UCRC Migration Conference

From 'First Reception' to integration (?) The governance of migrant mobility and transformations of statecraft in Greece since the late 90's.

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Introduction

- This presentation stands for the initial phase of a research project.

- A genealogical analysis of power relations involved in attempts to govern the mobility of migrant newcomers, manage their reception and integration.

- A diagnostic of the present by problematizing, taken for granted assumptions, about mobility and inclusion.

- The folding and refolding of two distinct but interacting governmentalities that compose the reception and integration of migrants in Greece in the various historical periods and today – the 'informal' and the 'formal' one.

The context

- The making of 'transit migration', 'transit zones' and 'transit countries':

  o during the 90s International organisations, EU agencies and national governments start refereeing to 'unwanted migration' (Boswell, 2003) that has to be stopped or controlled.

  o EU starts targeting countries to the south of the EU suspected for being lax on migration movement towards countries in the North.

  o entire countries that were crossed by migrants were labelled 'transit countries' (Bulletin Quotidien Europe, 2006).

- However widespread the term is, there is no definition of transit migration in international policy or international law. The genealogical approach is an important tool in tracing the various displacements, transformations and reactivations (Boudou, 2017) of different concepts that are related to the reception of migration; transit migration is one among others.

- The making of 'transit migration':
    - simplifies and irregularises migration movement
    - Views mobility and integration as antithetical
    - conceives migrant movement as linear
    - it is an agentless approach

- Ongoing critical approach towards the transit migration -seems to reproduce a form of linear thinking by adding only a single in- between phase to the migration process (Moffette, Walters, 2018).

- Migrant mobility is caracterised by 'a sequence of movements that are linked to each other by periods of settlement in spaces of relationships, in socially constructed places' (Angels-Pascual-de-Sans, 2004, p.350).

- The European External Border, or the Border Regime:
  - during the 1980's migration movement to Europe increased and has been articulated in terms of asylum seeking (collapse of the Soviet Union).

  - in this context emerges a mechanism in the governance of migration that denounces a more common approach between member states. That is, the European External Border that goes hand in hand with a common Asylum System for Europe.

  - What establishes the European External Border:
    - the Schengen Agreement.
    - the Dublin System.

Bordercrossings 'in transit'

The case of Greece late 90s early 2000

- The background
  - A little after 1989 Greece becomes a 'hosting country' – migration happened in the beginning from south-east and central eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, later on and until the actual period from south-east Asia, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa.
  - During the first era of migration to Greece many were those that have settled into society by working informally in various sectors of the Greek economy.
  - During the following phases and since the late 90s migration to Greece was taking place with the purpose to move towards other EU countries. However, a big majority of those intending to move on, remained stuck, returned or have been forcibly returned to Greece where they ended up living for long periods.

- The (non)policies and practices.
  - o No formal standardized immigration admission procedure existed other than the odd regular migration scheme upon invitation. The only way that the vast majority of migrants could reach the country was by irregularly crossing its borders.
  - o When Greee begins to play the role of EU's external border the national migration policy applied is that of 'zero tolerance': reinforced surveillance of entries at the Greek-Turkish borders and blocking of the departures by air (Athens) or sea (Patras and Igoumenitsa, which are among the country's leading points of departure).
  - o At the same time the Asylum system, has been one of the least successful in Europe, with a recognition rate of less than 1%.
  - o Being a migrant in an irregular situation was a sufficient reason to be arrested and held while awaiting deportation, without factors such as conditions in one's home country or one's age being taken into account.

- The infrastructure of the 'formal reception' late 90s until 2011:

  - very few special holding facilities for the newly arrived migrants, called ECHPA (Special accommodation centres for aliens), located mainly in the Greek Turkish terrestrial and maritime borders.

  - very few reception centres for the unaccompanied minors and the most vulnerable

  - a plethora of detention like situations, applied almost everywhere: in regular police cells or in police stations, in border guard stations, in yards and other improvised facilities fitted out for this purpose etc.

Mapping the principle spaces of detention in Europe and around the Mediterranean (Migreurop, 2013)

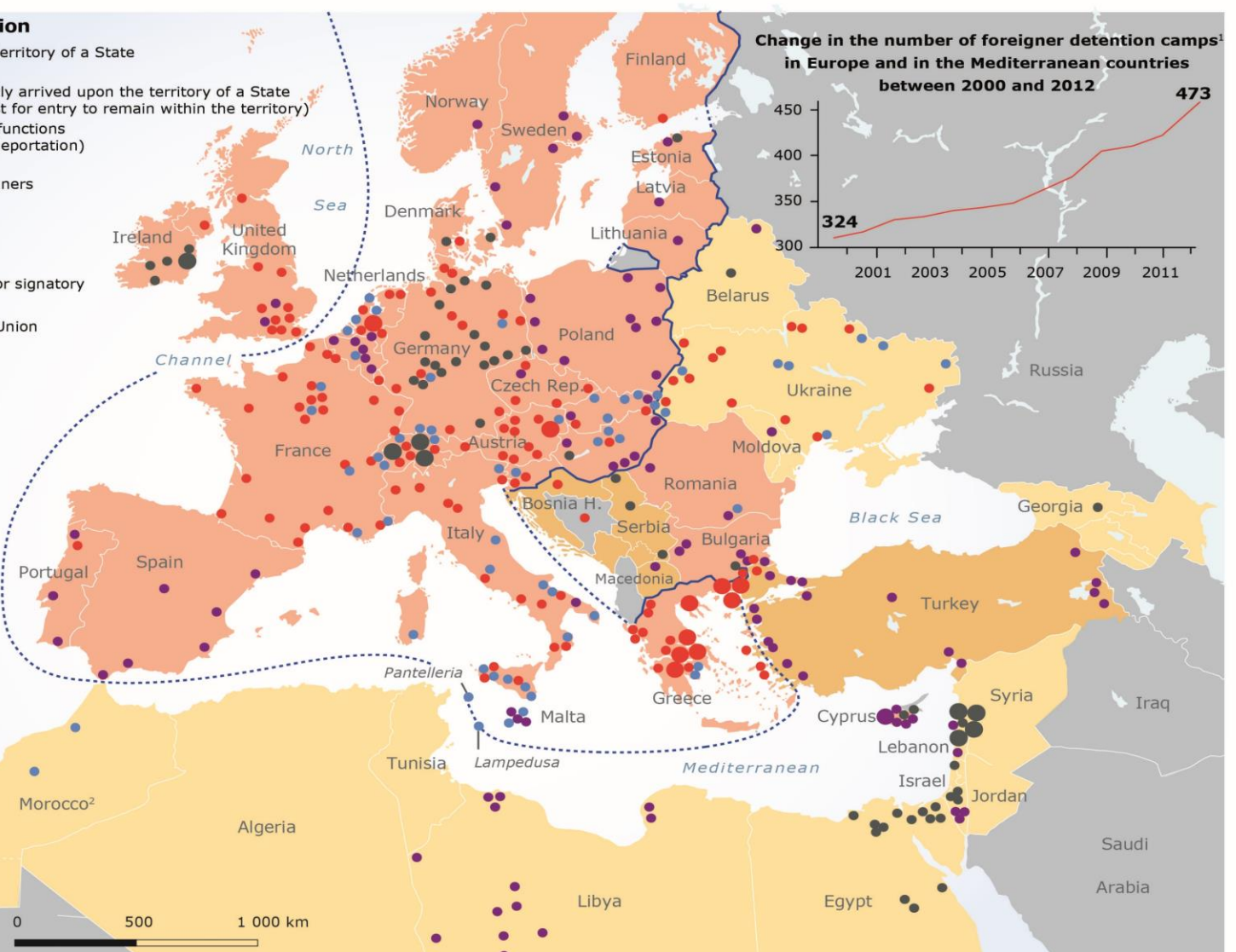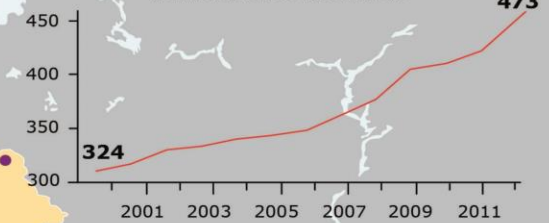## The Principal Spaces of Detention

- Camp for foreigners present on the territory of a State and awaiting deportation
- Camp for foreigners that have recently arrived upon the territory of a State (pending examination of their request for entry to remain within the territory)
- Camp for foreigners combining both functions (examination of entry requests and deportation)
- Civil law prison regularly used for the administrative detention of foreigners
- Presence of a detention facility
- Presence of five detention facilities in the same geographic zone

- Member of the European Union and/or signatory of the Schengen agreements
- Candidate country for the European Union
- Limits of the Schengen space

1. The graphic takes into account the totality of the camps identified by Migreurop. But only the permanent structures with a capacity greater than or equal to five people have been mapped.

2. In Morocco, numerous police or gendarmerie stations are used as sites of retention, during raids against migrants.

3. For the countries that are eligible for the EU Neighbourhood Policy, and/or those that have signed a community readmission agreement, we do not have access to more detailed information for Algeria, Tunisia, Jordan, and Syria, nor for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia or Belarus. Concerning earlier versions of the map of camps, the absence of points in certain countries does not mean that the camps have disappeared, but that, due to a lack of up-to-date data, we have preferred to leave them out.

Change in the number of foreigner detention camps[1] in Europe and in the Mediterranean countries between 2000 and 2012

324 ... 473

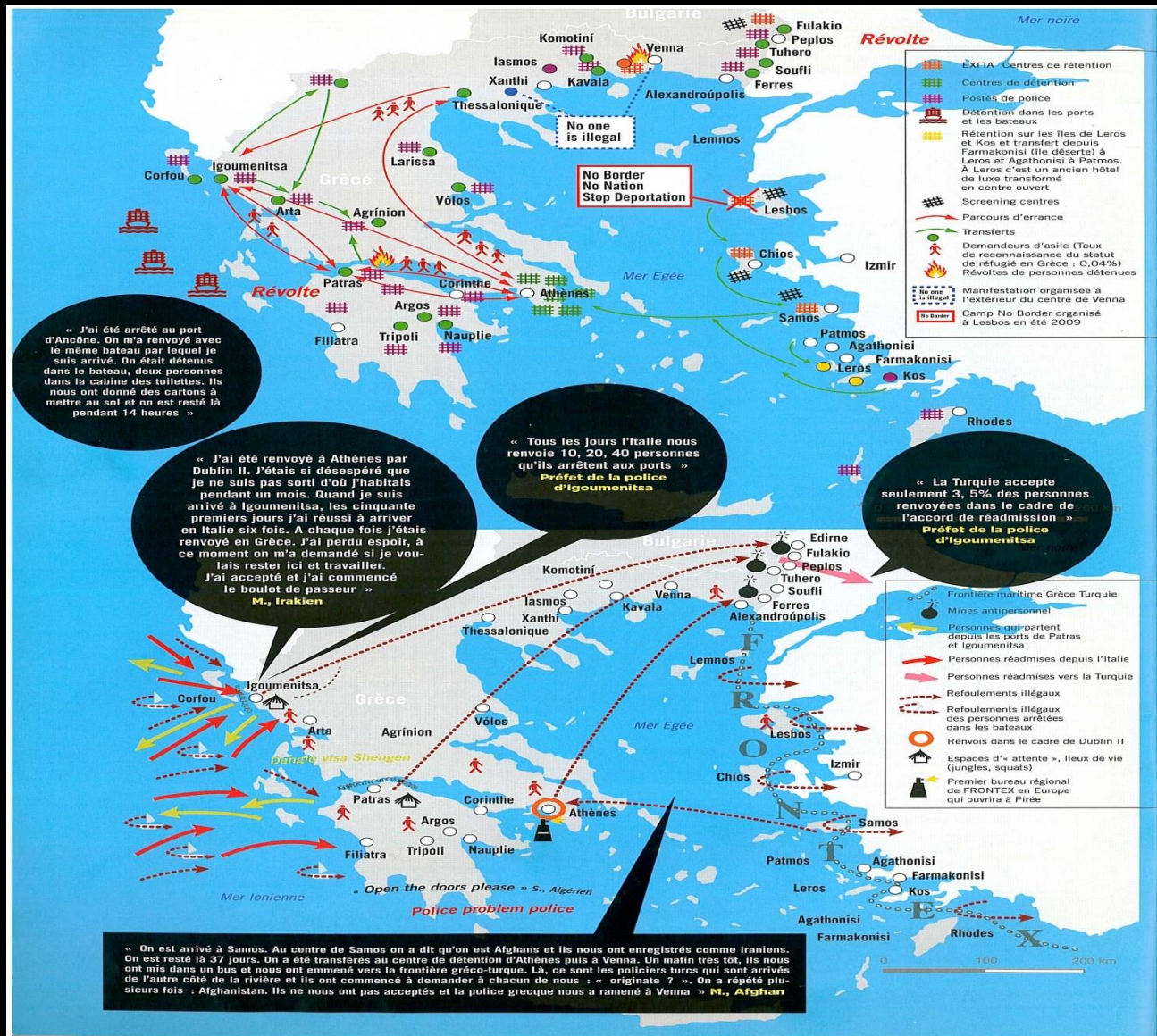2001 2003 2005 2007 2009 2011

Sources by country[3]: **Austria** (1-5-8), **Belarus** (Democratic Belarus), **Belgium** (Foreigners Office, Ciré), **Bosnia Herzegovina** (4), **Bulgaria** (1-4), **Cyprus** (Kisa, TerrFerme), **Croatia** (1-3-6), **Czech Republic** (1-5), **Denmark** (2-4), **Egypt** (2-4), **Estonia** (1-2-5), **Finland** (1, Pakolaisneuvonta), **France** (Annual Reports from the Interministerial Comity on Immigration, Cimade), **Georgia** (4), **Germany** (Pro Asyl, 5), **Greece** (1-6-7-8, FRA), **Hungary** (Welcome to Europe network, 1-3), **Ireland** (Irish prison service, 1-2), **Israel** (Hotline for Migrant Workers, 2), **Italy** (ARCI Immigrazione, Interno.it), **Latvia** (1-5), **Lebanon** (Frontiers), **Libya** (Fédération internationale des droits de l'homme / FIDH, Justice sans frontières / JSF, 4), **Lithuania** (1-5), **Luxembourg** (4), **Macedonia** (IOM), **Malta** (JRS), **Mauritania** (4), **Moldova** (4), **Morocco** (4), **Netherlands** (1-4), **Norway** (Government, 1-2), **Poland** (1-4), **Portugal** (Provedor de justiça, Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras), **Romania** (TerrFerme), **Serbia** (4), **Slovakia** (1-5), **Slovenia** (1-5), **Spain** (APDHA, CIE, Derechos vulnerados, 4), **Sweden** (Swedish migration board), **Switzerland** (2), **Turkey** (Helsinki Citizen's Assembly Refugee Advocacy and Support Program), **Ukraine** (Border Monitoring Project Ukraine, GDISC, 1-3-6), **United Kingdom** (UK Border Agency, 4).
*Common sources: 1. European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT); 2. Global Detention Project; 3. JRS Detention in Europe; 4. Migreurop; 5. European Parliament; 6. Human Rights Watch (HRW); 7. MSF; 8. Frontex.

- Complex mobilities: 'irregular' crossings and unnamed crossings.

  - The main concern of policies and practices that address migrant mobility are the so called irregular or 'illegal' crossings. These latter are the object of statistics and analysis in order to be controlled and channeled by the established policies.

  - Border crossings take equally place for reasons that apparently do not concern the established mechanisms of control; they are however provoked by those mechanisms: push-backs, deportations and returns. These crossings remain unnamed in the narrative in the policy makers and practitioners' discourse.

A "premature" first reception?

The " grassroots " response

- Infrastructures established by intra and extra migrant relations, which develop in the context of overlapping displacements: enclaves of precarity in various urban and peri-urban areas.

- Self-constructed, spontaneous refugee camps, such as the makeshift camps in Patras and Igoumenitsa, where refugees organised their daily lives, as a response to the blocking of their mobility to other EU countries.

- "Facilitating" the settlement while in a limbo in Athens:
  - in overcrowded apartments
  - squatting buildings
  - precarious staying in squares and open public spaces.

- The making of 'transit' migrant mobility produces two situations that are interconnected:

  - it established those enclaves of precarity in the urban and peri-urban spaces
  - it creates the space where the secondary reception takes place as a concept and as a practice.

If the 'official' reception system of that era could be seen as a premature 'first reception', the unofficial and more grassroot response to the settlement of the migrant mobility of that era constitutes a secondary reception before its establishment.
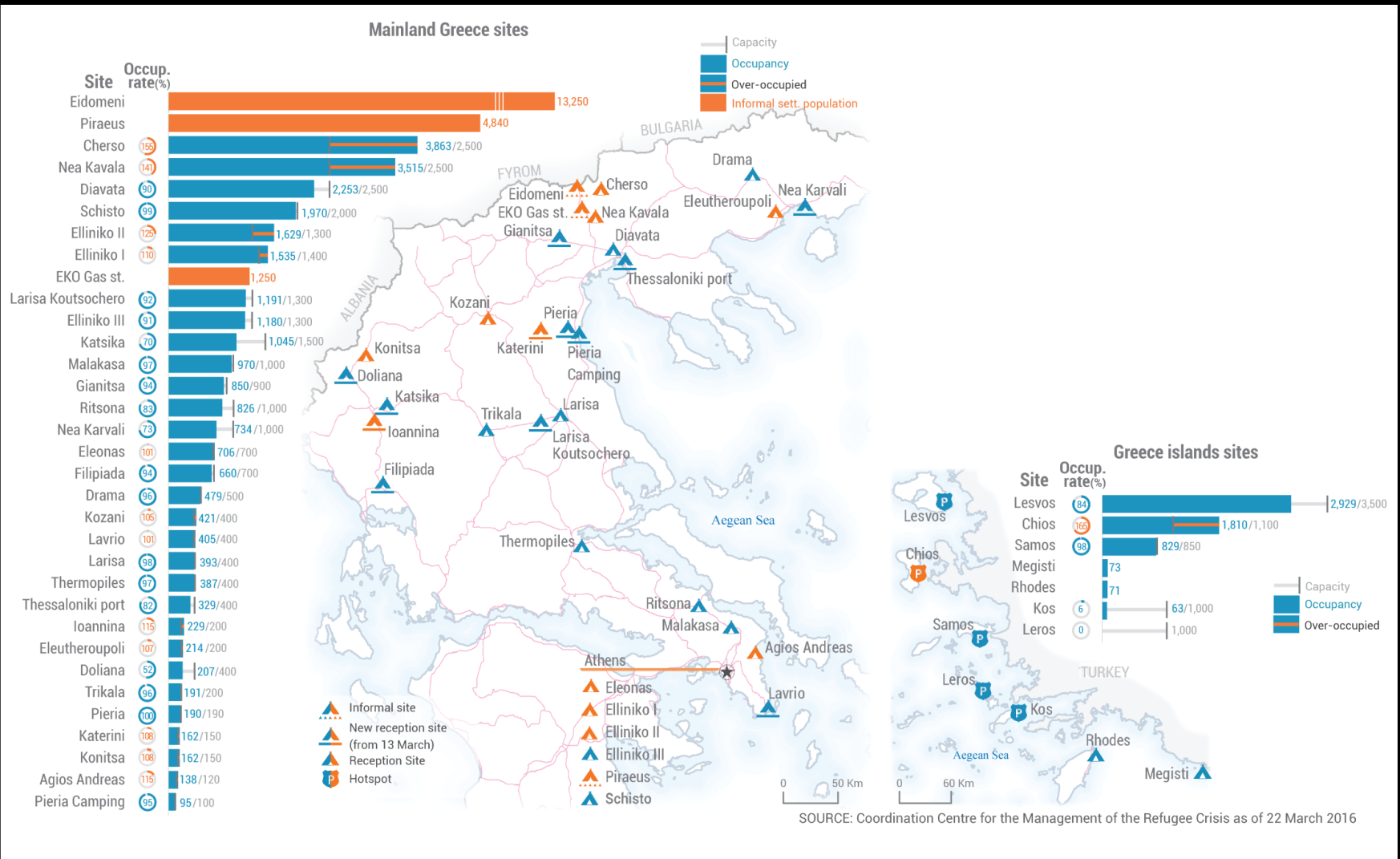
The case of Greece from early 2000 until today

- The period between 2008 and 2010, the 'zero tolerance' practice is extended also to intensified police raids in the different makeshift camps, together with what is known as 'sweep operations' in central districts of Athens, Patras, Igoumenitsa etc.

- In June 2009 the makeshift camp of Patras is demolished by the police and the municipality. In May 2011 intensified police raids end up in the dismantling of the Igoumenitsa 'jungle'.

- In June 2009 – just after a period when severe civil unrest broke out over the country, a period known as the 'Greek December' – the government presented a package of security measures consistent with requirements issued by the EU. Among these, migration was one of the most important.

- The 'sealing' of the Spanish and Italian borders, around 2010, transforms Greece into the main corridor to the EU.

- According to Frontex statistics, in 2010 more than 90%of Europe's immigration (that was apprehended) was at the Greek–Turkish border (FRAN Quarterly 2011).

- In 2010 the Greek authorities stopped approximately 130,000 undocumented immigrants, the equivalent of 100–150 new arrivals each day (UNHCR June 2011; Greek Police 2011). Consequently, and until 2012, the Evros region, which features a land border with Turkey, became the main entry point for migrants to the EU.

- Since the beginning of 2010 the Greek government is focusing on the disconnection of the asylum procedure from police responsibility.

- Law 3907/2011 aims to respond to criticism of systematic detention, by creating new structures, called "reception centres" ('KEPIs' in Greek), new detention facilities ("pre removal centres"), Asylum services and finally it establishes the First Reception Service (FRS).

It is during this period that the **first reception appears as a concept as well as an institution**. Until that period responsibility towards the reception of third country nationals has been fragmented to the competence of various ministries.

- In practice the first asylum office opens in June 2012 and the first temporary 'reception centre' opens in September of the same year.

- The period from 2011 until 2014 is characterized by a big lack of funding, which leads to a deficient administration system, the FRS is not that active.

- During the 'summer of migration' (2015) first reception as a practice is essentially suspended.

- The 'closing down' of the Balkan root and the Eu Turkey deal lead to the geographical restriction and the Greek Turkish maritime borders are transformed to 'holding zones.

- First reception is reactivated together with the 'hotspot' approach, implemented by Law 4375/2016. The Law foresees the centralization of the reception system, inside the Ministry of Interior; FRS is renamed (Reception and Identification Service).

From 'First reception' we pass to practices that establish in a more regular way the **'secondary reception'**: the proliferation of camps in continental Greece and the different housing solutions are some of the main practices that are shaping it.

SOURCE: Coordination Centre for the Management of the Refugee Crisis as of 22 March 2016

- Since 2017, from transit to de facto staying/containment: secondary reception seeks for a more integrative character.

- Integration remains a key word for the different stakeholders that are involved in the secondary reception. However, the debate on integration remains limited to technical solutions that try to address the prolonged staying and does not projects a wider space of co-existing in a given society.

- While the formally established secondary reception system concerns only those eligible to apply for asylum and those that already are part of the system (are inside the different camps, or other settlement solutions such as the ESTIA programs etc.); the premature secondary reception applies mainly to those that are not eligible for asylum, and are excluded from any protection scheme and system. In that way it may be precarious, but it is performed in a more inclusive way.

The discussion

- The meanings that take reception in the different examined periods: the interplay between control and care.

- The governmentality of migrant mobility: how it evolves depending on the examined periods. The variety of stakeholders that are involved and how the reception system (formal and informal) is folding and unfolding and becomes the field of an assemblage of various jurisdictions.

- The power of the counter conduct in the making of reception as an infrastructure.

- Reception as an infrastructure is a vantage point from were to rethink the informal/formal conception using as a tool the assemblage theory.

- Reception as an infrastructure that creates an intermediary space:

  o a space between first reception and integration; a space that puts in question what integration is? For whom? And how?

  o an intermediary space that opens the discussion on hospitality seen as a ritual that reshapes the relation between host and hosted.

- Reception is crucial for understanding different problematizations of the relationship between mobility and integration.