The Mediatisation and the Politicisation of the 'Refugee Crisis' in Europe

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1. Introduction: Mediated Politics in/and the 'Refugee Crisis'

Much has been said in 2015-16 and beyond about the so-called 'Refugee Crisis' i.e. yet another pan-European 'crisis' caused by the sudden massive asylum seeker flow from countries such as Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia and Iraq. Across Europe and especially in the key EU countries, there have been divergent interpretations of this process. Therein, various mobilising and politicising concepts – incl. humanitarianism, security, diversity, protectionism, etc. – were deployed in public discourses to legitimise the ever new restrictions of migration and asylum policies as well as diverse expressions of solidarity or lack thereof.

While, in general, we have experienced/witnessed many calls for control and urgency to manage the European borders more tightly – and to illustrate the sheer existence as well as plausibility of an EU-wide coordinated asylum policy response – there have also been many comments about a presumed regionally-specific incl. 'Eastern' vs 'Western' way of dealing with the issue. While Central and East European countries generally seem to have failed to fulfil their asylum obligations, Central, Western and Northern EU countries did, or at least attempted to, honour their commitments. Nevertheless, there has generally been a huge degree of changing attitudes towards openness and inclusion with, in the majority of cases, increased hostility and at best various reservations towards the incoming asylum seekers (for an extensive outline, see Triandafyllidou's paper concluding and summarising the findings of this Special Issue).

Moreover, diverse interpretations have been put forward as far as this "new odyssey" (Kingsley 2016) and a genuine human tragedy, indeed unprecedented in the post-War period, is concerned. These interpretations not only pertained to the geo-political and politico-economic ontology of the so-called' Refugee Crisis'. They also resulted in discussing income levels, national economies, national commitments to democracy, past individual and collective migration and asylum experiences, current politics, and many other related issues that should, at least officially, influence various countries' reactions and their openness towards the incoming migrants and asylum seekers.

At the same time, the continous exclusionary rhetoric of othering fuelled by the resurgence of right-wing populist and nationalistic as well as nativist agendas in both

Europe and beyond surely contributed to the above debates (see, inter alia, Wodak & Krzyżanowski 2017). They all emphasised the ethno-nationalist "politics of fear" (Wodak 2015), especially regarding immigrants and asylum-seekers. The former and the latter yet again became an easy target of stigmatising political and media discourses and practices which not only contributed to a shift in public moods, imaginaries or political preferences but often also resulted in outright physical violence towards the incoming 'refugees' (see Dimitrakopoulou & Boukala in this Special Issue).

Through the focus on the diversity of patterns of mediatisation and politicisation of what has overall been dubbed as the 'Refugee Crisis', this double special issue of the *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies* aims to address the complexity and the overlapping nature of the processes outlined above. We want to, first and foremost, critically challengeany stereotypical or schematic readings of the recent asylum-seeker and migrant phenomenon as well as delve into a systematic empirical analysis of how it simultaneously became the focus of media and political agendas. Thereby, we would like to illustrate that the by now highly heterogeneous and (too) strongly mediation-dependent European politics created an array of – in most cases negative – interpretations for the 'Refugee Crisis'. These often came about as a token of right-wing populism and outright political opportunism – and indeed very rarely as a case of political responsibility or long-term visions. We also want to highlight that, in each of the analysed countries, the media-based as well as mediated political discourses on the 'Refugee Crisis' frequently did not forge any 'new' ways of perceiving and interpreting migration and otherness. Instead, these often rested on both national and cross-national recontextualisation of historical patterns of talking about 'the other' as well as of the national discursive traditions of highly-politicised exclusionary thinking.

2. Discursive Shifts, Politicisation and Mediatisation: Interpreting the 'Refugee Crisis'

Our critical reading of the recent socio-political processes and their media-based as well as political interpretations takes place within several dimensions.

First, we want to challenge the variety of notions and socio-political concepts used in recent discourses and among them, very prominently, that of the *'Refugee Crisis'* itself. The latter, we argue, is strongly ideologically charged and has been developed in media and political discourse mainly to legitimise the alleged urgency – incl. various 'special measures' – that were or were supposed to be taken in recent months and years. Our strong contention is that the concept is both wrong (the recent processes have mainly concerned migrants in general and asylum-seekers, and not refugees, in particular) and purposefully uses the notion of crisis which, as such, implies larger facets of, in most cases irrevocable, socio-political ad politico-economic change (see Koselleck, 2006, Roitman, 2014; Krzyżanowski, 2009; Triandafyllidou, Krzyżanowski and Wodak, 2009). We believe that the description of the recent migration flows as "crisis" is both stigmatising – especially for the migrants themselves – and adding an unnecessarily alarmistic connotation to this discourse. It

carries a specifically political function and, as such, it is obviously not arbitrary but intentional and purposeful. In fact, this and other key concepts used most recently are also a case of *recontextualisation* (Bernstein 1990; Krzyżanowski 2016; Wodak & Fairclough 2010) of earlier (negativised) descriptions of large-scale developments related to immigration and asylum-seeking (e.g. in the context of wars such as e.g. in former Yugoslavia in early 1990s and other; see Matouschek et al. 1995; Reisigl & Wodak 2001; Wodak & Van Dijk 2000; Wodak 2013 a,b).

Our aim is, however, to look much deeper than just into words, notions or concepts – or merely into political and media representations of the recent occurrences. Indeed, we recognise that the discourses on the 'Refugee Crisis' are part of, on the one hand, changing/shifting hegemonic political agendas and related discourses and, on the other, a token of negative implications of the wider and indeed pre-existing processes of simultaneous politicisation and mediatisation of immigration (e.g., Baker et al. 2008; Messer et al. 2010; Reisigl & Wodak 2000; Wodak & Forchtner 2014).

Our theorisation of discursive dynamics departs from the notion of *discursive change* (Fairclough 1992), indeed one of the foundational concepts in critical-analytical approaches that link contributions in our Special Issue/s. We treat discursive change as a certain macro-level concept i.e. one that denotes global or transnational, macro-level dynamic framing of discourse characteristic for specific periods of time. We see discursive change as, however, necessarily operationalised at the mezzo- or micro-level by the concept of *discursive shifts* (Krzyżanowski 2013a, 2018) i.e. a set of local, micro-level appropriations of discursive changes. Those appropriations are actor-specific responses to social, political and economic macro-level transformations. Discursive shifts are, importantly, non-simultaneous and context- as well as field-dependent. For example, as we show, in response to – but also as a token of accommodation of – discursive changes such as the ongoing securitisation of socio-political realities, political radicalisation or the solidification of the neoliberal framing of public spheres, a significant shift to new types of discourses on immigration took place, drawing on traditional as well as new forms of discriminatory rhetoric or outright racism, antisemitism, and xenophobia (see Krzyżanowski & Wodak 2008, 2009b; Kaposi & Richardson 2017; Yuval-Davis 2011).

In many cases – often fuelled by the rise of political radicalism and ethno-nationalist mobilisation – that shift has resulted in a move towards Islamophobia as one of the key patterns of xeno-racist discursive scapegoating and othering (Krzyżanowski & Wodak 2009; Krzyżanowski 2012, 2013b) The latter has often entailed all-embracing discrimination against Muslims (Bennett et al 2013) as well as the development of new framing of the majority of issues related to multiculturalism from the point of view of apparent inter-religious and thereby inter-cultural conflicts (Bauböck & Tripkovic 2017; Wodak 2017a).

As the ensuing contributions to our double Special Issue highlight, the advantage of analysing the dynamics of discourses around the 'Refugee Crisis' resides in the ability to thereby capture the long-term diachronic changes and shifts of public – esp.

political and media – discourses. Moreover, we are able to observe a variety of context-dependent shifts (of smaller/larger scale) – as part of wider political dynamics and policies on immigration in contemporary Europe – and their simuiltanous or subsequent mediatisation.

Indeed, our above view on discursive dynamics is deployed here in the course of the critical and in-depth exploration of the mutual interdependence of processes of politicisation on the one hand, and mediatisation on the other. Whereas the two notions have been widely debated in either social/political or media/communication theory, there have been few studies so far that would relate them to each other, especially in the sense of ideological dimensions of politicisation and top-down strategic dimensions of mediatisation (see also Forchtner, Krzyżanowski & Wodak, 2013).

In general terms, *politicisation* serves as a description of the process of making all questions political questions, all issues political issues, all values political values and all decisions political decisions" (Hartwell 1979: 14). As such, politicisation denotes the growing power of the state and thereby of the political actors who, in the process of competing for power over the state system, tend to politicise matters and issues that are of public-wide concern. Widely criticised by, in particular, proponents of liberalism and neoliberalism (especially for its state-empowering claims), politicisation could, however, be well seen as having some positive aspects. For example, it denotes the fact that many issues that would otherwise be deemed 'private' or 'unimportant' may actually enter the public domain and become part of ongoing political debates. Historically, we know that the politicisation of some matters (e.g. those related to civil, women's, LGBT, ethnic, religious or other minority rights etc.) has been vital in empowering various social groups and has become instrumental in increasing public visibility of their claims in the eyes of political actors and the wider public.

However, as especially discourses and politics of immigration in Europe and beyond have shown, politicisation has two vital and indeed very negative consequences. First, it creates an imbalance of power by shifting its majority to the political realm. Thereby, politicisation "takes the manifest from of increasing the power of the state, of increasing political power as against all other forms of power in society, of increasing the power of politicians and the bureaucrats as against the power of individuals, private institutions, and voluntary associations" (Hartwell 1979: 15). This implies the weakening of individual agency in social reality and makes both individuals and groups strongly reliant on political action (which, however, in fact proves increasingly more and more inefficient). Or, "for the individual, this has meant increasing political dependence and awareness, along with increasing political ineffectiveness and frustration" (ibid.).

The second and perhaps the even more negative aspect of politicisation is the fact that it contributes to the far-reaching ideologisation of public debates as various issues that are politicised must effectively also be articulated in line with ideologies

that dominate the political realm. In this vein, Ellul (1967/1979: 211) famously argued that politicisation results in an increased volume of "ideological debate, doctrinal conflict, systematic argumentation along certain lines" (ibid.) and that the task of a critical exploration of politicisation is to "ask why these ideological debates have increased and what attitude people assume" (ibid: 211-212). While transcending Benda's (1969) argumentation on the dogmatisation of public debates and the logic of political passions, Hartwell (1979: 16) also claimed that politicised ideologisation of debates may very easily be seen as source of social conflict and one of the "effective ingredients of violence, a specific endemic disease of all modern societies".

Both of the highlighted negative aspects of politicisation – i.e. the issue of power imbalance and especially that of ideologisation – create an open space for hegemonic narratives that dominate contemporary public discourse. Thereby, the main problem is not whether/if certain issues are politicised (as most are anyway), but indeed how and when and if they are, for example, scandalised or not, become viral in the social media and their echo-chambers (Allern and Pollack 2012; Brodnig 2016; Entman 2012).

Hence, once politicised, various socially-relevant topics become widely constructed along political visions and ideological imaginaries. The important aspect of analysing politicisation – esp in the context of topics such as immigration – is hence to remain critical of their political framings and mindful of the fact that what they really represent are the interests of the political elites.

Immigration has indeed become a such a highly politicised topic in recent years, especially in terms of the ideologisation of related debates but also of making politics the key locus to effectively dictate the public views on immigration. While some decades ago immigration was certainly much less debated in politics and wider public spheres (see Wodak & Pelinka 2002), nowadays the topic has indeed become one of the most frequently debated as well as the most strongly politicised ones. This happened due to the continous merging of the – sometims distinct, sometimes blurred – categories of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants in their representation in the media (see above).

We agree with Buonfino (2004) who spoke about politicisation of immigration as a process of competition between its various political framings that are, in the end-effect, almost always either economic or security-related in nature (see Watson 2009, Bourbeau 2011; see also Wodak & Van Dijk 2000; Krzyzzyanowski & Ledin 2017). It has thereby been argued that by politicising and politically highlighting immigration, governments and other political actors would want to present themselves as 'in control' of immigration which they would ideologically view as a certain 'problem' (van Dijk 1998). As a result, however, that strongly negative framing of immigration would prevail within the political sphere under the overall heading that immigration must be 'tackled' (e.g., Martin-Rojo- Martin and Van Dijk 1997; van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999). This would eventually have a very significant spill-over effect onto other areas

of the public sphere with, in particular, the media discourses often following political agendas' patterns of negative politicisation.

The final concept that is crucial for the contributions across our Special Issue/s is that of *mediatisation* of politics which, as is argued here, is one of the main carriers of contemporary immigration discourses and of their long-term politicisation.

As such, the concept of mediatisation of politics describes the processes whereby politics becomes increasingly dependent on both mass media and other facets of mediated practices (most recently via social/online media). These, it has been argued, profoundly change how politics works: they alter political practices into the process of mediated attention-seeking rather than of political representation and policy making.

Both the classic (Blumler and Kavanagh, 1999; Bennett and Entman, 1999; Mazzoleni and Schulz 1999) and the more recent work on the mediatisation of politics (Preston 2008; Strömbäck 2008; Esser and Strömbäck 2014) has rightly argued that mediatisation is a gradual process. It not only entails the move from (relatively neutral and information-like) mediation to (far reaching) mediatisation of politics but also consists of distinct phases. These not only imply the gradual encroachment of media into politics but also more power of the media on the wider society which, paradoxically, thus becomes increasingly independent on mediated hegemonic political control. As a result, it has been contended that in conmtemporary political communication "mediated reality matters more than any kind of actual or objective reality" (Strömbäck 2008: 239).

Using mediatisation as one of the key concepts in contributions to our Special Issue/s allows us to systematically look at how online and social media are used nowadays by political leaders and party headquarters as the main channel of political communication. This channel is highly cost-efficvient by reaching out to millions of users and being instantly reproduced without any production/transmission costs. It also appears to be 'neutral' and as if developing 'spontaneously' from the ground-up, or giving voice to the people. But ion reality it involves some very specific top-dwon communication strategies on the part of parties and party leaders.

The above is particularly interesting for the ever-more successful radical right and right-wing populist parties and platforms across Europe. The former and the latter have namely been able to spread their exclusionary anti-immigration messages by providing simplistic explanations to complex socio-economic and political phenomena, indeed particularly via online and social media (for a recent comprehensive account see Wodak & Krzyżanowski, 2017). As has been extensively shown, radical right parties strongly gain political capital via online communication of anti-immigration rhetoric despite often being excluded from traditional media or even being denied space in public broadcasting. In a similar vein, the rise of the 'uncivil society' (Ruzza, 2009; Krzyżanowski & Ledin, 2017) that is often affiliated to the radical right and is outright racist or generally discriminatory views has also been based very strongly on the online communication.

Yet as all of the above examples certainly emphasise, the arrival of online opportunities has very significantly altered the logic of constructing political messages on immigration. The latter, as will be shown in the ensuing contributions, display some profound change to the way political discourses are nowadays structured, in most cases not as single/unitary voices but as purposefully polyphonic narratives. Hence, as highlighted by the contributions to our Special Issue/s, mediatisation allows capturing the process where not only radical right parties but also mainstream politics resort to simplistic explanations about international migration and asylum seeking. They do so while using social and online media and in order to build and diffuse their discourse, eventually presenting specific policy choices as 'unavoidable' solutions and thereby normalising radical and extreme right attitudes and opinions (see Wodak 2017b; paper by Rheindorf & Wodak in this Special Issue). Indeed, one of the main discursive shifts that occurred in Europe during the 'Refugee Crisis' is many countries' mainstream political movements and parties (incl. governments') ever-more obvious endorsement of anti-immigration rhetoric and/or of a harshened stance on openness towards refugees. Such shifts have been skilfully mediated and legitimised via online messages in order to legitimise or very often *pre-legitimise* (Krzyżanowski, 2014) ensuing change in politics and policies of immigration and asylum, allegedly under the pressure of the 'Refugee Crisis'. This, to be sure, has helped mainstream politics to gain legitimacy for its changing policies while at the same time still keeping its moderate image (Wodak 2017b). It hence showed how the mediation-driven '*digital politics*' (Vaccari, 2013) has become the main carrier of the spill-over of exclusionary views across public spheres and political spectra. By the same token, it has also become the gateway for the further spread of '*anxious politics*' (Albertson and Gadarian, 2015) which, building on the fears, imaginaries and anxieties, now not only mobilises the radical right but also stretches through the entire continuum of both left and right European politics.

3. Outline of Special Issue/s and Contributions

Our Special Issue/s bring together leading scholars working on migration-related discourses and practices in European politics and the media. Their aim is to critically analyse how the recent refugee "crisis" has been interpreted in media and political discourse with a view of guiding social and, in particular, political action.

Contributions to our Special Issue/s have not been designed in a strictly comparative way. They rather focus on periods of particular significance and urgency within selected regions (esp. in South vs. North vs. East/Central vs. West Europe). We also look at countries along as well as outside the key 'routes' taken by migrants in the recent 'crisis' and recognise that, while in some countries many discourses and interpretations stem from the actual experience of receiving the arriving migrants, in many countries, however, the discourse remains largely imaginary and boils down to politicised and mediatised fantasises, visions and mainly scenarios of migrants as danger and threat.

Analysing discursive practices in first arrival countries such as Greece, countries further along the so-called “Balkan route” (Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia), further into Central and Eastern Europe (Austria, Germany, and Poland), and final destinations such as Sweden and the UK, we aim at highlighting the discursive patterns of representing, interpreting, and instrumentalising the ‘Refugee Crisis’ as a recent phenomenon in the European public sphere. We are also considering how these discursive practices are intertwined with past discourses on migration, asylum, nation and alterity – thus connecting this current ‘crisis’ and related public and political discourse dynamics with previous ones, often more generally about migration and asylum (panics) in Europe. However, by the same token, we also look at countries such as Poland which, despite rejecting any refugee arrivals, have seen a development of virulent anti-immigration and anti-refugee discourses developed in most cases to legitimise its own negative political response.

While tackling the discursive politics/media interface in an in-depth, empirical and systematic way, the ensuing papers target the specific context-dependent interplay between mediated political and mass media discourses. They explore how and if former East vs West or South vs North divisions in Europe are re-surfacing and how such discourses reflect national traditions (of national self-conceptions and conceptions of the ‘Other’) or a common European discourse on solidarity or indeed, on migration/asylum control.

Opening the first of the two issues comprising our double special (i.e. JIRS 16:1), Markus Rheindorf and Ruth Wodak consider interpretations of the ‘Refugee Crisis’ in Austria. They claim that Austrian politics has long been characterized by a variety of discursive struggles whereby various meanings of salient concepts, such as ‘border’ or ‘maximum-limit’ have been proposed across the political spectrum. They eventually became hegemonic in both politics, media and the wider Austrian public sphere. As the uthors show, the phase at the peak of the ‘Refugee Crisis’ in late 2015 and 2016 was outright dominated by such meta-discursive negotiation of terminology related to building a border fence and setting a maximum limit on refugees. Both issues raised serious ideological and legal concerns and were thus largely euphemized; as responses to ever-increasing pressure from the political right, but also as politically-opportunistic messages sent out to the public as potential voters. This, as the authors argue in much detail, eventually allowed for the normalisation of restrictive policies in the theoretical framework of border and body politics, otherness, and, indeed, mediatisation.

While retaining the focus on Central Europe, Andreja Vezovnik looks at the process of securitisation of immigration in Slovenia as one of the key countries along the so-called ‘Balkan route’. Vezovnik focuses on the securitisation discourse that emerged in Slovenian TV news during the 2015 stage of the ‘Refugee Crisis’. Ther author first explores how the said discourse evolved in the context of the migrant situation in Slovenia and under the country’s legal and policy frame. This is followed by an analysis of Slovenian TV news which illustrates how the rhetorics of exceptionality, criminalization, security, and militarization all eventually became constituents for what

the article defines as the wider securitization of discourse. The author eventually concludes with a reflection on securitization and governmentality and argues that the former is an act of legitimising the latter.

In the following paper Federico Giulio Sicurella looks at the language of walls along the ‘Balkan route’. He maintains that, as the ‘Refugee Crisis’ unfolded, physical rather than just symbolic border walls and fences became an increasingly accepted and legitimate way of coping with the challenges of immigration. The paper eventually examines the intellectual response towards such fence-building logic and analyses how Serbian and Croatian public intellectuals reacted to the dramatic impact of Hungary's decision to fortify its southern border in September 2015. The analysis of salient argumentative strategies reveals how the intellectual criticism of wall building was embedded in specific discourses of values, in historical narratives, and in the topos of “Fortress Europe” long-standing in European politics and political imaginaries.

Closing the first of the issues and moving the focus on to the northern part of Central and Eastern Europe, Michał Krzyżanowski explores politicisation and mediatisation of the ‘Refugee Crisis’ in Poland. The author shows that, although largely absent from Polish political discourse after 1989, anti-refugee and anti-immigration rhetoric has recently become extremely politically potent in Poland. The analysis illustrates that an array of new anti-immigration discourses has been enacted in Poland’s public sphere by the right-wing populist party PiS (Law & Justice) who used the recent ‘Refugee Crisis’ to spread its discriminatory views and ideologies as part of political campaigning. As the paper shows, PiS’ largely imaginary discourse spread in political genres as well as via offline and online media. It has drawn on the orchestrated and strategic dissemination of discursive patterns combining, inter alia, Islamophobia, Euro-skepticism or anti-internationalism as well as historical patterns and templates of discrimination such as traditional Polish anti-Semitism.

The second of our two Special Issues (JIRS 16:2) focuses on the arrival/destination rather than, as previously, on the refugee transit countries. It opens up with a paper by Michał Krzyżanowski on which argues that despite its traditional openness and pro-immigration stance Sweden now witnesses a gradual change into discourses aiming to legitimise the curtailing of immigrant intake as well as limitation of their rights. The paper argues that different patterns of politicisation of immigration have traditionally dominated in Sweden, and focuses on Swedish mainstream politics where some explicit focus on politicisation via (previous as well as current) immigration-related policies still persists. However, as the analysis of the governing Swedish Social-Democratic Party’s Twitter discourse shows, a hybrid new discourse of politicisation is now emerging and has been used widely in the context of the ‘Refugee Crisis’. It has allowed mainstream and other political actors to legitimize restrictive immigration policy by way of often populist-like politicisation patterns as well as using new modes of online political communication.

The third of the key European destination countries in the course of the ‘Refugee Crisis’ – i.e. Germany – is the focus of the following paper by Bastian Vollmer and Serhat Karakayali. The authors argue that the anti-immigration continuum of public attitude-media-politics has undergone significant changes in the course of the ‘Refugee Crisis’ in Germany. By examining migrant representations and discursive events taking place in 2015 and early 2016, the authors point to the volatility of the recent discourse on refugees. A historical/critical discourse analysis highlights how new topoi arose and ‘old’ topoi – esp. stemming from the security/power paradigm – have reconquered the German public discourse. Using newspaper coverage, Vollmer and Karakayali discuss discursive events in three main sections: borders, arrival, and presence. There, they show discursive shifts that have taken place that have had an impact on the configuration of categories such as *migrants* or *refugees*.

In the following paper, Samuel Bennett looks at the UK as yet another destination country which, however, unlike openness-driven Germany or Sweden above, introduced strict limitations on the migrant and asylum seeker influx right from the outset of the current ‘crisis’. Bennett’s contribution analyses Twitter accounts of key UK political actors to show that their topoi and legitimation strategies change over time. He argues that this discursive shift takes place largely in reaction to specific (mediatized) events throughout 2015. Bennett also claims that such discourses can be seen as recontextualisation of existing discourses that have been present in the UK public sphere for a number of years.

Returing to the first-arrival countries, Monica Colombo explores representations of the ‘Refugee Crisis’ in Italy. She specifically analyses the process whereby securitarian and other discourses were intertwined as part of political strategy. The author first offers an overview of how the ‘Refugee Crisis’ has been represented by the Italian press and looks at the various combinations of discourses that dominated media reports. Then, as a token of political discourse, she examines in much detail, inter alia, the speech that the then Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, posted on his Facebook page as well as delivered at the Italian Parliament. Colombo shows that, delivered the day before the special summit of the European Council called in the aftermath of the Mediterranean Sea tragedy of April 18, 2015, the speech opened several avenues for the interpretation of the refugee crisis and emphasised security-oriented dimensions often legitimised by compassion and humanitarianism.

Staying within the south-European focus, Dimitra Dimitrakopoulou and Salomi Boukala explore in depth the Greek social media discourses on the ‘Refugee Crisis’. Drawing on the European threats regarding Greece's expulsion from the Schengen zone, the authors explore whether and how the Greek traditional and social media were deployed in the course of the ‘Refugee Crisis’ and how their discourse underwent various shifts while drawing on a variety of resources incl., ideologies of a homognous Greek nation-state and its imaginaries. The authors assume that the ‘Refugee Crisis’ led to a polarised climate that eventually also dominated the Greek and European political scene and posed challenges to European solidarity. Dimitrakopoulou and Boukala first explore the social media discourses of the Greek

prime-minister and the president of the main opposition party regarding the European debate on the Schengen agreement's suspension. They then juxtapose this analysis with the examination of Greek media coverage of both the Schengen debate and the 'Refugee Crisis'.

Closing our double Special Issue publication, Anna Triandafyllidou provides an extensive comparative paper exploring and highlighting key tendencies in the analyses proiviuded thourghout all contributions with the emphasis on patterns of both mediatisation and politicisation of the 'Refugee Crisis' in Europe. Triandafyllidou points to a wide range of discursive tendencies and shifts, and pulls the different threads together with the aim of providing a narrative of how the crisis has unfolded and how the discursive dynamics were aligned with the actual developments. By following such 'real-world' events contributing to the 'Refugee Crisis' as they happened, Triandafyllidou is able to identify which events (and how) were taken up in the different national political contexts and media landscapes as highly relevant. By doing so, Triandafyllidou provides a meta-analysis of the findings of our double Special Issue as well as highlights the main interpretative frames used to make sense of the refugee emergency and its pan-European representations and interpretations.

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