

Hellenic Observatory Research Programme

Immigrant & Refugee Segregation Dynamics (InSert)

Policy Brief

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THE LONDON SCHOOL
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1. Introduction

The current policy brief aims to provide an overview of the issue of spatial segregation of immigrants/refugees with specific reference to the Greek experience. First it discusses the causes and dynamics of spatial segregation of immigrants and highlights some basic methodological issues regarding the analysis of the phenomenon. Secondly, it focusses on the refugee case to briefly outline, and offer a preliminary evaluation of, the policies adopted by the Greek state in order to facilitate their reception and accommodation.

2. Spatial segregation of immigrants

According to the International Organisation of Migration (IOM, 2004), international immigration is a process by which non-nationals move into a country for the purpose of settlement. Motivations or reasons to migrate are both push factors, such as home poverty, unemployment, wars, environmental conditions, political uncertainty, diseases etc., and pull factors, such as better employment and education opportunities, family reunion, etc.

International immigration has grown considerably over time. It is estimated that today about 3.4% of people around the globe are migrants (United Nations, 2017). This phenomenon has attracted increasing attention in the literature giving rise to a number of studies examining the social, economic and spatial implications of immigration. Immigrant spatial settlement patterns have been discussed in the literature under the theme of spatial or residential or ethnic 'segregation', defined as the unequal distribution of migrant groups across space (Musterd, 2005). This is because segregation is usually associated with prejudice, discrimination and racism, especially in an ethno-cultural context. Moreover, spatial segregation seems to have important implications for immigrants' quality of living, employment and education opportunities, access to services and amenities, exposure to crime etc. (Peterson & Krivo, 1993).

Causes and dynamics of spatial segregation

Two major streams of explanation have been put forward regarding the various patterns of spatial segregation of immigrants: socio-cultural and economic (Van Kempen & Ozuekren, 1998). Socio-cultural explanations argue that immigrants tend to locate close to each other in order to take advantage of their social networks and to retain elements of their culture such as language and religion (Boal, 1976). Economic explanations draw attention to the functioning of both the labour and the housing markets, asserting that immigrants tend to concentrate in the least expensive or even deprived areas (Arbaci, 2007) due to income and information limitations (Bartel, 1989). These arise because immigrants are usually low-skilled, low-paid, unemployment-prone workers, and because they face both restricted access to housing and other information regarding the host institutional setting (Yinger, 1986; Clark, 2002).

Three main models were put forward in analysing the dynamics of immigrants' spatial settlement, i.e. the spatial assimilation, the spatial stratification and the residential preference model (Freeman, 2000). The spatial assimilation model favours the time-progressive dispersal of initially spatial-concentrated immigrant groups. Initially, immigrants cluster close to their co-ethnics in order to take advantage of the social and kinship networks, that provide social support and information as well as better employment opportunities (Cutler et al., 1999). However, the gradual acquisition of

the language, values, and manners of the host society (a process called 'acculturation'), achieved through prolonged contact with natives and through mass institutions such as schools and the media, lead to the spatial assimilation and dispersal of the immigrants (Massey, 1985; Van Kempen & Ozuekren, 1998; Charles, 2003).

The spatial assimilation model adequately describes the settlement dynamics for many immigrant groups, e.g. the non-English speaking populations in Sydney and Melbourne in Australia (Hugo, 1996). However, it encounters problems in explaining spatial patterns for other minorities, such as the Turks in Germany (Ehrkamp, 2005), or the African-Americans and Puerto Ricans in the USA (Freeman, 2000). This has led to the development of the place stratification model, that considers urban space as a hierarchy of places ordered in terms of desirability and the quality of life they provide (Logan, 1978). Natives occupy the most desirable places, keeping immigrants, and minorities in general, at a distance. Immigrants are attached to a low social status and remain segregated even if they are financially able to reside in areas occupied by natives (Alba & Logan, 1993). The place hierarchy is maintained through institutional mechanisms (red-lining, exclusionary zoning, etc.) and/or discriminatory acts of the host society that can be explicit or implicit (Cutler et al., 1999).

While the place stratification model envisages that spatial segregation is being imposed on immigrants (by other groups), the residential preference model (sometimes termed as cultural preferences or resurgent ethnicity model) asserts that this is in fact a decision of the immigrants themselves (Clark, 2002; Logan et al., 2002). That is, immigrants prefer to reside with their co-ethnics and remain spatially segregated, even when they have the financial means or the social status enabling them to move elsewhere. There are many benefits from such a spatial behaviour. To newcomers, the community's social network would provide not only emotional, social and cultural support, but also other vital resources, such as housing and valuable information on the host institutional framework and the labour market (Hagan, 1998). To other members, the community represents the stronghold of their own cultural identity in a sense that it constitutes a specific ethnic local public good. It enables them to sustain aspects of their pre-migration cultural practices (e.g. religion, language, etc.) while also facilitating their assimilation into the wider society.

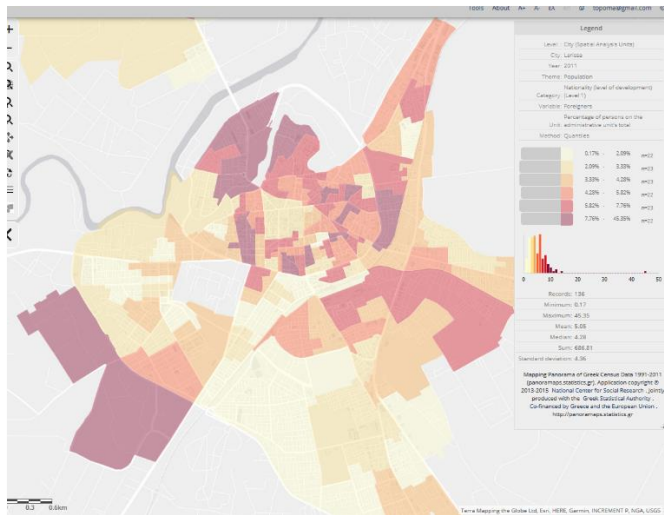
Measuring spatial segregation

Measuring segregation can be quite challenging given that there are many methodologies and indices developed over the years. Evaluating the existing methods of their time, Duncan and Duncan (1955) established the use of the Dissimilarity Index. More recent studies, such as Reardon & O'Sullivan (2004), Wong (2005), Feitosa et al. (2007), and Arvanitidis & Pasatas (2012), have criticised these essentially a-spatial indices, putting forward some truly spatial measures for the assessment of spatial segregation. Yet, Yao et al. (2018) argue that *"while the broad concept of segregation may be intuitive, measurement is [still] challenging because of the complexity of varied dimensions and spatial arrangements"*.

Gathering accurate location data for the needs of this project has been difficult mainly due to individual data privacy issues. On these grounds the research team acquired access to the following data regarding the case study cities: (1) immigrant location data at the census tract level (Figure 1) and (2) schooling immigrant and refugee data, whereas it is in the process of getting refugees' location data that are available from the UNHCR and the relevant NGO's. Analysis will proceed in three levels. First, there will be some exploratory analysis; the acquired data will be mapped and simple geographical analysis will be conducted, such as Mean Center & Standard Deviation Ellipse

Analysis. Next, some conventional segregation measures will be calculated (such as Dissimilarity Index D, Isolation Index I, and Exposure Index P) for the wider spatial units of the cases under study. Finally, segregation will be assessed using advanced spatial techniques, such as Spatial Autocorrelation (Global Moran's I), High/Low Clustering (Getis-Ord General G), Hot-Spot analysis and SKATER (Spatial "K"luster Analysis by Tree Edge Removal) algorithms.

Figure 1: Spatial Analysis Unit for the city of Larissa



3. Refugee accommodation policies

- Studies indicate that immigrants tend to cluster close to each other in order to take advantage of the social and information networks.
- Immigrant's acculturation may lead to spatial dispersion; however this depends on the institutional mechanisms and the xenophobic attitudes of the host society.
- In Greece, the regulatory framework for receiving and accommodating asylum seekers changed in response to the large refugee inflow.
- Greece set up two main housing structures to accommodate asylum seekers: first hotspots and camps and second social apartments and shelters.
- The dominant form of housing is hotspots and camps.
- The social apartments and shelters accommodate all categories of asylum seekers but with priority on families, children and vulnerable individuals.
- There is a new law regulating refugee education in the country.

Since 2012 Greece has received a substantial influx of refugees coming mainly from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, as a result of the ongoing political instability and war in those areas. These inflows, counting more than one million people, peaked in 2015 and slowed down in 2016, mainly due to the EU-Turkey Agreement. At the same time, tight border controls and other acts have substantially reduced uncontrolled movements, leaving sixty-five thousand refugees "trapped" in Greece for an indefinite period (Kotzamanis & Karkouli, 2016). Asylum Service (2019) statistics indicate that from 2013 to 2019 there were 215,183 applications for asylum in Greece.

Asylum and accommodation policies

In response to the large refugee inflow, both the EU and Greece tightened the relevant regulations and developed a range of policies for their reception and accommodation. The new asylum law of 2016 (Law 4375/2016 on the Organization and Operation of the Asylum Service), regulated the asylum seekers procedure and the refugee spatial allocation and accommodation framework. Those who arrived in Greece before the 20th March 2016 were transferred from the islands to mainland accommodation facilities (under the international protection procedure), while those who arrive after the enactment of the Law remain in the islands and follow another, fast-track procedure that regulates their residence in the country (Skleparis, 2018).

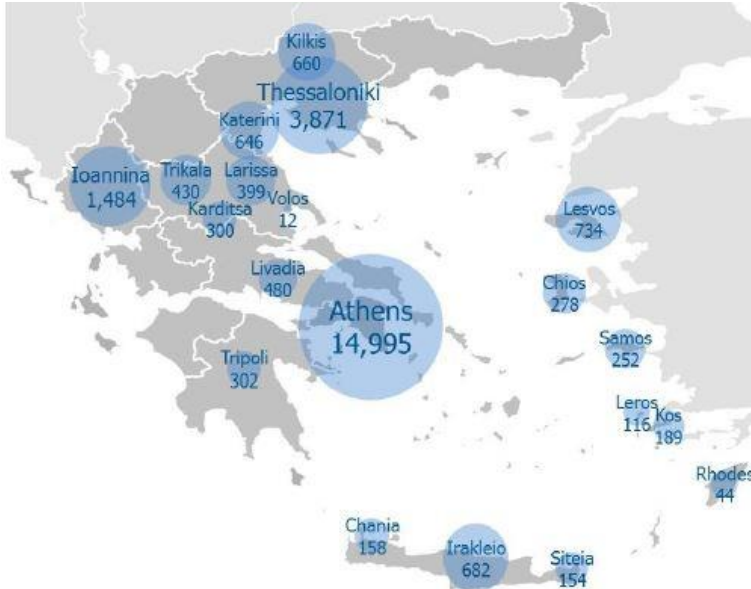
Overall the Greek state set up two housing structures in order to accommodate asylum seekers. The first one is accommodation in camps and hot-spots and the second one in social apartments (Map 1). The latter has been provided under the UNHCR Accommodation Scheme, that is part of the ESTIA programme (Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation) of the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. Currently the programme is being implemented by 10 local authorities and 13 national and international NGOs, providing accommodation to 22,803 people, 6,314 of whom are recognized refugees and 48% are children (UNHCR, 2019). These accommodation facilities (26,186 units in 4,457 apartments and 19 buildings) are located in 14 cities in mainland Greece and in 6 islands (Map 2).

Map 1: Refugee accommodation facilities in Greece



Source: UNHCR-HQ Geneva (as of 11 June 2018)

Map 2: The ESTIA accommodation units in Greece



Source: UNHCR-Greece (February 2019)

The ESTIA programme supported mainly refugee families, children and vulnerable individuals, e.g. ‘women-at-risk’¹. Thus, out of the 189,851 asylum application between 2015 and 2018 (Asylum Service, 2019), only 57,145 were hosted in their social apartments (UNHCR, 2019). The majority of refugees got accommodation in hot-spots, camps and other designated facilities reserved and run by the state (e.g. warehouses, tourist facilities, ex-industrial buildings etc., see Map 1). Most of them are located away from urban centres (and notably, in proximity to main highways) and confront certain operational problems (Kreichauf, 2018). These problems not only aggravate the social integration of asylum seekers but also have negative implications for the ESTIA programme and the implementing agencies (Kourachanis, 2018).

Refugee education policies

The concentration of school-age refugee children in accommodation facilities gave rise to concerns regarding their education. This is because, according to the Greek legislation, all children regardless of their legal status have a right to education. As such, a new law (Law 4415/2016) enacted in 2016 to regulate the intercultural and refugee education in the country, aiming to build relationships between different cultural groups and to eliminate inequalities and social exclusion. Special preparatory reception classes were established either within the camps or in existing public-school facilities located close to them (assigned by the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the local authorities and the local Directorates of Education), in order refugee children between 6 to 15 years old to acquire basic education. Children from 4 to 5 years old are eligible to preschool facilities, supported by the UNHCR and NGOs, located within the accommodation areas. It is estimated that since April 2017 2,643 children have enrolled in such classes in 111 Reception Facilities for Refugee Education across mainland Greece (Ministry of Education, 2017). The majority of these classes take place in evenings so that refugee children are not mixed with native students. On these grounds they are not only *de facto* segregated at the intra-urban level, but the situation is expected to remain

¹ UNHCR considers a woman at risk or a girl to be at risk, if she has protection problems particular to her gender and lacks effective protection normally provided by male family member Ts. Women-at-risk cases may be single heads of households, unaccompanied, or accompanied by other family members.

unchanged due to the spatial segregation of refugee accommodation and the temporary character of their residence in the country.

4. Next steps

Over the next time period our research team will concentrate on the acquisition and analysis of data, according to the outlined methodology. In particular we are seeking to get access to data on the location of refugees that are available from the UNHCR (ESTIA programme) and the relevant NGOs. In addition, we will conduct qualitative, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with key actors (local authorities, NGO's, RAS, existing immigrants) in the cities under study.

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