

DECONSTRUCTING REALITIES AND FRAMING POLICIES IN THE NEW EUROPEAN BORDERLANDS

Conference proceedings

Edited by
ANA NIKODINOVSKA KRSTEVSKA
OLGA KOSHEVALISKA

UNIVERSITY GOCE DELČEV – ŠTIP
2022



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



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CIP - Каталогизација во публикација
Национална и универзитетска библиотека "Св. Климент Охридски", Скопје

321

DECONSTRUCTING Realities and Framing Policies in the New European
Borderlands [електронски извор] : conference proceedings / edited by
Ana Nikodinovska Krstevska, Olga Koshevaliska. - Štip : University Goce
Delčev =Штип : „Универзитет – Гоце Делчев“, 2022

Начин на пристапување (URL):

<https://pf.ugd.edu.mk/index.php/mk/za-fakultetot/publikacii-i-proekti>

. -

Текст во PDF формат, содржи 54 стр., илустр. - Наслов преземен од
екранот. - Опис на изворот на ден 30.12.2022. - Фусноти кон текстот

ISBN 978-608-244-978-4

а) Европска унија -- Соседи -- Политика

COBISS.MK-ID 59086085

bord[EU]r

Jean Monnet Network

“BordEUR: New European Borderlands” is a collaborative research project of nine European universities, Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. BordEUR documents and assesses the proliferation of new borders in the aftermath of the European Union’s (EU) recent crises (the Eurozone crisis, the so-called migration crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic), which in various ways, were crises of those very borders. We suggest that the refugee and migration issue in particular go well beyond policy and institutions, and instead instantiates a fundamental uncertainty that faces not just the EU, but liberal democracy in general. This multi-faceted global crisis of capitalism and liberal democracy resulted in a worldwide pushback taking multiple forms, but populism and its European rightwing variant in particular merit. The right-wing populist interpretation of European politics (including migration) namely puts the focus squarely back on bordered nation states, away from supranational units. First, only nation states can erect and maintain borders, and second, the threat itself (societal security and terrorism) is also primarily framed on the state level. BordEUR situates the question of (re)emergent borders in the context of this populist pushback against a crisis-ridden liberal democratic status quo.



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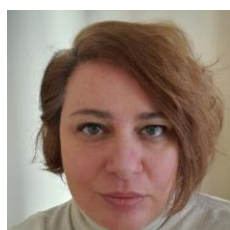
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András Szalai is Associate Professor at the Department of International Relations and European Studies of Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE). His current research at the DI deals with rightwing populism's narrative construction of security threats, the symbolic use of borders in mitigating ontological insecurities, and the securitization of migration as a societal control mechanism. His general research interests include securitization theory, constructivist theories of European foreign policy, and epistemic power in security expertise. Szalai's work has appeared in outlets such as *International Relations*, *Millennium*, and the *European Review of International Studies*.

Ricard Zapata Barrero is Full Professor in the Department of Political and Social Sciences, Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF-Barcelona). His main lines of research deal with contemporary issues of liberal democracy in contexts of diversity, especially the relationship between democracy, citizenship, and immigration. He conducts theoretical and empirical research on migration and in the Mediterranean area. He is the Director of GRITIM-UPF (Interdisciplinary Research Group on Immigration), and of the Master's Program in Migration Studies at UPF. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the largest research network on Immigration in Europe IMISCOE and Chair the External Affairs Committee. Current Coordinator of EuroMedMig (Euro-Mediterranean Research Network on Migration) and EUMedMi Jean Monnet Network "Mapping European Mediterranean Migration Studies". Additionally, he is a member of editorial boards of several academic journals and an occasional contributor to media and policy debate.



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PREFACE

This book is the second publication delivered within the Jean Monnet Network Project ‘BordEUR: New European Borderlands’, born within the context of the past experiences of Jean Monnet activities carried out by the Central European University (Hungary), and involving other eight partner universities from different European countries: University Goce Delčev-Štip (North Macedonia), Middle East Technical University (Turkey), South-East European Research Center of the CITY College, University of York Europe Campus in Thessaloniki (Greece), University of Sheffield (United Kingdom), University Pompeu Fabra (Spain), University of Vienna (Austria), ‘Alma Mater Studiorum’ - University of Bologna (Italy), the University of National and World Economy in Sofia (Bulgaria).

The aim of the BordEUR project is to document and assess the proliferation of new borders in the aftermath of the European Union’s (EU) recent crises (the Eurozone crisis, the so-called migration crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic), which in various ways, were crises of the EU borders itself. Specifically, through the focus on (re)emerging borders, the project sought to address the pressing challenges that the EU is facing in its border control practices as well as in its self-representation as an international actor. Through different case studies studied during the project duration, the research team analyzed the symbolic role of borders in the EU and Member States narratives, outlining new approaches to bordering policies and bordering practices in the neighborhood.

One of the project activities where the results of the research were shared *in itinere*, was the international conference hosted by the University Goce Delčev in Štip, under the direction of prof. Ana Nikodinovska Krstevska and prof. Olga Koshevaliska in December 2021. The conference entitled ‘Deconstructing realities and framing policies in the new European borderlands’, which took place online due to the limitations of COVID – 19 pandemics, saw the participation of most of the project partners, presenting their research and results, and opening the path for further fruitful discussion on that matter. In fact, this publication contains some of the proceedings of the BordEUR conference held at the University Goce Delčev – Štip.

Specifically, Stefano Bianchini, Silvia Cittadini and Marco Zoppi in their paper *In-Securitization through externalization? The EU and Western Balkans ‘Borderlands’*, provide insights and analysis regarding the making and re-making of borders in the Western Balkans, in the aftermath of the migration dynamics of 2015. In a similar stance, Ana Nikodinovska Krstevska and Olga Koshevaliska in their contribution *EU and North Macedonia: Establishing new bordering practices in asylum and migration*, tackle the solidarity crisis of the EU in relation to the migration influx and how this crisis pressed for externalization of EU’s asylum and migration policies in the Western Balkans. Going round on the other side of the Adriatic coast, Michela Ceccorulli in her summary *The implications of bordering practices in relations between Italy and the EU*, exemplifies how the different crisis have impacted upon Italy’s bordering processes and have pushed for the adoption of a narration of overlapping the border of the EU with the Southern border of Libya. Returning to the Balkan route, Petros Golitsis and Alexandra Prodromidou in their paper *Mapping migration and integration tendencies in Greece and their impact on bordering practices*, present and analyze immigration related statistics for the case of Greece, shedding light on the current migration related practice and policy within the EU and Greece, with a particular focus on the Greek-Bulgarian cooperation and the Greek-Turkish tension. Looking at borders from the perspective of the United Kingdom,

Owen Parker in his summary *EU citizens, free movement and ontological (in)security in the United Kingdom: Beyond national citizens and post-national entrepreneurs?*, outlines UK's securitizing narrative towards EU citizens conceived as an ontological security threat to UK citizens, and, gives evidence that the economic benefits from EU citizens were wrongfully perceived by the public, being issues that were securitized by certain elites and certain media. András Szalai in his contribution *The border as a symbolic resource in populist crisis narratives: Lessons from Hungary*, focuses primarily on political discourses, and illustrates the symbolic role of borders in terms of a dilemma that the Hungarian government led by Orbán is facing, outlining that securitization of borders in the Hungarian case is not the result of imposing greater control on borders, rather about maintaining a state of crisis for political mobilization and policy justification within the country, and about enacting state sovereignty on the European level. Finally, Ricard Zapata-Barrero in his case study *Debordering processes and resilient ontological security at the city level: The case study of Barcelona in perspective*, brings the question of ontological security on a city level, and he explores through a conceptual and empirical framework the connection between the two heuristic approaches withing migration studies, that is ontological security and urban resilience.

We hope that this edited volume will give an insight about the work of the members of the BordEUR research team and that it would raise interest among the public on issues related to bordering practices of the EU in the new borderlands.

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IN-SECURITIZATION THROUGH EXTERNALIZATION? THE EU AND THE WESTERN BALKANS “BORDERLANDS”

STEFANO BIANCHINI,¹ SILVIA CITTADINI² AND MARCO ZOPPI³

Aims of the research

The research will provide insights and an up-to-date analysis regarding making and re-making of borders in the Western Balkans, in the aftermath of the intense migration dynamics of 2015. In doing so there will be a specific focus on questions of “ontological security”, applied to both states and individuals. The research will incorporate evidence from: desk-based analysis exploring existing literature and official documents; a questionnaire answered by relevant actors in the area, such as academics, practitioners, NGO workers, local government, and international organization representatives; online interviews with selected respondents. This will allow to capture aspects of insecurity at different societal and governance levels.

Historical background

Historically, the Balkans, or better the Balkan-Danubian basin, have always been a crucial European peninsula of transit and interculturality. Not necessarily, and not always, these characteristics have been a source of insecurity and fear. On the contrary, they often produced cultural prosperity and an original syncretism that bridged the broader Central Europe with the Adriatic and Eastern Mediterranean space. During the 20th century especially, controversial processes of state and nation building have seriously altered this context by impacting on regional stability and the security of populations. Rivalries based on language, territories, culture substituted previous thrusts to integration and coexistence. This process, aggravated by the ferocity of WWII, the bloody dismemberment of the Yugoslav federation, and the ethnic cleansing, which was methodically pursued in a variety of forms, have generated far-reaching consequences for the geopolitical arrangement of South-East Europe. This has taken a toll on the awareness of security, to which new insecurities have added up in the last years.

Migration management and implications for EU accession and political stability

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Today, the region often-called “Western Balkans”, containing EU “candidate” countries (Albania; Montenegro; North Macedonia; Serbia) and EU “potential” candidates (Bosnia and Herzegovina; Kosovo) is involved in a long, fatigued and uncertain process of EU accession. The issue of enlargement remains central for understanding regional security, also in relation to migration, since the European Union keeps putting pressure on Western Balkan governments to improve migration controls in order to meet its own security needs. The EU has thus interest in deepening the externalization of borders in the Western Balkans, and the latter can benefit in many ways from pursuing the EU-desired trend – cooperation in these terms can represent in fact an important driver for EU accession, and to attract funds. In this way, the Western Balkans have developed a peculiar configuration of borders, namely has turned into a “borderland” worth exploring in more detail.

There are a number of challenges. The first is the concern for the human rights of migrants, who face several obstacles and threats to security in their quest to transit along the Balkan Route to reach EU countries. In addition, the current EU approach towards the extension of border control and migration management is reinforcing a system that, in the name of stability, does not challenge the rise of semi-authoritarian regimes in the Western Balkans. This is clearly a challenge to be tackled politically, in particular because the EU builds much part of its enlargement narrative on the pillars of democratization and reconciliation to be achieved in the region.

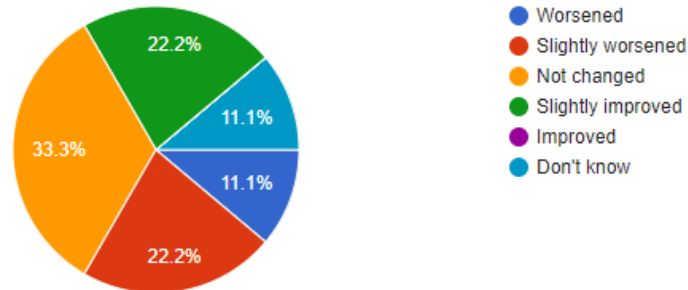
In the light of the above, in the Western Balkans border narratives, practices, and (non)cooperation in a broader migration control regime occur against a pre-existing background complicated by tensed inter- and intra-state tensions, scarce cooperation, and unreconciled past legacies connected to the war involving the region in the 1990s. This creates space for both cooperation and tensions, which will be explored in detail by this research. Think for example of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the re-affirmation of its internal political fragmentation also around the issue of asylum seekers and their reception on the territory (fragmentation not only between the two entities, but also between cantons and the capital). This reduces the chances to cooperation on the issue of migration, favoring rather the tightening of borders and the resort to pushbacks and violence against migrants (which are carried out also by EU countries). Moreover, the state of things reduces also sensibly the geopolitical agency of the Western Balkan region and of the single countries within and cast further shadows on the enlargement process. These are all significant source of insecurity that the research explores.

Questionnaires

We report here below the preliminary results of some sections of the questionnaire. The questionnaires here presented and analyzed aimed at collecting different perceptions from relevant stakeholders working in the WB region in the field of migration and/or border control on a series of issues connected to the management of the migration flows since 2015 and its impact on the relations between the Western Balkans countries and the EU. Online interviews with selected respondents have followed.

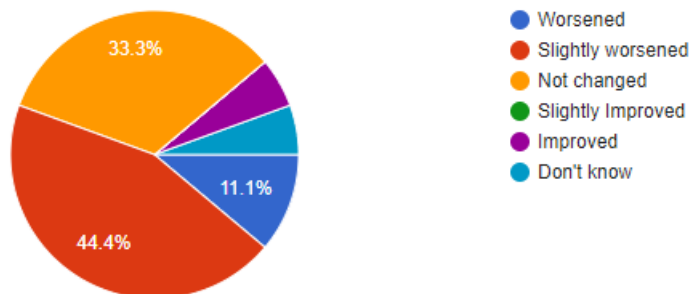
1.1. Do you think that the so-called migration crisis and the mass migration flows have improved or worsened the relation between your country and the European Union?

18 responses



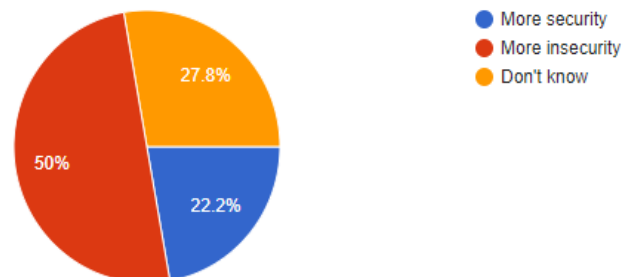
1.2. Do you think that the so-called migration crisis and the mass migration flows have improved or worsened the relation between your country and neighboring countries?

18 responses

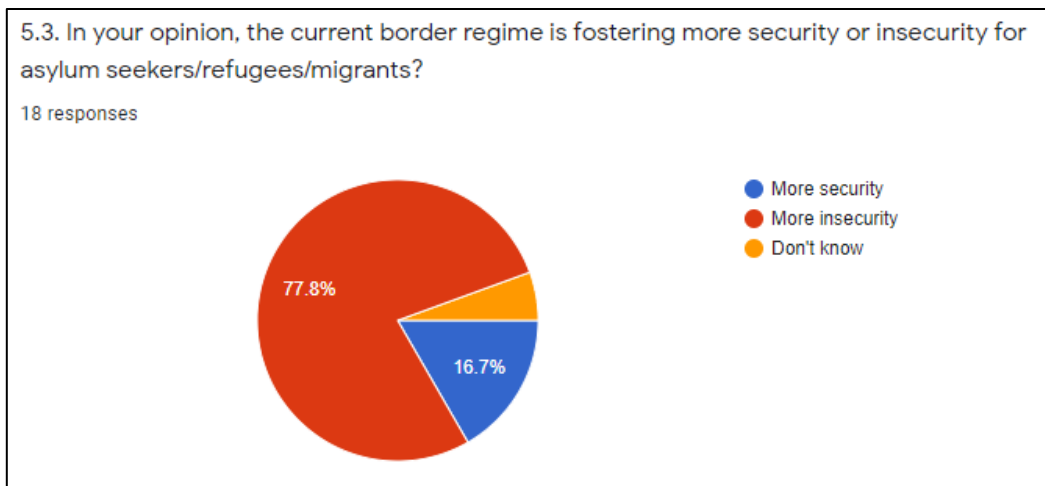


5.2. In your opinion, the current border regime is fostering more security or insecurity for citizens living in towns near the borders?

18 responses



IN-SECURITIZATION THROUGH EXTERNALIZATION? THE EU AND THE WESTERN BALKANS “BORDERLANDS”



Preliminary conclusions

The analysis of the answers to the questionnaire highlighted several divergences, in particular in regard to different understandings of “security” and “cooperation”, as well as a series of recurrent issues that evidently are perceived as significant in the current narratives and practices of border externalization:

- The different roles played by WB countries in the management of borders raise tensions; pushbacks are perceived as particularly relevant, in this context.
- Cooperation is perceived exclusively in terms of securitarian measures, while EU and WB countries are criticized for the lack of a strategy for the integration of migrants and asylum seekers.

EU AND NORTH MACEDONIA:
ESTABLISHING NEW BORDERING PRACTICES IN ASYLUM AND MIGRATION

ANA NIKODINOVSKA KRSTEVSKA⁴
OLGA KOSHEVALISKA⁵

1. Introduction

The Refugee crisis in 2015 - known also as the solidarity crisis of the EU, that followed the massive influx of migrants and refugees coming to Europe, deeply impacted upon the European Union, creating almost a collapse in EU's asylum and migration system, and leaving great division among EU Member states. It was under these circumstances that the structural problems of the Common European Asylum System were brought to the surface, highlighting both its shortcomings, and questioning solidarity and distribution of responsibility among EU Member States, but moreover, creating new borderlands in the neighborhood, in particular in the Western Balkans.

The division that was created was among on one side, Member States that were against the EU asylum and migration system, like the Visegrad countries meaning Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, plus the Baltic states and Spain, and on the other side, the Western European countries among which Greece and Italy that were the most exposed EU's frontline countries during the refugee crisis. In fact, the unproportionate influx of irregular migrants majorly affected the frontline states, which literally overstretched their capacities to coop with the great number of asylum applications that were presented in their national systems. In all this, also Western Balkan countries being on the crossroads of the Balkan route suffered unproportionate pressure upon their national systems, creating difficulties to their borders and imposing great burdens to their asylum and migration systems in general.

The the division comes as a result because of the so much disputed article 13 par. 1 of EU Regulation (EU) N. 604/2013 related to the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining a claim for international protection, which prescribes, (previous fulfilment of the other circumstances foreseen by the Regulation), that actually frontline countries being 'states of first arrival' where irregular migrants crossed borders coming from a third country, are responsible for examination of their asylum claims. With the Dublin IV regulation proposed on behalf of the Commission in 2016, there was an attempt to fill in the gap by introducing a corrective mechanism for allocation of asylum seekers. Nevertheless, it did not see the light of the day. Instead, in September 2020 the Commission came up with a second proposal – the New Pact on Asylum and Migration, whose outcome is yet to be discovered.

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2. Responding to migration pressure in the EU

As soon as migration pressure was registered at the borders in Greece, Germany suspended the transfers of Syrian asylum seekers that under the Dublin system were supposed to be returned to Greece. This, in order to bypass the Dublin procedures and proceed with examining Syrian asylum claims. This policy gave rise to massive secondary movements of irregular migrants and refugees, putting in place a long human corridor of people headed from Greece through the Western Balkans to Germany. However, shortly after the enthusiastic German open-door policy, Europe evidenced a domino effect of securitizing policies which were applied independently by countries along the route, whether EU or non-EU, interdicting the passage of migrants and refugees and bringing into question the respect of the principle of non-refoulement, as guaranteed by the Geneva Convention for the status of refugees, which imposes to countries the non-returning of migrants and refugees to countries where they can be persecuted. As a matter of fact, some Member states introduced intra - border controls within the Schengen system and imposed restrictive rules on borders. For example, Hungary erected hard borders and electric fences on the border with Serbia and Croatia and it imposed daily limit of examination of asylum claims, Austria imposed daily ceiling of entries into the country, North Macedonia, and Serbia restricted entry for migrants in base of nationality (permitting only Syrian, Iraqi and Afghan nationals to pass through borders). Aside from this, also illegal pushback between borders became daily practices and violent clashes between migrants and the police often occurred.

On the EU level efforts were made to assure solidarity and to ensure equal sharing of responsibility for asylum seekers among EU member states. On the grounds of art. 80 (TFEU) the Council adopted two decisions 2015/1523 and 2015/1601 for resettlement of asylum seekers from Greece and Italy, in the attempt to alleviate the burden of high number of asylum seekers from these two countries and to redistribute them according to fair quotas among Member states. However, despite initial agreement, the countries from the Visegrad Group, refused to accept any relocation quota for asylum seekers on their territory and challenged the Council's decision in front of the Court of Justice of the EU. Independent of the Court's decision which ruled in favor of the Council basically, the activities that were undertaken by the EU to tackle the migration crisis did not produce concrete results.

3. Establishing EU's internal-external security nexus in asylum and migration policy

In parallel with these events, in 2015 the European Union was hit by a series of terrorist attacks that happened in different cities, having killed hundreds of people throughout the EU. Some of the authors of the attacks were identified by the French minister of interior as irregular migrants that have entered European borders with the migrant influx in 2015. This situation was a turnover in EU's security policy, and it was used as additional pretext to raise security concerns in EU's asylum and migration policy. Therefore, tackling terrorism was not treated anymore as a purely security and defense matter, but in a multidimensional way, referring to a variety of issues that fall within the scope of asylum and migration policy. Hence, asylum and migration were conceived as a strong nexus between internal and external security of the EU, bonding into what we know as EU's external dimension in asylum and migration policies. What practically happened is that against the impossibility of reaching internal solidarity, Member states through the EU sought alternative methods to assure their internal stability and security

and at the same time protect their asylum systems from massive influxes and security related threats.

To do so, the EU aside from enhancing the mandate of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (known as Frontex) in 2016, reinforced other instruments to tackle asylum and migration in the external dimension in particular through cooperation with third countries. Such activities included establishing cooperation for border control and management for prevention of illegal migration and fight against smuggling of migrants, reinvigorating implementation of readmission agreements and visa requirements, border management support, establishing operations at high seas, introducing containment measures (or non-entrée measures) that aim at controlling or 'containing' future migrants at the States of origin or transit prior to arriving in Europe, concluding partnerships agreements with third countries like the EU-Turkey deal, introducing safe third country clauses in international agreements or informal arrangements, fostering return, giving financial contributions (as in the case of North Macedonia through the IPA funds), accelerating the removal processing, impeding legal arrival, and other. All this in a model of 'cooperative deterrence' (Papastavrdis, 2021), whereby countries at different points of the displacement line align their policies, more or less formally and directly, to repeal unwanted flows (in exchange for different benefits from the EU). Basically, the EU together with Member states is establishing a form 'of contactless control', through which they can control migration and asylum before it even reaches EU territory.

4. The new EU bordering practices in North Macedonia

When speaking of North Macedonia and its position in these new bordering practices of the EU and EU Member states, the bordering realities can be deconstructed through three forms of agency: 1. The process of European integration, 2. Bilateral cooperation with EU Member States, and 3. Cooperation with Frontex.

Through the process of European integration which is the most powerful and most influential normative instrument of the EU when it comes to spreading norms and shaping realities, the EU basically imposes EU norms upon North Macedonia through the process of harmonization of national law with EU law. On these grounds, national authorities transpose EU law into national law and implement EU rules, standards, and procedures. To this end the country undergoes thorough examinations and visits by EU officials at least once a year, in order to determine the level of adaptation to the EU acquis, but also to determine the level of implementation. This is regulated in Chapter 24 regarding Justice, Freedom and Security in the part of Legal and Irregular migration, Asylum, Visa policy, and Schengen and external borders, and as of the Refugee crisis, it specifically puts accent on the implementation of the Readmission agreement between EU and North Macedonia, particularly in the part of readmission of third country nationals (art. 3 Readmission agreement), what was individualized by the Commission as a priority in the New Pact on Asylum and Migration; furthermore, on the establishment of a biometric registration system that follows the Eurodac model in order to introduce a proper system for managing irregular movements; and of course alignment with EU visa policy for short stays in the EU, which is an important benchmark in European Integrations. Judging from the last Progress Report of the Commission for North Macedonia, the country is moderately aligned with this Chapter, but it is fully aligned with the Schengen rules and external borders.

Through bilateral cooperation, this proved to be the most efficient tool for remote control of migrant influx and from prevention of migration and combat smuggling of migrants. Owing to the EU solidarity crisis Member states that were majorly exposed to the migrant influx, strengthened their cooperation on a bilateral level with the countries of the Balkan route. As a matter of fact, during the crisis North Macedonia established cooperation with 8 regional and EU countries (Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Hungary, Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Poland), which provided the country with technical assistance and donations like field vehicles, thermal cameras, wired fences, equipment and computers for registration of migrants, for the purpose of controlling the border with Greece, but also trainings to police officials for border management and sharing good practice; and furthermore, established the deployment of 'guest police officers' on the Greek-Macedonian border that jointly with the police and army patrolled and surveilled the border in tight coordination with FRONTEX officials. This was proven to be the most effective tool for border management, from which benefitted both North Macedonia and the partner countries, preventing a big number of illegal entries of migrants on the borders. This type of cooperation is still ongoing.

Lastly, through the cooperation with Frontex this has been another important initiative that mirrors the Union's effort to enhance the external dimension of asylum and migration, in particular in front of the new operative mandate of Frontex and the central role that it has been given in border management and return policy from the EU. Until now, within the framework of a Working arrangement with Frontex, North Macedonia has been cooperating through information exchange and risk analysis also on daily level, training and research and development projects, and joint operations conducted on the Greek-Macedonian border for the purpose of countering illegal migration and cross-border crime issues. However, following the developments of Frontex under its new operative mandate, the EU initiated a new type of concept of integrated European border management based on an international Status agreement between Frontex and a third country, with the purpose to support border controls, management of irregular migration, fight against cross-border crime, fight and prevention of human trafficking, migrants, and terrorism, and to identify possible risks and dangers related to security. The Status agreement will provide Frontex border guards with executive powers to conduct different types of operations like joint operations, rapid border interventions and return operations, which in essence, will allow Frontex to duplicate what it is doing inside the EU also outside the EU that is in the Western Balkan region. Despite initializing negotiations for signing the Status agreement in 2018, the signing of the agreement has been blocked in September 2020, by Bulgaria due to the language dispute with North Macedonia. Frontex role in EU's asylum and migration policy has been deemed crucial by the Commission in the New Pact on Asylum and Migration in particular in reference to the return policy of the EU. Despite this believe, Frontex purpose has been questioned by different NGO's concerning matters of human rights violation on borders and has also been two times subject to revision of the EU Court of Auditors. Therefore, while waiting for the Status agreement, Frontex and North Macedonia are already establishing operative plans for action.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF BORDERING PRACTICES IN RELATIONS BETWEEN ITALY AND THE EU⁶

MICHELA CECCORULLI⁷

Key concepts

- **Securitisation:** representation/framing of an issue/group as existential threat to a polity/ 'people'
- **BORDERS:** 'Soft' and 'hard' features that structure social orders; they both 'mediate' or 'separate' social communities.
- **Ontological security:** According to Mitzen, "ontological security refers to the need to experience oneself as a whole, continuous person in time — as being rather than constantly changing — in order to realize a sense of agency".⁸

Key Questions and Answers

1. Why and how did different crises impact Italy's bordering processes?
 - The economic crisis first (2008), the 'refugee crisis' then (2015) and lastly the COVID pandemic (2020-) have repeatedly questioned the country's **ontological security**
 - The fallout of the 'refugee crisis' (2015) on Italy's bordering process is of particular interest
 - When inflows towards the country peaked in 2016 different political majorities faced rising **insecurity** through the definition of different sets of borders:
 - ✓ defining the perimeter of the national political community with respect to the EU
 - ✓ defining the limes of the EU's border
 - ✓ reframing the borders of Italy's national identity
2. Which shape did they take?
 - Definition of the national community: Italy has tried to define a **perfect matching** between its borders and those of the Union – Italy's strongly voices for shared duties
 - ✓ This logic has been a constant in Italy's discourse **irrespective of political colours** (2016-2021 – Center-left/centre right coalition)

⁶ Summary of Bord[eu]r Jean Monnet Project project presentation, December 2021.

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⁸ Jennifer Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma," *European Journal of International Relations* 12, no. 3 (September 24, 2006)

- (2016-2028); yellow-green coalition (2018-2019); five-star movements/centre/centre-left parties (2019-2021)
- ✓ Example: debate about search and rescue activities in the Mediterranean
 - Reconfiguration of the Union's geographic border: Italy's has constantly tried to stretch the **external border southwards** to directly engage with origin or transit countries and diminish outflows
 - ✓ This logic has been a constant **irrespective of political colours**, although with differences mainly in **tones and focus**
 - ✓ Deep implications on relations with the neighbourhood (broader and deeper relations on migration)
 - ✓ Example: a narration overlapping the border of the EU with the Southern border of Libya (starting from 2017)
 - Reframing of Italy's national identity: Italy's has set boundaries to makes sense of the national community and of the values underpinning its political action
 - ✓ This practice has **never been fully consistent** along the political spectrum, mixing accommodating and inclusive with limiting and disregardful stances
 - ✓ However: populist and anti-immigration formations (2018-2019) have challenged Italy's ontology
 - ✓ Examples: Security Decrees (2018); Abstention from the Global Compact on Migration (2018)

Key normative/ theoretical question

3. How has this affected the European Union?

- Bordering practices observed since the refugee crisis seem to suggest that Italy has undertaken actions having **more severe consequences on migrants** when **lack of solidarity** among EU's Member States has been more evident
 - ✓ Stark examples are cooperation with Libya (deeply criticised) and the tight on NGOs (seemingly strong criticised)
- Lack of solidarity and Italy's related practices impact also on the **EU's actorness**
 - ✓ The discontinuation of Operation EUNAVFOR MED Sophia (2020) represents a clear impairment
- Lack of solidarity has further aggravated Italy's schizophrenic boundaries exercises, which time and again have mostly reacted to (created or inevitable) **emergencies** at its borders
 - ✓ Quarantine vessels during the pandemic, a denigrating narrative on protection duties coupled with securitarian moves and the definition of a list of safe countries of origin (unprecedented in the Italian case) stands as telling examples
- Given the co-constitutive nature of Italy and EU's borders (Italy being a key player on the governance of migration), Italy's bordering practices impact EU's ontology, mostly undermining it

Policy implications:

The EU (and most progressive actors) should strongly put efforts and advance the cause of solidarity among the Member States, for the issue has a clear impact on its own ontology. The Pact on Migration and Asylum seems to be too timid on that respect: search and rescue activities in the Mediterranean and the Dublin Regulation should be put upfront to avoid that Italy, a key actor on migration, is dragged and drags herself the EU into ever more restrictive and ultimately damaging practices. Solidarity should keep up with EU's ambitions as a liberal and value-based actor and not be intended to lower these down.

Theoretical implications:

Border studies should be more effectively linked to European and IR studies. In fact, more efforts should be paid by scholars to consider the nature and meaning of borders not only for migrants but also for other actors and the EU itself, to grasp their functions, dynamics and their meaning for the EU as an actor. Italy plays a performative role in the construction of the (Southern) border of the European Union. Her actions are simultaneously affected and affect not only the European border but also its ontology.

MAPPING MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION TENDENCIES IN GREECE AND THEIR IMPACT ON BORDERING PRACTICES⁹

PETROS GOLITSIS¹⁰ and ALEXANDRA PRODROMIDOU¹¹

Abstract: Although citizens, in what could be perceived as hostile or opposing groups within the host societies, tend to systematically exaggerate on migration related statistics, and underestimate the migrants' educational levels and socio-economic integration (Grigorieff, Roth, and Ubfal, 2020), the cultural, religious, language, educational and socio-economic differences seem to actually matter and drive the debate and the current migration practice. Within this framework, our goals are to overview, present and analyze the actual immigration related statistics for the case of Greece. Once we review the recent literature in the field, we shed light on the current migration related practice and policy within the EU and Greece, by focusing on the Greek-Bulgarian cooperation and the Greek-Turkish tension. Our data set, even though it starts from 1950 (according to the available data of United Nations), is focused mainly on the last decade, including the Syrian war in 2011, and the period from 2015 to 2022, where 2015, as known, is the year of the European Refugee crisis.

Key words: *European migrant crisis; Greece; State policy on Migration and Asylum; Border control*

1. Introduction

In a global context, while the migratory pressure towards the United States of America is expected to gradually ease,¹² the opposite seems to be the case in the European Union and for European countries in general. The broader geographical proximity of the continent to countries in Africa and the Middle East, which insist in displaying higher levels of both fertility and instability –compared not only to other developed, but less developed countries as well– stresses the importance of insisting on the migration related debate and policy, and justify –at least to a degree– the commonly use term “migration pressure”, if not “migration problem” too.

⁹ Greek case study generated in the context of Bord[EU]r project. “BordEUr: New European Borderlands” is a collaborative research project of nine European universities, co-funded by the Erasmus+ Program of the European Union. <https://bordeur-project.com/>

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¹² According to Hanson and McIntosh (2016) the driving forces of this trend are the declining fertility in Mexico and other Latin American countries, and the relative improvement in their political and economic situation of these countries and region. Also, according to Pew Research Centre, Mexicans decline to less than half the U.S. unauthorized immigrant population for the first time (2019a).

The aforementioned, which is supported by data, and particularly the increasing trends in international migration, coupled with a rather omnipresent hostility towards further increases of the immigrant population in major receiving countries (Pew Research Centre, 2018; 2019)¹³, shows that the problem should be perceived primarily in an international context, then as a continental-regional one, and last –but in a way– not least, in a country context.

The omnipresent hostility, even though it could be read as a biased perception, and subsequently it could lead to a conclusion that more accurate information could mitigate hostility towards migrants (Alesina, Miano, and Stancheva, 2018), it is actually a fact.¹⁴ Thus, any mitigating measures could reduce the tension and the persistence of the problem, but they would not erase it.

Subsequently, even though citizens, in what could be classified or perceived as hostile or opposing groups within the host societies, tend to systematically exaggerate on migration related statistics (for example on foreign born individuals among the total resident population), a practice which goes along with the underestimation of migrants' educational levels and socio-economic integration (Grigorieff, Roth, and Ubfal, 2020), the cultural, religious, language, educational and socio-economic differences seem to matter and drive the debate and the migration practice.¹⁵ The source of the tensions, which could be attributed to these differences, should be at the very core of the present migration policy-making. However, the impact of those to the migration problem or to the international free movement of people and workforce is not the main focus of our contribution, but an underlying framework that should be investigated by the experts in the field. Our goal is to overview, present and analyze the actual immigration related statistics, in a European context, by focusing mainly on the country of Greece, to review the recent literature in the field, and by critically comparing both to shed light on the current migration related practice and policy within the EU and Greece as well. It has to be added here that the area of focus in terms of the data set, even though it will start from 1950 (which is the start date of the available data provided by the United Nations), will focus mainly on the last decade, i.e., from the start of the Syrian war in 2011, and especially in the period from 2015 to 2022, where 2015, as known, is the year of the European Refugee crisis.

¹³ According to the Centre, many worldwide oppose to more migration – both into and out of their countries (Pew Research Centre, 2018, 2019b).

¹⁴ The sizeable increases in economic and refugee migrants over the past decade seem to have generated a rise in xenophobic movements and nationalism around the world. These movements have been fuelled by aggressive political campaigns – such as those that led to the Brexit referendum in the UK or to the election of Donald Trump to the Presidency of the U.S. – that openly appealed to anti-immigration sentiments (Fasani, Llull, Tealdi, 2020).

¹⁵ Receiving countries typically aim at regulating migrant flows through their migration policies. They intend to control both the size of the inflow and its characteristics, trying to select the best talents as well as catering to the needs of their labour markets. In recent years, an increasing number of countries (e.g., Canada, Australia, the U.S., Germany and the U.K.) have implemented selective policies, which seek to encourage immigration of specific workers, mostly highly qualified, to cover the high demand of specialists in certain occupations, which is driven by skill-biased technological change. The outcome of these selective policies – and their overall effectiveness in screening migrants– crucially depends on their design and on their interplay with the spontaneous selection of individuals into migration from origin countries (see Fasani, Llull, Tealdi, 2020).

To stress the European case, according to United Nations, the number of immigrants residing in Europe is about 82 million, which is approximately the 30% of the world migrant population (UN, 2019). The majority of the immigrants, about 50 million, live in the EU14+UK area. Proceeding now to the Greek case, we will first review the improved economic outlook of the country and then we will couple it with the Greek-Turkish tension, the Greek-Bulgarian eventual cooperation and the migration pressure.

2. The Improved Greek Economic Outlook

As known, the Greek economic “guardianship” by the IMF and the EU, which lasted nearly a decade –since November of 2009– ended on August of 2018. Various key economic and financial indicators have returned to what tends to be perceived as normal. However, the public debt –as it is captured by the public debt ratio– is still one of the highest internationally, and if this is to be combined with various frugality policies, heavy taxes, and the migration pressure, we can conclude and support that even though the public finances continue to be stable, the overall situation within the economy and the country remains rather fragile, especially under and after the Russian Invasion to Ukraine (since 24 February 2022) and the increasing commodity prices that will trigger increases in the interest rates and other sources of geopolitical tensions.

Subsequently, even though during the last few years, despite of the brief COVID-19 related turbulence, the economy grows, and the unemployment decreases, certainly as a trend, the country keeps on recording one of the highest unemployment rates among Eurozone countries, with youth unemployment, according to Eurostat, standing at 30.8 percent in August of 2021 (from 33.10 percent in July of 2021). If on the aforementioned, we are to add that immigration flows tend to grow, along with the ongoing Greek-Turkish border related tensions –which are now more important and complex in the context of the Russian invasion to Ukraine– we can support that the broader situation could be perceived as a rather renewed emergency.

Even though the refugee emergency of 2015-2016 had receded after spring 2016, and by the next year the new asylum seekers and irregular migrants at the country’s borders reached in terms of arrivals a comparatively new low, the country experiences since 2018 a new rise in immigration and asylum-seeking flows, both through the Greek-Turkish sea borders (arrivals on the Aegean islands) and through the Greek Turkish land border, on the north-east side of the country. But before we focus on this tension and the EU hard borders, we have to review first the related literature, and then to proceed with the Greek statistics on Migration.

3. A brief overview of the related literature

As long as we have addressed this topic from an economic perspective at parts so far, it is important to add, for the conceptual framework, that the migration flows –among other factors– are driven by supply shifts; and it is also important to clarify that phenomena including refugee and undocumented migrations¹⁶ provide evidence that migratory movements can happen despite the efforts of destination countries to

¹⁶ Undocumented migration is also a sizeable phenomenon, with the most recent estimates pointing at 4-5 million undocumented immigrants living in Europe (12-16% of the total ExtraEU immigrant population) and 10.5 million in the U.S. (23% of the foreign-born population) (Pew Research Centre, 2019a, Pew Research Centre 2019b). Also see Borjas and Cassidy (2019) for the wage related penalty of the undocumented immigration.

influence them through their migration policies (Fasani, Llull, Tealdi, 2020). Between 2015 and 2016, as known, E.U. experienced a “refugee crisis”, with hundreds of thousands of refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and other countries, reaching Europe to seek humanitarian protection from political persecution, war, and violence or better economic conditions. Since then, and due to this, many European countries have experienced as a trend yearly increases of their immigrant shares in the range of one percentage point.

The aforementioned, i.e., the supply shifts, mainly in terms of the international labour market, and their relation to the documented and undocumented refugee flows, stresses the significance of reflecting on, if not capturing, the causes and consequences of international migration, and, subsequently, the effects of different migration policies. Within this context, we have to report that an extensive literature in the field exists, and has analyzed many of these issues (see for example Borjas, 1987; Borjas, 2003; Hanson, 2009; Kerr and Kerr, 2011; Nathan, 2014; Dustmann, Schönberg, and Stuhler, 2016; Peri, 2016; Borjas and Monras, 2017; Borjas, Kauppinen and Poutvaara, 2019; and Blau and Hunt, 2019 for recent surveys). However, the contradicting nature of these findings, as they are related mainly to the causes and consequences of international migration, underline the intrinsic difficulties in implementing meticulous evaluations of the impact of migration. Thus, the inability of literature to reach a clear consensus guides our steps and justifies our decision to present and analyze the statistical data, instead of trying to model them via, for example, an econometric technique. For the econometric modeling, as expected, the main difficulties abide to the aggregate nature of migrant shocks, which does not allow a straightforward identification of affected and unaffected individuals; on top of that the endogenous selection of migrants into countries, regions, sectors, etc., complicates the estimation of their causal impact on receiving societies (see Fasani, Llull, Tealdi, 2020 for further details)¹⁷.

At this point, and as long as we have briefly introduced the supply related debate and the factors that drive it, it is good to add the literature that focuses on the effects of high skilled immigration on receiving countries. This is a strand of literature which is relatively new at a rather early stage, and it focuses mainly on the U.S.A (see Kerr, Kerr, Özden and Parsons, 2016 for a rather recent review). Some proponents highlight by studying important historical events including the Fall of the Iron Curtain (Borjas and Doran, 2012), and the emigration of Jews escaping from Nazi Germany (Moser, Voena, and Waldinger, 2014), and they evaluate the effects of the immigration of scientists on the scientific output of American researchers.

Returning to our current context, many articles have focused on the impact of high skilled migration on patenting and entrepreneurship (see for example Hunt and Gauthier-Loiselle, 2010; Kerr and Lincoln, 2010; Moser and San, 2020), and the potential displacement effects on native STEM workers (see Bound, Braga, Golden, and Khanna, 2015; Peri, Shih, and Sparber, 2015; Kerr, Kerr, and Lincoln, 2015; Doran,

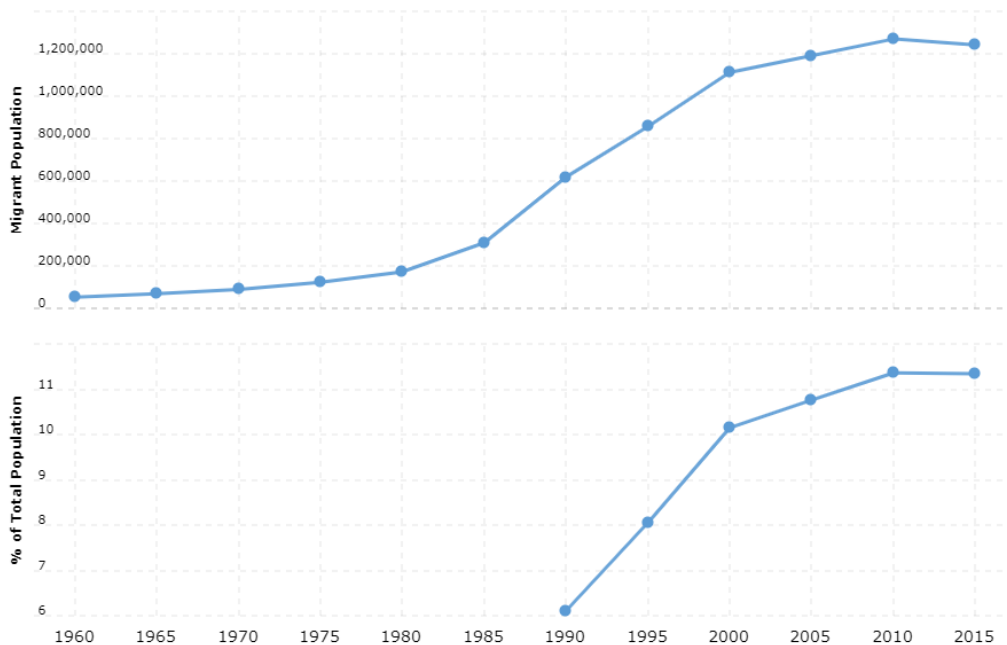
¹⁷ Economists have tried to overcome these difficulties by implementing a large variety of approaches, ranging from natural experiments and instrumental variables to structural models. While allowing to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon, the heterogeneity in approaches has also raised issues of comparability of alternative findings. The literature on the economics of migration is rich and booming, but it is far from being settled yet.

Gelber, and Isen, 2020; Llull, 2020) and native STEM students as well (Orrenius and Zavodny, 2015).

4. A brief historical overview of Greek Experience with Migration. Historical and current data.

At this part we will present and review the Greece Immigration Statistics from 1960 to 2021. On the first figure (1), we view the migration population of the country and the percentage of immigrants to total population from 1960-2015. The end date is one provided by the World Bank (the source of data). Also, it has to be noted that International migrant stock is the number of people born in a country other than that in which they live. This stock includes refugees too.¹⁸

Figure 1. Total number of immigrants and their proportion to the total population



Data Source: [World Bank](#)

MLA Citation: <ahref='https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/GRC/greece/immigration-statistics'> Greece Immigration Statistics 1960-2021. www.macrotrends.net. Retrieved 2021-11-02.

Apart from commenting the obvious, i.e., the historically increasing trend of both variables, in the total number of immigrants and their proportion to the total population, it is important indicatively to proceed with some table related calculations, which are reported below. We can see that: Greece immigration statistics for 2015

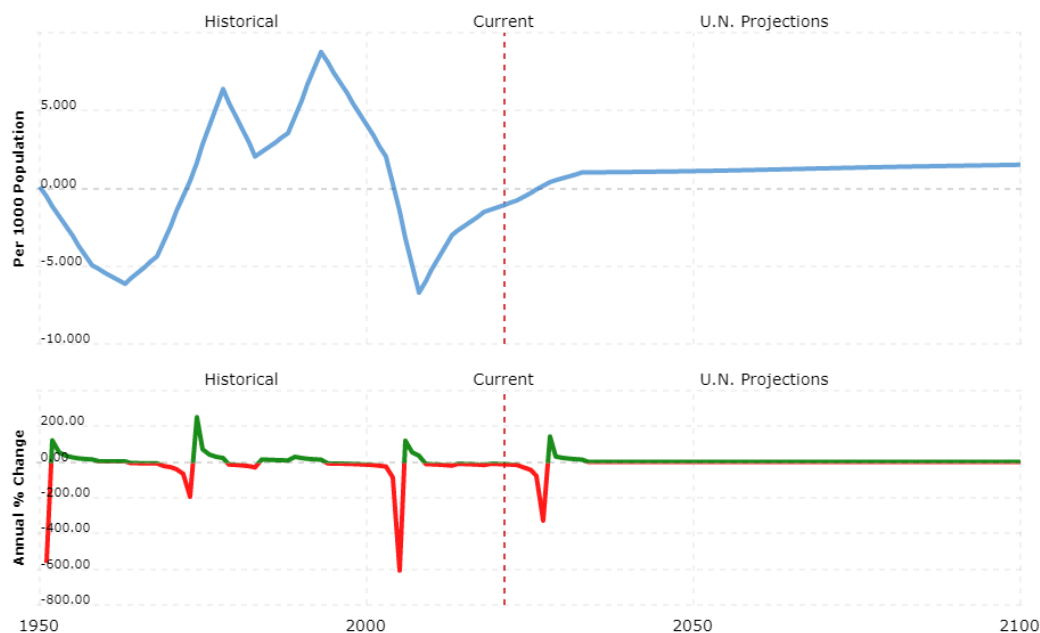
¹⁸ The data used to estimate the international migrant stock at a particular time are obtained mainly from population censuses. The estimates are derived from the data on foreign-born population-people who have residence in one country but were born in another country.

was 1,242,514.00, which is a 2.14% decline from 2010; for 2010 was 1,269,749.00, which is a 6.64% increase from 2005; for 2005 was 1,190,707.00, which is a 7.11% increase from 2000; for 2000 was 1,111,665.00, which is a 29.59% increase from 1995.

The sudden increase of both variables in early 1990s of course it is explained historically as a result of disintegration of the former Communist bloc. Greece, that had been struggling in a way with its immigration policy since then –even though the migration flows have changed in time, both in terms of their source and in terms of their tension– was certainly totally unprepared. Thus, the beginning of mass illegal immigration into the country, for several years it was accompanied, but not counter-balanced, by mass (illegal) deportations of mainly Albanians, Bulgarians and Romanians. The country reluctantly initiated its first legalization program for illegal immigrants in 1997, and the 6-month White Card was granted to almost all 372.000 applicants (which at that time was the only reliable data on immigrants). Its successor program, the 1-3 year Green Card, laid substantial impediments in the way of applicants, and the number of applicants was only 228.000 with heavily delayed bureaucratic procedures (Baldwin-Edwards, 2004). The 2001 Census had a total of 762.000 registrants normally resident and without Greek citizenship, but this figure supposedly included ethnic Greeks (homogeneous), EU nationals, and children.¹⁹

Still, in order to overview more effectively, and for comparison purposes too, it is important to proceed and focus on the Greece Net Migration rate. On the figure below, we present this net variable from 1950-2021. The source of data is the United Nations. Also, we include the United Nations projections up to the year 2100.

Figure 2. Greece Net Migration Rate 1950-2021



¹⁹ For further details, especially for this transitory period from 1990 to 2008, see Baldwin-Edwards, M. (2008). Statistical data on immigrants in Greece: an analytic study of available data and recommendations for conformity with European Union standards. Athens: Mediterranean Migration Observatory, University Research Institute for Urban Environment and Human Resources, Panteion University, 2004: 1-80.

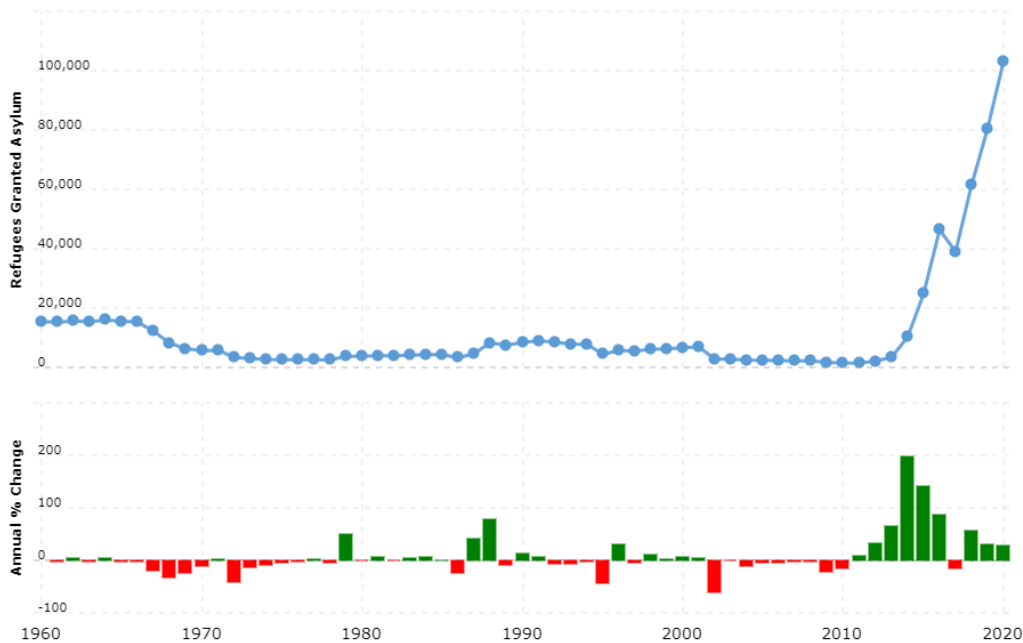
Data Source: [United Nations - World Population Prospects](#)

MLA Citation: Greece Net Migration Rate 1950-2021. www.macrotrends.net. Retrieved 2021-11-02.

As it can be seen, and through related calculations, it can be reported here that the net migration rate for Greece in 2021 is -1.074 per 1000 population, which is a 12.11% decline from 2020; in 2020 was -1.222 per 1000 population, which is a 10.8% decline from 2019; in 2019 was -1.370 per 1000 population, which is a 9.75% decline from 2018; in 2018 was -1.518 per 1000 population, which is a 16.36% decline from 2017.

Proceeding to Greece Refugee Statistics from 1960 to 2021, we present on figure 3 the refugees granted asylum in total number and the annual percentage change of the variable. Still, it has to be added, that according to the United Nations official definition, refugees are people who are recognized as refugees under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees or its 1967 Protocol, the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, people recognized as refugees in accordance with the UNHCR statute, people granted refugee, like humanitarian status, and people provided temporary protection. It has to be further noted that the asylum seekers –people who have applied for asylum or refugee status and who have not yet received a decision or who are registered as asylum seekers– are excluded.²⁰ Country of asylum is the country where an asylum claim was filed and granted.

Figure 3. Greece Refugee Statistics 1960-2021



Data Source: [World Bank](#)

MLA Citation: Greece Refugee Statistics 1960-2021. www.macrotrends.net. Retrieved 2021-11-02.

²⁰ Palestinian refugees are people (and their descendants) whose residence was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948 and who lost their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict.

As it can be observed, and through calculations, it can be reported that Greece refugee statistics for 2020 was 103,136.00, a 28.19% increase from 2019; for 2019 was 80,454.00, a 30.93% increase from 2018; for 2018 was 61,446.00, a 57.6% increase from 2017; for 2017 was 38,988.00, a 15.99% decline from 2016.

5. Immigrants and Refugees in Greece. The asylum seekers.

It is important to start this part by noting that Greece, even though is an EU member and in the Schengen Area, –opposed to the neighbouring Bulgaria which in EU but not in Schengen– is not perceived as a final destination for refugees. Before we proceed through to the asylum seekers and the Refugees-Immigrants related statistics, we have to report the Legal Migration statistics in Greece. The source of data is the Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum, and the data are updated (the last release of data used is July 2021).

Overall, the Legal immigrants in Greece are: 933.528, which are consisted of three broader categories. These are the Citizens of EU and ‘homogeneis’: 209.368; the Citizens of Third countries: 666.259; and the Legal refugees: 57.901. The 666.259 immigrants/citizens²¹ Third countries are reported on the table below in terms of their nationalities.

Table 1. Top 10 nationalities of Citizens of Third countries which are Legal Immigrants

Country of origin	Number of Immigrants	Proportion
1 Albania	420.451	63,11%
2 Georgia	29.049	4,36%
3 China	26.493	3,98%
4 Pakistan	25.345	3,80%
5 Ukraine	21.086	3,16%
6 Russia	18.031	2,71%
7 India	16.243	2,44%
8 Egypt	14.441	2,17%
9 Philippines	12.769	1,92%

²¹ Note that the inputs in the tables are in released in Greek, and thus they are translated by the author. The Minister uses both terms for the Third Countries Citizens, i.e., it is referred to them as citizens, while at other parts/tables it uses the term immigrants.

10 Bangladesh	12.122	1,82%
Other nationalities	70.229	10,54%
Summation	666.259	100,00%

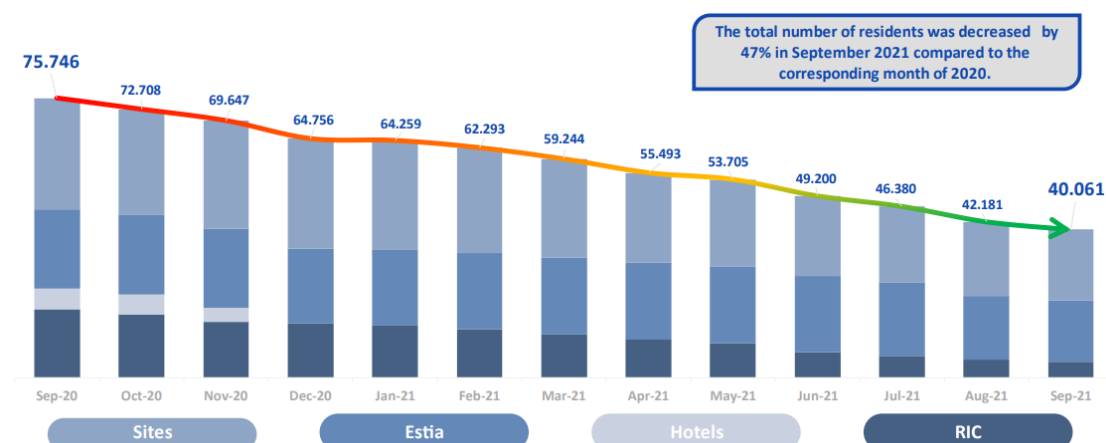
Source: Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum

Another final classification that we have to touch upon, before we proceed, is the ‘Permanent Golden Visa’. According to the Greek State, on July of 2021, 980 Golden Visas were issued, out of which almost the two thirds were given to Russians and Chinese (29.59%, and 27.45%, respectively). This number led to 8953 Golden Visas issued by the Greek state overall, out of which the 69.63% was given to Chinese, 6.3% to Turkish; 5.65% to Russians. Note that these numbers are referred to Individuals. Thus, if we switch onto a family perspective, the overall numbers change to 17878 Golden Visas issued by the Greek state, out of which the 71.52% was given to Chinese, 5.42% to Turkish; 4.98% to Russians.

Before we continue with the Reception, Identification and Asylum Procedures, of what now could be classified as the opposite of the aforementioned Legal Immigrants, note that for an analytical overview of the data in relation to Reception, Identification and Asylum Procedures see the Appendix²² (available upon request). However, at this part we will briefly highlight the key points of the data provided by the Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum. The data is updated and the report was released on September of 2021. In terms of arrivals (see Chart 1 on appendix), they were decreased by 8% in September 2021 compared to the corresponding month of 2020. As far as transfers to mainland are concerned they were decreased by 79% in September 2021 compared to the corresponding month of 2020, meaning from 314 to 648 (see Chart 2 on appendix). The island residents were decreased by 79% in September 2021 compared to the corresponding month of the previous year (see Chart 3 on appendix), while in terms of the distribution of Asylum Seekers per region and the Accommodation scheme, the total number of residents was decreased by 47% in September 2021 compared to the corresponding month of the previous year. This chart is provided below (see figure 4), where we observe the change of Residents through time. The drop is from 75746 to 40061 individuals.

²² Note that on this section: 1. Data are provided by the Ministry of Civil Protection. 2. Data may differ slightly from previous months' publications as they have been fully processed. 3. Data have been revised as they have been fully processed. 4. In Table 3 referring to the residents of the islands are included in addition to the residents in RICs, Sites operating under the Ministry of Immigration and Asylum and in the houses of the ESTIA Accommodation Program, the residents in the other Sites, Sites under the authority of Greek Police and in the Shelters of National Center for Social Solidarity for Unaccompanied Minors. Tables 4, 5, 6 concerning the residents of the Islands and the mainland include only the residents in RICs, Sites operating under the Ministry of Immigration and Asylum and in the houses of the ESTIA Accommodation Program. 5. Data are provided by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Figure 4. Distribution of Asylum Seekers per Region and Accommodation scheme



Source: Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum

We also provide the Distribution of Asylum Seekers per Region and Accommodation scheme in a table form below.

Table 2. Distribution of Asylum Seekers per Region and Accommodation scheme.

Regions	Residents	Percentage of total population
North Aegean	3.878	1,95%
Mainland Greece	4.250	0,78%
Epirus	2.473	0,73%
Attica	16.258	0,42%
Central Macedonia	7.716	0,41%
Thessaly	2.171	0,30%
East Macedonia & Thrace	1.261	0,21%
Peloponnese	1.008	0,17%
Crete	545	0,09%
South Aegean	248	0,08%
West Greece	253	0,04%
West Macedonia	0	0,00%
Ionian Islands	0	0,00%
TOTAL	40.061	0,37%

Source: Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum

To proceed, on Chart 5 (see appendix; available upon request) we report the Distribution of asylum seekers per region and accommodation scheme, by sharing the residents and percentages of total population per region, within the country using a map. What should be noted mainly here is that the goal of the Greek Government is the equal and fair distribution (1%) of asylum seekers in all the regions of the country, with the exception

of the first reception points (Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 2021). There was a general decrease in the number of residents in most regions by 47%, as stated, during the last 12 months.

In terms of the pending pre-registrations for international protection, we provide the figure below, where we can observe that the total backlog (i.e., the pending applications and decisions) was decreased by 53% in September 2021 compared to the corresponding month one year before.

Figure 5. Pending Pre-Registrations of applications for International Protection – Decisions issued in 1st and 2nd Instance



Source: Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum.

The aggregate pending pre-registrations of applications for international protection-pending decisions in 1st and 2nd Instance per month are also available and are provided on appendix (see Chart 10; appendix; available upon request). Still, it has to be noted here that according to the Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum, the average time for a 2nd instance decision to be issued is 91 days since the date of appeal lodging, while it is 56 days from the date of appeal discussion. Also, the number of appellants who applied and benefited from free legal aid is 8541 (1411 for the 1st Quarter, 3111 for the 2nd Quarter and 3632 for the 3rd Quarter, and finally, the total of pending decisions of Appeals Authority consists of cases that have been discussed in 2021, as from 22885 appeals that were discussed in 2020, while pending are only 4.

It has to be added, as expected, that the pending pre-registrations for international protection do not coincide with the applications for International Protection per year. Thus, we provide these values as well. Note again that for 2021 applications are calculated till the month of reference (September):

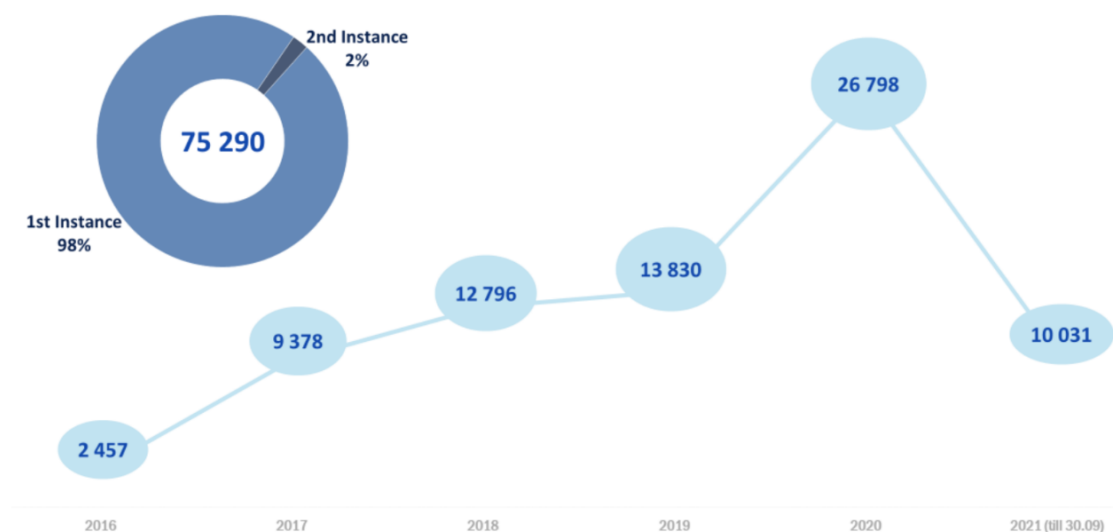
Table 3. Applications for International Protection per year

Years	Applications for International Protection ²
2013	4.814
2014	9.431
2015	13.187
2016	51.044
2017	58.634
2018	66.952
2019	77.279
2020	40.553
2021	20.309
TOTAL	342.203

Source: Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum.

Proceeding to asylum seekers that are covered by a decision granting Refugee Status, in 1st and 2nd Instance, we provide data for the last 5 years. For 2021, the number of Refugee Status Decisions has been calculated till the month of reference (September). The figure is provided below in total numbers from 2016-2021 (until 30.9.2021).

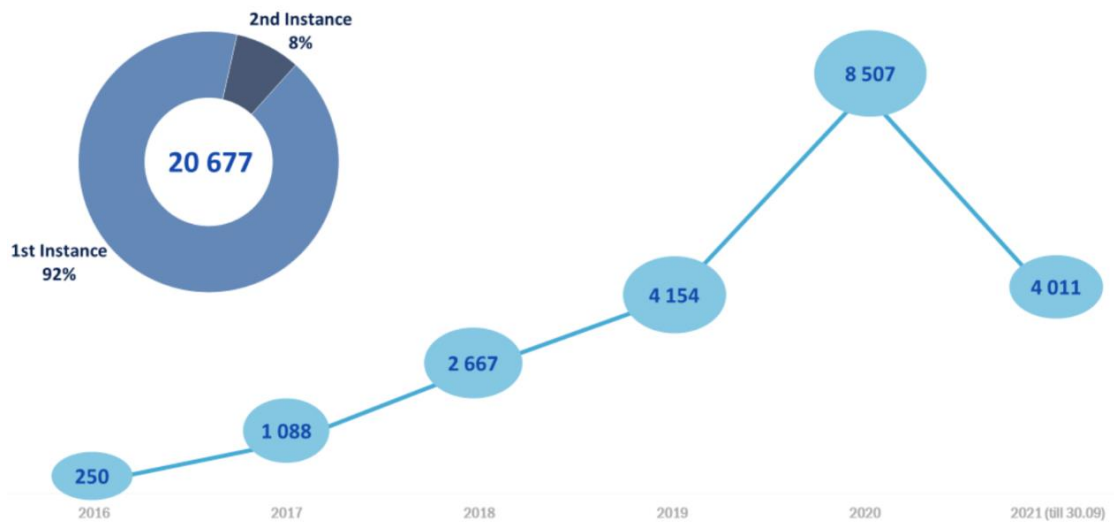
Figure 6. Asylum Seekers covered by a decision granting Refugee Status in 1st and 2nd Instance



Source: Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum.

As known, the asylum seekers that are covered by a decision granting 'Refugee Status' is different than the asylum seekers that are covered by a decision granting 'Subsidiary Protection' status and thus we provide the relative figure below. The figure shows the Aggregate Subsidiary Protection Decisions that have been issued in 1st and 2nd instance in the last 5 years. For 2021, the number of Subsidiary Protection Decisions has been calculated till the month of reference (September 2021).

Figure 7. Asylum Seekers covered by a decision granting Subsidiary Protection status in 1st and 2nd Instance



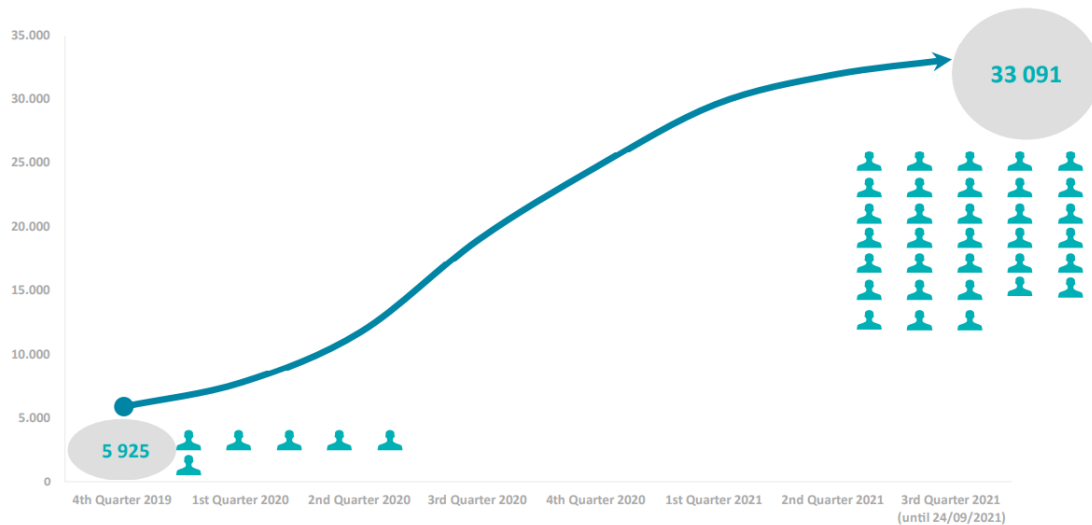
Source: Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum.

The comparison of the two different aforementioned status, i.e., the recognition rate, is available on appendix (see appendix Chart 13; available upon request), along with the applications for annulment of 2nd instance decisions before the Administrative Court (see appendix, Chart 14; as above). Still, it has to be noted that the 44.4% of the total applications for annulment (3046) are pending, while for the rest of them (55.6%), a decision has been issued. 2.66% of the decisions had a positive outcome and 97.34% were rejected, according to the Ministry of Migration and Asylum.

We will now focus on the “Helios” program. The "Helios" program is funded by the European Union. Its purpose is to promote integration support for beneficiaries of International Protection and is implemented with: a) accommodation support, b) through integration courses (learning the Greek language, enhancing social skills), c) Job counseling sessions, and d) raising awareness of the host Community and promoting social cohesion. The Ministry of Immigration and Asylum monitors the implementation of the program, which is implemented by the International Organization for Migration.

From 16/07/2019 until 24/9/2021, 33.091 people have registered in the program, while 15.573 recognized refugees receive financial assistance for renting a house. It is worth noting that in September, 225 new leases were added to the accommodation support of the "Helios" program (regarding the period from 31/8/2021 till 24/9/2021). At the same time 6.093 beneficiaries of International Protection have been enrolled in the integration courses and 6.216 people are attending job counseling sessions.

Figure 8. HELIOS Integration Program. Helios Enrollments

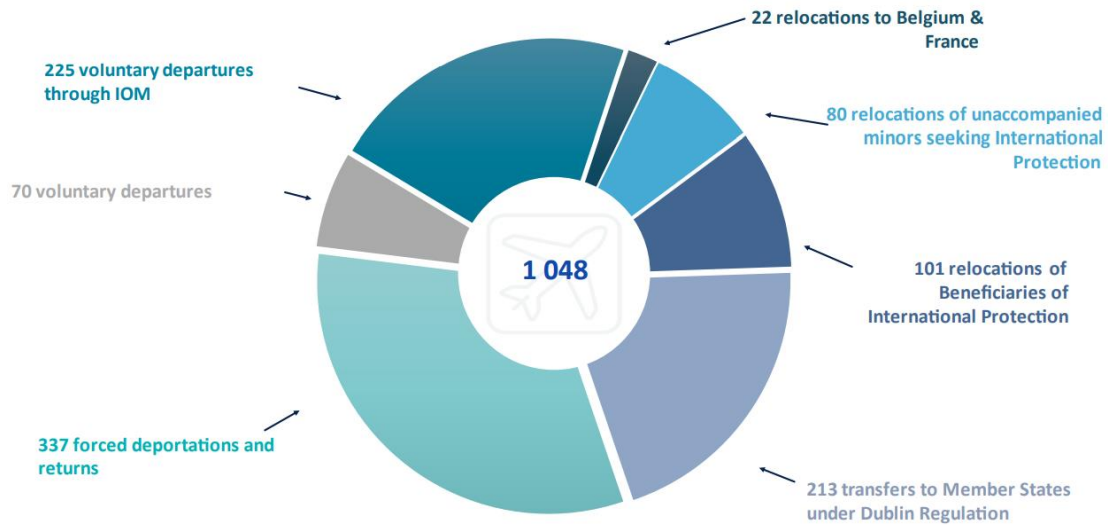


Source: Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum.

The new leases and the rental allowance which is received by the immigrants are available on appendix (see Charts 16 and 17, respectively; available upon request).

Last but not least, we have to report the Returns-Departures. According to the report of the Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum, in September 2021 the departures from Greece to third countries outside the EU, as well as to member states of the European Union are the following: 337 forced deportations and returns of third country nationals, based on agreements of the European Union, but also bilateral agreements of our country; 225 voluntary departures through IOM; 70 voluntary departures of immigrants from our country to their countries of origin; 213 transfers to Member States of the European Union under the Dublin Regulation; 80 minors left with the relocation program of unaccompanied minors; 21 & 1 people seeking International Protection (total 22) were transferred to Belgium and France correspondingly in the context of voluntarily relocation program; 101 Beneficiaries of International Protection moved to Germany, Ireland, Portugal as part of a relocation program implemented in cooperation with IOM funded by the European Commission; Returns under the EU-Turkey Joint Declaration have not been made since March due to Covid-19. It should be noted that despite the lifting of the Covid-19 measures, from 01/06 the requests of missions-returns of the Greek authorities have not been answered; A total of 1.048 people left the country in September, while 731 arrived. The respective figure and the table are provided below:

Figure 9. Returns-Departures



Source: Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum.

Table 4. Return-Departures

	Forced ¹	Voluntary ¹	IOM ¹	Relocation of Unaccompanied Minors ²	Dublin Transfers ²	Relocations of Asylum seekers ²	Relocations of Beneficiaries of International Protection ²	Total
Jan-21	234	55	185	13	19		44	550
Feb-21	220	45	363	6	5	59	440	1.138
Mar-21	260	42	181	110	23	62	708	1.386
Apr-21	223	51	203	64	272	61	103	977
May-21	342	78	127	39	248	48	0	882
Jun-21	311	56	215	49	397	24	7	1.059
Jul-21	346	96	219	26	365	49	20	1.121
Aug-21	243	96	237	42	109	0	5	732
Sep-21	337	70	225	80	213	22	101	1.048
Total 9-months	2.516	589	1.955	429	1.651	325	1.428	8.893

Source: Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum.

6. The Greek-Turkish tension and the Greek-Bulgarian cooperation

A special and indicative emphasis will be given at this part on the relations between Greece and Turkey and the land and the sea border of Aegean. It has to be noted (see also the chapter/work of Plamen Ralchev (2022), a BorDEUR partner, “In the EU and out of Schengen Area: Bulgaria’s experience and challenges in securing the external border of the EU) that the decision of the neighbouring Bulgaria on constructing a metal fence on its land border with Turkey, along with a series of informal agreements and the

communication between the former Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borisov and Turkish President Recep T. Erdogan, mitigated the migration pressure on Turkish-Bulgarian border, by diverting it to Greek-Turkish side, and particularly, as stated, on the sea.

Within this context, we will focus on the relations between Greece and Bulgaria, the two neighbouring EU countries, which has cooperated on the border control and on the prevention of illegal border crossings practices. Still, some challenges appear from time to time, concerning internal Greek and Bulgarian regulations, which drove the former Bulgarian Prime Minister Borisov on his position that there should be migrant registration centers outside the EU, before allowing migrants in the EU; a position that coincides with the Greek one.

The aim of this part though, given that the broader migration pressure and the related statistics are already presented, is to investigate indicatively public discourses, the institutional capacity and interactions with neighboring states in relation to bordering practices in the region, and identify deficiencies and gaps in securing the external border of the EU. It is of special interest, to contrast the Greek case to the Bulgarian one, the one country being an EU-member inside the Schengen area and the other one being an EU member outside the Schengen area.

Since the civil war in Syria in 2011 and the start of the refugee crisis, Greece, along with Bulgaria, being the external border of the EU with Turkey, found themselves on the geographic forefronts that experienced the refugee pressure. As known, the so-called Balkan route, was extensively used in the period from August 2015 to March 2016. The refugees and migrants were traveling through Greece and North Macedonia to Central and Western Europe. Greece, due to many reasons, including the financial meltdown of the country during the period, and the subsequent fiscal, public debt and economic crisis, and of course the subsequent austerity measures, was perceived and in a way is still perceived and predominantly is a transit country; which is also the case for the neighbouring North Macedonia and Bulgaria as well.

Nonetheless, the EU-Turkey deal reached on 20 March of 2016 closed the Western Balkan route and the intensity of flows was diverted. From this date and onwards, the Greek government detained migrants and asylum seekers arriving by sea in closed facilities on Greek islands (Frelick, [2016](#)). In April 2016, the government passed Law 4375, which established a Ministry of Migration and Asylum, harmonized Greek law with European Parliament directives on vulnerable populations, and enabled restriction of movement on new arrivals inside closed facilities at border entry points for up to 25 days (Frelick, [2016](#)). In April 2016, the European Commission reported that Greece 'has significantly increased its overall reception capacity' and that 'significant progress had been achieved in putting in place the essential institutional and legal structures for a properly functioning asylum system' (European Commission, [2016](#); Tsourapas and Zartaloudis, 2021).

Furthermore, it has to be added that Greece traditionally experiences much higher numbers than the neighbouring Bulgaria. This outcome is not only due to the long-standing practice of the Bulgarian authorities to prevent Turkish nationals from

accessing both the procedure and international protection, and to return them back,²³ but because the Turkish authorities to a large extent divert the migratory pressure from the Bulgarian to the Greek border.²⁴ One of the latest examples in this respect was the March 2020 border crisis in Pazarkule-Kastanies region²⁵, when the attempted entries to Bulgaria were close to zero.

To proceed, we read on the Bulgarian case study, that “the Bulgarian PM Boyko Borisov, at a EU summit in Brussels, announced that migration pressure on Bulgaria is now coming from the Greek border (Ralchev, 2022).²⁶ Bulgarian Defense Minister Krasimir Karakachanov has expressed Sofia’s displeasure at Greek government plans to build a closed migrant center near the border between the two countries, saying that “It is absurd and it is not the act of a good neighbor.” The comment came in reaction to a Greek government plan to build a facility in the northern region of Serres that would host migrants who entered the country illegally as of March 1, 2020 and are slated for immediate deportation.²⁷”

However, Ralchev (2022) comments that “despite this outburst, according to a Greek news website, the two countries are also still cooperating along the border region. The website *Greek Reporter.com* wrote that Greece had asked Bulgaria to open up a dam located on the Evros river, which runs along the border region between Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria, in order to “cause intentional flooding and make it more difficult for migrants amassed at the Greek-Turkish border to cross the river.” Moreover, this researcher adds: “The governments of Bulgaria and Greece renewed their commitment to cooperation. Boyko Borisov tweeted that this helped “guarantee the stability of their two countries and the whole region.”. It is interesting to note that these were and still

²³ For more details see, as stated, the chapter of Ralchev (2022). Specifically, we read there that “Bulgaria has recently returned to Turkey at least six people who allegedly are related to the network of preacher Fetullah Gülen, considered by Ankara a terrorist organisation. The Gülenists have reportedly been found in a truck by the Bulgarian border police in Ruse, a city at the border with Romania, where they had attempted to cross. A total of nine people were caught in Ruse: one Iraqi, one Syrian and seven Turkish. All of them claimed asylum and were told that they will be taken a refugee centre in Sofia. However, the vehicle took a different direction and went to Harmanli (near the Turkish border). After checking in the refugee centre in Harmanli at midnight, six of the seven Turkish citizens were taken out of the camp and handed over to Turkish authorities. They were reportedly harshly treated. The remaining Turkish citizen was not an alleged Gülenist, and so he was not handed over. Those six who were returned to Turkey are Dr Yunus Hayri Yildizhan Associate Professor, Soner Özlü, a science teacher, Fethi Altun, a journalist from Cihan news agency and three police commissioners: Uğur Soylu, Abdulkadir Celik and Yunus Demir. A source claims that a bribe “per head” was paid by Turkey for the return, but the information could not be confirmed. While the Bulgarian authorities kept silent about the extradition, many details appeared in the Turkish press, including photos of the alleged Gülenists upon their return to Turkey. A similar extradition of an alleged supporter of Gülen in August 2018 has sparked outrage in Bulgaria.”

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/bulgaria-extradites-alleged-gulenists-to-turkey/>

²⁴ Offnews, The Turkish Ambassador promised to sustain the migrant pressure towards Bulgaria at a zero level, 3 May 2020, available in Bulgarian at: <https://bit.ly/397W2Ph>.

²⁵ Mediapool, Борисов при Ердоган докато хиляди имигранти напират към Гърция, 2 March 2020, available in Bulgarian at: <https://bit.ly/3rUUQYj>.

²⁶ <https://bnt.bg/news/in-brussels-pm-borissov-was-congratulated-on-the-way-bulgaria-protects-borders-203341news.html>

²⁷ <https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/250439/bulgaria-opposes-greek-plans-for-closed-migrant-center-near-border/>

are rather well balanced and the cooperation along the border region of the two countries, Greece and Bulgaria, is a rather effective one (contrary to the Greek-Turkish); holding that this is a work in progress, which is rather exposed, and it is highly responsive both on external and internal pressures as well. Within this context it is important to have reliable statistics. The aforementioned are in line with the broader policymaking of Greece, which at least 2016 closely co-operates with the EU on migration issues, strengthening the securitized refugee policy (Lazaridis and Skleparis, 2016; Dimitriadi, 2017, pp. 91–116; Stivas, 2021).

7. Concluding remarks

It is interesting to note, as a concluding remark, that according to Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum and the related statistics of April 2022,²⁸ that the initial burden and the excessive pressure of immigrant flows to the Greek islands were eventually settled by the solidarity that the country has shown internally; meaning that the immigrants and the asylum seekers were fairly and rather proportionally distributed throughout the entire country; mainly by extensive transfers to the mainland (Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 2022; see the provided links on the footnote). The same could happen, in terms of solidarity, as a policy proposal, throughout the European Union, especially now, that mainly Poland, due to the Russian Invasion of Ukraine, experiences the skewed overpressure of Ukrainian war refugees. It would be ideal, and a path to follow, to show solidarity by re-distributing the flows rather normally and proportionally throughout the entire continent; once this has happened, programs like the afore-presented Greek, EU co-funded program “Helios” could help in the integration processes, which is a long and a demanding path to follow and sustain.

Lastly, it is of a certain value to repeat, as another concluding remark, that although the refugee emergency of 2015-2016 had receded after spring 2016, and by the next year the new asylum seekers and irregular migrants at Greek borders reached in terms of arrivals a comparatively new low, the country experienced since 2018 a new rise in immigration and asylum-seeking flows, both through the Greek-Turkish sea borders (arrivals on the Aegean islands) and through the Greek-Turkish land border, on the north-east side of the country; this problem still exists and certainly calls for responses within the EU framework, which is the current practice and the reference-framework of Greece. The cooperation of Greece and Bulgaria sheds some light on this good practice, but it certainly calls for a continuous monitoring and a constant reflection of policies and actions, along with the required financial support of all EU members and European countries, calling for more solidarity in an inter-European context.

²⁸ For the more recent statistics of Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum visit the following <https://migration.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Report A April -2022 International-Protection.pdf>
<https://migration.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Report A April 2022 International-Protection Appendix-A.pdf>
<https://migration.gov.gr/en/statistika/>

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EU CITIZENS, FREE MOVEMENT AND ONTOLOGICAL (IN)SECURITY
IN THE UNITED KINGDOM:
BEYOND NATIONAL CITIZENS AND POST-NATIONAL ENTREPRENEURS?²⁹

OWEN PARKER³⁰

Key concepts

- **Securitisation:** casting of an issue/group as existential threat to a polity/ 'people'
- **De-securitisation:** returning a previously securitised issue/group to the realm of a 'normal/ liberal' politics
- **Ontological security:** a psychological sense of a coherent/ whole self (that may be perceived as threatened as a consequence of processes of securitisation)

Key questions and answers

1. How/why did the free movement of people (FMoP) become 'securitised' in the UK (and drive Brexit) given its positive benefits?
 - In 2004 the New Labour government (under Tony Blair as Prime Minister) opened labour markets to new member states (the so-called A8 members including a number of Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs)).
 - ✓ Geopolitical drivers – pro EU and pro-enlargement in particular
 - ✓ Economic drivers – flexible/ neoliberal labour markets – fill gaps in labour markets
 - Many more came to the UK than anticipated (most from Poland).
 - Certain sectors became highly dependent on EU labour from CEECs.
 - Many argue that EU migrants from CEECs in UK had a negative impact and this drove politicisation:
 - ✓ Labour market competition
 - ✓ Downward pressure on wages

²⁹ Summary of Bord[eu]r Jean Monnet Project project presentation, December 2021.

³⁰ Owen Parker is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Politics and International Relations at University of Sheffield and a Research Fellow in the Sheffield Political Economy Research Institute (SPERI).

✓ Welfare competition

- But the evidence for each of these **not convincing**
- Evidence points to **more positive economic benefits than negative.**
- **But people believed these negative narratives: the issue was securitised by certain elites and the certain media.**

2. How were EU citizens cast as a threat to the (ontological) security of UK citizens?

- The above **narratives of scarcity and competition** in labour markets and for public services became particularly prevalent post-2007 economic crisis when there was significant material hardship in the UK.
- EU citizens were increasingly presented as EU ‘migrants’ and portrayed as threat to the ontological security of UK citizens a threat to ‘home’ (as nation) and ‘routines’ (of work) and, more generally to a ‘British way of life’.
- Following access of A2 states (Bulgaria and Romania) to UK labour markets (in 2014) and in the context of the Brexit campaign (2015/16) these narratives of scarcity were supplemented with more **transgressive narratives**, which **racialised** EU citizens (especially Romanian Roma in the UK).
- The ‘hard eurosceptic’ UK Independence Party (UKIP) (especially its long-time leader, Nigel Farage) was key in driving the securitisation of the issue after 2014, as was the Eurosceptic British tabloid press. UKIP benefited electorally.
- In the context of the Brexit campaign, discourses on FMoP were purposefully conflated with the post-2015 refugee crisis (famously encapsulated in Farage’s notorious ‘Breaking Point’ poster).
- By the time of Brexit negative perceptions of FMoP/EU citizens were widespread; the public regularly over-estimated the numbers of EU citizens in the UK and the ‘problems’ associated with their presence; and elites from parties across the political spectrum had (wrongly) accepted the veracity of the above scarcity discourses.
- In this period the Conservative government tried to exert some ‘control’ on FMoP by limiting access to benefits for economically ‘inactive’ EU citizens (extending a longstanding policy of making access to welfare conditional on time in work).

Key normative/ theoretical question

3. Should progressive actors ‘de-securitisation’ the issue by advocating for the return of FMoP?

- In other words, from a normative perspective, should we advocate for a return to FMoP in the UK?

- Yes, but we should argue for more than the status quo ante....
- Why?
 - ✓ Because the status-quo-ante championed a market citizen wherein the ideal EU citizen was economically active, usually a worker filling gaps in flexible UK Labour markets
 - ✓ Concretely this led to policies which excluded vulnerable EU citizens with patchy labour market histories from accessing social support including housing
- But do they deserve welfare if not ‘contributing’?
 - ✓ UK flexible labour markets (for instance, so-called ‘zero-hour’ contracts) create precarious working and living circumstances EU citizens, which leaves them vulnerable to un/under employment, which in turn creates problems in terms of ‘legal residency’ and access to welfare.
 - ✓ So I would argue they deserve welfare.
- Post-Brexit (post-2020) similar problems have arisen under the ‘Settled Status’ scheme. Those with ‘Pre-Settled Status’ (unable to prove 5 years residence pre-2020) and often the most vulnerable EU citizens have been denied access to welfare. The homeless in the UK are disproportionately represented in this group. (notably the ECJ)

Policy implications:

Progressive actors (in UK and beyond) should support free movement, but promote a more solidarist and inclusive version than that which was championed by New Labour after 2004 and then that which the European Union (and, in particular, ECJ jurisprudence) currently requires.

Theoretical implications:

An International Relations/ Security literature which argues for ‘de-securitisation’-- a reversion to a normal or liberal politics--in the face of ‘securitisation’, should *recognise the potential for exclusion within a ‘normal’/ liberal and domestic politics*. In particular, it should recognise that the championing of a post-national market or ‘entrepreneurial’ citizen (in place of a national citizen) can create its own exclusions

THE BORDER AS A SYMBOLIC RESOURCE IN POPULIST CRISIS NARRATIVES: LESSONS FROM HUNGARY

ANDRÁS SZALAI³¹

The Hungarian case study within the BorDEUr project focuses primarily on discourse, and not on bordering practices. The Balkan route is essentially closed, and Hungary has not been under serious migration pressure since 2015. I argue that in Hungary, border militarization, restrictive visa regimes, and other measures that criminalize irregular border crossings are ultimately not about border control, but about maintaining an atmosphere of crisis for political mobilization and policy justification, and also about enacting state sovereignty under threat in political clashes on the European level. In sum, borders play a key symbolic role: they are turned into theaters of sovereign power where resistance against EU policies and external threats can be performed.

In my talk, I will briefly explain the context within which this discourse unfolds, and then I illustrate the symbolic role of borders in terms of a dilemma that the Orbán government is facing.

Globalization and integration serve as the wider context of the contemporary rightwing populist wave. They both decrease the effective decision-making authority of states as power shifts to more diffuse, and international centers. Meanwhile, the increased flow of information and people put pressure on a key component of national sovereignty: controlling borders. European integration illustrates this trend. Three consequences follow from this trend. First, the trend produces its crises like the 2008 economic crisis, the so-called migration crisis, or the crisis in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Second, state elites find themselves less and less able to respond effectively to these crises in effective policy terms. The only area where they truly enjoy agency is domestic communication. So the narrative construction of crises, which includes their subject, those responsible, and possible futures through various solutions, becomes a key area of discursive contestation. And thirdly, there are inevitable pushbacks, most crucially in the form of the current populist wave in Europe.

This crisis-prone environment is very favorable to populist movements for multiple reasons. First, populists thrive on crisis. Populist movements are not only triggered by structural changes that are perceived as crisis, but they also actively construct crisis situations. Second, populists can identify those responsible for the crisis ('the elites'), redress problems and present themselves as an appealing solution. And third, populists also propose radical changes to democracy and frame themselves as the antithesis of the kind of mainstream politics that they see as responsible for the crisis, or the mismanagement thereof.

Populism has been on the rise all across Europe, especially its rightwing, nationalist variant. Two countries now have nationalist populist governments: Hungary and Poland. In both countries, over the last decade populist discourse has been used to justify extensive de-democratization in both countries. This is not only a problem for

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Hungary and Poland, but it also contributes to the ongoing crisis of European values, which decreases the EU's ability to act

Nationalist populism operates similarly across Europe and is based on three interlocking and mutually reinforcing discourses: populism, nationalism, and sovereignty. Populism is based on an antagonistic vertical relationship between 'the pure people' and 'the corrupt elite'. It represents a radical form of majoritarianism that claims that sovereignty should rest with the people, represented by their leader. Meanwhile, nationalism offers a different form of antagonism, one that exists horizontally between 'those inside' and 'those outside', with the inside is defined in etho-cultural terms. The border plays an obvious symbolic role in nationalism as it delineates the inside Us from the outside Other. Finally, sovereignty is a radical discourse that emerged against the aforementioned globalizing trends. It proposes a return to a narrow, territorial-Westphalian notion of the state. Only by reinforcing state power, sovereignty suggests, can societies resist the pressures of globalization. In sovereignty, borders symbolize territorial sovereignty, and in many cases are securitized as such.

These three discourses reinforce each other. For instance, populists can readily define the pure people in ethnocultural terms, combining the othering of nationalism and populism. Also apparent is the crucial role that borders play in nationalist populism. Hungary exemplifies many of these elements. However, Hungary is peculiar in the sense that the three discourses, unlike with most other nationalist populist movements, seem to clash.

This clash produces a double dilemma for the Orbán government. The first problem is the product of the success of Orbán's populism. With near total control over the country for a decade, how can a politician depict himself as anti-elitist and maintain the vertical antagonism inherent to the discourse? The second problem results from the clash between Orbán's nationalism and his sovereignist and securitized rhetoric on state borders. Orbán's nationalism is namely centered on national unification (which predates his landslide victory in 2010). It is a form of transborder nationalism that seeks to link kin-communities that were stuck on the other side of contemporary Hungary's borders after the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The borders of modern Hungary in this discourse are symbols of a national tragedy (the 1920 Trianon Treaty that dissolved the Kingdom of Hungary), and they literally divide the nation. Therefore, the narrative goes, they should be overcome.

These two issues need to be solved in parallel in Orbán's populist discourse since both contribute to his lasting popularity. The securitization of migration along the logic of populism and nationalism has been Orbán's most effective mobilization tool so far, and national unification is also crucial since it provides access to kin-communities that tend to support FIDESZ in Hun elections. I argue that to navigate this paradox, Orbán has expanded his narrative to be not just about Hungarian borders, but about the borders of Europe. In doing so, he relies on populism's particular style of othering. By moving the antagonism of 'elites' vs 'the people' to the European level, the Orbán government successfully expands its border crisis narrative to mitigate the inherent contradictions between transborder nationalism and state border security. The regime enjoys little to no political opposition domestically, yet it is still subject to potential challenges. To control opposition and mobilize support, the regime and its leader need to maintain the ability to act; and need to find new, external elites so that they can frame themselves as anti-elites or underdogs.

So, the solution to this dual conundrum lies in the expansion of the narrative on migration and borders from the opposing bloc from migrants to those that promote migration internationally (Brussels and Western elites, as well as “global networks”), and domestically (opposition parties, public intellectuals, civil society). The narrative depicts Hungary as the last line of defense for “Christian Europe”, and migration policy as a never-ending political struggle on the European level, as well as a search for traitors, moles, and internal enemies of ‘the people’. Since millions of migrants exert constant pressure on Hungary’s borders, this war can never be decisively won, and each battle poses another, increasingly dangerous “win or lose everything” scenario.

Though a permanent crisis narrative, Orbán creates an imaginary community within Hungary and Europe based on antagonistic frontiers. In this context, dramatized borders symbolically guarantee the separation between the internal and the external and invite identity construction. The narrative combines two scales of the internal (national and European) flexibly, so that it speaks to different audiences while maintaining coherence between the two levels. It stages PM Orbán as a capable sovereign on both levels, while establishing a rhetorical bond among Hungarians through the logic of nationalism, and among Hungarians and other Europeans through a civilizational rhetoric on the European level.

According to the PM, enemies exist on both levels, and battles also need to be fought. European liberal elites for instance are incompetent accessories to the invasion or, later, actively complicit ideologues who seek to capitalize on the crisis in order to gain new voters, weaken Christian culture, and thereby dominate the EU. These enemies are both responsible for the multitude of recent crises and are the antithesis of what Hungary through its Leader represents.

Orbán paints a picture of a European Union that betrays its own Christian conservative roots, adopts a progressive ideological agenda, which creates an internal identity crisis. These liberal ideas are in direct opposition with the way of life of “true Europeans”, represented by Hungarians, through their leader. Drawing on sovereigntism, the narrative claims that the EU’s goal is to infringe on the sovereignty of nation states. The Union thereby turns into a tyrannical “multicultural empire”:

The empire metaphor invites parallels with the 1956 uprising against the Soviet Union where the analogy works in two ways. First, it evokes nostalgia for a glorious past, when Hungarians as underdogs fought against injustice and oppression. Second, the analogy helps to frame the issue of migration through collective narcissism by invoking the tragedy of the failed uprising: Hungarians are willing and able to resist powerful empires, but they have been repeatedly let down or even betrayed by those that they sought to protect. The actions of the Hungarian government are aiding Europe but are misunderstood and misrepresented as a new European empire threatens national sovereignty. The only way to resist the pressure is to maintain “the Hungarian way of life”, unite, remain patriotic, and to show strength to decadent elites and the misled peoples of Europe. EU elites can simultaneously be framed as inferior to Orbán’s experienced leadership, and still remain threatening.

The PM’s narrative consistently claims that the problem lies with the leaders, and not the European Union itself. Contrary to media reports that seek to frame him as a Eurosceptic hardliner, Orbán consistently emphasizes that he is a supporter of the EU but is skeptical about its leadership. In fact, he claims, leaders are betraying the very

idea of the EU. This “idea” is framed narrowly by constant reference to “a Europe of Nation States” that is Christian, and anti-liberal.

The separation between two images of Europe puts the Hungarian PM into the middle of the battles over identity and policy on the European level. It frames him as the true representative of Europeans and Hungarians, the only possible choice when faced with the choice between a prosperous future or an “immigrant countries”. Orbán’s person embodies the values of ‘the people’ as well as their sovereignty, which are symbolically represented by state borders. To be free in Europe therefore means to protect national sovereignty from figurative liberal incursions (i.e., further integration and criticisms of Orbán’s policies), and from literal incursions of migrants through state borders. This stark contradistinction between ‘the true people’ and their enemies materializes in all policy choices and election campaigns, be they national or European.

The narrative suggests that Orbán is the only competent European leader with solutions that work like the border fence, and the only one who can protect Hungarians from this dire fate, and steer Europe back to its moral roots. Despite being in power for a decade, he can paint himself as an outsider candidate, a maverick that is seen as a “black sheep” for telling truth to power, while his supporters, be they domestic or foreign, are “underdogs” fighting a powerful foe.

In conclusion, this subversive anti-EU narrative paints a “revolt of nations” against “globalist elites” that justifies Hungary’s resistance to European solutions, and can be used to maintain antagonism, deliberately invite criticism, mobilize his base, and suggest future crisis situation due to a constant, existential, and often clandestine threat. The discursive shift enables the Hungarian PM to present himself as an able leader, one that has responsibilities not only to Hungarians, but Europeans as a whole; a protector of Hungarian sovereignty, a protector that is in constant conflict with external malign forces; an example to others in Europe, and thereby find allies in European debates., and a soft-Eurosceptic, one that is fighting for the soul of Europe by renegotiating Europe’s borders and identity. Under these politics, Hungary is likely to remain a disruptive force within the European Union: the regime thrives on crisis talk and EU elites offer an easy target for othering. With complete hold over the Hungarian media landscape, and a complete lack of EU counternarratives this antagonistic relationship is unlikely to change, even under an external crisis situation like the ongoing war in Ukraine.

DEBORDERING PROCESSES AND RESILIENT ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY AT THE CITY LEVEL: THE CASE STUDY OF BARCELONA IN PERSPECTIVE

– LECTURE –

RICARD ZAPATA-BARRERO³²

Lecture³³

This presentation is based on a working paper that has already been published. The main idea was to explore conceptually and empirically how to connect two heuristic approaches within migration studies: ontological security and urban resilience. The basic argument that I defend is that the normative foundation of urban resilience is ontological security. At the city level, this means that the security of the ‘self’ driving resilience operates at two levels: resilience is a strategy at the social level to maintain cohesion; at the individual level, I take H. Arendt’s idea that migrants have the ‘right to have rights’.

I will now introduce the theoretical background. What I am trying to do is to explore the possibility to have a multiscalar understanding of ontological security, which is one of the main differences from other uses, mainly at the State level. Of course, there is a consolidated theory on bordering and rebordering, but my idea is on what I call ‘debordering’. We can talk about debordering at the national level, but my focus combines ‘debordering’ with the ‘city-level’. This is an opportunity for me to reconceptualise what we call ‘Border cities’, which is not a territorial understanding but a much more symbolic understanding. For instance, looking at Barcelona, we are talking symbolically how Barcelona must manage the consequences of state bordering process. From this perspective, Barcelona’s debordering processes are related to processes of resilience of the pressures mainly coming from state. ‘Debordering’ is the process of opening borders by removing existing restrictions, and I take this very simple but working definition, and it refers to all kinds of political, legal, social barriers that are played at upper levels and in this particular case, at the state level.

As for ‘resilience-building’, it means the policy strategy for empowering cities and developing urban capacities and learning to govern with the spectrum of uncertainties, hazards and risks related to migration-related stresses. Resilience cities look for ways to face pressure in their legal, institutional, and policy infrastructures with interconnected cultural, economic, territorial/demographic, political and social dimensions. There are many definitions of ‘urban resilience’ but I will not go into this nominalistic debate. The one that I am giving is by the World Bank, which describes it as “the ability of a system to adapt to a variety of changing conditions and to withstand shocks while maintaining its essential functions”. Applied at the city level, this means that if nothing is done, spatial slums, precarity, territorial segregation, discrimination, racism, social conflicts may increase. Other by-products include xenophobia, continuous infringement of human rights, political hostility against migrants. Increasing resilience strategies include policy practice towards refugees, undocumented adults, unaccompanied minors, housing, vulnerable women and so on. They are extreme human situations generated by multiple social stress and processes, often by external factors: the state and EU bordering processes, which provoke this situation of stress at the city level.

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³³ Transcription of the Lecture by Aida Casanovas, GRITIM-UPF Research Assistant. Revised by R. Zapata-Barrero

Then, the key question that comes up is: how do state bordering processes affect migrant/city relations and how do cities draw and practice debordering strategies to face these tensions? My answer is that debordering strategies will be interpreted as resilient strategies and the foundation legitimating these strategies as a certain understanding of “ontological security” applied at the city level. Two potential resilient paths are: the local authorities may follow state border dictates in a rigid form; I take that from Mitzen, who states that ontological security may take a rigid form, and then accept the limits of migrant rights’ inclusion/exclusion established by the state, or not. This situation leaves room for imagination on how to deal with undocumented migrants at the city level because of the existence of bordering processes at the state level. In this case, city officers can follow their assistance and humanitarian views, becoming very activist, and even their claim-making against the state’s border criteria. This attitude is what I understand as ‘debordering’ processes. I can give examples of that: the Charter of Lampedusa, the Charter of Palermo, and others I refers in the WP.

Turning to the main argument: Bordering policies are driven by ontological security. State bordering creates a logic of inclusion and exclusion when some migrants manage to enter the territory but are immediately expelled at different degrees from the societal system. This creates stress on local authorities who must deal with micro-politics, short-term and proximity issues, despite migrants being out of the system. Sometimes for humanitarian reasons or simply pragmatic ones because “migrants are here now”. And it is from this here and now that ‘urban resilience’ begins: hard cases can be viewed as stressors for local authorities. These are outcomes of upper-level bordering processes. For most cities, this breaks their policy routines towards migrants, and here I use the local vocabulary of ‘ontological security’ strategies, looking at narratives and practices that most of the time go beyond their own routinised policies’ scope. The effort to re-establish policy routines or reboot new ones is what is at the core of the resilience concept. These stressors can have many sources: institutional pressures or limits, often coming from upper levels of governments; social stresses, such as discrimination and racism, precariousness (unemployment, lack of income, poverty), housing, legal status (refugees, undocumented, etc), age (unaccompanied children), gender (vulnerable women). But what interests me the most are those factors that are directly/indirectly by-products of the state’s bordering processes. In this case, I look at specific situations where cities must deal with human and social situations generated by external factors —by the state and/or EU legislation and competence systems—, and now aggravated by the pandemic shock.

City resilience is pushing cities towards new narratives and practices on debordering practices motivated by their understanding of their ‘self’, and hence, by ontological security. In political terms, ontological security acts as a normative foundation of a city’s resilience. The full argument can be formulated as follows: “today there are some structural stressors and acute shocks that most cities must face, which are provoked by States and EU (re)bordering processes, and that force most cities to follow de-bordering resilient strategies with the purpose to ensure the ontological security of their own system and of the migrants that are placed outside the social and political system”. You must bear in mind that when I speak about ontological security, the main horizon is cohesion-making and at the individual level, for migrants, it means the “right to have rights”, as stated before.

Applying ontological security and the processes of building resilience at the local level we can say that the security of the self may be the system of routines that a person may follow in its everyday life in their neighbourhood, but also in any place where the person may have the opportunity to develop its agency. At the State level, this ontological security may take the dimension of legal and policy routines, but also the national flag and the religious traditions that legitimate them. To my knowledge, this multi-scalar application of the notion has not yet reached the local level. My initial claim is that cities are subject to ontological security since they also seek to ensure the routinization of their policies. The main normative drivers of local ontological security are both cohesion-making at the societal level, and empowering migrants with the “right to have rights” at the individual level. This means that stressors breaking

routines at the local social system and then configuring a scenario of uncertainty are directly related to these two normative drivers of urban resilience.

Resilience policy strategies at the local level are usually employed as a synonym for adaptation to an adverse environment (World Bank). But I am much more interested in the second dimension, which is the capacity to transform the environment and reach a new structural scenario that may include this external factor into the societal system. These two dimensions give rise to two major meanings: a reactive and a proactive meaning of resilience. And I am more interested in the proactive meaning. In this sense, I draw from Mitzsen's idea of 'flexible or rigid routines'. The 'proactive' is more related to the 'flexible' routines and to the transformation of environments under the stress of bordering processes at the state level.

I will now go over the case of Barcelona and the debordering processes taking place in the city. It is a good example of the debordering processes that can be analysed linking ontological security and resilience strategy building. Barcelona is the capital of Catalonia, and it is recognised as being innovative in most of its migration/diversity policies by many international reports (OECD, etc). Cohesion-making and empowering migrants with a minimum "right to have rights" are the two main normative principles shaping its resilience strategies. Through document analysis and interviews with politicians and policy-makers covering the whole migration policy spectrum, I identified the main challenges generated by external factors that force the city to look at innovative and strategic policies. Of course, I did not speak in terms of ontological security of resilience with them, but this was the underlying notion. The interviews were conducted between January and April 2021, with an average length of an hour and methodologically I reached information saturation.

Barcelona makes clear that this link of ontological security and debordering processes makes sense. For instance, one of the interviewees said: "I believe that the whole story revolves around Immigration Law and its impact on citizenship law. At the local level, we cannot afford to distinguish between the national and immigrant population because many services and the infrastructures of the city rely upon the taxes that all of them contribute with. For us, the main criterion is who lives in the city, who is a resident". This awareness of state pressure clusters almost all the participants interviewed. Moved by the ontological security premises, they also recognised they must develop policy engineering and "imagination" to circumvent bordering restrictions. Time pressure is also very important, governing in urgency and it is complemented by scarce economic, legal, political, and human resources that most cities also live through.

Another example of how bordering processes make cities resilient: "I would also add something that you did not mention, which is the arrival of migrants at the coasts of, for instance, the Canary Islands, and their later transfer to Barcelona and other cities where they find themselves abandoned and in irregular administrative status". Something must be done here, and that is how debordering processes begin: cities lobby, they are activists and engage with other cities, they network, etc. moved by ontological security at the city level. In the article, I identify four main cases: the inclusion of immigrants into the public administration or the "diversity gap"; unaccompanied underage minors; immigrants in administrative irregularity in its whole diversity of profiles and their survival economic activities; and refugees.

For all of that, I think that the concept of "border city" is a meaningful heuristic perspective within the symbolic meaning of border. And secondly, Barcelona's fieldwork explores the policy strategies that cities have adopted to cope with uncertainty and pressure situations basically due to the state's bordering policies. These strategies are interpreted as debordering strategies and resilience is its main driver. Resilience is the notion that helps us categorise the effort of local authorities to provide migrants and the social environment with the routines in a system that has been broken. Resilient ontological security applied at the local level is a

promising focus of analysis that may be applied at other cities and even comparatively with the purpose to identify innovative and transformative strategies that cities follow to face stressors coming from bordering processes. This theoretical focus may help the same resilient cities ensure their own understanding of ontological security (cohesion and the “right to have rights” of migrants”) in circumstances of uncertainties and risks, under shocks and stresses created by the same state bordering processes. Thank you for your attention and I hope this maybe an opportunity

**DECONSTRUCTING REALITIES AND FRAMING
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Conference proceedings

Edited by
**ANA NIKODINOVSKA KRSTEVSKA
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**UNIVERSITY GOCE DELČEV – ŠTIP
2022**