

IMISCOE Research Initiative (RI): Refugees in European Localities: Reception, Perceptions and Policies

Research Workshop Chemnitz, 16.03.-18.03.2015

INVITATION AND CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

Since 2011, the refugee flows to Europe have greatly increased, putting European migration politics under pressure. There are steady and even growing refugee movements from Africa across the Mediterranean Sea and there is considerable displacement of people fleeing civil war and internal conflicts in the near East, especially from Syria. In particular, the arrival of refugees by sea on the Italian island of Lampedusa generated considerable media attention, dismay and, accordingly, political pressure on the European Commission and on individual member states like Italy, but also those confronted with refugees who travelled onward.

So far there exist only few research results that focus on the local consequences of growing refugee numbers. Municipal authorities in the different EU member states receive growing contingents of refugees which they have to accommodate. Furthermore, they have to deal with refugees who remain without having gained refugee status and are therefore not eligible for social support. This creates pressure on local administrations, particularly as the parallel process of decentralization of refugee housing and improvements of their reception situation is called into question. On the other hand, there are growing concerns in parts of the local population caused by the visible presence of refugees in their local environment. Not least, these developments are a result of a common discursive strategy to divide migrants into desirable and deserving versus undesirable and undeserving refugees.

While especially the Mediterranean countries receive media and scientific attention, little is known about the individual countries' strategies how to cope with the increased influx of refugees on the different regional levels. So far there is no systematic observation and analysis of the recording contexts, policies and the public's perception of these processes throughout Europe.

In order to bring light into the situation of refugee reception and integration on the local level as well as on the local response to rejected asylum seekers, we initiated a research initiative under the scientific roof of IMISCOE research network, which already had its initial meeting in August 2014. The goal of our initiative is to reveal the commonalities and differences of reception processes throughout countries and regions of the European Union. We are aiming to provide a systematic and comparative research on the process of arrival on the local level, including management strategies of the local administration, the development of public discourses and on reflections of the reception situation from the migrants' perspective.

With this call we invite researchers with experience or initial interest in the topic of refugee reception to participate in our second meeting of the research initiative, which takes place at the Chemnitz University of Technology from March 16th through March 18th 2015. The meeting will be held as a workshop with the intention to refine the RI's research questions and hypotheses, to create a study design for carrying out locality studies in different European countries, and – last but not least – to strengthen the social network among fellow researchers.

We especially invite young researchers who are willing to undertake a case study as part of their Master or PhD thesis within the proposed study design. We can offer co-funding of travel expenses for a limited number of participants. If you are interested to participate in this research initiative, please send a short exposé of your research idea, together with a short biographical note, until January 31st to birgit.glorius@phil.tu-chemnitz.de. Please also indicate if you are applying for supplementary funding of your travel costs.

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