

# Urban “creative” squatting in three major cities in Israel: Haifa, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv

Ruth Abraham (ruthabr1@gmail.com) ; Supervisor: Gillad Rosen (gillad.rosen@mail.huji.ac.il)  
 Geography Department, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

## Abstract

This research maps the models of ‘creative’ squatting in the 3 largest cities of Israel: Tel-Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem, as well as the urban policy applied towards these kinds of activities. Until recent years Israel has not faced the phenomena of creative and entrepreneurial squatting. Moreover, the legislation in Israel relates primarily to housing, illegal construction amongst minorities or political issues as settlements. In Europe, the connection between urban vacant spaces and independent creative individuals and groups created unique self-managed cultural and social centers. These organizations were legalized due to a creative policy approach towards entrepreneurial and artistic groups that squat in vacant urban spaces. By mapping the models in Israel and Austria this research draws attention to squatting in Israel.

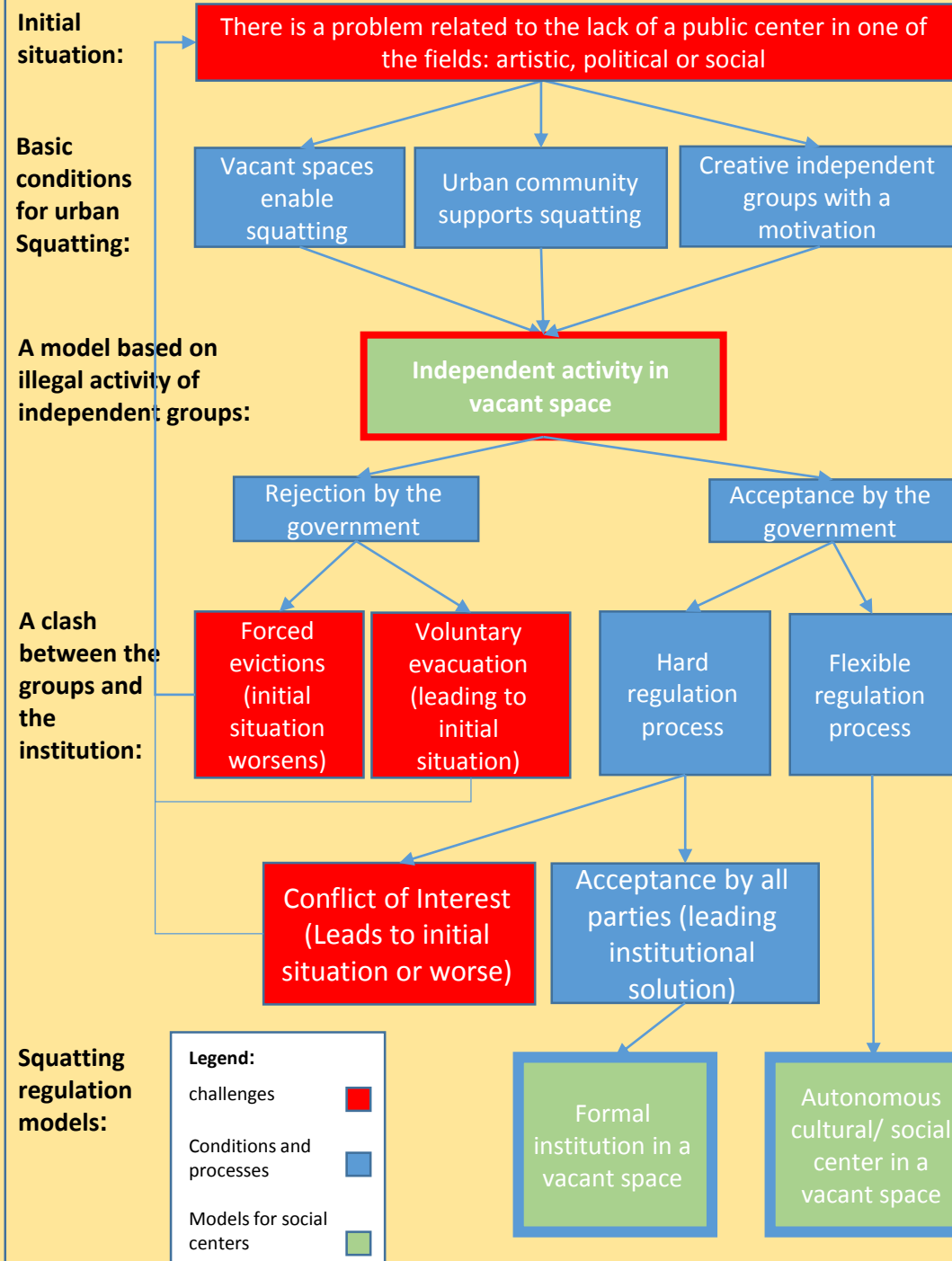
## Research questions

1. What motivates creative and artistic independent groups to invade vacant buildings in three cities in Israel - Haifa, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem?
2. What are the patterns of Squatting that can be identified in the three cities in Israel and what are their key characteristics?
3. To what extent do urban squatting in Israel undergo legalization processes? What can we learn from the Austrian regulatory regime?

## Research methods

participant observations - 25 participant observations in Israel and 15 in Austria. In-depth interviews with policy makers and squatters- 25 interviews in Israel, 7 in Austria. Policy documents - Urban programs for squatted sites and Urban laws concerning squatting.

## Conceptual model:



## Initial findings

Key Feature	Tel Aviv	Jerusalem	Haifa	Vienna
Long vs. Short Term Action	Only short term since 2000	Only short term	Only short term	<u>Past</u> – squats became cultural centers <u>Present</u> – short term
Motivations	Anti-institutional motivation	cultural vacuum	Conservation	Anti-institutional, conservation, cultural vacuum, etc...
Shrinking or growing city	Past – shrinking city Present – growing city	growing city	shrinking city	<u>Past</u> – shrinking city <u>Present</u> – growing city
Urban policy	Mostly 'Iron hand' policy	No specific policy	No specific policy	<u>Past</u> – Acceptance <u>Present</u> – flexible