interested in migration-related topics followed.
6. More complex, and indeed problematic picture, unfolded with regards to policy-making, strategy, and the very narrative on migration, revealing a critical juxtaposition between theory & practice.
7. In this context, room was created for politicking, demagogy, populism etc.
8. Greece represents in this context a very interesting case as to how to negotiate that space. This presentation attests to it.

Structure of the presentation

1. A few points on migration research: the two-fold bias and its implications
2. Querying the implications: theory vs praxis: what is at stake? – focus on populism
3. The case of Greece:
 - the scale and scope of migration-inflicted challenges
 - instrumentalization of migration?
4. Making sense of the migration debate in Greece
5. Take-aways

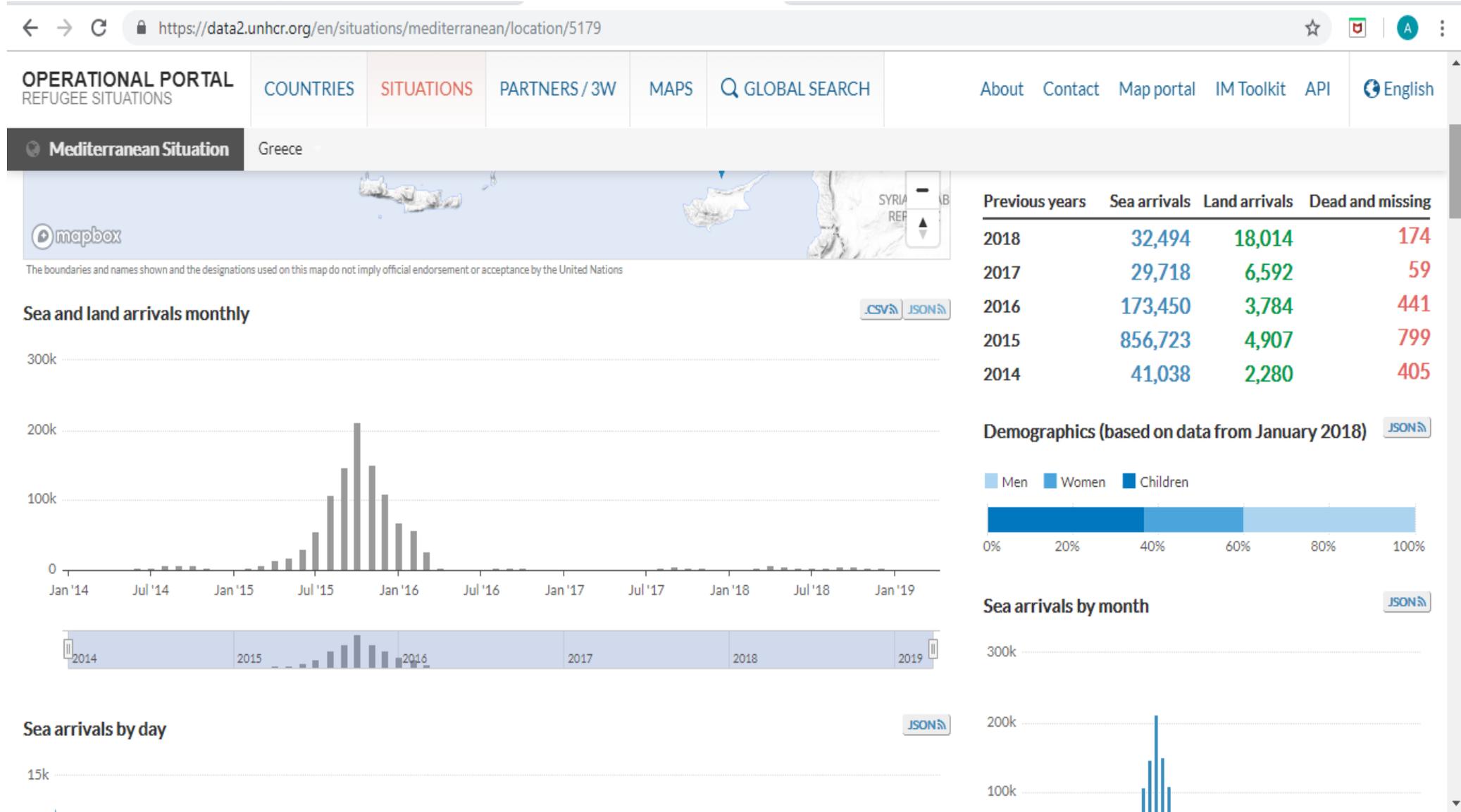
1. The two-fold bias of migration research/debate & its implications: a few points migration research

- Recent research on migration, the one triggered by the 2015-2016 migration and refugee 'crises', exhibits a two-fold bias, i.e.
 - (i) it is overly concerned with migrants/refugees seen as an aggregate concept; the implication being that the agency of individual migrant is ontologically reduced;
 - (ii) it is concerned nearly solely with challenges and hardship the incoming population faces, at the expense of the receiving population; the implication being that the receiving population is conflated with structures, and again, ontologically reduced;
- **So? -- the fundamental parts of what would have made the equation, had been taken out of it.**
- Implications:
 - (i) Our ability to identify, understand, and find 'solutions' to problems/challenges these individuals experience is limited;
 - (ii) (An unspoken of) space of tension is created effectively feeding aspirations of demagogues and populists.



3. The case of Greece: negotiating migration

3. The case of Greece: the scale and scope of migration-inflicted challenge

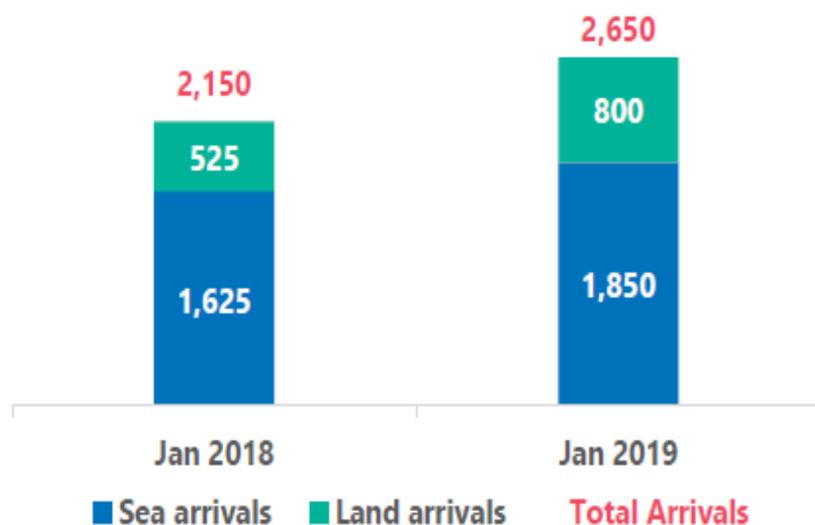


REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN GREECE*

72,300

14,550 on the islands and 57,750 in the mainland

Arrivals



*UNHCR estimate as of 31 January 2019 of those who arrived and remained in Greece since the 2015 – 2016 flow.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

63,850

eligible asylum-seekers and refugees this month, and 102,750 since April 2017 received **cash assistance**.

22,750

people this month, and 56,550 since November 2015 have benefitted from UNHCR's **accommodation in apartments**.

IN UNHCR'S ESTIA ACCOMMODATION

92% have social security number

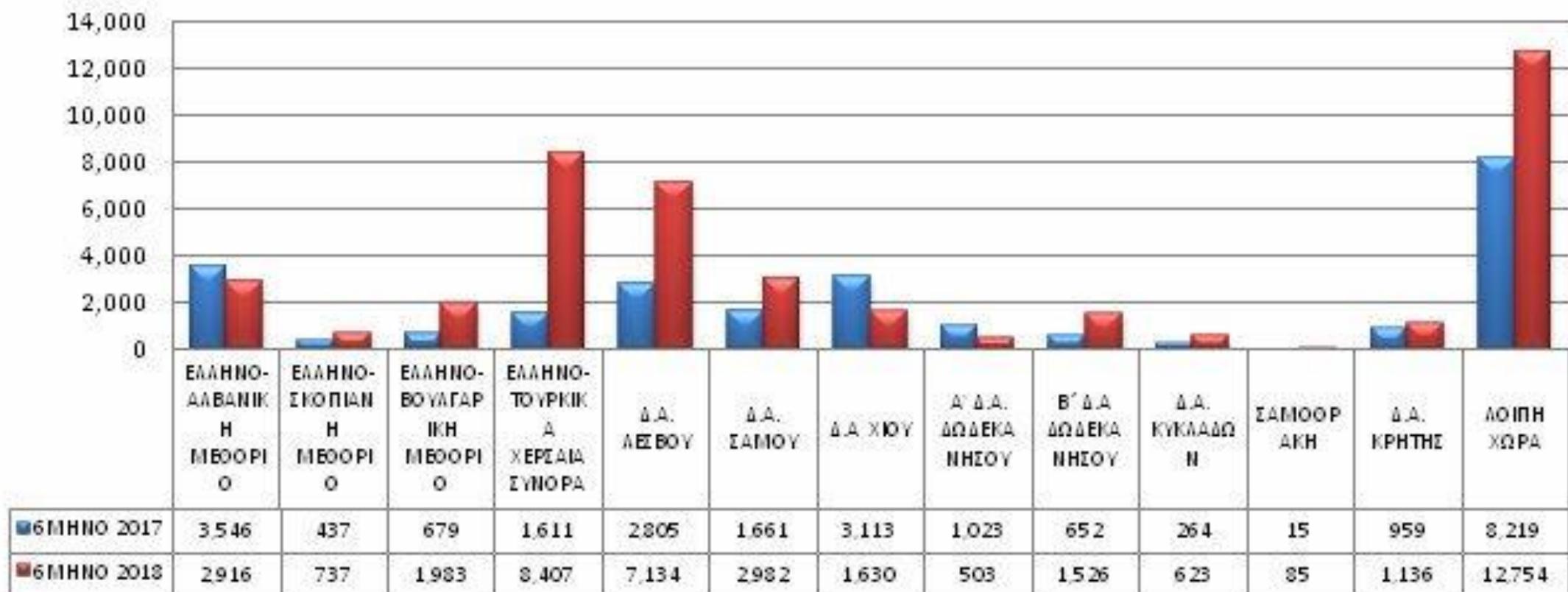
85% have tax identification number

29% registered with unemployment agency

Migration inflicted challenges

- Reception (detention) centres (*centres of reception & hospitality*)
- Unaccompanied minors
- Supervision, coordination, funding
- The thorny issue of push-backs
- Alternatives to 'detention' and integration
- Cities & migration
- New arrivals' dynamics

Συλληφθέντες παράτυποι μετανάστες ανά μεθόριο





--instrumentalization
of migration?

not really





Δύο ψήγματα επίκαισ

Η Καθημερινή - Mar 24, 2019

Αυτές οι σχέσεις ενισχύουν την **κοινωνική** συνοχή, εις βάρος όμως της ... Θεωρώ πως το πρώτο ψήγμα προέρχεται από τη **μετανάστευση**, που ...



Αθήνα, ακυβέρνητη πολιτεία

Η Καθημερινή - Mar 24, 2019

... ουδείς αμφισβητεί ότι η **κοινωνία** και η οικονομία της Θεσσαλονίκης ... πολιτιστικά ιδρύματα, τις υποβαθμισμένες γειτονιές των **μεταναστών**, ...



500 λέξεις με τον Νίκο Χρυσικόπουλο

Η Καθημερινή - 14 hours ago

... πολλούς νέους Έλληνες, τη **μετανάστευση** ως αποτέλεσμα της κρίσης. ... προωθεί αυτός στα μέσα **κοινωνικής** δικτύωσης, παρά από την ουσία ...



Η αναμέτρηση Ευρώπης - fake news

Η Καθημερινή - 17 hours ago

... ραγδαία ανάπτυξη του Διαδικτύου και των μέσων **κοινωνικής** δικτύωσης. ... Ευρωπαίοι πολίτες που ταλαντεύονται λόγω των **μεταναστών**, της ...



Φυματίωση: δύσκολος και επίμονος εχθρός

Η Καθημερινή - Mar 23, 2019

Show all



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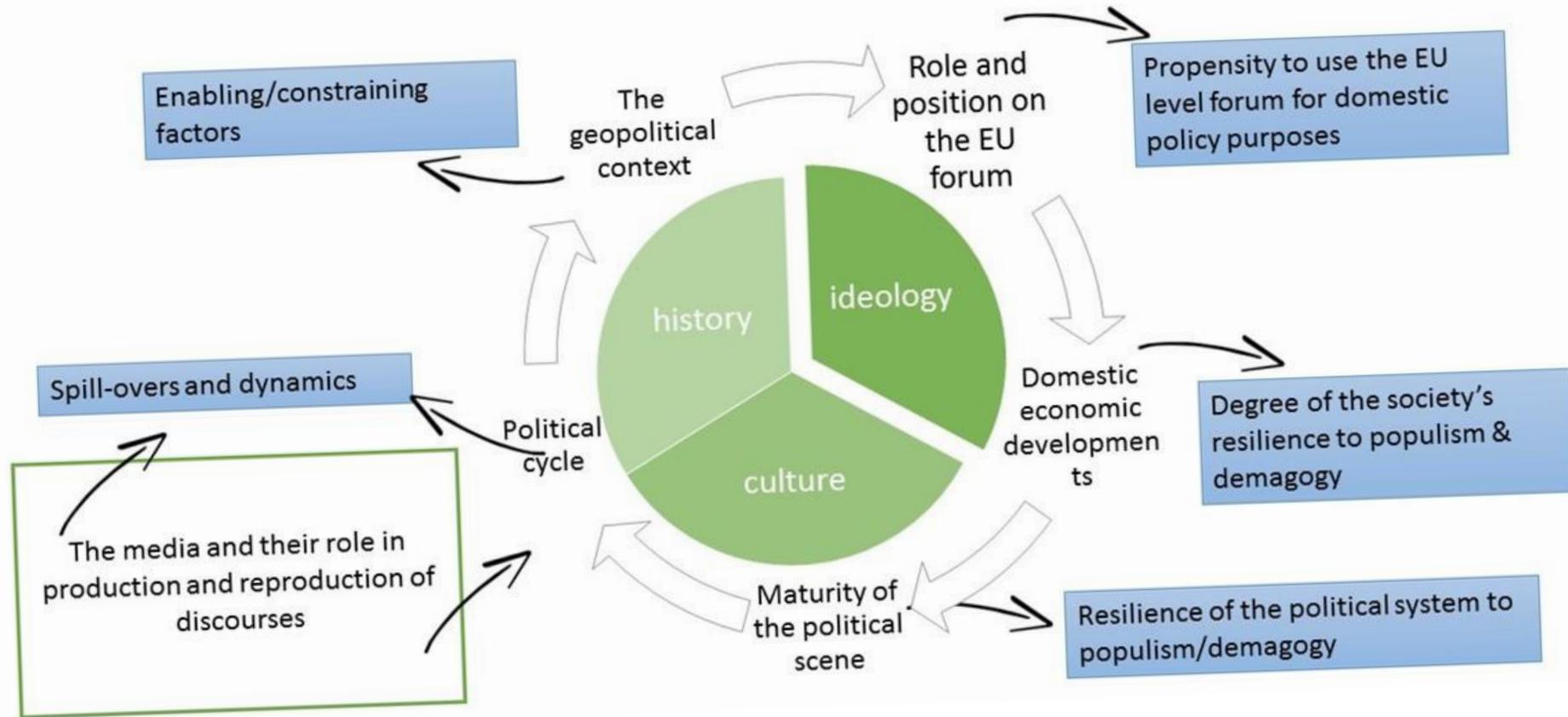
A dark, irregular ink blot with splatters on a white background. The blot is roughly circular but has jagged, feathered edges. The center is a solid, dark blue-black color, while the edges transition into a lighter, greyish-blue wash. Numerous small, dark blue droplets and splatters are scattered around the main blot, particularly towards the top and right sides.

**making sense of the migration debate
in Greece**

Contextualizing migration in contemporary Greece

1. Throughout its history, ancient and modern, Greece and its population experienced migration;
2. the wave of migration that followed the Turkish-Greek War of 1919-1922 (ca **2 million** Greeks were forcibly moved and/or lost their de jure homelands).
3. The WW2 brought devastating population losses as high as **560,000** (note that in line with the pre-war census, Greece was inhabited by roughly 7, 5 million people).
4. This tragedy was followed by mass migration from rural areas to cities and emigration over the period 1950-1974, when more than **one million** Greeks migrated to ... Western Europe, the U.S., Canada, and Australia.
5. In the early 90s, Greece received about **1 million** of migrants from Albania.
6. The sovereign debt crisis of 2010, economic recession and the unemployment that followed, resulted in mass exodus of Greeks. Estimates suggest that ca. **427,000** people have left Greece over the period 2008-2016, most of which were educated.

Figure 1: Drivers of the migration-populism nexus, i.e. the interlocking dimensions of the external and domestic context



Making sense of the migration debate in Greece: the society

- The amount of **human tragedy** that unfolded in Greece in connection to the influx of migrants and refugees via the Mediterranean route and the enormous rescue and shelter effort that the Greek society extended to the masses of incoming individuals, **limit the scope of haphazard and light-hearted references to migration; likewise, they do not allow its direct instrumental use**
- As a result, migration is viewed as **unavoidable phenomenon**. It is discussed mainly through the lens of technical challenges that the management of increased, irregular, mixed migration generates. Greece's obligations towards ensuring effective management of population influx within the framework of Schengen Agreement, international humanitarian law, refugee law, and the emerging EU migration regime constitute important tenets that define the debate.

Making sense of the migration debate in Greece: the political scene

- Throughout 2015-2016, arguments picking on shortcomings related to the delivery of these commitments were occasionally employed to criticize the SYRIZA government. Importantly, migration itself never served as the resource of political competition. Moreover, arguments of that kind would form only a part of larger argumentative schemes employed by SYRIZA's opponents to blame it on a different account.
- A key factor explaining why migration is not employed in Greece in an instrumental way is that **no political actor that considers itself a serious political player would do that.**
- **Failure to comply with this tacit consensus would discredit any political actor** and would propel mechanisms leading to that actor's containment on the political scene. The case of Golden Dawn attests to that.
- Importantly, **the mainstream Greek media comply with the largely implicit consensus and do not fuel the debate beyond upright information.**

Takeaways

- Historically determined perception of time and space, mentality, recent experience with migration and the ramifications of the sovereign debt crisis have played a profound role in shaping the interpretive lens through which irregular migration is conceptualized in contemporary Greece.
- An explicit, concerted consensus established among the key stakeholders allowed to keep the gini of populism at bay.
- It remains to be seen how the forthcoming elections to the EP will consolidate this status quo....

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Thank you

Dr. Anna Visvizi
avisvizi@acg.edu

The mediating impact of the sovereign debt crisis

- Greece's GDP (current prices) dropped 27.3 percent over the period 2008-2015
- average annual unemployment rates rose from 7.8 percent in 2008 to 24.9 in 2015 (it peaked at 27.5 in 2013).
- Gross fixed capital formation, i.e. investments, fell from 23.8 percent of GDP in 2008 to 11.7 percent of GDP in 2015.
- These developments were accompanied by related drop in savings level and dramatic increase in the percentage of population living below the poverty level. Estimates suggest that 15% of the population lived in extreme poverty in 2015. In 2011, the percentage was 8.9%. In 2009, it did not exceed 2.2%.²
- Overall, it can be argued that historically determined perception of time and space, mentality, recent experience with migration and the ramifications of the sovereign debt crisis have played a profound role in shaping the interpretive lens through which irregular migratory flows are conceptualized in contemporary Greece.