Third Progress report
The Boris Mints Institute for Strategic Policy Solutions to Global Challenges
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Title of the project:
“Refugees in town: assessing the "local turn" of forced migrants’ integration”

The research project examines how cities deal with the social and economic incorporation of forced migrants. The research focuses on the challenges and the opportunities that local governments face as they mediate between national migration control policies and the influx of asylum seekers in precarious socio-legal situation. In addition to a qualitative extensive case study analysis of 2 central cities (Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem) and 3 towns in the socio-economic periphery in the South and Central regions of Israel, at the current stage, the research is expanded to include also Haifa as a third central city in Israel.

The research is part of the burgeoning literature in migration policy studies on the “local turn” of migrants’ incorporation (Zapata-Barrero, Caponio and Scholten, 2017). This phenomenon pertains to several policy dimensions through which municipal actors deal with the localization of global migrations. The first dimension relates to policies dealing with the creation of conflicts in the social, cultural and economic realm, but also to new forms of community development and conflict resolution (Kritzman-Amir, 2015). The second dimension concerns a growing duality between national policies that view migrants primarily as “aliens” and object of heightened control and restrictions and local policies bound to deal with the messy task of incorporating migrants as “persons”, allocating resources, providing services and managing their factual incorporation in the urban fabric. This “division of labour” between national authority over migration and local responsibility over migrants’ lives, has elicited increasing public and scholarly interest in the urban rescaling of migration policies (see Kemp and Rajman, 2004; Varsanyi, 2008; Ridgley, 2008;
Seeking to contribute to the literature on urban rescaling of migration policies, we have so far examined how cities that receive the bulk of asylum seekers like Tel-Aviv have responded to the restrictionist turn in national policies (see previous reports). By including Haifa as an additional case study, we see to enlarge the comparative framework of the “local turn” of migration policies to allow for greater variation in our analysis of the path-dependent itineraries of local policies. Our purpose is to create a typology of urban migration regimes, a concept we introduce to examine how demographic, institutional as well as socio-economic and socio-historic variables combine for explaining the different models of dealing with “aliens” that evolve in each locality.

The case study of Haifa stands out in our comparative framework as an ethno-national mixed-city where despite the relatively few numbers of refugees residing there and despite the official lack of, there have been considerable attempts by civil society actors, local communities and municipal actors to provide services to the whole population of forced migrants and incorporating their children into the educational system.

**Current State and Progress**

In the following, we present a summary of the current state and progress of our research following up on the commencement of the Haifa case study:

1. **Establishment of research cooperation with ALEF, a civil society organisation in Haifa to gain access to both community members and activists.**

2. **Mapping the ways in which urban authorities and municipal divisions in Haifa (welfare, planning, health and education) deal with the integration of asylum seekers (resource allocation, service provision, criteria for eligibility) and particularly their children.**

3. **Mapping relations between the veteran and the migrant communities.**

   We have collected partial data on the demographics of the Haifa population of forced migrants, their main areas of residency, the enrolment of forced migrants’ children in schools in Haifa and the main challenges faced by the civil society
involved as well as the urban authorities.

We are preparing to carry out fieldwork, i.e. interviews with representatives of the municipal divisions responsible for welfare, planning, health and education.

4. Preparation of outline for analysis of the data collected in Haifa

Identification of main parameters of the Tel Aviv and Jerusalem case studies to focus the data collection in Haifa for comparison.

Expected Outcomes

1. Report on needs of the forced migrants’ community in Haifa in relation to integration and challenges faced by the civil society engaging with municipal bodies
2. Publication of research on a three-localities comparison of local forced migrant integration in Israel based on the cases of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa.

Future steps

1. Finishing data collection in Haifa.
2. Transcriptions of interviews from Haifa with the Atlas.ti program for content analysis.
3. In-depth data analysis of the Haifa case along the relevant parameters of the Tel Aviv and Jerusalem analysis.
4. Cross-location comparison between Haifa, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.
5. Focused analysis of how local communities on the ground—including refugees and hosts—co-exist, adapt, and struggle with integration.
6. Detect best practices parameters for urban integration so as to inform policy makers and frontline workers.
References


