Abstract submitted for **‘Politics and Governance’**

**Abstract:** **Citizen-refugeeness: internal displacement and digital order in Greece's Storm Daniel**

Storm Daniel, a devastating Mediterranean cyclone in September, left thousands of Greek citizens in Thessaly displaced, forcing them to find shelter in existing refugee camps. To get a sense of the catastrophe, the World Meteorological Organization accounts for a “record-breaking rainfall”, with a “reported 750 mm falling in 24 hours at a nearby station in the mount Pelion village of Zagora” – equivalent of about “18 months of rainfall” (WMO 2023). The majority of residents were forced to evacuate their land and moved to refugee camps and detention centres, where migrant populations found shelter until recently – thereby making Greece the first country in Europe with internal displacement. This major disaster – the worst climate crisis-related weather event to hit Europe so far – is abruptly reshaping the nation’s citizenship regime and government crisis management policies, leaving individuals in a state akin to refugeeness, exacerbating pre-existing inequalities/vulnerabilities and forming new ones. In this presentation I discuss the ecology of communication and its digital inequalities as manifested at this juncture of climate change and migration. The research employs mixed-methods approach, including interviews with affected individuals, ethnographic observations in the impacted area, and digital ethnography.

Contributing to ‘**Politics and Governance**’the presentation seeks to raise the following critical question: *How do Thessalian climate refugees navigate and address digital inequalities to manage internal displacement?*

Grounding the project within the media and communications scholarship, I aim to capture the present moment as a rare moment of citizen-refugeeness in Europe and I place paramount importance on addressing the immediate needs of citizens in refugee camps while emphasising their digital responses to managing the crisis. The analysis foregrounds the role of media and communications technologies in supporting and/or creating challenges to local communities in Thessaly and how these communities develop different capacities to address the pressing issue of with citizen-refugeeness. Not only has Storm Daniel highlighted the urgent need for effective crisis management and support for displaced communities but has also underscored the minimal role of digital technologies in environmental migration in the region. It becomes clear from the findings that the path to recovery is fraught with traditional and digital inequalities, which exacerbate existing inequalities and vulnerabilities faced by the so-called “citizen-refugees”. The findings reveal that an effective response to such crises involves understanding and leveraging the three dimensions of communicative ecology: *hyperlocal networks*, *gatekeeper dynamics*, and *information poverty*.