Cities and migration: comprehensive study of cities welcoming migrants and refugees

Ciudades y la migración: estudio integral de las ciudades que acogen a migrantes y refugiados

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Abstract

In today's globalized world of international mobility, migration is a major contributor to urbanization. Cities play a crucial role in welcoming migrants and refugees and in their integration with local societies. Cities are spaces for refugee and immigrant reception, rights protection, and inclusion in local communities. Migration represents significant challenges for city governance, social cohesion, and realisation of human rights for all. This paper is based on describes UNESCO-ECCAR-GMPA-Marianna V. Vardinoyannis Foundation ongoing research project on 'Cities Welcoming Refugees and Migrants' launched in May 2016. The 6-year research project analysed contemporary experiences, policies, and practice of cities with a particular focus on Europe. This paper discusses the research project, its methodology, key types of data, documents and literature reviewed, and key findings. This paper discusses the trilogy of research questions: how to obtain knowledge and assessment of place, policy, and practice of cities welcoming migrants and refugees; whether there are common approaches and policies referencing values and rights; and do common approaches, policy, and practice represent a coherent values-based framework across multiple cities in Europe. The study of city experiences shows a largely common welcoming city agenda regarding the reception and integration of refugees and migrants. The research findings highlight that deliberate values and rights-based approach is the foundation of a welcoming city.

Keywords: urbanisation, welcoming cities, local authorities, human rights, inclusion, integration, non-discrimination, research methodology.

Resumen

En el mundo globalizado actual de movilidad internacional, la migración es un factor importante que contribuye a la urbanización. Las ciudades juegan un papel crucial en la acogida de migrantes y refugiados y en su integración con las sociedades locales. Las ciudades son espacios para la recepción de refugiados e inmigrantes, la protección de los derechos y la inclusión en las comunidades locales. La migración representa desafíos importantes para la gobernanza de las ciudades, la cohesión social y la realización de los derechos humanos para todos. Este documento se basa y describe el proyecto de investigación en curso de la UNESCO-ECCAR-GMPA-Marianna V. Vardinoyannis Foundation sobre 'Ciudades que acogen a refugiados y migrantes' lanzado en mayo de 2016. El proyecto de investigación de 6 años analizó experiencias, políticas y prácticas contemporáneas de las ciudades. con un enfoque particular en Europa. Este documento analiza el proyecto de investigación, su metodología, los tipos clave de datos, los documentos y la literatura revisada, y los hallazgos clave. Este documento evalúa la trilogía de preguntas de investigación: cómo obtener conocimiento y evaluación del lugar, la política y la práctica de las ciudades que acogen a migrantes y refugiados; si existen enfoques y políticas comunes que hagan referencia a valores y derechos; y los enfoques, las políticas y las prácticas comunes representan un marco coherente basado en valores en varias ciudades de Europa. El estudio de las experiencias de la ciudad muestra una agenda de ciudad de acogida en gran parte común con respecto a la recepción e integración de refugiados y migrantes. Los resultados de la investigación destacan que los valores deliberados y el enfoque basado en los derechos son la base de una ciudad acogedora.

Palabras clave: urbanización, ciudades acogedoras, autoridades locales, derechos humanos, inclusión, integración, no discriminación, metodología de investigación.

Introduction

Cities everywhere have long benefited from and faced challenges of human mobility. Cities emerge from, and develop through, processes of migration and urbanisation. Newcomers – whether from rural areas or other cities within and outside of national borders – contribute to increasing the diversity and complexity of cities.

Cities have emerged on the radar of international development partly due to demographic growth, impacts of climate change, increased human exposure to natural hazards and other urban risks (UN-Habitat, 2020b, p.3). The role of local authorities and urban governments in discourse, policy and practice on migration, migrant and refugee inclusion and integration, human rights protection, and on development has significantly increased over the last decade, both in Europe (influenced by 2014-16 spike in refugee arrivals) and worldwide (especially in cities located in countries of immigration, such as USA, Canada, Australia, and others).

As evoked in the New Urban Agenda, "populations, economic activities, social and cultural interactions, as well as environmental and humanitarian impacts, are increasingly concentrated in cities, and this poses massive sustainability challenges in terms of housing, infrastructure, basic services, food security, health, education, decent jobs, safety and natural resources, among others" (United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, 2016, p.3). Migration represents significant challenges for city governance, social cohesion, realization of human rights for all, and for ensuring vibrant, productive cities today and tomorrow. These challenges include addressing the risks and vulnerabilities that migration entails in general and specifically for human rights protection across the whole of city governance and welfare of all denizens.

Migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons are addressed throughout the New Urban Agenda adopted at the Habitat III conference held in Quito, Ecuador, in 2016. The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) explicitly recognizes the positive contribution of migrants to sustainable development, as well as features migration, migrant, and refugee concerns. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (2018) and the Global Compact on Refugees (2018) also affirm the crucial role of local authorities as key actors in migration governance and refugee response.

While a growing number of academic studies, policy reports and other publications feature the challenges migration brings for urban governance (see Literature Review section below), until recently, there was little policy guidance and even less practical guidance and experiences collected and published.

This paper presents the result of six years of research, data collection and analysis, literature review, and studies of city policies and practices in Europe and worldwide done by the collaborative project *Cities Welcoming Refugees and Migrants,* among UNESCO, ECCAR (European Coalition of Cities against Racism), and GMPA (Global Migration Policy Associates), realised with the cooperative support of the *Marianna V. Vardinoyannis Foundation,* launched in May 2016. This paper draws on and presents the key points and findings included in the *Handbook on Cities Welcoming Migrants and Refugees: Rights, Inclusion, Integration, Sustainability' (Taran and Kadysheva,* forthcoming 2022). The Handbook, in turn, builds on previous research and analysis published as '*Cities Welcoming Refugees and Migrants: Enhancing effective urban governance in an age of migration' (*Taran, Neves de Lima and Kadysheva, 2016), and more recent analysis and elaborations of numerous topics.

The focus of the research was on Europe as a specific region with certain commonalities, including geographic delineation and significantly common development. The researchers also studied numerous publications, reports, research papers, and policy documents on cities elsewhere in the world, as well as global policy agendas and international city conference documents.

The research allowed to articulate a framework for action to guide development and implementation of city governance, including policy, institutional and programmatic responses on migration, as an agenda deriving directly from contemporary city policy and practice.

The study addresses the following key issues that make up an interlinked trilogy of research questions:

1. How to obtain knowledge and assessment of the evolving place, policy, and practice of cities welcoming migrants and refugees?
2. Core question: Are there consistent common approaches and policies referencing values and rights, versus discourse and analysis that is utilitarian city self-interest in economic growth and social cohesion?
3. Do the common approaches, experiences, policy, and practice of cities represent a coherent values-based framework across multiple cities and to what extent cities as a whole in Europe?

State of Art and Key Definitions

Definitions of key terms and concepts

Cities: In the absence of an internationally agreed normative definition, this paper considers cities as established urbanized concentrations of population in specific territorial space with an operational governance system, administrative apparatus, economic activity, and social organization. As the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) notes, "despite intense global discussions around urbanisation, a global definition of a 'city', 'urban area' and 'rural area' has been lacking, and thereby, limiting meaningful international comparisons (OECD/European Commission, 2020, p.3). This report recognizes the relevance of the *welcoming cities* notion and practice to small size cities of several thousand inhabitants as well as cities of larger populations.

Right to city – "the right of all inhabitants present and future, to occupy, use and produce just, inclusive and sustainable cities, defined as a common good essential to the quality of life. The right to the city further implies responsibilities on governments and people to claim, defend, and promote this right" (United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, p.26). The *right to the city* includes several elements and implications, such as right to inclusion, to services, and to participation.

Welcoming cities are those that recognize that all refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, immigrants, displaced people and other newcomers to the city are rights-holders, subject to non-discrimination, equality of treatment and opportunity, and provision of services regardless of identity, origin, nationality, legal status or any other grounds of discrimination. Welcoming cities facilitate engagement of migrants and refugees with local communities to provide support and orientation to newcomers, and enable settlement, inclusion, and integration.

Welcoming culture – explicit public commitment to the reception and integration of and with newcomers, particularly immigrants, migrants, and refugees in terms of equality, participation and justice for the entire population.

Whole of city approach – refers to participatory involvement of and cooperation among all concerned institutions, departments and agencies of the city government, elected officials, the city legislative body or council, and concerned civil society and community groups including representative im/migrant and refugee community organisations and members of the population at large.

Whole of society approach – involvement by and cooperation among community groups, unions, civil society organizations, specialized NGOs, migrant and refugee associations, and business/private sector and employer organisations as well as volunteers and other concerned individuals.

The place of cities in a globalized world of international mobility

"The city, one of the world's biggest phenomenon of the 21st century, has evolved greatly over the centuries, particularly in terms of its size, form, structure and composition, while largely maintaining its importance in local and regional development" (UN-Habitat 2020a, p.2). The data shows that the global population living in urban areas has increased from 29.6% in 1950 (UN DESA, 2014) to 56.2 % today; long-term prospects continue to predict that the world will further urbanize over the next decade, to 60.4% by 2030 (UN-Habitat, 2020b, p. xviii). Cities have become a driving force for addressing sustainable economic growth, development, and prosperity. They inspire innovation, promote consumption and investment in both developed and developing countries (UN-Habitat, 2016).

The research and literature review reaffirmed that cities worldwide have developed through processes of migration and urbanization. In today's globalized world, migration and urbanization are interconnected and interrelated processes. "Migration has been a major contributor to urbanization, whether rural-to-urban movement within countries or the clustering of international migrants in global cities. International migration accounts for about one-third of urban growth in developed countries and is increasingly transforming urban areas into heterogenous, multi-ethnic, multicultural, and multilingual spaces" (UN-Habitat, 2020b, p. xix). The current levels of urbanization around the world are the result of changes in local population due to natural increase, but ever more often, the predominant change is due to migratory flows – between and within the countries, between urban and rural areas, and between different regions of the world.

Cities are centers of access to jobs and business opportunities, innovation and entrepreneurship, education, culture, and sports. Globalization has highlighted the socioeconomic potential of cities. However, in both the developed and developing countries, economic growth has not resulted in the well-being of all; there are gaps between the rich and the poor, and 'formal' and 'informal' cities. Addressing poverty and providing access to local public services for all, including healthcare and adequate, affordable housing are of particular concern for local governance.

Over the centuries, cities have faced challenges as well as opportunities deriving from human mobility. Newcomers and immigrants contribute to increasing their diversity and complexity of cities. The populations of cities throughout Europe consists of multiple ethnicities, national origins, social classes, education and skill levels, and professional occupations. City residents live in diverse neighbourhoods but interact with each other on a daily basis. Immigrants into established and new metropolitan settings transforms urban areas demographically, culturally, socially, politically, and economically. In many cities, officials are actively encouraging immigrants, albeit primarily highly skilled migrants and business and creative elites, to join their communities. The availability of jobs and remunerative activity also attracts low-skilled migrants, both in regular and irregular situations.

Migration presents significant challenges for city governance, social cohesion, the realization of human rights for all, and for ensuring equality of treatment and non-discrimination. These challenges include addressing the areas of health, education, housing, community welfare and others across the whole of city governance and for the welfare of all denizens.

Much of migration governance is developed and implemented at the local/city level, including provision of basic services such as housing, healthcare, schooling/education, facilitation of employment and enterprise creation; and upholding of human rights, equality of treatment and social cohesion. Cities are crucial for welcoming, reception and integration of migrants and refugees. Cities are the place and space where migrants interact with the society, community, and (indirectly) with the country of residence. Nearly every city across Europe is formally engaged in addressing migration. Research and analysis of city policies, actions, and practices over several years shows that cities generally have established a values-based policy on migration to the city, with comprehensive government approaches, explicit responsibilities and coordination across administrations, and cooperation with local and regional NGOs, civil society, private enterprises and community groups as well as refugees and migrants themselves.

The International Conference on Population and Development back in 1994 recognized urbanization as integral to development. The issues of migration, refuge and internal

displacement are addressed explicitly in the New Urban Agenda, which was adopted at Habitat III in Quito in October 2016. Migrant and refugee concerns are also present throughout the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which recognizes the positive contribution of migrants to sustainable development. The Global compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular migration and the Global Compact on Refugees also affirm the active role of local authorities as key contributors to migration governance and refugee response.

Contextual data on international migration and cities in Europe

Review and extrapolation of data shows that a significant portion of growth in cities in Europe (and in some cases simply maintaining population levels) is a direct consequence of migration to cities, notably international migration. For example, over the past 60 years, the city of Vienna has experienced a very dynamic population development. Within a few decades, population numbers in the city first went from stagnant to shrinking and then started to grow rapidly. At the same time, a previously strongly ageing city was turned into a young metropolis – mostly due to international immigration (City of Vienna, 2021).

In 2020, the estimated number of *international migrants*, defined as persons residing outside their country of birth or citizenship for more than one year, reached 281 million worldwide, with female migrants accounting for 48 percent of this population (UNDESA, 2020). International migrants make up 3.6 percent of the global population, a proportion that has remained relatively stable over the last three decades (UNDESA, 2020). Nearly half of all international migrants resided in the region from which they originated. Among the major regions of the world, the largest number of international migrants in 2020 resided in the European region, with a total of 87 million. 70 percent of migrants residing in Europe were born in another European country (UNDESA, 2020).

According to European Commissions data, 2.7 million persons immigrated to the EU, while 1.2 million persons emigrated from the EU in 2019. Total net immigration to the EU was 1.5 million persons. Without migration, the European population would have shrunk by half a million in 2019, given that 4.2 million children were born, and 4.7 million people died in the EU. In 2020, according to provisional data, EU population shrunk by about 300 thousand people (from 447.3 million on 1 January 2020 to 447.0 million on 1 January 2021), due to a combination of less births, more deaths and less net migration (European Commission, 2021).

In 2020, about 2.25 million first residence permits were issued in the EU, compared to nearly 3.0 million in 2019. The decrease was due to the travel restrictions imposed as a result of COVID-19 pandemic, that had a particularly strong negative impact on education-related permits: their share decreased from 14% in 2019 to 11% in 2020. In 2020, first permits were issued for the following reasons: 40% work/employment, 28% family, 11% education, 11% asylum, 10% other (European Commission, 2021)

Foreign born populations comprise significant portions of populations across Europe: 47.3% in Luxembourg; 29.7% in Switzerland, 19.5% in Sweden; 19.3% in Austria; 18.1% in Iceland; 17.8% in Ireland; 17.2% Belgium; 16.1% Germany; 15.6% in Norway; 14.9% in Estonia; 14% in each Spain and the UK; 13.4% in the Netherlands; 12.8% in each France and Slovenia; 12.7% in Latvia; 12.5% in Greece; 10.8% in Portugal; 10.5% in Denmark; 10.4% in Italy; etc. (OECD, 2019).

Indeed, the proportions of foreign-born persons in cities in Europe are significantly higher than their share in the total populations of the countries. Many European cities are home to large populations of foreign-born individuals, notably: Brussels (46 per cent), London (38

per cent), Amsterdam (34 per cent), Stockholm (33 per cent), Milan (32.3 per cent), Madrid (20.5 per cent) and Paris (19 per cent) (World Cities Culture Forum, n.d.). Analyses of city populations that distinguish foreign-born individuals and those with at least one foreign-born parent more fully reflect the outcome of recent immigration: population counts in Vienna, for example, show that 59 per cent of residents are either foreign born or have a foreign-born parent.

In 2020, according to UNHCR estimates, there were a total of 20.7 million refugees under its mandate, plus 5.7 million Palestinians under care of the UNRWA, and 4.1 million asylum seekers, who represent together 11% of the total global migrant stock population. 73 per cent of refugees and Venezuelans displaced abroad lived in countries neighbouring their countries of origin (UNHCR, 2021).

The number of first-time asylum seekers who applied for international protection in Member States of the EU increased gradually from 122 thousand in 2008 to 250.4 thousand in 2012. The numbers spiked to 531 thousand in 2014 to over a million in 2015 and in 2016 and decreased to 620.3 thousand in 2017; 564 thousand in 2018; and 632 thousand in 2019 and then declined substantially to 416.6 thousand in 2020 (Eurostat, 2021).

In 2020, 40.7% of EU first instance asylum decisions resulted in positive outcomes, that is granting refugee or subsidiary protection status, or an authorisation to stay for humanitarian reasons, some 50.1% of which resulted in granting refugee status. In absolute terms, 106,200 persons were granted refugee status in the EU in 2020 at first instance, 50,300 were given subsidiary protection status, and 55,400 were given authorisation to stay for humanitarian reasons. Another 69,200 asylum applicants in the EU received positive final decisions based on appeal or review in 2020, of whom 21,600 were granted refugee status, 22,400 were granted subsidiary protection, and 25,300 were granted humanitarian status (Eurostat, 2021).

At the end of 2020, the EU hosted 10% of all the world's refugees (almost 2.6 million) (European Commission, 2021), some of whom were long settled, with the majority in urban locations. In comparison, Turkey alone hosted nearly 3.7 million refugees, the largest population worldwide. Colombia was second with more than 1.7 million, including Venezuelans displaced abroad. The share of refugees in the EU is only 0.6% compared to its total population (UNHCR, 2021). For comparison, at the end of 2020, the numbers of refugees as share of total population for Lebanon was 12.9%, Jordan 6.4%, Turkey 4.4%, Uganda 3.3%, Sudan 2.4%, and Germany 1.5% (European Commission, 2021) These refugee numbers are generally included in total migrant population figures that count foreign-born individuals' residents abroad for at least a year, but may not capture numbers of recently arrived refugees and asylum seekers.

Methodology

UNESCO and ECCAR established the project "Cities Welcoming Refugees and Migrants" as an open-ended collaborative research and city advisory effort in early 2016, with the support of Marianna V. Vardinoyannis Foundation. The project was carried out by a specialized multi-disciplinary international expert group GMPA, in collaboration with a specialized UN agency UNESCO and in consultation with city leaders in a leading European city network ECCAR. Core GMPA team included a researcher specializing in urban policy; a university professor-researcher on economics and socioeconomic development; and senior migration specialist with background in cities services, national governance, and international organizations.

The research: a combination of components

The methodology of the project leading to validated research findings was a mixed method using a qualitative and quantitative complex combination of:

- literature review across a variety of relevant types of materials, sources, entities, such as academic papers, city documents, European and International city networks reports, international institutions publications, normative documents including international conventions, etc. as outlined earlier in the paper;
- detailed surveying of multiple cities of different characteristics in different national-subregional contexts across Europe;
- interfacing with prior and parallel team member research on substantive city and refugee issues, in particular discrimination-integration; health; COVID-19 and migrants; and EU refugee and migration law and policy;
- engagement directly with city officials and other stakeholder practitioners in city and intercity consultations, sharing of information, participation in conferences and policy debates;
- academic schooling by a team member on urban planning and city management;
- prior team member knowledge and experience in directing a city-based refugee social services agency.

In general, the methodology and structure of the project allowed the expert team to:

1. Summarize and reiterate solid general research findings from surveys and recent follow-up with 22 cities in 11 countries across Europe.
2. Carry out comprehensive literature review, complemented by analysis of international policy papers and discussions and documents on cities and migration.
3. Identify key political, ideological, legal, social and other issues and contentions in city discourse and action articulated in responses to surveys.
4. Perform an analytical review and discussion of key issues, premises and responses identified from research and city discourse and policy as well as multi-stakeholder/constituency positions and practice.
5. Review the subsequent extensive research done over the period of 2017-2022 for the forthcoming comprehensive handbook for cities welcoming migrants and refugees.

Key stages of the research

The research was done in several sequential and interrelated stages. It started with the circulation in April 2016 of a survey questionnaire, designed by UNESCO with GMPA, to member cities of ECCAR. The questionnaire was sent to local authorities and city departments working on migrant and refugee issues. The survey sought to obtain contextual data on cities, identification of issues city governments are faced with in reception and integration of refugees and migrants, and description of city policies, practices and local initiatives. In addition, the researchers sought comparable data from other cities. The research team compiled and analysed results; prepared an extensive matrix of survey responses to identify similarities and differences in policy, practice, and actions, and wrote a survey report.

A stakeholder consultation in May 2016 at UNESCO headquarters in Paris presented a summary of survey responses, shared findings, and identified key issues, approaches, and a project plan of action. High-level ECCAR member city officials comprised nearly a third of the 70 participants.

In addition to the survey, the overall research comprised literature review and analysis of existing data by the GMPA core team, such as academic articles, research papers, policy briefs, publications by international organisations and city networks, conference presentations and outcomes, official city policy documents, statements, reports, and data/statistics on international migration and on refugees. The normative base of the research included International/UN conventions, ILO and UNESCO instruments, International Labour standards, Regional –and especially European Union– Conventions, Declarations, Directives, UN treaty body recommendations and comments, international conferences declarations, programs of action and agendas, and city charters and declarations. The section on Literature Review presents the sources used classified into key groupings.

A further round of web-search of complementary information on city websites was done, to complement, expand and develop the city survey responses. This allowed to enhance and fill in detailed profiles of each city providing substantial information, data and perspective, and to develop 2-page city briefs on 24 cities, outlining concrete city actions and policies.

During the project, the researchers drew on team background knowledge, approach and methodological inspiration and previous work and/or research experience, in such areas as city governance and urban planning, academic research on economics and mobility in Eurasian regional context, empirical discrimination testing of immigrants/immigrant origin persons in twelve cities in Europe and setting up and directing a city-supported refugee reception, resettlement and integration social service agency.

Over the course of project, team members participated in conferences on cities and on migration, in city consultations and inter-city meetings among city executives, practitioners, academic researchers focussed on cities and city institutes, sharing experiences, concerns, presenting joint activities, assessments and analyses.

The data, findings, and conclusions of the first phase of the research were written up as a 75-page book subsequently published jointly by UNESCO, ECCAR and GMPA titled '*Cities Welcoming Refugees and Migrants: Enhancing effective urban governance in an age of migration'*. The manuscript went through peer review in September 2016; comments and suggestions from 7 reviewers as well as from UNESCO team colleagues were addressed by the authors. The publication was launched at a 2-day high-level conference in Athens in November 2016. The event, the participants and the space allowed for broad peer discussion and vetting of the study and for testing the research hypotheses, findings, and conclusions among some 60 participants from across Europe, North America, and other regions, representing cities, universities, international organisations and migrant groups. The research team presented the draft structure and outline of a broad-spectrum multidisciplinary handbook for city governance practitioners. The discussion allowed the project tram to receive suggestions and inputs towards shaping the structure, content, and key issues to be elaborated in the handbook.

The research has been ongoing since 2017 up to early 2022. Over that five-year period the team collected and studied another two hundred plus documents, publications, reports, as well as relevant data, city practice examples over nearly 30 distinct thematic areas (discussed below). Further research, consultations, revisions allowed to draft and subsequently rewrite most chapters at least twice again as new material, more sophisticated analysis and more complex inter-relationships emerged.

Over the course of the project, the GMPA team interfaced the cities research with complementary research, notably an assessment of EU law and policy on protection of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants at EU borders and in member countries (Caritas Europa, 2016); a study on migration, health, and human rights (ILO, 2017); research on migration and development in Europe (Caritas Europa, 2019) including contributing to 11 national reports; and recently on COVID-19 and migrants and refugees (article 3 in this issue).

The draft of the handbook went through peer review in early 2018 with feedback, comments and suggestions received from academic and practical experts at Università Iuav di Venezia (Venice), Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI, Vienna), European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (ETC-Graz), University of Zagreb, OHCHR and several experts at UNESCO.

In October 2020 UNESCO circulated an updated short questionnaire to those cities that replied to the original survey in 2016. The follow-up questionnaire sought new examples of city action, focusing on impactful and successful activities in different policy areas. The questionnaire requested brief descriptions of several initiatives undertaken by the city and a hyperlink to webpages, as well as updates on current status of initiatives reported in 2016. Additional information was also obtained directly from city websites.

The handbook manuscript has undergone UNESCO institutional review and editing of each component. Some of its separate chapters have also been reviewed by experts in cities, ECCAR officials, and specialists in relevant international and European organisations.

The resulting handbook includes 30 chapters, each containing: key facts and data, including on COVID-19 impact; legal/normative framework, such as key legal instruments for governance of migration and protection of rights of migrants; description of key challenges; discussion of specific issues; key policy and practice responses, and actions in cities. The latter contains relevant examples of city actions, whether by city authorities themselves, or by city/local NGOs often in partnership with and the support from city administration.

The Analysis Process and Results

The questions were deliberately formulated to obtain city government views on the nature and characteristics of the challenges at the local level and to identify positive and innovative city policy approaches and recent response initiatives. The 10 questions requested information and data on refugee and migrant presence; city policies and practice frameworks regarding refugees and migrants; specific services provided; identification of practical initiatives; and actions tackling stereotypes and prejudices. The full questionnaire is provided in Figure 1. The questionnaire was circulated in English and French. With the responses, many cities included extensive documentation and links to city websites with information in the national language(s).

ECCAR leadership promoted participation in the survey and responses to the questionnaire designed by UNESCO with GMPA by key cities across a spectrum of counties in different parts of Europe. The responses reflected a diversity of city characteristics, sizes, economies, and regions. The 22 cities in 11 countries that responded to the initial survey questionnaire in 2016 were: Athens, Greece; Barcelona, Spain; Berlin, Germany; Bologna, Italy; Darmstadt, Germany; Erlangen, Germany; Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg; Geneva, Switzerland; Ghent, Belgium; Graz, Austria; Helsingborg, Sweden; Karlsruhe, Germany; Lausanne, Switzerland; Liège, Belgium; Metz, France; Malmö, Sweden; Nancy, France; Rotterdam, the Netherlands; Soest, Germany; Stockholm, Sweden; Uppsala, Sweden; and

Vienna, Austria. Relevant data on Bristol, UK and Lisbon, Portugal was also included, thus providing information on a total of 24 cities in 13 countries.

Figure 1

UNESCO -ECCAR-GMPA city survey questionnaire (2016)

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Name of the city:

Country

Population:

Context data:

1. What is the estimated number of foreign born currently living in your city? How many of them have arrived over the last two years?

2. What are the estimated numbers of refugees, asylum seekers and persons in refugee like situations present in your city?

3. Is your city a final destination or are significant numbers of arriving refugees intending to transit to other places?

   ▪ If numbers/estimates are available:
      Number staying? Number in transit?

4. What specific challenges have your city and city government identified due to refugees' and migrants' arrivals, in particular due to recent significant increases in arrivals if the case?

5. Has your city received additional resources from local, national or international sources to address challenges and needs relating to refugee arrivals? Please identify the source(s).

Policy and Practice framework:

6. Does your city have a specific policy framework and/or designated department or service addressing migrants and/or refugees? Please attach a city government/authorities policy declaration or statement(s) if existing.

7. What service areas are addressing specifically migrants and/or refugees? Health; Schooling; Housing; Nutrition; Employment/job-seeking; and Other (please specify)

8. What new initiatives has your city government taken or set up in the last year to deal with new refugee and/or immigrant arrivals?

   ▪ Please explain and/or attach documentation.

   ▪ Is addressing negative public stereotypes and prejudices against refugees an explicit goal of those initiatives?

   ▪ What examples of good practices have you experienced in your city?

9. How and in what areas is your city administration collaborating with other stakeholders (NGOs, associations, foundations etc.)? Please share specific examples.

10. Does your city have a deliberate media/public relations/public opinion strategy on welcoming/accommodating/integrating migrants and/or refugees? If so, please share relevant materials.

Source: Taran, Neves de Lima and Kadysheva (2016)

The ECCAR-UNESCO-GMPA team assessed the responses as ample and representative of the diversity of cities in much of Europe. Most replies were multiple pages of written text plus multiple documents attached. The survey responses and additional data from cities that range in population and territory sizes, experiences, and circumstances across 13 countries in Europe offered a relatively representative breadth and diversity of situations. Responding cities ranged in size from capital and large cities with populations exceeding one

million to small cities with less than 50,000 inhabitants. The majority of responses came from medium-sized cities with populations ranging from 100,000 to 300,000 inhabitants.

It is important to note that the three major challenges indicated by cities and local governments related to welcoming and integrating migrants and refugees are housing, education, and employment. In general, the survey responses allowed for comparing the obtained data to identify convergences, similarities, and differences in the actual situations as well as policy and practice responses among the variety of cities. This permitted the researchers to identify common areas of concerns, policy approaches, city government organization, and strategies on reception, inclusion, and integration. Survey responses identified numerous innovative initiatives in cities, successful practices, and examples of local partnerships. The information obtained from the surveys, complemented by extensive literature review and review of materials on city websites allowed for the preparation of 25 detailed city case-study profiles on topical areas of policy concern.

Barcelona, Esch-sur-Alzette, Ghent, Graz, Helsingborg, Karlsruhe, Lausanne, Liège, Soest, Stockholm, and Vienna provided responses to the October 2020 follow-up questionnaire. These cities provided brief descriptions of recent initiatives (most in cooperation/partnership with local partners) as well as updates on previously reported initiatives.

Selection and Analysis of the Literature Review
The total bibliography analysed combining the 2016 publication and the forthcoming handbook includes at current count nearly 400 sources. The sources were classified into the following categories (examples):

- International Conventions, Treaty Body Recommendations, World Conference Declarations, UN Declarations and Agendas, and international cities bodies declarations on international migration and protection of rights of migrants and refugees.
- Academic papers, reports and studies specifically on cities and migration *(given that the main literature review was done during the first stage of the project back in 2016, many of the key sources used were issued before that)*: Bravo (2018), Brown and Kristiansen (2009), Çağlar (2014), Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2010), Gomes da Silva, (2018), Juzwiak (2014), Juzwiak, McGregor and Siegel (2014), IOM (2015), Price (2014), Price and Chacko (2012);
- Publications and reports on international migration, migrants, and refugees: ILO (2021), OECD (2020), UNDESA (2020), UNESCO (2019), UNHCR (2021), WHO (2018), WHO (2019);
- Data sources: European Commission, Eurostat, OECD, UNDESA, UNHCR databases
- Reports, papers and publications on human rights of migrants, equality of treatment, non-discrimination and integration: Caritas Europa (2016), EMN (European Migration Network), FRA (Fundamental Rights Agency), ILO (2010), ILO (2017), ILO/IOM/OHCHR (2001), IPU/ILO/OHCHR (2015).
- City documents: policies, strategies, brochures, plans, program documents, etc.
- City networks charters, declarations, reports, briefs, strategies, plans and online materials: Cities of Migration global initiative (CERC Migration/Ryerson University), CLIP (European network of cities for local integration policies for migrants), ECCAR (European Coalition of Cities Against Racism), Eurocities, the Hague Process on Refugees and Migration, ICCAR (International Coalition of

Inclusive and Sustainable Cities), Rainbow Cities Network, UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments), etc.

• Migration and city high-level international conferences and forums outcome documents, agendas for actions, international commitments: United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development-Habitat; Global Mayoral Forum on Mobility, Migration and Development; etc.

• Specialised migration and city conference papers and presentations.

• Articles on city policies, initiatives and practices published in city, local and regional journals, online media.

The literature review provided a broad overview of the conditions, situations and issues of cities and migration across Europe and elsewhere, as well as theory of cities and urban development, right to the city and related concepts. The literature provided ample information and analytical perspective on city approaches to migration, policy frameworks and applied city practices. In particular, the literature review supported generating a comprehensive understanding of the human rights aspects of city policies and services that ensure no migrant or refugee is 'left behind'. Furthermore, the literature provided a basis to develop the research analysis and framing of the welcoming city approaches, common values, and city-wide practice inclusive of other stakeholders and migrants and refugees themselves.

Outcomes: Identified Welcoming City Values, Approaches, and Action Areas
Values and rights-based approach of the welcoming city

The research combining and interfacing literature review, surveys, and direct consultations with city officials, inputs by other experts and practitioners, and summation of concrete experience of cities across Europe and elsewhere found that there is a largely common *welcoming agenda* advocated and implemented in practice regarding the reception and integration of refugees and migrants. This agenda includes a set of approaches to address the challenges and opportunities of migration in cities and responding to the needs of newcomers while integrating the concerns of host societies.

This *welcoming agenda* is compiled from the contemporary experience of cities, derived from the responses to two surveys of twenty-two city members of ECCAR, widely reported across academic literature and indicated in the findings and recommendations of international associations and networks of cities. For its realization, this agenda depends on the commitment of local authorities in designing and implementing inclusive policies and services with support from regional and national governments, the engagement of civil society and the private sector, and meaningful participation on the part of all denizens and newcomers.

The research found that nearly all cities explicitly defined themselves as welcoming and inclusive. This was explicitly elaborated in formal city policy, usually through consultative and deliberative processes that involve the city's legislative and executive governance bodies and the mayor's office. Among the main values – that also reflect the governance principles – commonly cited by cities in terms of their engagement with refugees and migrants are the following (see Table 1).

Table 1

Main principles and values of welcoming cities

- **Inclusivity:** cities are explicitly inclusive of all denizens and newcomers in law, policy, administration, services, and practice, often with reference to non-discrimination, equality of treatment, welcoming culture and participation.
- **Integration:** distinct from inclusion, integration is referred to as a purpose or goal as well as a process and relates to the mutual incorporation and accommodation of immigrants in the city and <u>with</u> its inhabitants in community, social, economic, cultural, and political spheres, while respecting the cultural identity and heritage of each and every person.
- **Equality and services for all:** all essential services are available, accessible, affordable, adaptable and are offered with quality to all without discrimination on any basis. Equal treatment and opportunities are provided for all persons living in the city regardless of their immigration/legal status.
- **Non-discrimination:** a value expressed and understood as a universal principle in international law and usually in national and local legislation across a wide range of grounds including race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, religion, migration status and sexual orientation.
- **Rights protection and realisation:** refers to the respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights as recognized in international standards (usually reiterated in national law and local legislation), and the responsibility of city governance to uphold and provide for the fulfilment of human rights for all denizens.
- **Welcoming culture:** policy formulations in many cities make specific reference to a welcoming culture as a main underlying value.
- **Solidarity:** an integral part of the welcoming and integration processes, as stated by some city pronouncements and policy documents, usually referring to mutual support and common interests between the city and its newcomer immigrants and refugees.
- **Participation:** inclusive and active participation of all in the life of the city, particularly at the community and neighbourhood level, in social, economic, cultural, and political activities. Participation includes not only the engagement of all stakeholders in the advisory, decision-making, and implementation bodies of city governance, but also encouraging and facilitating involvement of people in community-based organisations and local and city level associations, unions, clubs, groups, etc.
- **Diversity:** expressed as a value and reality of the city with corresponding expectations of enhancing diversity, respecting the different ethno-socio-cultural identities of denizens, and facilitating the visibility of and exchange among the diverse community identities in the city.
- **Dialogue:** articulated as a value, dialogue requires openness to communicate across the city and its diversity of actors and denizens as well as deliberate measures to organize, facilitate and support mechanisms and forums for dialogue.
- **Social cohesion:** for cities, it is both a fundamental value and a core objective. A cohesive society is one which 'works towards the well-being of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalisation, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward social mobility' (OECD, 2011). As such social cohesion is both a desirable end and a means to inclusive development.
- **Development:** some cities make specific reference to development – economic, social, and cultural – as a value underlying policy on immigration/immigrants, usually with reference to terms of inclusive economic growth, sustainable cities, social development, and recognition of a migration-development nexus.

Table by author

Key areas of city concern and policy action

The research looked at specific areas of policy, administrative and practical activity, and services. At the local level, migration governance includes specific attention to the following areas. Each of these areas is discussed in corresponding chapters of the Handbook (see Table 2).

Table 2

Key areas of concern and policy action for Welcoming Cities Governance

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Keys for governance for a welcoming city:
- human rights-based approach and leaving no one behind
- articulating and realising the welcoming city narrative
- communicating inclusive cities welcoming refugees and migrants
- data collection, analysis, and application
- exercising leadership by cities
- comprehensive 'whole of city' approach
- obtaining resources and efficient budgeting
- building cooperation and partnerships
- accountability

Cross-cutting considerations:
- addressing discrimination, xenophobia, and racism
- enabling diversity, equality, inclusion, and integration
- achieving meaningful local participation of migrants and refugees

Responsive approaches, rights protection, and inclusion for specific groups
- gender dimensions, women, and girls
- migrant and refugee family concerns
- migrant and refugee children
- youth and adolescents
- migrants in irregular situations
- LGBTQI refugees and migrants

Functional-operational domains of city governance
- holistic approach to urban health
- availability and access to affordable housing
- accessible employment and decent work, (recognition of qualifications and experience)
- social security and social protection
- schooling, education, vocational training, recognition of qualifications, tertiary education and language learning
- public utilities/services, transportation, infrastructure
- public safety, emergency services, policing, law enforcement
- access to justice
- culture, sport, leisure and recreation

Table by autor

Functional-operational domains of welcoming city governance

The study allowed to identify major 'new' points coming up in handbook research and revision. Some of functional-operational domains of city governance crucial to inclusion, integration and human rights protection of migrants and refugees are presented below.

Holistic approach to urban health: Cities recognize that public health inclusive of newcomers, immigrants and refugees is among the most fundamental concerns. The COVID-19 pandemic amplified the centrality of this issue. All cities reviewed in the research had made efforts to design health prevention, care and treatment policies without discrimination, stigmatization, or inequality. Most cities have taken comprehensive and holistic approaches recognizing that it is the circumstances faced by immigrants to the city, particularly living and working conditions and other social determinants of health, rather than migration itself, that put people at risk of medical pathologies or negative health outcomes. Increased exposure to health risks and the limited ability to cope with illness that arise from these living and working conditions, expose migrants to higher health risks, as amply demonstrated by the pandemic and often inappropriate responses to it that either were discriminatory against migrants or provided little or no response to their particularly circumstances, risks and needs. Therefore, it is crucial for cities to ensure that the right to health and health-related rights are enshrined in local law, policy, and practice. City authorities need to pay deliberate attention to providing for appropriate and affordable health prevention, care and treatment services accessible by all migrants, accommodating for language barriers, and regardless of migration status.

Availability and access to affordable housing: Housing is one of the fundamental concerns indicated by city authorities in addressing migration to cities. Housing is inevitably a major issue for any city growing in population. It also constitutes a challenge for cities growing in economic activity and affluence, as expectations rise among the population for larger housing space and quality, even when urban populations may not be growing significantly. It is important therefore to ensure that immigration figures in urban planning.

Accessible employment and decent work: Employment and access to the labour market for immigrants/migrants to the city is among the key challenges recognized by cities. Unrecognized educational attainments, qualifications and/or prior work experience, language barriers, discrimination and in some cases irregularity of status were mentioned as major factors in migrant exclusion from employment, as well as from engaging in business activity and thus self- and family-supporting income. City survey responses and city discourse emphasized that these problems are transversal and hinder inclusion of migrants and refugees in the city. Cities are taking a wide range of actions to facilitate migrant and refugee employment, including local recognition of qualifications, retraining, apprenticeship programs for migrant and refugee youth, language training, widening access to technical and vocational education and training, providing incentives to local employers to hire im/migrant and refugee workers.

Social security and social protection: Ensuring migrants and refugees access to social protection raises particular challenges as social security rights are usually related to periods of employment, contributions or residency. Social protection includes support *benefits* in situations of need for medical care, sickness, unemployment, old-age, employment injury, family/children need, maternity, disability, and survivors (widow/er) benefits. Migrants – particularly those in precarious temporary or seasonal regimes – often face distinct and greater risks of exclusion from social protection. Similarly, asylum seekers and refugees with a precarious status are often excluded from even minimum guarantees of social protection. City attention to supporting income security, reducing poverty and inequality, and advancing social inclusion improves employability and productivity for migrants, for economies and for *all of the city*. A key concern is ensuring effective implementation of national social security systems and complementing and extending support at the local level to ensure provision of basic benefits as needed across the situations enumerated above.

Schooling, education, vocational training, recognition of qualifications, tertiary education and language learning: Schooling and education in general are among the fundamental challenges urban governments recognize they must address with immigration to the city, regardless of its origins. The schooling of migrant girls and boys, including unaccompanied minors, allows for their inclusion in society and the training for adults offers them the possibility to enter the labour market. Key concerns include: provision of public schooling accessible by and adapted to diverse child and youth populations; proximity of schools and appropriate class size/teacher-student ratios for all children and students in the city; rapid inclusion of all arriving migrant/immigrant/refugee children in schools including by local language learning, and providing for appropriate and adequate teaching, learning and educational content ensuring that schooling supports inclusion of and integration with children and youth migrants to the city.

Public utilities/services, transportation, infrastructure: Public utilities/services and infrastructure are basic to city physical structure and its means and ability to support its population as well as economic and other activities. They include supply, connection, and distribution of energy – namely electricity, natural gas and in some cities central steam heat distribution; water, sewage, garbage and recycling collection services; public transportation; and telephone and internet services, both fixed-line and mobile. Growth and change in population impact all aspects of city governance and administration, especially functions relating to spatial distribution and the organization of metropolitan life and activity. They necessitate planning, major cost investments, sophisticated organization and political negotiation on public utilities, transportation and infrastructure, including taking into account immigrant and refugee populations, particularly to ensure that infrastructure and utilities are available, affordable and equitable throughout the city. This requires particular attention and resource allocations in city planning and administration.

Public safety, emergency services, policing, law enforcement: Cities need to address deliberately and substantively migrant-responsive public safety, policing, emergency services, and disaster preparedness. It is especially crucial to ensure the proximity of fire, rescue, medical and other emergency services as well as policing concerning migrants and refugees equal to that of all city residents. City planning, resource allocation, preparation and training also needs to include major emergency and disaster preparedness. It is not only an issue of equipment and facilities, it is also a major concern for training of police, other emergency responders and disaster preparedness personnel to ensure that migrants are treated with respect and feel included and perceived as equal human beings in the communities in which they live. It is also a matter of building trust with public safety, police, and emergency responders.

Access to justice: Cities need to ensure access to justice, both in law and in judicial and administrative mechanisms, processes, and institutions, for migrants and refugees equal to that of all city residents. Particular attention is needed to ensuring access to justice for migrants in irregular or undocumented situations as well as for refugees and asylum seekers.

Culture, sport, leisure and recreation: Culture, sports, leisure and recreation are each vital components of community life and human activity in the city, that have important implications for inclusion, participation and integration of every individual in the city, especially for welcoming migrants and refugees. Culture is also a means for empowerment and self-expression of migrants, through which they are able to create bonds with people from their origin-based communities and 'established' communities, offer their contributions and also reshape their self-identities in new environments. It is important for local governments to also *culturally* integrate migrants within their societies and offer them tools and opportunities not

only to learn the language of the host country, but also their historical and cultural traditions. At the same time, however, it is fundamental that cities promote and valorise the important sociocultural contributions that migrants themselves bring in the country of destination. Well-established and newer migrant communities have always made significant sociocultural contributions to the countries of destination, in terms of sport, music, arts, food and many other fields. This means ensuring that museums and libraries as well as city departments and facilities addressing sports, parks and public spaces deliberate ensure inclusion of migrants, migrant led activities and spaces and events that feature migrant and refugee cultural expression, preservation of cultural identities, histories and manifestations. It also means specific attention to ensuring accessible and appropriate sports, parks, open spaces and meeting places in proximity to where migrant and refugee communities live.

Conclusions

This review demonstrates that the three research questions stated in the introduction were amply addressed and answered.

1. The six-year project and its methodology allowed the research team to explore evolving place, policy and practice of cities welcoming migrants and refugees. The combination and each component of academic-scientific research, detailed surveying of city actors, direct engagement with city officials and practitioners, along with specialized team competences and practical experience in relevant city activity provided a unique comprehensive study system permitting obtaining accurate and authoritative findings, conclusions and recommendations that have been subsequently validated by city experts, officials, academics, and practitioners.

The applied methodology and process of the project permitted to document, accurately assess and validly articulate the well-established and evolving governance frameworks, policy and practice of cities welcoming migrants and refugees. Notably, this included common expression of a values and rights-based approach shared across diverse cities in Europe in city policy and day-to-day practice on the ground in the community.

2. The research found a common deliberate, values-based, and comprehensive *"whole of city" approach* by city governments as well as multi-stakeholder engagement with partners, including migrants and refugees, broadly across the "whole of society". Within this approach, nearly all cities sought to provide:

- specific attention *across the board* to the spectrum of arrival, reception, settlement, self-sufficiency, integration and participation support actions and services;
- services for all without distinctions of any kind on any basis, whether grounds of prohibited discrimination or legal status or recognition;
- focused attention to reach groups considered at higher risk of exclusion, discrimination, isolation, etc. (e.g. women, children, youth, unaccompanied minors), while several cities also cited specific attention to protection and assistance for LGBTQI refugees and migrants; and
- deliberate mobilization across the entire city administration in liaison with regional and national government, and efforts to coordinate with other municipalities.

3. The research found that the common approaches, experiences, policy, and practice of cities represent a coherent values-based framework across multiple cities. The study of city policy and practice across Europe shows that a comprehensive and deliberate city governance approach to welcoming and including refugees and migrants is common to and prominent in

all the cities directly reviewed. While this does not necessarily establish that the same is generally true for cities throughout Europe, the literature, city discourse and participation in welcoming cities networks and initiatives by many cities across the whole of Europe certainly suggests that a welcoming cities approach is at the least widespread and manifested in some way in at least some cities in all countries of the wider Europe.

The approach in all 24 cities reviewed and mentioned in the literature regarding many other cities was explicitly based on a set of values such as inclusion, non-discrimination and equality of treatment, city services to all, and participation in the city of all the residents. These values also reflect ethical norms. Many city laws and policy documents make specific references to international human rights laws, norms, and standards. At the same time, proactive, public leadership by city mayors, leaders, officials, and executives was found to be equally important. This kind of leadership is usually demonstrated through public discourse, official statements on welcoming city policies, practices, and initiatives, and in engaging city population and the media.

Focused attention to fostering mutual respect between 'citizens' and existing populations and newly arriving refugees and migrants is also a nearly universal theme in city responses to refugee and migrant inflows. Most cities in Europe studied or referred in literature undertake deliberate activities to address the concerns of existing populations, to counter racism and xenophobia, and to promote accurate, well-founded, non-antagonistic stories and other media coverage.

All cities reviewed emphasized extensive and widespread self-mobilization by community, civil society and charity organizations in solidarity with and in support of refugees and migrants. This was consistently affirmed in literature and information from many other cities in Europe. Several cities have also experienced outpourings of individual volunteers. City governments similarly seek to encourage, support, and facilitate better coordination with and among civil society, local and community responses, and individual volunteers. Some city governments also deliberately engage support by *private sector* businesses/employers and business associations.

Another point worthy of note is that most cities have longstanding policy and practices of welcoming immigrants and in several cases prior refugee influxes, with several cities formally devoting attention to migrants and refugees over decades.

Migration and associated responses at the city level are similarly at the forefront of international dialogue, networking, and cooperation among cities. This is manifested in the expanding number of international metropolitan networks on migration and the growing compilation of collective international city commitments and statements on migration.

Contemporary experience shows that city authorities and constituents need to engage in dialogue and negotiations with national authorities, taking a firm stance on upholding fundamental city governance responsibilities, fully implementing human rights and humanitarian obligations, and defending subsidiary autonomy of local authority, responsibility, and competence. As current news indicates, cities may be obliged to engage in legal defence of *welcoming city* law, policy and practice in judicial proceedings, in addition to spirited public advocacy and mobilizing public opinion.

This article features and assesses the applied research approach itself, to encourage similar multi-disciplinary, multi-method, practitioner-inclusive approaches for research and for

policy development and assessment on topics concerning governance, populations, society, social work, international relations and others.

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