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## ID 1632 | RECONCILING GOALS OF SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL SUSTAINABILITY: AN EXAMINATION OF SPATIAL DIMENSION OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION IN TRONDHEIM, NORWAY

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**ABSTRACT:** The paper presents preliminary findings from the first phase of a research project that is aimed at investigating the policy for decentralised local centers (commercial and transport hubs) in the city of Trondheim and an expressed goal of creating inclusive spaces at sub city level, while achieving a reduction in transport related greenhouse gas emissions. We use the case of social integration of refugees in the city of Trondheim to examine the potential of the planned local centers in achieving the expressed goal of creating a sustainable and inclusive city. We situate ourselves in the debate on social integration in the spatial domain viz. social mix versus segregation (Cole and Goodchild, 2001, Fincher et al, 2014 etc.) and the value of creating spaces of encounters (Fincher et al. 2014, Gressgård and Jensen 2015) to study the patterns of interaction among refugee groups in the city and their use of space in the local neighborhoods/ centers for such interactions. We relate these preliminary findings to the plans and policies of the Trondheim Municipality - both spatial and social welfare policies, to contribute to the debates on the role of spatial planning to promote social integration in increasingly diverse medium size cities in Europe. Municipal policy on integration of refugees in Trondheim is limited to the formal and structural aspects of society, while leaving the relational, interactional and cultural aspects to unplanned arenas and self-initiative by the refugees. There have been some efforts to represent the cultural diversity of the city through food and cultural festivals, with limited outcomes. As is illustrated by our preliminary investigations, most informants experience a sense of alienation and isolation, and interactions are limited to people of similar cultural backgrounds and other refugees, mainly in central locations. One of the main findings discussed in the paper is that refugees experience a sense of isolation in the neighborhoods they are housed in by the Municipality, raising questions to the efficacy of the policies of social mixing followed in Trondheim. We also find that spaces of social encounters in the local area have only limited potential to facilitate long lasting contact between the refugees and the host population, unless more targeted efforts for social network building is undertaken. The window of opportunity of the first five years of the 'Introduction program' of the Municipality are critical owing to the close contact refugees have to State

authorities. Disregarding the importance of the living environment and social links and bonds in the local community, is a shortcoming in the integration efforts of the Municipality, one which can be easily addressed. In conclusion, the paper raises questions for scholarship on the spatial dimensions of social integration, some of which will be investigated further in the current project.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

To develop more attractive local shopping- and service centers, is a strategy towards a more sustainable development in Trondheim. Based on a detailed analysis of the distance from where people live and their access to shopping, the Municipal Development Plan for Trondheim evaluates public transport and possibilities for densification in relation to existing and planned local centers<sup>1</sup>. This strategy is largely based on environmental objectives since it is assumed to reduce the need for transport and to minimize urban sprawl. In the development plan, there is also an underlying argument that local centers will become arenas for social and cultural encounters and thus contribute to a more inclusive and diverse city, (Trondheim Kommune 2010). Sustainable urban development means, in a broader sense, a commitment to create an inclusive and diverse city where everyone has equal opportunities to participate. Social sustainability includes, according to Bramley et al (2009; 2010), both the notion of 'social equity' and 'sustainable communities'. While 'social equity' implies that everyone should have equal access to employment, affordable housing, and services such as education, health, recreation areas, and public transport, the term 'sustainable communities' addresses senses of belonging, opportunities for social interaction, safety / security, perceived environmental qualities, experienced house quality, social stability, participation and involvement (Bramley et al 2010).

This working paper discusses the first phase of a research project, addressing questions raised in dialogue with Trondheim town planning office and IMDi (The Directorate of Integration and Diversity), on how to facilitate a more holistic view on the challenges related to the settlement and integration of refugees within Trondheim<sup>2</sup>. Whereas the responsibility of settlement and integration of refugees is organised under the health and welfare office, the town planning office has the responsibility for providing and ownership of social housing. In order to foster a comprehensive sustainability perspective for urban development, it is beneficial to see these sectors together. Further, the potential challenges related to settlement and integration of refugees are seldom explicitly addressed in long term planning strategies (see e.g. Hauge et al, 2015). IMDi stated an interest in learning more about how and in which ways the city is used by refugees, and in which arenas integration actually "happens". Since these being complex questions that are challenging to research, the project uses the local center development plan as a starting point for discussing the unclear spatial policies regarding inclusion and diversity in Trondheim. One important aim of the project is to explore the ways refugees experience and use their neighbourhood and the city, and thus gain insights into how social sustainability issues such as the settlement and integration of refugees could become an integrated element in the local center development. As of now, the plan for local centers is based on the goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while aiming to create inclusive local neighborhoods/areas without any clear idea on how this might be achieved.

The first phase has included a literature review on social integration processes and theoretical frameworks for understanding social integration as experienced in and framed by urban space. Further five student groups (altogether 20 Master students) have carried out mapping exercises and interviews to investigate how refugees in five selected local areas in Trondheim use their neighbourhood, the local centers and the city as a whole. They subsequently discuss how housing, neighbourhood and local centers may facilitate or hinder social integration processes.

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<sup>1</sup> In the development plan, local centers are defined as urban areas or neighborhoods with an identifiable center where the population can get access to their daily requirements for shops and services within walking and cycling distance from residential neighborhoods and workplaces (Trondheim Kommune 2013; 2014). Local centers should have a density of minimum 6 dwellings per hectare within a radius of 1-2 km, and should have at least 5-7000 residents and employees in order to justify a feasible provision of goods and services.

<sup>2</sup> The research project, "Lokalsenterutvikling som strategi for bærekraftige byer – besetting og integrering av flyktninger i Trondheim kommune", is financed by Husbanken (The Norwegian Housing Bank), and runs from September 2016 to December 2017. Professor Eli Støa is leading the project.

In the paper will first present theoretical perspectives on urban planning in the context of integration of migrants focusing on two main approaches, social mix and places for encounters. We will then continue with presenting discussions on integration that we believe will be useful in our further research. Finally we will present some of the main findings from the student work and based on this raise some preliminary questions for discussion. The limitations of using student work should be acknowledged, since we have limited control of the empirical data and the analysis of it. The student assignments are therefore mainly useful as an input, together with a review of relevant theoretical perspectives, into a discussion of issues and questions for further fieldwork within the project. The aim with the paper is to identify challenges related to the role local centers and housing may play in integration processes and to discuss how to pursue the research before we carry out our main fieldwork during spring / summer 2017.

## 2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ADDRESSING SOCIAL INTEGRATION IN A SPATIAL DOMAIN

Urban planners have to a varying degree addressed challenges due to immigration and (the lack of) integration. Vitello (2009) notes from an American context that while European countries have established a tradition of social planning, including national integration programs, the Anglo American planning tradition struggles to accommodate cultural difference. Planners have engaged with immigrant communities, typically in advocacy roles, but mostly community development has been done by community workers not planners. In European cities, immigration and integration have become a pressing question due to the refugee crisis and fear of terrorism. As often discussed in relation to a concern about the increased segregation of ethnic minorities in poor urban neighbourhoods, integration of immigrants is approached as a 'spatial problem' of uneven distribution of resources, welfare and a general 'good' living environment. Since 1990s, therefore, European countries have seen a shift in both policy and academic discourse from a dominant conception of poverty to "a focus on social exclusion, signifying a significant redirection of emphasis from the material deprivation of the poor towards their inability to fully exercise their social, economic and political rights as citizens" (Geddes 2000, p. 782-783, see also Andersen 2001). This shift in European policy has been followed by "a wide range of efforts to promote community participation in deprived, immigrant-dense areas of the city [...] to encourage immigrant engagement so as to create a shared sense belonging and speed up integration (Gressgård and Jensen 2015, p. 2). Often known as integrated area based initiatives, a cross-sectoral approach to area-development seeing physical upgrading and community engagement as equally important, so-called deprived, immigrant dense urban neighbourhoods are undergoing regeneration to combat social exclusion and facilitate integration.

Fincher et al. (2014) and Gressgård and Jensen (2015), have identified three main theoretical approaches that have informed urban planning debates on integration; the 'right to the city' and 'social justice', planning and 'multiculturalism' or 'pluralism', and a newer discussion related to 'social capital' especially in relation to the above mentioned regeneration approaches towards poor urban neighbourhoods. The concept of 'right to the city' has been central to critical debates in urban theory (e.g. Lefebvre 1968, 1996, Harvey 1973, 2008, Mitchell 2003, Marcuse et al. 2009). When linked to urban planning practices, 'right to the city' suggests a consideration of the power structures present in the city and in urban planning practises, facilitating or hindering, in the present case, refugee's influence on their use and rights over urban spaces especially those shared with the host society. 'Multiculturalism' is a concept with many meanings; "at once a philosophy of the nation and nationhood, a set of public policies, and a democratic reality in many countries and cities in which ethnic and racialized variations exist in the population" (Fincher et al. 2014, p. 3). Fincher et al. (2014) employ the term to discuss the ways planning engages with ethnic and racialized difference, and as such 'multiculturalism' can be seen as a more specific term than 'pluralism' which is the concept that Gressgård and Jensen (2015) prefer in their review on very much the same topic from a Scandinavian context<sup>1</sup>. Within planning theory and urban studies, 'pluralism' often refers to the pluralist-elitist debate from the 1950s and 60s (see Allmendinger 2002, and Harding 2009), and has been developed as a perspective that encompasses difference, both in (cultural) values and in power and access to decision-making. Though we in the following chose to use the term 'pluralism', we acknowledge that both 'multiculturalism' and 'pluralism' are ambiguous concepts. For example How (2013) argue for the

<sup>1</sup> Gressgård and Jensen (2015) do not state clearly why they prefer using the term 'pluralism', however in a Norwegian context multiculturalism might be associated with the (quite polarized) debate on whether integration of ethnic minorities has failed or not, where critics of the Norwegian integration policy sees the multicultural society as a potential threat towards values they see as 'Norwegian'. As such, 'pluralism' might be understood as a less politically charged concept.

use of 'transculturalism' as a less static concept, that better capture the processes of intercultural exchange and cultural transformation that take place in urban spaces.

'Social capital' is a concept that increasingly has entered the debate and understanding of integration of immigrants, in addition to concepts such as 'community cohesion' or 'social cohesion' (Gressgård and Jensen 2015). 'Social capital' has been developed as a conceptual framework by scholars such as Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam (Sullivan 2009, see Portes 1998 for a review), however especially Putnam's (1995, 2000) conception of social capital as an inherent quality of a well-functioning civil society has proven to be attractive for policy directed towards 'excluded' and 'marginalised' communities. The assumption is that people living in deprived neighbourhoods have limited access to so-called bridging social capital which encompasses more distant social ties, and that "living in mixed-income communities may provide opportunities to interact with people who have more diverse social networks, and in turn auxiliary benefits from such interaction" (Arthurson et al. 2015, p. 439). As such, 'social capital' is associated with trust between different social groups and citizens' ability to participate in the wider society. Hence, 'social capital' is also linked to a well-functioning participatory democracy, and suggestions that the quality of governance and outcomes will improve with increased social cohesion and the citizens' participation as 'co-producers' in governance (Sullivan 2009).

As for Norway, ethnic segregation was until the 1990s treated as a question of class mobility and economic redistribution through the welfare policy (Holt-Jensen 2009). The debate on ethnic segregation as reinforcing the old spatial divide between rich and poor emerged, however, throughout the 1990s, and moved in the 2000s towards a fear of 'ghettoization' and 'parallel society' if a concentration of poor ethnic minorities in less attractive parts of the city were allowed to develop further. The focus on integration thus entered Norwegian policy and planning with the focus on area development, to a large degree inspired by integrated area based approaches to urban renewal in other European countries, especially the UK, Denmark, and Sweden (Brofoss and Barstad 2006, Lund 2014). In these approaches, participation as community empowerment partly building on arguments in line with the idea of 'social capital' is often a central strategy.

The theoretical approaches discussed above are, perhaps except from theories on 'social capital', not easily translated into urban planning practices. From a study of eight multicultural metropolis, Fincher et al. (2014) identify two main approaches to urban planning practices to support integration. The first approach, social mixing, target interventions on residential space. As noted by Cole and Goodchild (2001), the assumption of a mixed society as a more 'balanced' and 'harmonious' society is a normative idea with long traditions within planning. The idea was for example a prominent aspect of the British garden city movement before the First World War, and became systematically adopted into the housing and New Town programs of the 1945-51 Labour governments. While criticized from the 1950s for underestimating that segregation might also be a positive factor in developing a strong sense of community, the idea of social mix re-appeared in the New Labour housing policy from 1997, directed towards the housing estates from the 1950s and 60s. Hence, the current focus of attention on social balance "lies in projects designed to promote neighborhood renewal and social inclusion rather than, as before, on the principles of comprehensive planning" (ibid.:345). Fincher et al (2014) discuss the shift in focus in social mix planning in Europe, from being an explicitly class oriented project to become the "dominant solution to managing the segregation of internal and external undesirable Others in [ethnically] diverse cities" (ibid. p. 23) (see e.g. Lees 2008 and Arthurson 2015 on critical discussions on social mix strategies).

The second approach, planning for spaces for encounters, concentrates more on the design and use of public space. This approach involves "the creation of opportunities for interactions between ethnic communities in the hope that contact will reduce prejudice and social conflict" (Fincher et al. 2014; 43, emphasis in original). Since public space is connected to normative understandings of what is accepted as "appropriate" or "inappropriate", the production of public space is often analysed in relation to theoretical debates on 'right to the city' (Fincher et al. 2014, Gressgård and Jensen 2015. See e.g. Mitchell 2003). Of relevance here is both the 'visual manifestations' of migrant minorities in the public sphere, and regulations of the use of public space – both formally and informally. Further, the assumption that encounter can "produce any kind of change beyond the time/space of the encounter itself is increasingly being challenged" (Fincher et al. 2014, p. 43, se e.g. Valentine 2008). In addition, there is a growing body of scholarship that point to the fact that encounters across cultures are likely to take place at sites beyond those that are usually discussed among planners, such as in schools, libraries, workplaces and everyday neighbouring practices like gardening and eating (ibid.).

Though both social mix approaches and planning for encounters in public spaces often come together in regeneration programs targeting immigrant dense neighbourhoods, e.g. the Saupstad-Kolstad area development program in Trondheim (Trondheim Kommune 2013), social mixing is not really discussed in planning strategies that encompass the city as a whole – such as the potential for densification and local center development in Trondheim – other than in the regulation of mixed housing according to size and type of ownership. According to Legeby and Marcus (2011), therefore, the focus on residential segregation and social mix limits the potential of the build environment for integration. They argue that the potential for interplay that develops as people share public space is equally important for integration processes as the residential mix.

### 3 INTEGRATION AND SPACE IN NORWEGIAN POLICY AND PRACTICE

Several researchers have emphasized the importance of housing for integration. E.g., research on reception centers for asylum seekers suggests that low standards of housing counteracts integration (Hauge et al, 2016). It is generally agreed that a high turnover of residents in an area tend to negatively influence people’s feeling of safety and interaction between neighbours (see also Vacher 2007 immigrants experience from social housing in Denmark). Further, studies from Norway have found that the refugee’s ability to obtain housing without help from municipal authorities (so-called 'self-settlement') may contribute to empowerment and a feeling of autonomy (Røe, 2015). However, there is a fear that self-settlement will reinforce to the increasing segregation of immigrants in marginalised areas, a situation believed to counteract integration (Valenta and Bunar, 2010; Røe, 2015). At city level, therefore, the idea of social mix is an important strategy when providing homes for refugees. This is true also for Trondheim, as the Health and Welfare office responsible for the housing of refugees seek to avoid concentration of ethnic minorities in certain areas, especially around Lademoen, which is a former working class neighbourhood close to the city center, and at Saupstad housing estate planned and built in the late 1960s and early 1970s (fig 1). Saupstad is today one of the most immigrant dense neighbourhoods in Trondheim, with around 30 % of the population being either immigrants themselves or having parents that are immigrants.

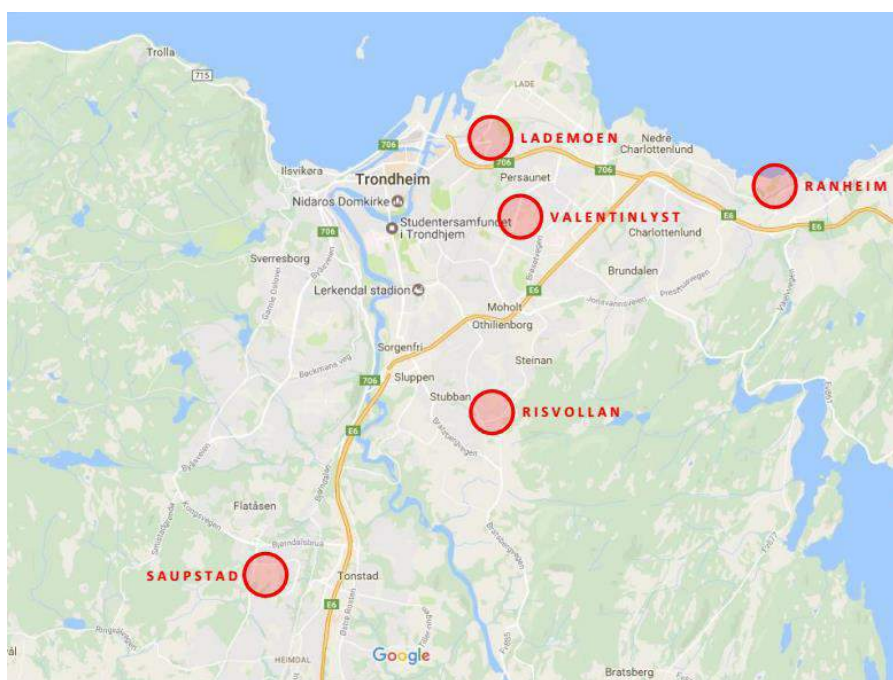


Figure 1: Map of Trondheim with five selected local centers at neighbourhood level. Source: Google Maps.

Because of the relatively high amount of immigrants and low score on statistical indicators such as education, employment and health, Saupstad is part of an integrated area based development program. The development is a cross-sectoral initiative seeking to facilitate cross-cultural meetings and networks among the residents, in addition to a physically upgrading of the local service- and shopping center, schools and public spaces.

According to the Municipal Development Plan (2012-24), Trondheim wants to continue the densification and localisation policy by reinforcing the existing built structures- having the right business at the right place, rejuvenation of the existing local centers, and retaining and developing the blue/ green structures. It also aims to reinforce the existing public services and preserve cultivable land and ecologically sensitive forests (Trondheim Kommune, 2012;b). The densification policy also aims to serve other purposes, such as to reduce the need for expansion of transportation and a better utilisation of existing infrastructure (Trondheim Kommune, 2012b). This coupled with the choice of environment-friendly transport, can also provide a greater degree of diversity and accessibility (Ibid). This resonates with the argument that densification and transformation of the city could help refugees to be more interactive with locals. Therefore, the context of transforming local centres in Trondheim can potentially create a proactive space for an inclusive meeting and exchange with locals for the refugees. Beyond what is outlined in the Municipal Development Plan are the efforts to develop local centers into diverse and inclusive meeting places. Although the plan states this objective as part of the goals of the local center development, currently no concrete measures or means to achieve this have been identified. Refugees are not per se identified as a 'target group' by the plan although the societal development plan (kommuneplanens samfunnsdel) states the goal for inclusion and diversity for the city.

#### 4 ON INTEGRATION (AND METHODOLOGY)

Integration is a complex and somewhat controversial concept (Ager and Strang, 2008). The understanding of integration ranges from an assimilation perspective, which implies an expectation that refugees should adapt to the host society so they eventually will not stand out, to a multiculturalist perspective in which everyone's right to keep their cultural and religious identity is recognized (ibid). Today, most reject assimilation as a measure of integration and accept that the arrival of refugees will involve a greater degree of cultural diversity and hence a gradual change in our own society at both the local and national levels. For the purpose of this project, we lean on Ager and Strang (2008), who developed a conceptual framework for approaching integration of refugees and immigrants. The framework builds on previous work developing indicators for evaluating integration in the UK, in addition to fieldwork in environments of refugee settlement and analysis of survey data. Ager and Strang define ten core domains of integration and divide them in four categories (see Figure 2). The authors insist the domains are interdependent and all significant for integration, with no primacy of one over the other. However, Valtonen (2004) points out the difference that a strong welfare state might provide, and that strong social rights of settling refugees can occur alongside weak labour market status, bringing out features of 'differential exclusion', peculiar to settlement in this particular context' (2004: 71).



Figure 2 Ager and Strang's core domains of integration (2008: 170)

There are however other approaches to integration. For example the Efms INTERPOL (2006:18) defines social integration as “a generations lasting process of inclusion and acceptance of migrants in the core institutions, relations and statuses of the receiving society”, stressing the interactive process between migrants and the receiving society in which the receiving society has much more power and prestige (see also Esser 2000). Hence, integration might both refer to normative aspects of what characterises an ‘integrated’ immigrant, and an experience of inclusion or exclusion among the immigrant population. Methodologically, we first map the policy and practice on integration in Trondheim municipality that so far seem to concentrate on facilitating language and cultural knowledge, and access to housing, employment and/or education, and health services. Interviews have however revealed an understanding among municipal actors of the role of social networks and a general feeling of being included for integration to be ‘successful’ (i.e. partly covered by the social connection domain of the Ager and Strang 2008 framework). For this purpose, the municipality works closely with NGOs’ such as Red Cross. Second, we are in the process of performing in-depth interviews with refugees living in different parts of the city to explore their experiences of belonging and inclusion (or not) to their home, neighbourhood and the city as a whole.

## **5 A SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE CITY?: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS FROM THE FIRST PHASE OF THE PROJECT**

Among the 13 local centers identified in the local center development plan, five were selected for the mapping exercise carried out by students of the master program in Urban Ecological Planning during fall 2016 (see Figure 2). Of these, the centers at Risvollan and Saupstad represent the development of housing estates in Trondheim in the early 1970s. The local centre at Valentinlyst was established in 1975, in relation to expansion of housing in the area. Lademoen and Ranheim stand out as not being clearly defined centers today. All local centers serve a population between 4300 and 5700 residents, and had between 58-185 refugees settled in the surrounding residential neighborhood in 2016. Saupstad has the largest share of non-western immigrants, with 30 %, while Ranheim has a small non-western population of 2,8 %. Based on qualitative observations, informal talks, interviews, focus groups discussions and workshops, the students explored how the refugees use and relate to their neighbourhood, the local center and the city as a whole<sup>1</sup>.

Most groups struggled with finding relevant informants. They found it difficult to approach people directly at the local centers since it is hard to know who are refugees and who are just Norwegians of foreign origin or other kinds of immigrants. They therefore approached established arenas where refugees meet, such as language cafés, the municipal qualification program, churches, sports clubs and other meeting places for immigrants. Three of the groups managed to find a sufficient number of informants within ‘their’ local center, the two others came in contact with refugees living all over Trondheim but still asked them about how they use the city and their neighborhood. All together they interviewed 44 refugees either individually or in groups, in addition to several more with whom they asked brief questions. Some groups also interviewed other actors (social workers, representatives from housing cooperatives etc.)<sup>2</sup>.

### **5.1 THE LOCAL CENTERS: SPATIAL QUALITIES AND THE ACTIVITIES OFFERED**

It seems from the student investigations that the local centers only to a limited degree work as arenas for social encounters between the refugees and the host community. Most informants express that the city center is perceived as more attractive as a social meeting place, a place for ‘hanging out’, than the local centers. Moreover, the local centers often do not offer activities which the refugees need, such as language cafés, opportunities for volunteering, sports, religious activities etc. Even when it comes to shopping, refugees do not necessarily prefer the local shops. They mainly go shopping where the prices are lowest, which is often in larger shopping malls such as City Syd, City Lade etc. Many also join the free bus to Sweden and do their shopping at Storlien.

<sup>1</sup> Trondheim municipality defines refugees as those who have received asylum in Norway and has lived in the city for less than five years. Among the questions the students asked, were: 1) What are your everyday activities? Where? When? With whom? How do you get there? 2) What kind of spaces/which spaces do you use in the neighborhood/city/city center/local center? 3) What are your most important social networks and why? 4) Describe a normal day/week

<sup>2</sup> For a more thorough description of main findings from the 5 student groups, see Appendix

As expressed by several informants in almost all the groups, the value of sports and volunteerism as a potential for social interaction among and between groups – immigrant and Norwegian, should not be underestimated. Volunteering functions both as a means for increased interaction, increased familiarity of the cultural and social norms as well as a ‘grapevine’ for information on employment opportunities etc. The language cafes also perform similar functions. Sport and training was mentioned by several informants as their only means of recreation and interaction with others, albeit mainly other refugees from similar cultural backgrounds. Religious activities were also seen to perform a dual role – of maintaining a sense of identity through one’s religion as well as a meeting space for social interaction. Although not all local centers can feasibly provide all such facilities, the local of volunteer centres, sport facilities and religious centers should be part of the discussion on local centers at the city level.

The reasons for not using local centers are however not only lack of the ‘right’ activities and reasonable prices on grocery and other goods. The centers moreover tend to be perceived as boring, lacking attractive public spaces for ‘hanging out’ without having to buy something. In some neighborhoods (e.g Ranheim and Lademoen) there are no defined and visible center at all, which makes them even harder to relate to.

## **5.2 LACK OF VISIBILITY – AFFECTS SENSE OF BELONGING**

According to the students, refugees (and other non-western immigrants) are generally not visible in (most) local centers (with a possible exception of Saupstad-Kolstad). This may be because these groups prefer other places. With the relatively small numbers of refugees living in each neighbourhood, it is hard to influence on and participate in the local everyday life. In most areas there are also a lack of visible ‘symbols’ of multicultural population, such as mosques and other aesthetic elements. Lack of visibility may affect the process of developing a sense of belong, assumed to be important for social integration (e.g. Efms INTERPOL, 2006).

## **5.3 SOCIAL ISOLATION**

Few informants state that they have Norwegian friends. Informants in Ranheim, who were mainly single male youth, expressed a sense of hopelessness and isolation in the local area where they were accommodated. Their only comfort was in being able to interact with others from their own community in sport facilities located in other areas. In this sense we may draw the conclusion that they are not yet very well socially integrated. Time is probably also an important issue. The informants in this study have lived in Trondheim for less than 5 years, many of them for less than two years. It not only takes time to find new friends. Also achieving a sense of belonging or feeling at home in a neighbourhood and local center takes time. Informants state clearly that the main issue for them at this stage is to learn the language and to get work, this is important in order to be integrated in the long run.

Refugees are not a uniform group. There are obviously cultural differences, as well as issues related to gender and life situation. Young, single and most often male refugees move easily all around the city and seek places and activities where they can meet other refugees, often with similar cultural background as themselves. As was observed by the group of students that worked in Saupstad, it appears that female refugees with families and children are more frequent users of some of the activities offered within the local neighborhood. Here, women of immigrant/refugee background do come in contact with women of Norwegian origin, in for example the knitting group organized by the local volunteering centre but these interactions do not result in ‘deep’ ties beyond the immediate interaction. As they are conceptualized now, local centers are mainly seen to be shopping centers with some community functions such as the library in Risvollan and Saupstad. The value of interaction that these functions afford may not satisfy the ultimate aim of creating local inclusive neighborhoods.

## **5.4 HOUSING**

Only few informants mention their residential situation as important for their everyday life. This may be due to how students asked their questions (housing was not emphasised in their assignment). But it is worth



investigating closer, since 'housing first' is one of the main slogans in Trondheim's strategies towards integrating refugees (ref?). We also know from research on other vulnerable groups that housing is important for how people perceive themselves as part of a society (dignity, empowerment, identity, privacy etc) (e.g Hauge et al 2009) and for the integration process (e.g. Røe, 2015).

## 6 RAISING QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION

At this stage in our research, we do not have sufficient empiric data to draw any substantial conclusions. We would still like to use this opportunity to raise some preliminary questions for discussion.

Integration of refugees in the first 5 years of their residence in the Trondheim Municipality is the responsibility of the Health and Welfare division of the City Council. This is facilitated through their accommodation in social housing combined with an obligatory 'Introduction Program' (Kvalifiseringscenter for Innvandrere INN) that qualifies refugees for entering the job market – defined as a certain level of language skills as well as basic school education. As stated by the representatives of the Health and Welfare division in a project related meeting, the focus is mainly on 'systemic integration' which can be evaluated through 'measurable indicators' such as attainment of a certain level of education, access to welfare services and integration through paid and gainful employment. Both the representatives from the Town Planning division and the Health and Welfare divisions acknowledged the need to understand and address social integration but expressed the gap in knowledge on the needs and functioning arenas for social interaction and integration. As expressed earlier, this project attempts to fill this gap in knowledge, and will do this by looking into for the role played by the local centers and neighbouring areas.

With reference to the frameworks for integration discussed earlier in the paper, municipal policy on integration of refugees in Trondheim is limited to the formal and structural aspects of society, while leaving the relational, interactional and cultural aspects to unplanned arenas and self-initiative by the refugees. There have been some efforts to represent the cultural diversity of the city through food and cultural festivals, with limited outcomes. As is illustrated by our preliminary investigations, most informants experience a sense of alienation and isolation, and interactions are limited to people of similar cultural backgrounds and other refugees.

The feeling of social isolation perceived by our informants might be an indication of a worrying implication of the lack of focus on social integration as opposed to systemic integration. These young people first come in contact with the local culture and community in their residential neighborhoods. Although they are all obligated to follow the Municipalities education programs in order for them to be qualified for the job market, their sense of alienation in the host culture can possibly have far reaching implications for their role as future citizens. The window of opportunity of the first five years of the 'Introduction program' of the Municipality is critical owing to the close contact refugees have to State authorities. Disregarding the importance of the residential environment and social links and bonds in the local community, is a shortcoming in the integration efforts of the Municipality.

The next level of our analysis relates to the spatial policies of the Municipality and their potential to address social integration. In the urban development strategies of Trondheim Municipality that may be relevant for social integration of refugees, we recognize both social mix approaches and an emphasis on developing spaces for encounters in the local centers. The way refugees are accommodated all around the city with relatively small groups in each area may be due to pragmatic reasons (that's where the available housing is), but it seems that it is part of an overall strategy to avoid an accumulation in certain neighborhoods. We also see from the municipal paper on local centers (Trondheim kommune, 2012a) that there is an underlying assumption that strengthening the local centers will provide social and cultural meeting places. Still it seems from our preliminary findings that neither of these strategies so far have supported social integration between refugees and the host community. One can also raise questions regarding the policy of social mixing itself. Unless it is followed up by initiatives for social integration in local areas it may lead to the kind of isolation expressed by our informants.

From the first phase of investigation in the project, we can raise the following questions that will be explored in the next phase:

1. What are the functioning spaces of social encounter for refugees and how do these encounters have a bearing on relational, interactive and indentional aspects of integration (Ager and Strang,2008; Valtonen,2004;Efms INTERPOL,2006)? How do the refugees perceive this relationship?
2. To what extent do these social encounters take place/facilitated by space in neighborhoods and local centers?
3. Which role does the home play, and the relationship between private and semi private arenas and public spaces in the local areas play for social interaction between refugees and the host community? What qualities of the various spaces and the relationship between them facilitate social encounters that may have consequences for social integration?
4. Is there a visible dimension to the integration process, and if so – how does it come to expression at a local level in Trondheim (and where?)

We hope that knowledge developed through looking more into these questions, will give insights that may be useful in a further discussion on the organization of policy domains and implementation structures in the Municipal administration when it comes to the broadly framed objectives set out in the local center strategy.

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# ID 1641 | METROPOLITAN PLANNING AND URBAN MINORITIES "ON THE MOVE". A TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON INTEGRATION PATTERNS

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Planning traditions in European countries have generally either ignored settlement patterns of underprivileged migrating populations or tried to control them through imposed settlement actions or population redistribution (Desage et al., 2014). Urban integration of immigrants or of poor nationals in a migration situation (such as rural population attracted by employment opportunities in the city or returning expatriates from former colonies, etc.) has been generally addressed by providing specific or standard public housing or by implementing social mix policies. In this paper we address integration patterns by focusing on the characteristics of a "welcoming" territory or its "hospitality", i.e. a territory that offers opportunities for integration and that showcases its social diversity. We further question the importance of morphologic configurations of metropolization and of governance arrangements characteristic of metropolitan planning for successful incorporation.

New comers to the city claim space and make place. In regard to these processes, we ask several questions: what settlement and place-making patterns of migrants, chosen or imposed, are associated