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The Role of Leisure Practices and Local Identity in Migrants' Inclusion in Two Rural Norwegian Municipalities

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Abstract

This article discusses the role of local identity and local leisure practices in migrants' inclusion processes in two rural Norwegian localities. The discussed study was conducted in municipalities that had experienced increased international migration following the EU expansion in 2004 and had a long history of internal in-migration. In the study, individuals' social inclusion and belonging processes are treated as inseparable from a locality's dominant local narratives, practices, and norms—drawing on theories on inclusion/exclusion processes in places. Based on findings from semi-structured interviews with local natives, internal migrants, and international migrants, the study found that different leisure practices were central to local identity in the two localities, which had implications for what was expected of migrants in order for them to be accepted locally. These findings align with what is commonly conceived as outdated community study research findings. The findings indicate the continued relevance of the local for people's identification and migrants' inclusion processes and support a need for closer theoretical and methodological integration of internal and international migration research. Another central finding was that in one of the localities, national narratives about civic engagement were evoked by some majority Norwegians as additional arguments for the importance of migrants' involvement in local leisure activities. These interviewees' main concern appeared to be ensuring local—rather than national—cultural continuity and cohesion. Finally, the different inclusion grammars in the two localities illustrate that inclusion processes in one locality should not by default be seen as representative of what is transpiring in a nation-state.

Keywords

community studies; domestic migration; inclusion; international migration; local identity; national identity; place theories; social spatialisation

1. Introduction

In the decade following the EU's enlargement in 2004, international migration to rural areas in Europe increased (Rye, 2018), including in Norway, which is part of the European Economic Area. Increased international labour migration to rural areas, together with the presence of other international migrants, such as refugees and lifestyle migrants, has stimulated a steadily growing body of research (for more information on this subject see de Lima et al., 2022; Hedberg & do Carmo, 2012; Jentsch & Simard, 2009; Kordel et al., 2018; McAreavey, 2017; McAreavey & Argent, 2018; Rye & O'Reilly, 2020). Some central issues addressed in this research are the role of increased international migration for rural regeneration, policy issues, and the views and experiences of local development actors and migrants. Concerning international labour migrants' inclusion processes, more research has focused on their workplaces and position in the local labour market than on everyday encounters with longstanding residents in other local arenas (Stachowski, 2020; Stachowski & Rasmussen, 2021, p. 157). Moreover, in rural areas and beyond, there is a need for more attention to the role of local reception atmospheres for international migrants' incorporation processes (Glorius et al., 2021). In rural areas, the topic has mainly been addressed in research about local development actors. It has been found that these actors often welcome increased international labour migration, as it can be economically beneficial and reverse population decline (cf. Rye, 2018, p. 3). Less research has addressed the views and experiences of other longstanding locals on immigration locally and how such views may shape newcomers' inclusion trajectories (some exceptions include Kasimis & Papadopoulos, 2005; Moore, 2021).

In this article, I scrutinise the reception atmospheres of two Norwegian rural places that had experienced increased international in-migration in the decade preceding the research. The discussed findings are drawn from 112 interviews with natives, internal/domestic migrants, and international migrants conducted in 2013. The municipalities had a diverse international migrant population and a long history of internal in-migration. Within this context of past and present migrant mobility, the study aimed to investigate the processes by which new residents could become part of the local communities. In this study, social local inclusion processes are conceptualised as processes related to becoming part of local social informal networks and socially accepted in the localities. A central question that guided the research was: What are the criteria for being seen as a local insider in the locality? I sought to identify the "entrance tickets" (drawing on Eriksen, 2007) for becoming part of the local community, and whether the entrance ticket was attainable for migrants of different backgrounds.

The article's analysis draws on insights from two research traditions that are not usually applied in studies on international migrants' inclusion processes in rural localities. First, I put the findings into dialogue with theories of inclusion/exclusion processes in places. Second, the article draws on insights from community study research about social dynamics between internal migrants and native locals.

The research design and chosen theoretical approaches were motivated by an aim of avoiding methodological nationalism (Wimmer & Schiller, 2002). I endeavoured to do this, first, by putting places at the heart of the interview guide and analysis. The intention was to understand inclusion/exclusion mechanisms for local residents in general and to inductively explore through open questions which categories of people were deemed "in place" and "out of place" (Cresswell, 1996), staying open to whether this was related to country background or not. Second, I sought to avoid methodological nationalism by including natives, and internal and international migrants in the sample. Whilst all these were broad

categories, the aim was to empirically disentangle the potential relevance of local and national origin for residents' experiences of the places in question and their perceptions of what was crucial for local acceptance. Third, the study aimed to avoid methodological nationalism by "trying on" knowledge from internal migration research that seemed highly relevant also for international migrants' inclusion processes—i.e., community study research on migrant-native relations. Whilst international migration has increased to rural areas, social dynamics between migrants and local natives in small (rural) places is not a new research topic but has been investigated in-depth in that research tradition (see, e.g., Crow et al., 2001). The absence of references to this research within international migration research more generally reflects a habitual separation between internal and international migration research, with little empirical and theoretical cross-fertilisation between the fields (cf. King & Skeldon, 2010; Nestorowicz & Anacka, 2015). This article aims to "bring in the old" from community studies in the quest to understand contemporary social post-migration processes in small rural places. As such many insights generated from community studies are valuable. Additionally, they can contribute to considering with fresh eyes international migrants' inclusion processes in such localities and not presuming that national and ethnic backgrounds are the sole defining characteristics in these boundary processes. A fourth potential contribution against methodological nationalism is the article's analysis of inclusion processes in two localities in Norway. As Fitzgerald (2012) underlines, multi-sited qualitative research can be a way of avoiding methodological nationalism even though there is a risk of sacrificing in-depth knowledge when including several cases. This article's findings show that within the same nation-state, several local inclusion grammars are possible, and indeed transpire.

In what follows, I first detail the study's theoretical framework. Following this, I describe the method and methodological approach before presenting the empirical findings. In the discussion, I summarise the article's key points and address the implications of the study.

2. Local Inclusion/Exclusion Processes

2.1. Inclusion and Exclusion in Places

In this study, places are conceived as a "combination of materiality, meaning, and practice" (Cresswell, 2009, p. 1). Places are not seen as static containers for social action (Berg et al., 2013). Rather, the study treats individuals' social inclusion and belonging processes in small places as inseparable from dominant local narratives, practices, and norms, informed by theories of inclusion and exclusion in places. Dominant place narratives such as local identity shape the social realities in the places we live in because the narratives shape people's actions and patterns of living (Bieger & Maruo-Schröder, 2016, p. 5). As Junnilainen (2020, p. 46) states, narratives about places "inform understandings of what kind of a place this is, what kind of people are living here and how people like 'us' live." Hence, norms are inherent in place narratives and the narratives produce norms about acceptable practices. Cresswell (1996) and Shields (1991) emphasise that what is deemed suitable in a place is shaped by the groups in power in the place. Shields (1991) uses the term social spatialisation to analyse the power of dominant spatial norms and perceptions that govern what should be done, when, and where. Social spatialisation coordinates people's perceptions to create a "common sense" where social tensions become interpreted in a certain way. Dominant place meanings and norms are usually contested to various degrees but can be a starting point for understanding which practices are welcomed or trigger negative reactions in a certain context at a given time. As Shields (1991, p. 263) states, while community identities "may not be consensual, they are normative and…have empirically

specifiable effects." Moreover, Cresswell (1996) has shown that by examining transgressions—i.e., actions and categories of people that are seen as out of place by groups in power—one can gain insights into dominant practices and dominant meanings about a place.

Importantly, analysing dominant local meanings does not negate awareness of a locality's interconnections to other scales. I follow Massey's (1997, p. 323) understanding that a place's uniqueness is conceived as the result of a particular "mix of current and historical social relations on different scales." However, in the discussion of the findings, I analytically separate the local and national levels. Previous migration research suggests that some practices can concurrently evoke reactions about what is inappropriate in a locality and a nation-state (e.g., Larsen, 2011), but research has also found that when immigrants are conceived as "others" this can be informed by local characteristics of a place and by local symbolic meanings about a place (Sohoni & Mendez Bickham, 2012). Moreover, research finds that certain aspects of national identity can be deemed as typical for a locality and region (Gullikstad & Kristensen, 2021, p. 51), whilst other research suggests that nationalism can be evoked by local conditions and does not necessarily play out in equal ways in all localities within a nation-state (Jones & Desforges, 2003). It is important to scrutinise the local level to understand the mechanisms involved in international migrants' inclusion processes.

2.2. Natives and In-Migrants in Community Studies

King and Skeldon (2010, p. 1636) highlight that both internal and international migrants potentially experience hostile environments. They are particularly referring to countries with large regional differences in terms of religion, ethnicity, and language. However, numerous community studies and gentrification research have shown that in countries with lower levels of regional diversity, tensions can also exist between longstanding and new residents—sometimes even if in-migrants come from the neighbouring village (Nadel, 1984).

Scepticism towards in-migrants can have symbolic or material causes, which can intersect (Crow & Allan, 1994). In this article, I analyse symbolic tensions, as migrants were seen as welcome contributions to local work life in the localities and did not otherwise appear to be perceived as material threats (Søholt et al., 2018). Community studies document local variations concerning the extent to which communities are open to new members. For example, studies find local differences in the emphasis placed on kinship and local ancestry as markers of local "insideness" (Crow et al., 2001). Regardless of the local reception atmosphere, a recurring topic in this community study research is that natives often want to maintain the local definition of power and "moral ownership" over the place and that in-migrants are expected to follow dominant local norms and "know their place" (e.g., Crow et al., 2001; Phillips, 1986). Many studies find that new residents must prove themselves through participating in highly valorised practices in the locality, at a level of involvement that aligns with local norms of "how things are done" and according to dominant views on migrants' position locally. In many of the studies, leisure practices appear decisive for being accepted locally (e.g., Crow et al., 2001; Phillips, 1986), which also emerged as a finding in the present study. The role of leisure practices for local acceptance aligns with a general tendency that people's leisure activities are perceived as signalling whether they are good citizens or not (Rojek, 2010).

Community studies have been heavily critiqued, for example, for traditionally treating local communities as closed social units and overlooking people's mobility (for an overview of common critiques see Crow, 2018). However, recent findings from other research traditions indicate that identification with local places remains

important for less mobile and more mobile individuals alike (e.g., Gieling et al., 2017; Gielis, 2009). Berg et al. (2016) point out that whilst small local communities are heterogeneous, one should not ignore that locals have *the place* in common, which may be especially relevant in small places. Moreover, Berg et al. (2016, p. 37, translation by the author) highlight that "when there are not so many 'to choose from,' one has to relate to those who are there."

3. Method and Methodology

3.1. The Cases

The two studied municipalities are in Western and Northern Norway and predefined in a larger research project (The Multiethnic Community: Inclusion or Exclusion of Immigrants?) about international migrants' inclusion and exclusion processes in three rural Norwegian municipalities that experienced increased immigration between 2002 and 2012. In 2012, international migrants (hereafter interchangeably referred to as "immigrants") comprised more than 10% of the registered local population in these municipalities, and the municipalities also had a substantial number of temporary international labour migrants. The origins and migration histories of international migrants in the localities were diverse. In both municipalities, there was a substantial number of Eastern European labour migrants. Both municipalities have settled refugees for several decades and have many family reunification migrants (to labour migrants and refugees, as well as marriage). In the Northern case, there were also many Scandinavian labour migrants and Russian-origin residents who had come through work permits or marriage. In the Western case, there were also a substantial number of Southeast Asian marriage migrants who were married to native locals.

In both municipalities, the population expanded from the turn of the 20th century onwards, as the establishment of local industries was followed by a high level of domestic in-migration. Internal in-migration has continued at high levels. After the 2004 EU expansion, a continued local need for labour was increasingly met by international migration.

The municipalities differed in their local labour markets and business structures, except for some shared industries such as local public administration, educational institutions, and service jobs. In the Western case, a high proportion of locals worked in the local shipyards and some smaller industries, while the industries in the Northern case were more diversified and included mining, trade, national public administration, health, tourism, farming, and fishing.

Both municipal centres had under 4,000 inhabitants, a number that is intentionally stated vaguely to preserve case anonymity. Whilst the Northern centre is a small town, the Western centre is a type of small rural place that in Norway is referred to as a *bygd*.

Both municipalities had a variety of local leisure organisations for children. They also had local leisure activities for adults but to a greater extent in the Northern case. The Western municipality borders on another municipality with a large town that has further leisure options, whilst the Northern municipality has a more peripheral localisation in Norway. Both municipal centres had a few small cafés, a library, sites for cultural events, and local gyms. The Northern case also has a large, modern swimming pool. There were a few hotels in the Northern case and one hotel in the Western case. The Northern case also had pubs that

were open in the evening. Both places had a relatively high level of social visibility. For example, when I rented an apartment for the research stay in the Northern municipality centre, I was later told that "everyone" would wonder who I was.

3.2. The Research Stays and Interviews

In the Western case, most of the interviewees lived in the municipal centre and a small place nearby a few minutes' drive away. I will refer to this joint area as Skipsviken. In the Northern case, most of the interviewees lived in the municipal centre, which I call Minetown, and within its closest vicinity, 5–10 minutes car drive away.

I stayed in Skipsviken for five weeks and in Minetown for four weeks. I conducted 58 semi-structured interviews in the Western case (8 natives, 14 internal migrants, and 36 international migrants), and 54 interviews in the Northern case (15 natives, 9 internal migrants, and 30 international migrants). International migrant interviewees had diverse backgrounds in terms of migration reasons and country backgrounds. Each of the three main interviewee categories had approximately the same number of men and women. Interviewees' ages were diverse, ranging from young adults in their early 20s to 86-year-olds. Most interviewees were between 25 and 60 years old. The interviewees were in different family life situations (single/partner/married and with or without children). Interviewees were recruited primarily by contacting people directly in various workplaces, with additional recruitment through a few initial local contacts and snowballing. When the article's analysis draws on international migrants' accounts, this is primarily based on interviews with white, European migrants. Most refugees I recruited—especially in the Northern case—had short residence times and these interviews were marked by not having a shared fluent language. Hence these interviews were less in-depth than the other ones. In the Western case, I also talked to some refugees from Europe, Asia, and Africa who had longer residency and these interviews have been used in the analysis. Their elaborated accounts about local "entrance tickets" and local identity followed the same pattern as in other interviews in the Western case.

As stated, a central overarching question that guided the research was: What are the "entrance tickets" for becoming part of the local community (informed by Eriksen, 2007), and is the entrance ticket attainable for migrants of different backgrounds? As both nationalism research (e.g., Eriksen, 2007) and community studies (Crow et al., 2001) show, some groups' entrance tickets emphasise participating in certain practices and adhering to certain values, whilst other groups' entrance tickets emphasise being part of certain human categories (for example, local, regional and national origin; ethnicity; phenotype). Therefore, it was not a given that newcomers' practices alone guaranteed local acceptance.

The interview guide was developed to learn about dominant local practices, norms, and narratives. The aim was to identify which practices and types of people were commonly deemed as "in place" and "out of place" (Cresswell, 1996), and the implications for migrants' inclusion processes.

Most of the interviews were conducted in Norwegian, except for a few interviews where we spoke English, depending on the interviewees' preference. The interviews lasted between 20 minutes and two hours (depending on interviewees' availability) and were conducted in cafés, homes, and, mostly, at interviewees' workplaces in private meeting rooms. The interview guide was mainly used as a checklist. During the longer interviews, I aimed to cover all the main themes but to make the interviews as close to an everyday

conversation as possible. I brought up the guide's themes when I deemed it natural in the conversation. Sometimes interviewees raised the themes themselves and I followed up. In the shorter interviews, I took a more active role in structuring the conversations and focused on sub-topics in the interview guide which the interviewees seemed to have considerable information on and/or engagement with. As the data accumulated, I added a few questions about central emerging themes that I asked new interviewees about.

In addition to the interviews, I participated in local events and had informal conversations with locals during my stay, which I used as supplementary material. I do not detail this method as the ensuing analysis mainly relies on the interview data.

3.3. Analysis

The analysis of dominant place narratives, norms, and practices is based on interviews with all three interviewee categories, whilst the presentation about expectations of migrants is primarily based on natives' and internal migrants' views. The analysis combined abductive reasoning with grounded theory methods. Abductive reasoning entails moving back and forwards between theory and general knowledge and empirical findings (cf. Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). The grounded theory methods I used were coding, memo writing, and scrutiny of contradictory cases (especially informed by Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978). The interviews were transcribed by the researcher and coded in NVivo. I defined some codes during transcription, and others while working in NVivo. The codes went through several cycles of reorganising and relabelling (Saldaña, 2009, p. 8), which enabled thematic narrowing and theoretical development. After coding, I wrote summaries of the most central codes (following Bazeley, 2013, pp. 228–229). During and after coding, I wrote theoretical and empirical memos that became early foundations for the developing article.

3.4. The Local as the Main Unit of Analysis

Whilst the main unit of analysis is the local level, the study was designed with the intention of allowing empirical openness about the relevance of both the national and local levels for international migrants' inclusion processes. In practice, this means, first, that the interview guide focused on the local level but also included open questions about migrants' inclusion processes which made it possible for interviewees to bring up the national scale if they deemed it relevant. This was also enabled by the conversational interview style. Second, the migrant sample included both internal and international migrants as a means of learning about the relevance of local, regional, and national boundaries for local inclusion processes. Of course, the international migrant sample was a highly diverse category. The strengths and weaknesses of this approach will not be discussed here for reasons of space limitation and focus. Third, the sensitising concepts, which shaped the research proposal, interview guide, and research attention, drew on theories and findings from studies on local identity and local inclusion/exclusion processes as well as national identity and inclusion/exclusion processes in nations. The aim was to scrutinise local inclusion processes whilst retaining an open mind and empirical curiosity towards if, when, and in what ways the national was relevant in international migrants' inclusion processes.

4. Empirical Findings

Analysis of local development actor interviews and local media outlets in other work packages in the larger research project found that longstanding locals expressed appreciation for international migrants' local contributions to work and civil society (Berg-Nordlie, 2018; Søholt et al., 2018). My findings from the interviews with locals in the general population point to local variations concerning *which kinds* of leisure practices seemed conducive to international migrants' acceptance. In Section 4.1, I go most in-depth into the inclusion logics of the Western case, which will be contrasted to central relevant findings from the Northern case in Section, 4.2 (for supplementary findings on the Northern case see Lynnebakke, 2021).

4.1. Skipsviken

4.1.1. Dominant Meanings About "the Local We"

In dominant local narratives about what characterised Skipsviken and its local inhabitants, civic engagement and contributing to the local community were central. Local written historical material echoed in interviewee accounts, presented Skipsviken today and historically as having many locals with a high level of engagement for the local community, displayed through practical efforts inside and outside of work. Here, interviewees especially emphasised organisational involvement as typical. The centrality of organisations was a theme that ran through interviewees' elaborate accounts on a range of topics. Moreover, internal migrants seemed to be an intrinsic part of the dominant narrative about local engagement and were portrayed as important contributors to developing the locality in the past and the present.

To gain knowledge about local identity, the interview guide included the question: "What is a typical local inhabitant like?" The purpose was to gain knowledge about dominant local representations, and not to search for an essentialised image of locals. A recurring description of a "typical local" was someone who was patriotic, active, outgoing, and friendly, who contributed to the local community—for example, through local organisations—and someone who enjoyed outdoor activities and sports. Some interviewees exemplified a typical local with certain immigrants and explained this by highlighting these residents' work contributions and strong participation in local organisations.

Views on entrance tickets to local acceptance partially overlapped with views on the typical inhabitant, namely work/working hard, Norwegian language knowledge, personal style (being open and somewhat outgoing), and contributing locally in their spare time. When I asked interviewees what was important for migrants' and other locals' acceptance, majority Norwegian interviewees often said that one should "show that you wanted to be part of the local community" and that it was important to "show your presence," which usually entailed being involved in local organisations. When I asked majority Norwegians what would make it difficult to be accepted locally, a recurring answer was "staying inside" and not taking the initiative, which interviewees again implicitly or explicitly connected to organisational involvement. For example, one longstanding resident—Linda—thought that a barrier to being part of the local community "could be if you don't seek out anything, if you want to keep to yourself," before immediately adding, "but if you are interested in clubs and organisations, it is easier because that is what the local community is built around." Volunteering was important for local acceptance. Here, interviewees particularly referred to the importance of participating in what in Norway is called *dugnad*. *Dugnads* involve a time-limited collective effort for the

common good. The practice has long historical roots and has been conducted in various settings—from former collective efforts in farming communities to contemporary efforts in leisure organisations and housing associations (Lorentzen & Dugstad, 2011). Whilst similar practices exist in many other countries, *dugnad* is important in Norwegian national identity and has strong normative connotations, to which I will return.

Several internal and international migrants had experienced organised activities and *dugnads* as important arenas for getting to know locals, and some said it was more difficult to become part of the local community if you didn't have children. Whilst several international migrants said they had experienced *dugnads* as sociable and enjoyable, they—like other international migrants—shared that they missed out on more informal local meeting points such as cafés and neighbours visiting each other.

4.1.2. The Social and Normative Roles of Children's Organised Leisure Activities

Adults' involvement in children's leisure organisations came up when interviewees talked about dominant place images, dominant local practices, local social cohesion, and in-migrants' local integration. The most common children's leisure activities were, as in many small Norwegian places, sports clubs and the local brass band. In Norway, running both types of activities typically depends on parental involvement by participating in for example fund-raising activities, *dugnads* at local tournaments, and transporting children to the activities (with parents often taking turns). Many majority Norwegians (both local natives and internal migrants) depicted children's organised leisure activities as crucial for local social cohesion. For example, Eirik said that locally, children's football, the brass band, and handball "tie us together." There were no similar statements about adult leisure organisations, although some described these as local meeting points. The emphasis on the social role of children's leisure activities fits into a broader picture where many interviewees—from all three interviewee categories—described the locality as centred around the nuclear family and its activities. This was also supported by views and experiences about who was considered to be more on the margins locally, such as elderly residents, couples with grown-up children, and single adults without children.

Some interviewees thought there had been a decline in other local social meeting points, such as volunteering for shared local facilities. The stronger prevalence of children's organised leisure activities in recent years has been a general trend in Norway (Nordbakke, 2019), as is the tendency for these activities to be common social meeting points for adults (Frønes, 1997; see also Stefansen et al., 2016)—a feature that has also been found in rural Norway (Stachowski, 2020). However, this trend does not necessarily mean that such activities signify local social cohesion in all Norwegian localities, as will be clear when I later present findings from the Northern case.

There seemed to be a general worry that there were not enough people involved in children's leisure activities and that their continued existence was vulnerable. For example, a few adults played in a local children's brass band to make up a full band. Moreover, interviewees pointed out that all parents had to contribute by volunteering so as to not negatively affect other parents' workload. In addition, involvement had strong normative aspects that related to views on what it meant to be a good local.

As stated in Section 2.1., dominant norms, narratives, and practices shape the ways certain actions are interpreted (Cresswell, 1996; Shields, 1991). When I asked majority Norwegians open questions about local

inclusion and what they thought their route to local acceptance was, participating in children's organised leisure or other organisations was sometimes the first issue that sprung to mind. Moreover, when I asked whether locals tended to view temporary international labour migrants as part of the local community, the unanimous answer among majority Norwegians was "no," which was explained by these migrants' non-participation in organisations and local events. An interviewee said with disapproval that temporary international labour migrants would play football only among themselves. Relatedly, a native local sports club representative commented that he would like to incorporate bocce in the local sports club because a group of longstanding settled immigrants occasionally played this sport in the town centre. His aspiration could have been motivated by a desire for local meeting places but also could be read as a local (and national) default of structuring leisure activities into organised forms.

Majority Norwegians differed in their views of immigrants' levels of local volunteerism; some thought it was high or satisfactory, whilst others were concerned that it was not high enough. For example, the native local Else shared her fears that increased immigration could be followed by a weakened sense of local responsibility:

> Else: If there will be too many of them [immigrants], I fear that our own will erode a bit.

> Interviewer: What do you think can erode?

> Else: Doing your share. The *dugnad*. Responsibility for the community.

I will not discuss the possible reasons for variations in majority Norwegians' views on immigrants' participation levels. What matters for the discussion is the way immigrants' participation was conceived, regardless of the actual participation levels. In some of the interviews with majority Norwegians, not only local social spatialisation but also national social spatialisation was evoked when they talked about immigrants' involvement in organisations and volunteering. A few of these interviewees expressed a sense of urgency about increasing immigrants' participation in certain volunteer practices, a concern that is also seen in some public discourse and policy documents in Norway (e.g., NOU 2011:14; see Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, 2011). Moreover, some statements echoed the role of volunteerism (*dugnad*) and civic engagement in Norwegian national identity (cf. Rugkåsa, 2010). For example, a teacher in the local upper secondary school said it was important that immigrant pupils in vocational educational tracks passed social science classes before going on to placements in local industries because: "We see that if our local communities are to function, we…need to teach [pupils] a bit about Norwegian *dugnad* culture [and] Norwegian work culture." In such statements, immigrants' spare time activities seemed to be interpreted as a reflection of their cultural integration in Norway and not as a matter of individual and family preference. This contrasted with how natives' and internal migrants' degree of participation was portrayed by majority Norwegians. For example, when interviewees talked about local majority Norwegians' (non-)participation in *dugnads*, this was framed solely about whether they took local responsibility or not, whilst no comments connected this to being a good national citizen.

To understand the normative connotations of such statements about immigrants' participation it is necessary to highlight common social meanings of organisations and volunteerism in Norway. As in other Nordic countries, there are a high number of voluntary organisations in Norway. Organisations have played an

important historical and contemporary role and led to widespread social practices of egalitarianism, which is an important value in Norway (Bendixsen et al., 2018). Associations are often regarded as arenas for learning democratic processes and for creating a sense of community in Norway (Hagelund & Loga, 2009). In national policy documents, maintaining a high level of organisational involvement is deemed important for sustaining a democratic society by promoting tolerance, trust, and social interaction between different groups of people (e.g., Arbeids- og Inkluderingsdepartementet, 2007; Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, 2011). From the 1980s onwards, sports association memberships increased in parallel with a decline in the memberships of political parties, unions, and labour organisations (Folkestad et al., 2015). Contributions to leisure organisations, as to many other local organisations, are often conceived as civic action that can benefit not only one's children but also other children, supporting the vitality of the local community as a whole (Carlsson & Haaland, 2006) and even promoting national cohesion (cf. Horst et al., 2020). The historical and contemporary centrality of organisational engagement in Norway can lead to these forms of civic action being highly valorised, whilst other forms of contributions to the common good more rarely lead to recognition of being a good citizen (Horst et al., 2020; Jdid, 2021).

Whilst the criteria for being seen as a good local appeared to apply to all locals, an immigrant origin seemed to filter some longstanding majority Norwegians' interpretation of immigrants' actions and practices. The narratives that contrast majority Norwegians' participation levels with immigrants' participation levels in local volunteering seemed readily available, reflecting the role of volunteerism in Norwegian national identity and the often-strong valorisation of civil society organisations in Norway. However, despite these interviewees' references to how leisure activities are "done" in Norway, they did not express a concern for national cohesion and national cultural continuity as such. Rather, their references to the "Norwegian way of doing things" appeared as additional arguments for sustaining valorised local practices. Their main concerns seemed to be about how to sustain local meeting places and practices that were experienced as vulnerable, thereby ensuring local cultural continuity and local cohesion.

4.2. Minetown

4.2.1. Local Narratives on Diversity and Mobility

Despite Minetown's long history of internal in-migration, this was—in contrast to Skipsviken—not part of dominant narratives on "the local we." One likely reason is centre–periphery tensions. Minetown is located far from the capital where national policy decisions are made. Historically, there has been North–South antagonism; and in the early stages of the municipality's population growth, many in-migrants from Southern Norway had local power roles. In the interviews, North–South antagonism seemed to prevail for some locals, though expressed in a playful, tongue-in-cheek manner (cf. Eidheim, 1993). When mobility and diversity were part of narratives about the place, references were made to the local Norwegian, Sámi and Kven populations, and the long history of cross-border mobility to and from Russia.

4.2.2. Wilderness Practices and Local Identity

As in Skipsviken, leisure practices were a central topic in the Minetown interviews when people talked about local identity and local "entrance tickets." However, compared to Skipsviken, interviewees expressed a different inclusion logic and emphasised different practices. Interviews with different categories of

Minetown locals pointed to wilderness leisure activities being common local practices and that they were central in dominant narratives about "the local we." Many interviewees described a "typical local" as someone who liked outdoor life (e.g., going to one's cottage, going hunting, berry-picking, or fishing). The number of cottages in the municipality is high, and many of these are owned by people who live in the same municipality. From early Friday afternoon throughout the weekend, there were notably fewer people in the town centre compared to weekdays. Most local natives expressed that they identified with local nature and wilderness activities. Wilderness enjoyment almost appeared to be a local norm. A local native, Stella, told me that she was not personally interested in wilderness activities (which seemed to be a matter of degree, as she enjoyed both kayaking and spending time in her cottage) and laughingly noted that when others shared long, detailed accounts of wilderness activities such as hunting, she would become quiet, trying not to reveal her boredom. Relatedly, some internal and international labour migrants had experienced that their acceptance by longstanding locals had been facilitated by sharing that they themselves enjoyed and participated in wilderness activities.

Although Minetown had many leisure organisations for adults and children, this was not depicted as part of local identity. By extension, migrants' participation in such activities did not evoke similar normative statements about being a good local as in Skipsviken. Moreover, there were no similar statements about the vulnerability of sustaining these activities. This could reflect the larger population in Minetown but seemed more to reflect that locals did not define themselves by these activities. By extension, local cultural continuity and local cohesion were not portrayed as threatened by whether newcomers participated or not in local organisations and volunteerism. As in Skipsviken, some interviewees thought there had been a decline in local informal meeting places in recent years but in Minetown such comments did not concern a decline in volunteer events for the whole local community. Instead, interviewees talked about a drop in spontaneous neighbour visits and that people spent more time online and watching TV. Some also said that today, nuclear families and close friends spent more time together in cottages and other wilderness activities than before, which one interviewee in his 60s explained by the fact that today, there were better roads and that families often had more than one car.

4.2.3. Migrant Inclusion and Dominant Local Practices and Norms

Some Minetown natives thought that new residents' local social integration could be a challenge because many longstanding locals spent a lot of their spare time in their cottages or with other wilderness activities with their closest social circles. Similar sentiments were expressed among local development actors interviewed by my colleague Susanne Søholt in another work package in the larger research project.

Other natives, however, thought that new residents could easily build their local networks by joining (outdoor) leisure organisations for adults. Such statements sounded more like recommendations for promoting migrants' well-being than marked by the sense of urgency some Skipsviken interviewees expressed about immigrants' civic engagement. This did, however, not mean that all statements about migrants' leisure practices were devoid of norms. A recurring statement was that new residents should make the most of their opportunities locally and not complain about a lack of options. A local native, Arne, expressed this view:

> Interviewer: How do you think one becomes part of this local community?

Arne: There is a very good story about a Swede who came to work here as a builder. He came on a Tuesday. On Wednesday, he had gotten in touch with the local diving club; on Thursday he went diving with the club. Only your own interest decides whether you get accepted. I don't think anyone refuses you to join if you turn up and ask. If you don't want to have contact with locals, don't want to have anything to do with them, you won't have contact with them either.

Arne's statement points to a localised frame for how immigrants could act "in place" (cf. Cresswell, 1996). His seemingly indifferent statement about in-migrants' leisure practices was normative in a different way than in normative comments in Skipsviken. His statement suggested that if newcomers did not seek out hobbies, they could only blame themselves if they did not become socially integrated locally and indicated that Arne had a take-it-or-leave-it attitude about what the place had to offer. Implicitly, one should not bother with or complain about established locals, who were busy with their own lives and social circles.

The findings also suggested that the climate and dark season in the Northern case contributed to the different local reception atmospheres. Minetown interviewees sometimes talked about "frantic" outdoor activities during the lighter and warmer months and a more withdrawn lifestyle during the winter, which in both cases could entail little time to include newcomers. Again using statements by Arne, he thought a consequence of the local climate and dark season was the need to have hobbies, stating: "We don't live here because of the weather, and not because of the sunlight either, right? Because when we crawl out in November, it is pitch dark until February….That is when you should have hobbies." He noted that dark winters meant that spring through autumn could be exceptionally intense outdoor time periods, with berry picking, hunting, and fishing, as well as maintenance of gardens and houses. He said that it was smart for migrants to join leisure organisations, as settled locals were absorbed in their own hectic seasonal activities.

Whilst narratives in Skipsviken about immigrants' organisational involvement sometimes drew on national meanings about such activities, this was not the case in Minetown interviews concerning wilderness activities. This is despite that nature and closeness to nature is an important part of Norwegian national identity (e.g., Gullestad, 1992) and outdoor leisure is a national policy area. Instead, interviewees' descriptions of wilderness activities as typical for the municipality were sometimes contrasted with the capital, again pointing to centre–periphery tensions playing into local and regional identity. There were no statements among majority Norwegians that immigrants should be active in outdoor leisure activities for the sake of their integration in Norway. Moreover, international migrants who had experienced wilderness appreciation as a route to local acceptance explained this through local, and not national, practices and place meanings.

5. Discussion

The findings show how social spatialisation informs locals' views on how migrants should best adjust in order to be locally accepted. Dominant narratives about localities and nation-states are symbolic resources that can be picked up by individuals in given situations (cf. Gullestad, 2002). The aim has not been to give an essentialised picture of Minetown and Skipsviken and their locals, but to demonstrate how individual stances drew on a shared repertoire of dominant local—and sometimes national—meanings which shaped the ways migrants' practices were interpreted and valorised.

In the findings, the centrality of local identity for inclusion processes shows the continued relevance of place-based communities also in a time of high mobility and interconnectedness. Interviews with a wide variety of locals suggested that all residents could face similar normative expectations to be involved in certain leisure practices. Additionally, the findings from Minetown show how a locality's social and geographical position within a nation-state can influence local norms about what is expected of internal and international migrants.

It is important to avoid making presumptions prior to research as well as concluding prematurely during the analysis that findings from one local context are representative of what transpires within a nation-state (cf. Fitzgerald, 2012, p. 1737). The findings show that there can be distinct inclusion/exclusion dynamics in different localities within the same nation-state and they support the importance of research designs that make it possible to disentangle and remain empirically open to the relevance of both national and local influences for international migrants' inclusion processes.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that even though certain national narratives about expectations of immigrants are available, the use of these narratives can depend on their relevance in the local context. The findings suggest that whether national narratives about what characterises a good national citizen are used locally depends on whether they concur with dominant local narratives about what characterises a good local citizen. In Skipsviken, expectations of immigrants' participation in organisations sometimes drew on national narratives about the importance of organisational involvement for immigrants' integration as nationals. However, this appeared as additional arguments for maintaining local social cohesion rather than expressing concern for national social cohesion and immigrants' integration in Norway as such. Some nationalism researchers depict national identification as something that pervades everything, including people's self-identification, everyday consciousness, and material surroundings (e.g., Billig, 1995; Kapferer, 1988). By contrast, the findings suggest that interviewees first and foremost identified as locals, were concerned about local cultural continuity, and did not appear primarily concerned about national cultural continuity.

The findings also point to the contemporary relevance of what are commonly regarded as outdated community studies. The findings echo studies from decades ago about different local inclusion logics in different local communities and the relevance of leisure practices for new residents' acceptance. Hence, there is no need for analysis of international migrants' local reception atmospheres in small rural places to start "from scratch" and to solely build on international migration research and theory from urban settings. The processes can also be discussed in the light of valuable insights garnered through internal migration research. Drawing on this research tradition about migrant-native relations can also contribute to understanding when norms and practices at different scales become relevant in migrants' inclusion processes and how such meanings may interact. By extension, the findings support that it is beneficial with a closer methodological and theoretical integration of research on international and internal migration. Both research fields have garnered insights that can increase and nuance understandings in the other research tradition.

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