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Host institution: Hebrew University, Israel

Period: fall-winter semester 2015 (November-December 2015)

**Final report:**

Visiting Israel for a research stay turned out to be a rewarding experience. As my research addresses German- and European environmental cooperation with Israel, the main goal was to make as many interviews as possible and collect data that was not available or easily accessible outside the country.

Starting at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, I was warmly welcomed by the (host) supervisor Prof. Eran Feitelson (the department of Geography). Among his many research interests are environmental policy making in Israel, and he himself was an expert-member in several governmental and professional committees that dealt with various environmental issues. His knowledge and experience have contributed a lot to my research, for example by suggesting advices and new points to go deep into, and by directing me to potential interviewees.

My research stay eventually turned into a dense period in which I made interviews and other data collection in four cities (Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa and Ashdod). I have also managed to attend a conference in Zikhron Ya'akov dealing with local level sustainability initiatives.

Interviews were with central and local level bureaucrats dealing with environmental policy making and cooperation, as well as experts and academics. Most interviewees had contributed new information of some sort and, importantly, had introduced me to other potential interviewees (snowball interviews), which widened the range and variety of the data I initially planned to gain.

One outcome of interviewing was, for example, a new angle on the cooperation between Tel Aviv and Berlin. It turned out it embeds certain environmental aspects that are not usually highlighted when addressing the relations of the two cities. Also, participation of Israeli local level policy makers in German environmental forums of all sorts takes place regularly, an angle that receives now special attention in my research.

Another outcome of the research stay was to be exposed to- and understand better sustainability as it is currently interpreted in the context of Israeli policy making circles. New concepts and ideas are being discussed and promoted, for instance the understanding of the necessity to act at the municipal and neighborhood levels in order to achieve long term sustainability-related goals. Furthermore, in some cases new ideas are adopted from Europe and translated to the Israeli context: from small scale transportation and urban farming schemes in Jerusalem to regional rural collaborations in attempt to preserve natural areas in the view that these areas are an asset for attracting new residents and enhance economic activity for the region. These are all part of a change toward sustainability that seems to grip Israeli policy makers.

Other than this, the research stay has enhanced my understanding of the necessity, in Israel, to continue and develop capacity building in decision making circles, a process that involves many academics and research groups in universities. These networks of experts are major source of influence on the development of sustainability within decision making circles.

Although effective and beneficial, my research stay did pose several challenges. For instance, because my time there was limited it was not easy to try and maneuver between pre-planned and new interviews, as well as organizing and addressing new allocated data. All in all, while the research stay was intense and challenging, it both opened up new channels for examination and contributed to focusing on certain aspects, two things much needed to my research.