Integration and exclusion logics for immigrant policies – the case of Israel

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1. The subject of the research

Immigration policy studies are a relatively recent field of studies (Zincone, Penninx, & Borkert, 2011). At first, efforts were made to understand the gap between announced restrictive immigration policies which reflect the anti-migration public opinion, and the high intake of migrants. This gap was explained by the lobbying of well-organized pro-immigration stakeholders toward politicians — the latter acting as brokers for pro-immigrant policies (Freeman, 1995; Schuck, 2007). Finding this analysis restrictive, a new group of scholars — the neo-institutional theorists1 (Boswell, 2007) — emerged and offered a different understanding of the gap through institutional dynamics. For instance, Christina Boswell argues that institutions’ quest for legitimacy shapes immigration policy responses at State level (Ibid.). The neo-institutional approaches also suffered some limitations. Among them, their analysis is focused on present time and does not include historical aspects leading to different policy responses, nor does it consider actors and institutions outside of the main governmental bodies. Finally, it does not look at the immigrants themselves — the main beneficiaries (or victims) of immigration and immigrant policies2. Editing the conclusion of the volume Migration policymaking in Europe: the dynamics of actors and contexts in past and present, Giovanna Zincone leverages the country analysis detailed by the contributors3 to offer a complex explanatory model of migration policymaking in Europe (Zincone et al., 2011). She includes determining factors as: the historical and institutional legacies, the multitude of actors — from formal, semi-formal to informal actors — influencing policymaking, the political opportunity structures, and the economic and political context of each country (Ibid.). Doing so, she shows how recent research works have brought time, actors and context into the picture.

Integrating the ‘immigrants’ as a relevant explanatory variable into immigrant policy research introduced a major shift: from immigration policy research to integration4 policy research. The current context of immigration has a role to play in this shift: in a world of intensified migration movements and intensified diversity5 of migrant figures, States finally acknowledged the fact that immigrants were permanently settling and that the figure of transient migrant worker became marginal (Castles, Haas, & Miller, 1998; Giugni & Passy, 2006; Heelsum & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2013; Martinello & Rath, 2010; Penninx, Kraal, 2011).

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1 Apart from her model, Boswell considers three different neo-institutional approaches: One based on State and society, illustrated by the work of James F. Hollifield; one based on the State and domestic liberal institutions, illustrated by the work of Virginie Guiraudon; and the last approach based on the State and the international society illustrated by the work of Yasemin Soysal (Boswell, 2007).

2 Based on Maren Borkert and Rinus Penninx’s terminology, ‘migration policies’ refer to mobility and settlement policies, ‘immigration policies’ to admission, entrance and expulsion, while ‘immigrant policies’ refer to all policies related to immigrants and their position in the host country (Zincone, Penninx, & Borkert, 2011).

3 For the case of Austria, Albert Kraler; for the case of France, Catherine Wihtol de Wenden; for the case of Germany, Maren Borkert and Wolfgang Bosswick; for the case of the Netherlands, María Bruquetas-Callejo, Blanca Garcés-Mascareñas, Rinus Penninx and Peter Scholten; for the case of Switzerland, Gianni D’Amato; for the case of the United Kingdom, Lucie Cerna and Almuth Wührtholtz; for the case of Italy, Giovanna Zincone; for the case of Spain, María Bruquetas-Callejo, Blanca Garcés-Mascareñas, Rinus Penninx and Eduardo Ruiz-Viciatez, for the case of the Czech Republic, Marek Čaněk and Pavel Gízinský, and for the case of Poland, Anna Kleinger and Izabela Koryś.

4 The concept of integration has been a source of intense debate in the academy which I will develop further in the proposal.

5 For a better understanding of the multiplication of migration figures, statuses, itineraries and more, I refer to Steven Vertovec (Vertovec, 2007).
Martiniello, & Vertovec, 2004; Zincone et al., 2011). Therefore, policies can not only aim at controlling admission of migrants, but also defining their position in the society: policies ought to shift from immigration policies to immigrant (or integration) policies. I would like to make a first remark: the analysis of the relations between the host society and newcomers is not new to the scholarship. 1950 Georg Simmel’s essay “the Stranger” (Levine, 1971) is still a reference in integration policymaking research (Alexander, 2003; Penninx et al., 2004; Penninx, Martiniello, Brey, Cachon, & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2006). 1978 Hans van Amersfoort’s analysis of majority-minority relations (Martiniello & Rath, 2010) have largely influenced European migration scholars, notably in the Netherlands (Alexander, 2003; Paulle & Kalir, 2013; Penninx et al., 2004, 2006). A second remark is that recent literature we find on the relations between hosts and new immigrants is usually confined to the nation-states and citizenship debate (Castles, 2005; Cresswell, 2006; Giugni & Passy, 2006; Martiniello & Rath, 2010; Paulle & Kalir, 2013; Sassen, 2005; Yuval-Davis, 2006). In that constellation, the attempts to bring together the debate on the nation-state, citizenship and immigration, with the debate on immigration policymaking are worth the praise. I wish to mention the work of Michael Alexander who offer an analytical framework to compare policies in Europe through the attitudes of local authorities toward immigrants (Alexander, 2003; Schnell, 2013); as well as the work of Rinus Penninx, Karen Kraal, Marco Martiniello and Steven Vertovec (Penninx et al., 2004) who acknowledge the logics and strategies of actors in governmental institutions as fundamental to the understanding of policymaking.

This leads me to a final remark on immigration and integration policymaking. The rising importance of the issue of integration in policymaking led to another displacement: the displacement of decision-making from the national level to the local level. Indeed, the local scale corresponds to the arena where migrants settle, engage in interactions with the local population, work and more (Penninx et al., 2004, 2006; Schnell, 2013). Therefore, scholars have emphasized the role of local authorities in integration policymaking and policy implementation. A first set of research works tackled the reasons why the local scale has become relevant (Favell in Giugni & Passy, 2006; Taylor & Leitner in Sheppard & McMaster, 2008); while another set of research works addressed examples of policymaking and policy implementation at local levels, mostly in European cities (Alexander, 2003; Heelsum & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2013; Jørgensen, 2012; Penninx et al., 2004).

Although I will develop this idea later in the proposal, I wish to state here that the position of the scholars – like Michael Alexander, Izhak Schnell, Rinus Penninx, Marco Martiniello among others - who engaged in researching the role of representations and perceptions of Otherness in policymaking at local levels is marginal. For instance, in the field I wish to research – Israel – the notion of integration7 has been taken

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6 Georg Simmel argues that the stranger is “the person who comes today and stays tomorrow”. He does not belong to the group, but he interacts with it, he confronts it. The stranger might share common features with the group, but often, the differences are what its strangeness express. In that latter case, he is not an individual, but rather a “particular type” (e.g. the Jews in Frankfurt in medieval time had a tax fixed once and for all, while for other residents, this tax could change depending on their incomes)

7 Or other synonyms, as assimilation, acculturation, incorporation, absorption and more.
for granted in most academic works. Israeli scholars refer to the intense debate on integration when introducing their work. However, the methodology they base their research on follows a definition of integration which do not question the ideological issues of integration, or the politics of belonging. Integration is seen as an objective, a new comer being integrated when the following dimensions match with the results of the native population: employment and earnings, housing, language proficiency, social networks, cultural consumption among others. A notable exception concerns Karin Amit who considers the degree of integration perceived by the new immigrants, rather than the degree of integration calculated on the base of the economic and social performance of the immigrants (Amit, 2008).

In this context, I believe that the study of the role of local authorities in Israel to integrate new immigrants could bring further light to this field of research, and moreover, could orient the spotlights to a different stage than the European one. First of all, Israel regards to immigration has been similar to other settlement nations. The United States, Canada or Australia consider immigration as a constitutional part of the nation (Brubaker in Martiniello & Rath, 2010). Similarly, immigration has been a fundamental aspect of nation-building in Israel (Efrat, 1988; Golden, 2001; Khazzoom, 2005; Ram, 2000; Shama & Iris, 1977; Yiftachel, 1998, 2000). Therefore, Israel offers a fascinating field to explore the politics of belonging and their translation into actual policies and practical programs. Israel presents an institutional configuration – which certainly evolved from the establishment of the State in 1948 to nowadays - where the questions of integration on one hand; and the relation with the implementing local level on the other hand were always at heart. Therefore, it can be significant to see this 65-year evolution when European States have been tackling integration and integration at local levels only from the past two decades.

The immigration policy in Israel has been a one and only policy: the ‘Law of Return’ which allows every Jews of the Diaspora to be granted immediate citizenship at their arrival in Israel. This policy has implications in different sectors. The politico-legal dimension is clear as new comers of Jewish ascendency are granted the right to vote and to be elected. The socio-economic dimension involves a variety of integration policies, for instance to enhance the position of the new comer on the labor market. The cultural dimension is also tackled through language learning but also a much deeper attempt to federate a multicultural mosaic of immigrants into the Israeli nation (Golden, 2001; Ram, 2000; Yiftachel, 1998, 2000). The spatial dimension has been the object of intense policymaking and policy implementation focusing on the dispersal of immigrants in peripheral areas, notably along the new borders (Berthomière, 2003; Efrat, 1988; Kellerman, 1996; Khazzoom, 2005; Kimmerling, 1982; Lipshtitz, 1991; Shama & Iris, 1977; Yiftachel, 1998). We can see that this apparently unique immigration policy is in fact a multifaceted immigrant and integration policy which has been translated in different programs along dimensions as I just mentioned, but also over time (Efrat, 1988; Mesch, 2002; Shama & Iris, 1977).

8 See for instance (Friedberg, 2001; Haberfeld, Semyonov, & Cohen, 2000; Kanas & Tuhergen, 2009; Lewin-Epstein, Semyonov, Kogan, & Wanner, 2003; Mesch, 2002; Noam, 1994; Remennick, 2003)

9 Indeed, integration policies have been focusing on European countries predominantly, taking for granted the supranational bias introduced by the European Union membership of these studied countries. For a critic of European-centered research, see Adrian Favell (Giugni & Passy, 2006)
Although a de facto decentralization is recognized in Israel (Ben-Elia, 2006; Elazar, 1988; Razin, 2003), the role of the local authorities in policymaking and implementation and the bias they introduced to the Law of Return has not been studied in a comparative manner.

2. Research questions and objectives

The research will inquire the extent to which immigrant policymaking and immigrant policies’ implementation in Israel depend on the local government’s leadership perception of its role toward the integration of new immigrants. Here, my main hypothesis is that integration policies and their operationalisation depend on the politics of belonging (and who will soon belong) at national level, how the discourse is interpreted or redefined at local level (mostly by the mayor and his councillors), how it is translated into a program by the directors of the department in charge of immigration and absorption, and finally, how it is implemented in the field by municipal agents.

Therefore, I would like to investigate the extent to which Israel local authorities took over immigrants’ integration in their set of responsibilities. More specifically, I wish to inquire the ideology, perceptions and representations at work in Israeli local authorities. I also wish to question the personal and professional strategies of politicians (mayors and councillors) as well as civil servants (directors and agents).

The objectives of the research will include the observation of the shift from national to local immigrant policymaking and policy implementation in Israel; understanding the logics of immigrant (or integration) policymaking taking place in local governments; unveiling the role of ideology and political goals of the leadership; analyzing the civil servants discretionary practices.

3. The theoretical framework of the research

Immigration policymaking has recently emerged as a field of research on its own right (Zincone et al., 2011). Here, I wish to develop various approaches of the profuse literature on immigration and integration policymaking and policy implementation as well as their relevance for my research project which I will carry out in Israel. First of all, I will address the new considerations for integration policies, and notably the reasons why studied policies shifted from the mere control of admissions of immigrants to a country to the attempts to control the position of new comers in the host society (or to use the buzz vocabulary, their integration in the host society). In Israel, policies have always been directed at ‘absorbing’ immigrants, which led to the early development of a complex institutional fabric. Second, I will show how these policies, traditionally designed at national levels, are now more often studied at local levels, and more particularly at the city level. Again, the consideration of the role of the local level was always at heart in Israeli policies, however, it is interesting to question the orientation of this role – forced upon by national government, or defined by the municipalities themselves? especially in the new context of decentralization and local economic development. Finally, I wish to give special attention to the logics of
institutions and actors in policymaking, the translation of policies into operational programs, and the new bias introduced by municipal agents (or other stakeholders) when implementing these programs: a three-layer prism which has the potential to considerably differentiate the responses of a municipality from another.

3.1. From immigration to integration policies

The emergence of the field of immigration policy research coincides with the publication of the article of Gary Freeman *Modes of Immigration Politics in Liberal Democratic States*. Freeman aimed at explaining the gap between the discourse toward immigration – generally restrictive – and the reality – large intakes of immigrants in industrialized countries. Freeman and other scholars after him analyzed the gap as the result of the concentrated interests generated by immigration. Well-organized pro-immigration actors which have high interests in accepting larger amounts of immigrants lobbied toward politicians, themselves facilitating pro-immigration policies (Freeman, 1995; Schuck, 2007). Similarly, other approaches revolving around the need for cheap labour in a globalized economy emerged and showed that industrialized states designed policies to accept more new immigrants than what would be reasonable to accept (Castles, 2004). Considering these approaches as restrictive, new approaches surfaced focusing on institutions as the main object of analysis. For instance, Christina Boswell argues that the institutions of the State – the operational departments rather than the politicians – are central in immigration policymaking. In her opinion, institutions design policies in order to reinforce the legitimacy of the State. Depending on the importance they put on different legitimating mechanisms, policy responses vary (Boswell, 2007). Boswell integrated a new actor in the policymaking process: the governmental institutions. Nevertheless, other important variables explaining the variety of immigration policy responses were missing: a time perspective, the influence of non-State institutions and actors, and the main beneficiaries of these policies, the immigrants. Giovanna Zincone edited a volume on ten European countries and their immigration policies’ trajectory. At the end, she concludes with an explanatory model which takes into account the historical and institutional legacies, the multitude of actors – from formal, semi-formal to informal actors – influencing policymaking, the political opportunity structures, and the economic and political context of each country (Zincone et al., 2011).

The shift from immigration to immigrant (or integration) policies occurred with the introduction of the immigrant figure in the analysis of policies. Immigration patterns have changed dramatically the past decades from temporary economic migration to permanent settlement of very diverse populations in countries which already had a history of immigration, but also in traditional emigration countries (Vertovec, 2007). Amplified tensions, social unrest and riots led to the end of the long lasting ‘ostrich politics’ prevalent in Europe. Receiving countries started to define the position of new comers in their society. Depending on the attitude of authorities toward new immigrants, countries adopted different

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10 See footnote 1.
11 See footnote 3.
policy responses, from non-policy to guest-worker policy, assimilationist policy, multicultural policy and more recently intercultural policy (Alexander, 2003; Schnell, 2013). Scholars from the Netherlands, notably from the IMISCOE research network12 started to get involved with integration policy research (Heelsum & García-Mascareñas, 2013; Penninx et al., 2004).

3.2. The ‘integration’ debate

This leads me to question the concept itself of integration. Various attempts have been made to define integration. One of the most cited work is of Berry (1990, 2001). “Berry regards assimilation, integration, marginalization and separatism as a continuum stretching from complete inclusion to total exclusion of minority groups from the host society” (Remennick, 2003). However, the first term – assimilation – has been rejected by academics because of its negative connotation, legacy of the assimilation debate of the 1950s and 1960s: “assimilation as a concept and as a theory has been subjected to withering criticism in recent decades. Much of this criticism rejects assimilation out of hand as hopelessly burdened with ethnocentric, ideological biases and as out of touch with contemporary multicultural realities” (Alba & Nee, 1997). Integration on the other hand has been a fundamental concept of recent scholarship (Favell in Martiniello & Rath, 2010). Adrian Favell notes that integration is the only concept – among many words like assimilation, incorporation, acculturation… - which includes both the ideas of a collective social goal and the intervention of a collective political agency (Ibid.). Larissa Remennick argues that there are different degrees of incorporation, with ‘integration’ being the more positively connoted location as it acknowledges the possibility for an immigrant to maintain his own identity while adopting the identity of the receiving country.

Regarding integration as ‘the moment when immigrants perform as good as the receiving country’s nationals’ is practical as it permits to define dimensions of integration, which are measurable and comparable. This is actually the most dominant approach of integration in the scholarship. Studies usually focus on one or several of the dimensions of integration: politico-legal, socio-economic, cultural-religious, and spatial. Researches set indicators (civic rights, political rights, employment and earnings, education, language proficiency, religiosity, spatial segregation, social networks and so on) and compare the performance of immigrants to the results of the native population. Here, I want to point out that integration is not so much measured, but rather ‘non-segregation’ (Ruiz-Tagle, 2013). Let me give an example to illustrate: integration will mean that immigrants are not concentrated in the same neighbourhood. If they are, the policy will aim at dispersal13. The same apply for social networks: multiplying contact with the local population is seen as a sign of integration for immigrants, although locals are not requested to have contacts with immigrants to be integrated in their society14. This approach

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12 www.imiscoe.org
13 This is actually the mode of policymaking which we witnessed in European capital in the 1990s (Hans Mahnig in Martiniello & Rath, 2010).
– measuring the performance of immigrants compared to the natives - is also predominant in the Israeli scholarship.15

Evidently, measuring integration by comparing it to the native population also calls for an analysis of the norms and standards of dominant groups. It means that there is a dominant group to which the rest should adapt. The same dominant group is the one who defines the Otherness, but also who control the access to society membership (Hans van Amersfoort in Martiniello & Rath, 2010; Paule & Kalir, 2013; Hans Mahnig in Penninx et al., 2004). At the moment when we ask ourselves “who is the dominant group?”, “who decides”, we challenge the ontology of ‘integration’. This fatally leads us to look at the abundant scholarship developed around the nation-state and citizenship (Castles, 2005; Cresswell, 2006; Favell in Giugni & Passy, 2006; Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013; Brubaker and Favell in Martiniello & Rath, 2010; Sassen, 2005; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Indeed, the politics of citizenship in the nation-states is fundamental to understand the construction of a figure of ‘outsider’. In nation-states, citizens are equal, they enjoy full membership, they should be ready to performed sacred acts (e.g. be drafted to the army), they belong to a community of culture, they enjoy democratic participation, they belong to one unique nation and they are entitled to important privileges (Brubaker in Martiniello & Rath, 2010). The new patterns of migration led to deviations from the nation-state model with which States strive to tackle (Ibid.). A group of scholars believe that the nation-state is still central and that it decides who is a member and who is not (Favell in Giugni & Passy, 2006). Moreover, immigration is seen has a factor strengthening the nation-state is a period of globalization. Indeed, defining the outsiders permit to improve the cohesion of the members (Cresswell, 2006)16. Other scholars advocate for the reconsideration of the national scale: they believe that globalization and the strengthening of supranational organizations (like the European Commission) accelerated the displacement of claims toward supra and sub-levels (Castles, 2005; Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013; Sassen, 2005).

In this framework, looking at Israel should bring further elements to the debate. Indeed, if North American and European literature acknowledges a shift from immigration to integration policies the last decades, (1) integration has always been the object of policies in Israel. Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, immigration has been central to nation-building. Therefore, the absorption of immigrants has been the object of policies since the 1950s. Moreover, absorption of immigrants has been developed together with national goals (Efrat, 1988). In this context, Israel offers the potential for a study of integration policies which were designed in a proactive manner rather than a reactive manner to social issues, as it has been the case in Europe. Second, I have pointed out that ‘integration’ is often used as a tool to measure the performance of immigrants compared to the native population. (2) Israel is not an exception and one can find a great collection of qualitative studies – by the way extremely useful to learn about the conditions of the different groups of immigrants in Israel -. However, if we shift to the

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15 See footnote 7.
16 In a world of mobility where the figure of the ‘cosmopolite’ is positively connoted, foreign workers, illegal workers, refugees… etc are still considered as threatening figures of mobility (Cresswell, 2006; Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013).
citizenship debate, a very interesting literature developed around the segregation of the oriental Jews 17 (Bensimon, 1970; Efrat, 1988; Khazzoom, 2005; Ram, 2000; Shama & Iris, 1977; Yiftachel, 1998, 2000). Finally, I have argued that national ideologies and definition of the citizen versus the outsider are central to the ‘politics of belonging’ and the politics of integration. (3) In Israel, immigration is part of the national myth. Important efforts have been invested in the establishment of an imagined community (Golden, 2001). Studies have shown that integration seems to be easier for Jewish new comers to Israel 18. However, countries which encourage immigration and settlement do not necessarily promote a universalistic view of citizenship and membership. As mentioned before, oriental Jews have suffered ‘State-engineered segregation’ (Khazzoom, 2005; Ram, 2000; Yiftachel, 1998, 2000).

3.3. Displacement of integration policymaking

The shift from immigration to integration policies has had another implication: it renewed 19 the role of the city toward migrants. Indeed, “in every European context, most immigrants live in cities. That is where the jobs, housing, schools, support services (whether governmental or non-governmental), religious and leisure facilities, and their own social networks are concentrated” (Penninx et al., 2004). Studies started to focus on policymaking at city level (Alexander, 2003; Jørgensen, 2012; Penninx et al., 2004). Alexander and Penninx et al’s researches aimed at comparing between European cities, while Jørgensen compared four Danish cities and the national level. These exercises revealed very interesting explanatory factors for differences or convergence: the historical and institutional legacy, the political opportunity structures (institutional and structural context for policy-making), the strategies of political parties, the political logics or rationalities, the membership in transnational networks 20, the size of the municipality, the relative size of the immigrant community and its strategies to take part in decision-making and of course, the national policies.

Does this sudden research interest for integration policymaking at city level correspond to a real displacement of policymaking and decision-making? The first element of response is the new responsibilities that local authorities took following decentralization process. Indeed, the 1980s and the 1990s witnessed important political reforms toward decentralization. Some national budget was allocated to local authorities, but mostly, these authorities were encouraged to mobilize their own resources through tax, service delivery, partnership with the public sector and more. In the field of immigration, the local

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17 Few articles describe similar segregation mechanisms toward the Former Soviet Union immigrants (Haberfeld et al., 2000) – although most studies conducted after the mass migration of the FSU immigrants in the 1990s are actually qualitative research works which do not question the ontology of ‘integration’ (Friedberg, 2001; Kanas & Tubergen, 2009; Lewin-Epstein et al., 2003; Mesch, 2002; Noam, 1994; Remennick, 2003). Similarly, research works on the Ethiopian-Israeli community (Noam, 1994) have not questioned the ontology behind ‘integration’, although their ‘integration’ in itself has been polemical.

18 For instance, comparison study between Jewish Moroccans in Israel and Muslim Moroccans in the Netherlands (Oudenhoven & Eisses, 1998) or comparison study between FSU immigrants in Canada and Israel (Lewin-Epstein et al., 2003) show that the sense of belonging to the same religious community led the government to develop efforts of tolerance and recognition superior to what we witness in other countries.

19 Before the hegemony of the nation-state, cities were the authorities controlling movements of population and delivering passes (Castles, 2005; Cresswell, 2006; Giugni & Pasy, 2006; Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013; Zincone et al., 2011).

20 Transnationalism and policymaking was the object of Yasemin Soysal’s research who shows that human rights networks and organizations influence immigration policy responses toward more tolerance to immigrants (Boswell, 2007).
authorities also gained some autonomy in sectors affecting immigrants, notably regarding employment services, language studying, urban planning and urban development, cultural services. Some municipalities even experienced new kind of local citizenship for illegal aliens.

A second element of response is the new paradigm of globalization and its impact on scales of decision-making. Some scholars believe that the globalized economy and the strengthening of supranational organizations like the European Commission or the United Nations council lead to the weakening of the State. Policymaking now takes place at supranational levels, and at local levels: a phenomenon called ‘glocalisation’ (Soysal in Boswell, 2007; Sassen, 2005; Leitner and Taylor in Sheppard & McMaster, 2008). The phenomenon of glocalisation is explained differently: it is the result of a State strategy to displace their responsibilities (and therefore the blames) and maintain the current world order (Favell in Giugni & Passy, 2006; Taylor and Leitner in Sheppard & McMaster, 2008); transnational networks and organizations negotiate directly with local authorities; (global) cities are privileged arenas which provide openings for new types of political actors – like disadvantaged migrants – and new types of strategies (Sassen, 2005).

Once again, looking at Israeli cities can provide new insights. Indeed, since the first days of the State, the role of the local level in Israel for the absorption of immigrants was always predominant. It followed a top-down direction where the State organized territorial planning to fulfill national goals as well as provided cities, development towns and villages with the necessary funding (Berthomière, 2003; Efrat, 1988; Kellerman, 1996; Kimmerling, 1982; Lipshitz, 1991; Shama & Iris, 1977; Yiftachel, 1998, 2000). Second of all, since the end of the 1970s, Israel witnessed a radical change in the political rationalities and the policy frames when the right wing party Likud accessed the Government in 1977. The new political majority led to the withdrawal of the national State in many sectors as well as to budget restrictions. Local governments were pressed to be more active and a (5) de facto decentralization took place (Auerbach, 2001; Ben-Elia, 2006; Elazar, 1988; Razin, 2003). This had implications to immigration policies. Indeed, the bureaucratic integration shifted to direct absorption: Housing and employment became the responsibility of the new immigrants. New immigrants received an absorption basket for the first months of their residence, and then had to find housing and jobs through informal networks (Mesch, 2002). Third of all, Israel is not a member of the European Union, therefore, (6) the only policies above local policies are the national policies. It will permit to eliminate this bias from the research. However, it is possible that transnationalism will still be a relevant variable. Indeed, Israeli institutions include a Ministry of Diaspora Affairs, and many governmental institutions and non-governmental organizations rely on the Jewish Diaspora networks of organizations for funding. It has been shown recently that new connections between Diaspora networks and mayors in countries of origin are emerging (Caglar, 2006). In a context of

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22 Helga Leitner shows that EU regional policy initiatives strengthen sub-national authorities by providing them with resources and involving them in policy implementation (Sheppard & McMaster, 2008).

23 Absorption basked (ad klita in Hebrew) includes a basic living allowances, funds to start fresh and discounts on certain furniture (Lewin-Epstein, Semyonov, Kogan and Wanner, 2003).
decentralization and reduced access to resources, we cannot exclude the possibility that Israeli local authorities foster special bonds with Diaspora organizations to access international funds. In that case, it has been shown that it has implications on integration policymaking at city level, notably, these cities proved to be more open to immigrants (Jørgensen, 2012).

3.4. The logics of integration policymaking and policy implementation

In policymaking, logics refer to “broader cultural rules and beliefs that structure cognitive ideas and guide decision-making as well as the behaviour of actors in the policy field” (Jørgensen, 2012). We must take into account the fact that immigrant policymaking’s logics are based on majority/minority (or host/stranger) relations. Indeed, policymakers are usually part of the dominant group of the society (Penninx et al., 2004). It has been communally believed that local authorities are more accommodating than national governments toward immigrants, and that they put in place innovative mechanisms for the participation of minority groups in policymaking. If it has been true in England, or in the Netherlands, researches conducted in Switzerland, France and Denmark have shown contradictory results. It seems then that the different logics correspond to different political opportunity structures (Jørgensen, 2012; Penninx et al., 2004).

Once the policies have been elaborated, they require their operationalisation. Here again, studies have shown that integration policies suffer an implementation gap (Heelsum & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2013; Jørgensen, 2012). Indeed, national policies or local policies both go through a reinterpretation by professional staff - from policies to programs, or from a political target to a working procedure. Finally, once the policy has been interpreted into a working procedure, a final layer distorts: the municipal clerks in direct contact with the immigrants, and the immigrant representatives. Indeed, municipal agents must ‘depolitis’ policies to be able to work efficiently. They also add their beliefs and values in the working procedures. Alexis Spire’s ethnography of asylum-seekers’ regional departments in France, as well as Maria Bruquetas Cajero’s research in municipal departments in Spain, have brought considerable light on this point (Heelsum & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2013; Spire, 2007). Therefore, integration policies go through a three to four-layer prism: from national policies to local policies, to operationalisation by high-level staff, to depolitisation and implementation by municipal agents.

(7) In the case of Israel, this prism exists. However, apart from research work on Tel Aviv municipality’s attitude toward non-Jewish immigrants, there has been no systematic review on the role that the municipality endorses, the policies they design and their implementation. Moreover, the local arena is complex. Apart from the municipality, (8) other actors can influence policies:

- Governmental actors: the Ministry of Immigration and Absorption. As policies touch every sector of the public life (politico-legal, socio-economic, cultural and religious, and spatial), the Ministry of Immigration and Absorption is not the only national institution in charge, but also the Ministry
of Economy24 - which provide national self-employment schemes for immigrants25 -, the Ministry of Housing – which nowadays provide discounts for new comers26 -, the Ministry of Welfare and so on.

- Large Jewish organizations: organizations like the Jewish Agency 27, the World Zionist Organization28 or the Joint Distribution Committee29 are preponderant actors for immigration and integration of Jews from the Diaspora.

- Ethnic-based organizations: Nefesh benefesh for the English-speakers, AMI, Gvahim or the AAEGE for the French speakers, OLEI for the Spanish and Portuguese speakers and more.

- The private sector which provide cultural products in the immigrants’ mother tongue; employment opportunities within ethnic networks and so on (Remennick, 2003).

In sum, comparing various Israeli cities can provide us with enlightening new elements regarding the shift from national to local policymaking and policy implementation; the logics of immigrant (or integration) policymaking taking place in local governments; the role of ideology and politics of the leadership; and the civil servants discretionary practices.

4. Primary working hypotheses and estimated contribution

The first aspect that I wish to tackle is the understanding of Otherness by local leadership. I argue that the ‘politics of belonging’ (Yuval-Davis, 2006) shapes the figure of the ‘Other’ and therefore define the beneficiaries of municipal programs for integration. Indeed, will benefit only people who are considered by municipal leaders as ‘not yet integrated’ or ‘segregated’ (Ruiz-Tagle, 2013). Scholars have already disserted on the national ideology of Israel. However, I would like to understand if the local level is more accommodating.

Second of all, I believe that – with the existence of clear national policies, of many governmental institutions in charge of immigration and integration, and of many non-governmental institutions in charge of immigration and integration - municipalities negotiate their role. I would like to understand if municipalities integrate or differentiate the national agenda (explicitly as a “branding” strategy, or implicitly – as a hidden agenda). As any organization, municipalities certainly articulate their strategies around ‘retaining’, ‘devolving’ or ‘ignoring’. Therefore, it is of interest to map the actors and understand who does what, and why it is so.

24 The former Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor.
26 90% on municipal tax (arnona in Hebrew) for new immigrants
27 The Jewish Agency was funded in 1922 and comprised a department of Immigration and Absorption which still functions today (Shama & Iris, 1977).
28 See https://www.wzo.org.il/World-Zionist-Organization, and more specifically, the settlement division.
29 American NGO which has an operational program for new immigrants. The Joint policy is to develop pilot projects with governments until governments can lead the project itself. See http://www2.jdc.org.il/category/olim-general.
Finally, I argue that the institutional actors - through their perceptions, their strategies and their practices – introduce bias. The first bias being the translation of national policies to local policies; then the translation of a policy into a municipal program at the department of Aliyah and absorption; and finally, the interpretation by municipal agents which leads to an implementation gap.

In this framework, I would like to verify that integration is not a mechanism: it is politics. It is politics because it defines who are beneficiaries, what they need to become integrated, and the moment when municipal agents consider that “their work is done”. I think that Israel presents a specific case. Usually, there is an understanding that the national level defines the immigration policy, and the local level the integration policy. In the case of Israel, immigration and integration have been considered together since the establishment of the State. Finally, I wish to bring back the role of the human agency: from politics to policies, then depolitisation by clerks toward operationalisation.

5. Research methodology

5.1. Field selection

In order to select a relevant field for study, I have followed four types of variables. I envisage to ‘compare the comparable’ and to select cities which present similar features and similar levels in the urban hierarchy; similar demographic and economic contexts (at least two cities similar to each other and different from the two others); but different historical legacy, different represented ideological views, and different degree of – visible – efforts (finance and human resource-wise) toward integration of immigrants.

Geographical setting variable: all residents of municipalities in Israel can have access to Aliyah and absorption services, nevertheless, with some geographical variations. Therefore, I assume that certain cities may be highly involved with immigration and absorption issues because of their status in the geographical urban hierarchy of Israel: for instance, a high population or a relative geographic isolation where no other significant city can provide the same services.

Historical trajectories and ideology variable: settlements and development towns were created to host new immigrants from 1950s to the end of 1970s (Efrat, 1988). I assume that cities which were planned as immigrant cities have an historical past of engagement toward immigration which can impact – positively or negatively – their engagement nowadays (whether if immigrants successfully participated in the development in the city; or immigrants presence negatively impacted the city development). Alternatively, cities which existed before the establishment of the State and have a significant share of Arab-Israeli population may be the target of immigration policies as a way to increase the demographic share of Jewish residents (e.g. Acre, Nazareth). We also assume that the political orientation of the leadership - the city mayor and his councillors - will have impacts.
Demographic and economy variables: Cities in Israel are not homogeneous if looking at their share of native Israelis, veteran immigrants or new immigrants. Similarly, represented immigrant groups vary. This can be the result of the earlier planned settlement, of current politics but more certainly of existing communities which can provide networks for new comers, and economic opportunities. The demographic and economic criteria will differentiate even more cities from the State policy. I assume that the share of immigrants, notably of new immigrants, determines the involvement of the municipality. Second, the composition of the immigrants (country of origin) can be decisive, some communities coming with higher human capital\textsuperscript{30} than others; and some communities having more political representation than others\textsuperscript{31}. Finally, the dedication of the local government toward economic development might influence the choice of residence of new immigrants.

Adapted human and social resources criteria: Finally, we agree that city is the level where immigrants experience immigration. They settle, seek for employment and develop social relations with immigrants from their community, other immigrants and natives. In the logic of integration and exclusion, I assume that public institutions have a role to play. Therefore, the level of effort can probably be measured with the openness of institutions toward migrants. I assume that a municipality “highly involved” in integration of its immigrant residents will certainly address their problem through skilled municipal staff, knowing the language of represented groups and trained to multicultural skills.

Here is a table briefing the four sets of variables:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Geographical settings criteria</th>
<th>Historical trajectories and ideology criteria</th>
<th>Demographic and economy criteria</th>
<th>Adapted human and social resources criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highly involved</strong></td>
<td>Large population, biggest city in the district, high budget, Presence of ministries’ branches</td>
<td>Was always a destination chosen by immigrants Mixed city Political program includes immigrant absorption</td>
<td>High share of immigrants Western immigrants Entrepreneurial municipality</td>
<td>Independent department for absorption in the municipality Numerous staff Comprehensive services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Laissez-faire</strong></td>
<td>Smaller town No availability of national services</td>
<td>Immigrants were forced to settle there High share of welfare in the budget</td>
<td>Low share of immigrants or immigrants with low socio-economic level High share of transfers from national level</td>
<td>Absorption is a sub-department Only one coordinator Services limited to first months after immigration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{30} The human capital corresponds to one’s education, labor experience and networks (Mesch, 2002 and Lewin-Epstein, Semyonov, Kogan and Wanner 2003).

\textsuperscript{31} Higher political representation of the FSU immigrants (Mesch, 2002).
In this framework, I selected four cities: two which I consider “highly involved” and two characterized by a “laissez-faire” policy.

**Acre.** Acre is located in the Northern District, north of Haifa city. It has a population of 46,300 inhabitants, 18% of them being immigrants who arrived in Israel after the 1990s. Most immigrants come from the Former Soviet Union (FSU). The municipality’s mayor, Mr. Shimon Lancry, belongs to the political party “Heart to the immigrants”. Since its first election in 2004, he significantly increased the activity of the municipality toward immigrant absorption. An independent department constituted of four staff members exists in the municipality. Acre is a mixed city: Part of its population is Arab-Israeli. Our hypothesis is that ideology and politics greatly influenced Acre’s recent engagement in immigrant absorption as well as its new positioning as a city for immigrants.

**Arad.** Arad is located in the Southern District, south of Beer Sheba city. Arad was established as a development town in the fifties and its role has been to absorb new immigrants – mainly from North Africa and Middle East countries. 38% of its 23,400 inhabitants are immigrants who arrived in Israel after the 1990s. Represented groups are FSU immigrants as well as Ethiopian immigrants. Mrs. Tali Ploskov, an immigrant who arrived from the FSU in 1991, is the mayor of the city. Five staff members work at the department for Aliyah and absorption of the municipality. We argue that the historical context as well as the status of the leader – herself an immigrant – might greatly influence immigration policymaking in the city.

**Kiryat Shmona.** Kiryat Shmona is located in the Northern District, in the extreme north of the Galilee. Kiryat Shmona was established as a development town in the fifties and its role has been to absorb new immigrants – mainly from North Africa and Middle East countries. 23,100 persons reside in Kiryat Shmona, 16% of them are immigrants who arrived in Israel after the 1990s. Represented group is mainly FSU immigrants. The mayor of the city, Mr. Nissim Malka, does not emphasize immigration in its political program. Therefore, the vice-mayor – himself a FSU immigrant – took over this issue and holds the Aliyah and absorption portfolio of the municipality. He coordinates one municipal staff. This “laissez-faire” attitude might be the result of a negative attitude toward new immigration: Kiryat Shmona has traditionally welcomed Sephardic immigrants of low socio-economic level and might therefore consider immigrants as a welfare charge rather than a lever for economic development.

**Kiryat Gat.** Kiryat Gat is located in the Southern District, north of the Negev desert. It was established in the 1950s as a development town by North African Jews. 47,400 persons reside in Kiryat Gat, 27% being new immigrants, mainly from the former USSR. The municipality is led by Mr. Aviram Dahari. Despite the large number of immigrants, Aliyah coordinators are under the social affairs department. Kiryat Gat has been ranked as a low economic status city by the National Bureau of Statistics. It receives high transfer from the central government (more than a third of its budget) and dedicates a large share of its budget to welfare. Kiryat Gat was also selected for its ‘laissez-faire’ attitude toward new immigrants.
5.2. Setting

5.2.1. Period studied

We have seen that the historical and institutional legacy play a major role in differentiating policies. Therefore, it seems fundamental to understand the cities’ dynamic over the years – since the establishment of the State to now.

However, in order to tackle the aspects of ‘operationalisation’ and ‘depolitisation’ of policies, the analysis will focus on current politics.

5.2.2. The actors

Three sets of actors will be interrogated: first, the municipal leadership – the mayor and its councillors -; second municipal agents – the directors which first operationalise the policies, but also the municipal agents providing services to immigrants and being in direct contact with them; and other stakeholders which potentially influence policies like the high-level officers in other government branches, directors of non-profit organizations and community representatives.

5.3. Research methods

As human agency is central to my approach, I choose to privilege close encounters, notably interviews with leaders and focus groups with agents. Additionally, I hope to conduct observations during municipal council meetings on one hand; and at the counter on this other hand. Finally, to understand the dynamics of policymaking over time, I will engage in the narrative analysis of strategic plans, Department of Aliyah and absorption annual agenda and activity reports, as well as the municipal Website and newsletter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Target population</th>
<th>Raised questions</th>
<th>Data to be collected</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Close encounters with municipal leaders</td>
<td>Mayors</td>
<td>How do local politicians perceive their role in the integration of new Olim? Who, in their opinion, must be 'integrated', and therefore, who does not belong? What are the stakes when talking about integration in local politics? What kind of strategies does the leadership follow?</td>
<td>Personal immigration history; professional experiences (notably if there are experiences in integration programs); political affiliation and beliefs; career development and future stakes</td>
<td>In-depth interviews following models of life stories/biographies. Narrative analysis and discourse analysis (to understand perception of dominant groups, members of dominant groups in the making, non-members)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close encounters with technicians</td>
<td>Director of the absorption department of the</td>
<td>How do agents perceive the role of the municipality in the integration of new Olim? Who, in their opinion, must be</td>
<td>Personal immigration history; professional experiences and current responsibilities</td>
<td>3 to 4 workshops (which play the role of focus groups) organized on different thematic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>municipality</td>
<td>Agents</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>'integrated', and therefore, who does not belong? How do they translate/depolitis a local policy into a program which can be operated? What is the bias introduced at the moment when a policy becomes a program?</td>
<td>and tasks; representation of the others, beliefs; career development and future stakes</td>
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<tr>
<td>together with the municipality. Themes can include: the beneficiaries of integration programs; the operation of a policy; mapping of actors in integration policy and potential of cooperation.</td>
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</table>

**Observations in council meetings**

- Is immigration a priority/a strategic issue in the municipal agenda? How does the council perceive its role in integration policy? What are the debates/negotiations around integration policies? Is the city entrepreneurial? Does it look at immigrants as potential leverage for economic development?
- Frequency of debates around integration issues; type of debates; councillors and third parties involved in the debate; mention of immigrants in debates related to economic development, welfare, culture, planning and education
- Attendance in official council meetings
- Analysis of the debates around integration policies, of the chronology of the meeting, of the present stakeholders and their involvement in the meeting

**Observations at the counter (public reception)**

- How do agents perceive the role of the municipality in the integration of new Olim? Who, in their opinion, must be 'integrated', and therefore, who does not belong? How do they translate/depolitis a local policy into a program which can be operated? What is the bias introduced at the moment when a policy becomes a program?
- Type of information and services requested/given;
  Difference of services given depending on status/ethnicity of new immigrants;
  cooperation with other stakeholders.
- Observations at the counter for a week in every municipality (potentially at the end of the workshops, when trust will be gained with agents)
  Behavioural analysis;
  analysis of content of questions vs. given answers

**Narrative analysis of strategic plans; Department of Aliyah and absorption annual agenda and activity reports;**

- What is the place of immigrants' integration on the agenda? How does this place change since the new government was elected?
  Does the municipality “market” itself as a place for immigrants?
  Are policies implemented into actual programs (with a budget allocated)? Does the
- Frequency and type of policies/strategies/programs announced which are related to integration issue;
  mention of immigrants in programs related to economic development, welfare,
- Narrative analysis of last 4 strategic plans (usually prepared every five years), of current mayor mandate’s annual plans, of current mayor mandate’s annual agenda and activity reports (for integration department),
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipal Website and newsletter</th>
<th>municipality receive external funding for integration programs?</th>
<th>culture, planning and education; discrepancy between policies and actual activities</th>
<th>of current Website and current mayor mandate’s municipal newsletters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Close encounters with representatives of other stakeholders</td>
<td>Representatives from the Ministry of Immigration and Absorption local branch, from the Ministry of Economy local branch, from MATI, from ethnic organizations, from ethnic businesses</td>
<td>How do local politicians perceive their role in the integration of new Olim? How do they perceive the role of the municipality and potential cooperation? Who, in their opinion, must be ‘integrated’, and therefore, who does not belong? What are the stakes when talking about integration in local politics? What kind of strategies do they follow?</td>
<td>Personal immigration history; professional experiences; current programs led by their organization; political affiliation and beliefs; career development and future stakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In-depth interviews following models of life stories/biographies. Narrative analysis and discourse analysis (to understand perception of dominant groups, members of dominant groups in the making, non-members)</td>
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To conclude, since the establishment of the State, Israel has considered immigration as a pillar of nation-building. Efforts toward immigration and toward integration of new Olim have been intense, and mostly led by the State. The political rupture initiated at the end of 1970s had two consequences on immigration policies: The State stopped providing housing for immigrants in designated areas as well as job opportunities; a de facto decentralization took place giving local governments new responsibilities. In this context, immigration policies and policymaking – while mostly being the sovereignty of the national State – might have led local governments to assume a new role. In order to evaluate this role, I have selected four different peripheral cities which present different aspects of the variables that I set: Acre and Kiryat Shmona in the North District; and Arad and Kiryat Gat in the South District. My first step was to select Israeli cities which can be my field for research. It is obviously very preliminary, and the possibility of cooperating with the local authorities will be soon explored. That said I would like to address the future challenges of this research project: first, the initial mapping is clearly insufficient to understand local policies for economic integration of immigrants. Understanding the role of the municipality, the municipal leadership and the municipal staff will be realized through close encounters. Their mental representations, perceptions and strategies should be central to my investigation. In parallel, I believe that the municipality is not the only actor in this arena: the Ministry of Immigration and Absorption, as well as the Jewish Agency are certainly important stakeholders, but also ethnic-based organizations, employment and entrepreneurship services, and other NGOs.
6. Bibliographical sources


