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European Cities Planning for Asylum

Editor

Frank Eckardt

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Editorial

European Cities Planning for Asylum

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Abstract
Despite the high priority refugees are given in the public and political discussion, urban planning has not yet started to systematically consider the role of planning in asylum policy. Mostly, the subject of refugees' arrival is addressed in local projects and housing without framing challenges and opportunities in the national and European context. A wider discussion on the used terminology of "integration" is missing just as much as a self-critical reflection on the orientation of planning discourses on the issue of housing only. In this editorial, our thematic issue "European Cities Planning for Asylum" is introduced and presented.

Keywords
accommodation; asylum; cities; Europe; housing; refugees; segregation; urban planning

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1. Introduction

European asylum policies have been a hot topic for many years now. As a major political subject in many European countries, the question on how to deal with the arrival of refugees in Europe remains highly controversial and has had a major impact on the rise of populism. Surveys show that it is not the that the European citizens reject refugees in general but are not accepting the way the process of integration is organized (Connor, 2018). The European states are failing, in the opinion of many of their citizens, to ensure the integration of refugees, which in return led to the creation of a "crisis". The talk about the "refugee crisis" has proliferated and originated a broader narrative of scepticism about the European unification, and even more about liberal democracy. It appears true that there is a need to consider the instruments, policies, strategies and narratives in asylum planning for refugees in Europe.

It seems obvious therefore, that the discipline of urban planning would be strongly contributing its built-up wisdom and knowledge in reaction to the publicly problematized—and partly truly problematic—situation of refugees in European cities. In fact, scholarly response to the arrival of refugees has stayed local or national but it has not yet reached a European level of reflection. While a sense of urgency has become alarming in many parts of Europe, Urban Planning has not yet found a common ground in searching for solutions.

The differences in planning systems and approaches across Europe are certainly an obstacle to the creation of any kind of European planning policy for asylum. It is, however, too early to draw any conclusion on the potential frames for such a policy and the probability—or even the desirableness—of a unified European approach. So far, even an overview of the different national asylum systems and their relationship to urban planning is missing.

2. Content

It is the intention of this thematic issue to contribute to the creation of a systematic knowledge of how different national planning systems and cultures are related to the integration of refugees in local contexts. A wide range of questions are related to the subject of asylum in the city, which the following articles have taken up. The different

case studies need to be regarded as reflections on the different roles of the planning institutions and national legal frameworks. It is assumed commonly that urban planning does not only fulfil a role within a complex field of relationships to other institutions; it also works with its own concepts, narratives, and interpretations of what is perceived as necessary for the integration of refugees. Especially housing strategies for refugees and their impact on the individual integration in society in general are at the core of these articles.

In this first place, the idea of settlement and camps as the only subject in urban planning regarding refugees needs to be overcome. As Dalal, Darweesh, Misselwitz and Steigemann (2018) convincingly argue in their article, refugees are urban actors practicing spatial behaviour, which has a transformative impact even in the classical refugee camp. Taking the topic of asylum seriously, however, more conceptual reconsiderations about planning are becoming obvious.

If urban planning is no longer thought of as a top-down management affair, the inclusion of citizens becomes especially important in regard to asylum. As d'Auria, Daher and Rohde (2018) work out in their article based on a comparative study of three European cities, urban planning might not have the right narrative for such an integrative approach. They suggest shifting from terms like integration to narratives of solidarity.

In Doomernik and Ardon (2018), the discrepancies between the local and national level regarding the hosting of refugees have been identified as a reason for the inadequacy of contemporary planning approaches in Europe. The investigation of the role of cities in the Europeanization of asylum policies (the so-called Common European Asylum System/CEAS) demonstrates the leaking integration of cities in the discussion of integration of refugees, especially into the labour market.

The differences between local approaches is also the starting point for Neis, Meier and Furukawazono (2018), who look at three examples from Germany. Here, the focus lies on how German citizens and refugees interact and integrate, especially with regard to the spatial dimension of integration. Urban architecture projects for housing and work opportunities are seemingly most important in the first "cycle" of integration, which advocates for an approach that does not reduce urban planning to hosting refugees somehow and somewhere but works with a long term perspective and holistic. Werner et al. (2018) are as well pointing at the importance of local policies. However, their work underlines the contestation of these policies towards refugees in the specific context of urban development. As exemplified in the case of Leipzig, the local approach towards refugees needs to be contextualized in the conflictual situation of housing in general and national governance strategies.

Meier (2018), in an article on the Dutch case of Kerkrade, frames the question of refugee integration also into an analysis of state-city relationships. She frames her analysis in the broader discussion on scale in Urban Studies. The term does not only reflect morphological or administrative conceptualisation but is motivated by a residential and economical categorisation. The focus on scale can help understanding the interplay of refugees with their socio-spatial fields of opportunities, especially in mid-sized cities. Researching two cities of the same category in Germany, Seethaler-Wari (2018) takes a different approach and argues for the importance of institutional settings in cities and neighbourhoods. In her article, she also looks at the urban context in its complexity but puts emphasis, also, on the attitude of refugees.

The attitudes of refugees might not be something that can be seen as static, and more research needs to be undertaken in order to understand the intersections between the relationships of refugees and hosting communities. Czischke and Huisman (2018), with their ethnographic work in Amsterdam, have indicated that social mix and the self-organisation of refugees are promising subjects for future urban planning and integration policies.

3. Perspectives

The articles in this thematic issue are provoking further research in different directions. By looking at asylum policies in Europe, discussions in urban planning of a more profound nature are addressed. Urban planning in this context needs to be understood as institution of a multi-layered state. Competences and obligations, relationships to other institutions and to the citizenry are framed by the wider political system and, to some extent, by the European unification process. In this regard, the concept of "urban governance" (Le Galès, 2003) as a broadening of the state activities to steer society seems to be at stake. While governance theories look at the embedding of planning, planning as a cultural setting (Othengrafen, 2012) based on specific narratives, institutional dynamics, internal conceptualisation and self-interpretation is important with regard to the attitude of urban planners towards refugees. Despite similar European approaches towards refugees, different understandings of planning concepts and discourses on the local and national level are interfering with a future concept for European asylum planning policies. A European planning for integration will remain a weak legal concept and, therefore, requires a massive work of interpretation by planners themselves.

4. Conclusion

Cities, as all articles in this issue demonstrate, are the political and spatial field for the integration of refugees. Research on this field works with the assumption that cities are the main field of integration of refugees. Nonetheless, so far, research has not made a strong case in seeing refugees as a special group and rather see refugees as being the same as any kind of migrant (Borkert, Bosswick, Heckmann, & Lüken-Klaßen, 2007). Current research has identified different dynamics of integration

which unfold after the settlement of migrants (Poteet & Nourpanah, 2016). This, so far, has been confirming the relevance of housing location for the further development of the induvial integration process. The physical access to jobs, education, social infrastructure and urban amenities remains of crucial significance, as well as the question of neighbourhood effects, segregation and spatial mismatch.

While this thematic issue has not paid much attention to the definition of the "refugee" it is clear that urban planning cannot escape defining the social group that is here addressed. In practice, a special policy for a group that skips even a clear juridical category might contradict universal approaches in urban planning, like housing for all. Nevertheless, refugees are a particular group of inhabitants which are characterized by specific social aspects, in particular the remaining uncertainty regarding their asylum status, their future position in society, the possibilities of return to their home country. The question remains open in how far the social abilities of refugees to integrate society are based on their psychological well-being (Black, 2001) and how this is supported by urban planning practices and policies.

Supported by observations in most EU countries, planning and management of hosting refugees has been resulting so far in a housing situation that is characterized by social and physical segregation. However, new approaches to segregation support the assumption that not only housing segregation needs to be considered but all domains which are relevant in everyday life likewise (van Ham & Tammaru, 2016). This leads to the conceptualisation of local integration and urban planning that needs to go beyond the providence of housing for refugees and to a holistic plan for social integration in general and a reconsideration of the terminology of integration in general.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

Planning the Ideal Refugee Camp? A Critical Interrogation of Recent Planning Innovations in Jordan and Germany

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Abstract

With the increase of refugee movements since 2014 in Europe and the Near East, the debate of how to plan appropriate shelters and emergency accommodation has gained a new momentum. Established techno-managerial approaches have been criticised as inappropriate, and the professional community of planners and architects was increasingly drawn into debates for alternative solutions. This article traces the "innovations" that promise better, more effective, and more humane emergency shelters using the examples of the "Tempohomes" in Berlin as well as the Jordanian refugee camps of Zaatari and Azraq. In both cases, planners were employed to address the ambivalent reality of protracted refugee camps and include "lessons" from failures of earlier solutions. While the article acknowledges the genuine attempt of planners to engage with the more complex needs and expectations of refugees, a careful look at the results of the planning for better camps reveals ambivalent outcomes. As camps acquire a new visual appearance, closer to housing, which mixes shelter design with social spaces and services as essential parts of the camp; these "innovations" bear the danger of paternalistic planning and aestheticisation, camouflaging control under what seems to be well-intended and sensitive planning. The article focuses on refugees' agency expressed in critical camp studies to interrogate the planning results. While recent critical refugee studies have demanded recognition of refugees as urban actors which should be included in the co-production of the spatial reality of refugee accommodations, new planning approaches tend to result in a shrinking of spaces of self-determination and self-provisioning of refugees.

Keywords

agency; asylum; control; design; innovation; migration; refugee camps; urban planning

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1. Refugees as Urban Actors: The Humanitarian Technocratic Planning and the Concepts of Agency and Control in Refugee Camps

Relief organisations and governments often perceive refugees in numbers. The urge to make decisions about how to deal with the "waves of refugees" crossing borders can be very daunting. This results in a wide variety of humanitarian and governmental policies, programs, and responses aiming to contain the aftermath of mass displacements haunting the security and safety of receiving countries. Through techno-managerial arrangements, which tailor generic emergency manuals, guidelines, and policies with the agendas of host governments and other powers, humanitarian organisations seek the best possible pragmatic response to a specific crisis.

Critical camp studies have looked at these responses from the perspective of refugees that feature in official response strategies primarily as passive victims and beneficiaries. How techno-managerial arrangements have

the potential to result in de-humanising, exploitative power systems has fuelled numerous critiques. In his influential writings, Giorgio Agamben (1998, p. 78) described the refugee camp as the "the absolute, pure, impassable biopolitical space", where control over life and death can be practised. The excessive control and disciplinary power that can be performed in a refugee camp are theoretically derived from the political otherness of refugees entering the body of the nation-state as unwanted, undesirable others (Agier, 2011; Said, 2002). Indeed, the perception of the camp as "other space" is strongly intertwined with the political notions of nationalism, and thus the camp becomes a spatial container for those who have "no right to have rights" (Arendt, 1951).

But other scholars pointed out that camp residents, rather than silently succumbing to the pre-meditated managerial and organisational structuring of daily life in a camp, tend to develop their own counter-strategies to negotiate its spaces and structures. These practices in which refugees engage in the co-production of spaces and subvert models of control and exclusion is what we refer to as refugee agency. Cities and urban areas can play a vital role in facilitating refugees' agency through their heterogeneity, autonomy, and the rich and complex environments they offer (see for example Alshadfan, 2015; Arous, 2013; Fawaz, 2016; Fawaz, Gharbieh, Harb, & Salamé, 2018). Even refugee camps themselves, where controlling and disciplining are given a wider margin to be exercised, are appropriated and reshaped through refugee agency.

Studying the urbanisation of refugee camps showed how refugees' agency dramatically reshaped the spatiality and physicality, as well as the socio-economy, of camps (Dalal, 2014; Martin, 2015; Misselwitz, 2009; Oesch, 2017; Ramadan, 2013; Sanyal, 2010). For instance, Romola Sanyal (2010) explained how, despite the policing practices of the Lebanese government and the attempt to maintain the temporal nature of the camp, Palestinian refugees managed to urbanise it through the incremental practice of building under the tents and bribing policemen. She points out that "the Palestinian case shows that refugees are active agents in the creation and consolidation of their community, even under conditions of duress" (Sanyal, 2010, p. 885). Therefore, and by recognising the importance of agency in addressing the spatiality of the camp, scholars called for alternative theorisations of the camp to the one offered by Agamben, where control and agency are both equally, and sometimes ambiguously, recognised and addressed (see for instance Isin & Rygiel, 2007; Katz, 2017; Oesch, 2017).

Amidst the growing interest in refugees' agency and how resistance to oppression can "camouflage" itself and find discursive ways to be expressed (Sanyal, 2010, p. 883), it is often forgotten that control has the same ability to acquire new forms. In the literature on camps, control is either perceived as a result of the sovereign nature of the humanitarian regime (Agier, 2010; Hyndman, 1997; Kagan, 2011) or considered as an intrinsic part of the camp's spatiality. In his lectures at the College du France, Foucault described how camps are planned on a disciplinary basis. He said:

> A town is built where previously there was nothing. How is it built? The famous form of the Roman camp is used, which, along with the military institution, was being reutilised at that time as a fundamental instrument of discipline....In the case of towns constructed in the form of the camp, we can say that the town is not thought of on the basis of the larger territory, but on the basis of a smaller, geometrical figure, which is a kind of architectural module, namely the square or rectangle, which is in turn subdivided into other squares or rectangles. (Foucault, 2007, p. 31)

Despite this historical perspective that Foucault offered, interrogations of planning in refugee camps tend to either attempt to improve its "architectural modules" (Kennedy, 2004, 2008), or criticise its standardised, humanitarian and techno-managerial planning (Herz, 2007). We, therefore, argue that the ways in which power, control, and agency are excised through camps' planning remain under explored. This article aims to explore how, just like refugee agency, control also manages to camouflage itself and find alternative ways to be exercised in the context of refugee camps. By focusing on planning—its principles, actors, and outcomes, we do not simply aim to re-assert that planning is power and value permeated (Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2002; Friedmann, 1993); but that it can be used to exercise control over refugees while claiming the opposite. In particular, we will reveal how the planning of refugee accommodations serves as a tool to encompass concepts such as sustainability and long-term solutions, while simultaneously serving the purpose of camouflaging, aestheticising, and neutralising disciplinary planning and control over refugees. For this, we conceptualise control as monitoring and surveilling, as social and society control in Deleuze's sense (drawing on Foucault's work), but also managing and organising everyday life—over the camp space (Deleuze, 1992; Foucault, 1977). Control is here seen as more than disciplining, as involuntary participation in "mechanisms of control that are equal to the harshest of confinements" (Deleuze, 1992, p. 4), as a "spirit" of the place that renders social systems into numerically measurable entities, thus taking away individuality. *Control* means then that the controlling regime is only interested in the position of the individual person within a mass—in our case, refugees to be controlled within a camp (cf. Deleuze, 1992). This is on the one hand, while on the other, we perceive agency as the ways in which refugees express individuality, choice, and voice their claims at times when they are least allowed or expected to do so. Thus, agency is not always bluntly expressed—as will be explained in this article, but could be recognised through performativity (cf. Häkli, Pascucci, & Kallio, 2017), and the subtle negotiations with controlling regimes (Sanyal, 2010).

2. Methodology and Approach

In order to address what we perceive as a global trend in camps' planning, we have chosen two contexts in which the planning of refugee camps did not only play a crucial role in managing "refugee crises"; but have also witnessed transitional shifts in planning where new claims for innovation and development were tested. These two contexts are Jordan, which built several camps for Syrians between 2012 and 2014 and Germany, which has become a destination for many refugees, including Syrians, and has thus produced various new typologies of emergency accommodations especially between 2015 and 2018. In this article, we acknowledge the complex and often hybrid and ambiguous realities of camps—spatially and managerially, and their categorisations (see for instance Agier, 2011, pp. 37–59; Mcconnachie, 2016; Oesch, 2017). We are also aware of the political and historical conditions which have made refugee camps "the" appropriate spaces to deal with refugees in the Global South, in opposition to asylum and detention centres used to disrupt refugees' movement to the Global North (Agier, 2011, 2016). While both points will be taken into consideration throughout the analysis, our article aims to find a cross-cutting perspective—in this case, the role of control and agency on camps' planning as a way to challenge these long-established dichotomies and categorisations regarding refugees and camps in different contexts. This approach is not only growing among scholars from different disciplines (see for instance Coddington, 2018; Martin, 2015; Pasquetti, 2015; Sanyal, 2014), but is one that we perceive as a crucial and necessary step towards the development of knowledge in this area of research.

In order to explore how control is being camouflaged in the planning of new camps, the article follows a case study approach. In Jordan, it looks at two concrete examples: Zaatari and Azraq camps built in 2012 and 2014. While in Germany, and due to the ephemeral nature of refugees' management and their spaces, the article looks at different camps encountered between 2016 and 2018. Empirical data in Zaatari and Azraq is obtained through various periods of ethnographic fieldwork carried out by Ayham Dalal during 2014 and 2018. These include participatory observations, walk-alongs, in-depth and semi-structured interviews with camp residents and planners during about 30 visits to Zaatari and Azraq camps. This is on the one hand, while on the other, the Berlin case studies started as multiple encounters, experiences and observations noted by the authors between 2014 and 2018. These include the experience of Amer Darweesh going through the asylum process and living in accommodation centres during 2015 and 2016 in parallel to exploratory fieldworks conducted by Anna Steigemann and Ayham Dalal in emergency accommodation centres (Moabit, Lichtenberg, Westend, Tempelhof, Kreuzberg, and Neukölln), with a total of 20 structured interviews with Syrian asylum seekers during 2016, 15 ethnographic and more conversational interviews, supplemented with various walk-alongs and participant observation phases in and around the different accommodations from 2016 until 2018. Empirical data on Tempohomes or "container villages") specifically at Wollenburger Straße and Tempelhof-Columbiadamm) has been obtained by Amer Darweesh, Ayham Dalal, and Philipp Missewlitz during 2018. These include participatory observations, walk-alongs, in-depth and semi-structured interviews with camp residents, volunteers working for operators, and site planners at Berliner Real-Estate Management (BIM) and the State Office for Refugees Affairs (LAF). What started as exploratory fieldwork has been fostered in a research project under the title "Architectures of Asylum", which looks at practices of appropriations in refugee camps in Berlin and Jordan. Thus, this article serves as a starting point for the research project, which is part of the Collaborative Research Centre (SFB) 1265 "Re-Figuration of Space" in Berlin.

The article applies a comparative cross-case study approach (Gerring, 2011) that is geared towards testing our hypothesis, that the recent planning models of refugee camps are used to camouflage control over refugees while claiming the opposite. In order to capture the interplay between control and agency, we focus on the everyday practices in the camps, and thus, work with a practice-theory approach (Reckwitz, 2003; Schatzki, 1996). With this focus on the practices, the spatial form—as a camp or collective accommodation—is conceptualised as a result of the (often conflicting) practices of those who plan, design, organise, manage, and control life in the respective refugee accommodations and their residents. With this methodological approach and the discussed critical analysis of the main recent theoretical concepts and approaches that explain the logic of and innovations in the more technocratic humanitarian regimes' planning of camps and accommodations and the role of refugee agency (or the lack thereof), we focus our comparative study on the concrete changes in the planning of Azraq camp (opened in 2014) as compared to Zaatari camp (2012), as well as on the innovations in the planning of the emergency accommodation Tempelhof airport (2015) to the planning and establishment of Tempohomes (2017) in the following part.

3. Refugee Camps in Jordan: From Emergency Response to "Sustainable" Settlements

Jordan is a country that has been long affected by migratory movements. Since its establishment, it has received various waves of refugees, of which the Palestinian remains the most remarkable. This has resulted in more than 10 Palestinian refugee camps scattered around the country (see Al-Husseini, 2010; Chatelard, 2010). Due to these precarious conditions, Jordan did not sign the Geneva Refugee Convention in 1951, and instead, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees

(UNHCR; Al-Kilani, 2014). The unprecedented war on the other side of the borders in 2011 has led thousands of Syrians to slowly seek refuge in Jordan, and especially in the North. Most of the families were able to find silent refuge among families which share a history of kinship transcending colonial borders. Yet the continuous influx of refugees started to affect the underdeveloped structures and services within the Jordanian north. At that time, Syrians, who were rather treated as guests (Achilli, 2015; ILO, 2015), were forced to register as 'refugees' (JRC & IFRC, 2012). This did not only turn them into humanitarian subjects but meant that they would become recognised and managed under the humanitarian regime. This transition was coupled with a growing frustration between Jordanians living in underdeveloped areas and Syrians, leading the majority of Jordanians to consensus that Syrians should be accommodated in camps (CSS, 2013). Today, however, only 20% of about 650,000 registered Syrian refugees live in UNHCR camps (including Zaatari, Azraq, the Emirati-Jordanian and King Abdullah Park). These camps are also partly managed by the Jordanian government through the Syrian Refugee Affairs Directorate (SRAD). While accommodating Syrians in camps had its own dynamics, in this article, we will shed the light on how these camps were planned, and how the concepts of control and agency started to shape their spaces and the overall discourse on camp planning.

3.1. The Planning of Zaatari Camp

The opening of the Zaatari camp took place under precarious conditions. Relief organisations were given a mere 19 days to prepare a refugee camp in a deserted field near Zaatari village in the north of Jordan (Al-Rai, 2012; UNHCR, 2012a). The initial plan was to accommodate 15,000 persons from temporary accommodation centres near Ramtha as well as from the borders (UNHCR, 2012b). But as numbers rose on a daily basis, the plan soon proved completely insufficient. Refugees were immediately provided with the classical UNHCR tent to shelter families of five members, but other facilities and infrastructure such as shared toilets and kitchens had to wait. The early growth of the camp, therefore, was not conditioned by a master plan, but rather through self-organised squatting practices initiated by refugees themselves. Initially, UNHCR and relief organisations did not exercise control over the resulting settlement arrangements as they were too busy to provide infrastructure (Dalal, 2014; UNHCR, 2014b).

A re-alignment to the standards and guidelines of UNHCR's official *Handbook for Emergencies* (UNHCR, 2007) only became possible when planning for the camp's extension started. According to Mohammad Jertila, the UNHCR site planner during a personal interview in 2014: "the handbook [became] our bible....It is, however, our responsibility to respond to challenges as they present themselves on the ground". Consequently, and in contrast to the fluid shelter-space that had evolved organically around the camp's entrance and main street, official planning guidelines were now imposed to lay down a rigid spatial order in the form of a grid and a clear layout of functions which aimed to regularise and control life in the camp. The new camp was divided into districts with clear boundaries, each demarcated by a wide asphalted street. Districts were made up of standardised blocks composed of a matrix of shelters (caravans), arranged in a grid, and surrounded by communal latrines, kitchens, and multi-use spaces. The orderly vision of how districts, services, blocks, accesses, and infrastructures linked together in a master plan (see Figure 1) and stand in stark contrast to the initial camp.

The newly planned part intended to distribute new arrivals in an orderly fashion, and to assist in relocating those living in the older organic part (UNHCR, 2013b, p. 9). Yet, this strategy proved unrealistic to enforce given the highly dynamic situation on the ground. The number of registered residents jumped from 50,000 in January 2013 to 200,000 in May of the same year (Dalal, 2014, p. 57) and, rather than filling up the prescribed gridlines, refugees had begun to squat everywhere: between and inside the planned shelter units (prefabs), in schools, they created markets, making use of all available resources (including communal infrastructure and electricity) to shape camp spaces according to their own needs. Against the logic of an egalitarian grid, refugees moved "their" containers to form small semi-closed clusters in which families and relations gathered, beginning to share resources and establish socio-spatial patterns that are often reminiscent of habitats left behind in Syria. The resulting alternative spatial structure (see Figure 2) is a direct consequence of refugee agency mobilizing socio-cultural beliefs to find improvised answers to daily needs (Dalal, 2014). Zaatari camp was transformed into one of the "largest urban centres in Jordan" (UNHCR, 2013a). While UNHCR pragmatically conceded its inability to reinforce initial plans and tacitly accepted unplanned "occupations" (cf. Agier, 2011, p. 180), overall, Zaatari became synonymous with planning failure. The issuing of UNHCR's global *Policy on Alternative to Camps* (2014) can also be read as a negative assessment of "losing control" in camps like Zaatari.

3.2. The Planning of Azraq Camp

In order to face an expected "mass displacement" of Syrians (Al-Rai, 2013), in March 2013, the Jordanian government approved the plan to build a new camp called Azraq, located in the empty desert near the international road to Iraq (United Nations [UN], 2014). While this decision was taken in response to the forced migration of refugees arriving in Jordan on a daily basis, there was a gradual decrease in refugee counts in 2013. Therefore, the camp was kept in a "state of readiness" until the decision to officially open it was taken on 30 April 2014 (Jordan Times, 2014; UN, 2014, p. 4). In contrast to the stereotypical case where refugee camps are built and

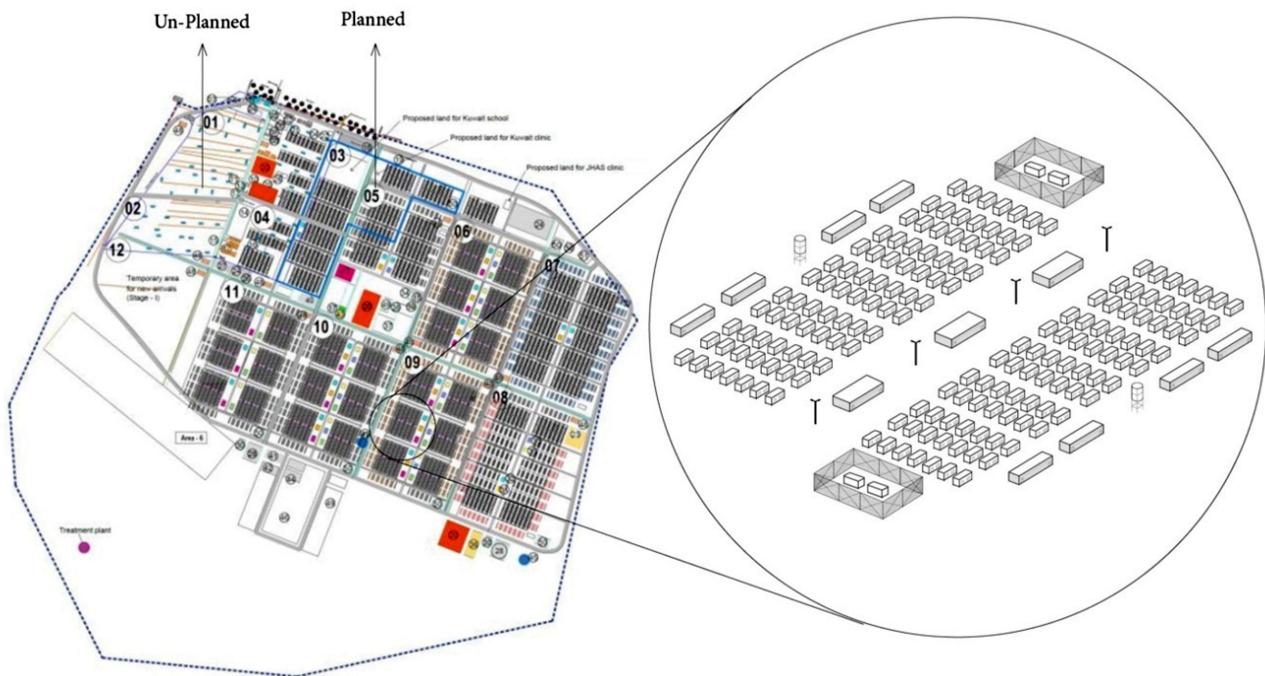

Figure 1. The planning of Zaatari camp and its suggested spatial hierarchy. Source: Dalal based on UNHCR (2014).

Figure 2. The subversion of Zaatari camp's plan through daily urban practices initiated by refugees. Source: Dalal based on Google Earth in 2017.

planned rapidly and in an emergency situation, Azraq camp took around a year of "careful planning and attention" (Jordan Times, 2014). According to the UNHCR representative in Jordan, Azraq camp was perceived as a role model in camp planning and implementation, being described as "one of the best-planned refugee camps in the world" (Jordan Times, 2014).

Azraq camp stretches across a vast area of about 14.7km^2 in which a new strategy of hierarchical spatial differentiation was tested. Camp districts (Zaatari) were now called sub-camps or "villages",—four dedicated to house refugees and one used by management as 'base camp'. The four villages are further subdivided into districts. Each district is divided into plots and each plot is composed of two rows of six identical shelters (see Figure 3). Additionally, the villages are planned as self-contained and self-sufficient complexes containing their own schools, NGO sites, a community centre, and market space composed of planned rows of market stalls.

UNHCR explicitly and repeatedly emphasised that the planning of Azraq camp was informed by "lessons learnt" from Zaatari camp (cf. UNHCR, 2014a), stress-

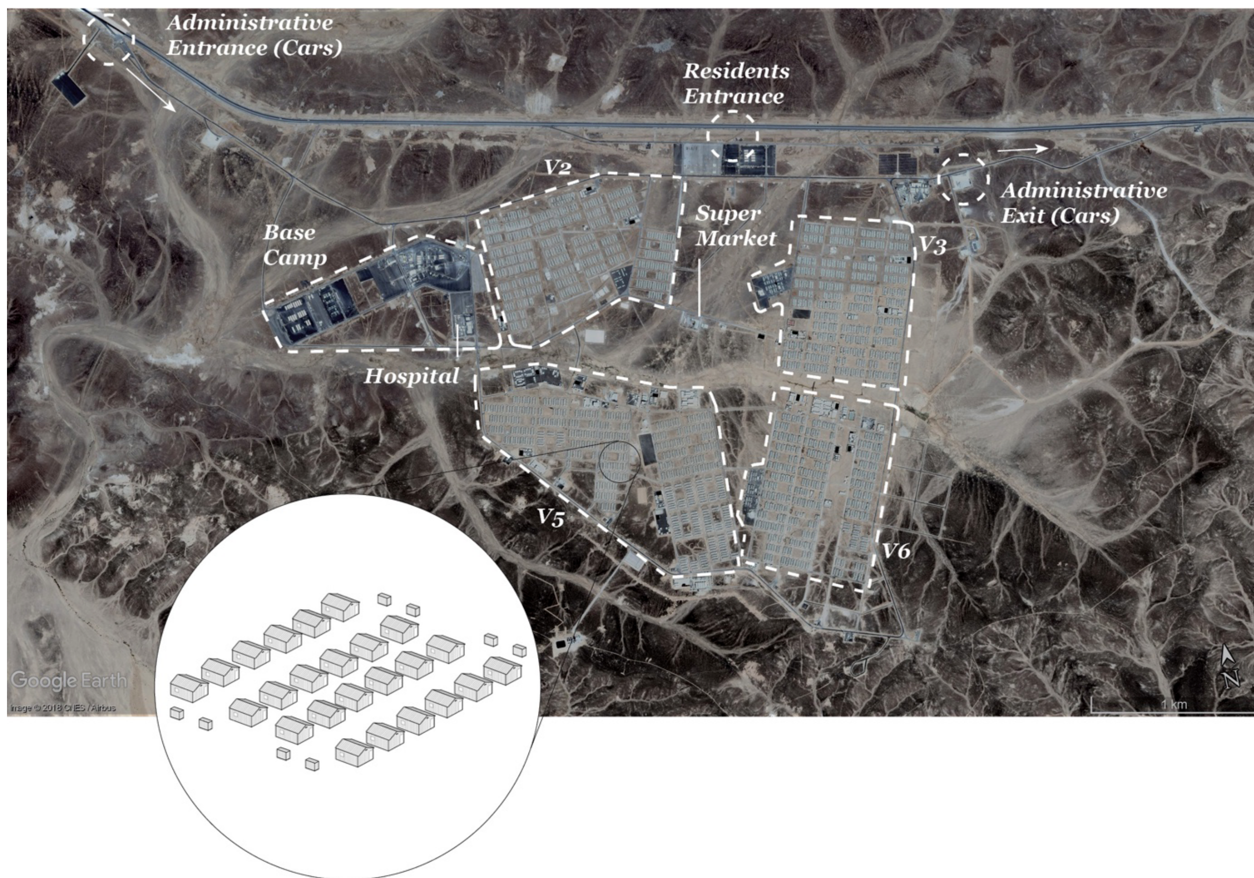

Figure 3. The master plan and shelter typology of Azraq camp. Source: Dalal based on Google Earth, 2017.

ing a recognition for a need for improved shelter design, acknowledging the benefits of decentralising services in self-contained "villages" to improve access or the need for a diversification of functions including supermarkets, market stalls, or designated "local" community centres. Azraq planners engaged in a process that, to some degree, can be likened to "integrated urban planning" which reflects a broad trend in the humanitarian community towards more urban responses to refugee crises (see for instance Crisp, Morris, & Refstie, 2012). Whilst acknowledging the efforts made by the planning team to rethink the layout, structure, and division of functions deviating from previous norms, we would like to use the dual perspectives of control and refugee agency to evaluate the results.

As stated earlier, defining spatial systems in order to discipline everyday life and service processes has always been a form of managing camps and their populations (cf. Dalal, 2014, 2015; Herz, 2007; Hyndman, 2000; Pasquetti, 2015). The typical grid provided in camps such as Zaatari embodies a humanitarian paradigm attempting to guarantee equal access to services for all camp residents. While it does not foresee or explicitly encourage functional or programmatic diversity, refugee agency mobilises processes of appropriation that can add this diversity to the grid and reshape the camp. While the spatial system of Azraq camps builds urban functions into the plan, it makes refugee-initiated appropriations impossible. The disciplining grid is replaced by a spatial structure of improved control to ensure that the police and the humanitarian organisations are in full charge (Gatter, 2018; Hoffmann, 2017). "Villages" are placed at a considerable distance from each other introducing cordon-sanitaire–like buffer zones, which prevent "groupings", "riots", or "contact" among refugees on a bigger scale. Similarly, external visitors(e.g. researchers) cannot simply access the camp on foot. While attempting to access the camp on foot in 2016, a police officer replied: "No one is allowed to enter the camp without a car….It is impossible to reach the villages by walking from here. You don't imagine how far they are". The basecamp with its key managerial functions is placed at a considerable distance from the "villages" so that it would be difficult to stage demonstrations or protests by refugees, as was frequently the case in Zaatari camp (cf. UNHCR, 2014c). Refugees and their guests enter through a separate access point near the highway and closer to the villages (see Figure 3). All these aspects highlight the dual nature of the plan: to provide a more complex integrated plan to address needs while clearly ensuring improved control over the population of the camp, their movement, and their ability to organise daily life processes. Within the first two years, effective policing made informal spatial practice such as moving or extending shelters,

which is indicative for refugee agency, almost impossible. As expressed by a young male refugee, who lives in Azraq camp with his wife and daughter:

> It is difficult to compare life in Zaatari and Azraq camp....Zaatari is all informal, unlike Azraq. Here everything is well-planned and has been prepared in advanced....You know, we came to the camp, and the shelters were ready to receive us. In Zaatari, people made everything from scratch. But I can tell you that they [police] did not like it! Imagine, the manager of the camp [Azraq] once told us: 'I want to stand between the houses and be able to see the end of the camp!' [Laughing] Such a thing wouldn't be possible in Zaatari camp!

While "effective" planning serves to reduce the space of self-organisation and self-provisioning, margins of informality continue to be negotiable. According to a shelter expert, the presence of empty uninhabited shelters in Azraq camp—waiting to be filled by expected coming refugees—became an opportunity to extend subtle practices of appropriation. Uninhabited shelters would be found dismantled and used to extend shelters through fences or to separate the internal space of the shelter (see Figure 4). During the first two years, strict policing was efficiently practised. Orders to remove additions would be immediately given to refugees once appropriations are spotted on site, and refugees would be warned. Yet, according to the shelter expert, refugees would redo the appropriation once the police were gone. Similar spatial practices of negotiating control have been spotted in Berlin camps as well. The continuous practices of refugees to appropriate the shelters according to their daily needs, however, have led to incremental informalisation of the camp which comes in a strong contrast to its early "neat" image. By that, refugees did not only manage to humanise the camp and gradually create better settings for their domestic lifestyle and needs but also succeeded to subtly negotiate the control initially imposed on them through planning. As a camp official put it in a visit to Azraq in 2018:

> Well, usually the police would come and ask people to take this [pointing to a metal fence that had been added around a shelter]...you know, it is not allowed [voice lowered]...but, what to do? People keep changing and adding things around the camp...you know, eventually, they live here. This is a fact. And they are trying to make their lives easier. At the end of the day, our task is not to make their lives more difficult than it already is, but to provide them with protection.

4. Accommodating Refugees in Berlin: From Reactive Emergency Management to Planned Housing

Refugee reception in Germany and Berlin is—contrary to Jordan—a highly regulated and complex process administered by state bureaucracies profoundly structuring all aspects of the life of the so-called asylum seekers. During the complex process of applying for asylum, refugees often need to change accommodation beginning with police registration at designated reception or first arrival centres (*Ankunftszentrum*) in the respective federal country. After registration, a national distribution key called Königssteiner Schlüssel allocates refugees to the federal states (population size and GDP determine the number of allocated refugees) and within the states to different cities and regions. Personal choices, residential preferences, or the existence of other extended family members in the country are not part of this process (Steigemann, 2018; Wendel, 2014, p. 9). Having arrived in their designated location, refugees are then forced to reside in officially recognised emergency accommodations (*Notunterkünfte*) set up by local municipalities until their "case" has been processed, which can take up to three years. The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) eventually decides if political asylum

Figure 4. The vandalization of uninhabited shelter units to appropriate inhabited ones and connect them to create additional spaces. Source: Dalal taken in 2018.

Table 1. From Zaatari to Azraq: Changes in camp governance and physical structure.

	Zaatari Camp	**Azraq Camp**
Shifts in camp governance and management	UNHCR manages the camp with the support of SRAD	SRAD and police are in control
	Emergency situation prevails Delivery of services (especially shelter) was not organised	Long-term planning prevails Delivery of services including shelter is very organised
	The emergence of informal hierarchies as links between refugees and UNHCR communication between relief organisations and refugees	Official community centres have bigger roles as spaces of
	High reliance on volunteering, multiple NGOs and relief projects	Limited numbers of NGOs and relief projects
	Decentralised services (multiple schools, hospitals, informal markets and souks, many youth spaces, etc.)	Centralised services (one main hospital, one community centre and market in each village, etc.)
Changes in spatial structure and physical characteristics	Planned initially as an emergency camp following UNHCR's Handbook of Emergencies	Planned as a "city" using external urban planning and design expertise
	Centralised layout following block standards with functional zoning	Very clear spatial hierarchy: Plot<Block<District<Village<Camp
	The planning process was hectic as it happened while people were settling	The camp took about a year of careful planning
	Perceived as "chaotic" and "informal" due to a high degree of refugee initiated appropriations and changes	Perceived as "ordered" and "formal"
	Most shelters are movable	All shelters are fixed
	Different types of shelter units	One type of standardised shelter
	Refugees are difficult to allocate within the camp until recently (when the address system was installed in 2015)	Refugees are easy to allocate using addresses
	Zaatari camp is considered as a "bad" model	Azraq camp is considered as "the best" model

(which can be extended to permanent residency provided the fulfilment of strict conditions) or humanitarian asylum is granted, which limits residency rights to one year and reduces rights to apply for family reunions or employment possibilities (cf. Tometten, 2018). Only after the asylum status is clarified, do refugees have the right to choose their own accommodations but, given limited financial means and high rental prices, often continue to reside in designated state provisions.

This article will focus on the accommodation crisis triggered by the arrival of nearly one million refugees following the brief period of "open-door policy" in Germany and the subsequent effort by municipalities to find new accommodation solutions within the given, highly structured and bureaucratised refugee administration system outlined above and the equally bureaucratised general planning system. Initially, unprepared for the high number of arriving refugees, many cities had resorted to improvised emergency measures including tents, organised squatting of factory halls or school gymnasia, which Rene Kreichauf (2018) referred to as "campization"—a tendency towards accommodating refugees in Europe in spaces that resonate with refugee camps in the Global South. Also in Berlin, which in 2014–2015 received an estimated 80,000 refugees, the emergency accommodation capacity had to be radically extended. Makeshift solutions included the reuse of vacant structures, often publicly owned, such as the empty hangars of the former inner-city airport Tempelhof. Here, several of the vast industrial halls were transformed through the introduction of a grid of temporary walls forming small 12m^2 cubicles for up to 12 persons sleeping in bunk beds—up to 800 persons in total per hangar, approximately 2500 in total. Instead of doors, loose curtains separated cubicles from access corridors reducing any possibility of privacy further. In addition, the cells were not roofed, which

led to residents complaining about noise and light obstructions (see Figure 5). To provide order and security in these harsh conditions strict rules were put in place that regulated all daily routines, from the regulation of lights (switch-off times in the evening at 22 hours) to catered meals and strict access control. Under such harsh conditions, the scope for refugee-initiated appropriations is very limited. Nevertheless, left-over spaces or wider-corridor sections became hang-out spaces for groups of men, others for women with self-initiated sofa arrangements and wall graffiti. One refugee interviewed in July 2016 had managed to open a small hair-dressing service using a recycled chair and shelves he had obtained through one of the guards: "We are not used to being dependent....If I did not manage to work here I would have gone back to Syria long ago". Yet, overall, self-initiated appropriations remained scarce and only possible through leniency of guards and local management. Most refugees reported on health and safety checks insisting on immediate removal of any violations.

Following intense criticism of the inhumane and overcrowded conditions at the Tempelhof hangars and other equivalent settings, as well as several scandals involving corruption and mismanagement at Berlin's State Office for Health and Social Affairs (LaGeSo), the city was forced to rethink both administrative management and develop new accommodation strategies for refugees. This involved, for the first time, not only state actors but also professional planners and architects, and was coordinated from September 2014 onwards by a newly formed task force including experienced personnel from the city's planning administration. A first measure included the installation of six "container villages" (LaGeSo-Dörfer) planned in 2014 and opened in early 2015, composed of stacked containers placed in mostly peripheral locations in the city. The Task Force had managed to bypass complicated and delaying planning laws by designating the structures as temporary. As collective accommodation centres (*Gemeinschaftsunterkünfte*), the "container villages" were supposed to house refugees waiting for their asylum application process and, like all other state-funded centres, provided intense and continuous supervision and monitoring. While the task force was initially briefed to design housing for 2,000 refugees, in 2016, it became clear that at least nine times more refugees needed to be accommodated. With a newly formed LAF in charge (Lübbe, 2017; RBB|24, 2018) new ideas for how refugee camps should be *managed* and *planned* started to emerge. Rather than temporary solutions, the administration conceived the idea of Modular Accommodation for Refugees (*ModulareUnterkünftefür-Flüchtlinge*—MUFs), a cheap yet long-term, durable, standardised building type which would allow for re-use as affordable housing for homeless persons, or student housing in the medium and long-term. This strategy reflected a shift towards considering refugee accommodation as part of the general housing crisis in the city. The support of local districts and the general public, it was hoped, would be greater if investments could be seen to address the shortage of affordable homes for other constituents too.

Planning for a more durable solution also meant following building regulations and completion was expected to take at least 2–3 years. A new German building code (BauGD §246—*Flüchtlingsunterbringungsmassnah-*

Figure 5. A perspective into the planned emergency shelter at the former Tempelhof airport in Berlin in 2016. Source: Misselwitz, taken in 2016.

mengesetz) designed specifically to speed up the process of accommodating refugees, limited for submissions until December 2019, opened a window for another interim solution. Planning parameters included standardisation, the speed of construction, efficiency in maintenance, and alignment with complex fire safety rules, and led to a prefabricated, single-storey container-based solution called Tempohomes (see Figure 6). For realisation, the LAF contracted another governmental authority known as the BIM, which then, subcontracted architectural offices to provide designs and plans matching tightly prescribed LAF standards. Solutions could be scaled to match the carrying capacity of local sites, and resident numbers therefore vary between a150 and 1000. With new Federal funding opportunities, LAF standards were later revised to also include specific requirements for social meeting spaces, playgrounds, and leisure facilities. Containers were improved through the introduction of a small porch-like element at the entrance. Tempohomes now included a much broader spectrum of functions and facilities—even areas for planting or socio-cultural projects—resembling, albeit on a much smaller scale, the shift towards urban planning described at Azraq camp in Jordan. This shift can be considered a direct "learning" from earlier omissions and experimentation following persistence and pressure from external NGOs and refugee groups.

The shift from techno-managerial emergency accommodations to "designed" Tempohome solutions also determined the re-organisation of the former Tempelhof airport. Following public pressure, in late 2017, most of the hangars were closed and refugees shifted towards a newly erected Tempohome "village" for over 1000 refugees, located immediately outside of the building on the airfield itself. Following revised LAF standards, the new site included a whole range of central and decentralised public spaces. Carefully designed, extensive wooden terraces between containers include seating arrangements; pergolas providing shade and rain protection; and numerous sports and social facilities (see Figure 6).

Seen through a perspective of control and refugee agency, such new and "good-looking" Tempohomes, however, appear rather ambivalent. The overall planning focus on open public space and "village" rhetoric camouflages persisting control and monitoring from security staff and camp management. Refugees frequently expressed their frustration with control exercised over their private spaces and their coping strategies. A female Tempohome resident explained:

> I don't like this picture in my room. Imagine that we are not allowed to change anything here without the permission of the social worker! Therefore, I cover it

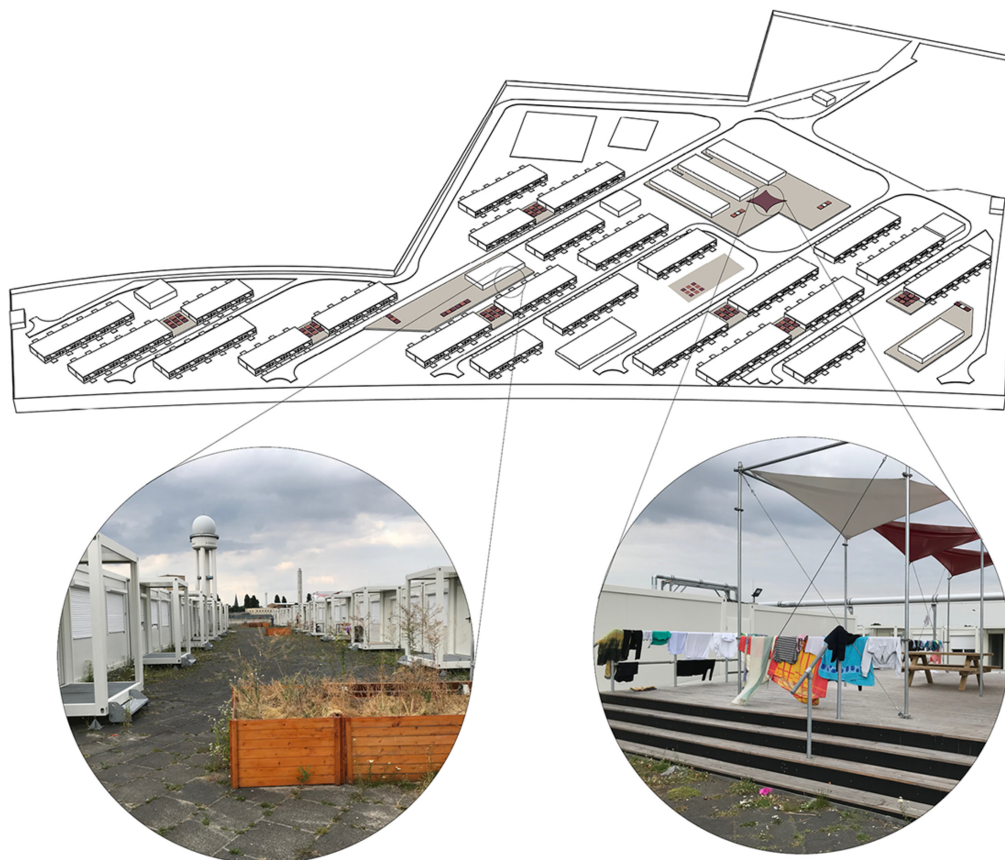

Figure 6. The Tempohome at Columbia-Damm (Tempelhof) showing designed social spaces and how they are appropriated or left unused. Source: Darweesh, Dalal and Misselwitz in 2018.

> with a plastic sheet because I don't like to see it…and when I know that they [social workers] are coming to visit, I remove the sheets beforehand.

Another male interviewee explained:

> Security guards here always ask us to bring the furniture inside, but where? They are only doing what they are asked to do. There is no place for this table inside. When we know that someone from LAF will come to visit the camp, we take our furniture inside and then we take it out after they leave. Even the carpet, despite the cold, is forbidden to be placed on the floor under the pretext of fire protection. It is our habit to sit on the ground with the family to eat, for example. We can't do everything they say, life on the ground is different from what they think and plan.

At another Tempohome in Wollenberger Straße, one of the residents wanted to plant a small garden outside his container which reminded him of his house and garden in Syria. However, shortly after, he was requested to detach it from the containers and move it to the garden, because he was told that it would block the emergency access through the window (see Figure 7). Others reported the forced removal of added curtains on porches or informal seating arrangements. Designed public spaces or wooden decks remain noticeably empty and underused (with the exception of sports facilities for kids) or, in more decentralised locations, the Tempohome Columbia-Damm for instance, spaces designed for social activities are appropriated for drying laundry (see Figure 6). Access for the public tends to be carefully controlled and, in most Tempohomes and MUFs, is granted only based on prior written application and approval. While these could be justified as 'security measures', the control practised over refugee accommodations reduces self-determined spaces in which agency and self-expression could unfold.

The persisting control and reduced refugee agency extend to social mixing approaches from LAF and local management teams as well. When asked whether social organisation and the formation of social hierarchies amongst Tempohome residents are encouraged, a local manager replies:

> We do not want refugees to group within their own language and cultural groups. We also do not want to privilege certain individuals over others. Refugees have to learn to live in Germany, according to our values where everybody is the same, where people from many nationalities and religious groups live peacefully side-by-side—not segregated. If they don't learn it here, when should they learn it?

While fostering "integration" is the declared paradigm of LAF, which has devised the concept of an integration ladder from dependence towards higher levels of autonomy and self-organisation, the statement reveals the degree to which "integration" is understood as assimilation paradigm when applied to practical camp management. Managing camp life is seen as an educative task supported by appropriate rules and regulations, preparing successful asylum seekers for life in the "proper" city. The architectural design of Tempohomes is its physical and material equivalent: Here, the architecture appears to serve as a means to an end, describing a landscape of "proper" living, which prepares refugees for assimilation into the German city.

5. Conclusions: Comparing Planning Innovations and Outcomes across Germany and Jordan

By exploring the recent transformations of refugee camps planning and spatiality using examples in Jordan and Germany, we identified comparable trends—a shift towards applying urban planning approaches to camps which, as a result, appear to be more city-like urban

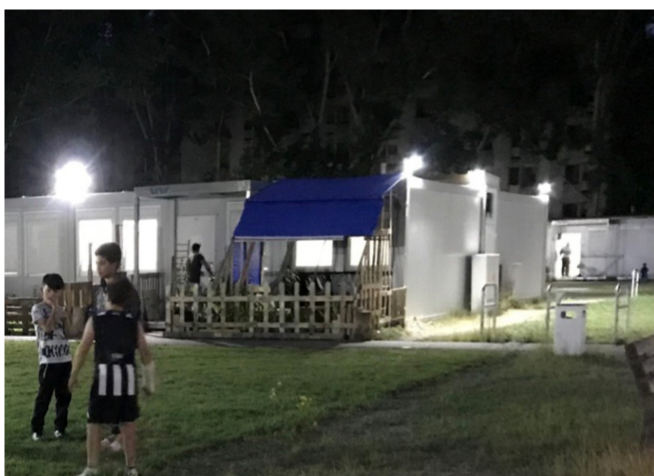

Figure 7. The controlling of appropriated spaces at the Tempohome in Wollenberger Straße. Source: Darweesh and Misselwitz, taken in 2018.

Table 2. Managerial and physical characteristics of refugee accommodations in Berlin.

	Emergency Accommodation		Long-Term Accommodation
	Reception Facilities (EAE; e.g. Tempelhof Hangar)	**Tempohomes (GU1)**	**GU2**
Shifts in camp governance and management	Managed by an operator (NGO) appointed by LaGeSo	Managed by an operator (NGO) appointed by LAF	Managed by an operator (NGO) appointed by LAF
	Provision of emergency assistance and monitoring	Provision of services such as social work, translation, child care, etc.	Fewer services are provided
	Guarded by security	Guarded by security	Guarded by security
	Stay no more than six weeks	No more than 3 months	Stay until phased out
Changes in spatial structure and physical characteristics	Refurbishing of existing buildings such as hospitals, schools, sports halls, etc.	Refurbishing of existing buildings and/or Planning and designing small settlements using containers (Tempohomes)	Newly planned and designed buildings and/or Planning and designing small settlements using containers (Tempohomes)
	Improvised shelter	Planned shelter	Planned shelter
	Up to 12 persons in one 25 sqm cubicle (Tempelhof)	2 persons in one container space	1 person per room
	Ad-hoc utilisation of available space	Tempohomes planned as settlements or small camps	MUF designed as housing

habitats. In both instances, this has been the result of processes of learning from previous failures; often combined with external pressure and critiques. In the case of Jordan, this includes lessons that were drawn from informal urbanisation processes at Zaatari and then applied to Azraq, including a recognition of a more decentralised arrangement with sub-districts ("villages") and more complex functions needed to make the setting "sustainable". In the Berlin case, learning from the failures and critiques of emergency accommodation arrangements in the early years of the current "refugee crisis", as exemplified in the Tempelhof hangars, led to the revision of standards and the matter planning of Tempohomes—designed container arrangements as aesthetic urban public spaces. Both cases discussed in this article seem to reveal genuine attempts to apply principles of urban planning and architectural design to improve previous approaches to technocratic emergency shelter provision. In both cases, some of the learning was directly responding to the rationalisation of previous planning failures and needs that became apparent through the appropriation of camp residents themselves. Generally, the more urban design-oriented approaches reflect a growing involvement of urban professionals in humanitarian contexts, which can be equally observed in other contexts.

However, when observed from the perspectives of control and refugee agency—both key concepts developed in critical refugee studies—the planning outcomes are much more ambivalent. While a certain "recognition" of refugees self-determination played a role in formulating and explaining new design approaches, the results reveal a tendency towards aestheticisation and formalisation rather than increasing autonomy and spaces of self-provisioning, which are core to the concept of refugee agency. As Tables 1 and 2 show, by summarising the policy-initiated shifts in management and physical characteristics, in the well-designed camp environment, the loopholes for self-provisioning and appropriation are actually shrinking.

In Jordan, where enforcement of humanitarian guidelines and norms was—as the example of Zaatari shows—initially weak and informal appropriations flourished, the well-designed camp of Azraq seems to have decreased the scope of appropriations in exchange for a spatial arrangement fostering increased control. In Germany, where refugee accommodations had always followed

much stricter and tightly enforced norms and standards, better housing and access to designed open spaces and outdoor facilities also seemed to have the contradictory effect of solidifying and further stabilising control. New and clean-looking materiality in Azraq camp and Berlin's Tempohomes, despite the increased sense of privacy of containers and modules and, in the Jordan case, more hybrid housing forms, become part of a controlling, disciplining educative landscape, personified in the constant presence of security guards, fences, social workers, and health and safety patrols. The shift led from the stereotypical, technocratic shelter and layout types towards camps that look like houses and are referred to as "villages" in both Jordan and Berlin. While this shift is perceived from the outside as "positive", our article tried to emphasise the need to take these shifts into deeper consideration, as ways in which the refugee camp—as Agamben warned us, manages to veil itself in ways that we need to recognise.

Hence, while the inclusion of design and planning professionals in the improvement of refugee camps is commendable, the results can threaten to camouflage and soften the disciplinary powers embedded within the framework offered by the refugee camp through planning. Looking deeper into the spatial practices and agency of refugees in camps allows for a critique of their planning. Furthermore, it should also inform new guiding principles for less expert-driven, controlling and more participative, cooperative, experimental, and open-ended planning that appreciates and includes the spatial knowledge and practices of refugees as the ultimate users and residents of the designed place. This could enable less finished and maybe less aesthetically pleasing, yet more genuinely inclusive attempts to provide more adequate and dignified spaces for refugee protection.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

From Integration to Solidarity: Insights from Civil Society Organisations in Three European Cities

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Abstract
This article sheds light on the lack of cohesion in asylum approaches between EU member states and questions the dominance of the 'integration' paradigm. It argues that civil society organisations (CSOs) have, through solidarity, challenged the bias 'integration' involves and the exclusion it generates. To do this, it examines three case-based practices led by CSOs that operate in three European capital cities—Rome, Brussels and Berlin—and that embrace mobility in the context of front-line, transit and destination countries, respectively. With the 'refugee crisis' of 2015 acting as a threshold moment, the cases navigate a complex web of relationships amidst a fragmented debate about asylum, and varying national and local frameworks in Europe. Through the comparison of cases, the article argues that the political possibilities of such practices and their enduring engagements with the urban, remain limited. However, the shift in discourse from 'stasis' and 'integration' to 'mobility' and 'solidarity' that the three cases embody, represent a critique that fundamentally challenges urban planning and its role for asylum.

Keywords
asylum; civil society organisations; displacement; integration; solidarity

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1. Introduction

Although not a new phenomenon, the most recent migratory flows seeking to reach Europe touched a peak in 2015, earning the well-known, but highly controversial term, 'refugee crisis'. That year the EU received 1.3 million asylum applications (Eurostat, 2018), creating a condition of emergency, due to the large number of people arriving at the same time. Arguably the 'refugee crisis' was not one created by incoming asylum seekers per se, but one provoked by the incapacity of the EU to sufficiently cater for such large amounts of displaced people at once (Doomernik & Glorius, 2016). Thus, the 'refugee crisis' questioned Europe's position vis-à-vis the refuge and hospitality of those displaced by war and other serious disruptions, becoming a threshold moment for Europe's political and social project, as well as a challenge for the entire refugee system (Betts & Collier, 2017).

With the EU–Turkey agreement, the EU–Libya deal, and the closing of the Balkan route, the number of asylum applications in Europe dropped in the course of 2016 and 2017 (Eurostat, 2018). This number may well diminish in light of the most recent EU summits that have practically "buried the right to asylum in Europe" (Taylor, 2018, p. 20). Moreover, migration has become increasingly enmeshed with the future of many urban areas in Europe, since cities and metropolitan regions persist as main sites of arrival and passage for displaced people (Eurocities, 2016). They are, by consequence, a crucial concern for urban planning, which here is understood as

"a broad set of social activities not limited to traditional planning efforts, but rather as purposeful social action to improve the quality of life in localities, cities, regions and nations" (Sanyal, 2005, p. xxi).

These activities engender transformations with spatial and social consequences that manifest themselves in the city, linking urban space and displacement, and further rendering migration and asylum urban phenomena within which local level responses are very much involved. It is because of this reasoning that cities have been set as the stage for the cases that will be discussed in this article, as they spotlight activities related with asylum seekers in the city, in line with Darling's call for "the need to better unpack the urban character of asylum" (Darling, 2017, p. 180). In the three urban areas presented here, as well as in many other cities across Europe, civil society organisations (CSOs) have been mobilising locally, occupying different positions vis-à-vis state-led approaches. Solidarity is at the core of their actions, confirming the importance of revisiting the term in light of diversity, and more specifically, by taking into account how it is practiced in everyday places by people engaging across ethnic and cultural boundaries (Oosterlynck, Loopmans, Schuermans, Vandenabeele, & Zamni, 2016). These mobilisations therefore, hold potential to engage "the city as a space distinct from, yet conditioned by, state discourses and practices" (Darling, 2013, p. 1786).

By unfolding the stances taken by local practices led by CSOs in the three European capital cities of Rome, Brussels and Berlin, this article sheds light on the lack of a unified approach to asylum embraced by European member states. Before delving into the cases, the article will begin by reviewing integration based on recent literature, as evidence that challenges the problematic embedded within it. It will then attempt to unpack solidarity as it is expressed through civic action, intentionally straying away from forming a definition for it that is simplistic of its complexity. The main aims are to highlight how CSO practices enact solidarity as everyday relations that take place in urban spaces, and to assess the political possibilities of such solidarities for urban planning. In fact, while these initiatives are not linked with main state institutions and NGOs traditionally working on integration, it remains to be seen if new voluntary initiatives born in the aftermath of the 'refugee crisis', such as those examined below, will be bypassed by mainstream integration policies or will be able to radically renew them. Because of the politics of bounding entailed by the 'refugee crisis' (Crawley & Skleparis, 2017), the authors will rely on the terms, 'asylum seeker' to refer to people in the process of seeking asylum, 'refugee' to indicate those that are status holders, and 'displaced' to describe a broader group of mobile people having experienced flight and trauma.

2. Apprehending and Questioning Integration

When it comes to issues related with migration into or around Europe, integration has become a prevalent approach (Favell, 2013). While a decade ago it could still be claimed that it was a key term for the development of policies aiming at refugees and asylum seekers (Ager & Strang, 2008, 2010), it has since been challenged by many scholars both conceptually and operationally (Bagelman, 2013; Darling, 2017; Favell, 2013; Gryzmala-Kaziowska & Phillimore, 2017; Squire, 2010). Yet, a lack of shared understanding and no generally accepted definition persist, despite being already pointed out to for several years now (Castles, Korac, Vasta, & Vertovec, 2002; Robinson, 1998). Its articulation in the last decades as a "long-term two-way process of change" (ECRE, 1999) appears to recognize that mutuality is key toward achieving a welcoming environment. However, research has shown that the dominant interpretation of integration remains an effort to be made mostly by those who have newly arrived, since the notion is embedded in conceptions of the nation-state which are exclusive and culturally bounded (Favell, 2013; Squire, 2010). It is rooted in the assumption that privileges 'established' residents, puts the burden on refugees to integrate, and neglects asylum seekers as those with ephemeral presence. Because of such assumptions, Squire (2010) argues that it is important to shift from the rhetoric of integration to that of solidarity, which removes the expectation of assimilation.

Ager and Strang's work on integration has attempted to reflect on the normative conceptions of integration by outlining a framework in which they develop ten core "integration domains" (Ager & Strang, 2008, p. 167). Of these areas the most foundational, citizenship and rights, is viewed as requiring utmost articulation by governments intending to develop an effective integration policy (Ager & Strang, 2008, 2010). Such categorisations reflect the way in which responses to asylum seekers and refugees are approached at the governing level. Integration structures generally begin from a privileged standpoint that reduces and simplifies the complexities of displacement, and accepts the nation-state's framework of categorising people, as worthy of integration by being with status or without. In addition, such approaches to integration are, as Squire has argued, flawed because they "overlook(s) enactments of solidarity in which cultural categories and legal distinctions disappear or are relatively unimportant" (Squire, 2010, p. 292). She has illustrated the need to consider the more recent collective engagements (in the UK) as movements that enact a shift of focus away from integration toward solidarity that is mindful of temporary presence and mobility (Squire, 2010). Comparably, this article presents the three cases as actions that set aside cultural and legal distinctions by practicing solidarity with varying degrees of opposition from local and national policies, thus, occupying distinctive spaces within their respective urban settings.

Integration is also being redefined by the shifting relationship between migration and forms of settlement, a point of particular relevance for urban planning. In the past, patterns of movement consolidated the con-

cept of migration as leading to permanent resettlement (Penninx, Spencer, & Van Haer, 2008). By contrast, in the hypermobile globalised world of today migratory practices are more in flux than they were in the past, and by consequence integration "cannot be what it was" (Favell, 2013, p. 54). This is ever more the case in the context of asylum seekers and refugees who have been moving through Europe as a result of the circulatory movement induced by the Dublin Protocol, that instigated situations of being expelled and suspended (Agier, 2016; Nail, 2015). These forms of mobility refute the essence of integration that is tied to permanence and to a conception of "a bounded national society defined by more or less inclusive rules of membership" (Favell, 2013, p. 54). Because of the state of suspension and related debilitating issues that come as a result of not having any status, Bagelman has argued that displaced people often have to succumb to a life of charity and waiting (Bagelman, 2013).

In light of this, the cases presented aim to show how initiatives led by CSOs manifest themselves in three urban areas in Europe and are critical to challenge dominant conceptions of integration through solidarity. In studying their practices, what emerges is that solidarity is a process deeply rooted in human values and camaraderie, especially workable at the local level through the mobilisation of citizen groups and CSOs, notwithstanding the importance of multi-level governance. While scholarly work on higher level frameworks such as Ager and Strang's ten core domains remain important to note interrelations between housing, workplaces, neighbourhoods and public services, solidarity plays a major role as the main ingredient for two of the core domains they define, namely those of social bonding and bridging (Ager & Strang, 2008).

The three cases that follow, in Rome, Brussels and Berlin, vary in their durational set-ups, from (initial) emergency responses to long-term urban transformations, and face different struggles in regard to local and national support. While both the Baobab Experience in Rome, and the Plateforme Citoyenne de Soutien aux Réfugiés (the Citizens' Platform for the Support of Refugees, which will be referred to as PCSR in this article) in Brussels emerged from immediate action of volunteers during the intensified movements of 2015, the Coop Campus in Berlin is the outcome of a longer term engagement initiated in 2012 through voluntary action. All three cases take a stance in the face of EU frameworks foregrounding 'integration' and specific national interpretations of the term, as we will see in the discussion below.

3. Insights from CSOs in the Aftermath of the 2015 'Refugee Crisis'

In the aftermath of the 'refugee crisis' of 2015, conditions have evolved since the first citizen-led mobilisations—many of which have subsequently associated themselves formally into CSOs and NGOs (Bouagga & Barré, 2017; Mikaba, 2016). They continue their work today by broadening their efforts to include displaced persons in the context of an increasingly diversified population and pursue awareness-building activities in relation to asylum and its urban implications. In such context, cities and municipalities have capitalised differently on the vibrancy of such mobilisations. Whether this dialogue has occurred or not is a point worth expanding on in relation to urban planning issues. In fact, when the notion of 'urban planning culture' emerged, it supported the debate on whether a particular autonomy and self-governance embedded in a specific locale would resist in the face of escalating encroachment by global forces (Sanyal, 2005). Relatedly, one of the founding fathers of 'radical planning', John Friedmann (1987, 1988) argued that civil society would defend what he termed life space in the face of global forces. In his view, such resistance would be legitimised by a different form of planning, aimed ultimately at the empowerment of civil society (Sanyal, 2005). The comparison of the three cases displays, therefore, whether such alternative form of planning is emerging in light of the political possibilities claimed by and provided to the CSOs examined. These possibilities are reflected in the actual physical spaces and places of the cities in question, as will be further described below.

The research presented here is part of an ongoing collaboration between KU Leuven, the University of Sheffield, Politecnico de Milano, Housing Europe, and Architecture without Borders International. In terms of the information and data collection for the cases presented in this article, the three authors typically conducted research on each of the cases in parallel, however their time-frames varied. In the Italian case, semi-structured interviews with volunteers and key organisers were conducted, and additional desktop research included access to the CSO's digital archive. In the Brussels case, digital and spatial ethnographic research as well as informal conversations and semi-structured interviews with CSO members took place in the course of 2017. In the German case, contacts with contributors to the project preceded the specific focus of this research. Semi-structured interviews with key organisers and urban practitioners were also conducted, and events organised by the CSO in question were attended as moments to pursue conversations informally.

Each of the three cases will be unravelled by focusing on two particular aspects. Firstly, the everyday practices of the CSOs will be discussed in light of particular activities that reflect the dynamic engagements between asylum seekers and refugees and more 'established' residents, and that at the same time contribute to solidarities that cut across such distinctions. Secondly, the transformation of their activities over time will be deconstructed to illustrate how a focus on mobility and solidarity impacts the range and nature of the CSO practices. A comparative reflection on how the urban plays out for each case will follow, together with a discussion on what

the political possibilities for each CSO are, in the context of a nuanced and complex web of relationships that reflect the planning cultures they are embedded in.

3.1. The Baobab Experience: Rome, Italy

In general terms, in spite of its central position along migratory routes to Europe, Italy occupies an ambivalent position, because it is unclear how many of the asylum applicants will actually remain in the country (Scholten et al., 2017). The number of asylum requests reached a peak in 2016, with 130,119 applications, of which 58% were refused (Ministero dell'Interno, 2018). Yet, dominant narratives persist in presenting Italy as a country primarily of transit, leading to a fragmented asylum policy and a high focus on emergency relief and first reception (Omizzolo, 2016; Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees [SPRAR], 2017), despite the stark rise in applications since 2014. Since 2002, following a first rise in asylum applications in the late 1990s, the idea of "360 degree integration" was endorsed by the establishment of the SPRAR. The intention was to move beyond the distribution of basic services and to provide complementary support in the form of 'integrated reception' undertaken by local institutions on a voluntary basis, with a 20% co-financing requirement. The SPRAR's prime shortcoming is that it remains inaccessible for the large majority of asylum applicants, since in 2016, 77% of them were still hosted in 'extraordinary' reception centres (Lunaria, 2016).

The city of Rome illustrates how the difficulties of the Italian asylum system play out in its urban arena, where over 100 unused structures are inhabited by displaced persons—estimated to be over 180,000 in the capital (Busby & Dotto, 2018). Many of them reside in emergency accommodations and thousands live in makeshift squats – approximately 10,000 live in inhumane conditions (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2018). It is in this context that the Baobab Experience was born in 2015, when an emergency situation was created by the simultaneous clearance of informal camps and the suspension of the Schengen agreements (Baobab volunteers, 2016). Baobab emerged out of a self-managed accommodation centre run by migrants that offered approximately 200 beds for overnight stays, as well as informal support of various nature. Its evolution over time is the result of both, specific local policies and fundamental solidarity practices that have engendered dynamic transformation of its undertakings.

Cleared more than 20 times from its various sites of occupation, the Baobab Experience currently takes the form of an informal camp occupying a no-man's land behind the Tiburtina Station in Rome. The area has been renamed Maslax Square after a migrant whose tragic path is considered emblematic of the "dehumanisation of Italy's reception system" (Baobab, n.d.). For the moment, the camp's presence has been enabled by the area's owner, National Railways. Even though Roman authorities remain a potential threat, it has been almost a year since they have performed further clearance actions. In the camp, activities take place with the support of local and international medical and legal associations, as well as the broader network established with human rights activists. By 2018, more than 70,000 people had passed through the Baobab camp (Baobab, n.d.), received medical care, food, overnight accommodation, and legal assistance, all set up by citizen donations. They were women, men and children aiming to reach other European countries, or asylum seekers in Italy who were exposed to lengthy waiting lists before being able to access support as a result of their undefined statuses.

The centre has been described by its volunteers as a place where "not just migrants have transited, but where an entire humanity has been in transit" (Baobab, n.d.). By this they not only refer to the fact that participating as an 'established' urban resident implies the challenge of decentring one's position when confronted with a wide array of mobile trajectories and migratory projects, but they also underline the variety of categories that have contributed to the running of Baobab's everyday activities (L. Cantisani, personal communication, 19 September 2018). This range includes both very young and very old residents of the nearby neighbourhood, as well as entire families, students, and foreign tourists who decided to spend part of their travels through Italy acting as helpers.

Notwithstanding the fact that local authorities have committed to providing a definitive venue for Baobab, the City of Rome has refused all attempts by the CSO to find a permanent location, even when they included participation in public calls for the regeneration of abandoned industrial buildings and landscapes (A. Costa, personal communication, 6 July 2018). Nonetheless, the centre's precarious occupation in space has not been an obstacle for the provision of support, which extends beyond 'first reception' and is not limited to the, however significant, food provision, emergency shelter, and medical and legal assistance. This care is extended to all those who require it; this may include migrants with acquired refugee status, but who have not been able to access a number of services due to various factors, including discrimination (A. Costa personal communication, 6 July 2018), as well as Italian nationals in precarious conditions (L. Cantisani, personal communication, 19 September 2018). As such, the centre distinguishes itself from mainstream providers who 'deliver' specific forms of assistance only to those 'entitled' by means of particular classifications and categorisations.

Two particular activities are worth exploring in the context of enacting solidarity; both subvert conventional categorisations that result from differential management of migration in Europe. The first activity worth examining is Baobab4Fun. This initiative is a collaborative venture between camp volunteers and hosts, and concerns leisure and cultural activities, ranging from language classes, urban gardening, sports and tailored arts and crafts workshops. More significantly, the group also

organises guided tours in Rome, including visits to major attractions such as, archaeological sites and museums. While many displaced people are careful about avoiding activities that may draw attention to their identities, the guided tours legitimise their participation through presence and change their relationship to the urban realm, which they experience largely by attempts to remain invisible. Moreover, sightseeing is not organised as an initiative exclusively for the displaced, but rather, as an opportunity for broader participation. What is commonly framed as an activity for mobile elites, such as global tourists, becomes therefore accessible to several participants—including asylum seekers and refugees.

The second area of intervention worth scrutinizing is Baobab4Jobs. This initiative focuses on various forms of support for displaced people to pursue their aspirations of further studies, or the acquisition of skills and training. This is yet another domain of action that illustrates how the Baobab experience is not only a 'first reception' provider, but one that has over time extended and modified its own support to cater to a broader array of activities, given the wide diversity of participants present in the camp. Again, no distinctions are made: "while some hosts stay in the camp for three days, some stay for six months or more while waiting for their documents. So that this time is used productively, everyone will have the opportunity to attend practical training courses" (Baobab, n.d.). Starting September 2018, based on the idea of one of the camp's hosts, further training will be brought to the camp's space itself, under the rubric of "Baobab unique experience on skill acquisition" (Baobab, n.d.). The initiative is not only significant because it is initiated by a 'receiver' rather than a 'provider' of aid, but also because it multiplies and diversifies the range of activities the camp holds within its physical and social environment. On the one hand the camp confirms its rootedness in the self-initiatives of migrants, and on the other, it strives to reduce the state of exception that camps generally embody by becoming increasingly varied, both in program and social composition.

3.2. The Plateforme Citoyenne de Soutien aux Réfugiés: Brussels, Belgium

Institutional structures in Belgium operate at three levels: federal, regional, and communal. While asylum and migration are a federal responsibility, policing, public order, and social policies overlap in responsibility between the federal, the regional and the communal; urban planning is a responsibility shared by the region and the communes. In Brussels this framework leads to significant overlap: the city has 19 communes, each with its own mayor and administration; they all further fall into a regionalized administration, the Brussels–Capital–Region. Because of this complex and nuanced institutional structure, overlaps exist in the governance levels, creating opportunistic gaps that open up the possibility for negotiation by the group in question, as will be elaborated.

In 2015, the state received a relatively large number of asylum applications when confronted with its population size (Scholten et al., 2017, p. 12). That year, Brussels saw the emergence of a spontaneous refugee camp in Maximilien Park (which lies in proximity to the immigration office), as a result of the long waiting times it took asylum seekers from Syria to file their applications. Under the leadership of far-right Secretary of State for Asylum and Migration, Theo Francken, official response had deliberately expressed hostility to those displaced (Cendrowicz & Paterson, 2015). In the absence of timely institutional action, non-profit organisations, citizen groups, and individual volunteers mobilised to offer humanitarian service, supporting the installation of the camp and giving rise to the PCSR. The camp has been studied as a contested site for citizenship (Depraetere & Oosterlynck, 2017) and as an expression of the political activism of humanitarian workers (Lafaut & Coene, 2018); this includes partial insight into the work of PCSR. Its members are heterogeneous and consist of political activists of anti-austerity movements, action committees of undocumented migrants, students, and volunteers (Lafaut & Coene, 2018). PCSR is the CSO that will be examined in the context of the Belgian capital city and its recent entanglements with migration.

The evolution of PCSR's mobilisation over time can be examined in relation to the changing demographic of displaced people in Maximilien Park, following the clearance of the Calais 'jungle' in October 2016. These demographic changes form the basis, in this section, for discussing how solidarity and mobility have evolved in PCSR's activity and the implications for its action in the urban realm. PCSR began as an immediate response to the 2015 'crisis', in an attempt to put pressure on the Federal Government to take action under the state's obligation to the 1951 Refugee Protocol (Marques dos Santos, 2018). An evolution in its activity would allow it to negotiate a deal with the City of Brussels to dismantle the camp in exchange for the temporary rights-of-usage of a vacant factory; this evolution is characterized by the moment when PCSR members collectively decide to offer asylum seekers sleeping space in their homes to display solidarity with them (Cendrowicz & Paterson, 2015). This solidarity has not only persisted but has also grown in light of a change in the profile of asylum seekers, who are no longer the "good refugees" of Syrian origin (Lafaut & Coene, 2018, p. 9), but the less welcome sub-Saharan African men and women frequently denigrated under the appellation, 'transit migrants'. For reasons again connected to terminology (Düvell, 2010) the term 'displaced' people will be preferred instead.

For many of those displaced currently in Maximilien Park, disappointment in European hospitality has led them to consider the UK as a last resort to seek asylum (Pellecchia & Godderis, 2018). In the meantime, they experience a state of suspension, since they have not filed for asylum in Belgium nor yet reached the UK, their applications in other EU member states may have been re-

jected, or they have been fingerprinted upon entry into Europe but have moved on from their first country of arrival. Since this change in the demographic of those displaced seeking refuge in Maximilien Park, PCSR has expressed “solidarity with all migrants” (PCSR, 2017). This slogan reflects the platform’s evolution from a citizen-led mobilisation generated by public sympathy for Syrian refugees, to a broader movement that critically engages with issues of asylum in Europe.

According to its website, PCSR stands in opposition to the hostile environment in Belgium and in support of “migrants” (2017); they do not distinguish between less or more privileged mobile people, their mobility statuses, or their categorisations. The platform aims “to be a place where people can meet…nurture ideas and initiatives that promote solidarity between citizens and migrants…[where they] will engage in awareness-raising activities and mobilize people around migration issues” (PCSR, 2017). The website also stresses that Europe needs migrants, but never once uses the term ‘integration’, and rather focuses on the term ‘solidarity’. According to one of their key members, “hosting” and “including” are key terms for the platform, as opposed to “integrating”, especially under current conditions of secondary movement within Europe (Marques dos Santos, 2018). PCSR’s action reverses the bias embedded in ‘integration’—that those who are new are expected to integrate—and focuses its attention to the host society’s role in promoting a culture of hospitality, feeding what Darling (2013) has examined under the notion of “moral urbanism”.

PCSR self-organises mainly via Facebook, through a closed online group with over 42,000 participants (Hébergement Plateforme Citoyenne, 2015) and more than 15 area-based local groups. Members volunteer sleeping space in their private homes all over the country, acting as hosts to those in need for as many nights desired. This process goes beyond the provision of bed-space; it is one in which cultural exchanges take place and misconceptions about one another are broken. In analysing their action, four primary acts of solidarity are enacted: offering asylum seekers a place to sleep during the night, offering them a ride to and from the park, donating supplies, and sharing live warnings of police presence in the district. Secondary activities include organising gatherings of protest, such as rallies that defend a cause, or of community events such as meals and parties. Tertiary activities include posting interesting articles, political updates that are relevant to migration, as well as spreading information to raise awareness and provide mutual advice among hosting members.

While PCSR communicates and organises online, it uses the city for its operation. Since Maximilien Park has acted as a place of arrival, hosting asylum seekers and offering its infrastructure for their use, it has also been activated as PCSR’s main meeting point for the dispatch of daily action. Moreover, due to the multi-layered governance structure outlined above, PCSR has found gaps that have allowed them to negotiate the opening of humanitarian and reception centres that mark its presence physically and spatially. One of such instances is the recent establishment of 900 square meters of space for centralising medical, legal, social, and other services offered by several local and international CSOs (Marques dos Santos, 2018). This space has been secured in none other than the North Station—the busiest multimodal station in the country, and an international bus stop for low-cost pan-European lines. While the humanitarian nature of the hub makes it less easy to disengage from discourses that view those displaced as victims, the online stories of PCSR members hosting asylum seekers in their private homes testify to exchanges that refute the distinct roles of ‘recipients’ and ‘providers’ of aid. Neologisms such as “vnous” (combining ‘us’ and ‘them’) and “amigrant” (merging ‘friend’ and ‘migrant’) developed in the course of exchanges between volunteers and those displaced are a telling indication in this regard (Daher, 2018).

Furthermore, PCSR also successfully negotiated to temporarily occupy a vacant office building to act as a nightly reception centre, La Porte d’Ulysses (Marques dos Santos, 2018). This centre is one out of multiple urban spaces the PCSR operates in: it acts at the unit scales of the individual hosts’ homes and participates in the running of two humanitarian hubs as well as several support centres. Building on Darling’s call to reflect on the city’s engagement with forced migration (Darling, 2017), this shows how acts of solidarity have a direct urban planning implication that is tied to the city, not only in its representations, but also in its physicality. PCSR’s activities further reflect the solidarity of collective citizen action that Squire (2010) writes about, enabling it to move between spatial and legal scales, making use of interstitial spaces both in the city and between governance levels.

3.3. Coop Campus: Berlin, Germany

Germany has been the largest receiver of refugees in Europe during the ‘crisis’ of 2015 (Romei, Ehrenberg-Shannon, Maier-Borst, & Chazan, 2017). It appears to be a desired destination because it is associated with a prosperous economy, liberal asylum laws, and strong diaspora networks (Trines, 2017). The registration and administration of asylum seekers for the whole country is steered by its main institution, the Federal Ministry for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), while the implementation of actual ‘integration’ happens at the local level. States and municipalities are responsible for distribution, education, housing, and the provision of material supplies for asylum seekers and refugees, and correspondingly, follow very different approaches. In Berlin these numbers were reflected in the influx of 72,000 displaced persons in 2015 and 2016 (The Senate of Berlin, 2018). The number of arrivals challenged the state apparatus, causing the federal administration to collapse—a situation that triggered a quickly growing number of volun-

teer networks to setup alternative support systems. In July 2016, the Senate of Berlin developed a Masterplan of Integration and Security, with the important characteristic of being applicable only to status holders (The Senate of Berlin, 2016). This highlights what Squire has exposed as the disqualification of asylum seekers as "subjects of integration and cohesion" (Squire, 2010, p. 291) due to their undecided or ambivalent status.

The Gärtnerei—later expanded to become the Coop Campus—is one example that deliberately targets primarily, but not exclusively, the participation of non-status holders to the city's social, cultural, and economic life. One of the project's goals is to avoid that displaced persons stay in limbo, and to employ collaborative activities to halt the endless cycle of waiting that most are subject to (Schlesische 27, 2017). It is an experimental garden and nursery located in the Western Jerusalem cemetery that borders the Tempelhofer Airfield in Berlin-Neukölln, comprising an area of 3000 square meters. It is owned by the Protestant association Berlin-Stadtmitte (EvFBS), which is in the process of reclassifying the cemetery into building land. The team of the Schlesische 27, an International youth and cultural centre located in Berlin-Kreuzberg, and Raumlaborberlin, the auto-depicted "commons of spatial practice" (C. Mayer, personal communication, 2 July 2018) are the initiators of the Gärtnerei/Coop Campus. The EvFBS supports the initiative by allowing the free use of the cemetery ground. However, the current cooperation agreement is temporary, and has already been renewed a few times; its further renewal remains uncertain.

The Gärtnerei/Coop Campus initiative emerged out of earlier engagements of the Schlesische 27 acting in solidarity with asylum seekers and refugees. The team had already participated in the refugee-led Oranienplatz occupation by the Lampedusa in Berlin group, that evolved out of a 2012 march, in which around 70 displaced persons predominantly from West Africa, as well as 100 supporters, protested against the inhumane conditions in the country. The gradual occupation of the square turned into a tent village where approximately 100 refugees lived, until they were evicted in 2014 (Rohde, 2016). The Refugee Company for Crafts and Design and the related Cucula project were born out of a direct engagement by the Schlesische 27 with the occupation (Cucula, n.d.). Other projects followed suit with the predominant goal of supporting asylum seekers and refugees to work rather than to wait.

The Coop Campus project is considered a phase in a gradual transformative process of city-making (C. Mayer, personal communication, 2 July 2018). It began in 2015 as a nursery aiming to tackle, through gardening, the question of how to enable the coexistence of diverse groups after the significant amount of those displaced had arrived in Berlin (Schlesische 27, 2017). It was set up in mutual effort between the project´s initiators, asylum seekers and refugees, and neighbours. This collective engagement was a way to establish and upkeep a sense of mutual ownership over the project. The nursery emerged as a first intervention, followed by the restoration of an existing stonemason's house, and the installation of a greenhouse to become a multi-functional, experimental garden. To create opportunities for enabling active participation is, as already mentioned, the prime aim of the Coop Campus, underlined by its approach to empower people through the exchange of skills and knowledge. The woodworking workshop in the stonemason house for instance, provides the possibility for participants to work independently of legal status. A kiosk was further constructed for the exchange of products and donations that activate displaced people's skills rather than fostering the passive reception of state support.

The site's incremental transformation emphasizes the conception of urban inclusion as promoted by the Schlesische 27 and its partners. Coop Campus is described as providing a ground for mutual learning amongst a heterogeneous group of participants, while offering to be the learning ground itself (Schlesische 27, 2017). It, therefore, emphasizes a collective approach to articulate the coexistence between 'established' residents and those displaced. Solidarity is expressed by embracing participation through presence, rather than through membership based on legal or cultural characteristics. Learning is a multi-directional process that is grounded in the transformation of an urban interstice; gardening, building, and a plethora of other activities are shaped through collective engagement and are thus, constituted in spaces where various legal statuses, socio-economic profiles, and cultural and ethnic backgrounds have the opportunity to engage with one another. Distinctions are blurred by the fact that all participants are learners and have some form of knowledge to share with the others present. Interested participants have the possibility to learn German in a school in the garden, set up in a stonemason house that also hosts a monthly adult education activity known as Café Nana. Here too, boundaries are blurred and categories subverted: asylum seekers and refugees provide different language classes to Berliners and share insights into customs, ceremonies or agricultural practices in their home countries.

The gradual changes made to an urban area serve as the canvas for a co-creative process that not only enacts solidarity, but also transforms the urban fabric physically. From a gardening nursery, the Coop Campus has evolved into a collective process that includes the contribution of a wide array of participants on site. The project is indeed meant to function as a testing ground where ideas for a broader urban situation are tried out and could stimulate further collective developments (C. Mayer, personal communication, 2 July 2018). However, the hurdles that the project faces today are indicative of the clear limitations when it comes to the potential endurance and wider impact of collective engagements rooted in solidarity. Indeed, while social hierarchies and distinctions may be momentarily disrupted, the long-term vision for social and physical change has stalled, despite an urban

planning framework by Raumlaborberlin for the gradual development of the area as a cooperative neighbourhood beyond the cemetery's perimeters. Even though the project illustrates how socio-cultural spaces are appreciated, as does the approach towards collective urban development (C. Mayer, personal communication, 2 July 2018), neither the EvFBS nor the responsible planning authorities are open to this vision. Another related fact is the abandonment of the initial idea to develop housing for both refugees and non-refugees in the nearby communal living complex by EvFBS. Because of the difference in housing standards for refugees and conventional social housing, these intentions could not be pursued.

4. Embracing Mobility to Shift from Integration to Solidarity

The three cases presented above provide evidence, from practice, of the shifting discourse at the local level from integration to solidarity, through the perspective of mobility. By mobilising citizens under a shared value system that does not distinguish between the status of people as a precondition to access the city, they display solidarity as a process that foregrounds participation through presence, rather than exclusive membership rules rooted in legal and cultural statuses. They either deliberately shun the framework of 'integration', as does PCSR in Brussels, or, as in the case of Baobab in Rome, they emphasize that neither temporal nor legal boundaries should be an obstacle to welcoming the displaced—even if the term can still occasionally be found in their digital and printed publications. Comparably, the Coop Campus team has involved non-status holders, without making them an exclusive target of support, to promote the stimulation of an urban environment where intensified movements and diversities can generate a multitude of collective engagements. Further research may wish to explore the important entanglements that such practices based on solidarity may have with representations of the "good" and "hospitable" city called for by Derrida (2001) and observed by Amin (2006) and Darling (2013); this, however, is not the prime focus of this contribution.

Rather, through the comparative analysis of three cases, this contribution displays the tangible consequences of EU migration policies and their national interpretations on urban space, and how the circulatory and secondary movements, the multiplication of borderlands, and the diversification of migratory projects, have impacted a number of European cities (for a list of cities dealing with a "fluid situation, often in the absence of support, or even in the face of hostility from the national level", see Eurocities, 2016, p. 7). This impact is multi-faceted but is here discussed in light of, firstly, the political possibilities of CSO-driven solidarity in feeding what has been termed, "life space" (Friedmann, 1988; Friedmann & Huxley, 1985), and secondly, the intersection between such mobilisations and the actual urban spaces that enable the enactment of solidarities, as a means to reflect on how the urban plays out in the context of asylum.

For the first point, as mentioned in the introduction, Friedmann advanced the idea that a renewed form of planning would be capable of legitimising planning processes that would ultimately empower civil society (Friedmann, 1988). The latter was viewed as the principal driver of resistance against homogenising forces, mostly understood as economic, albeit extended here to include cultural and social dimensions. However, the political possibilities of the CSO cases examined in the cities of Rome, Brussels, and Berlin display an extreme precariousness; in the best case scenario, they are tolerated and mildly supported by local authorities, as the Coop Campus case shows, but both the Baobab volunteers and PCSR are rather placed in a position of instability. National integration frameworks or local integration plans, as epitomised by the Masterplan on Integration and Security released by the Senate of Berlin, continue to target status holders and exclude many other displaced people without status. While the blurring of such distinctions is at the core of the solidarities enacted by the three CSOs examined, the disruption and unsettlement of social roles and hierarchies (e.g., learners/educators; providers/recipients) remains specific to the activities and initiatives led by the CSOs in question. They find little to no resonance with the way in which various governance levels continue to conceive of permanent settlement, in terms of legal membership and cultural boundedness as the main paradigms to work with displaced people. The key posture remains that of departing from stasis rather than from mobility, thus, dismissing the force of migrant agency (Nail, 2015).

Movement, moreover, as has been illustrated, has informed the ways in which the CSOs have had to operate in their attempt to find space for action in the urban fabric. This brings us to the second point of attention: all three cases suffer from their interstitial presence in the urban realm, characterised by short-term rental agreements for the occupation of underused buildings or residual spaces in their respective cities of operation. The idea of urban change rooted in solidarity, and for which mobility is a given, is in contrast with the possibility of acting out in the city from a less precarious position: Baobab, PCSR and Coop Campus are now forced into interstices such as station backsides, underused buildings and open spaces with quickly changing ownerships, ultimately compromising longevity and the effectiveness of their solidarities.

The mobility that frames their actions is one to which they are also subject, though this occurs with variations across the three cities. In Rome, Baobab's space of intervention remains a camp under threat of eviction by local authorities in a relatively peripheral location, whereas in Brussels, PCSR operates in public domains such as parks and stations, located in close proximity to an important administrative border represented by the Immigration Office. While the most successful in securing an urban

space into which physical transformations can be designed as a way to generate a co-productive city-making process, Coop Campus too suffers from temporal lease arrangements, and the recent sale of part of the land has endangered the continuity of key activities, such as Café Nana. Through both the Rome and Berlin cases, we see that when longer-term engagements with the city are searched for, obstacles arise. As soon as mobility becomes a vision for city-making for example, the consequences of differential logics arise, as illustrated by the different housing norms in Berlin. Even though the practices endorsing mobility have 'moved' themselves by expanding their focus, broadening their audiences, and expressing solidarity with a growing number of vulnerable people (including 'established' residents facing hardship), clear limitations remain in terms of their wider effects – in spite of the increasing importance of multiple minor acts, based on participation through presence, that disrupt established 'integration' narratives.

5. Conclusion

This article has examined three CSO practices that emerged out of the post-'crisis' movements which led private citizens and voluntary associations across Europe to welcome asylum seekers and refugees coming mostly, but not only, from war-torn Syria. This mobilisation shifted from a voluntary instance to organised associational work, that expanded its action over time to include a number of other displaced people for whom 'integration' and its biases are not relevant. To build on such an assumption, the article delves into the recent literature on the term, exposing its discursive and conceptual shortcomings. It then proceeds to critically understand and compare the collective engagements of three CSOs operating in front-line, transit and destination EU countries. The cities of Rome, Brussels and Berlin are the urban realms in which these practices, rooted in solidarity, operate. The cases are unravelled based on two main aspects related to mobility. Firstly, the disruption, suspension and subversion, however temporal, of social, cultural and economic distinctions is discussed in light of the CSOs' engagements. Secondly, the expansion and transformation of their activities is taken as a point of attention to illustrate how, by embracing mobility, the range and scope of CSO engagement can only increase and be enriched.

Taken together, the cases display a shift from the bias of 'stasis' embedded in 'integration', to that of 'mobility' and 'solidarity'. This unfolds through the acceptance of the fleeting presence of not just mobile elites, but also, of other people 'on the move'; it is most significantly expressed in the shared narrative to "break with the established 'script' of the passive and grateful refugee and to undermine fixed classifications of citizens and non-citizens" (Darling, 2017, p. 189). The cases are then discussed comparatively in light of two aspects: first, their opportunity to defend "life space" (Friedmann, 1988) against the disruption of global forces, extended here to include the externalisation of EU migration and asylum policy; and second, the way in which the urban is mobilised, not in terms of representations and imaginaries, but as a physical construct within which to operate, and that can be transformed in alignment with the perspective of mobility. The analysis concludes by highlighting how the endurance of such engagement with the city remains limited, notwithstanding the significant collective engagements grounded in solidarity that confirm the pitfalls of the 'integration' paradigm, and that would require a more 'radical planning' in John Friedmann's terms.

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Conflict of Interests

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Article

The City as an Agent of Refugee Integration

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Abstract
In this contribution, we investigate how the role of cities in the governance of refugee integration has changed as a consequence of the Europeanization of asylum policies into a Common European Asylum System (CEAS) in conjunction with the "refugee crisis" of 2015, which this CEAS turned out to be unable to adequately cope with. We will answer this question by first giving a quick overview of scholarly thinking on the role of the city in global issues in general, and in migration issues in particular. After this we provide an exploratory analysis of the role cities presently see for themselves as cities, as well as jointly organized in European networks.

Keywords
asylum; city networks; Common European Asylum System; integration; migration; refugees

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1. Introduction

There is an important stream of literature arguing for a more local approach to global issues in general and, though less so, migration issues in particular. Authors such as Benjamin Barber and Saskia Sassen who famously coined the concept of the "global city", have noticed the political power and agency of cities in today's globalized world. Normally, states assume responsibility for those issues, yet cities may be better equipped to deal with them. Barber (2013) argues that we need a "global parliament of mayors" and implies that the centre of global governing should be within the city. Even though Barber's argument is slightly provocative, his reasons and arguments provide a new theoretical paradigm to look at the role of the local level within multi-level governance. In the field of migration studies, a "local turn" has taken place (Caponio & Borkert, 2010; Zapata-Barrero, Caponio, & Scholten, 2017). Where previously migration, refugee and asylum policies were by and large understood to be national in nature (e.g., Doomernik & Jandl, 2008), more recently, and especially after the 2015 "asylum crisis", research increasingly includes the lower levels of governance, such as the special issue of the Journal of Refugee Studies on local refugee policies (Glorius & Doomernik, 2016). A growing academic appreciation of the importance of multi-level governance, notably in the European Union (EU), has come together with the highly visible realities of the said "crisis" which have largely played out at the local level (Doomernik & Glorius, 2016).

The present contribution focuses on cities and their networks as increasingly important players in the EU and its member states' response to the arrival of asylum seekers and refugees. When national sovereignty is at stake, as is the case with the admission of refugees and immigrants, individual cities—which we define as urban administrative units, and usually the lowest rung of national political stratification—as a rule execute policies decided upon at the national level. However, we can observe how cities contest policies or seek and exercise discretion when national policies turn out to be unenforceable, politically undesirable or at cross-purposes

with their specific mandate (e.g., maintaining public order; see, for the Dutch case, Kos, Maussen, & Doomernik, 2016; for the US, Canada and the UK see Bauder, 2017). Cities steering their own course is thus not particularly new or unique for Europe. However, it would seem that two developments together have boosted their role: the growing Europeanization of asylum policies, thus opening up new opportunities for political venue-shopping for city governments above the national level; and the unexpectedly high influx of asylum seekers in 2015, which put considerable strain on the EU's ability to jointly deal with their arrival. In effect, cities all over Europe had to act in the face of national governments that were overburdened or even unwilling to take responsibility (Doomernik & Glorius, 2016). The present article asks how this has changed the role European cities identify for themselves and how they organize horizontally and vertically in response to these new challenges.

Next, we provide an overview of the main arguments arising out of the scholarly literature as to why cities claim (and some would say deserve) agency in the governance of immigration and refugee integration. Then we proceed to sketch what the main European city networks lobby for. For this we review their policy documents. In other words: we limit ourselves to statements issued by local governments, singly and collectively. Obviously, this does not result in a representative image of what cities' positions are, for those who do not participate in networks that clearly promote a larger role for themselves and (usually meaning) inclusive policies remain out of view. Finally, we evaluate in which domains these present policy ambitions depart from those that traditionally belong to the realm of urban governance, and thus those that represent a European "local turn" in response to the "refugee crisis".

2. Cities and Governance

A first reason why cities are becoming more important in global governance lies in growing populations and ditto economic impact. Just over half of the world's population lives in cities and these earn 60% of global GDP. Refugees too predominantly resettle in cities.

Also in terms of political legitimacy, cities have features distinguishing themselves from national or supranational governments. Mayors often boast approval rates 2 or 3 times higher than those of national legislators or chief executives (Barber, 2013, p. 84). Cities are more intimate to their population than national governments. For the European Commission, this is one of the motives for engaging local governments with its policies (De Mulder, 2017).

A third argument why cities matter for global politics is the fact that they are politically better suited for it than nation states. Or at least, as Barber (2013, p. 74) provocatively writes: "Nation states have not shown much capacity to rule the world". According to Barber (2013, p. 4), in the face of increasing globalisation, cities must be the agents of change. He identifies two advantages of cities over states. First, while nation states' efforts at cooperation can be "crippled by the issue of sovereignty", cities do not face such limits. They are thus less likely to become venues of nationalistic politics. Secondly:

> The seeming indifference of cities to power politics and sovereignty, a feature that distinguishes them from states, is critical to their inclination to out-reach and networking. They prefer problem solving to ideology and party platforms, which is a core strength critical to their network potential. That they lack appetite for sovereignty and jurisdictional exclusivity enables them as agents of cross border collaboration. (Barber, 2013, p. 71)

Similarly, Kratz and Nowak (2017) demonstrate how the city embodies reason and pragmatism against a rising populist tide in the EU and the US alike.

In today's globalized world, cities are increasingly networked; they are collaborating internationally in a wide variety of inter-city networks in which they are quite effective. We will see below that there are many city networks doing productive work in lobbying, policy transfer and policy initiation in Europe's migration policy field. Cities such as Stuttgart, Barcelona, Hamburg, Vienna and Amsterdam have become hubs of urban networking, spawning new associations almost every year.

Cities appear to possess the unique combination of representing a level of governance that is local and thus able to represent pragmatism, efficiency and legitimacy, but at the same time being able to learn from each other through horizontal networking, e.g., about how to navigate vertical relationships, and formulating cooperative solutions with other cities in the world.

3. Cities and Migration

Most immigrants arrive in cities, where they work and go to school, find houses, do groceries and look for healthcare. Refugees, which we treat as a sub-category of migrants, are in particular need of support from local governments in terms of education, language and healthcare. Therefore, immigration is a prime example of a global issue playing out at the local level, both in the field of integration and in the field of citizenship. Furthermore, cities deal practically with immigrants, even though national governments exercise their role as the sovereign who decides about admission and membership for those who are non-nationals. Indeed, as the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD) observes, the cost of integrating refugees is largely borne by sub-central governments, which is funded through lump sum payments from the national level, where the various and varying needs of refugees in local contexts is not taken into account (OECD, 2017).

Next to inclusion and integration policies, national membership status itself is also defined and acted out

within cities, especially when this is about more than legal status. As Isin (2000, p. 6) notes: "Global cities are spaces where the very meaning, content and extent of citizenship are being made and transformed".

Varsanyi (2006), Daamen and Doomernik (2014) and many others describe how citizenship is transformed within the city. For instance, in many cities in the US, immigrants without a status are given school board voting rights and can pay in-state tuition fees of universities (instead of the tuition fees for non-nationals). Furthermore, the cities either issue the immigrants with driving licences, or accept certain proofs of identity (such as the Mexican *Matriculas consulares*) or locally issued ID cards in lieu of driving licences or official passports (Bauder, 2017). While in European countries, notably the welfare states among them, national control regimes tend to be stricter, these do not prevent the irregular residence of immigrant and failed asylum seekers. This can result in the de facto acceptance of their presence by city governments. In other words, citizenship can exist in practice without it being granted by law. The main reasons for cities to offer this alternative to legally based citizenship can be simple pragmatism in view of insufficient enforcement capacities, local economic interests, or priorities within community policing, which are mandates that are particular to their level of governance (as compared to national mandates that need to consider wider sets of interests; Spencer, 2018). In addition, ambiguities in national policies, resulting in policy gaps (Hollifield, Martin, & Orrenius, 2014), can force or tempt city governments to close these gaps at the local level.

Bauböck (2003) similarly argues that in cities, membership is not given on the basis of abstract notions of giving consent to enter a bounded community, but instead upon the mere reality of presence and residence in a place. Next to the classical distinction between nationality by descent (jus sanguinis) and by birthplace (jus soli), this form of citizenship could be called jus domicili, i.e., rights based on residence. Consequentially one could argue for "constitutional politics that would strengthen local self-government by redefining boundaries, membership and rights at the level of municipal polities". (Bauböck, 2003, p. 139).

What is more, theorists and scholars such as Bauböck (2003) and Barber (2013), De Graauw and Vermeulen (2016) see a clear role for cities in the field of migration. Cities "fix and manage" most practical issues such as integration, housing, work and education for immigrants, but they also play a role in shaping and negotiating citizenship itself. Local policies are more likely to provide immigrants with equal opportunities and have an eye for the importance of ethnic diversity and immigrant political participation (Garcés-Mascarenas & Chauvin, 2016). To be sure: we should not only be optimistic and simplistic about cities as agent of integration. Cities can act in exclusionary ways too if electoral realities force them to. For example, some cities in Spain refuse to register irregular immigrants and thereby counteract their legal access to healthcare, and some municipalities in Italy exclude irregular migrants from public housing. Additionally, in some localities, anti-immigrant parties and attitudes are growing, which is jeopardizing the inclusion of immigrants at the local level (Garcés-Mascarenas & Chauvin, 2016).

4. What Role Do Cities See for Themselves When It Comes to Managing Refugee Migration in the EU?

It is not only scholars arguing for a larger role for the local level within the migration field. Cities themselves, and especially their transnational networks, are vocal in arguing for a more important role. In most if not all policy documents, statements and initiatives, cities and city networks emphasize and ask recognition for their importance in the migration field. Migrants come to cities, and cities have to take care for migrants, and do so when no other institution is able to (Council of European Municipalities and Regions [CEMR], 2015).

As agents in immigrant policymaking, cities often claim they are neglected by national governments. In the remainder of this paper, we ask what role cities see for themselves in this respect. We look at policy statements, position papers, letters, initiatives, and the actions of cities. In order to analyse the role cities see for themselves, we have selected a wide array of city networks (see Table 1). We do not claim to have an exhaustive list of networks and initiatives. We only surveyed those city networks that address migration policy on their websites. We started with Barber's (2013) list of city networks and initiatives and added networks if they were mentioned in one of the documents we analysed. We have analysed all of their published material with the research question in mind. It is important to note that in these documents, there is a natural emphasis on change; on areas where cities demand more influence than they presently have. What is reported partly reflects the current role cities play and is focused on the future role they see for themselves.

There are different dimensions to the field of migration. Do cities want to play a role within all those dimensions? And what are those dimensions exactly?

Alexander (2003, pp. 48–50) offers a useful classification of policy domains and issue areas within the migration field. He identifies four local policy domains. Firstly, there is the legal-political domain, which addresses the civic incorporation of migrants/ethnic minorities in the host polity. This is the dimension where issues of allocation and citizenship play a role. Secondly, there is the socio-economic domain, which concerns social inclusion policies. Thirdly, Alexander defines the cultural-religious domain, which includes policies related to minority, religious and cultural practices as well as to inter-group cultural relations. Finally, Alexander points to the spatial domain, which groups policies with a strong spatial dimension (housing, urban renovation, symbolic spaces). Below we offer an inventory of what role cities envisage for those four policy domains. As shall become

Table 1. List of reviewed city networks.

UIA (Urban Innovative Actions) is an initiative of the EU and promotes and subsidizes sustainable urban development. Issues include environment, employment, migration and employment (Urban Innovative Actions, n.d.).
Urban Agenda for the EU, hosted by the European Commission, was initiated by the city government of Amsterdam in 2016 and covers a wide range of urban topics, including the integration of refugees (Urban Agenda for the EU, n.d.).
EUROCITIES has close to 200 members and partners. Collaboration is on a wide range of issues and includes refugee integration (EUROCITIES, n.d.).
The CEMR represents sixty national associations of regional and local governments, who together have 130,000 members, and extends beyond the EU (CEMR, n.d.).
United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is a global network of which CEMR is the European regional section (UCLG, n.d.).
VNG International is the international branch of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG International, n.d.).

clear, cities have distinct logics in formulating their policy goals and in identifying their target populations (cf., Jørgensen, 2012).

5. Legal Political Domain: Negotiating Citizenship, Negotiating Policy

City networks voice complaints about the Dublin III regulation, which stipulates as a core principle of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) that the European country an asylum seeker (someone who asks to be recognized as a refugee) first sets foot on, is and remains responsible for all that follows, be it integration, temporary protection, or rejection and deportation. This results in uneven burdens for member states and for their cities, notably at the EU's outer borders. Arguably it was this principle that turned the arrival of Syrian and other refugees in the summer of 2015 into a crisis of the EU's professed goal of political solidarity (Den Heijer, Rijpma, & Spijkerboer, 2016). It also means that a recognized refugee is not at liberty to move to a location in the EU where chances for integration (for instance by finding employment) are highest. Cities therefore argue for a revised allocation model, out of solidarity with communities in border regions and with refugees trying to enter the EU:

> The Dublin III regulation should be revised. This regulation puts pressure on the external border regions of the EU, where the majority of asylum seekers enter the EU and where local authorities are often the least able to offer a large number of asylum seekers adequate support and protection. (EUROCITIES, 2015a, p. 3)

Cities voice their (political) ideas on citizenship, especially the fact that refugees should benefit from free movement within the EU. EUROCITIES, in the same statement from 2015, argues for:

> The establishment of a principle of mutual recognition of refugee or international protection status and the possibility of transfer of protection status across Europe for recognised refugees. They should benefit from the right of free movement and establishment in Europe as soon as they are granted refugee status. (EUROCITIES, 2015a, p. 3)

Similarly, but with the imposition of a single restriction, CEMR (2015) asserts that "refugees who find a job in another country, should have the opportunity to move to that member state".

Furthermore, cities demand more involvement in designing and implementing a new directive for the allocation of refugees as part of the CEAS:

> Cities should be involved in the implementation of this directive to allow them to prepare for the reception of and provision of services to asylum seekers. (EUROCITIES, 2015a, p. 3)

> Without the involvement of local and regional governments there can be no practical implementation of the agreements concluded at EU and national levels. (CEMR, 2015)

Cities moreover identify a distinct role for themselves in adequately dealing with rejected asylum seekers, an issue that is generally understood to be difficult to solve from a national level:

> City authorities, if they wish to do so, should be more extensively supported by European institutions, member states and international organisations to enable them to offer quality information to those rejected and those dropping out of the asylum procedure, as well as to provide mediation and guidance regarding the voluntary return option. (EUROCITIES, 2015a, p. 2)

Besides negotiating EU asylum policy, cities may play an active role in shaping citizenship. As Garcés-Mascarenas & Chauvin (2016 p. 52) note:

> The incorporation of irregular immigrants takes mostly place at the local level: it is precisely

> there…where the practices of street-level bureaucrats, the support of non-governmental organisations and the development and implementation of particular local policies counteract the exclusionary effects of immigration policies.

To facilitate this process, city governments for instance may fund local NGOs working in the field of social and legal assistance. Barcelona offers a very interesting example when it turned the municipal census into the basis of what was defined as 'resident citizenship'. In effect, everyone registered in the city is considered a legitimate citizen, and has rights to healthcare, education, and municipal services such as libraries, sports centres and some social benefits.

But in many cities, citizenship takes shape through daily practice. For example, the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) has written a report together with EUROCITIES on how cities mitigate the impact of restrictive national policies regarding access to healthcare services. Where national governments limit access to public health systems, by requiring residence status in order to receive care, cities use their authorities to legislate or otherwise act in the field of health policy or delivery of care. As funders, cities support initiatives that facilitate improved access to services for their undocumented residents, for instance by providing it for free or anonymously. Examples from the report illustrate how cities have used a variety of strategies to improve access:

> Including funding local clinics in Helsinki and Warsaw; partnering with local NGOs to provide integrated, community-based care in Frankfurt; easing administrative burdens in Ghent; campaigning to raise awareness of the right to health services in Madrid; and funding coverage for services denied under national plans in Eindhoven, Amsterdam, Nijmegen and Utrecht. (Smith & Levoy, 2017, p. 31)

By doing this, undocumented immigrants are included in the city as residents, and cities are reshaping the—often-exclusionary—national citizenship policies (for the Dutch case see also Kos et al., 2016).

But cities can go and do go further. As mentioned above, Barcelona includes all immigrants in the municipal population register, regardless of their migration status within their city, providing them not only with healthcare rights, but also making it possible for them to access education, public institutions such as the library, and even certain forms of benefits (Garcés-Mascarenas & Chauvin, 2016).

To conclude, cities have their own political ideas on allocation, settlement, deportation and membership rules for immigrants. City networks argue for freedom of movement for refugees within the EU, hereby countering the current Dublin regulation. Following their logic, cities also demand more involvement in decision making on allocation of refugees at the EU and national level. Finally, the local level has significant impact on how citizenship works in practice. Cities mitigate national restrictive policies, and include migrants into the city as residents, thereby reshaping the actual meaning of citizenship.

6. The Spatial and Socio-Economic Domains: Autonomy, Policy Transfer and the Request for More Support

6.1. Labour Market

Often, cities are responsible for the labour market integration of refugees. In the Netherlands, for instance, we see how cities have different types of labour market integration programmes (Razenberg & De Gruijter, 2017). Dutch cities develop numerous initiatives and seek autonomy for making labour market integration policies. First, through assessments and intake conversations, municipalities try to assess "their" refugees' skills and strengths. Furthermore, municipalities like Amsterdam and Utrecht have "case managers" and "job coaches" for each refugee. Municipalities actively work together with local companies and employers and actively mediate between companies and refugees, also for internships and voluntary work arrangements. They organize visits to local companies with refugees, or "meet and greets" for employers and refugees. What becomes visible too is that localities often find it easier to integrate refugees with specific skills into their own labour markets. As a result of earlier more or less random distribution mechanisms in which all Dutch municipalities had to accommodate a centrally determined fixed share of refugees, mismatches between labour market needs and the refugees' human capital easily occurred. To counter this problem, the high-tech city of Eindhoven has developed a labour market integration policy specifically aimed at technically skilled English-speaking refugees. In other places, such as greenhouse regions, demand is mostly for low-skilled agricultural workers, whereas these municipalities have problems integrating highly educated refugees (Razenberg & De Gruijter, 2017). Allocation of refugees could be improved to make the host society a better match overall with the incoming human capital. Finally, private and civil society initiatives are also very relevant in labour market integration, and cities often cooperate with those. In Finland, for instance, cities support various initiatives, which help to connect refugees to available jobs (EUROCITIES, 2016).

6.2. Housing

The city networks we reviewed mention that housing immigrants is among their largest challenges. Often, housing is scarce and pricy. Also in terms of public policy legitimacy and the general public's awareness, housing plays a large role. Cities work with their own housing stock, use mediators to reach out to private landlords, refur-

bish empty office buildings, and coordinate solidarity initiatives among residents willing to host refugees in their homes (EUROCITIES, 2016). Yet national rules and regulations make it hard to fundamentally change the situation. As the cities assembled in the Urban Agenda for the EU remark:

> The exceptions for situations of 'humanitarian urgency' should become more accepted as a common practice. For example, exceptions should be made in the EU sphere of competition and internal market for certain forms of housing for refugees. (Emergency) accommodation such as tiny houses, modular housing, containers, laneway housing etc. should be subject to more lenient rules on state aid and public procurement. (Urban Agenda for the EU, 2017, p. 39)

Meanwhile, cities have the possibility to combine housing with their goal of social inclusion: civil society and housing corporations can be included in the policymaking. For instance, in Antwerp, young unaccompanied refugees who come of age and are no longer eligible for welfare benefits can participate in a housing scheme where they are matched with young local citizens (buddies) and given training and job opportunities (Urban Innovative Actions, 2018). In Amsterdam and Utrecht, local governments together with housing corporations and civil society actors have created projects in which refugees live together with students (who likewise benefit from access to affordable, temporary housing).

Finally, communication between national governments and the local level may have to be improved, as becomes clear from the EUROCITIES (2016) report:

> Communication with national authorities has proven difficult in some instances, with cities such as Barcelona, Bilbao and Nantes reporting that they were either informed late in the process or never at all about how many asylum seekers they should expect under the EU relocation scheme and how their reception would be funded. Many cities report that they have effectively acted instead of their competent national authority to provide reception to asylum seekers and migrants. (EUROCITIES, 2016, p. 7)

6.3. Social Inclusion

In terms of social inclusion, more broadly defined than labour market integration, there are interesting initiatives from cities. We found three examples through the subsidy platform for Urban Innovative Actions (2018):

> The city of Bologna will look to foster the social, cultural and economic inclusion of migrants integrating different services in a new refurbished centre and allowing migrants to acquire new skills and build micro-enterprises for community services in the neighbourhood. Asylum seekers' entrepreneurial skills will be capitalised in the city of Utrecht combining community housing and learning activities. The city of Vienna will create a one-stop-shop for refugees that will bring together municipal services with grass roots initiatives through new forms of social cooperatives. (Urban Innovative Actions, 2018)

Also here the great autonomy of cities becomes clear, as well as their opportunities to work together with civil society and other local actors.

In the sphere of spatial and socio-economic integration, we can see just how much autonomy and creativity cities have to address challenges. Local governments have the advantage of being close to their population: the immigrants as well as employers and civil society. Case managers and coaches, as well as the practice of intake conversations, allow cities to get to know refugees and to match them properly to the labour market. Contacts with housing corporations and civil society make it possible to use housing for integration of refugees and other migrants as well as promoting overall social cohesion. However, national and supranational logics also frustrate such local policies. The allocation of human capital, which is determined by national governments and—indirectly—by the Dublin regulation often does not match local labour market needs. And national housing rules are often too strict to allow for flexible and emergency housing which is necessary if municipalities find themselves with the task of housing large groups at once.

What we have not found much trace of are big city interests in the cultural-religious domain. One might suspect two reasons for this. First of all, the present urgency lies with the practical reception and integration of recently arrived refugees and less so with social cohesion among the cities' population at large. The main purpose of the networks we have surveyed seems to be policy change for practical purposes, and changes to that end in the relationship between levels of governance. Secondly, earlier city networks did extensively address social cohesion and inter-cultural relations, e.g., the Cities for Local Integration Policies (CLIP) program (Penninx, 2015). Indeed, generally speaking we do know cities tend to consider this to be an important policy field (Alexander, 2003; Jørgensen, 2012).

6.4. Municipal Foreign Policies

Interestingly, we also came across policy domains which fifteen years ago were not identified by Alexander (2003), in all likelihood because their emergence is more recent.

We see that city networks may take up a role in formulating transnational (i.e., beyond the EU) policy. One instance of a foreign-oriented network of municipalities is VNG International. VNG is the Association of Netherlands Municipalities, which reaches out with the aim of strengthening democratic local government worldwide by offering expertise. Its network is thus less aimed at sharing, mutual learning between equal part-

ners and common lobbying than the other networks we came across. The projects of VNG International are manifold, but here again the relevance of migration and refugee protection for the local level becomes very clear. One example of its projects in the migration field is a local government resilience programme for the Middle East and North Africa. The objective is to "strengthen resilience at local government level in order to improve living conditions of the local population and refugees in host communities and refugee settlements" (VNG International, 2018c). Another project is located in Jordan and provides municipal assistance to Al Zaatari refugee camp. The municipality of Amsterdam sent experts from their offices to develop an integrated (scenario) planning approach for the camp, to address service planning bottlenecks arising from the Syrian refugee influx, and to assist the local government to develop a development vision and plan for the region (VNG International, 2018b).

Also in Georgia, rights of migrants are protected, especially aiming to protect them from exploitation and trafficking, offering durable livelihood solutions for returning migrants, prevention of irregular migration and capacity building for NGOs working in migration management. VNG International also "assists in the fight against irregular migration" (VNG International, 2018a). In this instance, the VNG works in line with European and national policy goals: migration is linked to security issues such as trafficking and irregular migration (Huysmans, 2006).

CEMR also developed some notions resembling a foreign policy. For instance, this city network called for a more critical assessment in terms of international and European human rights and asylum law of the so-called "Turkey deal". It also explicitly mentions forms of transnational solidarity with mayors from across Europe and the Balkans, Turkey, and the Middle East, notably Lebanon and Jordan. For instance, it requests that the EU respects local and regional self-governance, for instance in relation to refugee reception in the region.

Cities do not only develop an external foreign policy, but also an intra-European vision. Cities call for solidarity and demand "increased efforts to better coordinate actions in dialogue between local, regional and national governments and to distribute refugees fairly and with solidarity across all regions and municipalities at the European level" (CEMR, 2016, p. 3). One important instrument for this is policy harmonisation, the need for which cities often emphasize.

6.5. Policy Harmonisation and Policy Transfer

Related to transnational policies, but a dimension in its own right, cities take it upon themselves to work on the harmonisation of policies. One of the important goals of the Urban Agenda for the EU is to do so and to make it more evidence-based (Urban Agenda for the EU, 2016, p. 14):

> There is across Europe a great richness of experiences and expertise on integration. Sharing this experience in a systematic way can help enhancing the capacity of local authorities to develop successful integration policies in several areas. More structural exchanges of practices and experiences between different levels of governance can increase the efficiency and coordination in addressing integration challenges. (Urban Agenda for the EU, 2016, p. 25)

CEMR (2016) demands further development of the partnership mechanism and a co-decision spirit between EU, national, regional and local levels within existing institutional structures. It argues that there is a need for specific funding for the local level. CEMR welcomes the initiative to allocate extra money towards migration issues, but it wants it to be allocated to the local and regional levels. It also argues that the local level has to do more in terms of exchange, peer reviewing and sharing of best practices.

UCLG (2018) likewise calls for the promotion of peer-to-peer learning. They work for instance on building a network of local and national stakeholders in the Mediterranean at city level aiming to reinforce knowledge and capacities of local politicians, officials and practitioners. Besides, they report organizing many mayoral forums and conferences aimed at sharing good practices.

To conclude with Barber (2013), cities are indeed well connected and formulate and practice "foreign policies". We see how cities formulate statements, as well as engage in actions, in solidarity with localities outside Europe, as well as demand solidarity among cities within Europe. VNG International dispatches experts beyond the EU's borders and EUROCITIES calls for solidarity with the EU's border towns. Such internal solidarity should be achieved by policy harmonisation, for which the different city networks have taken various initiatives, such as conferences and platforms. These activities invariably go hand in hand with demands for more and direct funds from higher levels of governance, such as the EU.

6.6. Public Awareness and Legitimacy

Besides demanding a larger role within the implementation and design of the CEAS, cities see a role for themselves in involving local civil society organizations and in managing awareness and consensus building amongst the local population. As Urban Innovative Actions writes:

> Cities have shown to play an important role in promoting positive public perception of migrants and refugees and an understanding among the public of the need and obligation to grant them protection. In order to encourage a positive reception work is being done by local governments and NGOs to help people understand migrant and refugee experiences. (Urban Innovative Actions, 2018)

CEMR and EUROCITIES explicitly mention this dimension and argue that the EU should provide more financial support for cities to manage public opinion.

EUROCITIES, in a letter to the European Commission and national leaders, states that European cities are committed to non-discrimination and equality, and that these see a role for themselves in countering xenophobic and nationalistic narratives:

> There remains a nationalistic, isolationist and at times xenophobic undertone to some debates at national and European level. This does nothing to support the long term integration of refugees and asylum seekers. (EUROCITIES, 2015b)

One concrete way of doing this is through "neighbourhood information sessions" as described in a EUROCITIES (2016) report on the city of Utrecht:

> Utrecht hosted five neighbourhood information sessions to address residents' concerns about the arrival of refugees, and in particular the establishment of two refugee centres in key locations in the city. These sessions involved a range of stakeholders, including the vice mayor responsible for refugees and asylum seekers, the police chief and a doctor working in asylum centres. Neighbourhood stakeholders were invited to discuss issues such as safety with the police, local policy with the vice mayor, and volunteer activities. The meetings helped to reassure residents and encourage a positive attitude towards refugees. (EUROCITIES, 2016, p. 9)

7. Conclusion

We have shown that city governments "feel" they are underestimated and even neglected as agents in national and European policymaking with regards to migration, both in general terms as well as for refugee integration. Many documents studied call for more involvement of cities by emphasizing that migration is a local issue. We found that cities seek a bigger role in the legal-political domain: demanding involvement in the content of membership (for instance, by lobbying for free movement of refugees within the EU), shaping citizenship practices (for instance, by giving undocumented immigrants access to services that go beyond the national legal framework), but also by demanding more involvement in policy making and implementation of a future refugee reallocation scheme within Europe. We see that within the legal-political domain the focus is on a reform of the CEAS: giving input for this reform, but also demanding influence in the policy making and implementation of a reformed CEAS. Thus, on top of being actors who close the policy gaps caused at the national level (which in turn cannot be seen as detached from the European level), cities identify larger roles for themselves and in their own right, organized horizontally as networks addressing refugee issues. To this end they each and jointly seek new and expand existing vertical relationships, bypassing the national level and tapping into European resources.

Secondly, cities develop innovative initiatives regarding spatial and socio-economic inclusion of recently arrived refugees, especially focusing on labour market integration. They bank on the advantage of being relatively close to both immigrants and local companies, and on working as mediators to match the demand and supply of human capital. Furthermore, cities put a lot of effort into 'seeing' and knowing refugees' skills and expertise in order to be able to match them to a job. Local companies are actively included and cooperate with municipalities. We have also seen how, in stark contrast, the allocation of refugees organized at the level of national governments appears to much less—or indeed not—match the local demands for labour.

Finally, we find that cities see immigrants more naturally as social capital as compared to the national level where the "immigrant as a threat" imagery is more readily invoked. Indeed, the overall message in the city networks' policy statements is one of inclusion and respect for human rights and thus an explicit willingness to act where national governments fail to deliver in both practical and moral terms.

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Conflict of interests

The authors have no conflicting interests to declare.

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Article

Welcome City: Refugees in Three German Cities

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Abstract
Since late 2015, the authors have studied the refugee crisis in Europe. In this article, we analyze local factors that are significant for urban planning to include in an integration plan through case studies in three cities in Germany. We have chosen to study Germany because of the country's touted Willkommen Kultur (welcome culture), which was prompted in large part by Chancellor Angela Merkel's "Flüchtlinge Willkommen" ("refugees welcome") stance. Now, three years after Chancellor Merkel's declaration to the world, although international and national policies set many parameters for refugee integration, responses to the uncertainty of the situation are fundamentally informed by local contexts. Germany has adopted a policy of distributing refugees to communities throughout the country according to the so-called "Königstein Key", which sets quotas for each state according to economic capacity. We have selected case study cities and a county that are at different scales and regions: Borken in Hessen (13,500 people), Kassel County (200,000), and Essen, a larger city (600,000). Here we investigate the ways in which German citizens and refugees interact and integrate, with a focus on the social-spatial aspects of refugee experiences and the impacts on urban planning policy, urban morphology, building typology, and pattern language formation. Beyond crisis, we are looking at how refugees can and will try to integrate into their host countries, cities, and neighborhoods and start a new life and how host communities respond to refugee arrival. Urban architecture projects for housing and work opportunities that help the process of integration are part of this study. Particularly, in this article, we investigate the reality on the ground of the positive Willkommen Kultur and the high expectations and implied promises that were set in 2015 by Chancellor Angela Merkel and German society.

Keywords
building projects; pattern language; refugee acclimatization; urban design; urban transformation; welcome city; welcome culture

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1. The Willkommen Kultur (Welcome Culture) and Its Implied Promises on the Ground

The United Nations estimates that there are about 250 million migrants in the world, of which more than 65 million people are refugees (United Nations, 2015). This means that every two seconds another person is displaced by war, violence, and persecution (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2018). Although the rate of refugee arrivals in Europe has slowed since 2015, newcomers continue to join the hundreds of thousands of earlier arrivals, particularly in Germany, where more than 300,000 asylum seekers arrived in 2016 alone (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2018a). These forced migrants joined the nearly one million who arrived in Germany in 2015, many still in limbo awaiting asylum approval or appeals. In Europe and in the United States, migration issues are divisive and at the fore of public debate and protest. How the world responds to this global crisis will arguably impact the trajectory of peace and well-being on this planet for generations to come.

In 2015, in response to the ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis in Syria, German Chancellor Angela Merkel welcomed refugees into Germany with a wide-open door to help them in a direct and humanistic way. At the time she calmed down the concerns of the German people with the now famous expression "Wir schaffen das!" ("We will manage that!"; Merkel, 2015). Merkel's Willkommen policy has generated a large number of positive reactions and activities in Germany at all administrative levels of federal, state, county, and municipality, as well as an overall positive response by civil society with its social, religious, and private associations and organizations, families, and individual citizens. Initially, a Willkommen Kultur emerged in communities throughout Germany. Communities took on the role of "arrival city" (Saunders, 2010), and collectively generated an atmosphere of "making Heimat" (Figure 1). "Heimat" is a meaningful German term that describes the place for one's own life, feeling, well-being, and belonging, embedded in the history and community to which one belongs (Schmal, Elser, & Scheuermann, 2016). In 2018, help and support continues in a pragmatic fashion after three more years of up and down events and experiences.

The American-based Portland Urban Architecture Research Lab (PUARL) at the University of Oregon has begun preliminary research by developing a set of focal areas situated within the broader context of this international crisis. These focal topics are also referred to as building blocks within this larger study of refugee escape, assimilation, integration, and return to original home country. Initial versions of this research were presented at the PUARL Conference in San Francisco in 2016, at the ISUF Conference Valencia in 2017, and at the PURPLSOC Conference in Krems in 2017.

In this article, we investigate the local experiences of the Willkommen Kultur and the high expectations and implied promises that were set in 2015. Our discussion and findings are drawn from field research conducted by the authors in Germany in August 2016, as well as preliminary visits undertaken by author Dr. Neis in December 2015 and March 2016, as well as follow-up visits in December 2016, in the spring of 2017, and in the summer of 2018.

Here we refer to the people who arrive in Germany in response to Chancellor Merkel's Willkommen policy as refugees; we recognize that many distinctions can be drawn between categories of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and those whose asylum has been denied and who are now living illegally in a host country. Our choice to use the term refugee is an effort to acknowledge that whether circumstances are solely political, largely economic, or a mix of many factors, the majority of people arriving have been in some way forcibly displaced from their home countries and are in a situation in which they must rely in some way on the host country for help in reestablishing their lives. To illustrate, in our visit to Germany in 2016, when asked if he had a sense of how people then living in refugee camps felt about being referred to as refugees, one Syrian collaborator responded with the simple statement: "They have no other word with which to call themselves".

Our research focuses on the ways in which the invitation for refugees to come to Germany is playing out in communities in regard to primary immediate needs for refugees and in regard to the initial impacts on the German citizens and social-spatial aspects of German communities. To this end, we selected three German cities that serve as case studies: the small town of Borken in the state of Hessen, the larger city and county of Kassel, and the much larger city of Essen (see Table 1).

Our initial research included informal interviews with German officials at various levels. Given Dr. Neis'

Figure 1. Syrian refugees reach Munich with trains from Austria on Sunday, 6 September 2015. ©UNHCR/Gordon Welters.

Table 1. Case study cities and data.

Case Cities	Population	Region	Refugees in 2016
Borken	13,500	Central Germany	200
Kassel County	200,000	Central Germany	1,500
Essen	600,000	Western Germany	20,000

German citizenship and wide network of contacts in Germany, we were also able to meet with a number of German citizens working in the private and volunteer sectors, as well as university faculty members. Professor Alexander Schmidt and doctoral candidates at the University of Duisburg Essen provided a number of meetings and tours of refugee facilities in Essen, and they also shared the final report from a masters' degree planning seminar (Wehling et al., 2015). We spoke informally with refugees at various camps and group housing facilities, and Dr. Neis and Mr. Furukawazono met with Syrian, Afghan, Pakistani, and Iraqi refugees for detailed conversations. However, we note that this first round of case study research was an initial investigation, and our findings and evaluations are suggestive, rather than exhaustive. From these interactions, we have identified a set of relevant local factors that might be important for urban planning and urban policy to include into an integration plan for local communities.

Figure 2. Map of Germany and three case study communities: Borken, Kassel County and Essen in red, and the city of Bautzen as comparative city in orange.

In the following sections, we provide a series of enquiries, observations, short vignettes, and brief discussions that illustrate how these three communities are working to address the more immediate, basic needs of refugees. Specifically, we examine the following factors in each of the three cities or county: a. overall support structure for refugees, b. refugee shelter and housing, c. communication and acclimatization, d. work opportunities for refugees, and e. the formal, legal asylum application process and structure. We end the article with a series of initial findings and evaluations and a brief outlook for the near-term future of refugee integration in Germany. We also connect our findings to a major planning and design method called the pattern language method (Alexander, 1979; Alexander et al., 1977; Neis, Ledbury, & Wright, 2014).

2. Detailed Topics of Investigation in the Welcome City

2.1. Help and Support Structure at the Local, County, State, and Federal Levels

While several authors make a clear distinction between refugees in cities and refugees in the country-side, the latter quite often as part of a nation's refugee dispersal policy (Darling, 2017, p. 182). The term city in Germany often applies to small towns that have old city rights, but from today's perspective may count as towns or villages and part of the countryside. It can be argued that the countryside in Germany is relatively well urbanized with its own opportunities of living together with refugees. Germany has adopted a policy of distributing refugees to communities throughout the country according to the so-called "Königstein Key", which sets quotas for each state according to economic capacity (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2018b). Distribution is roughly organized in three to four levels of supporting and administering refugees. Refugees are first registered at the federal level and they are then distributed to the different states. The state government then places refugees in particular counties, cities, towns, and villages. After their initial placements by the government, refugees' daily lives become largely local events in which refugees and citizens of the towns, villages, and neighborhoods must exist together.

It is worthwhile to emphasize that the work of the government at the federal, state, and local levels has been substantially aided by a wide variety of non-governmental initiatives. In Germany, a well-functioning civic structure has been very supportive. In addition to the city administration, religious organizations, non-

governmental organizations, and a number of volunteers and partially paid helpers, there is a very strong structure of "Vereine", which are associations for all kinds of purposes, from sports clubs to historical associations to garden associations. Many of these associations tend to be extremely helpful in supporting refugees in various ways through encouraging social interactions between refugees and Germans. For example, in Dr. Neis' town of Borken, a number of young male refugees have joined local sports clubs that facilitate the refugees and locals getting to know each other.

2.2. Refugee Housing in Essen, Kassel, and Borken

While in the global South large camps resembling large cities are typical for housing refugees, in the global North, camps are typically much smaller and only temporary (Darling, 2017, p. 180). As in much of Germany, the number of migrant and forced migrant arrivals in the larger city of Essen in 2015 and 2016 surpassed the amount of available built spaces in which to house refugees even temporarily. During the height of refugee arrivals from 2015 through the end of 2016, the City of Essen operated thirty-two temporary facilities throughout the city (Figure 3). Due to the large number of arrivals in 2015, Essen, like other places in Germany, moved to a system of small modern tent camps in order to provide basic shelter for new arrivals. Other permanent structures, such as underused hostels and hotels and empty apartment buildings were retrofitted for temporary refugee housing. Even old and unused airport buildings were transformed for housing refugees in large numbers as in the case of the Calden airport in Landkreis Kassel, or the disused Tempelhof airport in Berlin (Figure 4). In con-

Figure 3. Map with different kinds of shelters and small camps for refugees in use for a limited time in the City of Essen in 2015-2016. Source: Der Westen (2015).

Figure 4. Refugees being housed in disused Tempelhof airport in Berlin, 2015. ©UNHCR/Ivor Prickett.

trast to Landkreis Kassel, where the Landkreis (county) oversees and manages all aspects of refugee support, in Essen, management of the tent camps has been contracted out to a private firm, European Home Care (EHC). EHC managed all aspects of the temporary housing, including distribution, operations, meals, and security.

By the end of 2016, most of these temporary camps had been closed and refugees had moved to other temporary accommodations, but this time in permanent structures. During a visit in December 2016, Dr. Neis re-visited two of these camps—Altenberghof and Bamlerstrasse—and found only the paved floor plan remnants with gravel still in place, which had been formerly occupied by tents and paths in August 2016 (Figure 5). We were told by university researchers that some refugees from one of these camps were moved to the city's edge in a location with poor transport connections.

Essen has been working with a challenging situation of accommodating these thousands of new arrivals in their own housing stock in a city with very low vacancy rates for apartments (only 3% vacancy according to the City; Essen City, 2017a). The City places refugees whose asylum has been approved in their own apartments, but asylum approval can take months or even longer than a year. In addition, the City advertises to landlords to rent to refugees on a voluntary basis. Refugees are eligible to find their own apartments after achieving asylum status, but in the meantime, they most often live in dormitory style housing with other refugees of nationalities from around the world.

During the past three years, the City of Essen, like any other city in Germany, has had to work with constantly changing forecasts for the number of refugees who will arrive. At the end of 2016, arrival rates slowed substantially and plans to build additional dormitory style facilities or to retrofit existing buildings were placed on hold or canceled. In the meantime, the City is still working to allocate apartment placements and to manage the needs of thousands still housed in dormitory style facilities.

In the town of Borken, with about 13,500 inhabitants and about 200 refugees (the exact number changes frequently because of new arrivals), refugees are located in the core part of the town, but also in neighboring villages that are part of the municipality. Most of the young male population lives in the core town in the Bayernkeller, a former restaurant with a hotel (Figure 6). In the village of Kleinenenglis (a few miles from the town of Borken, but part of the same administrative structure), a number of families are housed in a four-story apartment building, and in the village of Gombeth, a former community building now serves as a shelter for unaccompanied minors. Distributed in prefabricated “Plattenbauten” (buildings for social housing), a number of refugee families live in the core of the town in individual apartments rented out by the City.

2.3. Acclimatization, Assimilation, Communication, and Living in a New Local Culture

Some groups of migrants and refugees, as well as guest workers, partially tend to gather around same national populations, or similar ethnic and religious groups, sometimes creating what is called counter or parallel cultures. With a liberal attitude, the German government has previously allowed ‘parallel cultures’ of non-German cultures to emerge in separate neighborhoods in cities. Historically, Germany has sometimes encouraged migrant communities to settle in particular cities and neighborhoods, such as during the guest worker policy era in which migrants from Turkish people were encouraged to migrate to Germany as a means of addressing shortages in the work force. The government has even celebrated this as what is loosely called a ‘multi-kulti’ social co-existence model. Apparently, the German government—and other European governments—have

Figure 5. Temporary tent camp structure in Altenberghof, Essen; the tent in use in 2015 (left), and after removal one year later in 2016 with researcher Aurelio David from University Duisburg-Essen (right).

Figure 6. The restaurant and hotel Bayernkeller used for refugee housing in the town of Borken (left); conversation with refugees inside the hotel in 2016 (right). On the right, Kemal (name changed) from Pakistan was later not accepted for refugee status and therefore continued his flight to another European country.

taken on new policies of dispersing refugees and forced migrants throughout the countries, possibly to avoid development of new parallel cultures. As Jonathan Darling (2017) notes: "Urban dispersal programs are in place in Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, and the UK". These dispersal programs take away an important source of keeping communal identity among refugee populations, which could make acclimatization to a new society a more difficult endeavor.

In practical terms, all refugees are taken care of by the government according to European Union regulations and the German Constitution. Upon arrival in Germany, all refugees are provided shelter in some form. They each receive a monthly monetary stipend for their personal use and expenses, and they are taken care of by a number of institutions, as well as private helpers and volunteers. They have arrived in a place where some fundamental life necessities are provided for them, at least for a while. After going through the federal and state arrival facilities in a new country, refugees finally reach the local city, town or village arrival places, where they will live for quite a while and get used to local life and culture to reach their objective of obtaining safe asylum status.

Refugees face a number of challenges in navigating everyday life. Many are first faced with communication issues due to language barriers, as well as the challenges of learning new social customs, getting around in a new place and neighborhood, completing article work, and dealing with trauma from experiences in conflict zones and serious problems on their escape route. There are also events of coming together and just enjoying a moment of relief and understanding each other. On Christmas, in December of 2015, the Protestant Church in Borken organized a live music event with modern music within the church as part of its ongoing ecumenical efforts. Dr. Neis attended and experienced local residents and Islamic women, children, and some young men coming together to participate, clap, and sing to modern mixed music in a Protestant church. In particular, small children running around with happy red faces made one think quite positively about the future of living together.

Language skills are critically important to support even the most basic interactions between refugees and locals in host communities, and these skills are also key to opening possibilities for employment in the host country. In 2015 and 2016, during the height of refugee arrivals, government emphasis understandably focused first on meeting basic needs of safety, housing, food, clothing, etc. Providing non-skilled work and language training has since developed in various forms according to the capacities, regulations, and options of various government institutions, but with language training in particular. Much of the municipalities' efforts are well supported by the private sector through charities and informal volunteer programs.

For instance, in the town of Wolfhagen, part of the Kassel County (Figure 7), retired citizens, particularly former school teachers, were eager to put their skills to work and so started up a variety of German language classes for the refugees residing at the Pommernanlage facility near the town. As a way of further encouraging everyday interactions, municipal buses service the Pommernanlage with regular stops between the camp and the town. Language classes are typically offered in town to encourage people to mix outside of the camp and to become more part of the community. Ms. Elena Beck, a social worker at the camp, explained the importance of these informal programs in helping refugees and Germans interact and connect (Figure 8):

Figure 7. Map of Kassel County with various individual municipalities and locations, including the community of Wolfhagen and the Pommernanlage, the old airport buildings in the municipality of Calden that served as a federal refugee camp, and the main Social Department Headquarters location in Kassel County.

> It is important not to make a parallel world here in the camp. It is important for people to have structure and purpose, and to feel that they have some involvement. That is why there are no groceries here [at the camp], and why the German course is offered in town.

In Essen, language classes are also provided by various charities and volunteer groups, such as the Diakonisches Hilfswerk. Classes offered in various parts of the city provide refugees a chance to get out of the camps or refugee-only facilities. One young adult male who had arrived as a refugee from Syria explained that although the German lessons were critical for him in learning the basics of the language, he had really learned to converse through actual informal conversations with Germans, such as those he had while volunteering at a clothing donation center:

> The most important thing is to help people get better integrated. For example, to learn a language, people need to speak it, not just have lessons then go back to

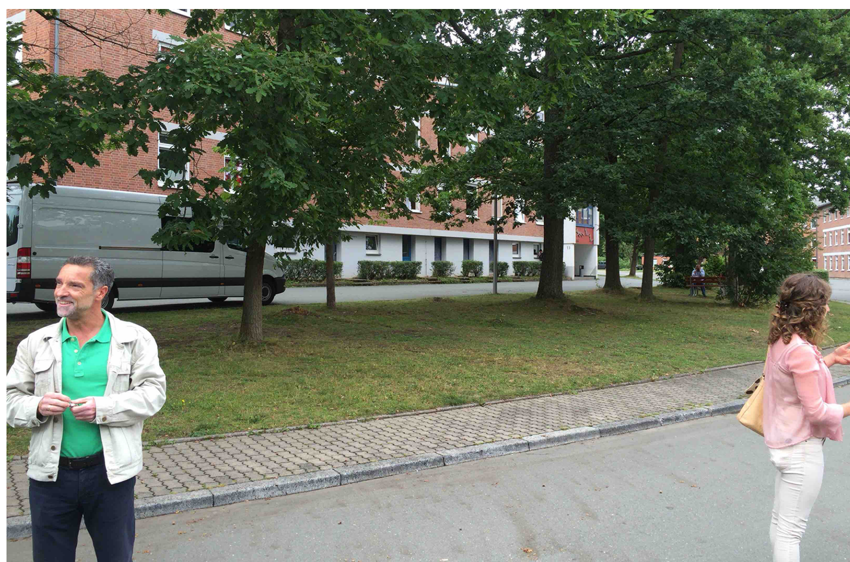

Figure 8. Social workers Mr. Zeuch and Ms. Beck at the Pommernanlage, a former military barracks for a tank battalion near the town of Wolfhagen, now used as a peaceful camp for refugees.

the camp. We got so much contact with German people through working together at the Kleider Kammer. We succeed in language without going to any school by practicing the language with our friends.

2.4. Work and Work-Learning Related Activities

In a meeting with Mr. Rossberg, director of the Kassel County department of social affairs in charge of refugee matters, he emphasized that the two major issues for refugees are housing and work. While housing is part of the refugee package according to German laws, work is less readily available (see more in Section 3.1.5 about the legal structure of work). Still, there are kinds of work that refugees can and will do if offered (Figure 9). These include short term help, practical internships, apprenticeships, and other kinds of support and learning operations that also help refugees to acclimatize, learn technical terms, and get to know the work culture in a particular society or a particular trade or craft.

Our experience in the town of Borken shows that the young men there appreciate work of any kind, even if the additional amount of money is minor. Being needed, doing something useful, and learning a trade are in themselves of value; work experience is also considered to help in attaining asylum status. In the Bayernkeller Restaurant and Hotel in Borken where twenty or so young men are living, having work or a job is considered very important, and if one of them can attend the university in a close by city, that counts as great success. For regular work, the City of Borken employs a number of young asylum seekers in their "builder's yard and repair facility", with outside park, garden, and streets work and repair operations. Some refugees also work in the private sector. One young man works in a painting shop, he proudly explained to us, and another young adult works in a car repair shop, a job he had occupied in his home country. Another works as a kitchen helper in the Italian restaurant, Dal Circulo. This is a good start, but more work needs to be done to create legally sanctioned work opportunities for refugees who have not yet obtained official asylum status. The new integration law ratified in the later part of 2016 did indeed improve the work situation for refugees, as we will see later.

2.5. Asylum Application, Approval, or Denial by Authorities

While they were not initially among of our main points of investigation, the legalities of the asylum process became the fifth point in our investigation because they are intrinsically related to major issues of housing, work, and a host of other issues of refugees living in a local community or neighborhood. While refugees and responsible and responsive Germans are addressing and helping with housing, work, and overall acclimatization issues, refugees must also apply for legal asylum if they wish to stay in Germany, at least as long as their country is considered unsafe to return to and live in.

Germany is not a traditional immigration country; there are only two mechanisms through which migrants and refugees may apply for legal residency in the country. First, Article 16a of Germany's 1949 Constitution includes provisions for asylum seekers. Second, federal law includes an "exception" policy, which states that the country does not allow immigration, except as appealed on a case by case basis (for example, for people who have married German citizens or for those with special work in Germany; see Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2018; S. Scherer from the County of Kassel gave us a thorough introduction to German asylum policy on August 1, 2016). Refugees apply for legal status through the asylum law. Asylum application processing can take from a few months to more than a year. During the interim period

Figure 9. Refugees and local people renewing the sports field at Pommernanlage. Source: Müller (2016).

between their arrival and the asylum decisions, refugees are very limited in their abilities to find self-rented permanent housing and paid employment.

Asylum denials may be appealed, but the appeals process again can go on for many months to a few years. Asylum has recently primarily been approved for migrants from Syria, Iran, Iraq, and Eritrea (now also for Somalia in 2018); these countries have been designated by federal policy as unsafe countries. However, the asylum applications of many others—precarious migrants from places like Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Ethiopia and other African countries—are being denied on the basis that these countries are deemed "safe" countries. Formal refugee asylum denials are increasing now that a few years have passed since the first large waves of refugees arrived, and growing numbers of people are now in precarious positions as migrants without legal status in Germany and Europe, but who are also not able to return to their home countries. This poses a serious dilemma for many of the refugees after so many days, weeks, and even years of hardship. Many of these migrants are forced migrants, real precarious refugees, in difficult situations, but without any legal recognition.

3. Findings, Evaluation, and Patterns: The Willkommen Kultur's Reality and Its Future on the Ground

One very positive comment from a critique of our work notes that insights of the kinds included here are only attainable from actual field research such as that which we undertook. It is also true that our initial research into these three towns and five major topics for understanding the refugee welcome culture in Germany focused on mapping the general situation facing these communities as a precursor to more targeted and extensive research and towards planning and design projects. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to look into these detailed preliminary findings and evaluations for possible further action, policies, design, and planning. These first visits allowed us to collect material in our initial field study cases that helped us to find research supported answers to our questions and sufficient data to reach some findings and accomplish evaluations with regard to our main question of how the implied promises of the Willkommen Kultur are working on the ground.

From this research, planning and design efforts can also draw some insights for action and for creating a framework in which a future of living together might be formulated. Here in particular we are referring to the planning and design approach called pattern language, which promises help in this respect (Alexander, 1979; Alexander et al., 1977; Neis et al., 2014). A pattern is simply defined as a solution to a recurrent problem in a particular context. Furthermore, the pattern does not only provide a singular mechanical solution but provides the flexibility to apply and express this solution in thousands of different ways. The simple pattern of "helping people in need" can obviously be applied in thousands of ways. Therefore, we have added one pattern (or at least a pattern problem formulation) to each of the findings in terms of a suggested application to planning. Toward the end of the article, we also briefly introduce the larger framework of a pattern language, and we suggest how patterns together can form a consistent system of cooperation and interdependencies.

3.1. Findings

3.1.1. Finding 1: Keeping up Help and Support Structure

The German help and support structures are seemingly working well, but are also becoming overwhelmed by ever increasing refugee numbers in 2015–2016 and beyond.

The support structure in the three German communities we investigated was organized at the administrative, public, religious, and institutional levels, at the business level, and also at the level of private initiatives such that the immediate needs of providing basic care to refugees had been met. Our conversations did make it clear that our visit in August of 2016 came months after what several agency workers referred to as the 'refugee arrival tsunami' had passed. We did not observe the kind of chaotic intensity noted by authors such as Häberlen, who were present on the ground during the first days and months when tens of thousands arrived in late 2015 (Häberlen, 2016, p. 58). Overall, at all administrative levels, and in each community, we encountered a generous attitude and desire to help.

The overall helping attitude can be seen as a positive sign of the enduring Willkommen Kultur. For example, when refugees began to arrive in Borken, the Free Protestant Church soon established a place and time for refugees and locals to meet every Monday for coffee and cake to talk about issues and problems, but also to just enjoy each other's company. This event and space is called Cafe Hope. Mr. Furukawazono participated in the Cafe Hope events on various occasions and at one point was asked if he himself was a refugee, albeit from Japan. In the City of Essen, Pastor Achim Gerhard-Kemper represents one of numerous neighborhood "Round Tables", public stakeholder groups that address how refugees can be integrated at the local neighborhood level (Essen City, 2017b). The extent of these groups is laudable; however, we did hear some criticism that the groups were composed mostly of Germans, and that refugees were not well-represented as members or participants.

In 2016, as more and more refugees reached even the smallest villages in Germany, city officials and residents started to wonder how they could actually handle and help more and more incoming refugees. Mr. Rolf Waldeck, the head of the City of Borken ad-hoc committee on refugees, was quite confident that with a number of about 100 refugees in the town, he and volunteers could handle this crisis. But when the number reached more than 200 refugees for a town of 13,500 inhabitants, Mr. Waldeck reported that he started to won-

der whether they could continue to successfully support all refugees. Similarly, the Pommernanlage facility in Wolfhagen opened for refugee placement in about 2013. During our 2016 visit, social workers explained that after nearly three years of participation, some of the town's volunteers were beginning to experience a sort of volunteer fatigue, wondering how much longer they could meet the needs of the camp.

These sentiments also reflected a growing national sense of the difficulty of sustaining refugee assistance over time. As people continue to live in a sort of legal and social limbo, the Willkommen Kultur continues to be tested locally, as well as nationally. While the agency representatives we spoke with did not report personal experience with violence against or by refugees, certainly the Willkommen Kultur has been met with disapproval and dissent since Merkel first opened the borders. By summer of 2016, though, the agency representatives with whom we spoke conveyed more of a sense of resolve to carry on than expressions of either naive hope or serious pessimism. Our August 2016 tour of a soon-to-open temporary refugee housing facility managed by Landkreis Kassel illustrated the ambivalence in which the agency worked. Although the so-called 'tsunami' of refugee arrivals had by then slowed, the agency workers were thoughtfully anticipating future arrivals and how best to accommodate their initial integration with the community. For example, numerous refrigerators and communal cooking areas were being installed, which would provide options for newcomers to prepare familiar foods and to express some sort of agency in making their own food in a situation in which they were otherwise faced without much ability to make their own decisions.

One pattern problem or question in this current situation might be formulated: "How to accept and support refugees in a new atmosphere of mistrust, doubt, and national populism, in general, but for our purpose in particular at the local level of cities, towns, and neighborhoods?"

3.1.2. Finding 2: Housing Design and Pattern "Visitor Room"

Housing is obviously a key element in the care for refugees. The large number of refugees, and their rapid rates of arrival in 2015 and 2016, often created serious accommodation challenges at the local level. While refugees are first housed in relatively large federal arrival camps, it is really the local level where refugees are housed for the longer term and in a more open and connected way to the local community.

While the general tendency in Germany is to provide housing for refugees within the existing building stock, there are also a limited number of new building structures provided for refugee housing (Schmal, Elser, & Scheuermann, 2017). The unwritten policy is to provide the same kind of low-cost housing for refugees and local citizens alike so that there is no indication of special, preferential treatment of refugees. In order to test more options, one of our architectural design studios took up a live-work design exercise at the edge of the central city in Essen and the University of Duisburg-Essen to explore socio-economic integration. Professors Howard Davis and Hajo Neis prepared and carried out a successful live-work (housing and working under one roof) design studio for Syrian refugees in the winter quarter of 2017 at the University of Oregon, Department of Architecture in Eugene (Figure 10). Student projects in this design studio class incorporated some general elements of a Syrian apartment floor plan, such as a "vis-

Figure 10. Photo of a design studio class titled "Refugee Live-Work Design Studio in the cities of Essen (Germany) and Portland (USA)", taught by Professor Howard Davis at the University of Oregon, Architecture Department, in the Winter of 2017.

itor room" that could also be used as a children room. This live-work project also raised the progressive question of next steps through which housing and work can complement each other and help refugees to develop small businesses and shops, and thus help with socio-economic integration.

The pattern "visitor Room" is apparently very important even in a small Syrian household. Therefore, this pattern was successfully applied in the Oregon and German design studio projects in various versions and modern adaptations including flexible uses, so that it also could work for a regular German or American household for a different function, such as a kids' room or working space.

3.1.3. Finding 3: Acclimatization and Friends

Acclimatization requires communication; language learning and mobile phone access are key.

Daily life for refugees includes a large range of practical matters and activities, from learning a language, to health issues, to connecting with the local community and city administration. The mobile phone acts as a critical tool for daily life and for communication back home. A phone is essential for keeping connections with family and friends still living in their original home countries and cities. A mobile phone is also critical for staying in touch with fellow refugees locally and in other cities in Germany or other host countries. Smart phones and Internet connection are critical tools refugees use to navigate new communities, learn the language, and keep up to date on their paperwork and asylum application processes.

Melissa Wall and Madeline Otis Campbell have made a strong argument for why a smart phone should be considered a basic need for refugee escape and integration in a host country (Wall, Otis Campbell, & Janbek, 2017). Their research has demonstrated the high levels of what they term "information precarity" in which many refugees live; research participants reported that mobile phones were almost always included among the few objects people fleeing would bring with them in even the most perilous journeys. In addition to the communication the phones provide, they also serve as an archive of personal documents, and they often serve as the only remaining repository of family photos. In our visits to the Pommernanlage and other camps, the wi-fi hotspot areas were important places for camp residents to gather. The Internet connections, often accessed with mobile phones, allowed the camp residents to communicate on their own, rather than needing to rely on agency representatives or other helpers.

One of the key challenges concerning communication among refugees and with local citizens is that it can be difficult to commit to the level of investment required for teaching and learning a new language while it is still uncertain if refugees will be able to or will wish to stay in the country. In addition, refugees are often coping with high amounts of stress, so it may be difficult to encourage social interaction with the pressure of learning a new language. Given the ongoing stresses facing refugees, the informal programs we encountered served a crucial role of making language easier to learn by combining it with play, work, shopping, and other daily activities.

Informal programs such as the volunteer work at the Kleider Kammer in Essen allow refugees and Germans to interact as relative equals through shared work and exchange. These everyday encounters demonstrate a level of integration beyond the formal structures of laws and work. Joachim Häberlen describes these informal interactions as part of the process of "making friends". As Häberlen discusses, much emphasis within integration discourse in Germany falls within the realm of laws and the role of the state; however, friendships—and we would add, informal interactions in general—are crucial for developing "mutual trust" (Häberlen, 2016, p. 69). Our experiences in each of these three case study communities add support to Häberlen's personal reflections.

"Making friends" also might be the title of a pattern that may need to be developed from the ground up, possibly negotiating and complementing loaded notions such as refugees, migrants, foreigners, and even locals.

3.1.4. Finding 4: Formal and Informal Work

Work experience is critical for assimilation and integration, but it is difficult to obtain during asylum application processing or otherwise.

Next to housing, work is the biggest issue for refugees in terms of a regular daily life and in terms of security and outlook for a good economic future. One could say that refugees are generally provided for by the German government in terms of housing, health care, monetary support, and other needs for daily life. In terms of work, there are a number of measures that are taken in cities and towns, such as internships, practica, and job learning, in the public as well as in the private sector. However, these activities are not regular jobs with standard pay, insurance, and other benefits, such as retirement. Even for refugees with recognized asylum status, there is no definite right for work with benefits. Here the promise that Chancellor Merkel made is incomplete in its results.

The welcoming invitation for refugees needs to include provision of regular jobs and support for private start-up enterprises by refugees. Socio-economic assimilation, and especially integration, depend largely on working and job opportunities in all kinds of forms, including self-help, start-ups (such as food-related businesses), and regular paid jobs. In this area, a lot of work needs to be done to successfully help refugees become more integrated and part of German society.

The younger people who arrive as minors and change their status to adults when turning eighteen years of age have better chances to fulfill the precondition of completing a primary school degree as a prerequisite for the right to even get a regular job. However, the question remains of how to support the next elder generation of

young adults who did not have the benefit of a regular German primary education.

A pattern here could be formulated along the lines of: Young people between twenty and thirty years old need a strong education to better achieve the precondition for regular job qualification.

3.1.5. Finding 5: New Laws for Integration and Immigration

The asylum law and the German residence law are not sufficient to effectively deal with the refugee crisis at the local level.

One of the main reasons for a number of the difficulties and complications with refugees being fully welcome in Germany is the current legal structure regarding foreigners from outside the European Union. The two laws dealing with foreigners are the asylum law and the residence law. The asylum law grants one the right to apply for asylum and be provided for until a decision has been determined about refugee status. The residence law states that non-citizens cannot live in Germany unless there are strong reasons for doing so. The United States is theoretically better able to receive refugees quickly due to the existence of immigration laws that allow for quicker processing of applications.

Special laws need to be introduced in Germany to solve some of the problems for refugees, including the right for more work opportunities; a solid comprehensive immigration law should be established by the parliament in order to provide more options for refugees to participate and become part of the host society in a faster, less troublesome, and more productive way. The new integration law that took hold at the end of 2016 and early 2017 became a major step forward in helping to speed up asylum processes, and also eased the way for refugees to get work more quickly. This law, known as “fordern und foerdern” (challenge and support), attempts to improve the situation and coordination between national and local coordination by combining the national work-related agency, Bundesagentur für Arbeit, with the needs of the various local communal social agencies in counties and municipalities in what is called the “job center”.

A county social worker from the Schwalm-Eder County, where Borken is located, shared with us that this development is seen as a positive step forward in dealing with the needs of refugees at the local level with regard to actual support and integration. However, the question of a larger national immigration law that is in the works was seen with some skepticism. If the new law only follows the same principles as most other immigration laws, with emphasis on qualifications of people from other countries who want to live and work in Germany, it would not help many of the refugees who continue to come to Germany. How to develop an immigration law that can be coordinated with the refugee laws seems to be the more relevant question at this point, especially regarding keeping up a realistic welcome attitude.

4. Next Cycle in Progress: An Outlook

In the process of investigating the Willkommen policy’s direct or implied promises on the ground in these communities we were able to find and analyze factors that are significant for refugees’ life, but also relevant for urban planning to consider in refugee support improvement and in an integration plan for refugees and citizens. We can say that German society initially accepted the challenge, especially on the local level of towns, cities, and villages. In the city of Borken, county of Kassel, and city of Essen, the administrations, public and private organizations, and private citizens alike managed various challenges, such as housing, connections to refugees, providing work related opportunities, as well as helping with asylum matters, and helping refugees to learn the language.

However, it is also true that with the arrival of more tens of thousands of new refugees over the past few years, the situation on the ground has become more and more difficult in these three towns and in German society in general. People started to feel overwhelmed and were uncertain how this ever-increasing refugee population could be taken care of sufficiently, as expressed for example in Mr. Waldeck’s concerns. The increasing refugee population and duration of the situation seems to take us to a second cycle of refugee crisis in Germany, Europe, and our three case study cities. Recently, however, the rate of refugee arrivals has decreased, so that in this year, 2018, the refugees coming to Germany are estimated at about 80,000 (in August 2018).

Within Germany and internationally, negative news of hate crimes continues, such as reports of attacks on refugee shelters with fire bombs and other horrible events that have taken place. For instance, one disturbing event occurred inside the county of Kassel at the former airport of Calden, where a large number of refugees from different ethnic backgrounds had a huge fight among themselves in the dining hall; the instance was reported all over the world (Deutsche Welle, 2015). However, it is also appropriate to note that this large camp is a national federal and state camp, not part of the responsibility of the county itself.

The choice of the three German cities was made to allow comparison across scales, and it was based on our own private, professional, and academic connections to supportive people, municipalities, and universities. However, in a discussion with Mr. Claus Muller from the renowned news article “Frankfurter Allgemeine FAZ”, Mr. Muller correctly pointed out that all of our case study cities are located in the western part of Germany, and none is in eastern Germany, where conditions apparently are dramatically different (Knight, 2016). Consequently, and on the suggestion of Professor Ralf Weber from the Technical University of Dresden, we have decided to look at the city of Bautzen, close to the Polish border and the city of Dresden (Figure 2), to obtain a more complete picture in a different

and also more difficult context. In the summer of 2018, Dr. Neis visited Bautzen and the burned remains Hotel Husarenhof, which had been retrofit for refugee housing, but was then set on fire, allegedly by right wing opposition (Figure 11). A local community worker confirmed the two different tendencies of "help and hate" in this lovely historical city.

Figure 11. The burned out Husarenhof Hotel in Bautzen, originally intended for refugees. Photo taken by Hajo Neis, August 2018.

Finally, since early 2017, we continue to hear and read more about young refugees who were not accepted with refugee status, but were rejected and in fact deported by police cordoned airplanes to their home countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, and African countries (Vyas, 2017). For example, during Dr. Neis' December 2016 visit to Borken, he found out that Kemal (name changed), one of the Pakistani refugees with whom he had met the previous summer, had received notice that his asylum application had been rejected and had fled to another part of Europe to avoid deportation. This latest development in the refugee saga reminds us of the incomplete attempt for an improving world. One refugee cycle has been completed with migrants and refugees forced return to where many had started their difficult journey, but now they have nothing to show at home that was worth the effort (Avenarius, Kastner, & Heidtmann, 2017). For others who were accepted with asylum status, a major step forward was achieved that continues to promise more success and the start of a new life in the welcome city.

In a recent development, fueled by several calls and comments by critics for a more basic and comprehensive approach for understanding the refugee situation (InzentIM, 2017), as well as helping and providing guidelines and advice for support and integration, we have started to develop a "refugee pattern language", with the more descriptive subtitle of "A Design Framework for Refugee Support and Integration", with the real possibility of a contribution to the next phase in the ongoing refugee narrative.[1] As explained earlier, patterns are individual solutions to recurrent problems. In addition to individual patterns, pattern languages can be understood as systems of patterns that tackle larger, more complex themes and clusters of issues than individual patterns, such as the difficult issue of refugee help and integration. In order to try to help to solve actual contemporary problems, the refugee pattern language will address the urgent challenges in this current period and beyond, including the key issues of improved refugee acceptance, improved refugee-support, and the function of the press in these complicated processes.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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[1] Read more about our project at: refugee.uoregon.edu

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Article

The Local Governance of Arrival in Leipzig: Housing of Asylum-Seeking Persons as a Contested Field

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Abstract
The article examines how the German city of Leipzig governs the housing of asylum seekers. Leipzig was a frontrunner in organizing the decentralized accommodation of asylum seekers when adopting its accommodation concept in 2012. This concept aimed at integrating asylum-seeking persons in the regular housing market at an early stage of arrival. However, since then, the city of Leipzig faces more and more challenges in implementing the concept. This is particularly due to the increasingly tight situation on the housing market while the number of people seeking protection increased and partly due to discriminating and xenophobic attitudes on the side of house owners and managers. Therefore, we argue that the so-called refugee crisis of 2015–2016 has to be seen in close interaction with a growing general housing shortage in Leipzig like in many other large European cities. Furthermore, we understand the municipal governing of housing as a contested field regarding its entanglement of diverse federal levels and policy scales, the diversity of stakeholders involved, and its dynamic change over the last years. We analyze this contested field set against the current context of arrival and dynamic urban growth on a local level. Based on empirical qualitative research that was conducted by us in 2016, Leipzig's local specifics will be investigated under the umbrella of our conceptual framework of Governance of Arrival. The issues of a strained housing market and the integration of asylum seekers in it do not apply only to Leipzig, but shed light on similar developments in other European Cities.

Keywords
accommodation; arrival; asylum seekers; Germany; governance; housing; Leipzig; refugees

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1. Introduction

Three years after the "long summer of migration" (Kasparek & Speer, 2015), the situation regarding the arrival of asylum seekers in Germany has changed profoundly. The welcoming atmosphere of 2015, the challenge of the European border regime through the movements of people, and the "de facto suspension of the Dublin system" (Ataç, Kron, Schilliger, Schwiertz, & Stierl, 2015) have faded into the background. The process of change becomes evident through the reinforcement of asylum laws, further attempts to tighten the existing Common European Asylum System for refugees and residence requirements, deportations, and political and media discourses focusing on refugees and migration as "a problem".

The local level is the newcomers' place to arrive and live, and political-administrative actors are setting the formal framework for their social and economic participation in society. Many medium and large cities in particular face a considerable in-migration of assigned asylum seekers and recognized refugees in Germany (Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung [BBSR], 2017; Hallenberg, 2017) and therefore, urban planning is in demand to deal with the different aspects of arrival and integration. Here, housing is a fundamental first step in the arrival process and a precondition of further long-term integration. Within the last years, several studies or databases have been established that enable a comparative perspective in Europe (see Asylum Information Database, 2015; European Commission, 2018; International Federation for Housing and Planning [IFHP], 2016). However, studies that focus on the housing issue remained few among mushrooming publications on asylum and refugees.

This article focuses on the possibilities and challenges of municipal administration enabling asylum seekers to find a place to live within the regular housing market in Germany. Therefore, it discusses how accommodation and housing of asylum seekers are organized and governed in German cities. In particular, it assesses whether the housing of asylum seekers can be described as a new policy field for urban planning and policy and to what extent it represents a contested field characterized by challenges and interest conflicts between the involved actors.

The article will present the local strategies of planning and providing housing for asylum seekers in the city of Leipzig a municipality that is located in Eastern Germany, former GDR, and shows an atypical development for the region. When publishing a concept that aimed at integrating asylum seekers in the regular housing market at an early stage of arrival in 2012, the city of Leipzig was a pioneer in organizing so-called decentralized accommodation. Right from the start, the municipality faced challenges in implementing this concept and the situation was aggravated in the context of post-2015 developments. Using the example of the city of Leipzig, with its almost 600,000 inhabitants in June 2018, this article represents valuable information on how the arrival of asylum seekers is handled in a large German city confronted with an increasingly contested housing market.

While conceiving housing as a contested field, the article outlines the bureaucratic regulations and requirements municipalities and asylum seekers face, describes the insufficient support and discrimination during the search for an apartment, and takes the structural influence of the local housing market into account. Therefore, the authors unfold the federal structures and regulations and show that this Governance of Arrival (henceforth GoA) has consequences for planning processes dealing with the housing of asylum-seekers on a local level (Section 2). After introducing the context of Leipzig (Section 3), we discuss our empirical findings with regard to this conceptual outline. Our findings are based on empirical studies carried out in 2016 and include an analysis of different (municipal) documents as well as qualitative interviews conducted with representatives of the municipality and stakeholders from civil society and the housing market (Section 4). The conclusion (Section 5) summarizes the responses to our research objectives and provides an outlook with respect to the further development, re-embedding Leipzig into a larger context.

2. GoA: A Conceptual Framework

The structure of our analysis is guided by two conceptual ideas. On the one hand, we develop a conceptual framework that we call GoA, which includes all rules, governance structures and involved groups of actors that deal with the arrival of asylum seekers. On the other hand, we will focus in particular on the policy field of accommodation and housing in a context of demand surplus and lack of low-price housing, as it is typical for many large cities in Germany and other European countries or beyond. Our intention is to combine these two perspectives in order to: 1) understand their interrelations and 2) to show how general features of housing market conditions and development, as well as the specifics of the arrival and the situation of asylum seekers as a group of newcomers on German urban housing markets, are leading to new challenges for local actors.

Across Europe, the responsible authorities, systems, and conditions of accommodation and housing for asylum seekers are variegated, e.g., regarding the actors involved, such as state and local authorities, NGOs, private companies, and the types of facilities (see European Migration Network [EMN], 2014). In most EU-member states, asylum applicants are accommodated in initial accommodation facilities during the (first steps of the) asylum procedure. Later, the majority of states makes use of more or less open collective facilities or community accommodation, while a certain share of EU members (additionally) make use of private houses or flats (e.g., Austria, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Italy, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom; see EMN, 2014, p. 14). Germany is the only country in the European Union where regional or local authorities carry the financial and executive responsibility for reception facilities. In other member countries, a state authority has full responsibility for the implementation and day-to-day running or, as is the case in Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Italy, and Sweden, shares it with local authorities (EMN, 2014, p. 15).

The German asylum system is based on a complex interplay of laws and regulations on the EU, federal, state, and municipal level (Aumüller, 2018; Schammann, 2015). This multilevel system defines responsibilities and affects inter alia the types of accommodation during the asylum process and the possibility for asylum seekers to enter the regular housing market. After entering the country, asylum seekers are sent to initial reception centers where they have to stay for a maximum of six months.

The distribution among the 16 federal states is based on a quota system, called Königstein Key, which takes into account the state's tax revenue and the number of inhabitants and thus tries to share the efforts and expenditures of reception. The federal states are obliged to supply a sufficient number of accommodations in these initial reception centers and can pass laws and guidelines on issues such as housing, freedom of movement, and the further distribution of asylum seekers within the federal state. From the initial reception centers, asylum seekers are allocated to districts and county boroughs and the local authorities are in charge of further accommodation until the end of the asylum procedure.

The federal states are partially covering the arising costs while the specific forms of financing differ widely and mainly do not compensate for the expenditures of the local administration (Aumüller, 2018, p. 181). For asylum seekers, the municipality they are assigned to represents their obligatory place of residence until the end of the asylum procedure. Within the German asylum system, the municipalities have a "hybrid identity" (Schammann, 2015, p. 28): On the one hand, they have to fulfill laws and obligations at higher federal levels; on the other hand, they are authorized to manage their own affairs which opens up a certain scope of action regarding the local reception of asylum seekers and refugees. According to federal law, municipalities have the duty to host a certain number of asylum seekers and should provide a respective number of places in so-called community accommodations.

While these shared accommodations are still the regular case in most municipalities, a rising number of administrations use their scope of action to implement alternative accommodation options. Since around the year 2000, a couple of municipalities (e.g., Berlin, Cologne, Dresden, Leipzig and Leverkusen) have introduced accommodation concepts that follow the idea of so-called decentralized housing (Aumüller, 2018, p. 184; Wendel, 2014, p. 10). Different rationalities, such as humanitarian vs. economic are shaping these transitions. The concepts are the outcome of political and public debates and struggles about the exclusionary and often inhumane living conditions in large accommodation centers combined with general uncertainty and psychological pressure during the asylum procedure (Aumüller, 2018, p. 185; Eckardt, 2018). According to Fontanari (2015), these large facilities lead to a condition of time suspension, non-belonging, and in-betweenness affecting asylum seekers' sense of self and posing a "*threshold* of citizenship". The transition from state-organized accommodation to housing market access can be seen as one of several transitions in different realms of civil and social rights that refugees undergo when changing between legal statuses during the asylum-seeking process (El-Kayed & Hamann, 2018, p. 144). Furthermore, decentralized housing instead of large, shared accommodation centers does not offer a clearly visible target and symbol for anti-refugee protest and racist attacks.

Still, the interpretation and notion of *decentralized accommodation* differs widely between the municipalities and may relate to the possibility of living in a flat rented by the municipality, renting one's own flat, or to a procedure where people are assigned to a room within a flat or housing unit within a larger shared accommodation (Aumüller, 2018, pp. 186–187). The upper limit of rent is not federally regulated but set by the social welfare office in charge. In general, the rates gear towards the local rates of the covered costs for accommodation of other beneficiaries like unemployed persons. In December 2017, 44,5% of all asylum-seeking persons receiving allocations in Germany have been living in so-called decentralized accommodation (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2018a), but it can be assumed that some federal states subsume smaller types of collective accommodation under "decentralized" housing as well (Mierswa, 2016, p. 8). After recognition of a right to asylum, refugees are entitled to receive the regular state welfare and have to move into a flat on their own if they had lived in community accommodation previously.

In reality, in municipalities allowing decentralized housing and refugees who had to move out of the municipal accommodation after obtaining a residence permit, asylum seekers essentially have to overcome many of barriers. The dependence on social welfare and a low share of affordable housing in many German cities make it difficult to find flats to rent and lead to a concurrence with other beneficiaries of social welfare or even a "black market" for subleasing and renting (Aumüller, 2015, pp. 59, 113–114; BBSR, 2017, pp. 7–8). Asylum seekers, as additional demanders on the evermore-contested housing markets in many German cities aggravate the problem of demand surplus, primarily in the low-price-segment. In the struggle for affordable apartments, people who are perceived as "foreigners" and/or receive state support particularly face considerable discrimination in the housing market (Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency [FADA], 2016).

2.1. Towards GoA: Reception of Asylum Seekers as a New Municipal Policy Field

In the last decades, the municipalities' social and housing policies did not include asylum seekers or refugees as a target group. Often, even integration measures for migrants deliberately excluded both groups. As this political disintegration collided with their real-life presence and the rising number of arrivals at least since 2012, local politics and administration had to find new approaches towards the social and integration-related needs (Aumüller, 2018, pp. 182–183). The reception of large numbers of asylum seekers, especially around 2015, challenged the municipalities' policies and strategies in an unforeseen way. New ways of problem solving had to be found and cooperation with non-governmental-actors received a much larger importance, as it was enlarged, intensified, or adapted to the needs

of the situation. Many ways of cooperation had to be established.

These changes in policies and approaches in asylum seekers' reception on the local level can be interpreted as the bottleneck within a wider change of urban governance and planning. Financial constraints and the need to act more efficiently urge municipalities to adjust their modes of decision making, service provision, and designing of urban policies towards new forms of complex urban governance with a multitude of actors and networked forms of coordination. In this context a "governance-beyond-the-state" (Swyngedouw, 2005) emerged:

> Which give[s] a much greater role in policy-making, administration, and implementation to private economic actors on the one hand and to parts of civil society on the other in self-managing what until recently was provided or organized by the national or local state. (Swyngedouw, 2005, p. 1992)

"Governance arrangements" are, according to Swyngedouw (2005), an outcome of these processes and involve a more or less "horizontal interaction among presumptive equal participants without distinction between their public or private status, while these actors are described as independent, but at the same time interdependent actors" (Swyngedouw, 2005, p. 1994). New institutions emerge, and actors are empowered, but presumably innovative arrangements "are fundamentally Janus-faced, particularly under conditions in which the democratic character of the political sphere is increasingly eroded by the encroaching imposition of market forces that set the 'rules of the game'" (Swyngedouw, 2005, p. 1993).

The developments in the field of local asylum seekers' reception and accommodation can be discussed with this perspective as many municipalities were relying on new forms of cooperation and networking between the state, civil society, charities, and private-sector actors to organize further shared accommodation, acquire apartments, and provide necessary support regarding formal and social aspects related to housing. Volunteers provided a crucial contribution to fulfilling initial municipal tasks of local refugee reception and administrations try to foster and bind this resource by implementing networks and coordinative as well as financial support for civic engagement (Gesemann & Roth, 2016). While the German "welcome culture" and civil society's contribution to the "humanitarian challenge" had been praised in the media and by politicians, other voices point to the fact that the reception of refugees has followed policies of deterrence. In addition, the reduction in reception infrastructure in previous years and civil society's activities have served as a compensation for structural weaknesses or even concealed the failure of authorities (see Hinger, 2016; Karakayali & Kleist, 2016).

Based on the concept of "cultural landscapes" as modes of ordering the world (Mitchell, 2002, p. 381), Hinger, Schäfer and Pott (2016) develop a notion of a "landscape of asylum" as a socio-spatial construct that emerges out of the multi-level negotiation process regarding the accommodation of asylum-seeking persons. They conceive this landscape of asylum as a "place-specific process-structure and socio-political order which encompasses much more than local politics" and is constantly being reproduced and reshaped (Hinger et al., 2016, p. 453). Informed by this notion of the local reception of asylum-seeking persons as a place-specific process structure, we adopt the perspective of a local GoA as a specification of urban governance with regard to the reception of asylum seekers, as the evolved socio-spatial arrangements are place-specific and temporal, shaped and reproduced by the interplay and interdependencies of the local actors.

In this article, GoA is conceived as all formal and informal framings of local refugee reception, thus encompassing the municipal tasks within the federal asylum system as well as the municipalities' scope of action regarding policies related to further social and economic integration and possible participation into (urban) society. This also relates to the administrations' reactions to changing demands. The extraordinary circumstances in 2015 intensified the need to form a new municipal field of action that still lives on today and involves diverse forms of cooperation with non-governmental actors. Either the impetus for a governance change was an active willingness of municipalities to create an inclusive and welcoming arrival scenario, or they were partially pushed by their legal tasks and the mere presence of asylum seekers and refugees to find solutions—or both at the same time.

Linking the two theoretical framing landscapes of asylum and GoA seems to be a fruitful way to focus on the planning and political structure of the arrival process. Arrival processes in the center of reflection serve the purpose of scrutinizing the preconditions of integration aspects.

We identify three dimensions of a GoA: 1) the development of a new policy field within the hybrid identity of municipalities in the last couple of years; 2) the need to include new actors in the implementation process and to (re-)develop governance arrangements; and 3) a dynamic process regarding time, space, and action. As such, they together capture structural and planning aspects of the arrival situation.

In this article, we will focus on the issue of housing as a core issue of reception and as an important condition for a long-term integration process. Thus, we concentrate on the specific complex situation of asylum seekers and depict the state-dominated processes with regard to housing and accommodation, a field shaped by different laws and practices of actors involved on various federal levels. Thus, we conceive this field as highly contested as it is particularly characterized by negotiation, conflict, and often-contradictory logic. This already becomes obvious in the fact that at federal and state level, migration is often discussed within the framework of regulatory is-

sues while, at the local or municipal level, migration issues are mainly discussed related to practical implementation or (long-term) integration. This general cleavage between federal levels may also affect how asylum seekers are accommodated (central vs. decentral).

3. Urban Development and Asylum in the City of Leipzig

Leipzig is a post-socialist city and has gone through different, even extreme phases of development since the German reunification. Like most cities in Eastern and Central Europe, it was an ethnically very homogeneous city in the state socialist phase; the proportion of foreigners before 1989 was around 3%. The transformation period of the 1990s was characterized by deindustrialization and a massive shrinkage. The city lost more than 100,000 inhabitants or about 20% of the 1989 population due to emigration, suburbanization, and declining birth rates. At the same time, migrants from different countries, especially from the former Soviet Union and Poland, came to Leipzig on a yearly basis of 1–2,000 people (Philipps & Rink, 2009, p. 402), a typically migrant quarter started to develop in Leipzig's inner east. When Leipzig saw moderate growth and reurbanization in the 2000s, immigration from abroad initially remained low, as unemployment was very high and jobs hard to get. Until the 2010s, the diversity of the population in Leipzig continuously increased: in 2015, 8% were foreigners (with a non-German passport) and 12% of the population had a migration background. Driven by several large industrial and service investments in the 2000s, Leipzig entered a phase of dynamic growth in the 2010s; during recent years, in-migration increased to over 10,000 people per year (approx. 2%). Because of the crisis in Southern Europe, immigration from abroad has increased and accounts for one third. The total share of migrants rose to more than 14% (foreigners 9,5%) in 2017 and shows the highest rates within the State of Saxony, but still rates low when compared to the national level (10,8% foreigners, 22% people with a migrant background; see Statistisches Bundesamt, 2018b; Stadt Leipzig, 2018b).

The share of foreigners also rose due to an increasing number of asylum seekers that were assigned to Leipzig in the last couple of years. As described above, the German asylum system is characterized by the interplay of complex multi-level regulations and tasks. While the State of Saxony has to receive 5% of the asylum seekers within Germany according to the Königstein Key, Saxon regulations foresee that Leipzig is obliged to take in 13% of those arriving in this federal state (Sächsische Staatskanzlei, 2018). Figure 1 shows the intensive variation of this assigned number of asylum seekers, while the state share percentage has almost stayed the same in the last years.

The arrival of asylum seekers has thus reached annual numbers that had never been the case before. At the beginning of the 1990s, Leipzig firstly received asylum seekers, initially mainly several hundred persons from former Yugoslavia and Romania. They had to live in mass accommodation houses on the outskirts of the city and had practically no contact with the German population. However, from the mid/end of the 1990s, as a result of shrinkage and housing oversupply, it was relatively easy for them to move into one of the many empty flats and rents were affordable (Grossmann, Arndt, Haase, Rink, & Steinführer, 2015). However, only recognized asylum seekers whose long-term integration was supported could take this opportunity.

Due to a city council resolution in 2010, the municipality decided to restructure the accommodation process of asylum seekers during their asylum procedure and Leipzig's mayor was authorized "to develop a concept for a largely decentralized accommodation" (Stadt

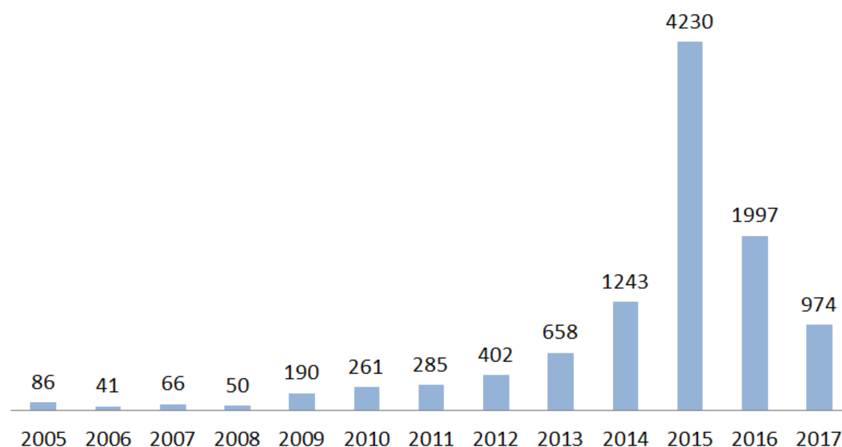

Figure 1. Asylum applicants that were assigned to the city of Leipzig. Source: Office for Social Affairs of the city of Leipzig (Stadt Leipzig, 2018a, p. 2)

Leipzig, 2010). At that time, only two municipal accommodation centers with high capacities existed and the resolution intended to limit the capacity of newly built centers to a maximum capacity of 50 persons. Because of the increasing number of asylum seekers since 2009 and difficulties in finding additional locations for shared accommodation, the concept could not be completed until 2012.

The Leipzig accommodation concept Housing for Recipients of the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act (henceforth accommodation concept) foresees a three-step procedure for accommodation (see Figure 2). After the stay in Saxony's initial reception centers, asylum seekers should live in shared municipal accommodation with capacities for 150 to 200 people for a period of six months up to one year. After that, they should be assigned to smaller shared accommodation for about 100 people. Here, according to the municipal concept, the asylum seekers get prepared to live in own apartments and receive assistance in finding one. As a third stage, the model provides decentralized accommodation, defined as living in self-selected social units in a flat, which is independently rented by the inhabitant. Only in exceptional cases, the city of Leipzig provides housing for asylum seekers in flats rented by the municipality. The accommodation concept argues that this decentralized accommodation facilitates the integration of asylum seekers into urban society and enables privacy and self-determination. As the possibility to live in flats instead of shared accommodation is not foreseen as a regular form of accommodation by the legislator during the asylum procedure, the city of Leipzig is obliged by the State of Saxony to examine each individual case and decide whether the person in question may move from shared to decentralized accommodation. Prerequisites for the move are humanitarian or medical reasons and a specific application to live in a private flat filled out by the asylum seeker and approved by the social welfare office (Stadt Leipzig, 2012, p. 6). Before a legal opinion questioned the lawfulness of this praxis in December 2017, also called a social prognosis, a valuation of the conduct and personal situation of the asylum seeker by a social worker was part of this process (Leipziger Internetzeitung, 2017). Furthermore, decentralized accommodation has to be less expensive than housing in shared accommodation (Stadt Leipzig, 2012, p. 8). Currently, a single-person household may spend 215.50 EUR on basic rent (Stadt Leipzig, 2018d).

The support by social workers is foreseen at each step of the accommodation process and the municipality provides a certain financial support for some registered associations that support asylum seekers with regard to daily life issues such as the asylum procedure, work or educational issues, language courses, or housing related aspects.

While drafting the accommodation concept, it also became obvious that there would be difficulties to implement it as the municipality had problems finding enough low-cost apartments whose owners were willing to cooperate, so the accommodation concept needed to be updated the following year. Already at the time of updating, many asylum seekers could not find suitable apartments to rent (Stadt Leipzig, 2013, p. 2). Furthermore, according to the concept, the shared accommodation and individual apartments should ideally be dispersed over the whole city due to aspirations of social mixing within neighborhoods and individual housing estates.

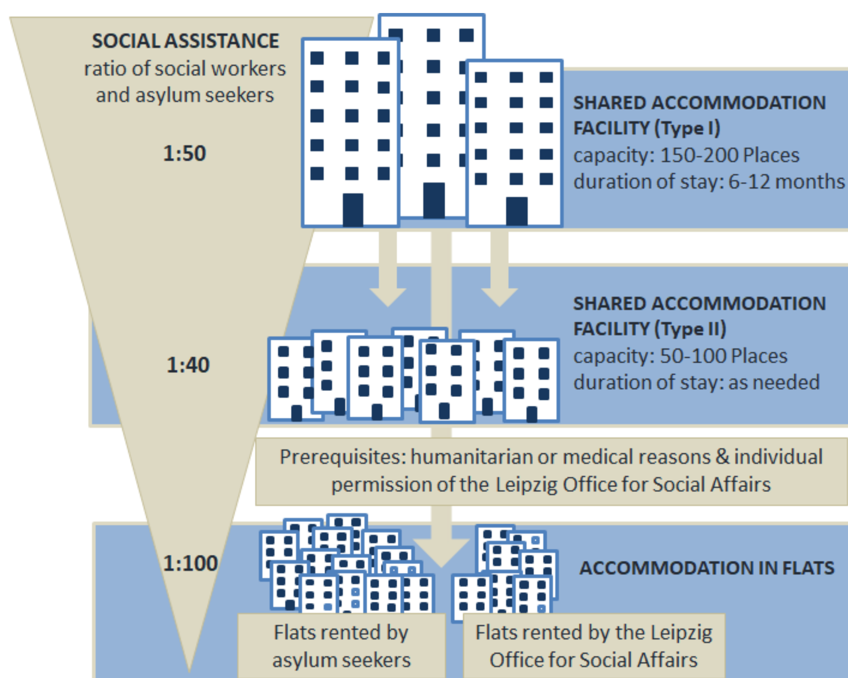

Figure 2. Leipzig's three-step accommodation system for asylum seekers, including quotas for social assistance. Source: based on Stadt Leipzig (2012).

Since then, the integration possibilities of the Leipzig housing market declined steadily, especially in the lower price segment and few remaining opportunities can be found in a few selected neighborhoods.

In reaction to the rapidly increasing number of asylum seekers during 2015 (see Figure 1), as in many other German municipalities, emergency accommodation centers were opened or extended in Leipzig. Asylum seekers were hosted in a wide range of shelters: in regular tenements, partially with completed residential units, in non-residential buildings, such as an exhibition hall or a hardware store, as well as in temporary shelters, such as tents and containers. While the stay in large community accommodations should be limited to the time of the asylum application procedure, a large number of people in these facilities already received state welfare and thus should actually have moved into their own apartments.

Landlords who refuse to rent their flats to asylum seekers and refugees aggravate the general housing shortage. The reasons not to rent range from uncertainties regarding the tenancy due to ongoing asylum procedures or limited residence permits, to a housing management that tries to avoid "overcharged" houses as well as openly expressed racist attitudes. As a result, the rate of accommodation in flats reached a low point in 2015: while drafting the accommodation concept, more than 60% of all asylum seekers were accommodated in flats (Stadt Leipzig, 2012, p. 11) during 2015–2016. The share ranged from under one third to just over 43%.

From 2010 onwards, due to increasing immigration and decreasing vacancies, the situation on Leipzig's housing market started to change (Stadt Leipzig 2015). The previously high vacancy rates are vanishing, rents have increased and the housing market's characteristics turned from supply to demand surplus in the second half of the 2010s. Now, recipients of social welfare and low-income earners can no longer provide themselves with cheap housing; migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees are additionally excluded by xenophobic reservations or racist attitudes (Budnik et al., 2016). The changing housing market is challenging the decentralized approach of the Leipzig accommodation concept even more.

4. Discussion: Housing as a Contested Field within GoA

The aforementioned developments and structural changes regarding the accommodation and housing of asylum seekers can be described as features of the local GoA. Hereinafter, we will shed light on the current actors involved in the GoA, their interactions and cooperation, and existing challenges and conflicts to reveal that Leipzig's housing market can be seen as a contested policy field in this regard.

As Figure 3 shows, GoA is a complex municipal field of action. The levels of federal and state government, with their laws and regulations, and the provision of financial and human resources, have a decisive influence on the GoA, even if they are not directly represented in the governance structures at the local level.

The Office for Social Affairs and its department for migrant help are the administrative units in charge of the basic supply for asylum seekers and their housing. It is politically controlled by the City Council and depends on cooperation with other states, intermediary and civil society actors such as associations, welfare organizations, and housing market actors to fulfill these tasks. Some

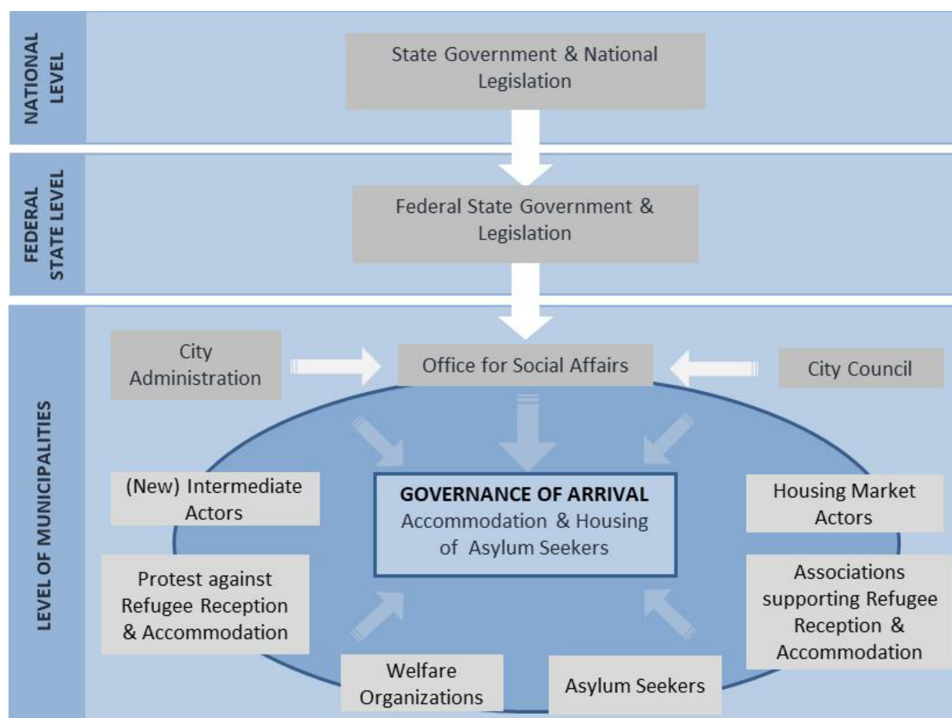

Figure 3. Governance of arrival. Source: authors' own elaboration.

of this cooperation has a longer history, some of which built on newly established actors or a new appearance of these actors in the field of refugee reception. Due to the developments of recent years, the policy field of accommodation was reformed and restructured within the city's administration.

The housing of asylum seekers can thus be regarded as one of several social welfare issues that the Office of Social Affairs is in charge of. The core formal task within the GoA is to accommodate the asylum seekers that the Federal State of Saxony assigns to live in Leipzig. In other municipalities, these tasks are often on the agenda of the regulative authorities. Through the implementation of the Leipzig accommodation concept in 2012, this task should be fulfilled with a specific proclaimed willingness to *humanitarian* housing and the city of Leipzig took advantage of the respective legal possibilities, thus individually framing the GoA. Before the interdepartmental working group Asylum was established in 2015, the Office for Social Affairs had to deal with finding, planning, and implementing shared accommodations and flats rented by the city without the respective planning capacities and the relevant position within the municipality administration in general (see Figure 3). This task was and is especially difficult because of the increasing affordable housing shortage. In addition to personnel restrictions, the Office of Social Affairs faced several core challenges implementing decentralized housing for asylum seekers. First, it had to negotiate the implementation of the Leipzig accommodation concept as federal state actors interpreted it as contradicting Saxon law, second asylum seekers' access to the housing market, and also the administrative unit's contact to housing market actors was more difficult and complex than expected and, thirdly, the supply of affordable flats has been constantly diminished since the situation on the Leipzig housing market became tenser. Overall, this shapes the contested field of housing in Leipzig.

According to information from the Leipzig Office for Social Affairs, asylum seekers have been accommodated not only in shared accommodation but also in apartments since 2004, thus, already before the Accommodation concept from 2012. The State of Saxony rejected this municipal practice following a degree of the Saxon Ministry of the Interior from 2001 which allowed a decentralized accommodation in exceptional cases only. Consequently, the drafting and implementation of Leipzig's accommodation concept, which foresaw a constant rise in the percentage of asylum seekers living in flats, was accompanied by strong critics from the federal State of Saxony. This situation changed only in 2014 when the State of Saxony released an own accommodation concept including a commitment to accommodate some groups of asylum seekers in a decentralized way, e.g. in own flats or housing units.

Since the adoption of Leipzig's accommodation concept in 2012, the situation in the city has changed profoundly as the city government and administration were willing to overcome political, structural and organizational barriers in order to be able to implement decentralized, i.e. own flat-based housing. In doing so, the human rights perspective was paid attention to, and, at the same time, an additional option for accommodating people in the time when rising numbers of people were assigned to the municipalities in Saxony in 2015/16 could be provided.

When looking at civic society, we find a complex situation with competing and contrasting attitudes as well (see Figure 3). On the one side, there was a considerable protest against refugee reception and accommodation within the city of Leipzig. The reception of refugees was questioned, in principle, by the right-wing populist movement LEGIDA (a pendant to the more well-known PEGIDA movement that started to act in 2014 in Dresden) and the right-wing populist party AfD (Alternative for Germany) in Leipzig as in many other places across Germany. Smaller initiatives specifically opposed community accommodations in certain neighborhoods and in one case prevented the housing of asylum seekers and refugees in a single-family housing estate. On the other hand, there is a multitude of associations and initiatives that support or even demand the reception of refugees in Leipzig. These initiatives support asylum seekers and refugees on a daily basis, bring them in touch with longer-term inhabitants, and foster their social participation in urban society.

While associations and activist groups have been influencing political actors and policies regarding the housing of asylum seekers for many years, and new governance structures have evolved that are building on respective resources. Thus, the intensity and modes of interference have become more diverse since the drafting and implementation of the Leipzig accommodation concept, considering the high number of incoming asylum-seeking persons since 2014. The aim of Leipzig's decentralized accommodation concept was to clearly state that to live in an own flat should be considered as the only humane option to provide (longer-term) housing for refugees. To reach this aim, the concept was elaborated based on networking activities including various actors. This process was accompanied by long-term protests of civic society associations pointing to the rights of refugees and making their situation and needs visible. The Refugee Council, an association that aimed at raising awareness regarding the situation of refugees in the city of Leipzig, took an active part in the drafting of the concept and played a role in its implementation when offering social consultation for asylum seekers living in own flats. On the contrary, the civic association for human dignity acts as a critical observant questioning the necessity for the shared accommodation steps within the concept.

The Contact Point Housing initiative (*Kontaktstelle Wohnen*) can be interpreted as a governance arrangement (Swyngedouw, 2005) within the local GoA. It serves as an example for the active involvement of non-state actors in fulfilling municipal tasks as its activities are explicitly dedicated to supporting asylum seekers and refugees

with finding a flat and dealing with the bureaucratic process of state support payment for housing. The persons involved, partly from the Association for Human Dignity, saw an urgent need to create new support structures and could rely on networks and experience in housing issues through their voluntary engagement (for refugees and social aspects of Leipzig's housing market in general). Funding from the city of Leipzig and other sources allowed them to open an office in 2015 and begin to get in touch with housing market actors to create awareness for the issue of refugee housing. A central strategy was to manage a pool of volunteers to support people as *housing peers* to overcome barriers based on language and structural knowledge of how to navigate through the process of house seeking. As their approach was unique in Germany at that time, they soon gained wide political and public attention. The task of the Contact Point Housing was to establish a bridge between the state authorities in charge of the accommodation of asylum seekers or refugees and house owners, housing associations, and enterprises. They should support people to get their own rent contracts, thus helping them to move out of shared accommodation facilities. As a civil society actor, the Contact Point Housing builds a partnership with state actors and gets involved with their unique resources and personal commitments. They partially fulfill municipal tasks as they support the municipality to implement the Leipzig accommodation concept. Still, the dependence on funds is creating the necessity to negotiate the goals and scope of actions and makes it difficult to plan for the longer term. Furthermore, the most obvious challenge for their work has recently been the tight housing market in Leipzig.

The accommodation concept is a planning instrument for asylum seekers' integration into the housing market, but the recent reality shows that flats that meet the financial constraints of state welfare can only be found in certain areas of the city, thus causing residential segregation instead of preventing it. An analysis of housing offers for the year 2017 has shown that only 3% of the offered flats in Leipzig are suitable for asylum seekers. These apartments are located almost exclusively in the prefabricated housing areas in the western and eastern parts of the city (Rink, Schneider, & Haase, 2018). This increases ethnic segregation, which is higher in East German cities such as Leipzig, with a relatively lower proportion of foreigners than in West German cities (Helbig & Jähnen, 2018, p. 33). The tense situation regarding asylum seekers' search for apartments became particularly apparent when the municipal housing company faced allegations of bribery in 2016. A black market for flats had already emerged the year before, as the waiting lists for social housing made people wait for a year or more until they were offered an apartment, while the payment of up to 1000 EUR enabled people to sign a contract within a few days (Leipziger Volkszeitung, 2016).

Altogether urban policies have to negotiate along a thin line between addressing the specific needs and constraints of people with an asylum background and othering/discriminating them through special concepts that show little or no conceptual coherence with other urban policies and the integrated urban planning perspective, as the new integrative master plan shows (Stadt Leipzig, 2018a). On the one hand, asylum seekers represent a group with a certain residence status, a temporally limited perspective to stay, language barriers, and social and economic opportunities. Thus, there are certain needs and constraints which are typical for their situation, even though the individual situation might differ widely. Many of those face the possible or actual experience with forms of racism and discrimination. On the other hand, it can be discussed as a form of *othering* if issues such as (decentralized) housing, that are closely interconnected with the housing market and its dynamics are handled in a special accommodation concept, while Leipzig's accommodation concept rarely acknowledges this *group* (asylum seekers) as a demand group. So, any solution represents a more or less successful compromise between those poles.

Summarizing, we can determine the GoA and especially the issue of housing as a contested field mainly with a perspective on involved actors and actors' interests. We call it "contested" for several reasons: When looking at the municipality, first, asylum-related policy fields have interrelations with policy fields such as urban planning, housing, and social welfare. Second, the emerging questions regarding the reception of refugees urge different units of municipal administration to find ways of collaboration. Third, with their different foci and interests, they have to find new forms of coordination. When looking at the public sphere and civil society, new conflicts of how to organize the housing and co-existence of locals and refugees become obvious. Fourth, and most contested, is Leipzig's housing market (which is in line with the result of other multi-case-study analyses such as BBSR, 2017). Here, the reduction of social housing over the last decades due to privatization led to municipalities having a very small leeway for influencing and controlling the housing market. The resulting insufficient supply of accommodation possibilities and affordable flats poses a great challenge with regard to the increased needs of asylum seekers.

5. Conclusions

The article has analyzed how the accommodation and housing of asylum seekers are organized and governed in German cities, using the example of the city of Leipzig. In particular, it has focused on the housing of asylum seekers as a new policy field for urban planning at the local scale and has asked how far it can be described as a contested field that is characterized by many challenges and interest conflicts between the actors involved. We adopted the perspective of a local GoA as a specification of urban governance with regard to the reception of asylum seekers, as the evolved socio-spatial arrangements

are place-specific and temporal, shaped and reproduced by the interplay and interdependencies of the local actors, as we described in the previous chapter. Accommodation and housing for asylum seekers became a new field of urban policy over the last years, and the specific situation in 2015 led to the establishment of new governance arrangements and institutions such as the interdepartmental working group Asylum or the Contact Point Housing and made the landscape of stakeholders more complex and variegated. The empirical analysis showed, furthermore, that housing of asylum seekers is a contested field indeed, for several reasons. First, since the increasingly tight housing market offers little availability for this demanding group. Second, since the governance of housing is characterized by many actors and diverse interest conflicts between them, in a situation where a couple of new collaborations and governance arrangements had to be established on short notice. Third, since there is discrimination and racism, which aggravate the situation for asylum seekers to find appropriate housing. While the "chaotic" conditions of 2015 are no longer a reality, the housing of asylum seekers and the social housing market, in general, remain a challenge for urban planning and policy-making in Leipzig. This fact clearly indicates that the issue is much more complex and of long-term relevance than the sheer problem of the "number" of refugees arriving in 2015. The example of GoA in Leipzig shows the challenges and problems of dealing with a new policy field and integrating it into more general governance arrangements.

With regard to its accommodation concept, Leipzig can be seen as a pioneer of a progressive municipal asylum policy in Germany and Europe. This concept was politically controversial from the beginning, and the conditions of housing as part of the GoA turned out to be a contested field, as analyzed in this article. The so-called concept of decentralized accommodation did not work properly from the outset due to inadequate planning and implementation; there has been a divergence between claim and reality from the beginning. In 2015–2016 when the number of asylum seekers in Leipzig peaked after a steady increase since 2009, the accommodation concept could not be implemented because the housing market in Leipzig was strained and it was practically impossible for asylum seekers to find appropriate affordable housing. Although the city reacted to the tense housing market with a new housing policy concept for Leipzig, refugees, and asylum seekers, and their supply of housing did not appear in it sufficiently. The planning concepts and the relevant policy areas have not been linked; refugees and asylum seekers play no role in municipal planning documents. Rather, a specific governance structure has been established to care for their accommodation, but independently from the system due to which the accommodation concept works. Civil society initiatives were included in the arrangements established in 2015 to provide housing for asylum seekers but they were soon overstrained with this task.

All in all, the GoA can be embedded in a highly dynamic field and its arrangements face a certain temporality. From the time of its drafting until now, the implementation of the accommodation concept ran after the real developments such as the number of arrivals or the changes in the housing market. After all, the decisions about concepts, policies, and available financial means related to the design of the GoA are abundant on political majorities in the City Council. The developments and reactions in 2015 and beyond brought political-administrative stakeholders and civil society actors to the limits of feasibility. Currently, no political efforts are recognizable that would substantially change this situation.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Being Accommodated, Well Then? 'Scalar Narratives' on Urban Transformation and Asylum Seekers' Integration in Mid-Sized Cities

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Abstract

This article deals with the interplay between the rescaling processes of cities and pathways of asylum seekers' integration. Building on scale theory and employing a downscaled mid-sized city in the Netherlands as a unit of analysis, two research questions are answered. Firstly, what kind of urban planning strategies do urban authorities of downscaled, mid-sized cities develop to rescale their cities? Secondly, how are these strategies related to the imagined pathways of asylum seeker integration? Here, the term 'scale' does not refer to an absolute 'spatial object' that is able to affect social reality. Rather, scales are socially produced through negotiation processes which are contested and heterogeneous. It is argued that Dutch urban authorities and housing corporations take a normative view of 'pathways of integration' and standardise these in terms of space, time and financing. By these socially produced scale processes, asylum seekers' accommodation is well-managed, keeping the residents regulated and 'in place'. Urban authorities utilise 'scalar narratives' to legitimate their interactions with asylum seekers and the way in which disadvantaged neighbourhoods in mid-sized cities are transformed. Using the Dutch mid-sized city Kerkrade as the case study, it is illustrated that local opportunity structures for integration are confined by (1) urban planning strategies mainly based on residential and tourism economies, (2) the perception of successful integration via a small-scale social mix within neighbourhoods, and (3) the neglect of public representation of cultural diversity.

Keywords

asylum seekers; downscaled cities; Kerkrade; mid-sized cities; multiscalar approach; pathways of integration; The Netherlands; urban transformation

Issue

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1. Introduction

Mid-sized cities of up to 50,000 inhabitants have not been the main destination of asylum seekers arriving in the Netherlands in recent years. Instead, the four big cities—Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht—have been favoured. This settlement pattern has not been changed by the recently arrived asylum seekers from Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea, and other non-Western countries. However, given the Dutch national distribution policy, a large number of the asylum seekers who received legal status, whereby they are allowed to stay for at least for five years, were initially distributed across the Netherlands. The national governments decide how many asylum seekers are to be accommodated in each municipality according to its population size. Therefore, a significant proportion of asylum seekers were allotted beyond the metropolitan areas, in small and mid-sized cities (Rijksoverheid, 2018).

The allocation is motivated by the idea that integration should be manageable on site. The Dutch distribution policy has recently been broadened by the strategy of 'matching' asylum seekers with regions. With the so-called 'duty traceable system', asylum seekers

are assigned to places with job opportunities expected to suit to their individual capacities and education profiles. Personal information is saved in digital records by the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (2018) and made accessible to governments in charge of integration. Once settled in these places, the chance to move elsewhere is limited. A large number of asylum seekers depend on social benefits, at least in the first phase of their settlement, and affordable flats in the big cities are rare. Owing to these conditions, the local opportunity structures become particularly relevant for the chance to get access to (further) education, employment or healthcare.

Mid-sized cities have probably fewer local opportunity structures at their disposal than do the metropoles, but it is clear that these places are not isolated islands. In the Netherlands, mid-sized and small cities are properly connected to big cities by public transport, even if they are situated in rural areas, in comparison with most other European countries. In addition, thanks to the range of social media platforms, asylum seekers are able to maintain social networks with others who live elsewhere. However, due to the power relations in the field of capital flow, big cities are more likely to attract investment and human capital than are mid-sized cities (Habit, 2010; Harvey, 2006; Smith, 1984). To better understand the processes of hierarchical positioning of cities in relation to migrant pathways of integration, a number of scholars propose a multiscalar approach (Belina, 2008; Brenner, 2011; Swyngedouw, 1997). For Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2011a, p. 7), the differential positioning of a city reflects:

> (1) flows of political, cultural, and economic capital within regions and state-based and globe-spanning institutions, and (2) the shaping of these flows and institutional forces by local histories and capacities.

They argue that the 'relative positioning of a city within hierarchical fields of power may well lay the ground for the life chances and incorporation opportunities of migrants locally and transnationally' (Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2011b, p. 73).

This article explores these dynamics, while suggesting that the generation of suitable local opportunity structure for asylum seekers is intertwined with the contested repositioning of cities. It is argued that the chance for participation as a social and everyday practice is affected by urban authorities who socially produce scales by which, in turn, asylum seekers are 'kept in place'. Once institutionalized, these scale processes become the means to legitimate certain interactions with asylum seekers as well as the way in which urban transformation has been executed. Here, the term scale is not perceived as an object that 'operates on' people's life but as socially produced processes that aim first and foremost to assure a hierarchic social order (Belina, 2008).

By doing so, the following research questions take the centre stage: what kind of urban planning strategies do urban authorities of downscaled, mid-sized cities develop to rescale their cities? How are these strategies related to the imagined 'pathways of integration' of asylum seekers? In addition to scale theory, the empirical basis for this article is ethnographic research on the Dutch downscaled mid-sized city Kerkrade, where I lived for seven months in the period of 2016 to 2018. There, I conducted expert interviews with nine agents of urban authorities (of the local government and housing corporations), two group discussions with 8–10 volunteers supporting asylum seekers, and in-depths interviews with 24 asylum seekers. In addition, I had several informal encounters with volunteers and asylum seekers. All of the interviews were recorded, and the transcripts coded, firstly, using the open coding method (Miles & Huberman, 1994), and secondly, axial coding by rereading, comparing and validating coded text fragments to determine the main categories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Moreover, participant observation of public spaces and an analysis of policy documents were carried out (Krippendorff, 2004). This article does not deal with all of these different perspectives, but first and foremost with the agency of urban planners and housing corporations, whilst suggesting that their 'scalar narratives' are neither new nor unique to this place, but rather illustrate patterns of rescaling processes that probably characterise other European downscaled mid-sized cities.

2. Multiscalar Perspective on Mid-Sized Cities

In European urban studies, the prevailing definition of mid-sized cities refers to the number of inhabitants in combination with the population density. For the scholars of the EPSON-project (EPSON, 2006, 2013), who studied a large number of European regions in detail, the boundary between small and mid-sized towns is fluid. These have between 5,000 and 50,000 inhabitants and a population density of 300 to 1,500 inhabitants per square kilometre. The scholars of the EPSON-project point out that despite their diversity, small and mid-sized towns have some characteristics in common that mean they generally differ from big cities (100,000 inhabitants or more). These are connected to their demographic composition, their labour markets, and their economic profiles. As regards the first aspect, in small and mid-sized cities, a higher proportion of pensionable adults and school age children are found alongside a lower proportion of working age adults with (higher) degrees. Regarding the labour markets, these cities seem to have a greater proportion of jobs in the industrial sector than in the service sector (which serves for a higher economic activity rate on average than in larger European cities, but also makes them vulnerable).

In terms of economic profile, three categories were identified in small and mid-sized towns. First, the 'restructuring industry' is characterized by a delicate balance between retaining the local production of trading goods, on the one hand, and industrial branches losing

their importance as a result of increasing global competition, on the other. The second one, named the 'residential economy', is mainly based on local activities such as housing demand, tourist activities, and social services. The last category, the 'knowledge-based economy', could be related to either the first or second type, and additionally relies on technical and social innovations, educational institutions, and creative industries.

The EPSON-project provides valuable insights into the specific characteristics of European small and mid-sized cities and it highlights the differential opportunities for further development according to the cities' historical pathways. For example, mid-sized cities with 'a higher proportion of employment in industrial activities tend to have negative trends in terms of growth, employment and population' (EPSON, 2013). Additional peculiarities affect mid-sized cities' development, such as their proximity to metropolitan areas, their infrastructural configurations, and their political position (EPSON, 2006). However, this study describes hierarchies of cities rather than analyses causes of uneven development. This deficiency also characterises studies wherein the scalar position of mid-sized cities is taken for granted (Esser, 2002; Greiving, Flex, & Terfrüchte, 2015; Kühn & Milstrey, 2015; Leimbrock, 2010; Lekkerkerker, 2016). By this deficiency, the process of strengthening the economic power of some cities while disempowering other (mid-sized) cities has rarely been explained. In contrast, the conceptualisation of cities' hierarchies as condition *and* outcome of the neoliberal global process of restructuring circuits of capital offers a possible means of interpretation (Harvey, 2006; Sassen, 2000, 2001).

More than two decades ago, Sassen (2001) has shown that a few so-called global cities were able to assume a strategic role in controlling and managing the financial markets and the global network of production sites, above other (major) cities. She argues that capital accumulation needs—and brings about—processes of deterritorialisation (Appadurai, 1996; Castells, 1996), but simultaneously depends upon investment in specific place-based key service industries. Global cities can be viewed as the territorial embodiment of globally managed and controlled capital flows, while mid-sized cities have to work harder to recruit (highly educated) labourforces, state subsidies, and private investments (Brenner, 1999; Smith, 1984).

For Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2011a, 2011b), the struggle for positioning underlies the processes of rescaling cities, as well as other sociospatial reorganisations, such as new urban and housing forms (Keil, 1991) and new transnational network formations; for example, by the agency of migrants. Since the early 1990s, a number of scholars have elaborated the conceptual framework of rescaling in relation to globalization process, whereby the term does not refer to geographical scales as such. Scale is not an absolute 'spatial thing' (Bird, 1993; Keil, 1991, 1994; MacLeod & Goodwin, 1999; Smith, 1984; Swyngedouw, 1997). Instead, scales are socially produced through negotiation processes which are deeply contested and heterogeneous (Belina, 2008; Swyngedouw, 1997). Moreover, the bipolar local-global perspective has been abandoned in favour of recognizing processes constituting other relevant scale levels to understand the complexity of the territorial embodiment of power relations (Brenner, 1999; Swyngedouw, 1997).

Brenner (2011) recapitulates the academic discussion on the multiscalar approach by advocating investigations of rescaling processes, rather than elaborations of scale levels themselves. In addition, he proposes the 'strong claim that the *differentia specifica* of scalar organization lies in the vertical differentiation and redifferentiation of social relations' (Brenner, 2011, p. 32). As a result, reorganisation of 'scalar hierarchies create geographies and choreographies of inclusion/exclusion and domination/subdomination that empower some actors, alliances, and organizations at the expense of others, according to criteria such as class, gender, race/ethnicity, and nationality' (Brenner, 2011, p. 34).

The emphasis on the vertical differentiation of social relations has been contested by others who state that a multiscalar perspective is limited by top-down structural constraints (Marston & Smith, 2001; Sheppard & McMaster, 2004; Strüver, 2008; Taylor, 2004). First of all, a researcher runs the risk of thinking over-hierarchically and thus other forms of sociospatial structuration are easily overlooked. Furthermore:

> A conceptualization of interactions across a diversity of 'sites', unfolding non-linearly, horizontally, and vertically, offers the explanatory power to account for the ways that the layout of the built environment—a relatively slow-moving collection of objects—can come to function as an ordering force in relation to the practices of humans arranged in conjunction with it. (Marston, Jones, & Woodward, 2005, p. 425)

Most recently, scale theory has been challenged because only a few scholars have explored the relationship between the scalar position of cities and migration processes. While acknowledging that a multiscalar approach does facilitate a better understanding of the relative positioning of a city within the context of neoliberal globalization processes, Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2009, 2011a, 2011b) appeal for elaborating of theories on migrants' pathways of incorporation in different cities. A comparative explanatory framework is needed, under which the varied and unequal opportunities for participation (of migrants and old-established inhabitants) in relation to the relative positioning of cities can be explored. They assume that 'all cities, including those that are failing, engage in global competition, and localities that experience marginalization are part of the same processes that shape the cities acknowledged to be global' (Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2011b, p. 73).

Exploring different cities as localities means, firstly, theorising city scale not (only) in terms of size or den-

sity of population but as a relative measure situated in a changing field of power relations. Secondly, migrants' agency should not be reduced to serving economic goals by the provision of their labour force (Nicholls & Uitermark, 2016). Rather, migrants are scale makers who contribute to the repositioning struggles of cities in multiple ways (Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2016). As regards the relation of local opportunity structure and the size of cities, Aumüller (2009) suggests that the bigger the town, the more chances migrants have to get a job in the informal labour market, to find their way without support by formalized institutions, and to encounter migrants from the same country of origin. On the one hand, in mid-sized cities, migrants seem to be more dependent on formal arrangements of the local government. On the other, there, companies seem to offer special qualification measures due to mediation by acquaintances and, because of that, the chances for incorporation in the labour market seem to be good (Boos-Krüger, 2005; Georg, 2011).

3. Urban Transformation and Asylum Seekers' 'Pathways of Integration'

In the current system of many European countries, asylum seekers are distributed to cities by the national government, and the local urban authorities are in charge of providing suitable accommodation (Darling, 2011; El-Kayed & Hamann, 2018). In the Netherlands, local authorities closely work together with housing associations to manage this task. By doing so, few private home owners are involved, as the majority of the social housing stock is owned by housing corporations or associations throughout the country.

An asylum seeker dependent on social benefits is officially denoted an 'urgent target group' for social housing. Here, Dutch integration policy and urban transformation processes come together and constitute conflicting scales processes: the Dutch state rates the number of asylum seekers to be 'integrated' into certain places, while housing associations and local authorities make plans to transform these places in line with regionally negotiated urban planning strategies. The objects of this urban transformation are, above all, disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Here, a higher proportion of private property has to be realised as the Dutch neoliberal urban policy prescribed (Musterd, 2014; Priemus, 2004, 2006). At the same time, these neighbourhoods are the first homes of many asylum seekers. In their given role as an 'urgent target group' for social housing, asylum seekers must compete for affordable housing with others who also depend on welfare provisions. Thus, the actions of urban authorities and housing associations are guided by the distribution of an insufficient amount of social housing to low-income groups and the requirement to balance diverse needs. Their actions are accompanied by 'scalar narratives' from which two narratives stand out in particular.

The first narrative refers to the term scale as a 'spatial object' (Belina, 2008) which is perceived as being able to affect 'pathways of integration': the larger the so-called ethnic community living closely together within a neighbourhood, the lower the chance of successful 'integration' into the 'receiving society' (Ronneberger & Tsianos, 2009). Although this 'scalar narrative' is recounted slightly differently depending on national contexts and histories, the essential message remains unchanged in many European public and political discourses (Hess, Binder, & Moser, 2009; Loch, 2014; Wieviorka, 2014). In Germany, for instance, the large-scale clustering of certain social groups is perceived as a sociospatial manifestation of 'parallel societies', which are, in turn, perceived as closed off from the German mainstream culture (the German Leitkultur; Ronneberger, & Tsianos, 2009). Here, Muslim migrants in particular have been depicted as backward and oriented towards traditional religious norms and values which are not compatible with 'modern' European values (Miera, 2012). This trend has also been observed in the Netherlands (Entzinger, 2014; Uitermark, 2010; Van Heerden, De Lange, Van der Brug, & Fennema, 2014). As a consequence, the processes of urban transformation of social housing stocks often aim to mix different social groups to boost 'integration' (Uitermark, 2003). The issue what social mix is effective for whom is contested (Galster, 2007; Ostendorf, Musterd, & De Vos, 2001) and positive neighbourhood effects for migrants in socially mixed neighbourhoods are very difficult to prove (Pinkster, 2014). Nevertheless, this direction of urban transformation is still practised (Watt & Smets, 2017).

The second narrative refers to the struggle of urban authorities to balance the diverse needs of asylum seekers and other low-income groups. They have to treat everyone equally by law, but Dutch urban authorities and agents of housing associations appear to be adopting increasingly neoliberal integration policies, with the mainstream parties representing 'a monoculturalist discourse in which ideas about the compulsory integration of immigrants are paired with plans to limit the influx of asylum seekers' (Van Heerden et al., 2014, p. 133). Thereby the pressure for behavioural change is laid on the asylum seekers and not on the agents of local governments (Entzinger, 2014). Besides, urban authorities attempt to manage migration flows to maintain 'social peace' whilst drawing upon benefits of the asylum seekers' human capital. Darling (2011) has analysed this contradictionary mode of governance by suggesting that the accommodation of asylum seekers is an internal border practice (of the UK). Drawing on the concept of domopolitics, he argues that accommodation is not a limitation of their mobility at all costs, but rather symbolizes a 'desire to categorise and filter flows of people and goods so that threatening might be dealt with while the advantageous is permitted' (Darling, 2011, p. 265). As long as local governments are responsible for accommodating asylum seekers, urban authorities are able to regulate 'pathways of integration', on the one hand and to response to the desire for a safe nation and society, on the other (Darling, 2011, p. 269).

These two 'scalar narratives' are related to a normative view of how pathways of asylum seekers should be and will succeed. Regarding the latter narrative in particular, the notion of a 'one-way road' integration 'seems to have won increasing acceptance among politicians and in the media in European countries and become an unquestioned legitimate objective', while integration policy programmes are far from neutral (Miera, 2012, p. 193). During the last three decades, attention has shifted from multicultural policies towards an integration policy centred on forced learning processes of the language, history and sociocultural norms and beliefs of the host societies (Bloemraad, Korteweg, & Yurdakul, 2008; Entzinger, 2014; Uitermark, 2010; Wieviorka, 2014).

In this way, from a sociological perspective, the process of integration and participation has been narrowed down to the imagination that asylum seekers must fit into a majority that, in itself, is well-integrated and positively bound to each other (Miera, 2012). This perception has been criticised by many social scholars, who argue that, firstly, the so-called host society is constituted itself by super-diverse communities (Grzymala-Kazlowska & Phillimore, 2018), and secondly, the idea of clear-cut and unambiguous affiliation of individuals or social groups fits neither urban everyday life and routines nor the multi-local and transnational orientation of many social groups (Yildiz, 2013).

In this article, it is proposed that this normative and simplified imagination of 'pathways of integration' is inappropriate for understanding everyday struggles, practices and needs of asylum seekers. Moreover, this perception paves the way for scale processes which are not developed to do away with barriers for participation but rather to regulate and order migration flows within nation states and 'receiving' (mid-sized) cities (Gebhardt, 2016; Ronneberger & Tsianos, 2009). To underpin this argument, the dictated pathway of sociocultural integration as one among other scale processes concerning 'integration' is illustrated. Besides, the urban transformation process of Kerkrade and its relation to 'scalar narratives' of urban authorities are discussed in the following.

Once settled down in their new home, asylum seekers are expected to attend the integration course. Within a prescribed period of time they have to learn Dutch, facts about Dutch history, figures, law and several norms and values of the Dutch society. The course should be

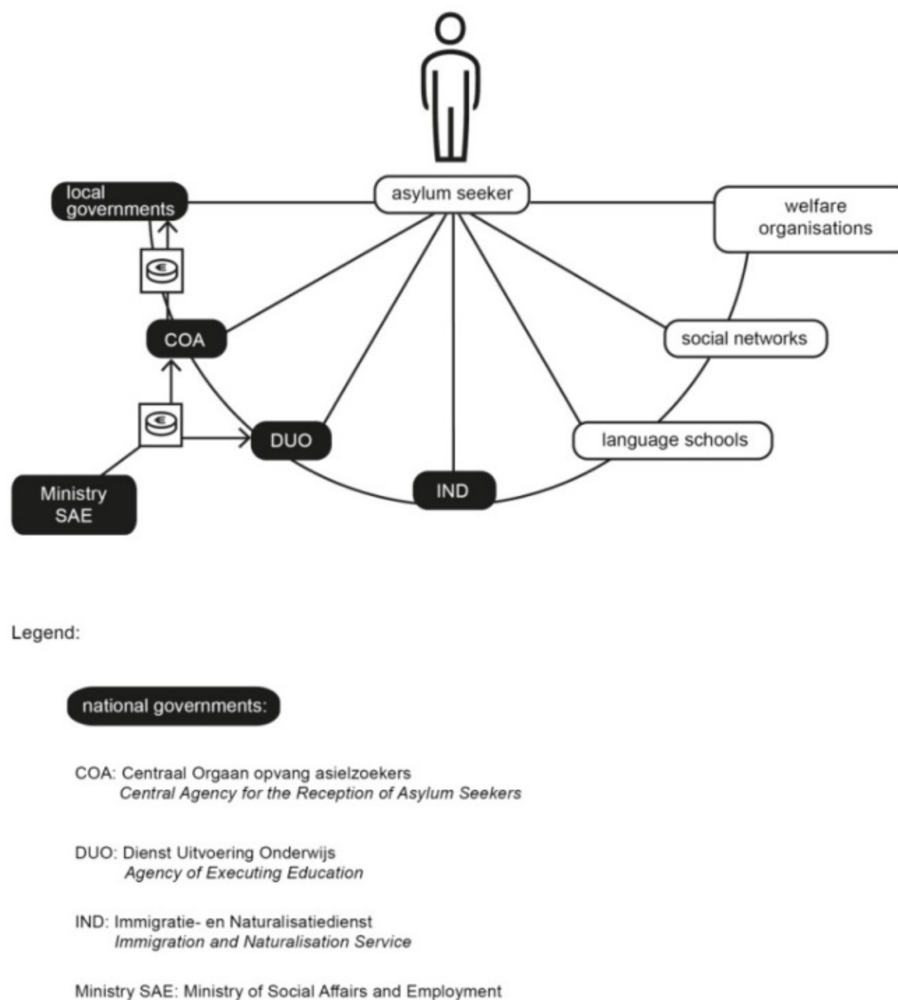

Figure 1. Actors in charge of asylum seekers' integration (figure drawn by the author based on Rekenkamer, 2017, p. 7).

finished with an exam taken within three years. Without passing the exam, the chance of receiving a permanent residence permit or Dutch citizenship is low (though exceptions can be made). Throughout the Netherlands, a large number of private and public language schools offer integration and language courses controlled and licensed by the Agency of Executing Education (DUO), which is part of the Dutch ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

Overall, this means that the asylum seekers' 'pathway of sociocultural integration' reproduces and is prestructured by (1) a spatial path (moving out of the accommodation centre into a flat in a certain city), (2) a time path (learning the Dutch language and culture within three years), and (3) a financial path (borrowing money to pay for the integration course). Interrelated key actors working for national and local authorities, language schools, housing corporations, and banks manage and control these pathways by generating scale processes along which tasks and responsibilities are arranged. For instance, as regards the financial path, DUO informs the asylum seeker on its website that s/he is able to borrow up to €10,000 to pay for the integration course and the obligatory exams (DUO, 2018). Language schools are aware of this and regularly charge exactly this price (see Figure 2).

Ultimately, the total costs cover the attended hours only, though the loan interest is determined in advance. This business model applies a penalty that the asylum seeker must pay if s/he fails to finish the integration course within three years (Dutch Integration Law, 2006, chapter 6 §28). This illustrates how the 'pathways of sociocultural integration' as educational and financial practices are intertwined with a concentration of power by

Betreft: Offerte **Dln.nr.:** **BSN:** **Bijlage:** n.v.t. **Datum:** 23-11-2017

Geachte mevrouw

Wij bieden u het volgende traject aan:

Onderdeel	**Prijs**
Leerbaarheid Alfa	€ 50
Voortraject Inburgering Alfabetisering A	€ 3028
Voortraject Inburgering Alfabetisering B	€ 1730
Voortraject Inburgering Alfabetisering C	€ 1730
Inburgering A1-A2 25 weken	€ 2163
Inburgering oriëntatie op de Nederlandse arbeidsmarkt begeleiding	€ 63
Inburgering lezen examen	€ 50
Inburgering luisteren examen	€ 50
Inburgering schrijven examen	€ 50
Inburgering spreken examen	€ 60
Kennis Nederlandse Maatschappij examen	€ 40
Leermiddelen Alfa en TPR	€ 415
Leermiddelen Inburgering A1-A2 25 weken	€ 84
Leermiddelen ONA	€ 23
Leermiddelen KNM	€ 35
Leermiddelen voorbereiding examen	€ 26
Totaalprijs	**€ 9597**

Indien u akkoord kunt gaan met deze offerte verzoeken wij u deze ondertekend aan ons te retourneren.

Voor akkoord,

Namens de opdrachtnemer, Namens de opdrachtgever,

Opleidingsmanager

Figure 2. Copy of an original offer for a licensed language school, sent to an asylum seeker who lives in Kerkrade.

scale processes, which are, in turn, placed beyond asylum seekers' choices (for example, to learn the Dutch language and culture in another way.)

4. Kerkrade: A Downscaled Mid-Sized City

Around 45,800 inhabitants live in the mid-sized city of Kerkrade, which is situated near the German and Belgium border in the southern part of the Netherlands. Kerkrade is part of an association of eight small and mid-sized municipalities, called Parkstad ('Park City') Limburg, of which five have seen declining population since the 1990s (Hoekveld & Bontje, 2016; Latten & Musterd, 2009). The downscaling process began with the closure of several coal mines in Parkstad Limburg during the 1960s. Despite considerable public support for creating new jobs, the rate of unemployment has stayed relatively high at around 15% in recent years, though it decreased significantly to 8% in 2017 (Elzerman & Bontje, 2015; Gemeente Kerkrade, 2017; Reijnders, Krishnamurthy, & Van Tetering, 2017).

The downscaling process of Kerkrade caused by deindustrialization constitutes a devaluation of the built environment which is closely related to capital flows moving by trend towards high(er) profit rates (Reijnders et al., 2017). Following Smith (1984, p. 148): 'the mobility of capital brings about the development of areas with a high rate of profit'. Concerning the attractiveness of downscaled cities for migrants, Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2011b) note that these provide limited opportunities for economic and social mobility and the development of local ethnic politics and representation. The latter characteristics are applicable to Kerkrade, although the city has experience with immigration from non-European labour forces who worked in its coal mines in the past. Of the 31.4% of inhabitants with a migration background, 5.8% are of non-European origin (CBS, 2018). As a result, the 340 asylum seekers allotted to the city between 2014 and 2018 do not come across large ethnic or religious organizations (except Christian parish communities) or businesses. These are also underdeveloped in the larger neighbouring city of Heerlen, although there is a mosque and some small businesses established by former migrants.

In contrast to many other municipalities in the Netherlands, in Kerkrade the asylum seekers are not supported by the national Dutch Council for Refugees but the much smaller welfare organization Impuls. This is run by volunteers and two part-time employees paid from the local government. The great majority of these have migration backgrounds and therefore have intercultural competences, a transnational network and speak the language of many asylum seekers (such as Arabic or Kurdish). Despite this valuable local agency for asylum seekers and the local history of immigration by non-European labour forces, the cities' repositioning does not consider the multilingualism or cultural diversity of their inhabitants an asset. Instead, tourism, local traditions, cultural events (such as carnival) and a cross-border ('EU-regional') residential economy are promoted. Regarding tourism, Kerkrade officials aim to reinvent the cities' image with slogans such as 'European and hospitable' (Gemeente Kerkrade, 2018). It is stated that 'tourism, recreation and culture can show us the way towards a new future. Embedded in the local history, in the tradition and in the landscape of Kerkrade they can grow into the new motor of our society' (Gemeente Kerkrade, 2011, p. 9). Furthermore, urban renewal projects are an additional part of the reinvention strategy characterized by conflicting scales processes. On the one hand, Kerkrade pursues its own interest of attracting tourists and new residents by transforming the city centre (while Heerlen does the same). By doing so, cultural and economic capital flows were territorially embodied, which disempower the other cities of Parkstad. On the other hand, the city depends on collaboration with Parkstad Limburg for being attractive to tourists and new residents. After all, many diverse attractions are needed to be able to keep the pace of competition with the nearby German urbanised area of Aachen.

The finding that scales processes either 'solve' competition between cities or reinforce it is not new (Smith, 1984). Hence, particularly for downscaled cities, this leads to long-lasting vacancies (Hoekveld & Bontje, 2016; Hospers, 2013), partly because downscaled cities—such as Kerkrade—have difficulty attracting new residents interested in buying houses. In a number of policy and urban planning documents of Kerkrade and the region, this difficulty has been acknowledged: 'despite the great cross-border potentials, at the moment [an EU-regional labour and housing market] is not yet an everyday reality. At the moment only 2.0% of the working population who resides in South-Limburg work abroad' (Parkstad Limburg Stadsregio, 2016, p. 18). Due to demographic change, a large number of existing houses are for sale, while the more rural small cities within the same region (Parkstad) or more urbanized cities (Heerlen) are often more attractive to home buyers. For Kerkrade, this means that it can hardly reposition itself neither through 'residential economy' nor 'restructuring industry' (EPSON, 2013).

5. 'Scalar Narratives'

For the interviewed urban authorities and planners of this city, urban transformation and asylum seekers' integration means reconciling both with local interests. These interests are essentially (1) the achievement of the 'right' and small-scale social mix and (2) the maintenance of 'social peace' by acting on the basis of equality. The follow citations illustrate how two urban planners perceive the relation between the imagined pathways of integration and disadvantaged neighbourhoods:

> R 1: You have to watch out, also with accommodating asylum seekers, that you do not settle them all down

in those [disadvantaged] neighbourhoods...you know? Rather, that you distribute them across the city.

R 2: But this becomes more difficult. Since the introduction of the new Dutch Housing Law, we have to negotiate agreements with the housing corporations once a year. In general, they want to support us but say, 'Soon, we have whole streets or apartment complexes where only asylum seekers are living…you should try to accommodate at least some of them in privately rental housing'. But they live on social security…so this does not *work*. Sure, you want to prevent there being whole streets of Syrian or whole streets of Eritrean. Then it clusters around altogether. This is probably fine for them, but for overall integration it is not a good idea...that you do not integrate into society. Thus, it is difficult because there is a shortage of social housing at the moment.

The idea that a small-scale social mix is an instrument for solving the 'problem' of the asylum seekers' integration is shared by two agents of a housing corporation.

R 3: You have some streets within neighbourhoods where you should not accommodate anybody. Two foreign families already live there, so no more. Otherwise, they will form a group when you just want them to integrate and to join in with the society. Having their own traditions, that's okay.

R 4: Yes, that they get something out of the Netherlands.

R 3: This is the idea we follow. In the past, you had whole neighbourhoods with just foreigners: Turkish neighbourhoods, Moroccan neighbourhoods. We try to prevent this. We also do this with disadvantaged Dutch families: settle them down next to a stronger one.

These quotations show that neither the asylum seekers nor the 'strong Dutch' neighbours are perceived as social agents with diverse skills or characteristics. Instead, a fixed sociospatial pattern of a homogenous majority group around which a minority group should be orientated is assumed. By utilizing this often heard 'scalar narrative' in Dutch planning practice (Galster, 2007; Van Kempen & Bolt, 2009), spatial scale is reified as an object with an autonomous effectiveness on people.

Nevertheless, 'scalar narratives' are flexibly deployed, depending on the interest at hand. All of the interviewed urban authorities know that a shortage of social housing will complicate the realization of a small-scale social mix within Kerkrade. This shortage is a result of the rescaling process initiated by all municipalities of Parkstad. They came to an agreement as to where and when urban renewal should occur. Therewith, they exercise the neoliberal Dutch housing policy (Priemus, 2004, 2006) and hope to reduce vacancies caused by demographic change. Ahead of other cities, Kerkrade demolished a significant share of its social housing in recent years. As a result, many households moved away and the city lost tax income. Therefore, urban renewal plans have recently slowed down and the strategy has changed to pay more attention to inhabitants' needs. Here, the 'scalar narrative' was utilized to reclaim power to broaden the local scope of action by renegotiating former agreements. As regards the maintenance of 'social peace' by acting on the basis of equality, officials hesitate to prioritise asylum seekers over other urgent target groups.

R 3: We want to help [asylum seekers] but we do not continuously provide extra help. There are other tenants who also earn something extra but they are nevertheless requested to clean their gardens. You should be able to do that. If not, there are particular [welfare] organisations who offer support, just like for Dutch families. Although, then, language is a barrier. You have to provide an interpreter in order to even understand their expectations'.

This housing corporation agent indicates the limits of their responsibility. In contrast to the 'scalar narrative' above, the asylum seeker is perceived here as a social agent who has obligations and expectations and is not able to speak Dutch properly. This illustrates the experienced difficulty to balance diverse needs of low-income groups. It is likely that officials are afraid of paving the way for right-wing policies. The strongest party in Kerkrade's local council is a conservative party and 29% of the inhabitants voted for the Dutch right-wing party. Therefore, the representation of a multicultural Kerkrade has so far been avoided. Says a local official:

R 5: We don't communicate on a large-scale. We don't announce, 'We will place in your street many, many asylum seekers'. We don't do this. We keep it low profile and we are lucky that we do not have a large-scale accommodation centre within our municipality....We communicate very little about asylum seekers and this is a strategy….Politicians ask questions...and we inform them on regular basis.

The resistance to public communication of asylum seekers' arrival, in combination with the neglect of the intercultural competences of them and the volunteers, the focus on the residential and tourism economies, and, last but not least, the broadly accepted 'scalar narrative' on integration via a small-scale social mix, constitute a limited local opportunity structure for asylum seekers.

6. Conclusion

The first research question asks which kind of urban planning strategies are developed by the urban authorities of

downscaled, mid-sized cities to rescale their cities. This article shows that a mid-sized city may be repositioned by the restructuring of its city centre, the transformation of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and the reinvention of its image in order to attract tourists and home buyers. In the case of Kerkrade, regional agreements for transformations of each city within Parkstad Limburg have also been made. The findings suggest that the repositioning efforts of mid-sized cities do not self-evidently mean that the local opportunity structures for asylum seekers will be improved. If urban authorities' main concern is to preserve 'social peace' by concentrating power by scale processes whilst avoiding multicultural representation, the chance of developing suitable local opportunity structures for asylum seekers seems to be low. Recently, urban strategies have begun to change in Kerkrade and Parkstad Limburg, with more attention being paid to participation and bottom-up processes (IBA Parkstad, 2018; Lekkerkerker, 2016).

The second research question concerns the interplay between strategies of urban transformation and asylum seekers' integration. It is demonstrated that urban authorities and state institutions socially produce scale processes to standardize 'pathways of integration' in terms of accommodation, time, and financing (see Figure 1). In all, these scale processes suit the neoliberal view that integration and urban transformation are, among other challenges, business models. Scale processes become affective in space (for example, with no mulitcultural representations or by reducing social housing) thus intensifying the dependence of asylum seekers on the volunteers who support them. Once institutionalised, scale processes are difficult to change by themselves (and the volunteers). Certainly, it is not suggested here that asylum seekers have no agency and are unable to change their lives or the everyday routines of a mid-sized city (an issue that will be explored in a following article on Kerkrade). The language school, for example, as a social and physical place, offers a platform for (cultural) representation and social interaction. However, first of all, conditions produced by scale processes must be accepted before access to an officially recognised integration course is possible. Secondly, from the viewpoint of urban authorities, the local opportunity structure is sufficient: asylum seekers are well-accommodated (by the intentionally hidden practice of the officials in charge), well-financed (with money borrowed at the asylum seekers' own risk), and well-supported by volunteers, first and foremost, with relatively low public costs.

Of course, Kerkrade is not representative of all downscaled, mid-sized European cities, and more empirical research is needed to ascertain whether or not urban authorities are willing (or able) to boost local opportunity structures for integration. Some studies confirm the presence of internal border practices (Darling, 2011; El-Kayed & Hamann, 2018) whilst Gebhardt (2016) argues that Dutch local governments in particular are losing spheres of influence because the state has centralised control over financial resources, integration programmes, and language courses. Other scholars demonstrate that Dutch municipalities have developed a number of practices to counteract national integration policies (Kos, Maussen, & Doomernik, 2015).

In my view, scale theory offers a suitable theoretical framework for (further) exploration of the interplay between the rescaling processes and asylum seekers' integration in mid-sized cities. The findings show that socially produced scale processes in both fields reproduce a social hierarchical order that leaves limited scope to position oneself outside these. However, future research on the life chances of asylum seekers in different mid-sized cities should take into account the issues of time (for learning new things) and financial circumstances. Governments regulate migration by control of accommodation processes, time, and the manner of financing 'integration', whilst attempting to draw upon its benefits. Last but not least, due to the absence of (large) ethnic organisations in many downscaled mid-sized cities, more research is needed to investigate alternative structures that are likely to be supportive; for instance, religious organisations of various denominations, and clubs.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

Urban Planning for the Integration of Refugees: The Importance of Local Factors

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Abstract
Housing location is one of several characteristics that play a significant role in the future integration of asylum-seekers. Many of these characteristics or institutional arrangements are spatialized aspects relevant to urban planning. Drawing on experiences from fieldwork in Göttingen, a mid-sized city in the German Federal state of Lower-Saxony 2016–2018, this article demonstrates the local challenges, strategies and their resulting institutional arrangements on various aspects of asylum-seekers' lives. It discusses the influence of those arrangements on the development of their social circles, and on their access to different resources, influencing their participation in and interaction with the social and urban life of their host cities; thereby influencing their integration processes. To do so, the article addresses local factors that are significant for urban planners to include into an integration plan. It observes the role urban planning can play in preventing aspects of segregation in the various life domains of refugees and in providing urban contexts that facilitate integration in European cities. The first assumption of this article is that integration, refugees' attitudes towards it, and an urban context that can facilitate it start from day one of the arrival of new comers in their host city/town. The second assumption is that integration happens on the local level of the city, and more specifically on the level of the host neighborhood.

Keywords
accommodation; asylum-seekers; Germany; housing; refugee; segregation; urban planning

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1. Introduction

This article aims to present parts of the German experience in refugee reception and accommodation. It draws on the fieldwork and preliminary findings of a research project implemented in the city of Göttingen, a mid-sized city in Lower-Saxony. The project was launched at the Max-Planck-Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity in February 2016 with the financial support of the Volkswagen foundation. It aimed to study the diversity of needs and aspirations of new comers (i.e., asylum-seekers arriving in Germany since 2015). It also investigated the responses of the German state and non-state institutions, to these needs and to the so-called "refugee crisis" in general. The fieldwork was carried out by a multi-disciplinary team of three post-doc researchers: a sociologist, an anthropologist, and an architect/urban planner (the author).

The project employed a mixture of ethnographic and other qualitative methods including; participant observation in refugee accommodations and in public meetings and events; focus group discussions; hanging-out (Geertz, 1998) and informal meetings with asylum-seekers and recognized refugees; semi-guided interviews with asylum-seekers, practitioners in different city institutions, social workers, volunteers, and management staff members (*Betreiber*) of selected accommodations. This is in addition to participatory research methods like language portraits and Photovoice. The data is coded and analyzed inductively, with the help of qualitative data

analysis software (Vertovec, Becker, Fleischer, Schader, & Wari, 2017).

Through the lens of ten refugee accommodations in Göttingen, and based on the fieldwork's preliminary findings, the article aims to highlight the local factors found significant to include in an integration plan from an urban planning perspective. These factors have three aspects: challenges related to the local host environment and urban planning in general; the characteristics of refugee accommodations—that this article will refer to as institutional arrangements (Vertovec et al., 2017)—responsible for differential access to services and resources; and the diversity and personal experiences of the refugee population hosted on the local level. Those local factors, it is argued, play a central role in the development of trajectories of "integration"[1] of asylum-seekers and refugees in their host (receiving) cities.

The article starts with two assumptions. The first is that integration, refugees' attitudes towards it, and the urban context that can facilitate or hinder it start from the first day of the arrival of new comers in their host environment. The second assumption is that integration happens on the local level of the city/town, and more specifically on the level of the host neighborhood (Fonseka & McGarrigle, 2012; Hinze, 2013; Wari, 2017; Wiesemann, 2011). The article argues for the importance of the local in the planning and implementation of integration strategies in an early phase of reception and accommodation, and for the importance of thorough consideration of the role that institutional arrangements of refugee accommodation play in the long-term integration of refugees.

Germany has a Federal decentralized system of politics, administration and urban planning (Pahl-Weber & Henckel, 2008). In the reception, accommodation and integration of refugees, different levels of the state have different tasks to fulfill. The macro national level decides how to disperse refugees to different states. Federal states (*Länder*), the executive arm of the government (Hooper, 1988, p. 184), decide how refugees are distributed between their different cities and communities, and partly cover costs that refugee accommodation generates on the local level (Katz, Noring, & Garrelts, 2016). However, integration happens on the local level (Kronenberg, 2018). Cities and towns host refugees (Ray, 2003), decide the location and characteristics of refugee accommodation, offer German and integration courses, and support refugees to find housing, trainings and jobs. It is also the local civil society (engaged neighbors, volunteers, and sponsors) that contributes to building social circles and acting as links between the new comers and the host society (ESPON, 2015).

Within this decentralized federal system, urban planning systems (Le Galès, 2003) work differently in the different federal states, even in different cities and communities. While some cities have built-in urban planning departments, others do not; urban planners have different levels of authority and access to resources in different cities (Schiller, 2018); and the land uses of some cities are further planned than others (architect, personal communication, June 2018). Therefore, decision-making processes, urban planning cultures and systems are different from one city to another.

In the so-called "refugee crisis"[2] of 2015, a relatively large number of asylum-seekers was arriving in Germany in a short span of time. They were received and accommodated in reception facilities before they were distributed across the country according to the quota decided by the *Königstein* key (see Section 2). The different states received asylum-seekers and distributed them to their allocated cities or towns. In the beginning of the refugee influx, many cities, including Göttingen, had announced their intention to avoid camp structures like tents and sport halls, and to accommodate asylum-seekers and refugees in decentralized housing. However, in light of the numbers of arrivals, most cities were not able to keep up with their initial intentions. At the peak of that phase, many administrative staff members in German cities felt overwhelmed by the situation (administrative staff, personal communication, May 2016) where they had to find prompt solutions to accommodate newcomers. These decisions were made spontaneously with the main concern to provide a "roof over their heads" and to meet their basic immediate needs. Therefore, it was mostly existing structures, like sport halls, old schools, and factories that were transformed to temporary accommodation centers in the first phase of the "crisis".

While the numbers increased, planning and construction of purpose-built structures to accommodate asylum-seekers became a necessity for lack of decentralized and social housing. Modular housing projects and container villages started to appear in many German cities, joining the existing transformed structures. Asylum-seekers should live in these for a theoretical maximum period (from three months to four years) depending on the

[1] "Integration" is a contested and highly debated term among academics, policy-makers and civil society groups, and is surrounded by massive literature (inter alia, Alba & Foner, 2014; Bommes, 2007; Castles, Korac, Vasta, & Vertovec, 2002; Esser, 2006; Hess, Binder, & Moser, 2009; Loch, 2014; Mecheril, 2011; Schönwälder, 2013; Vertovec, 2011; Wieviorka, 2013). The term is often criticized for conveying presumptions that, through a singular process, outsiders become accepted into a pre-existing society that is imagined to be homogeneous. These presumptions run counter to much sociological theory. While sharing such terminological and conceptual criticism, for the purposes of this article, the use of the term "integration" is meant as an umbrella for a broad range of processes. These include the acquisition of German language; gaining access to work, housing, education and training; building social contacts and networks; participation in representative politics; respecting national law and legal authorities; and the adoption of certain civil and cultural practices and values.

[2] "Refugee crisis" is the term used in European media and by politicians to describe the increase in numbers of asylum-seekers arriving to Europe, which reached a peak in the second half of 2015 and beginning of 2016. However, statistics provided by EUROSTAT (2016) challenge the rhetoric that there is a "crisis" in the sense that the developed European Union would be overwhelmed by the numbers of asylum-seekers (0,2% of the EU population), especially when comparing those to the developing countries which took in much larger numbers and percentages of asylum-seekers.

regulations of different federal states (Wendel, 2014). This period was extended after the failure of many cities to accommodate their share of refugees in decentralized housing fast enough. In public information events for the locals, there were two main arguments that accompanied purpose-built solutions; that they are temporary and would be removed after all asylum-seekers have moved out, or that they were planned for other uses in the long term, like being made available on the social housing market or as student accommodations. These claims may or may not be realizable, depending on the institutional arrangements of each housing solution, whose role in the daily lives and integration of asylum-seekers and refugees is the main focus of this article.

The article is divided into two main sections; the next section addresses recent measures of dispersal and integration in the German context and on the local level of Göttingen, and the following section discusses the three aspects of local factors relevant for urban planning and its role in refugee integration.

2. Measures of Dispersal, Accommodation and Integration

2.1. The National Level: Germany

Concerning European integration policies, a main similarity among European countries is that integration becomes a concern in a *later* stage of settlement, after reception, accommodation and recognition of asylum rights (Ager & Strang, 2008, p. 79; Poteet & Nourpanah, 2016; Scholten et al., 2017), which ends with a legal status and residency permit. For asylum-seekers, this is a long process of waiting (Scholten et al., 2017), which lasts several months, if not years. However, some integration measures have been implemented earlier on the local level of some European and German cities, especially within refugee accommodations by their management staffs and volunteers, in an attempt to start the integration process faster.

Germany has not considered itself as a migration country until the beginning of the 2000s (Chin, 2007). Therefore, institutionalized policies of integration are a recent development in the German context (Gesley, 2017). In August 2016, the new integration law (*Integrationsgesetz*) was enforced (The Federal Government, 2016), adding restrictions on the movement of refugees from their allocated federal states for a minimum of three years (*Wohnsitzauflage*) (unless they have a job contract or seat at an educational institution in other states). This new regulation is considered central to German integration policies (Renner, 2018) by avoiding the concentration of refugees in big cities, which are usually more attractive for migrants and refugees (ESPON, 2015, p. 2). This is due to better job opportunities, the presence of past migrant populations and potential social networks (Brezzi, Dumont, Piacentini, & Thoreau, 2010). By dispersing refugees, German policies aim to prevent ethnic segregation, and the formation of so-called "ghettos" and "parallel societies", issues that are considered a concern in the current public discourse. Critics of this law insist that these policies would hinder the integration of refugees who have existing social networks in other federal states that could serve as main actors in finding housing and job opportunities thereby accelerating their integration processes. Until the first quarter of 2018, only seven of the 16 federal states have chosen to apply the *Wohnsitzauflage* (Renner, 2018) and restrict the relocation of refugees to other federal states.

Each German Federal State receives a percentage of asylum-seekers based on the *Königstein key* (BAMF, 2016), a quota system that is (re)calculated annually based on the size of state populations and their income from tax returns (see Figure 1). This quota system aims to share the responsibility and costs of accommodating and integrating asylum-seekers and refugees. However, it has been criticized (Katz et al., 2016) for ignoring more important aspects to make this possible like, the land resources of the different federal states (especially relevant for city states), and the state of their cities' infrastructures and job markets (especially important in shrinking cities and rural areas).

Other aspects of integration, in the German context, include language courses, job market integration, housing, education, social and cultural integration, supervision and consulting, health, sport, and cultural diversity (Renner, 2018). Although all aspects are important for "successful integration", this article focuses especially on the role of housing from the temporary accommodation phase, because of its central role in accessing various other integration aspects, and access to information, resources and social networks.

In European and German cities, a huge range of local active actors was involved in the reception, accommodation and implementation of integration measures. The civil society including NGOs, welfare organizations, academic and cultural institutions, and volunteers played a central role in this process. Therefore, access to social circles among locals and local civil society is significant for supporting and facilitating trajectories of integration, and for avoiding segregation in various life domains (van Ham & Tammaru, 2016). This access is necessarily influenced by the combination of institutional arrangements at a given accommodation.

2.2. The Local Context: Göttingen

By the end of 2016, the city of Göttingen had a total population of some 134,000 (GÖSIS, 2016). That year, it had received 1,366 asylum-seekers from tens of countries, with the biggest groups of nationalities from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq. The percentage of foreigners in the city had constituted 13%, which included international students, migrants and newly arrived asylum-seekers. Of the total number of asylum-seekers in Göttingen, 67% were male and 33% were fe-

Figure 1. Refugee distribution quotas, in German federal states, according to the Königstein key in 2016. Source: translated from BAMF (2017, p. 17).

male. Moreover, 28% were aged under 17, 42% between 17 and 30, and 30% were over 30 years old (GÖSIS, 2016).

Known for its prestigious university, students constitute a substantive number of the 18–30 age group, which constitutes 27% of the population (GÖSIS, 2016). Together with students and academics working at the university and several academic and research institutions, asylum-seekers added to the high demand and pressure on housing in a city that already had a social housing problem.

Having a visible antifascist movement, Göttingen is popularly known as a "leftist" city that is more welcoming of migrants and refugees, than smaller towns in the Göttingen district and other districts in Lower-Saxony, as Figure 2 illustrates. In its housing and integration concept in 2014, the city shares its assumption that the majority of hosted asylum-seekers would remain in the city and that it therefore supports their integration measures from the beginning (Stadt Göttingen, 2014, p. 3) through language classes, education, and integration into the job market and society. However, not all decisions made regarding refugee accommodation and their resulting institutional arrangements were made to facilitate integration trajectories.

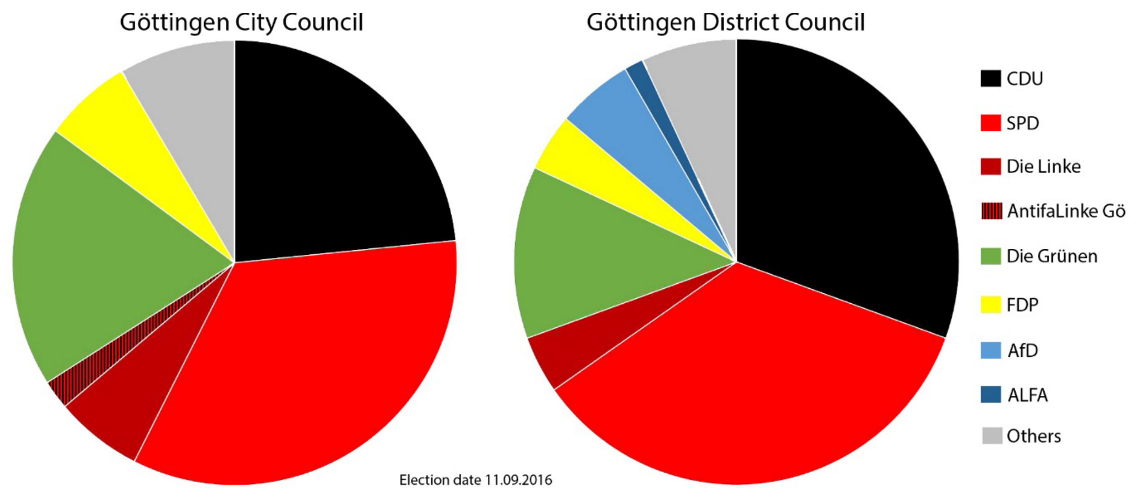

Figure 2. Comparison of political parties' seat distribution in Göttingen City and district councils in 2016. Source: author, based on data from Stadt Göttingen (2018a) and Landkreis Göttingen (2018).

Overall, between autumn 2015 and June 2018, the city of Göttingen received 2,880 asylum-seekers (Stadt Göttingen, 2018b). Through the city administration, social workers and the engagement of volunteers, 1,620 asylum-seekers and refugees were able to find decentralized housing. However, and despite a 19 Million Euros investment by the Municipal Housing Construction Society, for the provision of housing possibilities, 1,260 asylum-seekers still live in refugee accommodations (Stadt Göttingen, 2018b). Some of these cannot find housing due the lack of suitable units/apartments in the German housing market (e.g., units appropriate for families with more than three children, which is a need of many refugee families).

3. Local Factors Significant for Integration Plans: An Urban Planning Perspective

3.1. The Role of Urban Planning Systems in Refugee Accommodation: Local Challenges

The multi-layered multi-disciplinary aspect of urban planning involves different understandings of planning discourses and concepts and leaves a wide scope for interpretation by planners and decision makers (e.g., politicians, administrative staff members, professionals and practitioners) in different planning systems (Le Galès, 2003) and cultures (Othengrafen, 2012). This, the author argues, is especially true for those involved in the reception, accommodation and integration of asylum-seekers and refugees, especially considering that planning for integration remains a weak legal concept and still needs a lot of work by urban planners and planning systems (Othengrafen, 2012).

In the polycentric German system (Strubelt, Gatzweiler, & Kaltenbrunner, 2000), urban and spatial planning provides a huge scope for decision making on the federal, regional and local levels. It is the local level of municipalities, for example, that plans urban development and land-use and decides the locations and characteristics of refugee reception and accommodations. In this decentralized context, cities in the different federal states—and based on their different profiles, have different municipal structures, positions and hierarchies of urban planning departments.

The project's empirical findings in Göttingen confirm that for issues related to asylum-seeker reception and accommodation between 2015 and 2016, most decisions were taken by politicians and administrative personnel. This is because the time pressure of new arrivals would leave little time for the slow bureaucratic procedures of planning (urban planner, personal communication, September 2017). Generally, trained urban planners may have been consulted at times, but their recommendations were not necessarily followed by decision makers (e.g., Schiller, 2018). Several challenges on the local level played a role in the way such spontaneous—and sometimes ad-hoc—decisions were made to accommodate asylum-seekers in the short-term, which largely influence the long-term integration dynamics of refugees (Poteet & Nourpanah, 2016).

Based on the position of the decision maker on the local level, some aspects like political orientation, voter preferences, implementation speed, or budget allocations may be prioritized in their decision-making processes, over other aspects important for the long-term development and integration recommended by experts and urban planners. These decisions, nonetheless, influence the urban context on multiple levels and affect the socio-spatial tissue of the urban context.

Urban planning decisions are naturally political, and regardless who takes them, they face many challenges in the context of refugee reception and accommodation. Most challenges are not created by the refugees, but by existing structural problems (Lindley, 2014) and a housing crisis (Penny, 2016) that were revealed by the instant need for housing solutions by asylum-seekers and refugees. Examples of such challenges are: uncer-

tainty of number of arrivals/remaining asylum-seekers; existing shortage in social housing; budget allocation; access to land resources and private land ownership; state of infrastructure; land designations and land use; time-consuming bureaucratic procedures; availability and commitment of construction workers; voter preferences and nimby (Not In My Backyard) dynamics; marginalized migrant neighborhoods and "social burning points"; and adequate apartment sizes for bigger families. Those local challenges related to the host environment complicate decision-making processes.

In addition to these challenges, the diversity of hosted asylum-seekers and the institutional arrangements of their accommodations, are significant in the development of their integration trajectories on the local level and should therefore be taken into consideration when planning for integration. The following section addresses selected institutional arrangements and their role in the daily lives of asylum-seekers and refugees and illustrates how they may facilitate or hinder efforts of integration, or even result in exclusion and segregation.

3.2. Spatial Institutional Arrangements and Their Effects on Trajectories of Integration

Different German cities received and accommodated asylum-seekers in a wide range of accommodations. From emergency reception centers to purpose-built container villages, the spectrum of host structures provides a unique combination of institutional arrangements in each accommodation. These combinations allow different levels of access to various resources and services and confront asylum-seekers and refugees with different levels of complexities in their daily lives, influencing their individual trajectories of integration differently. While the institutional arrangements surrounding their accommodation may accelerate the integration process for some, it may hinder or decelerate it for others. The consequences of this are not only short term while they reside in the accommodations, but also extend into their future in Germany after they leave the accommodations.

Many of these institutional arrangements are spatial in nature, which are relevant to urban planning and architecture. Therefore, both disciplines can play a significant role in facilitating integration processes of asylum-seekers in host cities, if these arrangements are included and considered while planning for integration. The spatial institutional arrangements presented below play a role in the temporal patterns of asylum-seekers' daily lives; they influence with whom they live, whom they meet, and the social circles and networks they can create on the local level with German locals, other asylum-seekers or old migrants. In addition, they play a role in the selection of people with whom they eventually socialize, work, and commute. This directly influences how smooth their trajectories progress, and whether they lead to integration or segregation.

3.2.1. Accommodation Location

3.2.1.1. Proximity to City Center

Inhabitants of accommodations located in or close to the city center (see Figure 3) have easier access to urban services and infrastructure, shorter commute duration to reach city institutions, and are more likely to leave their accommodations and interact with their cities' public spaces, parks and enjoy leisure activities. Centrality is also fundamental in encouraging many volunteers to engage in accommodations thus playing an active role in the lives of asylum-seekers and widening their social networks and support systems.

In contrast, the accommodations located further (more than 2 km) outside the city center have limited public transport possibilities and longer commutes. This makes the trips to the city harder and discourages asylum-seekers (with a few exceptions) from leaving their accommodations if they did not have specific errands to run. More importantly, such locations discourage the engagement of active volunteers, thus limiting asylum-seekers' access to German courses and interaction with locals, and access to social and free time activities, a much-needed distraction in their phase of constant *waiting* (e.g., waiting during the asylum process, for a legal status, to find housing, to find jobs, for family unification and for a *normal* life to start).

3.2.1.2. Direct Surroundings

The location of accommodations is not only important in terms of distance or proximity to the city center, but also in terms of the direct surroundings on the neighborhood level.

Different accommodations have different surrounding environments. Whether old transformed structures or newly built housing projects, some are located within residential neighborhoods (e.g., Figure 4) and others are isolated in industrial or commercial areas (see Figure 6), lacking social spaces that allow for contact and exchange with willing neighbors.

For those located in residential neighborhoods, a layer of "normality" is added to their lives. However, there are additional aspects to take into account by way of planning systems, like the socio-economic level and the socio-political profile of different neighborhoods and their inhabitants. These, for example, play a role in the kind of contact that results with the neighbors. In Göttingen, middle-class neighborhoods generally provided a welcoming atmosphere and engaged neighbors in the lives of "their refugees" or "their accommodations", as they referred to them. They served as volunteers, German teachers and sponsors (*Paten*) of individuals and families. With this engagement, the refugees were located in an urban context that allowed them contact and facilitated their interaction with the local host society helping both sides to learn more about their re-

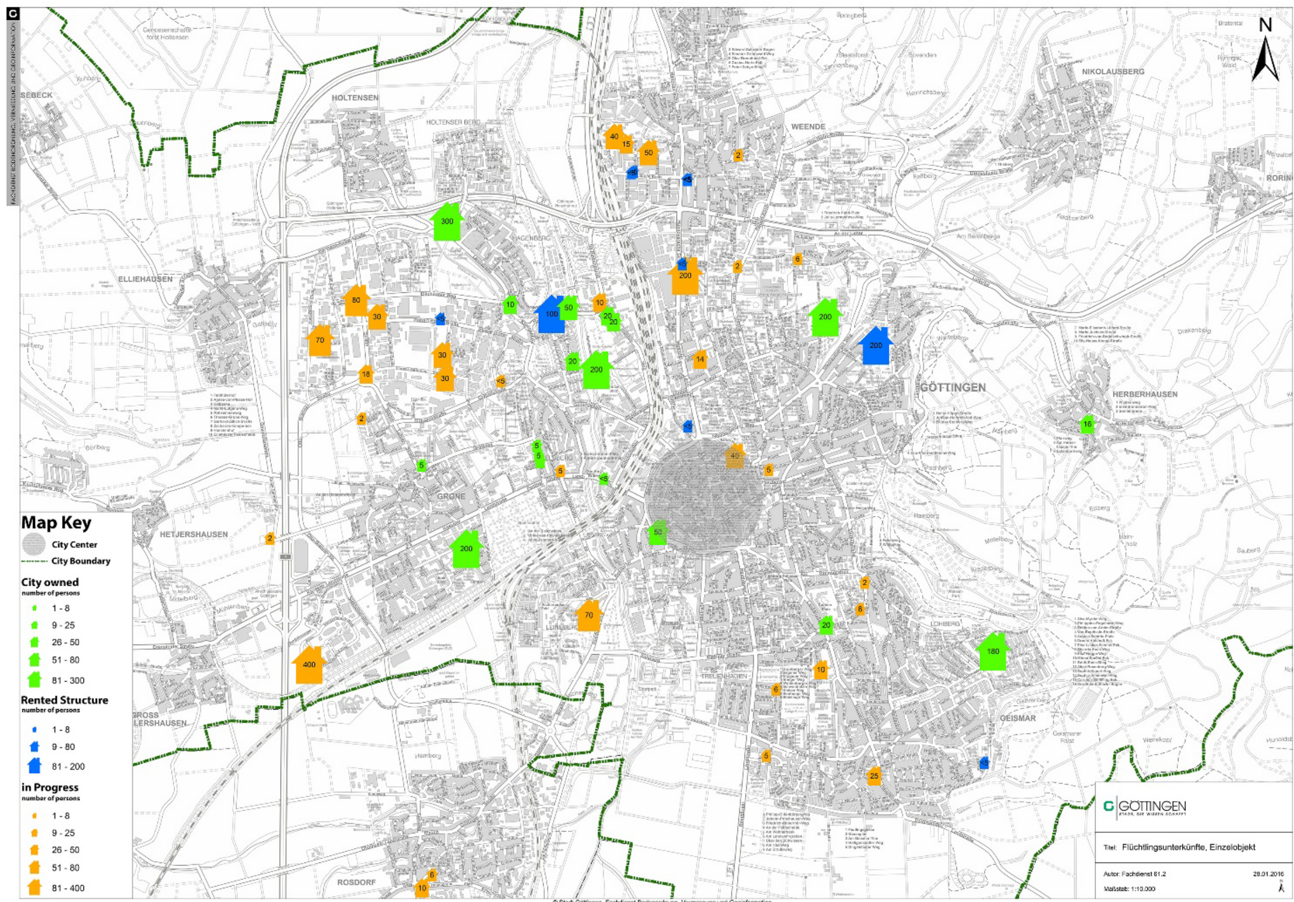

Figure 3. Refugee accommodations' sizes and distribution in Göttingen in 2016. Many have been closed since. Source: translated from the plan published by the Göttingen City website in 2016.

spective "cultures". In contrast, economically struggling neighborhoods, with an already high share of migrants, lower quality of infrastructure and higher competition over services were more vocal in criticizing the city's decision to locate refugee accommodation in their neighborhoods. In one such case, the planner/architect took a back-to-back planning approach (Khamaisi, 2006), designing a U-shaped accommodation/housing project to face the highway (see Figure 5) with its back to the adjacent neighborhood, resulting in a space that separates its 300 inhabitants from their residential surroundings, and lacks engagement with the neighborhood.

This observation in Göttingen cannot be generalized. Richer neighborhoods in Hamburg, for example, were more aggressive in protesting against planned refugee accommodation projects than economically struggling neighborhoods with a high share of migrants (Drieschner, 2016). This illustrates the uniqueness of towns and cities, especially on the neighborhood level, and supports the article's argument to plan for integration locally.

3.2.2. Centralized and Decentralized Accommodations

Whether refugee accommodations are centralized or decentralized, is another significant arrangement in the first phase of reception and accommodation. While centralized managed accommodations impose more control and lack of privacy on their inhabitants, they have full or part time staff whose main task is to support asylum-seekers with their daily lives. Although with differential quality, most centralized accommodations in Göttingen offer free access to internet, translation services, help with asylum forms and procedures, regular donations, information about city and free time activities, and a number of committed volunteers. On the other hand, decentralized housing solutions offer aspects of *normality* and independence that most refugees crave after the first phase. However, and although most existing literature argues for decentralized accommodation as the better solution for integration of refugees, some of our informants, who were accommodated in decentralized housing from the beginning, reported that they felt isolated from other refugees. They had no free access to internet, no contact with volunteers or locals, limited access to donations and lack of information about free time activities in the city. This restricted their access to resources and services, thereby limiting their interaction with the urban environment and decelerating their integration process.

This example is not meant to "romanticize" centralized accommodation, but to illustrate how important ac-

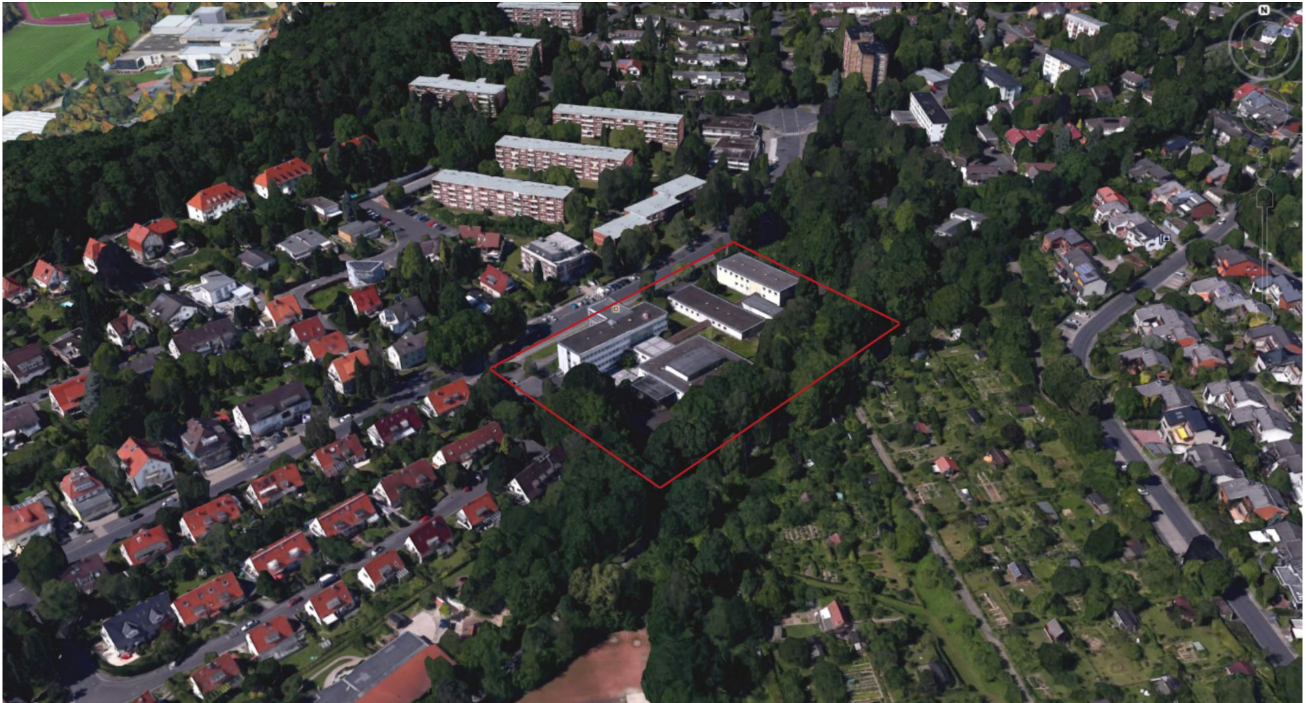

Figure 4. Former institute transformed into accommodation for 200 asylum-seekers in 2015. The accommodation, located in a residential neighborhood, enjoyed high engagement of neighbors and volunteers before it was closed. Source: author. Aerial view retrieved from Google Earth on 31 October 2018.

Figure 5. Purpose-built refugee accommodation/housing project, designed with five buildings and six-person apartments. Source: author. Aerial view retrieved from Google Earth on 31 October 2018.

cess to resources and services are for the trajectories of refugee integration. It is also important to point out that there is no best solution, that fits all refugees or all cities, and that the combination of institutional arrangements at a given accommodation is more relevant than single characteristics. The personal background of individual refugees, their education levels, the languages they speak, the time they had already spent in their host en-

vironment, their priorities and preferences, and their social networks significantly determine what type of early-phase accommodation would best facilitate their integration in the long term. However, concrete awareness about this refugee diversity presents an additional challenge to decision makers and planners.

3.2.3. Accommodation Size

The size of refugee accommodations serving as temporary or permanent housing solutions influences their access to resources and services. In Göttingen, the range of accommodation sizes is so wide that some structures accommodate two while others have the capacity to accommodate up to 400 asylum-seekers (and up to thousands in other cities). Such accommodation structures usually offer shared sanitation services like bathrooms and kitchens or canteens, which limits the freedom, comfort and privacy of asylum-seekers and prevents them from place-making and feeling "home". Big accommodations also increase the potential for social control, conflicts over the use of those spaces (Christ, Meininghaus, & Röing, 2017; Engelmann, 2018), or conflicts due to different hygiene standards and habits among different individuals and groups. Smaller accommodations offer higher levels of freedom, comfort and privacy, but still lack *normality*, an important need that our contacts iterated, and an important basis for integration, especially for vulnerable and potentially traumatized groups (Black, 2001).

On the other hand, the size of the accommodations is decisive in the development of social networks and relationships among the inhabitants, management staff and volunteers. The larger the group of asylum-seekers living together in the first phase, the bigger the spectrum of people, cultures and experiences to exchange with and chose from to build more beneficial social networks. However, the fact that refugees live in allocated accommodations, big or small, already decides which people they get to meet and with whom they would communicate in that life domain (van Ham & Tammaru, 2016).

3.2.4. Spatial Layouts

While some converted warehouses, sport halls or old schools and factories were able to provide instant "roofs" for many people in a short time, their spatial layouts and architectural designs are not meant for housing and living purposes. Suitable room designs, sizes, and other living spaces are mostly unavailable in such structures. For large spaces divided by partitions that accommodate six to 14 persons (see Figures 6 and 7), additional obstacles to *normality* are present like the high density in the rooms, constant loud noise, lack of control over lighting and ventilation, of freedom, privacy and independence in daily life activities. Such structures limit the

Figure 6. Former market hall transformed into a refugee accommodation for 400 persons. Most recently, it has been used for rejected or tolerated asylum-seekers or those with a low recognition profile. The structure located in an industrial area is close to the highway and has no windows. The next figure illustrates the interior. Source: author. Aerial view from Google Earth on 31 October 2018.

Figure 7. Right: interior of accommodation hall with its partitioned blocks. Left: floor plan of one block, as marked on the right. The partitions (rooms) accommodate between ten and 14 persons. Sources: author (right); edited from a floor plan published in the Göttingen City website in 2017 (left).

possibility of withdrawal, relaxation, sleep, and make private chats with friends, phone conversations with family members, or focusing while reading or studying difficult. The fact that some of these structures have no windows was reported to give asylum-seekers the feeling that they are in a prison. This feeling is further exacerbated in fenced structures that are constantly manned by security personnel.

The existence and layout of entrances, meeting areas, and cooking spaces are also important factors that differentiates aspects of daily lives of asylum-seekers and refugees who live in refugee accommodations. In very large accommodation structures (especially transformed halls or warehouses), cooking facilities are not part of the layout design, and catering services are the only option. So, in addition to sharing toilets and bathrooms with tens or sometimes hundreds of people, some asylum-seekers are deprived of the freedom to cook and eat what they want, when they want, and/or are prevented from inviting friends and acquaintances for a private meal, another central social activity that many asylum-seekers miss as part of a *normal* life.

Furthermore, public spaces, gardens, playgrounds, prayer rooms, smoking spaces, or meeting facilities, which the inhabitants can use to meet, socialize, or carry out free time activities are important for the social and mental health of asylum-seekers. Such spaces exist in different quantities and qualities in different accommodation centers. However, many accommodations—in which asylum-seekers may spend their first months or years—offer limited possibility for inside or outside activities. In one accommodation center, asylum-seekers used to spend their free time on the sidewalks in front of the accommodation to socialize or smoke, thereby blocking the sidewalks or talking loudly, which resulted in complaints and frictions with neighbors and passers-by, which added to their feelings of rejection and isolation.

Spatial layouts of purpose-built shelters, which accommodate asylum-seekers and refugees in container villages and apartments shared by two to six people (e.g., Figures 8 and 9), have interior spaces that are better suited for living compared to transformed warehouses. Although they offer higher levels of privacy, have fewer people sharing amenities, and allow some level of independence and autonomy, they are still referred to as "camps" by our contacts. The fact that they are purpose-built for asylum-seekers keeps their inhabitants isolated from local Germans and from integrated co-ethnics in some sort of "ghettos" (Siebel, 2016), and confronts them with power structures (Kreichauf, 2018), with the management staff and security personnel. Of course, this varies in intensity when combined with other institutional arrangements mentioned above like their location, direct surroundings and being fenced off on the neighborhood level.

The spatial layouts decide the level of comfort and hence; the time spent in the accommodation, in which activities to participate—in and outside of the accommodation, and chances of interaction within the accommodation and neighborhood to build new social networks. They therefore contribute to the quality of life of asylum-seekers and refugees, and to their integration processes.

Examples of other important non-spatial institutional arrangements are the demographic and social composi-

Figure 8. A purpose-built refugee accommodation compound for 200 people. The wooden-made structures resemble the design of modular container-villages and consist of two-floor structures with 2–4-person apartments. Source: author.

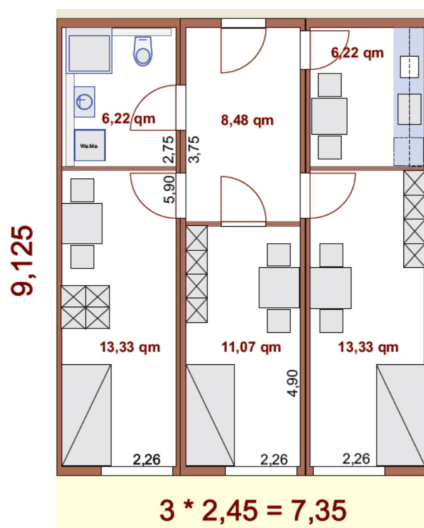

Figure 9. Floor plan of one apartment in a purpose-built, modular housing project for refugees. The apartments are designed for (up to) six people who share a bathroom, a kitchen and three bedrooms, furnished with bunk beds, a table, two chairs, and metal lockers. Source: Göttingen City website in 2016.

tions of inhabitants in accommodations, power and dependency structures (Kreichauf, 2018), accessibility to and qualification of management staff, social workers and translators, and the number of active volunteers involved in the daily lives of refugees.

Finally, it is worth mentioning here that the institutional arrangements are imposed by the system on asylum-seekers, who are expected to comply, especially if their social benefits depend on following the rules, like residing in the allocated accommodation. However, some asylum-seekers and refugees find ways to resist or adapt to the situation, to better suit their needs and priorities. This includes re-appropriating spaces in accommodations, staying with friends outside the accommodations, demonstrating against their accommodations, moving from the city, or even moving back to their accommodation, if their needs and priorities were not met in decentralized housing.

3.3. Diversity and Personal Experiences of Asylum-Seekers

Feedback from research participants showed the contrasting impressions, opinions and attitudes that asylum-seekers have gathered towards their host cities or Germany as a host country. While some praised the welcoming culture and expressed gratitude for the services they receive, others—in the same cities and sometimes within the same accommodation—reported isolation and exclusion from services, rights or the job market, blaming this on municipal staff and German institutions and laws. Based on their experiences, some reported their desire to move to other cities, or leave the country as soon as they can, while others expressed their wish to build a future in that city. These contrasting cases indicate that the combination of institutional arrangements, their personal experiences and the relationships they developed in their host neighborhoods and cities in the first phase of their accommodation, played a role in the attitudes they developed towards the host cities and integration in general. This confirms both assumptions that the *local* strategies of reception and accommodation influence the trajectories of integration from *day one*. Those who had comfortable living situations, access to resources and volunteers who supported them and made them feel welcome presented positive views, which encouraged them to engage with and "work harder" towards integration. Others who were isolated, for example because of their accommodation's location, because of their low recognition profile (*schlechte Bleibeperspektive*), or because they belonged to a specific social or age group, had different experiences, which affected both their perspectives and attitudes towards integration. Of course, the very diverse personal backgrounds of asylum-

seekers: gender, age, marital status, skills, languages, nationalities, legal statuses, *Bleibeperspektive*, education levels, lifestyles and so on are all important factors in their encounters and experiences, in the way they perceive and interact with their surrounding environment, and whether it facilitates or hinders integration. However, this very important aspect is beyond the scope of this article.

4. Conclusions

This article is based on research findings related to spatial aspects of refugee reception, accommodation and integration in the German experience by focusing on a mid-sized city in Lower-Saxony. The article argues for the importance of the local in the planning and implementation of integration strategies in an early phase of reception and accommodation, and for the importance of institutional arrangements of refugee accommodation in planning for long-term integration of refugees. The main arguments are summarized below.

4.1. The Importance of the Local Level

This article starts from the assumption that integration happens on the local level of a given host city, and more specifically on the level of the neighborhood, an assumption that is backed by the effects of the spatial institutional arrangements illustrated above. Therefore, and in order to plan for future integration of asylum-seekers; local strategies and planning should take into consideration the uniqueness of cities, their histories and demographic and cultural constructs, as well as those of the neighborhoods hosting refugee accommodations. Furthermore, the existing local needs for urban development, infrastructure and affordable housing should not be ignored in times of crisis. They should be integrated into emergency and contingency plans, while facilitating the participation of the local population as well as the affected refugees. This is especially important, where social groups compete for resources on the local level. Creating housing solutions for a specific group (e.g., refugees) can increase feelings of resentment and lead to protests by the other groups whose social housing needs were abandoned for many decades as budgets for social housing were reduced.

Working with the local civil society to identify innovative urban planning solutions, and suitable locations for refugee accommodations in empty and underused plots depending on local knowledge and cooperation (e.g., *FindingPlaces* partnership project in city of Hamburg; Colini & Tsitselikis, 2017; Zanghi, 2016) can be a successful local strategy to involve the local population in planning for more welcoming and durable housing solutions. This could also contribute to reduction of possible resistance to municipal top-down refugee housing projects. This requires the decision makers to consider principles of urban planning and design to create new spaces and environments that can better facilitate integration processes and avoid feelings of abandonment by the locals, leading to anti-immigrant sentiments. In addition, enough attention should be paid to the status and capacity of local infrastructure and services (e.g., kindergartens, schools, and public transportation), and to plan for their improvement in case they are expected to serve a large group of new comers.

4.2. Segregation/Integration

The article's second assumption is that integration starts from day one of the arrival in a new country, city or neighborhood. Since most asylum-seekers are accommodated in collective accommodations in the first phase of their arrival, and for months or years to come, this article analyzed the local factors important for integration through the lens of refugee accommodations, mainly focusing on their *spatial* institutional arrangements. However, many of these institutional arrangements would still be relevant in later phases of housing.

Spatial segregation through the location of refugee accommodations is not the only factor that hinders possibilities of better integration. According to van Ham and Tammaru (2016), segregation patterns are linked to different geographical or spatial and temporal rhythms. These patterns affect different life domains of those affected:

> Not just in terms of the neighborhoods they live in, but also in terms of who they live with, where they work, who they meet on their way to work, at work, in their leisure time, etc. Their residential neighborhoods alone do not capture the level of segregation the experience in their daily lives. (van Ham & Tammaru, 2016, p. 956)

The article argues that the experiences that new arrivals face in the first phase of their reception and accommodation, and the relationships they build in their neighborhoods and host cities have a long-term effect on their lives later, and play a significant role in the way their impressions, aspirations and motivations develop along the way of their integration trajectories. Those who end up in a combination of institutional arrangements that facilitate building networks with co-ethnics and locals experience a faster process of integration than others who land in combinations of institutional arrangements that lead to segregated spatial or temporal rhythms.

These rhythms are affected by several spatial aspects of refugee accommodations, like their proximity to the city center, direct surroundings, size and spatial layouts, and whether they are centralized or decentralized. They are also affected by other institutional arrangements like their access to resources, services and to social networks, the possibility of encounter in neighborhood and city spaces, the demographic composition (nationalities, languages, ages, genders, legal statuses, marital statuses,

etc.) of asylum-seekers in each accommodation, power and dependency structures, and the qualification of management staff, social workers, translators and volunteers. This is in addition to the highly diverse personal backgrounds and skills of asylum-seekers, which play a central role in their experiences and perceptions.

4.3. Planning for Integration

This article presented local factors significant for urban planning to include while preparing for the integration of refugees in European cities. It clarified that many urban planning decisions on the local level, especially since the beginning of the "refugee crisis" of 2015, were spontaneous, practical or ad hoc measures that were taken by a wide range of politicians and administrative departments of German municipalities, while facing a wide range of challenges on the local level.

The role of urban planners and architects was mostly physical not holistic and was introduced to the process—in many cases—after the decisions on some spatial institutional arrangements e.g., locations and sizes of accommodations were already made. Sometimes, like the case of Frankfurt in (Schiller, 2018), these decisions were even made against the advice of urban planners. Therefore, this article does not address urban planners or their role since the beginning of the crisis, but focuses on relevant local spatial institutional arrangements, regardless of who makes the decisions. In that light, the article calls for a more holistic approach in planning for the future of reception, accommodation and integration. It also calls for a more substantial involvement of urban planners, while considering the local factors illustrated above; the city profile (social, cultural, economic, demographic, political, urban, potential investment etc.), the local challenges, and the effects of institutional arrangements on different domains of refugee lives, their social networks, and their trajectories of integration.

The article concludes that there are no "best solutions" that fit all refugees or all cities. Planning for integration is most effective on the local level, where refugees live and interact with their local environments, and where the local host community and refugees would have the possibility to participate in planning and decision-making. Based on a complex set of spatial and temporal factors, some of which are general and others are unique to specific cities and neighborhoods, different combinations of institutional arrangements can produce different results in different contexts on the city and neighborhood levels and should, therefore, be considered in their respective contexts. Finally, decision makers and planners on the city level should identify both short- and long-term solutions (Katz et al., 2016)—with well-considered institutional arrangements—to accommodate asylum-seekers and refugees in a context that could facilitate integration, avoid segregation and improve the resilience of European cities (Baléo, 2017), in the face of future crisis.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

Integration through Collaborative Housing? Dutch Starters and Refugees Forming Self-Managing Communities in Amsterdam

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Abstract
Since 2015, Europe has experienced an unprecedented influx of people fleeing countries facing political turmoil. Upon receiving asylum status, refugees in the Netherlands are currently regionally dispersed and individually housed in public housing. The municipality of Amsterdam has recently adopted an alternative approach, whereby young adult refugees and Dutch young adults are brought together in collaborative housing (Czischke, 2018). This article presents findings from a case study of the pilot project, launched in 2016, which houses over 500 young adults, half refugees and half Dutch together in temporary dwellings. The goal is to provide refugees with social and cultural tools to integrate in the host society by interacting with their peers through collective self-organisation. Compared with more traditional forms of housing refugees, integration through collaborative housing is expected to deliver results. Our study aims to examine this assumption by looking at the daily reality of collaboration and self-organisation amongst tenants in this pilot project, and interrogates how this approach may help the integration process. The analytical framework draws on Ager and Strang's (2008) core domains of integration, which emphasises the role of social connections in the integration process. An ethnographic research design was adopted, including interviews and participant observation as data collection techniques. Preliminary findings indicate the gradual formation of social connections such as social bonds, social bridges and social links. Ultimately, we expect findings to inform better policies and practices in the field of housing and urban planning that help the integration of young refugees in European societies.

Keywords
Amsterdam; collaborative housing; housing policy; refugee integration; self-organisation

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1. Introduction

The number of forcibly displaced persons worldwide has increased from approximately 45 million in 2012 to 65 million by the end of 2016 (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2017). Most people fleeing violent political conflict find shelter elsewhere in their own country or in neighbouring countries, but a small minority applies for asylum in Europe. As one of the European Union member states receiving a comparatively large number of asylum seekers (Eurostat, 2018), the Netherlands struggles to find adequate affordable housing for those refugees who successfully acquire a residence permit. The recent rise in the influx of refugees further increases the pressure on affordable housing in popular parts of the country. Upon receiving asylum status, refugees in the Netherlands are regionally dispersed (as in other European countries) and individually accommodated in social rental housing. However, the effectiveness of this approach vis-à-vis integration goals is questioned (Bakker, Cheung, & Phillimore, 2016). More generally, the integration of refugees into Dutch society in

terms of education, employment and psychological wellbeing is often considered suboptimal (Bakker, Dagevos, & Engbersen, 2017; Korac, 2003; SER, 2018).

The municipality of Amsterdam has recently adopted an alternative approach to housing refugees, whereby young adult refugees and Dutch young adults are brought together in collaborative housing, keeping an even mix of each group (50% refugees, 50% Dutch). The ambition is to provide refugees with social and cultural tools to integrate in the host society by interacting with their peers through daily practices of collective self-organisation. This article presents initial findings from a study of the Startblok, the pilot project of this approach, launched in 2016. The project attempts to tackle several of the above-described challenges at once: the lack of affordable housing for young adults and for recent refugees and the integration of refugees into the host society.

The overall research question guiding this article is: how could collaborative housing help the integration process of refugees? To that end, we examine the case of the Startblok project through the lens of the following questions: what shape does the self-organisation and self-management of the tenants take? How does integration of refugees via social mix and self-organisation in a housing project work out in practice?

In what follows, we first summarize how refugees are currently received in the Netherlands and touch upon the recent emergence of collaborative housing in the Netherlands in the context of new roles for traditional housing providers. We then define and discuss different elements of integration as a two-way process. Our choice of research design—a case study with ethnographic research—is explained in the next section. Subsequently we address the research questions, starting with a full outline of the Startblok project and then analysing the self-organisation of the tenants, the role of the housing corporation and the integration of the refugees. Our tentative conclusion is that, compared with current alternatives, integration through collaborative housing appears to be an innovative and effective approach.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Refugee Integration in the Netherlands

Between 2012 and 2017 the number of refugees applying for asylum in Europe per year rose from over 300.000 to just over 700.000, with peaks due to the intensification of the Syrian war of respectively 1.3 million in 2015 and 1.2 million in 2016 (Eurostat, 2018). The Netherlands experienced a similar increase in asylum requests, and the number of requests that was granted rose accordingly, from 6.000 in 2012 to 34.000 in 2016 (Statistics Netherlands, 2018). In the Netherlands, asylum seekers that are successful in their applications receive a five-year residence permit, after which they can apply for permanent residency. This group is the focus of this article. To distinguish them from asylum seekers who are still awaiting a decision on their requests, and from those who have received a negative decision, in the remainder of this article we will refer to asylum seekers that have been granted a residence permit as refugees.

Upon obtaining a residence permit, refugees acquire the right to work and become entitled to most of the welfare arrangements available to Dutch citizens, such as the right to social housing, social services allowances, health care and loans for pursuing further education (up to 30 years of age). They receive coaching from municipal social services who attempt to place them into suitable trajectories towards education, employment and/or volunteering.

As all immigrants from non-EU countries to the Netherlands, refugees have to pass the Dutch exam in ‘inburgering’. This concept is often translated as integration, but Besselink (2006, p. 14) points out that it is “very much like the term ‘enculturation’ but having a root [in the Dutch term] ‘burger’, which means ‘bourgeois’ or ‘citizen’”. The exam consists of two or three parts, namely literacy training if applicable, basic proficiency in the Dutch language and knowledge about Dutch society. The exam has to be successfully passed, or at the very least demonstrable attempts to pass have had to be made within three years of obtaining a residence permit. Sanctions include fines and (theoretically) non-renewal of the residence permit. Refugees can borrow 10.000 euros from the government to finance the courses, and the loan will become a gift upon successfully passing the exam. In 2013 the Dutch government liberalised the market for ‘inburgering’ courses, resulting in a proliferation of new and sometimes less qualified companies offering such training. The pass rate dropped from 78% in the previous years, to 39% (Netherlands Court of Audit, 2017, p. 40). Several Dutch municipalities thereupon decided to become more actively involved in the integration processes of refugees in their area.

Similar to Denmark, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom, the Netherlands utilises a policy of dispersal to distribute the perceived economic ‘burden’ of asylum seekers and refugees evenly over the country (Darling, 2017). Every six months the government allots a quota of refugees that recently obtained a residence permit to every Dutch municipality. The quota is proportional to the number of inhabitants of the municipality. Refugees are furthermore spread out randomly over neighbourhoods with social housing, depending on where homes are available upon their arrival.

2.2. Housing Refugees in the Netherlands

In recent decades successive Dutch governments have introduced reforms to make the housing sector more market-conform, by encouraging tenure conversion, (i.e., transforming rental housing into owner-occupancy); allowing sharp rent increases via the deregulation of part of the rental market; and the introduction of temporary renting contracts (Huisman, 2016). Housing corpo-

rations, not-for-profit foundations who have a long tradition of close cooperation with government, own the majority of Dutch rental housing. In recent years their core task has been redefined to focus on housing those who cannot support themselves on the open market, such as low-income households and disadvantaged groups (Hoekstra, 2017; Mullins, Milligan, & Nieboer, 2018)—including recent refugees. These changes have resulted in an ongoing residualisation of the once large regulated housing stock. Regulated rent as a proportion of the total housing stock declined from 58% in 1985 to 34% in 2015 (Blijie, Gopal, Steijvers, & Faessen, 2016).

As a consequence, waiting times for social housing have lengthened, especially in regions with employment opportunities. In popular cities such as Amsterdam they have risen to more than ten years. Housing corporations allocate their homes partly through waiting lists and partly through giving priority to people with urgent needs (e.g., homeless people). The priority housing arrangements further reduce the proportion of houses available to those on the regular waiting list. Aware of the potential tensions of this situation, in 2015 the Dutch housing corporations made an appeal to the government for assistance, arguing that given the sharp increase in asylum seekers, the existing housing allocation model for refugees was unsustainable (Gualthérie Van Weezel, 2015). This model requires that each refugee household should be accommodated in their own autonomous, affordable home with a permanent rental contract. In response, the Dutch government introduced a number of financial measures and relaxed the law to allow refugees to be housed in shared accommodation and with temporary rental contracts—as long as, after some years, the refugees would then be allocated housing under the pre-existing model (Blok, 2015).

These developments take place against the political discourse in the Netherlands that currently emphasises the need to move away from a welfare society towards a participation society (‘participatiesamenleving’), with a broader societal focus on opportunities for self-determination (Uitermark, 2015). In the field of housing, this translates into a gradual retreat from large-scale housing developments (Nieboer & Gruis, 2016) and an interest in self-provision, tenant empowerment and collaboration (Czischke, Zijlstra, & Carriou, 2016). To this end there is growing interest amongst some Dutch housing corporations for innovative rental models such as different forms of collaborative housing (Bokhorst & Edelenbos, 2015; Elliott, 2018; Platform31, 2017).

2.3. ‘Top-Down’ Collaborative Housing

Collaborative housing (Czischke, 2018; Fromm, 2012) is an umbrella term that comprises a wide range of collectively self-organised and self-managed housing forms. These include, for example, resident-led housing co-operatives, cohousing and Community Land Trusts (CLTs). These different housing forms are characterised by high degrees of residents’ participation spanning the conception, development and management of the housing project, and the establishment of reciprocal relationships, mutual help and solidarity. Common motivations behind these projects include high levels of environmental sustainability, mutual provision of care for children, senior citizens, and other people with special needs and, in some cases, a redefinition of gender roles in the household (Lang, Carriou, & Czischke, 2018). In addition, in the aftermath of the 2008 global financial and economic crisis, affordability and social inclusion of disadvantaged groups have emerged as new drivers of many collaborative housing projects.

While the original models of collaborative housing emerged as bottom-up initiatives, i.e., people joining forces to jointly provide housing for themselves and by themselves, in recent years we have seen the emergence of more ‘top-down’ approaches. These correspond to housing projects initiated by a professional housing provider, be it a social housing organisation, a private developer, or a foundation or similar organisation. A top-down initiated collaborative housing project would typically involve a professional entity either owning a building or a plot of land, or being in a position to acquire either of these, for the future (re)development into a collectively self-managed housing project.

In this type of projects, initiators usually act as developers and managers, and convene a group of residents under a shared vision of a collectively self-organised and self-managed project to be sustained in the long term (Czischke, 2018). The opportunity is given to residents to propose their own common activities. Physical spaces for these collective activities and uses are usually co-designed with the residents and financed by the providers. Thus, a landlord or professional housing provider/developer is in a strong position to enable the development of a collaborative housing project and support the group of residents throughout the initial stages of the collective living arrangements. However, given the relative newness of these initiatives, there is no conclusive evidence yet on the longer-term outcomes of ‘top-down’ versus more typical ‘bottom-up’ approaches in terms of, e.g., community cohesion, effective self-maintenance and self-management, or resident satisfaction.

2.4. The Role of Social Connections in Refugee Integration

When considering the reception and establishment of migrants into their host societies, scholars distinguish between integration and assimilation. Both concepts can be understood as specific forms of social inclusion, a more general term referring to the “ability of individuals to participate in the community” (Dukic, McDonald, & Spaaij, 2017), and the process whereby minority or disadvantaged groups overcome their previous exclusion from society. Integration can be viewed as an interactive process, whereby the receiving society and the migrant mu-

tually adapt to each other. This implies that both parties have to be prepared to accommodate each other. Bakker, Dagevos and Engbersen (2014, p. 432) for instance define integration as:

> A multidimensional two-way process that starts upon arrival in the host state. This process requires from immigrants a willingness to adapt to the lifestyle of the host community, and from the host country a willingness to facilitate integration (i.e., access to jobs and services) and an acceptance of the immigrants in social interaction.

In contrast, assimilation can be regarded as a one-directional effort, solely by the migrant, to become completely incorporated into the host society (Strang, Baillot, & Mignard, 2018). Both concepts have normative implications, and in how far migrants should integrate and what constitutes successful integration is a recurring topic in contemporary political debates.

In this article, we focus specifically on the integration of refugees. Compared with other migrant groups, such as family or labour migrants, refugees start at a disadvantage. They had to flee their country of origin, and often suffer from traumatic experiences. In the Netherlands, the long stay in asylum seeker reception centres and the insecurity experienced during the often-lengthy wait for a decision on their asylum request compound this negative starting point (Bakker et al., 2014). Furthermore, like other non-Western migrants, they lack culture-specific skills and knowledge, and it is difficult to have their educational and professional credentials from their country of origin recognised. In the Netherlands, only a small proportion of refugees find employment. After two years of stay, 25% is employed for eight or more hours per week, and this rises to 50% after eight years of residency (Bakker et al., 2017). Although more than 50% of refugees in the Netherlands has an average to high educational background, only 10% finishes a language course suitable to their level, and this underachievement is structural (Netherlands Court of Audit, 2017).

Overall, Dutch refugee integration policies focus mainly on tangible outcomes such as housing, work and education. These outcomes are often considered insufficient (SER, 2018), for instance by the current government (VVD, CDA, D66, & ChristenUnie, 2017), and by refugees themselves (cf. Korac, 2003). We argue that one of the missing links in attaining more successful refugee integration might be found in a less tangible aspect of integration, namely social connections. This notion originates from Ager and Strang's (2008) conceptual framework concerning the core domains of refugee integration (see reproduction in Figure 1). They distinguish between three forms of social connections (second row from above in Figure 1): "social bonds (with family and co-ethnic, co-national, co-religious or other forms of group), social bridges (with other communities) and social links (with the structures of the state)" (Ager & Strang, 2008, p. 70).

Korac (2003) found that refugees value education and employment, but also stress being connected with the host community through social contacts. She therefore emphasizes the need for policies that focus on the building of social connections:

> This research strongly indicated that [refugees'] personal satisfaction and assessment of integration success goes beyond simple, measurable indicators, such as individual occupational mobility or economic status. It importantly includes indicators such as the quality and strength of social links with the established community....Policies and interventions facilitating settlement and full participation in the receiving society should address the issues of integration in community by promoting strategies for building

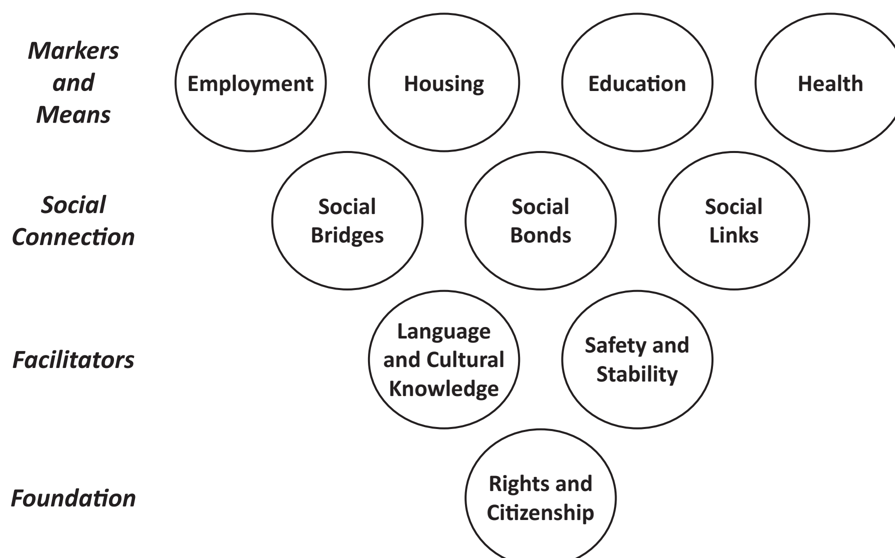

Figure 1. The core domains of integration. Source: Ager and Strang (2008).

'bridging social capital', that is, links between the established community and the newcomers. (Korac, 2003, p. 63)

Following from the above, we posit that collaborative housing forms might be more helpful than others for the process of mutual adaptation, as they would facilitate interaction between inhabitants more than traditional forms of housing. The underlying assumption is that more frequent and closer contact between residents will tend to foster the formation of social bonds and social bridges, which in turn might help refugees (and although perhaps to a lesser extent, those already established in the country) to engage with and navigate more tangible elements of integration, such as education and employment.

Taking the above concepts as a basis, we have developed a simple analytical framework to help us systematize the Startblok's approach as well as to identify its preliminary outcomes. As illustrated in Figure 2, this framework rests on the principle of structured self-organisation amongst tenants to carry out a number of tasks related to the management and maintenance of the housing. The underlying assumption is that structured self-organisation will to lead to regular social interactions between refugees and Dutch tenants, thereby providing both groups with opportunities for a wide range of social connections, which ultimately helps refugees to integrate in the host society. The self-organising principle is built on two main pillars or 'necessary conditions', each based on a specific assumption related to a specific desired integration outcome, namely:

1. Demographic homogeneity and social bonds: Having something in common promotes bonding between people. All tenants are singles without children in the age range 18–28. People in this category and age bracket tend to be at the same stage in their life courses, and thus have similar life styles, compared to other age groups. This holds for both Dutch and refugee tenants. The assumption underlying this condition is that demographic homogeneity (in this case, age and household composition) is a necessary condition to facilitate social bonding across diverse cultural and/or ethnic backgrounds;
2. 50/50 mix and social bridges: Through an even allocation of half of the flats to refugees and the other half to Dutch tenants, the assumption is that both groups will have the opportunity to meet and interact on a regular basis and on an even footing, leading to the formation of social bridges between them.

3. Method

This case study is part of a larger research project which focuses on the role of Dutch housing corporations in supporting residents' groups in the context of self-organisation and self-management and governance practices. The project aims to shed light on the extent to which this collaborative housing approach to refugee integration can help integration. We opted for a case-study in order to capture the specificities of the approach; the combination of the different elements that define the Startblok model is fairly unique, in that it brings together housing for refugees, collective self-organisation, and social housing allocation policies at the municipal level. Our chosen methodology has some constraints. The case is still in statu nascendi, which enables us to investigate only the first year and half of it. Further, it is a unique case, which prevents comparison and generalisation at

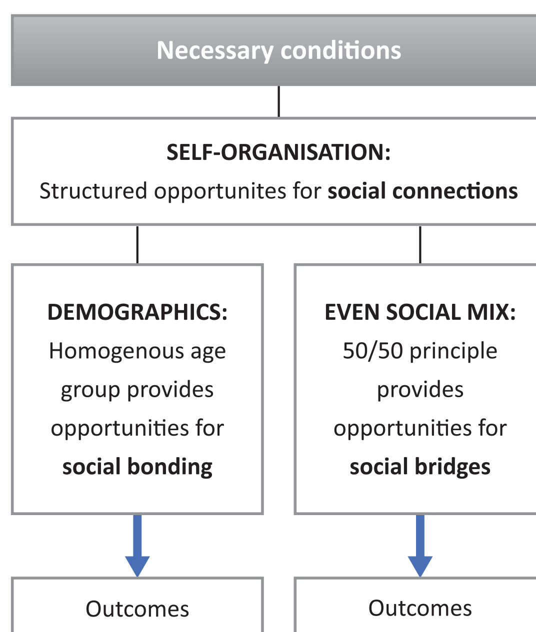

Figure 2. Refugee integration in the Startblok model: analytical framework. Source: authors.

this stage. In addition, the limited conceptual knowledge about this type of approach has prompted us to adopt a more explorative approach to this single experiment.

The field work started in February 2018 and will continue until December 2018. In line with the case study research design, we apply ethnographic data collection techniques including semi-structured interviews with residents and with representatives from the housing corporation. In addition, we have conducted participant observation on site, e.g., during residents' meetings. This allows us to supplement the interviews with observations on how the different actors interact with each other. We have interviewed both refugees and Dutch tenants. In parallel we have reviewed secondary data, including the project website, policy documents, newspaper articles, and audiovisual material. This review also includes the regular monitoring of developments in Dutch integration policy. Additionally, the housing corporation made available recent survey data on tenant satisfaction in this project.

4. Refugee Integration through Collaborative Housing: Preliminary Findings

In this section we present our preliminary findings, according to the analytical framework presented in Section 2.4. We start with a description of the organisational structure of the Startblok project, followed by our initial results on 'outcomes' related to each of the 'necessary conditions' outlined in our analytical framework.

4.1. The Startblok Project

When in 2015 the Amsterdam municipality had to deal with an unexpected redoubled influx of refugees to house, they looked for innovative approaches. A local councillor came up with the idea of mixing young adults with young refugees (Van Veen, 2016). The city council supplied the grounds and the infrastructure: roads had to be laid and electricity and sewage installed. Amsterdam housing corporation De Key was responsible for moving and installing the housing units. De Key has recently, as one of the first Dutch housing corporations, changed its official status from a general social housing provider, to one that only caters for young adults, defined as those in the age category 18 to 27. Other partners involved in the Startblok project are Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland, an NGO that receives government funding for helping refugees with their integration into Dutch society, and the municipal social services, that are also involved in the integration trajectories of refugees.

The Startblok is situated in the South of Amsterdam, on the site of a former sports accommodation consisting of grass fields. Although in the outskirts, the site enjoys good public transport connections. The housing consists of retrofitted container units, which have been used for another project before. By July 2016 the first tenants moved in—half of them are young refugees recently given a residence permit and the other half Dutch young adults. The aim is to give all these young people a springboard into a successful adult life, hence the name 'Starting block'. The goal is to create a community by letting residents organise and manage the project themselves. The Startblok consists of 463 bedsits, 48 shared apartments, a small office and a clubhouse.

Eligible for living in the project are lower-income singles without children from 18–27 years of age, who are in education, looking for employment or already employed. The majority of the refugees are from Syria and Eritrea. In line with the demographic composition of the recent influx of refugees in the Netherlands, they are mostly male. The Eritrean refugees usually have a low degree of literacy and low educational levels. The Syrian refugees, in contrast, tend to have middle to higher educational levels. The gender distribution among the Dutch tenants is more even, with a slight overrepresentation of female tenants. They mostly have the Dutch nationality, but there is a small minority of tenants with a Moroccan or Turkish background. The Dutch tenants reflect the Amsterdam population in that they are often highly educated. All tenants obtain a five-year lease.

The project's organizational structure is illustrated in Figure 3. The buildings are divided into 19 corridors, each encompassing between 16 and 32 bedsits. Each corridor has a shared communal space and each bedsit contains a separate bathroom and a kitchen unit in the room. Refugees and Dutch tenants are mixed throughout the corridors, ideally alternating every bedsit, so one Dutch, one refugee, one Dutch and so on. Two of the tenants on each corridor, one Dutch, one refugee, are the group managers, responsible for managing the corridor. They are the first port of call if problems arise on the corridor. They receive a small discount on their rent as compensation for this. The tenants on a corridor are expected to meet each other weekly, for instance while sharing a meal. Tenants who do not comply with the house rules, such as no littering of the corridors, can be given a fine by the group managers. The practical management of the grounds and the housing is performed on a daily basis by the grounds team and the 'klusteam' or maintenance team. Each of these teams consists of five members, and they receive a discount on their rents similar to the group managers.

At the next level of the hierarchy is the project team, consisting of five tenants employed on a part-time basis; the social managers. The team manages the project on a day-to-day basis, interacting with the group managers and the grounds team in case issues are not resolved at the corridor level. Together with the onsite manager, the project team selects the new Dutch tenants. The selection process involves registration followed by obligatory information meetings and written applications. Refugee tenants in the project are matched by central government bodies. Furthermore, there are two PR managers; an administration manager who handles the paperwork with the leases; a maintenance manager who coordinates the maintenance team; and a community development officer. All of these people are employed part-

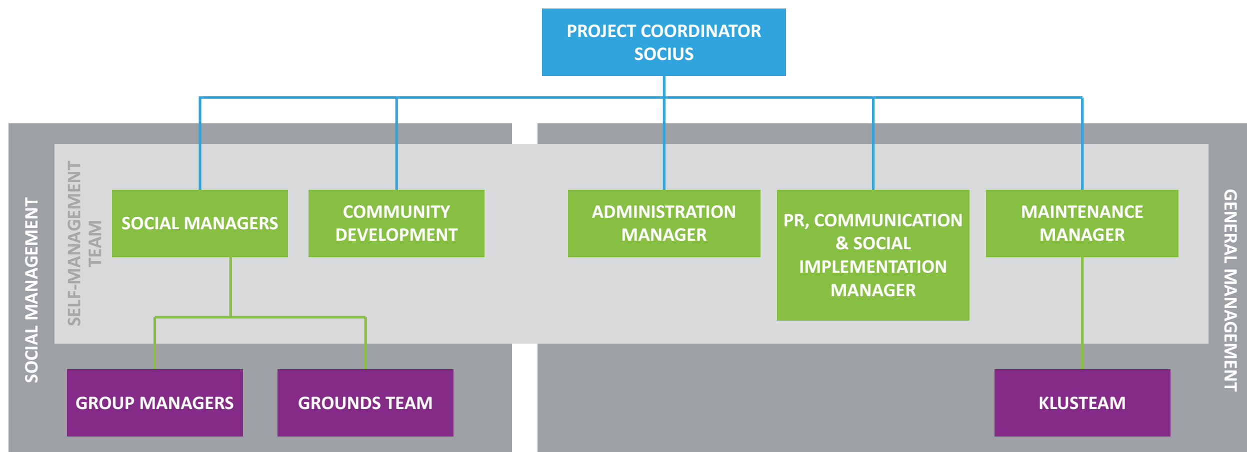

Figure 3. Organogram of the Startblok self-organisation. Source: startblokriekerhaven.nl

time by the housing corporation. Finally, there is Actief (not included in the organogram), a more autonomous group of five tenants whose goal is to stimulate tenants to become active in organizing social events and so forth. A central tenet of all these various roles is that they are all appointed from within the tenant population; one has to live in the Startblok to be involved at the organizational level. At the site only one professional is present who is not a tenant, the onsite manager (project coordinator) employed by the housing corporation who liaises with the tenants. The monthly meeting of all these groups constitutes the highest instance in the project.

The principle of community formation through regular interaction between tenants is built into the DNA of the project. Upon arrival, tenants are asked to sign a manifesto (Figure 4) endorsing these ideas, and they are continually reinforced by the 50/50 principle, the day-to-day visibility of the group managers and the attempts by the project team and other active groups to directly engage with tenants and to organize social events in the club house and the shared outdoor space. The physical organisation of the housing further promotes this. On the corridors each room has its own kitchen and bathroom, and is thus in principle independent, but due to the fairly small size of the rooms the tenants also make use of the shared common room available to each corridor. In this way the project strikes a seemingly effective balance between tenant autonomy and community formation.

4.2. Preliminary Outcomes

In this section we present initial findings on integration outcomes of the Startblok model, focusing on the presence of different types of social connections: social bonds, social bridges and social links. We then reflect on the attainment of social connections so far, and reflect critically on the assumptions underlying the model.

4.2.1. Social Bonds

Our initial findings show that the first necessary condition of the Startblok model, namely ‘demographics’, translates in fact into age-related bonding. Most tenants indicate that they feel connected to the other residents in

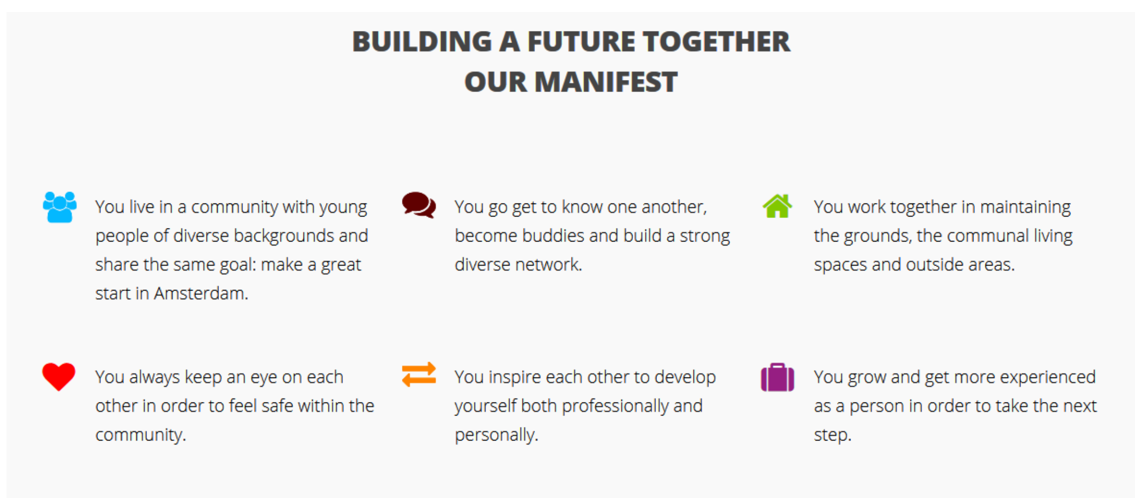

Figure 4. The Startblok Manifesto. Source: startblokriekerhaven.nl

the project. One refugee stated: “We make friends here, and for me, I feel like having family here. We are more than just neighbours or friends. We respect each other” (open answers to the survey, KWH, 2018). Tenants for instance eat together with their corridor neighbours or have drinks. Friendships develop and some tenants organise social activities together such as barbecues or soccer games. That similar age plays a large role in this, is illustrated by how one of the refugees put it, when reflecting on why the Startblok succeeds at being a community: “All the people have the same age. Same mind same thinking; way of thinking is the same. Here a lot of people have the same interest” (open answers to the survey, KWH, 2018).

In addition to age-related bonding, our findings suggest the formation of other types of social bonds; while the 50/50 principle ensures some level of continuous interaction between refugees and Dutch tenants from the same age groups, there is also opportunity for the refugees to interact with people from the same cultural background (and with those with other backgrounds). For example, the Syrians in the project often interact with other Syrians. This allows refugees to leverage their own cultural support network (Van Kempen & Şule Özüekren, 1998), while at the same time being part of the wider, mixed Startblok community. The risk that refugees become isolated, or (at the other extreme) become completely segregated from the rest of Dutch society, is therefore mitigated. This is in sharp contrast to the traditional form of refugee housing, where people are often dispersed even within neighbourhoods. Ultimately, the Startblok manages to achieve a relatively high concentration of refugees in a small geographical area, without this being viewed as problematic by those in the surrounding neighbourhoods.

4.2.2. Social Bridges

The 50/50 principle of the project, which permeates all levels, has been actively maintained from its start. This holds not just for the housing, but also for the formal organisational roles that tenants undertake. For example, on corridors care is taken to ensure that at all times half the tenants are refugees and half are Dutch. One of the two group managers assigned to each corridor is always a refugee, and the other is Dutch. Likewise, the composition of the project team also reflects this principle, including three Dutch and two refugee members (or vice versa). This means that interaction between refugees and Dutch people is built into the model. Furthermore, the active observance of the 50/50 principle prevents the drift over time towards homogenisation sometimes observed in other forms of shared housing. The required involvement of refugees in the organisational roles prevents that all or most expert and organisational roles are undertaken by Dutch tenants. This ensures that both refugees and Dutch tenants share a sense of direct ownership of the project. Their active inclusion in organisational roles also contributes to the refugees’ integration process. Through their collaboration with the Dutch young adults, they are helped in learning the Dutch language and understanding the local culture. For instance, the importance of the Dutch norm of being on time for appointments is passed on to the refugees in organisational roles. More generally, for those with part-time jobs in the project this work is usually their first experience of employment in the Dutch context, in terms of how payment, contracts and responsibilities are organised.

4.2.3. Social Links

The attainment of social links is described by Ager and Strang (2008, p. 181) as “the connection between individuals and structures of the state, such as government services”. Access to such services was found in Startblok in the form of the on-site presence of Vluchtelingenwerk, the government agency that provides support for refugees. While refugees in conventional housing have to go to their offices elsewhere in the city, the immediate presence of Vluchtelingenwerk significantly lowers the barriers to seek this type of assistance. In this way, the advice on integration courses, opportunities for education and work that the agency offers, becomes more accessible.

While not explicitly considered as part of the ‘Startblok model’, we found the location of this housing project playing a significant role in the acquisition of social links by refugee tenants. Although in the suburbs of Amsterdam, the Startblok is well-connected to other parts of the city via public transport. A good location is key to facilitate access to employment and education opportunities, and to social networks that are expected to help refugees to form social links with the wider Dutch society and to prevent (economic) isolation. Furthermore, Ager and Strang (2008, p. 181) highlight:

> The benefits of living in areas where refugee settlement [is] more established, in that local services [are] seen as more capable of dealing with refugee’s specific needs, thereby ensuring levels of access more in line with those of other residents.

The Startblok’s accessibility to the large and socially-diverse city of Amsterdam provides opportunities for refugee tenants to form not only social links, but also to extend their social bonds and social bridges.

5. Conclusions

In this article we have presented initial findings from an ongoing study of an innovative approach to refugee integration through collaborative housing. This approach, launched by the Municipality of Amsterdam and housing corporation De Key in 2016, brings together young refugees and Dutch young adults in an even mix, following a 50/50 principle. The underlying assumption is that, through structured self-organisation, the daily interactions between people from each group will progressively

lead to the formation of social bonds and social bridges, social connections that are key to the integration process. Our preliminary findings suggest that social connections are indeed being formed between both groups: as expected, social bonding happens across ethnic and cultural backgrounds by virtue of belonging to the same age group and household type (i.e., young single people). In addition, we found evidence of social bonding on the basis of common cultural and/or ethnic backgrounds, i.e., refugees bond with each other. This, however, doesn't stand in the way of the creation of social bridges between refugees and Dutch tenants, which can be explained to a large extent by the inbuilt social mix of the 50/50 principle. In addition to social bonds and social bridges, we established the formation of social links due to the accessible location of the project—an aspect that was not explicitly considered part of the model when first conceived. Despite not being in a central location per se, the accessibility to public transport connections to the city of Amsterdam provides refugees with opportunities to access not only education and employment opportunities, but also wider social networks, including with ethnic communities akin to theirs that can provide different types of support. These findings resonate, with literature that emphasises the importance of proximity to their own cultural and ethnic communities as part of the integration process of new arrivals, be it refugees or other types of migrants (Andersen, 2017; Van Kempen & Şule Özüekren, 1998). Given the importance of integration outcomes for contemporary European societies, for refugees themselves as well as their receiving countries, and the promising preliminary results, we argue that further research into refugee integration through collaborative housing is timely and urgent. Further analysis into the mechanisms of self-organisation and social mix in shared housing could provide part of the missing link of social connections in current integration theory, and could inform better policies and practices in the field of housing and urban planning to help the integration of young refugees in European societies.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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