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Migration-Led Institutional Change in Urban Development and Planning

Editors

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Editorial

Migration-Led Institutional Change in Urban Development and Planning

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Abstract
The migration-city-nexus has become central in migration and urban studies alike. This 'local turn' has not only initiated a rethinking of the local level as an independent level of migration policy-making but also broadened the discourse on how migration processes actually change cities. Therefore, the thematic issue at hand seeks to understand how migration-led development processes in cities promote and shape institutional change, and which actors transform policies, structures, and discourses on migration in different settings. It questions how migration-related issues in urban development are being handled and transformed by local state and civil society actors. With 11 empirical articles on local negotiations of migration in urban development in different settings, this thematic issue applies an institutional change perspective on local migration policy-making to contribute to a broader understanding of migration-led development in both urban and migration studies. When it comes to clearly capturing migration-led institutional change in urban development and planning, the contributions demonstrate great heterogeneity. They reveal that research on migration-led institutional change still has many biases and is very dependent on theoretical perspectives, positionalities of researchers, and the local context of the case studies.

Keywords
institutional change; migration; urban development; urban governance

Issue
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1. Introduction

Highly dynamic migration movements put the role of cities in migration policy-making around the globe on the agenda and question how migration-related issues in urban development are being handled by local government agencies, street-level bureaucrats, migrant organisations, and Social Movements. This thematic issue seeks to understand how migration-led development processes in cities promote and shape institutional change at a local level, and which actors transform policies, structures, and discourses on migration in urban development in different contexts.

With the 'local turn,' cities have become central in migration and urban studies, and a broad range of concepts and empirical studies deal with the migration-city-nexus. It led to a rethinking of the local level as an independent level of policy-making rather than merely implementing national policies, illustrating the heterogeneity of the local level (see e.g., Caponio, Scholten, & Zapata-Barrero, 2018; Dekker, Emilsson, Krieger, & Scholten, 2015; Jørgensen, 2012; Scholten, 2016). Frequently, these studies address topics like migrants' access to local labour markets, refugee reception and asylum, the socio-spatial organisation of integration policy-making, as well as migrant self-representation

in the urban society, to name just a few. However, the extent to which 'migration' leads to institutional change at the urban scale remains an open question, even if first studies reveal migration-induced change, e.g., in urban administrations (see e.g., Lang, 2020).

To frame 'institutional change,' this thematic issue suggests, first, to refer to new institutionalism from political sciences. This perspective allows defining institutions in the sense of policies, laws, or regulations as formal political institutions. Institutional change occurs not only on different governance scales but is also locally embedded in specific historical and geographical contexts (Hu & Yang, 2019; Sorensen, 2011; Streeck & Thelen, 2005, p. 9). Second, notions of sociological institutionalism help to explain governance in the context of urban planning, referring to institutions in a broader sense as formal rules, and informal norms and practices, which both structure actions and form routines (González & Healey, 2005, p. 2058; Healey, 1999, 2007). Both approaches locate transformation and local governance innovation between state and civil society actors. Thus, institutional change, as this thematic issue understands it, develops in the gaps between established policies or rules and their interpretation and enforcement (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010, p. 14). Considering this, the contested implementation of new routines in informal norms and practices, or formal political institutions (like policies, laws, and regulations) enables institutional change.

Therefore, this thematic issue builds on a broader understanding of institutions to analyse migration-led institutional change in different local settings. The contributions in this issue show a connection between governance actors and their locally embedded actions. We claim that for a better understanding of local migration policy dynamics, research should encompass a strong focus on migration-induced change in urban development and planning. With 11 empirical articles on local negotiations of migration in urban development in different settings, we make a first attempt at an institutional change perspective on local migration policy-making and aim to contribute to a broader understanding of migration-led institutional change in both urban and migration studies.

2. Content

The articles in this thematic issue contribute to filling the research gaps illustrated above. They are based on empirical case studies in different national and local settings, with a focus on the Global North.

Hanhörster and Ramos Lobato (2021) open the discourse on migration-led institutional change in urban development by focusing on migrants' access to the rental housing market in Germany. The authors look at the influence of institutional housing providers as potential preventers of institutional discrimination, their internal routines by allocating flats and how they, indirectly, contribute to the (re)production of socio-spatial inequality. It is not only a general housing shortage which restricts migrants' access to housing in Germany; these institutional housing providers also play a key role. In contrast to other European countries, discrimination remains a taboo in Germany, making it even more difficult to enter into a meaningful dialogue on how migration-led change in the sense of promoting equal opportunities can be achieved in the housing market.

In a similar vein, Vergou, Arvanitidis, and Manetos (2021) have been exploring refugees' access to housing, the corresponding policy responses, and the effects on socio-spatial segregation, by comparing three small and medium-sized Greek cities. The authors shed light on the interplay between municipalities and various local initiatives and NGOs in refugee allocation, and their influence on institutional change. As a result of the decentralisation of refugee accommodation and the new regulatory powers of municipalities in this context, the municipalities have developed different ways of handling refugee accommodation.

Desille and Sa'di-Ibraheem (2021) study the actors, discourses, and administrative practices used to increase the current mobilities of people (Jewish immigrants, investors, tourist visitors, and evicted residents) and explore their impact on the continuity of the settler-colonial regime in pre-1948 Palestinian urban spaces which became part of Israel. The city of Acre/Akkon, receiving the vast majority of new Jewish immigrant families in the last decades, serves as a case study. Their findings reveal a dramatic change in the attempts to Judaize the city: Mobility policies through neoliberal means have not only been instrumental in continuing the processes of displacement and dispossessions of Palestinians in the so-called "mixed city" but have also recruited new actors, and created new techniques and opportunities to accelerate the Judaization of the few Palestinian spaces left.

In contrast, Gruber's (2021) study deals with the challenges of youth migration between Eastern and Central Europe, taking as a case study an EU-funded INTERREG programme dealing with problems of a declining population and outmigration of a young and educated population. It is perceived as a loss of human capital on the one side and immigration as a burden on the other. The project aimed to analyse how far transnational cooperation can offer potentials for sustainable institutional change to support local stakeholders to better govern population decline and migration measures. The article makes clear that even if official institutions are open to migration-led change, short-term projects cannot contribute to sustainable institutional changes. Instead, there is a need for long-lasting activities to influence institutions.

Fernández-Suárez and Espiñeira (2021) shed light on innovative pro-migrant policies at the local level, taking the new municipalist governments of Madrid and Barcelona (between 2015 and 2019) as case studies. The authors examine the municipal room for manoeuvre in migration policy-making in austere Spain and

discuss innovative political measures to protect irregular migrants locally. Here, the new municipalist governments supported, e.g., access to social services and healthcare, and the granting of work permits to bypass illegality and criminalisation. The authors conclude that even if cities can gain certain legal options on how the control of migration is enforced, there are, however, constant tensions between political will and institutional constraints.

The article by Bund and Gerhard (2021) comparatively analyses institutional and structural conditions for local variations in integration strategies in four mid-sized German cities. Depending on the cities' share of migrants, financial and economic capacities, and knowledge assets, the local handling of migrants differs. Different actors from the municipalities or civil society can become the driving force in welcoming migrants. This makes the need for localised tailor-made approaches even more apparent. The article shows that even if financial capacities and socio-economic performance of municipalities and their residents have a great impact on the implementation of migration-related projects, it can be compensated by well-established networks and/or strong political will by local leaders.

The next article by Jahre (2021) discusses the implementation of a new urban policy in 20 different neighbourhoods of Berlin close to large refugee shelters, from the aspect of postmigrant spatial justice. In 2017, Berlin established the 'integration management programs' (BENN) as a response to the growing challenges local authorities faced due to refugee migration. The author analyses the BENN programme in the historical context of Berlin's participation and migration policies, detecting both continuities and changes in the local governance of migration.

Nettelbladt's (2021) article investigates how municipal governments negotiate far-right contestations through the format of citizens' dialogues at a neighbourhood scale in Cottbus, Germany. It analyses the reactionary responses to migration-led societal transformations in cities and their effects on institutional change in participation. The article shows how agonistic and communicative approaches in participatory urban governance can normalise arguments of far-right politics and disrupt the possibility of democratic dialogue. The study concludes that only a careful reconfiguration of participation practice challenges racist language, 'anti-elite' sentiments, and the emotionalisation of societal problems.

Budnik, Grossmann, and Hedtke (2021) also examine the role of social conflicts in the context of migration and discuss the relationship between conflicts and institutional change, taking the contested construction of a Syriac-Orthodox church in a small town in Germany in the 1990s as a case study. The article shows that conflicts ascribed to migration can fuel local institutional change. However, migration-led institutional change occurs indirectly, in small steps, and with ambivalent normative implications as a result of long-lasting processes. The authors conclude the importance of external and endogenous factors that lead to an iterative change in specific local social and historical contexts.

Zhuang's (2021) article contributes insights from immigrants' suburban settlements in Toronto, Canada, and analyses how various immigrant communities have shaped suburban neighbourhoods. The article sheds light on the role of municipal planning in managing diversity and in facilitating inclusive community-building. Despite the neighbourhoods being vital places serving the social, cultural, and economic interests of their inhabitants, the municipalities are rather reluctant towards developing a permissive policy environment to support ethnic communities' place-making efforts. The case studies reveal that municipalities might lack a thorough understanding of the needs of the ethnic communities in these neighbourhoods.

Finally, Huning, Droste, and Gliemann (2021) look at institutional transformation in German planning administrations to promote intercultural opening in urban planning. Here, 'intercultural opening' means overcoming access barriers based on cultural norms and open participation in urban planning for underrepresented groups. The authors reconfirm that bureaucratic structures and terminology do not adequately address the needs of the target groups characterised by, e.g., missing language skills. One major problem is that planning departments often do not have direct contact with the population, including migrants, since participation is often outsourced to private planning bureaus.

3. Synopsis and Outlook

In sum, all empirical contributions to this thematic issue demonstrate great heterogeneity when it comes to clearly identifying migration-led institutional change in urban development and planning. However, at least two findings encompass all empirical contributions in this thematic issue: (1) the difficulty to capture the temporal dimension of 'migration-led institutional change' in empirical and conceptual perspective alike, and (2) the heterogeneity and agency of non-state actors in directly and indirectly shaping change at the local level.

(1): All articles face the challenge of conceptually including the temporal dimension of migration-led institutional change. Here, in particular, long-term changes are more difficult to observe in specific actions of change agents since changing rules and norms have to be explained through a complex set of exogenous and endogenous factors. It is, as the other side of the coin, difficult to predict how stable routines of short-term institutional changes become.

The analysis of pro-migrant policies in Madrid and Barcelona reveals, on the one hand, that short-term institutional change has been actively fostered by changing the routines of police protocols. On the other hand, gaps between new policies and their enforcement opened up spaces for perpetuating old administrative routines and

neglecting migrants' access to health care and education (Fernández-Suárez & Espiñeira, 2021). Short-term institutional change might be fragile, in the sense that it leaves room to keep up with certain institutional routines, but it also might support change agents in creating new ones.

The long-term perspectives on institutional change first and foremost highlight that migration is often just one of the aspects influencing institutional change. The article by Budnik et al. (2021), e.g., elucidates that the decline of industrial labour and geopolitical eruptions in a small town, physically close to the former 'iron curtain' are also important drivers for institutional change. Desille and Sa'di-Ibraheem (2021) in the meantime argue that the on-going neoliberal restructuring strongly influences institutional change, pointing towards its power on framing conditions of mobility and residential or commercial displacement. However, case studies in this thematic issue also make clear that there might be no migration-induced change in urban development and planning, even if this had been demanded by migrant communities for a long time and this change would serve a city's interest (Zhuang, 2021). In the end, Huning et al. (2021) see institutional change within the field of participatory planning as a slow process which needs time to unfold structurally, but institutional change can also be fuelled through experimentation and transformative approaches like real-world laboratories.

(2): Civil society actors and economic stakeholders like neighbourhood initiatives, NGOs, Social Movements, or corporations have been important change agents in all empirical case studies in this thematic issue. Despite their heterogeneity, they have influenced migration-led institutional change in their interactions with state actors like municipal administrations. Agency, understood here as the capability to change cities and their formal and informal institutions, is strongly linked to the ability to create strong ties and networks between civil society and municipalities. Here, Bund and Gerhard (2021) show that cities with less financial resources only develop strong integration strategies if they can build on long-standing, intense networks. The case study done by Vergou et al. (2021) reveals that cities cooperating with neighbourhood initiatives and international NGOs can develop fruitful governance arrangements.

However, a difficult aspect of involving civil society actors in migration-led institutional change is raised by Fernández-Suárez and Espiñeira (2021). They analyse tensions between former activists coming to power in municipal governments and the Social Movements they had belonged to. In a different but also critical way, Hanhörster and Ramos Lobato (2021) focus on the agency of private housing companies as economic actors on migrants' access to housing. As institutional housing providers in Germany, they (re)produce socio-spatial inequalities and exclusion. In this case, non-state actors cannot be described as progressive innovators or drivers of pro-migrant policy change.

All in all, the articles in this thematic issue lead us to the question of whether migration-led institutional change can be fully understood only in the sense that it serves an emancipatory pro-migration discourse. Here, Nettelbladt's (2021) empirical work critically challenges this perspective as it looks at reconfigurations in participatory urban governance to challenge racist hegemony, which links migration-led societal transformation to fear and structural social inequalities. This possibility of xenophobic connotations or outcomes of migration-led institutional change demonstrates the struggle over its definition. A totally different perspective on questioning the positive connotation of migration-led institutional change is presented by Desille and Sa'di-Ibraheem (2021), as they decentre the progressive character of pro-migrant policies in the European context from a critical settler-colonial perspective in Palestine/Israel.

To conclude in a conceptual perspective, research on migration-led institutional change still has many biases and is very dependent on theoretical perspectives, positionalities of researchers, and the local context of the case studies. Also, it seems difficult to clearly define whether an observed institutional change is migration-led or supported by other factors. Here, it seems particularly promising to conduct more research on migration-led institutional change, e.g., in the Global South or post-socialist contexts. Furthermore, looking more deeply into local migration-led institutional change in a comparative perspective might help to understand not only local specificities but also the actual drivers for change.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Migrants' Access to the Rental Housing Market in Germany: Housing Providers and Allocation Policies

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Abstract
Housing markets play a decisive role in the spatial distribution of populations and the integration of immigrants. Looking specifically at Germany, shortages of low-rent housing in many cities are proving to be an open door for discrimination. This article looks at the influence institutional housing providers have on migrants' access to housing. Based on 76 qualitative interviews with housing experts, politicians, local government officials, civil society and academics, the internal routines of housing companies are examined for the first time in a German context, looking at what effect they have on producing socio-spatial inequality. Using Lipsky's (1980) 'street-level bureaucracy' as our conceptual framework, we argue that the barriers denying migrants access to the rental housing market are attributable to two factors: the organisational culture, whether in the form of official guidelines ('policy as written') or of day-to-day activities in the front-line context ('policy as performed'), and the huge gap between the two. Corporate policies, the resultant allocation policies, staff training and housing company involvement in local governance structures play a decisive role in determining migrants' access to housing. The goal of achieving the right social mix and the lack of guidelines for housing company staff in deciding who gets an apartment—turning their discretionary power into a certain kind of 'forced discretion'—in many cases arbitrarily restrict access to housing in Germany. Theoretically embedding these findings in organisational sociology, the article adds to urban geographical and sociological research into the drivers and backgrounds of residential segregation.

Keywords
allocation policies; discrimination; diversity policies; housing market; institutional housing providers; migration-led institutional change; social mix; street-level bureaucracy

Issue
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1. Introduction

> "Our intention was just to protect you from being rejected and discriminated by the other residents in the block and the surrounding neighbourhood."

This was what a housing company cited as the reason for rejecting a Turk applying for a flat in a predominantly native German neighbourhood. As in many other countries in Europe, there has been a decades-long political and academic discourse in Germany on the effects of social and sometimes explicit ethnic segregation and on ways of combating it. Much research highlights the benefits of living (at least temporarily) in migrant neighbourhoods ('urban enclave'; Zhou, 2009), pointing to forms of voluntary (ethnic) segregation

based on migrants' housing preferences, e.g., regarding local networks or migrant infrastructures (Hanhörster & Wessendorf, 2020). However, a critical view of ethnic segregation remains dominant in local housing policy. Though official quotas and maximum migrant ratios in German social housing belong to the past, many housing companies continue to steer housing allocation towards a 'healthy' mix. While some discourses explicitly highlight the need to avoid 'ghettos' or 'parallel societies,' they are more often disguised under the cloak of avoiding pockets of impoverishment. How housing companies go about selecting their tenants is embedded in organisational structures and day-to-day routines. These and their influence on migrants' access to the housing market have as yet hardly been researched.

Testing studies reveal the discrimination of migrants on the German housing market (Auspurg, Hinz, & Schmid, 2017; Horr, Hunkler, & Kroneberg, 2018). Indeed, a representative survey in Germany has revealed that the selection of tenants is not based solely on objective urgency, but also on such subjective factors as (perceived) origin, difference and suitability (Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes [ADS], 2020). This can have dramatic consequences, as housing plays a key role in integration (Ager & Strang, 2008).

The social mix principle is gaining in relevance in Germany due to the increasing polarisation of society (Helbig & Jähnen, 2018) and the recent influx of refugees. What remains unclear however is what is understood by the 'right' mix, especially in the face of high immigration rates and superdiversity (Vertovec, 2007). Further questions ask which organisational routines steer tenant selection and whether or rather how increased diversity is leading to organisational change or persistence of inner routines in housing companies. The question also arises as to whether the goal of achieving a mix is compatible with the objective of non-discriminatory letting enshrined in the German General Equal Treatment Act (*Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz*; Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, 2006) which entered into force in 2006. It is therefore important to better understand the role of housing companies in the production of inequality and to scrutinise how local organisations like housing companies are reacting to increasing levels of diversity.

Spotlighting Germany, the article looks at the internal routines of housing companies for the first time, assessing how they influence migrants' access to housing, and, subsequently, the production of socio-spatial inequality—a topic in need of a lot more discussion and further investigation. We thereby include the perspective of organisational sociology in the urban geographical and sociological research on drivers of segregation. The concrete research questions are as follows: a) Which internal and external factors influence or hinder migration-led organisational change and/or the persistence of company routines governing the access to housing for migrant households? And b) What influence do institutional housing providers consequently have on (re-)producing socio-spatial inequality?

2. Setting the Context: The Social Mix Principle and Migrants' Access to the German Housing Market

With a view to combating continuing segregation, the planning policy principle of achieving the right social mix has gained prominence in various (European) countries (Münch, 2009). The main aim here is to create and maintain socially stable occupancy structures—a great challenge for the many countries hosting increasing numbers of refugees since 2015 (Darling, 2016). Germany is no exception in this respect, with the principle of a 'healthy' residential mix enshrined in various federal laws and strategic plans (Die Bundesregierung, 2007) and guiding the activities of many different players. Indeed, in many ways it is seen as common sense to give local players sufficient room for manoeuvre. This principle is currently being questioned especially in academic circles, as is the strong focus on socially deprived neighbourhoods. Dependent on low-price housing, new immigrants with few resources are being hit particularly by selection strategies.

The German housing market, especially in large cities, is characterised by a comparatively high share of rental apartments (58% of the total housing stock; Statista Research Department, 2020) in the hands of institutional housing providers and private owners. The term 'institutional housing providers' covers three institutional forms: municipal housing 'companies,' private housing companies and cooperatives. Overall, institutional housing providers (vs. individual owners) represent 42% of the rental and 22% of the total housing stock nationwide (Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder, 2019).

In total, there is a shortage of 1,9 million flats in Germany's 77 major cities (with more than 100,000 inhabitants). Consequently, more than a quarter of all households in these cities are undersupplied (Holm & Junker, 2019, p. 2). This situation predominantly affects low-income households, as construction of social housing, long the key to housing for low-income households, has experienced a sharp decline in Germany in recent years, dropping from 2,09 to 1,14 million apartments between 2006 and 2019 (Statista Research Department, 2021) and thus no longer able to meet demand. Waiting times of several years are consequently the rule, especially for larger families (many of which are migrant families). They also limit housing seekers' options spatially, as social housing is often concentrated in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, in contrast to affluent residential areas where fluctuation rates (and thus opportunities to move in) are particularly low. Due to these enormous bottlenecks, many households qualifying for social housing are forced to look for housing on the private market where insufficiently restrictive regulation has led to exploding rents, especially in many inner-city neighbourhoods. In a

few cities, attempts are being made to curb drastically rising prices through rent ceilings (e.g., Berlin).

The influx of refugees in recent years has exacerbated housing bottlenecks, with many refugees forced to stay in temporary accommodation in several German cities. A recent study of the socio-spatial distribution of migrants between 2014 and 2017 (Helbig & Jähnen, 2019) revealed that in all the 86 cities studied, the proportion of migrants increased most in the socioeconomically most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Although we obviously cannot establish any direct causal relationship between these findings and housing companies' allocation practices, what we can say is that supply bottlenecks can create an environment fuelling discrimination: As almost every second household is entitled to social housing in large agglomerations, allocation procedures based on urgency are often prone to discrimination in the face of marginal fluctuation and vacancy rates (Hanhörster, Droste, Ramos Lobato, Diesenreiter, & Liebig, 2020). Cole and Furbey (1994, as cited in Tomlins, 1997, p. 181) even go as far as to argue that "allocation in a context of scarcity requires discrimination." Measured by requests for counselling, ethnic discrimination is the commonest form of discrimination in Germany (ADS, 2020, p. 5). Some 35% of migrant interviewees spoke of having experienced discrimination on racist grounds or because of their ethnicity in the past 10 years when searching for housing. Many cases involved multiple discrimination due to their low household incomes. In other European countries as well, a (perceived) migration background is acknowledged as a hindrance when looking for housing (Dill & Jirjahn, 2014; Sala Pala, 2013). This often affects even high-skilled middle-class migrants (Hanhörster, 2015).

In contrast to other European countries, in Germany there is little focus on structural discrimination in the allocation of housing to migrants (Münch, 2009). Although the General Equal Treatment Act provides the legal footing for equitable access to the housing market, it contains several loopholes allowing the discriminatory allocation of housing, for example the clause that protection against discrimination needs not be respected when a landlord is intent on creating and maintaining "stable social structures" (Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, 2006). There are also different forms of discrimination. Whereas direct discrimination covers practices directly related to such personal characteristics as gender or religion, indirect discrimination is based on apparently neutral criteria which nevertheless cause the discrimination of certain social groups (ADS, 2019, pp. 22–23). Allocation in the sense of a 'good mix' may be understood as a form of indirect discrimination when it is based on stereotypes of certain groups or prejudices against them. Here again, there is a clear lack of studies of the German context with a spotlight on the discriminatory effects of company policies and selection strategies.

3. Housing Companies as Producers of Socio-Spatial Inequality

Access to functional resources (e.g., jobs or housing) is influenced not just at a macro level through societal framework conditions or political principles, but also at a meso, i.e., an organisational level, as represented by schools or housing companies. In doing so, organisations not only reflect societal structures, but also generate the structures, institutional systems and hierarchies found in cities. A wide range of definitions are used in reference to the terms 'institution' and 'organisation.' We use the definition provided by Allard and Small (2013, p. 9), whereby 'organisations' are "formally recognized sets of people and practices whose activities are oriented toward an overarching purpose." By contrast, 'institutions' are umbrella systems, as "sets of individuals, organizations, and networks of relations that structure major aspects of urban life." In this article, we understand housing companies as organisations and as components of the institutional housing system, i.e., as "players of the game, and as they pursue their objectives, they act as agents of institutional change" (North, 1990, as cited in Kingston & Caballero, 2009, p. 154).

Few studies have been conducted in urban sociology or geography on the power of organisations to (re-)produce or counter inequality: The "theoretical implications of the social productivity of organizations are mostly undeveloped despite the growing interest in confronting this issue head on" (in criticism thereof, cf. Allard & Small, 2013; McQuarrie & Marwell, 2009, p. 262). In his concept of 'street-level bureaucracy,' the political scientist Michael Lipsky (1980) highlights this structuring power of organisations, also reflected in the amount of discretion available to front-line staff. He refers to the gap between an organisation's official guidelines ('policy as written') and how these are interpreted by front-line staff in their day-to-day work ('policy as performed'):

> In the context of organisational change, these two levels are described as the formal and the informal levels: The term 'formal' is often taken to mean that the rules are made explicit or written down, particularly if they are enforced by the state, whereas informal rules are implicit. (Kingston & Caballero, 2009, p. 154)

Lipsky's concept can be used in reference to migration-led change on the housing market, illustrating the reciprocal effects of but also the contradictions in dealing with growing diversity between the formal objectives and the day-to-day work of front-line staff.

Building on Lipsky's (1980) 'street-level bureaucrats' concept, we now look at the role of housing companies and the discretion available to them in dealing with diversity.

3.1. Organisational Culture: 'Policy as Written'

Organisations such as institutional housing providers differ not only in their formal structures (e.g., in the purpose enshrined in their articles of association), but also in their informal, normative, and cultural properties. Guiding corporate operations, these two different (more or less visible) dimensions of organisational culture are described by McQuarrie and Marwell (2009, p. 258) as the "dual nature of organisations." Similarly, Lipsky argues that it is not a company's formal organisational structure, which influences how customers are handled, but its day-to-day routines, attitudes, and values, which are not necessarily reflected in written documents. Looking at the dynamics of corporate policies, HR policies or codes of ethics, we are also seeing a change. Organisational change in reaction to rising immigration and diversity is in some cases enshrined in diversity management policies. It could even be the result of a combination of factors: Organisations are shaped in their structure and their change by "organisational actors," i.e., those who, through their values and attitudes, have a decisive influence on the functioning of organisations and are able to change them "from within" (Pahl, 1975, p. 265). A further factor could be a corporate target to counter discriminatory behaviour towards specific groups (Dobusch, 2017, p. 1645).

Yet organisations do not represent a homogeneous system but are instead the products of the social categories and norms determining their systemic and institutional embedding. Looking specifically at discrimination in people's access to resources, it is of decisive importance to look exactly at how organisations operate: "The fewer the resources to which people have access, the more their circumstances will depend on the organizations in which they participate" (Allard & Small, 2013, p. 6).

3.2. Day-to-Day Practices: 'Policy as Performed'

With his term 'street-level bureaucracy,' Lipsky refers to the day-to-day practices of company staff, while his term 'policy as performed' refers to staff's discretion in applying rules and procedures. Similarly, he used the term 'street-level bureaucrats' in reference to "public service workers who interact directly with citizens in the course of their jobs, and who have substantial discretion in the execution of their work" (Lipsky, 1980, p. 3). According to Lipsky, corporate policies are never executed homogeneously in the field. Instead, execution takes place in a context of 'bounded rationality,' where staff weigh up the interests of company management and those of their customers (Kingston & Caballero, 2009). Against a backdrop of limited resources, front-line company officers do their best to adapt their daily workload to their available resources. Categorising customers and prioritising their needs in a discretionary way are two ways of doing so. Differentiating between the 'deserving' and the 'undeserving' (Katz, 1990) is shaped by their experiences and their respective (subjective) values/prejudices and solutions available.

Yet only few empirical studies have looked at the internal routines of housing companies (Rosen, 2014; Sala Pala, 2013; Tomlins, 1997). These tend to view housing company staff as 'gatekeepers' to the housing market, wielding discretionary power over the allocation of housing to migrants. Especially when affordable housing is in short supply, the prioritisation of candidates and thus the decision-making discretion of housing company staff assume a key role.

4. Methodology

This contribution is based on the findings of a research project (concluded in 2019) analysing the practices of institutional housing suppliers regarding allocating housing to migrant households in Germany. Despite increasing pressure on the rental housing market through the recent influx of refugees in Germany (particularly in the low-price segments), the project's focus was not explicitly on refugees.

In a first project phase, 29 interviews with 38 housing market experts were conducted. Focused on large cities (with more than 100,000 inhabitants), the interviews covered experts throughout Germany, for example those working in umbrella organisations, as well as interviews with politicians, local government officials, academics, and civil society representatives (anti-discrimination agencies, tenant associations, migrant organisations, etc.). As there are as yet only few housing guidelines on diversity in Germany, housing companies with a certain amount of expertise in this field were particularly called on to contribute to the analysis.

In a second project phase, 47 further interviews were conducted in three case study cities with experts from the previously mentioned groups. The selected cities—Berlin, Dusseldorf, and Hamburg—are state capitals and greatly influenced by migration, as reflected by their high proportions of migrants (Berlin: 34%; Dusseldorf: 35%, Hamburg: 41%; national average: 26%; Hanhörster et al., 2020, p. 12), whereby people of Turkish origin constitute the largest group. The pressure on their housing markets is reflected in the high rate of households having to spend at least 40% of their net income on rent (excluding utilities and heating). Moreover, they all have a high rate of housing undersupply, especially for low-income households (Holm & Junker, 2019). To counter the pressure on the rental market, rent control instruments are used in all three cities.

Lasting 1–1.5 hours, the semi-structured interviews followed a guideline with six core questions and a series of in-depth questions allowing for modifications according to the interviewees' different work contexts. Alongside those on corporate policy towards diversity, questions focused on policy execution, for example in the form of allocation strategies and the prioritisation of

certain groups, and on socio-spatial cooperation projects. Within the housing companies in these three cases studies, staff from different hierarchy levels (corporate management, middle management, front-line staff) were interviewed. Because of the sensitive study topic and difficulties in gaining access to housing companies, we were unfortunately unable to observe the day-to-day work of front-line staff. In consultation with our interview partners, all results were anonymised.

All interviews were fully transcribed and then both deductively and inductively encoded. We are aware of the danger of conflating self-reports with behaviour assuming a consistency between people's attitudes and their actions (Jerolmack & Khan, 2014). What people say is often only a poor predictor of what they do. Therefore, we deliberately contrasted the housing company interviews with those conducted with other expert groups. Moreover, we used further methods to review and reflect upon the interview findings, including an analysis of housing company websites and documents on corporate policies, allocation strategies, etc. This was rounded off by a focus group discussion involving various stakeholder groups in all three case studies and a joint closing event.

5. Migrants' Access to Housing Markets: Organisational Guidelines and Their Execution in Practice

In line with the discussion above on Lipsky's 'street-level bureaucracy,' we argue that the institutional barriers for migrants on the German rental housing market belong to two areas: the organisational culture and the official diversity policies of housing companies ('policy as written') and day-to-day front-line practice ('policy as performed'). With reference to the latter, we make a distinction between three different dimensions based on our interview findings: staff policy and customer relations management, allocation management and the embeddedness of housing companies in cooperation and governance structures (see Figure 1). Building on this distinction, we will now look at the interaction between these two areas, discussing which factors promote or hinder organisational change in housing providers in the sense of providing migrant households with better access to housing or the persistence of inner routines.

5.1. Organisational Culture and Diversity Policies: 'Policy as Written'

Diversity management started moving up corporate agendas in the 1990s. Yet with no set definition of the concept, there is a lot of critical discussion on the extent to which it actually contributes to a questioning of existing power structures (Ahmed, 2007; Janssens & Zanoni, 2005): "The term 'diversity' is appealing as it does not necessarily challenge organizational culture, even if it allows a change in appearance" (Ahmed, 2007, p. 606). Over the past few years, several larger housing companies have introduced diversity management policies (Bundesverband deutscher Wohnungs- und Immobilienunternehmen e. V [GdW], 2015) focused on HR management, better migrant access to housing and the promotion of intercultural neighbourhoods. This is witnessed by such wordings as "corporate culture alignment with diverse cultures," or "staff training in intercultural competences" (GdW, 2015). Thus, the question arises whether these guidelines upheld by the GdW as the sector's umbrella organisation are actually leading

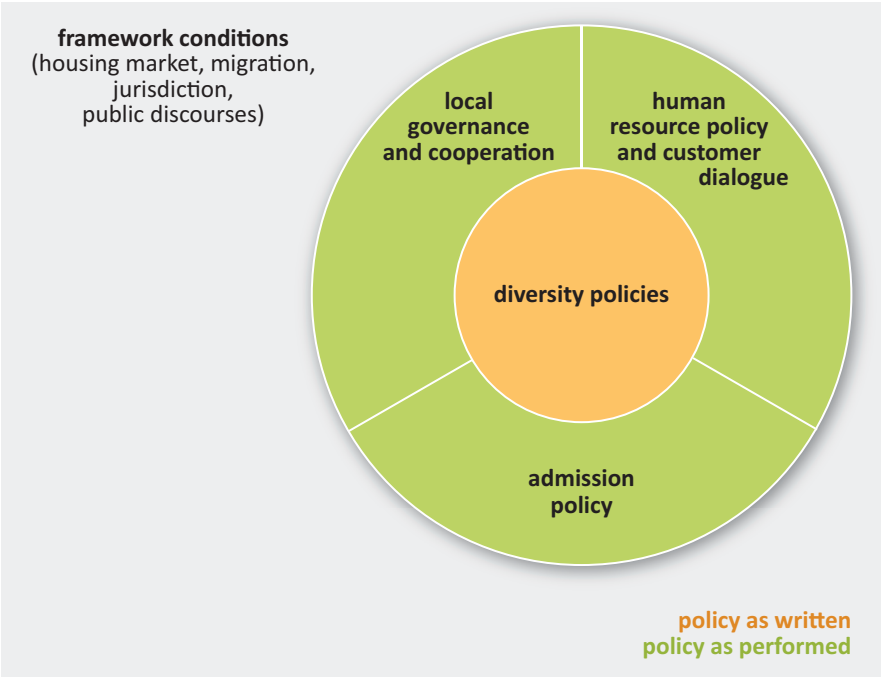

Figure 1. 'Policy as written' and 'policy as performed' in the field of housing.

to changed attitudes in dealing with diversity and to structural changes in corporate practices.

Our interviews revealed that very little is currently being done to actively promote diversity in the German housing sector. Drilling deeper, we found that not one of the companies upheld by experts as best practice examples had any concrete guidelines on how to handle diversity. While in some cases equal treatment topics are at least indirectly communicated to staff—for example with the staff photos of several companies showing people of different colours—ethnic diversity was not explicitly stated as a corporate objective by any of the top executives interviewed. With just a few exceptions, all corporate hierarchy levels are staffed solely by native Germans. At the same time, the availability of in-house intercultural training to promote equal opportunities was frequently cited as a way of increasing staff awareness to the subject.

In addition, diversity policies are supposed to address the transparency of criteria in allocating housing. This is a key issue, as—in the words of one civil society interviewee—the tight housing market "makes it very, very easy [for housing companies] to reject candidates on totally obscure grounds when they want to do so." As our interviews revealed, there is very little awareness of any discriminatory structures on the housing market. The presence of organisational barriers is denied by housing providers and in many cases the issue is taboo. Direct forms of discrimination are passed off as a 'one-off phenomenon,' while indirect discriminatory structures, e.g., a rejection due to a candidate's lack of German language skills, are not even seen as such.

The lack of awareness for discriminatory structures on the housing market makes it difficult to initiate any constructive and meaningful discussion on access barriers. As a result, little if any use is made of discretionary leeway (e.g., the development of guidelines for the whole sector). This applies especially to allocation practices, which continue to be oriented towards achieving the 'right' social mix. Targeted allocation management is seen as the basis for successful letting and effective operations, as it is considered the best way to minimise conflicts, keep fluctuation (and the resultant knock-on costs) at a tolerable rate and to cut the need for socio-spatial measures. Behind the stated goal of maintaining or creating 'stable and healthy neighbourhoods,' we thus generally found the microeconomic goal of efficient letting. For example, one executive stressed that his company attached:

> Great value to maintaining a balance in the neighbourhoods. What is the point of letting everyone move in…with the result that at the end of the day the social mix goes down the drain. Then I've quickly got a real problem on my hands.

It was also interesting to note that, despite their key importance, none of the companies had any clear idea what exactly was meant by the 'right' social mix. As only few of the housing companies studied had clear allocation criteria (apart from urgent cases, e.g., where tenants were faced with the imminent loss of their flat), tenant selection was ultimately left in the hands of front-line staff: "We don't have any corporate policy for allocating housing….It's up to team leaders to come up with the right allocation strategies and the right target groups, all in an attempt to achieve the right balance in every neighbourhood." As this statement showed, executives often deliberately refuse to set up any concrete guidelines but rather expect front-line staff to both know and follow an unwritten code (similar to explanations on 'informal rules' by Kingston's & Caballero, 2009). Thus, the scope of discretion usually enabling frontline staff to deviate (slightly) from a written policy (Lipsky, 1980) turns into a form of 'forced discretion' masking the lack of guidelines. It was quite clear that any changes of internal routines or policies were dictated by corporate management, with the latter thus having a decisive influence on the corporate philosophy and on how open the company was to new groups. One executive for example had this to say: "If I thought it would be best for us to batten down hatches, we'd have no problem doing so." It should be remembered here that the HR structure of corporate management has a great influence on corporate policy: "We here have something very special, something you won't usually find in the housing sector [executives with a migration background]. It's also something we try to achieve in our teams."

The attitudes of corporate management have not only a decisive impact on internal processes and structures, but also on their cooperation with external partners. The growing tightness of housing markets and the major influx of refugees in 2015/2016 have led to new strategic alliances in the housing sector. Many executives told us that they were being increasingly involved in city and neighbourhood committees dealing with social issues. This development also encompasses the heightened involvement of civil society players, often taking the form of formal cooperation agreements.

We now move on to discuss whether the organisational change emerging in some companies regarding an increasingly diversity-oriented corporate philosophy is just lip service or is actually triggering a long-term change in internal company structures and practices.

5.2. Organisational Practices: 'Policy as Performed'

5.2.1. HR Policy and Customer Relations

Systematic diversity management is reflected in diversity-oriented staff training and communications with customers. The following quote from a housing company executive makes it clear what lasting difference a diverse management team can have on a company's corporate communications culture: "That's something we try to achieve in our teams. Given the constellation here,

I don't think that one could openly speak of any [prejudice against people with a migration background] in our house." This statement applied to both corporate management and staff. Even if staff with a migration background do not per se have intercultural skills and are, like all other staff, very likely to use categorisations to make their work easier (Jeffers & Hoggett, 1995), a more diverse staff structure would seem to promote reflective attitudes and greater openness in internal communications, while at the same time countering the perception of migrants as 'bad' tenants. Nevertheless, few housing companies specifically hire employees with a migration background to take account of the growing diversity of their customers and thereby to position themselves as service-oriented companies (Meziani-Remichi & Maussen, 2017).

Alongside the hiring of staff, awareness-raising measures among existing staff play a decisive role in driving any organisational change towards taking greater account of diversity. However, while diversity training is available to staff in some companies, little seems to have actually taken place in the field of raising awareness among existing staff and training them. A further interesting point is that the wish to further develop intercultural skills does not always seem to come from corporate management, but often from front-line staff, in many cases reflecting uncertainty with how to deal with specific groups. However, these needs do not always lead to action by corporate management.

Customer relations are a further touchstone of a company's diversity management. Despite the new intercultural openness proclaimed by them, the housing companies studied continue to uphold equal treatment (but not equal opportunities) when advertising vacancies, while at the same time presenting them on the usual platforms almost solely in German. Easy-to-read information in different languages, whether in the form of flyers, face-to-face counselling, hotlines, etc., is often also lacking. Even if some committed companies work with interpreters and multilingual info material, these measures were only strictly pursued in very few cases and only introduced on efficiency grounds (in particular when language difficulties resulted in knock-on costs for the company). Yet despite all these measures, poor knowledge of the German language remains a key handicap on the German housing market—even among large institutional housing providers, as the following quote from a front-line worker illustrates:

> When people contact us via e-mail, you easily recognise…by their style of writing…that they speak and write German badly….So it [the application] moves automatically to the back of the queue and you first have a look at those able to write an understandable sentence.

For recently arrived refugees in precarious socioeconomic circumstances, this leads to a particularly vulnerable situation. Generally speaking, it was clear that the much-proclaimed corporate image of a non-discriminatory housing company had in most companies not led to any systematic organisational change. Any diversity-oriented commitment usually took the form of 'flagship projects': good for polishing a company's image, but of little actual use in the field.

5.2.2. Housing Allocation

Targeted allocation management by front-line staff is seen by the housing sector as a key factor in successful letting. Alongside objective criteria, such as a candidate's creditworthiness, subjective criteria are also used by staff to decide who gets an apartment. The 'healthy' social mix policy defines the framework for such allocations, without however defining any specific criteria. Our interviewees took a formal stance, defining social criteria in the sense of achieving the right mix of income groups. But there were also explicit references to ethnic categories and—at least in the discussions with us—the companies' clear concern to prevent "ghettoization." For example, potential conflicts between different nationalities or ethnic groups and their low mutual "compatibility" were often cited as grounds for specific allocations or rejections:

> We do try to make sure that certain ethnic groups do not live together in the same block of flats. In my view, things never work out that well between North Africans and Russians. It's no secret that you've got to keep an eye on such aspects.

The phrase ("in my view") illustrates the importance of front-line staff individually classifying candidates, just as the appeal to use common sense (implicit in the phrase "it's no secret that") is synonymous with legitimisation (Dobusch, 2017).

Although rejections are now generally worded to conform with the General Equal Treatment Act, our interviews revealed a universal misinterpretation of the clause that exceptionally allows unequal treatment when letting housing. The goal of this derogation is to allow the use of positive measures (e.g., quotas) to offset discrimination on the German housing market, especially for people with a migration background. However, many of the housing companies interviewed saw this derogation as legitimisation for specifically rejecting candidates with a migration background. The fact that the goal of achieving the right social mix ultimately led to migrant households not being selected was either ignored by the companies interviewed or at least not addressed.

Nearly all allocation decisions are taken at team leader level or below. Front-line staff are guided by a candidate household's assumed 'suitability,' i.e., whether a household is seen to fit in with the composition of residents in a block of flats or housing estate. On account of competition between various 'vulnerable' groups on

the housing market, front-line staff are forced to weigh up whether a candidate belongs to a 'deserving' or to an 'undeserving' group (Katz, 1990). The 'suitability' decision is discretionary, with front-line staff deemed—according to the interviewed executives—to have sufficient knowledge of local conditions and the housing on offer: "The final decision is based on the gut feeling of the customer centre manager." "Gut feeling," "sufficient knowledge," and "experience" are thus seen to be the key factors for targeted allocations (GdW, 2015). On account of their discretionary power, front-line staff play a key role in the allocation process, becoming gatekeepers to housing. The discrepancy described by Lipsky (1980) between formal instructions ('policy as written') and their day-to-day execution ('policy as performed') has thus less to do with the discretion accorded to front-line staff and more to do with the lack of written instructions, forcing staff to step in and take decisions based on their own criteria. Front-line staff's discretionary power thus becomes a form of 'forced discretion.' Clear criteria can be assumed to facilitate allocation and to 'relieve' front-line staff from having to use this 'forced discretionary power,' as illustrated by the following quote from an employee working for the only company interviewed with a clear set of criteria:

> The good thing for me is that I can be fair because, if I just followed my nose, it would be easy for me in some situations but difficult in others. Thus, I would just not give an apartment to people with whom I am not on the same wavelength….And like this [with the set of allocation criteria implemented by the company] I have a tool that enables me to say that I treat everyone equally.

Nevertheless, the term 'forced discretion' should not disguise the fact that both executives and front-line staff see personal assessments and experience as indispensable for targeted allocations. The fact that the criteria established by front-line staff are obviously based on subjective factors is thus not seen as any great problem, as revealed by the following quote from an executive: "Staff…are obviously guided by their own, personal taste. If I have the feeling that the candidate sitting opposite me fits in better because he will not cause me any trouble, then obviously I'll plump for him." Many front-line staff try hard to create micro-neighbourhoods with little potential for conflicts and consequently with the expectation of low fluctuation: "Each new rental contract…can land in a court or cause a complaint, meaning more work for us. We are all by nature lazy. If I select the wrong candidate, I'll end up with more stress."

Consequently, the interpretation of what constitutes a 'healthy mix' is also dependent on the neighbourhood in question. The quote at the beginning of this article illustrates that allocation practices make it difficult for migrants to gain access to housing in areas with a dominant middle-class and native German composition. Allocation decisions not only make it more difficult for certain groups to gain access to specific housing, but also reduce transparency for candidates:

> I can't just say: "I don't want you." I have to think up an excuse why I wasn't able to select that person—I mustn't discriminate. As front-line staff, we need a good dose of sensitivity and skill. Things like: How can I speak with someone? How much plain speaking can he take? How can I put that another way?

This quote highlights the desire of staff (despite a certain lack of decision-making transparency) to justify their decisions. As argued by Kozica, Kaiser, and Friesl (2014, p. 18): "Actors orient their behavior in accordance with the potential requirement to justify it." Discrimination on the housing market is thus not necessarily an expression of racist attitudes. In many cases, it just reflects a desire to make things easier for staff: "the social actors do not need to be racist to discriminate" (Sala Pala, 2013, p. 180). This makes it all the more difficult to uncover forms of discrimination in allocating housing. However, there is little readiness on the part of the housing companies to make allocation processes more transparent, despite formally upholding diversity in their corporate policies. Interestingly, this also applies to municipal housing associations, whose commitment to provide social housing is, as already discussed, much stronger than that of private or cooperative housing providers. Systemic changes to corporate structures are thus inconsistent and seemingly unwanted. Moreover, no audits had yet been conducted in any of the companies studied to check whether their allocation practices were in line with their increasingly diversity-oriented policies.

5.2.3. Local Governance Structures and Cooperation

Alongside federal legislation and guidelines, organisational change in housing companies is being driven by the political climate and the involvement of these companies in local governance structures. Both interviews and focus group discussions revealed that the influx of refugees in the past few years has increased awareness towards housing companies' allocation practices in the context of housing and integration policies. Pressure to legitimise their allocation strategies and practices has grown, especially in municipalities with strong anti-discrimination policies, migrant self-help organisations and tenant initiatives. In this respect, the provision of housing for refugees has acted as a catalyst for organisational change in housing companies.

But even if these cooperation projects point to clear organisational change on the part of housing companies, our interviews revealed a more ambivalent picture. Migrant organisations and NGOs are often portrayed in the glossy brochures published by the housing companies as key neighbourhood development partners with whom strategies are jointly developed to address

diversity. Our study revealed however that, while civil society representatives are in some cases involved, they do not do so on an equal footing, as for example the following statement made by a housing company executive illustrates: "[We don't want] welfare associations influencing our core business. As long as both sides accept this, everything is ok." In many cities, cooperation projects with local authorities were little more than expressions of interest, with no binding strategies or targets being set to improve migrants' access to housing and no discussions being held over the effects of social mix strategies. Allocation management thus remains solely in the hands of the housing companies. Consequently, we were unable to note any change in company practices aimed at making housing allocation more transparent and thereby less discriminatory, such as the conduction of regular quality audits or joining of forces, e.g., on regional platforms.

At the same time, however, any cooperation between the housing sector and politics/local government seems to be also dependent on a municipality's interest in doing so or on its problem awareness, as shown by the following quote of a company executive:

> As regards such activities here in Dusseldorf, we are not doing as much as in other municipalities, inter alia…because the authorities here are not that active in the field of neighbourhood development or integration. The willingness to work together, to network, to develop neighbourhoods is much higher in municipalities subject to structural change….Dusseldorf is booming. Why change things?

Our interviewee attributed Dusseldorf's apparent lack of interest in neighbourhood development to the city's comparatively privileged socioeconomic situation. Interestingly, in this case any willingness to cooperate and show more socio-spatial commitment would seem to be hindered by a lack of interest on the part of external cooperation partners; here, the municipality itself. By contrast, key changes, e.g., the social realignment of municipal housing associations, are taking place in Berlin, driven by strategic political alliances and state legislation. An important role has been played here by local stakeholders such as Berlin's anti-discrimination agency which managed to involve the housing sector in discussions with other stakeholders and supported housing companies in developing strategies to deal with diversity. This organisational change is being driven not only by cooperation projects with civil society, but also by the operations of other housing companies, especially those spearheading change. These examples illustrate that it is not exclusively the organisational structure—private vs. municipal—that guides institutional housing providers' practices and thus potentially limits migrants' access to the housing market.

6. Conclusions

In recent years, geographic and urban sociological research has started focusing on the power of (local) organisations to (re-)produce socio-spatial inequality (Allard & Small, 2013; McQuarrie & Marwell, 2009). One area still largely unresearched is how housing companies have reacted to the increasing diversity experienced in recent years, against a backdrop of growing socio-spatial polarisation. This was the starting point for our analysis of the policies and practices of institutional housing providers in Germany and of their migration-driven organisational change. We wanted to explore what impact institutional housing providers and their internal routines have on migrants' access to the housing market and, subsequently, on the (re)production of socio-spatial inequality. Our study clearly shows that it is not just general housing shortages that restrict migrants' access to housing in Germany. Institutional housing providers and their internal routines, but also corporate guidelines, day-to-day front-line practices and the involvement of housing companies in local government governance structures, also play a key role in (re)producing socio-spatial inequality. While our interviews reveal signs of increasing diversity driven by organisational change in housing companies, our research nevertheless illustrates that very little has yet been done to actively promote diversity in the German housing sector.

Using Lipsky's (1980) 'street-level bureaucracy' as our conceptual framework, our study reveals that the barriers denying migrants access to the rental housing market are attributable to two factors: the organisational culture and diversity policies in the form of official guidelines ('policy as written'), and the staff's day-to-day activities ('policy as performed'). Our interviews highlight a huge gap between corporate guidelines and their front-line execution, crucially hindering migration-led organisational change in the sense of facilitating access to housing for migrant households. This gap is most obvious in housing companies' HR policies, where little focus is placed on staff diversity and intercultural awareness and on the ways in which the housing companies communicate with their customers. The same applies to local governance and cooperation. Despite the increased involvement of housing companies in local cooperation projects with civil society or local authorities, it became obvious that these projects were mostly not seen as binding strategies but as 'window-dressing' and therefore had only a minor impact on making migrants' access to housing more transparent and less discriminatory.

Drilling deeper, the discrepancy between corporate guidelines on the one hand and their front-line execution on the other is also visible in housing companies' allocation policies. The interviews with employees at different levels of corporate hierarchies showed that, even when written corporate guidelines for non-discriminatory letting were available, their interpretation and execution were left very much to the discretion of front-line staff.

For many of the latter, the sole selection criterion was 'suitability.' In most cases, written guidelines did not even exist; rather, there seemed to be an unofficial, 'unwritten' code that front-line staff were expected to follow. Thus, what Lipsky (1980) refers to as the discretionary power of front-line staff, enabling them to interpret and thus to deviate from written policies in their day-to-day-work, becomes a necessity in the face of non-existent or not sufficiently detailed allocation criteria and guidelines. Our research thus offers the opportunity to expand Lipsky's (1980) concept of 'street-level bureaucracy,' complementing it with the notion of 'forced discretion.' However, while we were able to clearly identify the (lack of) decision-making transparency and the associated discretion accorded to front-line staff as barriers hindering migrant households' access to the housing market, the interviewed housing companies viewed them as an important framework facilitating 'social engineering.' Much more awareness and engagement are therefore required at board level to critically address existing corporate policies and to develop and institutionally enshrine new allocation strategies.

Organisational change in such companies aimed at promoting equal opportunities on the housing market is achieved not just by ad hoc measures or the flagship projects proclaimed by German housing providers, but also requires new corporate policies, skills development, and decision-making transparency. For example, while our research has revealed that the dominant principle of achieving a 'healthy' (social and ethnic) mix clearly decreases migrants' opportunities to gain access to housing—especially in privileged (and German-dominated) housing estates, on the part of the institutional housing providers, no contradiction is seen between the social mix paradigm and equal opportunities in the selection of candidates. There is thus a clear gap between the empirical evidence of discrimination and the self-perception and external image of housing companies. In contrast to other European countries like England or the Netherlands, discrimination remains a taboo issue in Germany, making it more difficult to enter into a meaningful dialogue on access barriers and leading to different stakeholders not making the most of their available leeway to achieve the non-discriminatory allocation of housing.

Thus, as clearly shown in this article, local organisations such as housing companies can decisively influence the production of socio-spatial inequality. In line with McQuarrie and Marwell (2009), our research shows that organisations—here, housing companies—play a crucial role in structuring social and systemic modes of integration. To "make sense of contemporary urban change" (McQuarrie & Marwell, 2009, p. 262), we thus need to pay more attention to the role of organisations and their internal routines. This in turn requires a better integration of organisational sociology perspectives into urban geographical and sociological research on urban segregation.

Since what people say is often only a poor predictor of what they do (Jerolmack & Khan, 2014), our multi-perspective approach involving representatives of city administrations and civil society organisations as well as reflecting on the interview findings through document analyses and focus group discussions has proved its worth. However, for future research, combining interviews with more ethnographic approaches (e.g., participatory observations) would seem to be an even more effective way of analysing the influence of local organisations and the associated organisational structures and processes in greater depth.

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Conflict of Interests

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Article

Refugee Mobilities and Institutional Changes: Local Housing Policies and Segregation Processes in Greek Cities

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Abstract
Many studies have explored the dynamics of immigrant and refugee settlement at the local level, highlighting that it is actually a two-way process: On the one hand, the local socio-political context specifies the conditions for refugee inclusion, and on the other, migrant mobility leads to the transformation of localities in various ways. In Greek cities, the social practices of local actors have played an important role in the implementation of the immigration policy, where refugees were perceived as a threat to personal and community security. Yet, new forms of social mobilisation and solidarity by individual citizens and community initiatives have worked to alter these attitudes, mitigating tensions and obstacles in refugee acceptance. The article draws on the Greek experience to explore the role and importance of the local socio-political texture in refugee inclusion, shedding light on how it gave rise to various local initiatives that inform refugee allocation as well as urban transformation and institutional change. In methodological terms, the article considers three neighbouring Greek cities as case studies to identify the different institutional and policy responses to refugee accommodation, giving rise to different paths and forms of social inclusion. The study reveals the complexity and context of the social-spatial diversity that refugees face but also the transformation dynamics of local states and civil society.

Keywords
local welfare state; municipalities; refugee accommodation; segregation; social initiatives; solidarity

Issue
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1. Introduction

Over the last years, and particularly after 2012, Greece has received a substantial number of immigrants, coming primarily from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq as a consequence of the general political instability and wars in the area. As a result, more than one million refugees have entered the country having as final destinations other countries in Northern and Western Europe. Yet, the closure of the so-called Western Balkans route and the European Union (EU)–Turkey Agreement on refugee and migrants in the Spring of 2016 have confined uncontrolled and irregular movements both towards and within the EU (European Council, 2016), leaving around 76,000 refugees and asylum seekers trapped in Greece for an indefinite period (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2019).

Although the situation has preoccupied both Greek society and the state authorities, giving rise to many debates, such concerns did not materialise in an integrated and solid planning policy regarding refugee and asylum seekers’ accommodation on the part of the state.

Instead, in an attempt to deal with such a pressing and controversial issue, the country deployed several strategies and measures treating the matter of spatial allocation, settlement and integration of the incomers on a rather ad hoc and diversified basis. Thus, this multi-level approach to the so-called refugee crisis has resulted in different housing outcomes and approaches to integration in many cities, corresponding to different levels of engagement and cooperation that the local social actors (civil society, NGOs, religious organisations, etc.) have exhibited. In some cases, innovative ways of social inclusion and acts of solidarity were made prevalent, whereas, in others, instances of social exclusion and marginality have been documented (Arvanitidis, Vergou, Manetos, & Grigoriou, 2020; Vergou, 2019). Overall, the different needs of the refugees were treated in varied ways based on the local context and social dynamics, sometimes in coordination and others in disengagement with the state and national directives (which mainly follow the EU policies and the framework set by the Common European Asylum System). Certainly, the issue of refugee integration has been at the forefront of the academic discussion, giving rise to an extended and growing literature. Notably, the current journal alone has published several articles and thematic issues on the matter, exploring the socio-spatial aspects of the phenomenon (e.g., *Urban Planning*'s thematic issues on "European Cities Planning for Asylum," "Urban Arrival Spaces: Social Co-Existence in Times of Changing Mobilities and Local Diversity," and "Cities of Inclusion—Spaces of Justice"), and especially how various 'arrival infrastructures' provide resources to newcomers in diverse local environments.

Yet, refugee integration remains a rather contested term and a controversial discussion, especially concerning the urban contexts. Integration characterizes different forms and access to functional, social, and symbolic resources conceptualised as culture, support and care networks, and social bonds. Furthermore, concerning different levels of governance, local state and large cities formulate their own perspectives to migrant integration which does not always coincide with that of the national level (Scholten & Penninx, 2016). Although integration has traditionally been correlated with national identity and community (Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016), cities become more autonomous, formulating their own perspectives and policies in finding solutions for housing, education, and health provision, as well as social aspects of community connectivity.

In our contribution, we analyse the interdependencies between local policies and segregation processes and we try to shed light on spatial integration processes and the barriers and challenges that refugees face in urban contexts. With all these under consideration, the article seeks to explore how the local, social, and material resources (such as support and care networks, community initiatives, social centres) and institutional and organisational resources (municipalities, NGOs, religious organisations), have evolved in specific initiatives in refugee accommodation and how they impact refugee allocation dynamics and institutional change in Greece. Furthermore, we analyse how different local policy responses have given rise to different segregation patterns revealing the weaknesses and challenges of refugee inclusion as this is experienced in selected, yet typical, Greek cities.

The analysis of path-dependencies of national and local housing systems is crucial to understanding the processes of residential settlement of immigrants. Thus, we highlight the specificities and peculiarities of Southern Europe and Greece in particular regarding urban development and housing provision in general. We stress that crucial to understanding institutional transformations and their effects on the spatial integration of refugees is the role of the Greek welfare system, with its interplay of familial and clientelistic political practices and its traditional weakness to provide affordable housing (Maloutas, Siatista, & Balambanidis, 2020).

As becomes evident, analysis takes into account the urban context and dynamics of the migration-led transformation processes, the local (political and social) environment, the conditions of the recent crisis-inflicted Greek welfare regime, and the complexity of interactions between different territorial jurisdictions (Arbaci, 2019; Mingione & Oberti, 2003). Following Andreotti, Mingione, and Polizzi (2012), our approach acknowledges that in local welfare regimes, different arrangements of formal and informal actors, special configurations of population needs, social policy providers and resources are emerging and intersect with other systems and territorial levels. In this context, the socio-territorial approach to urban inequalities is more appropriate to understand different levels of interactions and complex social relations from global to local (Oberti & Preteceille, 2018).

2. Spatial Integration Processes at the Local Scale: The Dual Housing Model and Path-Dependencies

Drawing on a comparative study of local experiences with refugee accommodation in three small and medium-sized cities in Greece, we provide a closer understanding of each city, with the local spatial integration strategies, community resources and particular characteristics of their civil societies. Our contribution, through the comparative analysis of local cases, is to highlight the various complexities of the housing processes in the localities where refugees are settled and to provide a better understanding of the interdependencies between local policies and segregation processes. These may involve varying arrangements and cooperation between public institutions, intermediate organisations, the Church, family networks, and the local community. Concerning this, we examine different forms of civil society engagement and how and to what extent they contribute to the social inclusion of the newcomers and the transformation of local urban policies. In this context,

and in response to a variety of contextual dependent factors and conditions, the transition to multilevel governance and the municipality's active or passive stance on welfare integration policies are far from a linear and uniform process. Specific local and cultural contexts give rise to diversified mixes of actors and strategies for implementing social policies.

The recent national legislation (Greek Government, 2020a, 2020b) signals a change of focus with emphasis on the local state and a step forward for the changing of generic 'emergency processes' to more locally-oriented policies. In this regard, implemented housing policies and integration programs seem to exhibit rather top-down (centralist) logic, and yet, at the same time, there is multi-level governance as local players are heavily involved in the process, shaping the path of institutional change. Thus, a network of 13 cities has been established where municipalities have a major role in the implementation of the housing policy of the newcomers and recently on the provision of an integration program to promote integration processes (Hellenic Integration Support for Beneficiaries of International Protection [HELIOS], 2019). Also, the relocation of refugees in open facilities camps near the cities have activated the municipalities to cooperate with international actors, NGOs, and humanitarian organisations. Different social initiatives and municipal entrepreneurship companies—such as e-trikala, a municipal development agency of the city of Trikala, which maintains the operation of 70 apartments with 500 refugees accommodated and ANKA, a municipal development agency of the city of Karditsa, which implemented the accommodation and assistance to asylum seekers in the city and created the intercultural centre 'Stavrodromi'(Crossroad)—took an active role in the social inclusion of the newcomers in local communities, differently from what was envisaged by the central immigration policy of the state.

In this framework, it is important to outline the contextual background and path-dependencies of national and local housing systems within which our case-study cities operate. The Greek welfare system exhibits the strong familistic and clientelistic structure that is apparent to the welfare regimes of the other Mediterranean countries. Overall, the family plays a prominent role as the main provider of welfare and as a key agent in social-economic and political reproduction (Bureau of European Policy Advisers, 2011; Oosterlynck et al., 2013a). Strong family ties not only work to assure financial support to their members, but family extended links and networks enhance such dynamics, taking advantage of the clientelistic political practices and rationale that for long have been embedded in the country's institutions. In accordance, practices of civic engagement and forms of civil organisation that represent a horizontal aggregation of interests are less developed, whereas the local state has traditionally been a quite weak and subordinate welfare provider due to lack of resources, powers, and competence (Arvanitidis, 2017; Maloutas, 1988; Maloutas & Economou, 1992). An interesting and rather distinct pole here are the religious institutions which are reported to provide social assistance and support in many Mediterranean countries (Mingione & Oberti, 2003).

As Kandylis and Maloutas (2020, p. 131) eloquently articulate, the provision of affordable housing for immigrants has been "a combination of a market-led laissez-faire approach" where the existing housing stock has absorbed massive migratory movements in "subordinate positions in socioeconomic hierarchy," and an "authoritarian approach assorted with humanitarianism," which "uses displacement as a means of constituting, isolating and disciplining minorities." The market-led laissez-faire approach to affordable housing in the Greek context is related to the absence of state policies for social housing provision, especially during the first two decades after WWII. Through indirect intervention, state policies promoted homeownership, usually via self-promotion and often via self-construction, allowing family intervention in housing provision while other forms of affordable housing supply were largely absent. The lack of comprehensive affordable housing policy, on the part of the state and the policy choices of no intervention, as far as the market regulates itself, made social housing seem unnecessary. Under these conditions, after the massive arrivals of foreign immigrants in Greece, in the early 1990s, the rented market was more or less the only solution for affordable housing (Arvanitidis, Petrakos, & Skouras, 2013). The recent severe economic crises lead to massive unemployment, loss of income, and impoverishment along with increased taxation on property, while the state stood unable to address the needs of most vulnerable population groups in need of care and support (Kandylis & Maloutas, 2020; Maloutas et al., 2020). When refugees arrived, a new accommodation scheme emerged, a "dual housing model" (Kandylis & Maloutas, 2020), which is based on two distinct accommodation schemes: (a) rented or free temporary housing in apartments (Emergency Support to Integration & Accommodation Program [ESTIA]) and (b) refugee camps.

On the one hand, the housing model of rented apartments and hotels (the so-called ESTIA) has emerged in different cities. This housing model developed as a partnership between the EU (which provides funding) and the UNHCR (which is responsible for its governance) in collaboration with local authorities and NGOs (which implemented the project *in situ*). Lease contracts were signed between local landlords and the local actors (the municipality or the NGO), and the criteria set for qualifying such places were typical and minimum standards of housing quality (Arapoglou, Maloutas, & Siatista, 2019).

On the other hand, the vast majority of newcomers are accommodated in refugee camps, either in crowded 'hot spots' at major ports of entry (considered as irregular migrants) or in refugee camps on the mainland. These "waiting zones" (*zones d'attente*) are the spatial

expression of a new and striking phenomenon of "shifting border," where ordinary social and constitutional rights within a liberal democracy are suspended or limited, especially for undocumented migrants or for those who do not have the proper legal status, only after they "pass through our gates" (Shachar, 2020, p. 4). The change in the national perception of immigration, from an innocuous humanitarian and ethic movement into a situation of a civil and national threat, resulted in these "emergency processes" to increasingly exhibit a marginalized and dehumanising attitude towards the newcomers (Bouman, 2016, pp. 85–86).

Apart from the above-mentioned general changes in the housing model of immigrants, we should also add the consequences of the recent economic crisis (2008) on housing inequalities and the aggravation of social-economic conditions of the vulnerable population. A series of bottom-up solidarity practices appear, which managed to support the vulnerable, claiming back the 'citizens' right to the city' (Arampatzi, 2017; Arvanitidis & Papagiannitsis, 2020; Featherstone, 2015). Thus, informal citizen networks emerged, through mechanisms of citizen engagement and participation in civil actions of various kinds (*inter alia*: solidarity kitchens, no-middlemen food distribution networks, social health centres, clinics and pharmacies, social education centres), forming a kind of a social safety net able to address the increasing demands for social protection and welfare provision. Interestingly, similar kinds of initiatives appear in response to the massive refugee inflows that the country has recently experienced.

3. Methodology

In methodological terms, the article draws upon the experiences of three small and medium-sized Greek cities (Katerini, Larisa, and Volos) to identify the different institutional and policy responses to refugee accommodation, giving rise to different paths and forms of social mobilisation, solidarity, and urban transformation. Since data concerning the location of individual refugee households are not available, the study employs school enrolment data, assuming, along with other studies (Arvanitidis et al., 2020; Vergou, 2019), that there is a strong correlation between school segregation and socio-residential segregation. Such an assumption is validated by the fact that the system of school catchment areas in Greece obligatorily allocates children to schools that are near their residence. Therefore, school enrolments are controlled by the local state and mirror the local population characteristics and environment (its ethnic and socio-economic composition). In this context, we must specify that there is a limitation in this study: the maps rely on school enrolment data and thus on refugees having children at school age only and therefore cannot consider the majority of refugees including young men or couples without children. However, we must specify that accommodation in rented dwellings is provided for the housing needs of vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees (families with an average of five people, single parents, people with serious medical conditions, and people with disabilities; Kandylis, 2019) and thus the majority of beneficiaries are mainly families or single parents and fewer single men.

Furthermore, semi-structured in-depth interviews with 15 local actors (key officials in accommodation and education provision, local government officials, representatives of NGOs, and activists) and 13 refugees were contacted to shed light on the different forms of civil society engagement, refugees' experiences, and policies undertaken. The interviews were conducted between October 2018 and July 2019. Content analysis and corresponding coding were used for analysing the interviews with key categories that emerged through the fieldwork (Bryman, 2004). Cartographic material and mapping techniques are used to display the patterns of residential distribution of refugees housed through the ESTIA program vis-à-vis local populations. Statistical data were also used from the application of Panorama of Greek Census Data (1991–2011) to obtain information on the social-economic profile of the cities at the census tract level (EKKE–ELSTAT, 2015).

4. The Case Studies

As mentioned, the current article draws on the experiences of three different, yet typical, Greek urban settings all located close to each other in central Greece. The first, Larisa, concerns a medium-size city where local authorities have an active, hands-on role in refugee settlement, whereas the second, Volos, a somewhat smaller city, has no active role in refugees' accommodation, although there is a refugee camp and shelters for unaccompanied minors at the outskirts of the city. Katerini, the third case study, is a small city, where a local NGO, established by a religious institution, coordinates and manages the housing and integration program for refugees. The specific (socio-cultural, political) contexts of the three case-study cities constitute the underlying environment that informs subsequent policies, the process of integration/segregation, and the barriers and challenges that refugees and the local societies face.

4.1. Larisa: A Centralist Governance Arrangement

Larisa is the largest city of the Thessaly Region with 146,926 inhabitants (4.8% immigrants; EKKE–ELSTAT, 2015). Close to the city (18 km), in Koutsochero (see Figure 1), there is a refugee camp with 1584 refugees. In 2018, under the supervision of the Municipality of Larisa, refugees were settled in apartments through the provisions of the ESTIA programme. The public benefit enterprise of the Municipality is the coordinator of the housing and integration programs for 430 refugees, both programs funded by the EU. The Municipality has a hands-on role in the spatial allocation and distribution

of refugees to different neighbourhoods within the city paying due attention to the local housing market conditions (house supply, prices, etc.) and the availability of relevant funding. It is also the agency that deals with the local landlords, specifying appropriate accommodations, signing the contracts, and enforcing the agreements. The criteria set for qualifying such places were typical and minimum standards of housing quality. The choice of the specific beneficiaries of the ESTIA accommodation scheme was made in cooperation with the UNHCR.

Figure 1. Koutsochero camp in Larisa, September 2020. Source: International Organization of Migration (2020).

The local integration policy is much more oriented towards housing and work for the refugees, through the municipality's services without involvement from other local, actors, such as NGOs. According to this pattern of governance, local arrangements exhibit a clear hierarchy between the different levels of government to ensure that policy implementation at the local level follows central rules and policies (Scholten & Penninx, 2016). This should be the manner for "an organized society where their marginalized parts, continue their lives and progress…with certainty and order," as the Municipality representative stated (Interview, September 4, 2019).

In the city of Larisa, local solidarity actions took place, especially towards refugees located in Koutsohero camp but also for those in the city. Such actions provided mainly humanitarian aid (food and emergency supplies) in cooperation with other institutional actors and municipal actors and services. The municipal social services (social grocery, shelter for homeless, educational and training activities, etc.) have been the leading actors in this process, with the civil society playing a second, subordinate but supportive role. In that sense, it becomes clear that social initiatives are rather subsidiary whereas the social agenda and policy formulation are set by the local state.

Concerning the ethnic diversity in the city, local authorities seem to have a specific orientation to prevent segregation tendencies. The fear of formations of minority enclaves ('ghetto') within the city seems to be a great concern for the municipality, which introduced area-based policies to manage ethnic-cultural differences in a city (e.g., Roma population):

> Unfortunately, refugees and Greeks are two worlds that have parallel lives. (Municipality representative, Interview, September 4, 2019)

> The example of France, with the uprising of marginalized minorities in the suburbs of Paris is something that we are thinking of. It's a fear for the future. (Municipality representative, Interview, September 4, 2019)

In contrast to the view expressed by the municipality representative were those of the refugees. Interviews revealed the majority of refugees are rather reluctant to live close to either co-ethnics or other refugee groups since they perceive this as a barrier to integration and interaction with the local population. In parallel, concerns were raised by those living close to their co-ethics:

> In the specific block of houses, we live together 4–5 families from Syria. It is not so good because we are isolated and it is difficult to learn the Greek language. Also, neighbours keep us at a distance. (Syrian refugee, male, 26 years old, unemployed, Interview, July 25, 2019)

Furthermore, it became apparent that a lack of local language skills is seen by many as the main barrier in the prospect of getting a job in the labour market and a private house when the ESTIA project ends. Interestingly, although many refugees highlighted the favourable qualities of Larissa as a place for permanent residence, they acknowledged the difficulties of getting proper employment that would allow this to happen. One stated:

> There are no jobs even for the Greeks, how can we [refugees] find a job? (Syrian refugee, man, 27 years old, unemployed, Interview, July 25, 2019)

Coming back to the issue of segregation, despite local authorities' efforts, segregation tendencies might be in place since the apartments that are made available to refugees in the market are located in specific areas out of the neighbourhoods where high socio-economic categories of natives reside (see Figure 2). This reveals that various factors may affect the development of social and spatial diversities in the city, such as the readiness of the host society to accept refugees in specific locations or the workings of the local property market that define housing availabilities, prices, etc., in addition to the specific housing strategies for the spatial distribution of refugees set by the local authorities. Summing up, in the city of Larisa, institutional changes are less pronounced and based on smaller changes and conversion, with the use of older institutional arrangements. Local state authorities opted for a strategy of organisational changes through the use of existing social assistance

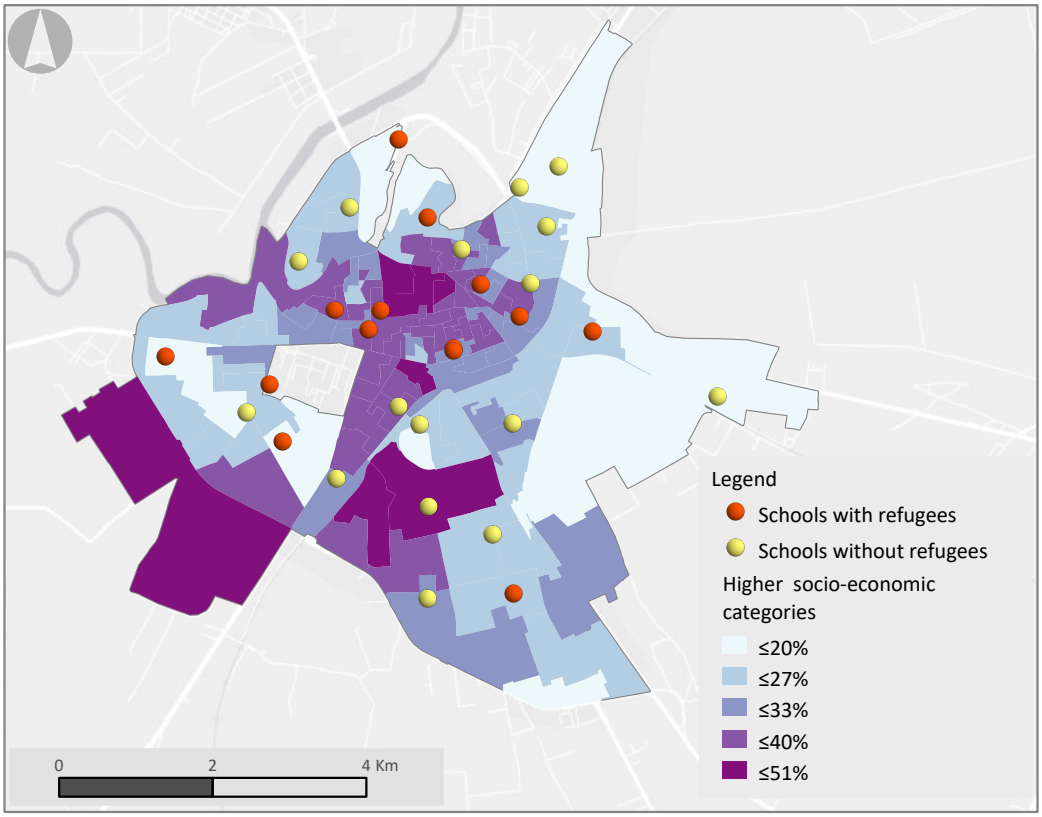

Figure 2. Distribution of higher socio-economic categories (2011) and refugee school population in Larisa. Source: Authors' elaboration and EKKE–ELSTAT (2015).

structures (a municipal public benefit enterprise) and build on previous experiences on local welfare, including refugee reception in the city.

4.2. Volos: A Decoupled Model of Governance

According to the 2011 census, the total population of the municipality of Volos is 144,449 inhabitants. The percentage of non-Greeks living in the city is 6.8% (EKKE–ELSTAT, 2015). There is a refugee camp located on the outskirts of the city, near a waste disposal site and close to the industrial area of the city (see Figure 3). Also, there is a hotel and two shelters for unaccompanied minors outside the city, which are operated by a national NGO (ARSIS). The local authorities and municipal actors shaped and enforced this model of local-state policy. At the beginning of the dispersal policy set by the Greek state, the Municipality of Volos asked the Ministry of Defence to place refugees "outside the city" (E-Thessalia, 2016). Refugee children, in the beginning, had non-formal education but attended language courses given by trained personnel inside the camp. After the refusal of the nearby village to accept them in their school, enrolment took place in an area near a Roma settlement in the working-class area of Nea Ionia, Volos (Vergou, 2019).

Figure 3. Moza camp in Volos, September 2020. Source: International Organization of Migration (2020).

However, local solidarity groups have been quite active in the city, providing informal support to the newcomers' settlement process, especially in the areas of education and basic needs. Although some solidarity actions took place in 2016 when refugees settled in the camp (Moza) on the outskirts of the city, such voices and activities were consolidated after the objections of several Greek parents to accept enrolment of refugee children in the school their children attended, which was near a refugee shelter in the north part of the city (E-Thessalia, 2018). The outburst of such xenophobic instances triggered new forms of small but robust solidarity mobilisations of active citizens in the city, finally succeeding in overcoming resistance and allowing refugee enrolment in that school. The absence of any support from the local state authorities along with the outburst of racism

and xenophobic behaviour from the Greek parents were the key drivers of the aforementioned solidarity actions. These local initiatives of support to refugees continued under different forms (cultural activities, first aid help, etc.) until the closure of the shelter at the end of 2020 and the transfer of refugees to other camps around Greece. However, other grassroots initiatives have not ceased providing mainly food support and emergency supplies to refugees housed in the Moza camp.

The pattern of the city of Volos seems to match, theoretically, to a decoupling pattern (Scholten, 2013; Scholten & Penninx, 2016), which is characterized by the absence of any mechanisms of cooperation and political interaction between government levels and represents a new wave of local policies of exclusion. During the relocation of refugees to the mainland, this pattern of absence of coordination took more severe conflicts and competitive forms between different levels of government due to political and institutional factors (see Spencer, 2018). In this case, municipalities or regional authorities challenged the central state and not only did something different (as it happens in decoupling patterns) but refused to comply with the central decisions of the state. To that end, the local authorities either refused to join the ESTIA program or protested against the accommodation of refugees. As a result, in some cases, the opening of reception facilities in buildings, hotels, and open centres were cancelled altogether.

In Volos, as seen in Figure 4, refugees are accommodated in facilities at the margins of the city, outside the urban fabric. Moreover, schools with reception classes for refugees are located in the North-West suburbs, where there is a high concentration of lower socio-economic categories and of Roma people in contrast to the northeast neighbouring areas which house higher socio-economic categories. Consequently, municipal intervention reinforced segregation processes in the city and eventually refugees were excluded from the centre of the city. In summary, the pattern of the city matches a decoupling governance arrangement, where refugees are excluded from the city. In this case, institutional changes are taking the form of subsidiary arrangements, where other actors are taking action, such as a national NGO (Arsis), undertaking an important complementary role in housing unaccompanied minors.

4.3. Katerini: A Localist, bottom-up Governance Arrangement

Katerini is a medium-size city (in Greek terms) of 85,851 inhabitants. The percentage of non-Greeks living in the city is 5.8% (EKKE–ELSTAT, 2015). Close to the city (about 13 kilometres), in Kato Milia village, there is a refugee camp which accommodates approximately 350 refugees (see Figure 5). After the closure of the national borders in March 2016 when thousands of refugees and

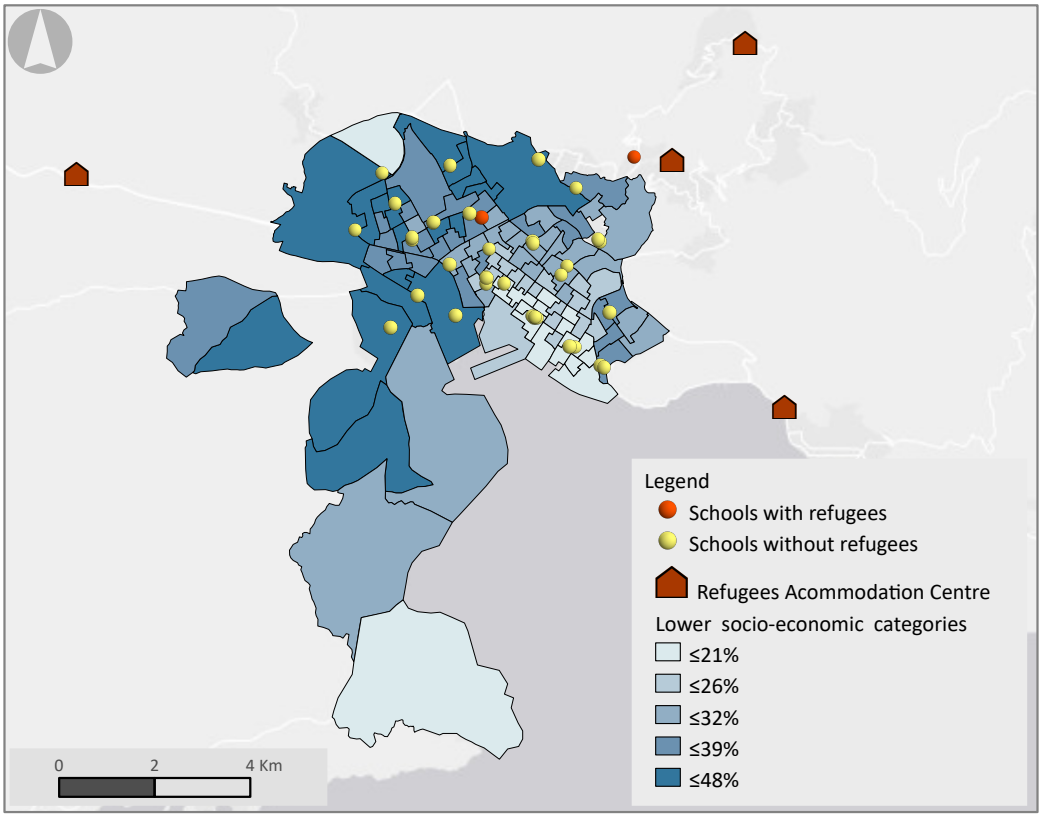

Figure 4. Distribution of lower socio-economic categories (2011) and refugee school population in Volos. Source: Authors' elaboration and EKKE–ELSTAT (2015).

asylum seekers were left stranded at Idomeni camp in northern Greece, local volunteers from Katerini, who were members of the charitable activity of the Social Grocery of the Evangelical Church, began to provide support to refugees and ended up transferring those most vulnerable into their own apartments in Katerini. Then, they established the NGO Perichoresis to support refugees in need. The NGO operates under the auspices of the Greek Evangelical Church of Katerini and it manages around 130 apartments, accommodating more than 598 refugees. Financial support comes from both the ESTIA housing program and other humanitarian organisations and church networks, mainly from Germany, such as Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World), Hilfe für Brüder International (Help for Brothers International) a mission association of the German Evangelical Alliance and a broader international church network of ACT Alliance and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe (Diakonie Emergency Aid). A global, cross-border philanthropic foundations network seems to filter into the governance of residential accommodation of refugees and local welfare solutions in the city. Another element that indicates the relative success of the local-based NGO approach is its ability to compete and gain institutional resources, in most cases through competitive processes and espousing a 'contract culture,' either for housing projects (ESTIA) or integration programs (HELIOS).

Figure 5. Kato Milia camp in Katerini, September 2020. Source: International Organization of Migration (2020).

In our study, we understand that the local NGO Perichoresis in Katerini played a crucial role in overcoming tensions between locals and newcomers in the 'spatial arena' and supported the smooth integration of refugees within the local community. Not only did it undertake the responsibility of running the ESTIA housing program, but it also established several other projects and activities to promote refugee integration and access to employment such as an intercultural cooking club, a sewing club and workshops, group therapy sessions for women and children, sports activities, English and Greek language lessons, and more recently, a social cooperative enterprise (Peri-Ergon) where natives and refugees make products from recyclable materials from refugee boats crossing the Aegean. Moreover, some refugees work as translators and mediators in accommodation facilities for refugees either in the city of Katerini or in the neighbouring city of Grevena. However, it was also found, but to a less degree than our case study in Larisa, that refugees are located out of the areas where higher socio-economic categories of natives reside (see Figure 6). This indicates that various factors played a role in social-spatial diversity in the city and key elements for the different paths of spatial allocation and distribution of refugees to different neighbourhoods within cities.

As our interviews made apparent, the success of the local NGO's social assistance depends on its ability to gain the support of local civil organisations and society in general. They were concerned about the public opinion and the views of the community especially in terms of refugees getting a kind of special treatment over the poor and vulnerable local people. For that reason, Perichoresis has established a new project where vulnerable native families can also benefit from subsidized housing:

> The integration of vulnerable Greek families within the same project of housing for refugees was very important for the local society. (Perichoresis representative, Interview, September 9, 2019)

> We need to show to the local society that refugees can contribute to the community…[that they] are equal to the other members of the society. [They should] find their own space in the local society…stand on their own two feet again. (Perichoresis representative, Interview, September 9, 2019)

The Perichoresis representatives believe that housing provision would help to reduce or eliminate racism, harassment, and other forms of discrimination. They stated that locals were not familiar with the cultural practises of the incomers, especially their social gathering in central public spaces, something that aggravates fear, especially at the beginning of their settlement:

> The local community can see now that refugees have a house and are integrated. So they don't feel fear. They wear headscarves [refugees] but when they have a house and a job they are not gathering at the park. When they have a house and a job they don't feel excluded or create problems. In contrast, in big cities like Thessaloniki, there are many violent incidents with refugees. (Perichoresis representative, interview, September 9, 2019)

In closing the Katerini case, a final point should be made. In the Greek welfare state, church and religious institutions have a major role in the field of social assistance. Depending on the local context, religious institutions intervene only in extreme cases of poverty and

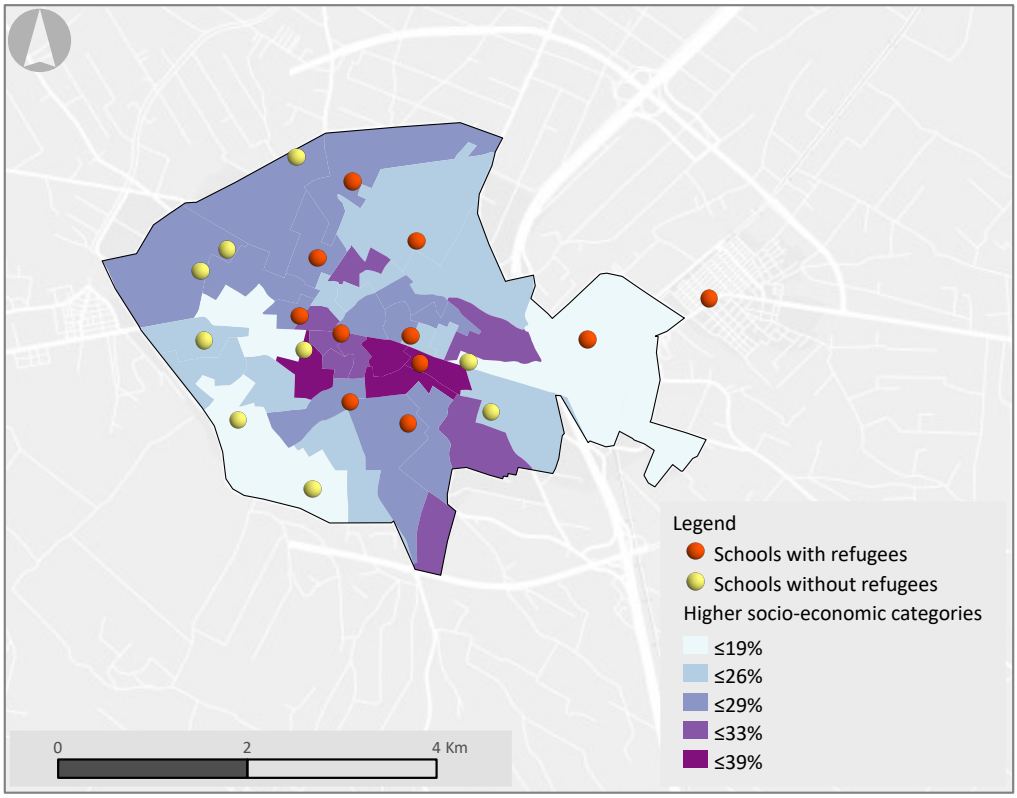

Figure 6. Distribution of higher socio-economic categories (2011) and refugee school population in Katerini. Source: Authors' elaboration and EKKE–ELSTAT (2015).

social exclusion or become a full partner of the local institutional regime (Mingione & Oberti, 2003, p. 13). In our case, the religious organisation under study maintains a major role in both cases, with a great deal of autonomy and more recently, in accommodation and integration programs of refugees.

> There is cooperation with the municipality but they don't want to interfere with the management of the accommodation and processes of refugees' integration. Generally, we work as a link between the municipality and the refugees. (Perichoresis representative, Interview, September 9, 2019)

In summary, there are different forms of institutional processes and changes regarding the accommodation of refugees in Katerini. While the role of a religious organisation as a traditional local welfare provider upraised, there was a shift of the welfare mix from caring tasks to NGOs and civil society interventions, enabling flexibility and swiftness in response by relying on global, cross-border philanthropic foundations network, donors, and direct-contract arrangements. However, the subsidiary position of religious organisations (as well as of civil society) in the local welfare has a diversified role and must undertake some risks. An important risk is the possibility of public institutions' passivity, where social responsibilities delegated from the local state to civil society (Kazepov, 2010; Oosterlynck et al., 2013a). Local institutional passivity coincides with the strong presence of a local, religious agency which may also inhibit the proper public sector engagement and the formation of reliable, accountable, and credible public responsibility (Allen, Barlow, Leal, Maloutas, & Padovani, 2004, p. 106).

5. Conclusions

The three examples of municipal governance arrangements illustrate the following different local government actions and social initiatives associated with urban areas in small and medium-sized cities in Greece: A centralist approach in accommodation and integration of refugees (Larisa); a decoupled governance arrangement where refugees are excluded from the urban fabric of the city (Volos); and a localist arrangement through a local-based NGO (religious organisation) with a more hands-on and inclusive approach for the integration of refugees (Katerini). These approaches show that municipal intervention has different variations, but there are many ways to shape or hinder urban inequalities and segregation processes. Different power relations, links and dynamics associated with local political arrangements of refugee housing give rise to distinctive processes of the social division of space.

All three cities relied on emergency measures that allowed them to either create a structure of responsibilities and arrange cooperation or emphasise the limited capacities in refugee accommodation. The city of Larisa

did not pass their responsibilities of refugee accommodation on to others or only did so to a limited degree. They used the already existing social assistance structures built on previous experiences (a municipal public benefit enterprise), following the example of other neighbouring municipalities and thus chose a strategy of organisational change. Therefore, the municipality was better prepared and able to implement smaller changes and adopt a social welfare approach to immigration, including refugee reception and accommodation in the city. In contrast, the municipality of Volos chose a more decoupled governance arrangement (Scholten, 2013; Scholten & Penninx, 2016) where refugees were excluded from the urban fabric. In structural terms, the city is rather different from Larisa, not only concerning the organisational structure of social welfare provision but also in the way that the municipality deals with migration and diversity. Local officials in Volos framed the settlement of the newcomers as a problem and asked for refugees to be placed outside the city. In contrast, the municipality of Katerini opted for a no-involvement strategy by delegating its responsibilities to third-party actors (e.g., a local-based NGO called Perichoresis, supported by a religious organisation). In this case, we observed the important risk of public institutions' passivity, where social responsibilities were delegated from local state to civil society (Kazepov, 2010; Oosterlynck et al., 2013b). However, in all three cases, regardless of the different approaches, there is a tendency to allocate refugee housing or other accommodation relatively closer to neighbourhoods with a lower socio-economic profile than to those with affluent residents. These common strategies of local governments to allocate undesirable populations in specific areas are similar to other forms of exclusion of certain minority groups in urban areas, such as the Roma population (Vergou, 2017).

Within this context, we observed different forms of institutional processes and changing aspects that may lead to broader institutional changes. Firstly, the role of a local public institution and its multi-level governance approach: The recent reforms in migration policy regarding refugee reception and accommodation in different cities in Greece and the decentralisation of accommodation policies have provided municipalities with new regulatory powers. These brought about the need for coordination of the increased number of various actors with different interests, values, and organisational frameworks (such as international organisations, NGOs, local solidarity initiatives, and religious organisations). In this sense, these new forms of governance may well be differentiated by their local political strategies, the involvement of civil society organisations, and the cooperation with different actors.

Another aspect of institutional change can be observed through the transition from public intervention to the involvement of civil society. Although local policies are very much dependent on national regulations, there is a degree of autonomy concerning integration policies (Scholten & Penninx, 2016). Furthermore, it seems that sub-national levels of governance (local states, regions) are more resilient and able to develop institutional innovation as "laboratories" concerning social policies, citizenship, social inclusion, and participation (Kazepov, 2008). However, the involvement of civil society organisations and mixed networks plays a diverse role which entails some risks, especially when local authorities resort to a passive role in the provision of local welfare policies, as we have seen in the Katerini case. As the welfare state eroded, the role of the Church as the traditional local welfare provider was elevated—this was also reported in other countries (Oberti & Preteceille, 2018). This shifted the welfare mix of social care tasks to NGOs initiatives and enabled flexibility and swiftness in response by relying on private finance, donors, and direct-contract arrangements. The intermediary structures involved in the local systems, which are diverse and range from large religious organisations to small volunteer groups, may fill in the void left by the absence of public interventions (Katerini case). Their success in combatting social exclusion issues certainly depends on the local contexts but we also have to keep in mind that in some cases such intervention might be seen as controversial or contested "battlegrounds" either between state and local state actors (Campomori & Ambrosini, 2020, p. 3) or among public and non-public actors. Furthermore, bureaucratic rigidity, lack of control, and strong clientelistic networks seem to hinder innovative developments.

Finally, another aspect of change can be observed through the effectiveness of civil society's social initiatives and civil actions of various kinds. Flexible forms of interaction between public actors and bottom-up initiatives seem to be effective in tackling housing and other pressing social issues of refugee integration, as we have seen in all three cases. When the community social initiatives are aided by adequate resources and supportive institutions, they can be intermediaries between the needs of refugees and the local state welfare services, and this deserves more research attention. Local institutions are better equipped to understand different levels of interactions and complex social relations at socio-territorial levels. In this context, the local spatial level as a relational setting enhances the sentiment of security and belonging and creates a sense of community which is necessary for refugees to seek a new life (Blokland, 2017), but proximity alone is not sufficient to create strong ties and support. Bringing diverse social groups together in mixed neighbourhoods does not automatically result in networking and community support but in contrast, research shows that households used varied strategies to maintain their distinct class position and control proximity and distance to other social groups (Maloutas, 2020; Weck & Hanhörster, 2015).

Concluding, we found that a kind of cooperation between state authorities and community organisations is rather beneficial. Allocating different tasks and responsibilities within local welfare governance would lead to

the advancement of refugees' integration. Taking into consideration the absence of affordable housing in the Greek welfare context (Kandylis & Maloutas, 2020), public actors, and state institutions can upscale successful practices of refugee accommodation in cities through municipal housing provision (Arapoglou et al., 2019), using their experience of cooperating with accountable and credible community organisations and providing adequate state resources for the development of affordable housing. By framing the case of refugee accommodation as opening up new opportunities, we can observe that housing policies, through the use of municipal services and experiences of the ESTIA program, may result in more inclusive housing for refugees. While the role of the state may be changing and processes of state-led privatisation have emerged, what remains ever more important today is a more comprehensive welfare policy approach. In this approach, affordable housing is emerging as a fundamental social right, while at the same time, housing markets seem to be failing to address persistent social needs.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

‘It’s a Matter of Life or Death’: Jewish Migration and Dispossession of Palestinians in Acre

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Abstract
In this article, we aim to identify the actors and unpack the discourses and administrative practices used to increase current mobilities of people (Jewish immigrants, investors, tourist visitors, and evicted residents) and explore their impact on the continuity of the settler-colonial regime in pre-1948 Palestinian urban spaces which became part of Israel. To render these dynamics visible, we explore the case of Acre—a pre-1948 Palestinian city located in the north-west of Israel which during the last three decades has been receiving about one hundred Jewish immigrant families annually. Our findings reveal a dramatic change in the attempts to judaise the city: Mobility policies through neoliberal means have not only been instrumental in continuing the processes of displacement and dispossession of the Palestinians in this so-called ‘mixed city,’ but have also recruited new actors and created new techniques and opportunities to accelerate the judaisation of the few Palestinian spaces left. Moreover, these new mobility policies normalise judaisation of the city, both academically and practically, through globally trendy paradigms and discourses. Reframing migration-led development processes in cities within a settler-colonialism approach enables us to break free from post-colonial analytical frameworks and re-centre the native-settler relations as well as the immigrants-settlers’ role in territorial control and displacement of the natives in the neoliberal era.

Keywords
Acre; Israel; migration; neoliberalism; Palestine; settler colonialism; urban development

Issue
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1. Introducing Settler Colonialism and Migration-Led Urban Transformations in Israel

In the last few decades, considerable research revealed how settler-colonial cities are being portrayed as modern, globalised places, and “a magnet for international migration,” as means to conceal their on-going colonial nature (Porter & Yiftachel, 2019, p. 178). Other scholars have emphasised that neoliberal discourses and practices do not only conceal colonial structures but also take part in processes which result in eliminating the natives (Coulthard, 2014). Yet, urban research has traced colonial processes in neoliberal Israel only very recently, and mostly concerning land and property privatisation processes (Fenster, 2019; Porter & Yiftachel, 2019; Yacobi & Tzfadia, 2017).

When it comes to immigration matters, the Law of Return (1950, amended in 1976) allows the immi-

gration of individuals of Jewish descent and is usually conceived as yet another national migration policy, or, when analysed more critically, as an ethnonational repatriation policy similar to those of Germany. Palestinian refugees, in turn, are still denied their 'right to return' (Khalidi, 1992). Migration studies scholars working on Israel have focused mostly on the issues of incorporation of new Jewish immigrants (Amit, 2009; Haberfeld, Semyonov, & Cohen, 2000; Lewin-Epstein, Semyonov, Kogan, & Wanner, 2003; Mesch, 2002; Tubergen, Maas, & Flap, 2004), immigration and spatial/urban transformations (Auerbach, 2011; Berthomière, 2003; Lipshitz, 1998; Tzfadia & Yacobi, 2007, 2011; Yiftachel & Tzfadia, 2004), and intra-community racialisation. This last point refers to the large scientific production on internal racialisation in Israel, or the post-colonial stratification between Jews of European descent—Ashkenazim—and Jews of African and Asian descent—Mizrahim—(see Chetrit, 2000; Shenhav, 2006; Yiftachel, 2000). This more recent strand includes the racialisation of Former Soviet Union (FSU) immigrants (Golden, 2001; Lerner, 2015; Remennick, 2002), Ethiopian immigrants, and asylum seekers (Elias & Kemp, 2010). To the best of our knowledge, very little has been written on the racial stratification of the society at large—between different Arab groups, Jewish groups, and non-Israelis (with the exception of Samman [2013] and Dorchin & Djerrahian [2020]). We argue that on the one hand, on-going Jewish immigration is still discussed within post-colonial frameworks—hence ignoring the on-going colonisation processes; on the second hand, it is discussed through neoliberal concepts and tools, including the participation of new private actors.

The implications of such post-colonial approaches are many. Firstly, it institutes the starting point for migration studies in Israel with the establishment of Israel in 1948. This temporality allows scholars to emphasise intra-community racism and marginalise the fact that settler-migrants were instrumental to territorial occupation and Palestinians' displacement before and after 1948. Post-colonial approaches have also contributed to normalisation: The diversification of migration experiences has pointed towards the convergence of Israel with other industrialised countries' experiences, in line with Israel's great efforts to preserve its image as a 'multicultural' modern liberal democracy (Amoruso, Pappé, & Richter-Devroe, 2019). If some of these latter works address processes of demographic engineering in Israel, they dissociate the impact on Palestinians both in Israel and in the West Bank.

Secondly, the post-colonial approach relies on a Euro-centred analytical framework (Hugill, 2017). The analysis of discourses, policies, and practices related to so-called *Aliyah* (Hebrew term meaning 'ascent' referring to Jewish immigration) or to new migration types shows a shift in the conception of Jewish immigration in the last decades from an act of settling and colonising to a 'normalised' act of migration, discussed in the neoliberal terms of 'diversity,' 'multiculturalism,' 'pluralism,' 'mixed cities,' and more. Yet, these discussions fall short of adding that neoliberalisation and settler colonialism are mutually constitutive.

Hence, rather than using the post-colonial approach, which implies having overcome the colonial condition (Veracini, 2010, p. 42), the settler-colonial framework brings forth migration as an on-going structure for the dispossession of the Palestinians (Sayegh, 1965; Wolfe, 2006). Following settler-colonial logic, the heterogeneity of the settler space is not a proof of multiculturalism or pluralism, but rather it is a demographic engineering technique used to maintain the settlers' society. For example, Svirsky and Ben-Arie (2017) emphasise how the shared life of the natives in Palestine, both Palestinians and Jews, before the third decade of the twentieth century, was destroyed by Zionism to enable the emergence of the settlers' society racial division. Moreover, some immigrants 'Exogenous Other,' namely the racialised (Mizrahim or Black) Jewish groups, remain excluded from the settler society (Veracini, 2010, p. 26). Arguably, normalising the immigration experiences through the post-colonial framework and neoliberal terms participates in a politics of knowledge: One should question the socio-political implications of the use of European migration analytical tools in the Israeli–Palestinian context.

To shed light on how the settler colonial structure frames migration-led urban transformations in Israel, we will analyse the case of Acre, a pre-1948 Palestinian city located in the northwest of Israel, in which only 2% of the pre-1948 community remained. In line with Israeli immigration history, Acre's demographic composition is strongly related to the different layers of Jewish migration: Jews from Middle Eastern countries, followed by North African Jews after statehood; and in the 1970s, Soviet Jews, followed in 1990s by FSU immigrants, including a large group from Azerbaijan. Since the 1990s, the city has actively reached out to Jewish candidates to immigration and receives about 100 new families of Jewish immigrants every year, including from Ukraine, France, or India. As we will show in this article, Acre's demographic composition is expressed officially through terms reflecting pluralism. It is also the discourse used by non-institutional actors, especially in tourism and urban renewal. Nevertheless, Palestinian inhabitants of Acre still claim that displacement practices are on-going and shift the focus back to the native-settler power relations.

Hence, in this article, we argue that neoliberalisation processes have not only been instrumental to maintain the processes of displacement and dispossession of the Palestinians in Acre and beyond in Israel but have also (re)produced techniques and opportunities to accelerate the judaisation of the few Palestinian spaces left. Moreover, it has also recruited new actors beside State actors, whose role we will explain further. To do so, we examine two levels: the official ideological level, represented by the State on the one hand; and the changes observed at the city level on the other hand.

2. City-Level Policymaking and Settler Colonialism

A major development in migration scholarship, highly addressed by this thematic issue, is that of the role of actors located *in cities*. Against 'methodological nationalism,' scholars have proposed to analyse the city level to understand new migration and urban-related policy developments. Among them, those affiliated with the discipline of geography and urban studies have made three important contributions. Firstly, they acknowledge a double movement, creating tension between "the urban dimensions of rescaled migration processes" and "the role of migration in the on-going rescaling of urban spaces" (Brenner, 2010, p. 24). Secondly, they point to a "partial, incomplete and contingent devolution" of immigration power to the local state (Varsanyi, 2008, p. 882), rarely accompanied by the necessary funds (Ellis, 2006). In the case of Israel, we will see that local immigration policies are a voluntary domain (Razin, 2003) which requires from local actors an application to public funds, independently of the distribution of immigrants in the various cities of the country. Thirdly, the interventions of social actors in the local turn are meaningful (Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2010), enabling us to reconcile structural considerations with the agency of actors.

To reflect on these changes, migration scholars have proposed the concept of 'decoupling' (Scholten & Penninx, 2016, p. 976), a process by which "in a single policy domain, there may be policies at different levels that are dissociated and may even be contradictory" (Scholten cited in Oomen, 2019, p. 5). Oomen (2019, p. 4) further proposes to "focus on the dynamics of decoupling, the processes by which cities disengage from national policies to take their own positions toward refugee and migrant reception and integration." We recognise the importance of escaping methodological nationalism, yet we find that decoupling does not necessarily lead to more accommodating immigration policies, nor that it enables to acknowledge the shift of settler colonialism towards the city level. This piece might therefore come as a counterpoint to the thematic issue's contributions, since it proposes that migration-led urban development and neoliberal policies can be used to produce a hostile environment, act as a veil to hide structural violence against the natives in the colonial context, and have dramatic effects on the existing community.

Moreover, not all actors in cities can make substantial changes. As Lacroix (2018) has argued, the autonomy granted to local governments in many parts of the world may lead to paradoxical outcomes. For some, decentralisation policies have increased the dependence of local governments towards external actors, including private actors, international organisations, and the central administration. Indeed, due to the lack of resources, the autonomy of Acre is often compromised, leading to competition over legitimacy and budget within the municipality itself, leaving some areas untreated, while others suffer from overlapping. But it is also threatened by privatisation as new private actors including industrials, diaspora organisations, messianic settlers, etc. have penetrated the field of Jewish immigration policy (Desille, 2019). This piece explores the impact of these shifts on the settler-colonial structure.

3. Setting the Stage: Acre, Immigration, and Urban Development

Before we turn to contemporary considerations regarding immigration and urban development in Acre, it is worth coming back to some historical elements which unveil the structural violence against the Palestinians. Acre is endowed with a rich Arab, Islamic, and World history, which led to its recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2001. The city does not have a religious affinity to Judaism and the presence of local Jews in the city was limited to a tiny community which left the city following the outbreak of the 1936 Palestine revolt against the British Mandate (Torstrick, 2000, pp. 43, 53). Before the 1948 War, Acre had a population of 15,500, all of whom were Palestinians (Torstrick, 2000, p. 52).

On 18 May 1948, the city was occupied by the main Jewish militia *Hagana* and became part of Israel (Abbasi, 2010). Only 3,100 Palestinians were counted in the city at the end of 1948, of which about 1,000 were refugees displaced from adjacent places (Paz, 1998, pp. 95–134). They were forcibly concentrated in the old quarter of the city and were subjected to a military rule until 1951 (Torstrick, 2000, p. 64). Embodying a 'state of exception,' the military government functioned according to emergency regulations, in which Palestinian inhabitants were quarantined in the old quarter. This 'rule of man over man,' to use Scmitt's lexicon (Sa'di, 2016, pp. 6–7), was marked by looting and many acts of cruelty (Torstrick, 2000, p. 56). Additionally, in 1950, buildings belonging to refugees (which included 638 commercial places and 5528 residential rooms) were seized first by the management of the 'Custodian of Absentees' Property,' then by the 'Development Authority,' both operating under the auspices of the Ministry of Finance (Fischbach, 2003, p. 30). The Development Authority had the warrant to sell, up to a certain amount, urban refugees' properties in the private sector. Until then, they were managed by governmental companies such as the rent-controlled housing company Amidar, which is owned, among others, by the Jewish Agency (50%), the Jewish National Fund (20%), and the State of Israel (20%).

Today, Acre is located in the north of Israel, 20 km from the Lebanese border. According to the last publication of the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (2015), Acre ranks 4/10 in terms of peripheral indicator (10 being Tel Aviv area) and 4/10 when it comes to socio-economic indicator (10 being the richest localities), low indicators placing Acre at the periphery. Acre has 48,303 inhabitants, 15,361 of whom are Palestinians. The Palestinian inhabitants constitute a deprived minority and are located at the bottom of the socio-economic

and educational scales. Their bulk continues to live in the old quarter inside the historic walls. The buildings in this quarter date to the eighteenth century and form the main tourist attraction of the city. It includes some Ottoman Islamic sites such as Al-Jazzar mosque and Khan al-Umdan as well as some underground sites of the remains of the Crusader period. While the touristic buildings are being preserved, the infrastructure and the houses managed by Amidar are in poor condition due to negligence. Since the end of the military government, some Palestinians families were able to move out of the old quarter to more modern areas, either built during the British Mandate or in the 1960s and 1970s for Jewish immigrants.

Israeli post-colonial scholarship and the official discourse categorise Acre as a 'mixed city' to capture the multiplicity of socio-economic, political, and ethnic cleavages that exist within its domain. However, as various scholars argue, this category is misleading and normalises the native–settler relations in the city (Falah, Hoy, & Sarker, 2000; Tzfadia, 2011; Yacobi, 2009). In fact, the aim of urban development and migration policies exceeds ethnic segregation to pursue judaisation processes which aim to displace Palestinians. A case in point: Acre municipal plans in the 1980s aiming to move Palestinian families outside Acre by securing decent housing for them in the village of Makr. According to Torstrick (2000, p. 81), a report by the municipality issued in 1985 to the government discussed the 'Arab sector' problems in Acre including housing, poverty, and crowdedness. The "report noted that the municipality was concentrating its efforts on moving families with many children to Makr" (Torstrick, 2000, p. 81).

In addition to the spatial containment of Palestinians in selected neighbourhoods, demographic engineering also occurs through Jewish immigration outreach and active settlement policies. Today, the promotion of immigration in Israeli cities is enabled through outreach programmes (termed *idud aliyah* or encouragement of migration) on the one hand; and specialised municipal units or departments on the other hand. For this endeavour, the municipality of Acre participates in the national programme 'Group Aliyah,' a joint program of the Ministry of Immigration and Absorption (MOIA), the Jewish Agency, and municipalities. Participation in the programme implies that municipalities should send a plan, including projections. The municipality receives the maximum support from MOIA, meaning that 3.5 full-time jobs are dedicated to Jewish immigration and their settlement. According to a clerk at MOIA, interviewed in 2014, the main beneficiaries are cities in the periphery and cities hosting Palestinian residents. The deputy director of the municipal department dedicated to immigration issues is in daily contact with representatives of the Jewish Agency in the FSU mostly, to encourage candidates to immigrate to Acre. Municipal agents in this department ensure their adaptation to the city, from receiving entitlements, registering children at schools, learning Hebrew, retraining and even religious learning, and re-conversion to Orthodox Judaism. Other municipal departments are also involved, including welfare, education, and employment. The municipality receives funding for an 'Integration of Caucasus Jews' coordinator' due to the presence of an important community from Azerbaijan.

Non-State actors are also present to push forward the settlement of new immigrants, including messianic settlers such as *Garin Torani* ('seeds on duty') and ethnic NGOs. The intrusion of private actors in immigration matters has been a subject of research in European policies (Lahav, 1998). Yet, in Israel, it is still embryonic. Babis (2016) showcased the role of NGOs for Spanish-speaking immigrants, whereas Scioldo-Zürcher (2014 to 2017) led a research project at the French Research Centre in Jerusalem showing the increased role of French-speaking migration entrepreneurs in the settlement of French Jews, notably beyond the green line.

4. Methodology

To overcome the oppositional stances used to describe Acre—for some a mixed, non-segregated city; for others a city where two groups live two separate lives—we propose to juxtapose two sets of literature, but also two datasets generated by our research projects. We believe that this juxtaposition will enhance the dialogue between migration studies, refugee studies, internal displacement studies, settler colonialism literature, and geography. Between 2014 and 2019, we conducted 18 interviews with officials, municipal agents, and other stakeholders dealing with migration and tourism carried out in Hebrew and French, and with two Palestinian residents and activists carried out in Arabic and English. Besides the Mayor's, all names were modified for anonymity purposes. Institutional actors were informed of the research goals by email and at the beginning of each recorded interview. Additionally, after the interviews were conducted in the municipality, a report was written, giving the Mayor a chance to react to comments. We also collected secondary data in Hebrew and Arabic, such as news, posts on social networks, and governmental committee protocols. Moreover, we conducted fieldwork together in 2019 in the old city of Acre, where we met and discussed tourism development with five Palestinian and Jewish entrepreneurs and employees, in English and Arabic. On this occasion, we did not collect names or other details that would disclose the identity of the respondents.

We have based our methodology on 'grounded theory.' Usually associated with the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory corresponds to the 'discovery of theory from data.' This does not mean that each empirical study will lead to a new theory, but that data can challenge existing theories and enrich them. Later on, Charmaz (2011) lays down the various dimensions characterising a grounded theory approach: the

rejection of claims of objectivity, the located character of knowledge (and therefore the variations and differences it implies), the co-construction of meanings, the impact of the interactions between researchers and participants, and the fundamental role of reflexivity. A crucial element highlighted by Charmaz (2011, p. 3) is the co-production of knowledge by the researchers and participants for their research, as "people construct both the studied phenomenon and the research process through their actions." Desille is a French national who lived several years in Israel and speaks Hebrew; while Sa'di-Ibraheem is a Palestinian citizen of Israel, proficient in Arabic, Hebrew, and English. We have discussed how narratives and information given to us differed depending on which one of us turned to participants, and in which language—Arabic, Hebrew, or English. By working together and confronting the literature we usually mobilise with both the dataset we collected and our position when engaging with residents of Acre, we aim to modestly bridge the gap between these 'separate lives.'

5. Actors and Institutions in Acre: Neoliberal Means for Settler-Colonial Displacement

5.1. Immigration: Economic Development or Demographic Engineering?

Demographic and social engineering through Jewish immigration outreach and active settlement policies have been at the core of settler colonialism in Israel. Even before statehood, Zionist organisations' immigration policy did not only restrict arrivals to Jews but also limited the immigration of 'penniless Jews' (Shilo, 1994). In her volume on Acre, Torstrick (2000, p. 58) mentions that the local leadership had advocated for the settlement of young, skilled professionals in Acre since the 1950s, which was very much in line with the national policy, assisting Jewish refugees on one hand; and encouraging the immigration of young professionals on the other. However, despite the officials being vocal, few young professionals were redirected to Acre.

In the last two to three decades, Acre has deployed a more aggressive policy towards Jewish immigration. Palestinian residents of Acre see such policies as increasing attempts to judaise the city, i.e., to make the identity of the space and community more Jewish. As Bilal, an interviewed Palestinian resident, states: "The Israeli capital started to leave Acre behind, for being a periphery, poor, and full of Arabs. This led Acre's identity to become more Arabic. Therefore, for [Mayor Lancry], it was important to bring Jews" (2019). The municipality, through its spokesperson, defensively rejects the 'judaisation' argument and presents immigration policies as a means to "bring a strong population" (extract from field diary, 2014). When interviewed, Mayor Lancry (2014) went even further, arguing that "immigrants are one of my daily priorities." He continued: "I see in immigrants a resource that can lead the city to social and economic development." This discourse is backed by the deputy director of the municipal immigration department, Elisa (2014), who translates the municipal needs through targeting candidates who are "educated people, with children," and whose "potential is usable." Zion (2015), the deputy mayor, himself an immigrant from the FSU, states: "The [immigrants], they are also, apart from the cultural and social issues, they also fill the schools." According to statistics, these goals are met, as between 2007 and 2011, 749 new immigrants settled in Acre, among them only 7.74% were older than 65 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2012). But the age of the newcomers does not seem to be the most crucial criteria. When asked about the underlying motives of this immigration agenda, Zion finally revealed the racial aspect of this work: "It's life and death….All the (Palestinian) villages will come to us," he said. A statement that emphasises not only the racial categorisation among Acre's social groups but also his perspective regarding the possibilities of existing: us or them. He continued: "It's a matter of life or death. What did you think? They will take the school, they will. I tell you that. We, Aliyah integration, it's blood, blood transfusion." While this quote might be stating the obvious of the Zionist agenda, in the municipality's official statements, it is usually concealed by 'diversity' and 'multiculturalism' discourse, as we will show later. The terms used by the deputy mayor as "life or death" and "blood transfusion" reveal, on the one hand, the structural elimination of the natives in settler-colonial societies, and on the other hand, the settlers' continuous fear of the return of the natives.

Nevertheless, in recent decades, the municipality is not the only institution dealing with the settlement of new immigrants. A range of private actors has also entered the arena. For instance, a French magazine and real estate agents have joined forces to bring French Jewish families to Acre. As a result, a dozen French families settled in Acre. More recently, the non-profit organisation *Shavei Israel*, whose stated objective is "assisting descendants of Jews and the Lost Tribes of Israel to reclaim their roots" (Shavei Israel, n.d.) has participated in the settlement of Indian "Bnei Menashe" immigrants. They funded a position among the messianic settler group *Garin Torani*, present in the city of Acre to assist in the incorporation of these newcomers. Messianic settlers such as the *Garin Torani* are families and individuals who, according to their definition, organise to live together in towns and neighbourhoods with a small Jewish or religious population, to strengthen the connection to Judaism and drive social and economic change. For example, one group called *Garin Daniali* has been active in the last few years in mandatory Acre, and describes itself as a group which "works to expand and rejuvenate the ranks of the Jewish community by attracting young families." Another group with similar aims, active in Acre since 1997 is *Garin Ometz* ('seeds of courage') which, according to its website, includes about "200 young religious-nationalist families" (Garin Ometz, 2016).

5.2. Tourism and Displacement in the 'Diverse' City

The post-colonial lexicon of 'multiculturalism' and 'mixed cities' has been used by Acre's leaders involved with tourism development since the first years following the 1948 war. For example, Yosef Gadish (Acre's mayor between 1952 and 1961) initiated an Arab minority folklore museum in the historical Ottoman hammam. Despite the displacement of most of Acre's residents a few years earlier in 1948 and the hazardous status of the Old City, for the mayor, the exhibit symbolised "the peaceful life that survives in our mixed city, Acre" (Torstrick, 2000, p. 68).

In the last decade, the development of a new municipal branding strategy has passed from officials in the municipality to an Israeli branding firm. This new actor maintained the discourse of 'diversity,' as they came up with the slogan 'Acre: City of Mediterranean cultures.' At the time, the slogan was not followed by immediate tourism activities (interview with Ketter, a consultant on tourism in Acre, in 2019; see also Avraham & Ketter, 2015). It seems, however, that this exercise has forced decision-makers to re-consider the tourism potential of the city. In fact, Mayor Lancry dates his interest in pushing forward the 'Mediterranean Cultures' of the city to the intercommunity riots of Yom Kippur/Ramadan between 8 to 13 October 2008, during which tens of Jewish residents surrounded and attacked the house of a Palestinian who drove his car on the day of atonement, or '*Yom Kippur*.' This developed into four days of riots involving thousands of Jewish and Palestinian residents and resulting in damaged houses and cars as well as tens of injured and arrested people. These events form the epitome of a series of attacks on Arabs and their properties in Acre, which increased in the previous years following the settlement of what is referred to as "Zionist settler groups" including the abovementioned *Garin* groups in the city (Arabs48, 2010). Nevertheless, following these violent events, the mayor argues: "We took the story of the Jews/Arabs [relations] as a lever. People hide multiculturalism. We took this multiculturalism and we put it on the priorities of every place" (interview with Mayor Lancry, 2014). To illustrate the municipal will, we were handed a book of stories and recipes of Acre's residents, from various national backgrounds, illustrating the many social groups present in the city, beside the general Palestinian/Jewish residents divide line. In a second interview, a year later, the mayor reaffirms: "Mediterranean cultures. That's the multicultural: tolerance….We knew that from the beginning, before the riots, we said that instead of looking at that as a weakness, look at it as an advantage, because, in Acre city, everybody lives! The city of everyone."

Unlike Zion's statements of "life or death," the mayor argues that "in Acre city, everybody lives," referring to immigrants and Palestinians as a multicultural society. These seemingly contradictory declarations represent two methods leading to the same aim: marginalising the Palestinian identity of Acre and displacing the Palestinian population, or at least turning them into 'another' minority in the city. As to the existence of this multiculturalism, Nasreen, a 32-year-old Palestinian woman, said: "Although an increasing number of Palestinian families are living in the 'new' quarters, this has not led to coexistence: each group leads a separate life. Furthermore, the Palestinians are still suffering from racism." Similar opinions to these were reported by a survey conducted by Falah et al. (2000, p. 790), according to which Palestinians feel that not only do official institutions not promote coexistence between Jews and Palestinians, but they deliberately encourage residential segregation on ethnic grounds. Hence, they argue: "It is not surprising, thus, to find that [in] Acre the percentage of the Arab population has declined between 1961 and 1994" (Falah et al., 2000, p. 790).

Nevertheless, the neoliberal means of branding the city continue, as well as the exploitation of Palestinian existence for profit. In 2015, two experts based at Haifa University, Avraham and Ketter, proposed a new branding strategy for Acre "as a shared space between Arabs and Jews, and as an extension to the existing branding plan of Acre as a hub of Mediterranean cultures" (Avraham & Ketter, 2015, p. 49). Meanwhile, the municipality's website still brings forth "Acre: City of Mediterranean cultures." This informs their tourism offer, with a focus on the Crusaders, Ottoman, and Jewish periods, with an absence of Palestinian history (Shoval, 2013). A tourism map of the city is available in different locations of the city, 22 out of the 35 sites indicated on the map being labelled 'Jewish sites.' Aside from municipal actors and external consultants, the term 'Mediterranean' also appears in tourism marketing materials, published by private actors, for example by Time Out magazine (2020).

However, the issues raised by Mayor Lancry regarding 'intercommunity' conflicts are far from being resolved through a new city branding. As Nasreen (2019) stated:

> it's not just another Middle-Eastern or Mediterranean town—definitely not—it is a Palestinian town, and that is the part being erased when you promote it as Mediterranean, as if Middle-Eastern is a euphemism just to not say Palestinian; and it makes it sexier also, it makes it more exotic.

The struggle over these symbolic erasures goes back to the early years of the state. For instance, some planners suggested to turn the old city of Acre into an open museum, yet devoid of its Palestinian past (Paz, 1998, p. 124). In this regard, Slyomovics (2014) and Wolfe (2006, p. 389) argue that settler colonialism not only entitles the replacement of the native society by settlers, but also the use of their imprint. In the case of Acre, this can be reflected in the narratives attached to the landmarks, which are devoid of the Arab past (Shoval,

2013), but it can also be traced in a double movement. On the one hand, as Bilal (2019) claimed, Jews who move into the Old city act as '*mistaarvim*' ('Arabs in disguise'): "They 'reincarnate' the place, live in old Acre, go everywhere daily, go to the fishery." On the other hand, many 'Israelisation' policies are imposed on Palestinians, including civil service or the need of Hebrew language.

5.3. Gentrification and Privatisation: New Means to Displace the Natives

The implications of immigration policies and neoliberal practices are most evident on the ground, where non-institutionalised actors are involved, such as immigrant investors. One such practice is the gentrification of indigenous neighbourhoods (Blomley, 2004; Coulthard, 2014). In the case of old Acre, processes of urban renewal and privatisation have relentlessly taken place over the last few decades.

While the historical sites had been given special attention since the 1950s, aiming to turn them into touristic attractions, the rest of the buildings that belonged to Palestinian refugees were neglected. Amidar, the governmental managing company, did not renovate the houses, banned new construction, and neglected the infrastructure, all conspiring to convert the neighbourhood into a slum area and to collapse some of the buildings (Torstrick, 2000, p. 67). Jews who moved to the quarter in the decades following 1948 left it during the 1960s as they were offered alternative housing in new neighbourhoods. This neglect began to lessen in the last two decades: Amidar started renovating houses and offering them for sale. The majority of the Palestinian residents were not able to buy the houses they lived in. Moreover, many were not able to pay their shares for the sudden sizable renovations made by Amidar, hence leading to hundreds of eviction orders and to a popular campaign "My house is not for sale" (Kurts, 2011). In a parliament committee meeting on November 18th, 2013, Haneen Zobi, a Knesset (Israeli Parliament) member affiliated to the Arab Party Balad, argued that the recent change is not part of a touristic project for developing the quarter for the benefit of the residents as Acre municipality claims, but is rather a long-term plan that aims to displace the Palestinian inhabitants. She argued: "In the 1970s, 8,000 residents lived there. Today, after 40 years, despite the natural increase, 3,000–4,000 people live there. This is a cleansing" (Knesset Economic Committee, 2013).

Meanwhile, in the city council, they insist that the last years' changes are an opportunity to open touristic businesses for Palestinians as well. The Head of Municipal Administration argued that for some projects "their aim is to preserve the soul of authentic Acre," and that the residents are part of these development processes. Yet, the question itself raises concerns regarding the role of the Palestinians in such plans. During our fieldwork in old Acre, Palestinian hostel owners expressed doubtful stands regarding the development processes. One owner was very hesitant to talk to us about 'politics,' yet, he said that Palestinian hostel owners are always treated as second class: "We [Palestinian businesses] are not their target audience in these development plans" (2019). Another Palestinian hostel owner shared with us his very long legal battle against Amidar and Old Acre Development Company to add another floor to a building he owns. He pointed out the discriminating approach these companies have regarding the ethnicity and political views of the owners: "You need to be Jewish or at least have strong links [with people in the municipality/Old Acre Development Company]" (2019). He also mentioned some rich Jewish investors who already own some assets in old Acre and who proposed to buy his hostel several times: "They want us to get exhausted, so we eventually sell the place." On the side of the street stands a new hostel owned by a Jewish investor from outside Acre. The place is designed as a capsule/pod hostel and offers, in the words of the receptionist at the hostel, a "traditional Arab floor seating." He commented on the fact that the owner is Jewish from outside Acre: "Sometimes you need people from outside to appreciate the beauty of the place," he said. One of our interviewees commented on the current situation saying that Palestinians in the new plans ought to either be displaced or, if they stay, form a silenced decoration: a reminder of Gadish's initiative for the Arab minority folklore museum. Bilal adds that misrepresentations go hand in hand with entrapment:

> Most of the Palestinian fishermen and the restaurants are unlicensed/unauthorised. This is how the authorities can stop them whenever they want….Also, there is an employment problem and many Palestinians work in Israeli businesses. This situation makes us financially trapped and, hence, unable to express our opinion regarding what is happening in the city. (2019)

He emphasised that the "privatisation" policies are not only being employed to the refugees' houses, but also public places. Mentioning the UNESCO World Heritage Site "Caravanserail of the Pillars," built in 1784 and used in different periods, he said:

> Khan al-Umdan is one of the places that was sold in a tender to French Jews; it is one of the city's historical landmarks. 15 years ago, it was a space used for shows by local Palestinian art groups, and sometimes we used to play football there.

A similar case is that of the luxurious Efendi boutique hotel. The receptionist argued it was a ruin and an abandoned building before today's owner, Uri 'Buri' Jeremias, "discovered it." It is worth mentioning here that in Israel, Uri Buri epitomises Acre for its seafood restaurants and cookbooks. The historical remains that the

building contains—an Ottoman Hamam, Byzantine remnants, and Crusader cellars—became part of the hotel's facilities, accessible only to the wealthy consumers of the hotel. Bilal explained that behind the hotel's launch, a process of displacement took place in the neighbourhood, this included police harassment and surveillance mechanisms against the residents, to force them to leave. He argues that what the residents went through might look like gentrification, a process where veteran inhabitants are forced to leave and a strong population is encouraged to settle in; however, he explains this is not the case, but rather the continuation of the displacement policies of the locals by Jewish immigrants. He says that unlike gentrification, "what we [Palestinians] are facing is a long-lasting systematic dispossession."

6. Discussion and Conclusions

In this article, we have attempted to trace the institutional and noninstitutional actors as well as their macro and micro discourses: Approaching the intersection of migration, neoliberalism, and place-making from the settler-colonial framework revealed new forms and performances of the violent structures against the natives. Neoliberalism has created a new constellation of actors, organised along new structures, leading to a lesser presence of the government, but increased *governmentality*, in the Foucauldian sense of the term. Migration and urban development matters have moved further away from the central administration to be taken over by the municipality on the one hand, and by private actors on the other hand, including external consultants (Israeli branding firm, researchers), para-public bodies (Jewish Agency, the development authority, Amidar, 'Custodian of Absentees' Property,' the police, and more), non-profit organisations (Shavei Israel), messianic settlers (*Garin Torani*), as well as entrepreneurs (hotel industry, real estate, local media). Nonetheless, these new actors continue the settler-colonial strategies, such as using Palestinian heritage to give themselves a 'sense of nativeness' in parallel to portraying Palestinians as a rootless "silent decoration."

The mapping of actors informs us greatly on the normalisation of settler colonialism in the neoliberal era. This was enabled through a methodology focusing on the urban, a shifting of the gaze between national official ideology and urban practical techniques. Here again, *actually existing neoliberalism(s)*—that is, more concrete (local) forms of neoliberalism(s) (Brenner, Peck, & Theodore, 2010; Peck & Tickell, 2002)—work hand in hand with neoliberal performances of the violent structures against the natives in settler colonialism (Blomley, 2004; Coulthard, 2014). Under neoliberalisation, the settler-colonial structure sustains a series of small, non-centralised moves and discretionary acts, performed by a wide range of actors in various institutions impacting urban development that ultimately lead to displacement. Moreover, we argue that such an exploration must stem from the historical and political context of the place.

This conclusion is based on the observation of the historical place production in Acre: it starts with the dispossession of property and containment of the Palestinian residents in the Old City, to the management of properties by Amidar. It extends to development-related tourism activities, where Jewish heritage is forced through on the one hand, while Palestinian historical places and Palestinian 'folklore' is used for economic purposes on the other hand. It is discursively performed through the branding of Acre as a 'city of Mediterranean cultures.' Hence, the Mediterranean imaginary also includes symbolic erasure, where natives are represented as "rootless" by colonial settlers (Wolfe, 2006). Through "narrative transfer" (Veracini, 2010, p. 182), indigenous people are represented as hopelessly backward, their identity being marginalised through Israelisation policies and their history being erased from narratives so that the actual society is defined as post-colonial (rather than colonial). While officials and agents at city hall argue that the qualification of "city of Mediterranean cultures" enables balancing the cultural and economic contributions of all socio-ethnic groups living in Acre, de facto, it reduces the Palestinian history and presence to a mere obstacle in a process where the ultimate goal stated is economic growth. Through globalised immigration policies, gentrification, and other neoliberal policies, indigenous spaces in the city become once again a 'frontier' for dispossession and displacement of the natives (Blomley, 2004; Coulthard, 2014; Sa'di-Ibraheem, 2020). Along with the symbolic erasure, an actual displacement of the natives occurs, for behind the globalised discourse on immigration and place-making, Palestinian existence translates to a "matter of life or death" and hence, as stated by the deputy mayor, Jewish immigration is a "blood transfusion." Therefore, the 'progressive' critical discourse on immigration and placemaking becomes in a settler-colonial society a justification and a means to carry out the elimination of natives in a 'legitimate' manner.

These findings corroborate and extend the growing literature on the politics of 'recognition' and 'multiculturalism' in settler-colonial states such as Canada, Australia, and the US in the neoliberal era. Moreover, it contributes to revealing the colonial agenda which is hidden behind the democratic, global, and progressive discourse of these regimes. Nevertheless, the processes described in this article are not only neutralised by the municipality and private actors but also through academic categorisations. Such academic discourses are not only prevalent in Israeli academia but also globally, as Jewish immigration to Israel is often entitled in academic conferences and journals as part of immigration studies and explored through analytical tools, which are relevant to the European reality. Within the politics of knowledge, we see a connection between policies and academic research: Who can be an immigrant? Who

can be an entrepreneur? When are planning issues considered as individual matters versus collective concern? How are economic performances used to shadow colonial entailments? Thus, we hope that this contribution can modestly work towards a rethinking of globalised trends, even progressive and critical approaches, especially when discussing non-European native geographies and colonised spaces.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Can Transnational Cooperation Support Municipalities to Address Challenges of Youth Migration?

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Abstract
In the cooperation project 'YOUMIG,' funded by the INTERREG Danube transnational programme, challenges of youth migration were discussed in a transnational consortium consisting of project partners from different countries from Central and Eastern Europe experiencing difficulties such as a declining population and outmigration, as well as immigration of young people, which necessitated the provision of an integration infrastructure. Project outcomes included strategies as well as pilot activities performed by local-level authorities. The following article will consider outcomes as well as experiences from stakeholders involved in the project and investigate individual and organizational learning processes throughout the project. It will elaborate on the question of the extent to which transnational cooperation can potentially facilitate sustainable institutional changes and transformation. The results confirm the potential of transnational cooperation towards triggering learning and institutional change. Nevertheless, they underline that in the context of the project, the learning processes that could be achieved were predominantly of an individual nature and that the tangible outcomes could not lead to sustainable institutional changes.

Keywords
Central and Eastern Europe; Danube Region; EU-internal mobility; INTERREG; organizational learning; transnational cooperation; youth migration

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1. Introduction

Between 2017 and 2019, the transnational cooperation project 'YOUMIG' was funded by the INTERREG programme. In the project, challenges of youth migration were discussed in a transnational consortium, consisting of project partners from different Central and Eastern European countries who were experiencing challenges such as declining populations and outmigration, as well as immigration, and therefore feeling the necessity to provide an infrastructure for integration. Migration in the Danube Region, including East-West EU-internal migration as well as migration between EU-member states and candidate countries were in the focus of the project, representing a form of migration that has significantly emerged in the last years. For many countries represented in the consortium, the free movement of labour has led to intensified outmigration of young people in the previous decades and as such has become a major concern for society and politics. The project partners developed local-level actions and visions to react to challenges arising from migration, e.g., by providing better services for young migrants. Exchanging ideas on a transnational basis should lead to improved capacity building of institutions dealing with the topic of migration.

The consortium consisted of 19 partners from eight countries and of different types such as (a) municipal partners from cities and towns in the Danube Region, (b) partners from statistical offices, and (c) partners from scientific institutions (universities) as well as regional development institutions (see list of partners in Table 1). Partners were selected with a view to 1) amplifying the knowledge on youth migration in general, 2) making youth migration more evidence-based within the countries of the Danube Region, and 3) developing potential strategies for local stakeholders to deal with challenges arising from intensified EU-internal migration. Partners from countries both with a positive and a negative migration balance were represented in the consortium. The project activities were generally focussed on supporting municipal stakeholders in addressing challenges of migration, therefore also focussing on the question of the extent to which transnational cooperation can support local stakeholders' governance of population decline and integration measures. The following article will focus on this latter question and critically examine transnational learning activities and their potential of leading towards sustainable institutional transformations on the local level.

It wants to do so by drawing on results from an evaluation conducted at the end of the project. The evaluation was carried out as an online survey, addressing all partners involved in the project. From a total of around 70 consortium members, 35 have answered the survey. Considering the number of collaborators with administrative and financial responsibilities within the project, this return can be rated as satisfying. The evaluation tried to shed light on individual and collective learning processes throughout the project. One main concern of the evaluation was determining how the different local partners could learn about the different viewpoints represented in the consortium and in the given time frame provided by the project. The survey consisted of closed and open questions. The results from open questions, but also the author's experiences and observations made throughout the project, enriched the analysis. Further, one year after the project has ended, project partners were contacted for an ex-post evaluation. Partners from the local level were asked about individual and organizational learning experiences gained during the project. Furthermore, information was gathered on the extent to which the project has brought about sustainable changes on the local level as well as on the extent to which results and outcomes were still activated and in use and thus have facilitated institutional transformation. The article will reflect on the ways in which transnational cooperation can contribute to learning about youth migration and mobility, particularly for towns and cities that display different migration profiles, including emigration. It will further scrutinise how project outcomes and learning experiences may lead to sustainable institutional changes, so that challenges of youth migration may be addressed more effectively on the local level.

2. Youth Migration Challenges in the 'Danube Region'

2.1. Status Quo: Migration in the 'Danube Region'

The so-called 'Danube Region' can be considered as a functional migratory region, consisting of sending and receiving countries of EU-internal migration, as well as candidate and third countries, displaying historic migration ties (Nemeth & Gruber, 2019). According to the 'European Strategy for the Danube Region' (European Commission, 2020a), the region comprises 14 countries: nine EU-member states (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia), two candidate countries (Montenegro and Serbia), and three third countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, and Ukraine). It represents one of the European 'macro-regions,' consisting of countries and regions facing similar challenges within the European territory and the need to develop a comprehensive spatial strategy (European Commission, 2017). The INTERREG DTP-programme 'Danube' is dedicated to common challenges within this region, with demographic and societal challenges being two of them (European Commission, 2020a).

Migration and especially migration of young people has intensified in the Danube Region in the last decade (Nemeth & Gruber, 2019), as did intra-EU mobility in general, and particularly East–West migration within the Union (Baláz & Karasová, 2017). The intensified migration and mobility has emerged mainly due to historical and political transformation, i.e., the collapse of socialist regimes between 1989 and 1990 and the enlargements of the EU. The internal market and the freedom to move represent a main prerequisite for intensified migration within the enlarged EU territory (King, 2018). Structural changes of EU policy and EU enlargements further transformed conditions for individuals from non-member states migrating to the EU and respectively to states that became EU members (Verwiebe, Wiesböck, & Teitzer, 2014). From a neo-classical and macro perspective, the disparities between Eastern and Western countries in the region, concerning their wealth and economic possibilities, offer a motivation for labour migration. But there are other theoretical viewpoints offering valid explanations, specifically when taking the intensified motivation of young people towards mobility within the European territory into focus. As King (2018) puts it, the fall of the Iron Curtain has created a 'new space for opportunities' and being mobile—or having the possibility to be mobile—a new norm in the context of their transition to adulthood. Next to opportunities in the context of labour and education, lifestyle factors are important drivers for young people's mobility (see e.g., Recchi & Favell, 2009). Causes and types of intra-European migration and migration to Europe are often the results of complex decision-making and can be explained by economic, social, familial, and cultural factors, with usually more than one reason being of importance (Verwiebe

et al., 2014). Generally, migration is a highly selective phenomenon, especially in the context of age, as important life-course events that may trigger mobility usually take place at younger ages (see Kley & Mulder, 2010).

The project YOUMIG took the age group of 15–35-year-olds into focus, representing an age group were most life-course events and transitions usually take place, which eventually also may trigger mobility (e.g., transition to higher education and from education to work, family foundation, etc.; see King, Lulle, Morosanu, & Williams, 2016). Within the project YOUMIG, eight countries of the Danube Region were represented in the consortium: Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Slovenia—seven of them with a local partner. For all local partners, a *Local Status Quo Analysis* was conducted at the beginning of the project, to learn about dynamics and types of migration and mobility (YOUMIG, 2018). The analysis included quantitative data analyses of migration and demographic data on the national and local level, a qualitative analysis with local stakeholders to interpret existing patterns and trends, as well as an investigation of types of migration and migration challenges.

We have found various and diverse migration profiles within the Danube Region and within the consortium of the project presented here (see Nemeth & Gruber, 2019, for a detailed overview). While some countries and regions are showing population growth and a positive net inflow of international migration and EU migration, a negative net migration is observed for the majority of these countries. In most countries represented in the project, the Danube Region includes the most important receiving or sending regions. In Austria, one of the main receiving countries of the Danube Region, migration from new European member states has increased, notably since 2007. The Danube Region today represents the most important sending region for immigration to Austria (see Fassmann, Gruber, & Nemeth, 2018).

The *Local Status Quo Analyses* (see YOUMIG, 2018) revealed that labour migration represents a main element of migration within the Danube Region, consisting of different types, with target earners and career seekers being of prime importance (see King et al., 2016, for detailed typologies on labour migration). Very often, stakeholders have reported that migrants take up jobs that are below their qualification, which is considered a main migration challenge within the Danube Region (see Agyas & Sarcsevity, 2017; Alexandrov, 2017; Bleha et al., 2017; Rath, Gruber, Nemeth, & Pschaid, 2017). Further, intensified student migration plays a key role in increasing the mobility of the young population, although very often studying and working in a different country go hand in hand (Rath et al. 2017). Personal networks and family ties are markedly important factors for continued migration within the Danube Region (Agyas & Sarcsevity, 2017; Rath et al., 2017). Transnational families have therefore been named as an important topic within the region. Interviews with local stakeholders and young migrants revealed that quality of life and future opportunities for the next generation also play an important role in the decision to migrate (Gruber & Nemeth, in press). Many moves observed during the project can be categorised as types of circular migration (e.g., seasonal labour migration, daily/weekly commutes), emphasising their importance within the Danube Region (Aralica et al., 2017).

2.2. Migration Challenges on the Local Level and the Potential of EU Cohesion Policy to Address Them

Intra-EU mobility has been promoted by the European Commission as a strategy to create more and better jobs

Table 1. Partner institutions represented in the consortium (excluding associated partners).

Partner type	Partners	Country
Statistical offices	Hungarian Central Statistical Office (*Lead Partner*)	Hungary
	National Statistical Institute of the Republic of Bulgaria	Bulgaria
	Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia	Serbia
Local partners (towns and cities)	Municipality of Sfantu Gheorghe	Romania
	Burgas Municipality	Bulgaria
	Municipality of the City district of Bratislava—Rača	Slovakia
	Municipality of Szeged	Hungary
	City of Graz	Austria
	Municipality of Kanjiza	Serbia
	Maribor Development Agency	Slovenia
Research institutions	Institute for Economic Research	Slovenia
	Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities	Romania
	INFOSTAT—Institute of Informatics and Statistics	Slovakia
	University of Vienna	Austria
	Institute for East and Southeast European Studies	Germany
	Institute of Social Sciences	Serbia

(Scholten & Van Ostaijen, 2018), since a more mobile population is widely perceived as a more resilient one. Higher degrees of mobility imply faster adjustment to economic shocks (Caldera Sanchéz & Andrews, 2011) and (especially internal) migration is seen as one prime mechanism to match labour demand and supply at local and regional scales (Stillwell, Bell, & Shuttleworth, 2018, p. 59). For many countries and regions in the EU labour market, mobility also represents a challenge (European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion, 2019). Sending regions experience intra-EU mobility as a threat, notably in countries from Central and Eastern Europe, where it mainly signifies outmigration of the young and educated, which—paired with persistently low fertility rates—results in an unprecedented population decline and ageing (Lutz et al., 2019). Although receiving countries of EU-internal labour migration might experience the inflow of young people as a positive opportunity, we know that it also represents an increased demand for integration measures and a certain challenge for welfare systems (Scholten & Van Ostaijen, 2018), which is on the other hand perceived by politics and societies as a challenge.

The *Local Status Quo Analyses* collected perceived challenges and implications of youth migration from local stakeholders in the case study regions of the project. The outflow of young and educated population is conspicuously perceived as a major challenge by these local stakeholders. In the first place, it has demographic implications. From a national perspective, projections support this perception, showing that in Eastern European member states, intra-EU mobility will have the biggest impact on population change in the future (Lutz et al., 2019). For some countries (e.g., Romania and Bulgaria), a decline of population, due to low fertility and a negative migration balance, is forecasted (Eurostat, n.d.). In all partner countries of the YOUMIG project, fertility rates are below the level of natural replacement, leading to population ageing with outmigration intensifying this trend (see Nemeth & Gruber, 2019). Secondly, migration challenges can lead to individual and societal challenges for outmigration locations as they perceive a decrease in population as a loss of human capital, which is linked to the decrease of social and intellectual capital and knowledge (see Kapur & McHale, 2005). Although return migrants were reported as an important factor in some analyses (e.g., Alexandrov, 2017), academic literature reports how return migrants can fail to reintegrate into their former home society or the labour market, which often hinders the process of applying experiences and knowledge that was gained previously (Cerase, 1974; Lang & Nadler, 2014). Furthermore, the number of migrants that eventually return or intend to return often represents only a share of those who had left (Snel, Faber, & Engbersen, 2015), although the 'liquid' type of migration makes return more feasible for EU-internal mobility (Martin & Radu, 2012). In general, return is attractive when it has occupational or income advantages, which remains a challenge in the context of the Danube Region, although economic, social, and political developments and increasing economic return have been observed for some Eastern European countries (Papademetriou & Terrazas, 2009). Beside return migration, diaspora engagement and (social) remittances have been acknowledged in academic literature as potential benefits for sending regions (Collyer, 2013; Levitt, 1998). Countries of the Danube Region have thus far mainly focussed on the facilitation of cultural and political identity through diaspora networks or have only recently started comprehensive diaspora policies (see e.g., Herner-Kovács, 2014).

Intra-EU migration is an important and widely promoted element of the European internal market. Challenges that arise from it have been addressed by EU cohesion policy. As lagging and peripheral regions generally tend rather to experience outmigration, EU cohesion policy focusses on the investment in lagging regions to make them more competitive. Place-sensitive policies are promoted particularly to support local strength and endogenous potential (European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion, 2019; Rodríguez-Pose, 2017). Further, cohesion policy focusses on an improvement in dealing with challenges, by improving institutional capacities to create easier mobility in order to pursue social, economic, and territorial cohesion. There have been several EU-funded projects dedicated to migration challenges, concluding with calls for better governance of migration, e.g., in the form of improved information and guidance for newcomers, also when targeting internal movers and intra-EU mobiles (see e.g., Reeger, 2018). Several EU-funded projects focussed specifically on youth migration, also in the context of INTERREG (see KEEP, 2020). The YOUMIG project therefore represents one example of a project that was designed to address challenges and implications to support municipalities in the development of strategies towards the improved handling of either population loss and outmigration or of immigration (and sometimes of both, which can represent challenges occurring simultaneously), putting emphasis on transnational and institutional capacity building and cooperation.

3. Improving Institutional Capacities and Triggering Institutional Change through Transnational Learning in the Context of INTERREG

The INTERREG programme for European territorial cooperation is part of the EU Regional Policy and provides funding for the cooperation of different partners (governmental stakeholders and administration, stakeholders from economy, society, or NGOs as well as scientific partners), mainly in the context of regional and spatial development. It is dedicated to supporting cities and regions in Europe towards an improved handling of the challenges they are currently facing (Hachmann, 2011). Results of

INTERREG projects include the development of strategies, guidelines, handbooks, pilot actions, and training units, but also investment in smaller infrastructures and facilities (see e.g., Bundesministerium für Verkehr und Digitale Infrastruktur, 2017). Projects are financed by the Structural Fund of the EU and are usually funded for three years.

The cooperation can be either between border regions (cross-border), between regions (regional cooperation), or of transnational character. Transnational projects take up challenges that are specific to certain cooperation areas, focussing on spatial development in larger cooperation areas (Hachmann, 2011). The idea of transnational cooperation is that in some areas, challenges are spilling over administrative borders and therefore larger territories need to be addressed. Yet, the identification of themes with true transnational character is challenging (Dühr & Nadin, 2007) and transnational problem-solving remains contested. The transnational cooperation programme focusses on the so-called 'macro-regions' (with the Danube Region being one of them), "where there is a need to increase economic and social integration and cohesion" (Faludi, 2008, p. 6). Projects should contribute to the implementation of common European targets and objectives (such as the Europe 2020 strategy or the Territorial Agenda).

The INTERREG Danube programme gave priority to four policy fields during the period 2014–2020 (European Commission, 2017). Priority 4 focussed on the 'well-governed Danube Region' intending to improve the capabilities and capacities of public institutions and key actors with the strategic vision to influence national/regional/local policies "through the development and practical implementation of policy frameworks, tools and services and concrete pilot investments" (European Commission, 2017, p. 4). Transnational cooperation is seen as an intervention that can support the improvement of governance, e.g., via the exchange of good practices (European Commission, 2017). Transnational cooperation can therefore be conceptualised as an element that can trigger institutional change, based on organizational learning.

3.1. Conceptualizing Organizational Learning through Transnational Cooperation

Several studies have investigated how organizational learning occurs in the context of transnational cooperation projects (Böhme, Josserand, Ingi Haraldsson, Bachtler, & Polverari, 2003; Colomb, 2007; Laähteenmaäki-Smith & Dubois, 2006; Harfst & Osebik, 2015; Vinke-de Kruijf & Pahl-Wostl, 2016). In these studies, it was widely acknowledged that learning in cooperation projects is based on social or collaborative learning, which "occurs when social interactions and processes change the understanding of the individuals involved" (Vinke-de Kruijf & Pahl-Wostl, 2016, p. 243). Social learning thereby is usually differentiated in individual learning and organizational learning, with individual learning widely considered the starting point for organizational learning (Hachmann, 2008; Vinke-de Kruijf & Pahl-Wostl, 2016). When learning can be transferred from the 'micro-' to the 'meso-level,' it can be implemented by organizations and furthermore does not get wasted once an individual leaves an organization (Vinke-de Kruijf & Pahl-Wostl, 2016). Learning is said to be based on a transfer of knowledge, which includes different forms: the transfer of explicit knowledge, which is mainly comprised of formalised information and knowledge, as well as tacit knowledge, which includes knowledge of a more personal nature and is more difficult to codify (Geppert & Clark, 2003). Group learning is influenced by the characteristics of the participants (their ability and motivation to participate and to learn), the composition of the partnership (including the knowledge of the single partners as well as mutual trust), and the interaction processes (in quality and quantity) within the project (Vinke-de Kruijf & Pahl-Wostl, 2016). Transnational learning has been investigated recently in the context of city-to-city learning, specifically in the context of city-to-city learning on climate change (Bellinson & Chu, 2019; Haupt, Chelleri, van Herk, & Zevenbergen, 2020). In a recent article investigating transnational climate city networks, Haupt et al. (2020) find that there are great limitations to transnational learning, especially when learning from best practices and front-runner cities. The authors argue for a distinction between the mere sharing of knowledge and the in-depth process of learning.

This distinction might explain why not all INTERREG projects succeed in triggering organizational learning processes (Hachmann, 2008) or sustainable institutional changes. Although "INTERREG offers a 'structure of opportunity' for the communication, dissemination and transformation of different concepts, cultures and ideas…[c]hanges in policies and practices resulting from the cooperation and learning processes may or may not subsequently happen" (Colomb, 2007, p. 365). Mostly it is only individual learning achievements that are reached (Colomb, 2007; Vinke-de Kruijf & Pahl-Wostl, 2016). Learning is not always the main motivation of participants, but sometimes it is merely the increased access to EU financial resources, which of course can hinder a learning process (Colomb, 2007). Geppert and Clark (2003) point out that knowledge transfer across borders needs translation to the destination context and that learning processes might be contested with an opposition towards ideas that travel over borders. This can particularly be the case when learning processes are understood as 'catching up' processes, showing no sensitivity to local and national contexts. Cultural as well as language barriers are sometimes described as limiting factors (Harfst & Osebik, 2015), although problems in cooperation are not always primarily related to language (Laähteenmaäki-Smith & Dubois, 2006). Learning can also be made more complicated when stakeholders are embedded in different administrative or legal systems

(Böhme et al., 2003). Further, projects are awarded a distinct set of financial and time resources, which is often seen as a limitation to the means of properly fulfilling all learning objectives (Harfst & Osebik, 2015). Some authors even mention financial value as the main interest of institutions in being part of an INTERREG project (Shepherd & Ioannides, 2020). It also has to be mentioned that for many actors involved, the cooperation in transnational projects represents only a minor aspect of their daily work and therefore they display limited commitment potential (Hachmann, 2008). There are well-recognised examples of INTERREG projects that were able to implement organizational learning effects (see e.g., European Commission, 2020b). As projects usually are preceded by a period of extensive planning and proposal preparation, they generally have a good basis for developing a common problem statement and objectives for the transnational cooperation process, as well as for identifying potential learning experiences. The European Commission promotes close cooperation with key stakeholders and the development of project ideas with close thematic ties to existing EU strategies to guarantee the successful implementation of project results (European Commission, 2017).

3.2. The Evaluation of Learning Processes and the Sustainability of Project Outcomes

In past studies, it has been criticised that INTERREG programmes are mainly evaluated according to quantitative measures relying on indicator-based and quantitative methods, with the main focus on the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme (Hachmann, 2011), wheras less-tangible outcomes remain widely neglected (Colomb, 2007; Hachmann, 2011). Authors have noted that there are often no ex-post evaluations of INTERREG projects, which impairs the potential of learning from past projects (Colomb, 2007). Further, a more qualitative form of evaluation and in-depth investigation of the individual as well as organizational learning process has been called for, to gain better insight into possible future knowledge development and for capitalization on transnational cooperation projects (Colomb, 2007).

The INTERREG Danube programme likewise mainly uses quantitative measures to evaluate successful project implementation. The project partners report on the development of the project in the 'progress report.' Partners report back on how progress is achieved in the development of single deliverables and report potential difficulties and deviations or delays in the implementation. Evaluation throughout the project is mainly focussed on financial management. The outreach of the project is measured by a quantification of the target groups that were reached. Yet, learning experiences gained throughout the projects are also collected in the final reports, as shared by the respective partners and collected by the lead partners. This however happens only by the time that the end of the project is reached. Although 'documented learning interactions' were highlighted as a main element of the projects (see INTERREG Danube, 2016), having the goal to acquire institutional knowledge in the transnational context, an in-depth evaluation of these learning interactions that were defined and conducted by the partners (see Soltész, 2019) has not been performed. Of course, the sheer number of these documented learning interactions, denominated in a very large number of projects, complicates such an evaluation. An evaluation particularly emphasizing the transnational element of different forms of learning would nevertheless be an important element to anticipate the success of the programme. The INTERREG Danube programme clearly emphasised a result-oriented approach as well as the delivery of concrete and measurable outputs and results (see INTERREG Danube, 2016). Although intangible tasks have also been mentioned as valid outputs (see INTERREG Danube, 2016, part 6, p. 13), clear priority is given to tangible outcomes and their communication. Calls for a more qualitative and in-depth evaluation therefore seem not to have been followed thus far, whereas the communication of ideas and results was emphasised to capitalise on and establish outcomes of the projects and to increase interaction with the public (Bundesministerium für Verkehr und Digitale Infrastruktur, 2017).

Measuring the 'success' of a project is difficult, notably in the context of migration and mobility, as the challenge of youth migration, for example, is a very complex topic. Likewise, focussing on sending or receiving regions has different implications for the outcome of a project. Migration furthermore is a policy field influenced by many factors such as economy and politics, therefore representing many different viewpoints of different stakeholders. The multiplicity of actors and perspectives however underlines the necessity for more (transnational) cooperation. The cooperation of different stakeholders (scientific and governmental partners as well as partners with different perspectives on the respective challenges) has been hypothesized as a major opportunity towards individual and organizational learning in the context of the YOUMIG project, to improve our understanding of the motivations as well as of the potentials of migration. The learning outcomes were considered a prerequisite for addressing the implications arising from youth migration. We will now consider the extent to which organizational learning and sustainable institutional changes could be observed in the YOUMIG project.

4. Transnational Learning and Institutional Changes in the YOUMIG Project

The INTERREG Danube transnational project YOUMIG aimed at strengthening stakeholders on the local level to deal with migration and mobility challenges more effectively. In most municipalities that were part of the consortium, outmigration was considered the main

challenge leading to population loss. The cooperation of researchers and local policy makers pursued a better understanding of the drivers and possible outcomes of youth migration. Further, pilot actions and local strategies were compiled as direct results of the project. In the following, the outcomes of the project will be reflected on in two ways: On the one hand, the survey results as well as reflections from the author will elaborate on individual learning processes concerning migration and mobility in the context of a transnational project; on the other hand, the outcomes of the project on the municipal level will be reflected on according to their sustainability and their potential to lead to institutional change.

4.1. Perceived Learning about Youth Migration from Transnational Cooperation

In the context of the YOUMIG project, different stakeholders participated in the consortium (see table 1). This complicated the collaboration on the one hand, as different standpoints had to be considered. On the other hand, a multifaceted approach was possible due to this research design. All survey participants stated that they have found the transnational cooperation useful in this respect: 61% have found it very useful, 22% useful, and 16% a little useful (no answers for 'not useful at all'). The survey participants conspicuously rated the benefits for municipal partners enrolled in the transnational cooperation as high (35%) or very high (45%) while the benefit for statistical offices and research institutions was rated a little lower.

Theoretical as well as practical knowledge was collected in the context of different work packages, where learning about youth migration was the main aim. Apart from a *Theoretical Framework on Youth Migration* (collecting theoretical and empirical knowledge from literature and completed studies; see Fassmann et al., 2018), the development of *Local Status Quo Analyses* for each of the local partners (see YOUMIG, 2018), as well as a *Collection of Best Practices* with projects that mitigate youth migration challenges and participation in two *Study Visits* (to partners within and outside the project; see YOUMIG, 2018 [Output 6.3., Transnational cooperation learning schemes]) were the main factors contributing to learning about youth migration challenges and how to address them. Figure 1 presents the results of the evaluation of these elements. Partners indicated the degree to which they found them helpful for learning about youth migration. Theoretical knowledge delivered by research partners was considered helpful for learning about youth migration, but learning about the own situation in the context of the *Local Status Quo Analysis* and personal exchanges in the context of *Study Visits* were rated even higher. The results underline that learning greatly relies on personal relations. Further, the high rating of learning perceived in the *Local Status Quo Analyses* and the *Study Visits* highlight the favouring of the aspiration of knowledge that is meaningful to the individual or the organization (Haupt et al., 2020).

In the open answer categories, it was mentioned that cooperation within the project has been useful for the local partners, as they were able to discover that similar challenges also existed for other municipalities. It also helped them to benchmark the own situation and widen own horizons. Exchanging ideas furthermore helped them to see potential development paths and to learn from (best) practices and role models. The general idea of the project—which was that not only municipalities with similar migration profiles could learn from each other—was widely rated positively by the project partners. Bringing together stakeholders with different perspectives on the topic of migration and actors from locations with different challenges provided a possibility towards mutual learning. The vast majority of sur-

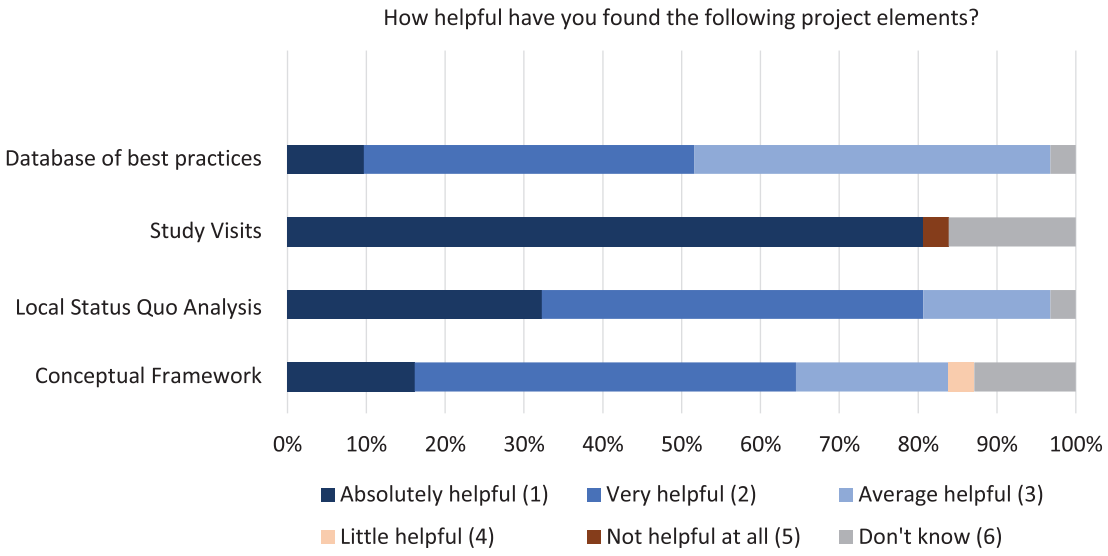

Figure 1. Results from the evaluation survey on perceived learning elements, evaluated by the project participants.

vey respondents saw potential in future cooperation in a similar consortium (75%). Yet, 20% stated that a future consortium would be more beneficial with a consortium consisting of different countries and partners. These respondents explained that a more problem-focussed perspective on similar challenges would make more sense to them. Some partners evaluated that bringing together highly divergent perspectives and views made the project idea very fuzzy and therefore some consortium members would have wished for a more focussed work on a more clear and specific topic (e.g., local problems arising from 'population loss,' 'brain drain,' etc.). In general, 90% of all survey participants stated that they have learned about new aspects of migration during the project. 35% stated that their perspective on migration has changed to some extent (41% 'not too much' and 22% 'not at all'). This underlines the necessity of differentiating between learning and the acquisition of knowledge (Haupt et al., 2020).

4.2. Insights on Learning about Youth Migration from the Open Answer Categories and General Reflections

As gained from the open answer categories in the survey, the exchange of perspectives still made it possible for members of the consortium to learn about new aspects of migration. Many general views on migration and mobility could be discussed and reflected upon by discussing the types, forms, and implications of youth migration based on knowledge from scientific literature as well as empirical analyses conducted in the project. Survey participants stated that they have found it useful to gain new knowledge on different types of migration. Some survey participants mentioned that it was particularly helpful to learn about different aspects of return migration from a theoretical point of view, e.g., by taking a differentiated look at types of return migration and hindering factors for successful return. Learning about 'transnational lifestyles' and the potential of 'social remittances' and 'diaspora' have also been mentioned as aspects of interest.

In the evaluation survey it was mentioned that it was a new learning experience for some consortium partners to consider immigration and its potential more closely, instead of merely understanding migration as outmigration in the form of 'brain drain' and seeing immigration as a burden. Especially young people within Europe make use of their mobility choices, and therefore strategies have been developed by the partners to address the implications of European youth mobility. Specific ideas for addressing challenges of youth migration were applied in the context of *Pilot Actions* (see YOUMIG, 2018). These activities included 1) supporting the integration of newcomers, also in emigration locations, 2) supporting return migrants, 3) staying in contact with migrants that have left their region of origin, and 4) addressing the local population and quality of life in the municipalities. Integration policies, in particular, still have to be developed in many cities and municipalities of the Danube Region (see Soltész, 2019).

While different ideas towards supporting and better (re-)integrating return migrants (e.g., supporting entrepreneurship, information platforms, etc.) were implemented in the context of the project, the importance of understanding the newcomer population as a resource was recognised, also in sending regions. Although the loss of the young population was the main challenge in most municipalities and cities participating in the project, some of the participating cities and towns also experienced immigration to a certain extent. This type of immigration has thus far not been perceived as holding positive potential in all locations, and by exchanging thoughts with representatives from immigration locations on the importance of the immigration of newcomers it did become obvious that immigration is of great importance when being confronted with outmigration of the local youth and with brain drain. It became clear throughout the project that receiving regions also experience outmigration of young and educated population to other destinations and that immigration and integration is a form of substitution of local population loss (see also Soltész, 2019). For this learning element, the transnational perspective might have been decisive as partners could experience the interconnectedness of migration within the Danube Region: While the leaving of young people is experienced as outmigration in one region, it means immigration in another. Further, a scientific approach to the practical challenges of the municipalities was used to reflect on existing local ideas and hopes, and to develop strategies. The project represented a type of applied research, where existing theoretical and empirical knowledge was communicated to society and governance, in order to include this information into future policy-making. The transnational and applied perspective can lead to transformations and the reinterpretation of existing views and perspectives.

In the project consortium, some stakeholders experienced difficulties in the implementation process of local strategies to address challenges arising from migration. On the one hand, a lack of political will and a counteracting political position on the national level generally played an important role in some countries participating in the project. As the project was started during times where Europe was confronted with challenges arising from third-country migration and intensified asylum migration to Europe, a general rejection of the topic of migration spilled over to the project idea. Although the circumstances underlined the need to talk about different forms and types of migration, some (political) stakeholders in the Danube Region became reluctant to participate in project activities. In the evaluation, one participant mentioned that the 'political sphere' rejected the creation of evidence-based migration policies, whereas others saw a lack of political will, mainly on the national level, to deal with the complex issue of migration. Nevertheless, the project gave momentum to

considering immigration as potential, which gave impetus to a different perspective on the common national narrative in many countries. For other municipal partners, the organizational structure and the general lack of autonomy of the local governance structure were mentioned as challenges encountered when attempting to implement effective strategies on the local level.

4.3. Sustainability of Project Outcomes and Institutional Change

The main goal of the YOUMIG project was to create strategies on the local level to address challenges of labour migration experienced by cities and towns in the Danube Region. The strategies were supported with ideas gathered in the context of the project from the research partners (theoretical and practical ideas, e.g., on best practices). As already mentioned, all municipalities involved have created *Pilot Actions* that tried to take specific local needs into consideration. Local *Pilot Actions* included regional marketing campaigns for attracting returnees and newcomers, co-working spaces to offer infrastructure for entrepreneurs, as well as information points for entrepreneurs. The ideas were partly inspired by activities of other municipalities in Europe, as introduced in the context of the collection of best practices. Furthermore, the creation of a *One-stop-shop* as an information point for young migrants was implemented in the context of the project.

While the project results and outputs were ambitious on account of their manifoldness, some partners already were cautious in rating their sustainability at the end of the project, as seen in Figure 2. Project partners mentioned in the open answer categories that limited resources (time and funding) will represent challenges to continue achievements reached during the project. Furthermore, it was mentioned that changing staff represented a challenge to the sustainability of project results. After the end of the project and thus of the funding, it was indeed the case that most *Pilot Actions* and *One-stop shops* came to a halt, as reported by the local partners one year after the project had ended. Even where *Pilot Actions* are still being sustained, it is mostly hardly possible to maintain them properly. The sustainability of project outcomes and the implementation of learning experiences were therefore undermined by the limited project time, as well as by limited financial and personal resources.

5. Conclusions: Transnational Learning for Addressing Challenges of Youth Migration

Returning to the overall question of the article, namely an enquiry into the degree to which transnational programmes such as INTERREG can trigger institutional change and organizational learning processes in the context of migration challenges, the following conclusion elaborates on the experiences gained during the INTERREG project YOUMIG. The project offered a great environment for mutual and transnational learning, with multiple possibilities towards exchanges between consortium partners as well as a variety of knowledge transfers and activities. These also led to multiple individual learning processes, as indicated by the evaluation survey conducted at the end of the project. Not all of these learning instances eventually led to sustainable organizational learning—although a variety of outputs on the local level was realised (e.g., *Pilot Actions*)—nor did they lead to sustainable institutional transformations of migration governance either. Further, some learning experiences might not be perceived as in-depth learning, but rather as knowledge acquisition.

The YOUMIG example showed that it is very difficult to implement sustainable institutional changes on the local level in the context of a short-term project. Particularly in the case of YOUMIG, the ambitious

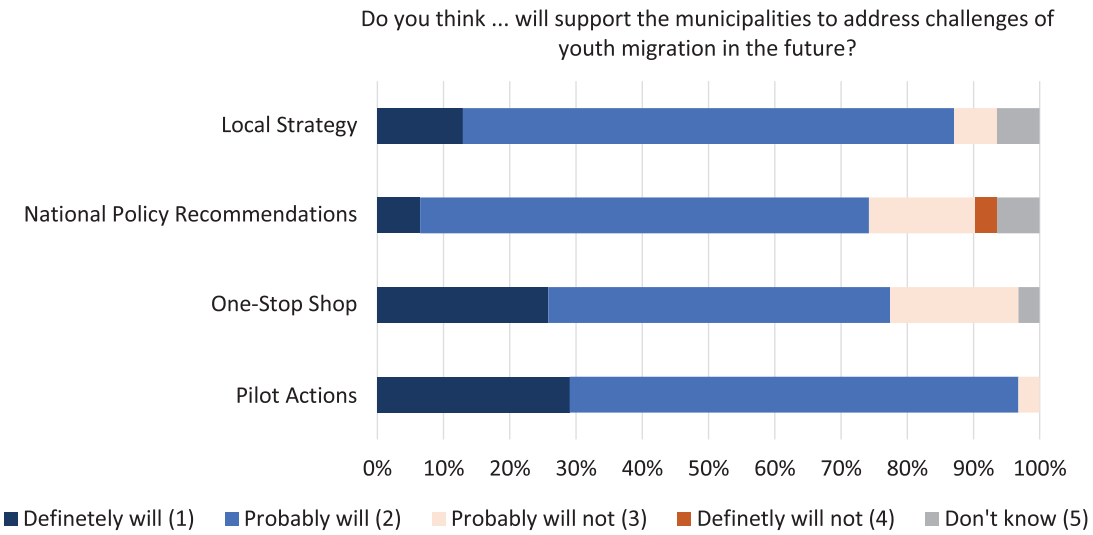

Figure 2. Results from the evaluation survey on the estimation of the sustainability of final project outcomes.

amounts of tangible outputs have to be mentioned, as well as the innovative composition of partners dedicated to challenges of youth migration from different angles, which all represented challenges to organizational learning. While many partners did get an idea of different viewpoints, the dissimilarities might also have led to an inhibited learning process. Furthermore, it must be mentioned that in many countries migration is perceived as a contested policy field, which has been discovered as a hindering factor for improved cooperation and governance. While sustainable institutional changes were unable to be realised within the time frame of the project, it should be mentioned that individual learning did take place for most partners. Although the project results were mainly defined by tangible outcomes and their communication, these necessary individual learning experiences should not be underrated, as they were mentioned in the theoretical literature as the starting point for organizational learning.

It must further be underlined that the lack of sustained institutional change in the context of INTERREG can be attributed in general to the limited time frame given to a very difficult venture, with a project duration of a maximum of 36 months (and in the case of YOUMIG, 30 months). Although multiple learning experiences stimulated by transnational cooperation did take place in the consortium, the process of these learning experiences eventually leading to institutional change would probably need longer than the duration of an INTERREG project. Institutional transformations are based on individual learning processes. Therefore, a lack of flexibility (mainly according to temporality, but also according to changing institutional challenges and needs) is often an important constraint. For the YOUMIG project, it can be summarised that—although the project has created a variety of outputs and results in different locations—the most sustainable results are the individual instances of learning experienced by the partners involved in the project. As local-level institutions are implemented in multi-governance systems, it further must be recognised that actors on the municipal or city level do not always have the power to implement changes, all the more so when they are in opposition to national policy narratives. Municipal partners reported a high level of political dependency in their scope of action, which very often can counter-act individual as well as organizational learning processes. Finally, it has to be considered that project partners have also been following other interests than the implementation of institutional change and organizational learning (e.g., networking, financial interests, etc.).

Should future projects want to realise more sustainable and in-depth learning outcomes, it might be valuable to consider the importance of personal relations as a prerequisite for learning. Further, the temporality of learning and the respective limitations of INTERREG projects might be addressed by focussing on the creation of sustainable networks or through cooperation with existing networks. While many projects seem to display a focus on tangible outcomes, within the short span of time given, it might be more useful and sustainable to focus on smaller outputs such as interventions or short-term pop-up actions that focus on sensibilisation rather than on institutionalisation. Putting the learning and interaction process into the spotlight—instead of the implementation of tools and activities—might be a more valuable approach, especially when discussing complex topics such as youth migration. Addressing delicate topics (such as outmigration, population decline, or immigration) brings together a variety of opinions, viewpoints, and visions, not least in a transnational consortium. Therefore, the exchange of these aspects needs to be emphasised to a greater extent than when, e.g., exchanging technical know-how. It ultimately has to be recognised that topics such as migration are highly influenced by different political narratives, which provides opportunity for intensified exchange and communication. Future evaluation processes should be able to focus on qualitative results. Not only the communication of successful project outputs but also the discussion of difficulties might lead to important learning processes, which later might become an important element of institutional change.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

The Role of the 'Cities for Change' in Protecting the Rights of Irregular Migrants in Spain

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Abstract
Have the new municipalist pro-migrant policies succeeded in protecting the rights of irregular migrants? Cities in Spain have powers to design and implement services and programs aimed at the reception and integration of immigrants. Cities can also include those who are in vulnerable conditions, guaranteeing them access to healthcare, minimum income coverage or labour training, regardless of the immigration status. However, old municipal politics have been characterised by pragmatism, being mainly focused on regular immigrants. Besides, there has been a restrictive and punitive turn in immigration policy directly connected to the economic recession and austerity as of 2008. To explore what possibilities do cities have to expand and protect the rights of irregular immigrants, we analyse in this contribution the cases of Madrid and Barcelona for the years 2015–2019 when progressive municipalists fronts ruled the cities. Based on the textual analysis of policy documents and in-depth interviews with political parties, street-level bureaucrats and activists, we first examine the competencies that municipalities have in migration matters and mainstream approaches in Spain. Then we discuss the action of the new municipalism, focusing the analysis on four political measures that have been rebel and innovative in protecting irregular immigrants, namely, the proactive census, the prevention of irregularity, access to healthcare and changes in police protocols. These real experiences allow us to argue that cities can achieve changes in the way state control is enforced. However, the analysis also shows tensions between the political will and institutional constraints.

Keywords
Barcelona; cities; citizenship; immigration; institutional change; integration; Madrid; municipalism; Spain; welfare

Issue
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1. Introduction

Over the course of the last two decades, liberal states have undergone a shifting from promoting policies that expand social and civil rights to restricting access. This "restrictive turn" (de Hass, Natter, & Vezzoli, 2018) came later to Spain than to other European states. It is particularly during the economic recession as of 2008 that austerity policies and the lack of political will started to undermine state integration policies. Until then, Spain was characterised by a more open approach towards immigration, explained by the segmentation of the labour market with high levels of informality and the limited character of welfare that is supported by familialism—being this a feature of welfare-states in southern Europe. This is characterised by late development, low social spending and a mixed level of protection where the family plays a relevant role in the provision (Arango, 2013; Peixoto et al., 2012).

After the crisis of 2008, the state launched a series of measures making access to welfare limited for immigrants. The introduction of new criteria for

civic integration in the Aliens Law (Spanish Government, 2009), making residence and work permits conditional to it, marks the beginning of this restrictive turn. At that time, the Socialist Party (PSOE) ruled the state level. When in 2011, the government changed to the People's Party (PP)—a more liberal conservative tendency, it approved a series of legislative initiatives that made much more difficult to lead an ordinary life for irregular immigrants. The exclusion from healthcare coverage by Law 16/2012 was particularly controversial (Spanish Government, 2012b).

The adoption of austerity policies as a way out of the crisis and the reduction of social investment in the budgets of the administrations increased social inequalities and poverty (see Bruquetas-Callejo & Moreno-Fuentes, 2015; Pedreño, Moraes, & Gadea, 2015; Treviño & González-Ferrer, 2016). Under these circumstances, the role of cities managing the integration of immigrants was severely affected (López-Sala, 2013), especially for those at risk of social marginalisation and exclusion due to precarious legal statuses. Brandariz-García and Fernández-Bessa (2017) show how social cuts and the consequent restrictions in access to welfare have had a significant impact on increasing immigration control in the cities. The extension of identification, detention and deportation practices also involved what has been conceptualized as a "punitive turn" (Bosworth, Franko, & Pickering, 2017) that affected to the criminalisation immigrants (Moffette, 2020).

In the midst of this context of incipient hostility, referring to a condition of fear and uncertainty that increasingly penetrates different aspects in the daily life of immigrants (Berg & Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2018), the May 2015 local elections marked a change. It leaded to the emergence of a new municipalism characterised by the promotion of a participatory approach to co-produce urban policies (Blanco, Gomà, & Subirats, 2018; Subirats, 2018). Following the cycle of social mobilisation known as '15M' the impact was not minor, large and medium cities such as Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia, Cadiz, Zaragoza and A Coruña (among others), became governed by new municipalist candidacies that manifestly questioned austerity and neoliberal policies. The constitution of the so-called 'cities for change' stands on the grounds of policies that promote inclusiveness and social equity (Blanco et al., 2018). As Russell (2019) argues, rather than essentialising cities as inherently progressive, the municipal became framed as a "strategic front" for developing a transformative politics of scale. The novelty was the recognition of the cities' leading role in making more inclusive societies and it was, at this point, where immigration politics acquired particular relevance. The rationale for the migrant struggles was the recognition that irregular migrants are de facto residents of the cities they inhabit (Bauder, 2014; Bauder & Gonzalez, 2018). This was made possible by the previous work of urban social movements drawing up alliances between activists and migrants against precariousness and police persecution (see Casas-Cortes, 2019; Fernández-Bessa, 2019). These alliances have been expanded through national and international connections, such as the Spanish network Refuge Cities, the European Solidarity Cities and the global municipalist movement Fearless Cities. Barcelona, in particular, was highly proactive in its relations with other sanctuary cities (see Bauder & Gonzalez, 2018; Christoph & Kron, 2019; Garcés-Mascareñas & Gebhardt, 2020; García-Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019).

Following this line of reasoning, in this contribution we wonder whether local pro-migrant policies have managed to expand the rights of irregular immigrants, and to what extent it is possible to improve their lives at the local level when the state is restrictive and punitive. We analyse the cases of Madrid and Barcelona in the years 2015–2019, when they become governed by municipalist fronts. We examine how these cities have enacted rebel and innovative policies to ensure access to social services, and to protect and avoid criminalisation of irregular immigrants. 'Irregular immigration' refers here to foreigners who do not meet the regular administrative procedures for stay or residence, as established by the Aliens Law (Spanish Government, 2009). This situation is caused in most cases not by irregular entry, rather than by the permanence after expiring entry visas. In this vein, irregularity occurs largely because the legal mechanisms to obtain residence or work permits are scarce and difficult (see Düvell, 2011).

The structure of the analysis is as follows. After this introduction, we describe the qualitative methodology in data collection. Then, we examine the decentralisation of powers in immigration policies and the main instruments that have characterised municipal old politics in Spain. Following, we delve into the examination of four innovative set of policies, namely: 1) proactive policies facilitating registration in municipal censuses, 2) measures to avoid administrative irregularity, 3) actions aimed at ensuring universal healthcare, and 4) changes in police protocols. These are illustrative cases of how cities can counterbalance the way state control is enforced. Then, to further understand the action and powers of municipalities in implementing progressive immigration policies, we analyse the contradictions between the political will and the institutional constraints of actual management. We examine the dilemmas faced by the new municipalism and what the limitations are. Finally, in the conclusion section we highlight some of the research findings.

2. Methodology

This research has been carried out based on a qualitative methodology that combines textual analysis and semi-structured interviews. We conducted 12 qualitative interviews based on two time series, before (2010–2011) and after the municipal elections (2015–2019). Coupled with the previous study of municipal immigration policies in the cities under analysis (Madrid and Barcelona),

this enables us to contrast the information gathered in 2010–2011 with the specific information obtained in 2019. During the 2015–2019 legislature, we interviewed six key informants involved in the new municipal governments ruled by Madrid Now (*Ahora Madrid*) and Barcelona in Common (*Barcelona en Comú*) citizen platforms. The interviewed profiles were policymakers, street-level bureaucrats, and political advisers. In order to contrast changes in the approach to reception and integration services, we included in the analysis other six qualitative interviews conducted with the same profile of stakeholders, when these cities were not yet governed by municipalist fronts, specifically in the years 2010 and 2011.The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis using Atlas.ti software. Broad thematic coding categories were prepared based on the theoretical framework and research questions of the overall research project, and these were expanded and refined into specific codes through the data collection process based on the emerging trends. Data was coded separately by two researchers, and discrepancies were resolved through consensus. In the writing of this article, we re-examined data codes related to new political proposals, namely, conflicts between social movements and institutions, measures aimed to avoid administrative irregularity, criminalisation, and measures facilitating access to rights and social welfare.

Concerning the textual analysis, we examined existing legal and policy documents (Barcelona City Council, 2005, 2019), and more concretely plans (Barcelona City Council, 2018a; Madrid City Council, 2017a), regulations and working documents (Barcelona City Council, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018b; Madrid City Council, 2016, 2017b, 2018). These documents were provided by the interviewees and also were found through the search carried out on institutional websites. We also examined the programs for the 2015 elections of the citizen platforms Madrid Now and Barcelona in Common, as well as major newspapers published on those dates to observe the press coverage given to the policy measures discussed here (*El País*, *El Mundo*, *ABC* and, in the case of Barcelona, also *La Vanguardia* and *El Periódico de Cataluña*).

Based on previous empirical analyses (Fauser, 2008; Fernández-Suárez, 2018; Morales, Anduiza, Rodríguez, & San Martín, 2008; Morén-Alegret, 2001) we found that Madrid and Barcelona could be relevant cases for examination due to several reasons. First, due to their demographic size and composition. These are the most populated cities in the country, with 3,2 and 1,6 million respectively, and those that attract the largest number of the foreign population. One of the important differences in the nature of local reception and integration policies derives from the composition and weight of the migratory flows. The weight of the foreign population registered in Barcelona stands at 18% and Madrid is 13% over the total population (National Statistics Institute, 2018). Both cities absorb 10% of the population, but their level of potential attraction is greater for foreign residents of which 15% choose to live here. The second element for the choice of these cities was the institutional tradition and experience that both have had in the attention to immigrant populations. Finally, the third element of interest was the value that immigration politics acquired under the new municipalism legislature (2015–2019). Madrid and Barcelona developed a high number of programs and responsibilities in this area and, as we will see, this is due to the radical nature in their conception of politics and doing politics. We find here novel elements of migration urban design policies that can be shared with other cities, as illustrates the network of international connections like Fearless Cities, promoted by Barcelona's Council in 2017 (see Russell, 2019). But before going through these innovative rebel aspects in immigration politics (Section 4), we examine now the decentralisation of competencies and the mainstream approach that cities have had in Spain.

3. Immigration Old Politics at Municipal Level

City councils are central institutions in managing the accommodation of immigrants in Spain. The state has exclusive jurisdiction in immigration matters, however, in the areas of reception and integration, regional governments and municipalities have been primarily responsible in the policy design and implementation. This decentralisation of powers took place in the 1990s, after the approval of the first Aliens Law (Spanish Government, 1985).

Municipalities have two main competencies since then: the incorporation of foreigners into the census and the provision of social services and social inclusion. Municipal censuses are the key instrument to do so. These are administrative records where local residents have the right to be registered. In most cases, migration status is not checked. However, registration does not imply the recognition of residence or work permits, so far these are state's exclusive responsibility. Despite this, the municipal census functionality is significant. It gives access to fundamental rights such as health and education under the criteria of being member of the community and, importantly, by ensuring that the registration does not imply police persecution (Gonzalez-Enriquez, 2009).

Concerning the areas under municipal responsibility we find housing, healthcare services, security, cultural and educational promotion, economic promotion through labour training and programs for children, youth, gender equality and seniors. Institutional social workers have an obligation to assist foreigners in immigration procedures. Besides, city councils are vital institutions in managing family reunification procedures and issuing reports to demonstrate social roots, which are also useful when applying for residence permits. Immigration policies have involved the consolidation of a number of agencies and administrative routines at local level, too. These measures include the following three:

1) forums for participation, so that integration measures have greater legitimacy; 2) the approval of integration plans as technical planning tools; and 3) the consolidation of a support network involving the third sector (Fernández-Suárez, 2018). However, municipal old politics have been characterised by routine and pragmatism in the measures implemented aimed at reception (see Zapata-Barrero, 2011).

Furthermore, the influence of the ideology of the ruling parties on integration policies is an open debate and more research is needed at both state and municipal level. The two cases examined here show that the confluence of progressive governments formed by citizen platforms give greater relevance to municipal powers than the previous ones, aiming to improve the rights of immigrants, especially of those under irregular status. Notwithstanding, there are differences in the specific cases of Madrid and Barcelona. Below we examine the context and framework of the political forces that have governed the two cities to locate the new municipalism legislatures on the map.

The city of Madrid was governed by conservative forces from 1991 to 2015, ruling a conservative approach (see Table 1). The great commitment with immigrant integration took place during the legislature of 2003–2007 and it was based on promoting universal care, equal access to public services, participation and interculturality. The Madrid Forum based on principles of dialogue and coexistence was launched with this goal in 2006. However, the model was truncated from 2007 due to a shift towards a liberal model of integration under the approach that immigrants are individually responsible for their destiny and economic integration. The idea of interculturality is discarded then, and it is replaced by the 'integration contract.' This approach makes programs more labour-oriented, reducing intercultural programs to a minimum (Rovetta-Cortés, 2014). The city offered basic care services and assistance offices to help with administrative procedures. However, these services were strongly affected by the social cuts of 2008, particularly those services aimed at coexistence, such as intercultural mediation and social participation. The Immigration Assistance Offices remained open, although declined in number. Madrid's response to the economic recession shows precisely the volatility of local policies committed to inclusion in the context of austerity (see Ambrosini, 2017).

In Barcelona the situation was different (see Table 2). The city has been governed mainly by progressive forces, in addition to the deep-rooted presence of a strong civil society (Eizaguirre, Pradel-Miquel, & García, 2017). Local immigration policies have been characterised by innovation. Instruments such as specific care services are similar to other cities, however the degree of institutionalisation, consolidation and implementation stands out here (Fauser, 2008). Since 1985, Barcelona is pioneering in creating specific participation mechanisms such as the Immigrant, Migrant and Refugee Service (see Morén-Alegret, 2001). The city also has a dynamic associative network of immigrants and protects ethnic ties (Mora, 2020). In addition, it places greater emphasis on civic integration through the learning of cultural and linguistic values (Caponio, Baucells, & Güell, 2016; Gebhardt, 2016a). It can also be explained by the dialectic of the differentiated Catalan minority within the hegemonic culture of Spain (Zapata-Barrero, 2017).

At the state level, the liberal paradigm of 'activation policies' prevailed after the economic recession as

Table 1. Contextualisation of multilevel governance in Madrid (1982–present).

		1991–2015		2015–2019	2019–2023
Madrid City Council (local)		PP/conservative Christian-democratic		Madrid Now/left-wing citizen platform	PP and Citizens–Party of the Citizenry (Cs–C's)/conservative and centre-right liberal; supported by VOX, far-right
		1991–2019			2019–2023
Autonomous Community of Madrid (regional)		PP/conservative Christian-democratic			PP and Cs–C's/conservative and centre-right liberal; supported by VOX, far-right
	1982–1996	1996–2004	2004–2011	2011–2019	2019–2023
State Government	PSOE/social-democratic	PP/conservative and Christian-democratic	PSOE/social-democratic	PP/conservative and Christian-democratic	PSOE and Podemos/social-democratic and left-wing

Source: Own elaboration based on electoral results.

Table 2. Contextualisation of multilevel governance in Barcelona (1982–present).

	1983–1987	1987–2011		2011–2015	2015–2023
Barcelona City Council (local)	Socialists' Party of Catalonia (PSC-PSOE)/social-democratic	PSC-PSOE, Initiative for Catalonia Greens & Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC)/ social-democratic, eco-socialist and left Catalan nationalism		Convergence and Union (CiU)/ Conservative and Catalan nationalism; supported by PP, conservative	Barcelona in Common & PSC-PSOE/left-wing citizen platform and social-democratic
	1980–2003		2003–2010	2010–2015	2015–2020
Autonomous Community of Catalonia (regional)	CiU/Conservative and Catalan nationalism		PSC-PSOE, Initiative for Catalonia Greens & ERC/social-democratic, eco-socialist and left Catalan nationalism	CiU/Conservative and Catalan nationalism	Together for the Yes & ERC/Pro-independence nationalist conservative coalition and left Catalan nationalism
	1982–1996	1996–2004	2004–2011	2011–2019	2019–2023
State Government	PSOE/social-democratic	PP/conservative and Christian-democratic	PSOE/social-democratic	PP/conservative and Christian-democratic	PSOE & Podemos/social-democratic and left-wing

Source: Own elaboration based on electoral results.

of 2008. These are specific measures that emphasize citizen's individual responsibility to perform economic self-reliance and societal integration. It happened firstly and foremost through gainful employment on the labour market (Gilbert, 2013), but civic integration programs were also established at this time, having a strong assimilationist accent that was specified in the acquisition of linguistic and civic skills (see Caponio et al., 2016; Gebhardt, 2016b).

When the new municipalist fronts came to govern the cities, they had to face state budget cuts that grossly affected social inclusion policies. The response was characterised then by a significant increase in social funds, particularly aimed at improving the life conditions of vulnerable people and strengthening care services thorough municipal assistances offices. Together with these measures aimed at ensuring the continuity of local integration policies, they promoted concrete actions aimed at protecting irregular immigrants, mainly facilitating their access to public services and protection against criminalisation. This is the focus of our analysis in the next section.

4. The Agenda for Change: New Municipal Policy Alternatives

The connection between "the transformative politics" of the new municipalism (Russell, 2019) and immigration policy relates to the double dimension of the state's restrictive and punitive turn previously noted. The first has to do with guarantees in the protection of rights and access to social welfare. The second addresses the extension of policing and "crimmigration" control practices based on identification, detention and deportation (Costello & Mouzourakis, 2016; De Genova, 2016). In this regard, the 2018 data from the Ministry of the Interior show that more than 11,000 people were repatriated at state level, representing an increase of 22% compared to the previous year. The total number of expulsion and return orders was 58,548, of which 19% were executed. And almost 8,000 people were detained at the Foreigners Detention Centres (Defensor del Pueblo, 2019).

The relevant question at this point it is precisely the link between the punitive dimension and the restrictive one in the access to rights and social welfare. Mezzadra and Neilson (2013) note this is produced under a model of citizenship that is based on a "differential inclusion," referred to the nation-state's effort to demarcate non-belonging via law and policy. It denotes that integration is marked by a multiplicity of positions that differentiate and subordinate subjects in society, manifestly restricting access to welfare, wellness and social opportunities (see also Borrelli, 2019; Könönen, 2018).

Analysing the concrete cases of Madrid and Barcelona, we decided to select four political measures aimed at irregular immigrants. This criterion derives from the fact that this group is more exposed to social vulnerability and stigmatisation. Although Spain is characterised by a high acceptance of immigration, the rejection of immigrants is greater when they are in irregular situation

(OBERAXE, 2017). Moreover, the very intention of adopting measures aimed at incorporating irregular immigrants initially shows a greater degree of commitment, also challenging the restrictive and punitive approach of the state. The measures selected are: 1) proactive policies facilitating the registration of irregular immigrants in official censuses, 2) measures to prevent administrative irregularity when already having regular status, 3) measures to ensure access to healthcare, and 4) changes in police protocols to avoid criminalisation and persecution. The implementation of these measures was more intense in Barcelona, as it became the driver for primarily responding to the fragility of immigrants' administrative status.

4.1. Accessing the Municipal Census

As we have maintained so far, the municipal census entails the right to access public services and municipal resources regardless of the immigration status. However, we find a high discretion in the requirements that each municipality establishes. Thus, there are cases that deny registration for irregular immigrants, such as the municipality of Vic (Triviño-Salazar, 2020) or the border enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla (Espiñeira, 2020). On the reverse, other municipalities, such as the cases analysed, promote proactive policies for registration. In Barcelona, the City Council modified registering procedures aiming to facilitate registration for those lacking fixed address, that is, people living without lease, in infra-dwellings or in occupied houses (Barcelona City Council, 2018b). By means of inspections carried out by municipal officials, they verify the regular use of the house without the need to have rental lease or the authorisation of the owner. The issuance of these reports facilitated that the number of people under these circumstances registered in the census doubled between 2015 and 2017. In Madrid, the City Council started a pilot project issuing Neighbourhood Cards, first in downtown and then extended to other districts. It established an agreement with social entities so that the headquarters can be used as an address where people can register. City officials from the Department of Social Services we interviewed emphasised the guarantees offered by the Neighbourhood Card as it was a valid document to certify social roots and avoid detentions (I2). Both councils also implemented the issuance of Neighbourhood Reports, as documents to prove social roots, give protection in detentions or avoid expulsion orders (see Fernández-Bessa, 2019).

4.2. Preventing the Fall in Irregularity

Barcelona is the most advanced case in developing measures to prevent people do not lose their regular status. The City Council has been innovative seeking labour alternatives such as the extension of the duration of labour contracts aimed at social insertion and public recruitment. The rationale was to stabilise the regularisation of people by generating offers from public employment that guarantee the achievement of a work permit. About 100 people were regularised by this measure, but the value of the program is more qualitative than quantitative. Düvell (2011) emphasises the difficulties and scarce mechanisms to obtain residence and work permits as one of the main causes of irregularity in Europe nowadays. He also demonstrates how the process of renewal of those permits is one of the main motives. In this vein, we have found that Barcelona's City Council launched protocols to identify people at risk for non-renewal of work permits and refer them early to municipal employment services.

4.3. Ensuring Universal Access to Healthcare

According to the national health survey (National Statistics Institute, 2011, 2017) in Spain, public health coverage for the population aged 0 and over is 99%. This data indicates the quasi-universalization of the public health system, which is an area of competence of the regions. When in 2012 the state approved the modification of the National Health System motivated by efficiency and savings arguments by Law 16/2012 (Spanish Government, 2012b), such reform amended the Aliens Law affecting the right to healthcare. Before that, irregular immigrants had granted equal access under the sole requirement of being registered in the municipal census. This was indicative of the state's initial positioning in favour of the universalisation of healthcare, recognised by the Spanish Constitution (Spanish Government, 1978, art. 43). However, the 2012 amendment limited access to those who fulfil the condition of affiliated to Social Security and, thereby, to those who are 'legal residents.' That meant that the census ceased to be an access title to full health coverage and those under irregular administrative status would only have access in emergencies for serious illness and limited assistance with pregnancy, childbirth and post-partum (Boso & Vancea, 2016; Peralta-Gallego, Gené-Badia, & Gallo, 2018). In addition, the contributory logic of the welfare system causes a strong vulnerability among the immigrant population with shorter and more precarious career paths, precisely due to their participation in temporary jobs and the informal economy (Bruquetas-Callejo & Moreno-Fuentes, 2015). Facing this restrictiveness, the City Council of Madrid launched the campaign: 'Madrid does care: Madrid free of health exclusion.' It consisted of accompaniment and training programs to access public facilities and medical care. The goal was to ensure that all people living in the city have assigned medical professionals. The program incorporated almost 20,000 people into the health system the first year. It offered training for municipal staff, so that they can explain and accompany citizens in the exercise of the right to health.

4.4. Changing Protocols for Police Intervention

The cities of Madrid and Barcelona are paradigmatic cases to understand how policing and crimmigration control operate in Spain (Brandariz-García & Fernández-Bessa, 2017; Moffette, 2020). State control practices based on selective identifications and collective raids are carried out in urban public spaces aimed at targeting and frightening racialised profiles of immigrants. Identifications take place mainly in downtowns popular neighbourhoods, monitoring the exit of schools, medical centres, markets, call centres and public transport stations. Both city councils adopted measures to counterbalance this punitive functionality of the state. In Madrid, these measures came after the death of the Senegalese street seller Mame Mbaye in March 2018. Immigrant activist organisations, such as the *Asociación de Sin Papeles* (Association of Undocumented People) and the *Sindicato de Manteros y Lateros* (Union of Street Sellers), constantly denounced the police harassment suffered by people doing informal street vending. The first measure adopted by the City Council was the modification of the 'Street Sales Instruction.' It incorporated the prohibition of police motorised persecution. It also regulated that police actions should be ordered and planned by a command, avoiding therefore autonomous police interventions. Interventions must be also accompanied by an assessment report ensuring responsibility. In addition, it was launched a pilot project to avoid identifications by ethnic/racial profile that consisted of a good practices protocol and the elimination of efficacy indicators meeting numerical objectives in detentions.

5. Tensions between Political Will and Institutional Constraints

As we further explore the institutional change initiated by the new municipalism and the limits found in adopting progressive migration policies, we notice elements of tension between the political will that arises from social movements and the immediate reality of management from within the institutions.

The tension between social movements, party-movements and government action has already been studied in the 'cities for change' (see Calvo-Martínez & De Diego-Baciero, 2019; Monterde, 2019; Subirats, 2016). In Madrid and Barcelona, this tension has been present throughout the entire 2015–2019 legislature. Based on our empirical work, we find hard frictions to solve between the agenda for change and its political implementation. It is described as "a tension between the project's essence and driving the institution" (in the words of a political advisor from Madrid Now; I1). Activists describe the institution as a complex machinery with established political-administrative inertias, with little capacity for innovation, and established power around the hierarchy of the structure, hindering therefore the implementation of the political agenda.

The demand for the closure of immigration detention centres, which has been central to migrant struggles, illustrates well this friction given the impossibility of materialising the action. The measure was included in the electoral programs of Barcelona in Common and Madrid Now. The attempt was only undertaken in Barcelona, and the strategy consisted of two actions. First, to avoid detention by issuing neighbourhood documents and changing police intervention protocols (as we saw in Section 4). Secondly, the City Council attempted to withdraw the license to use the facility. This is an act under municipal powers, however the process ended up being prosecuted, with long terms that made impossible for the institution to stop the activity during the mandate.

The arrival of the municipalist fronts as a new political actor with a strong activist component also revealed the tension inside/outside the institution. On the one hand, the burden of government management meant a transfer of people from the movement to the institution and, internally, this process was viewed critically insofar as it subtracted activists and weakened the social movements from which they came, as a political advisor from Barcelona in Common stated (I4). On the other hand, it also led to friction when defining and communicating the political agenda and it becomes more difficult to differentiate when the movement speaks from when the institution does, pointed out a City Councillor from Barcelona in Common (I6).

The priorities of the movement and those of the government also conflicted on specific issues. An important clash was the one that occurred with the *manteros* and the use of urban public spaces. They are undocumented immigrants who work in street vending. The name of *manteros* comes from 'blanket,' person who works with the blanket. A blanket is used to expose the merchandise, that is for sale, and it also allows to be quickly collected by folding it. It is an informal activity that is visible and is persecuted by the police. The conflict began in the summer of 2015 when mainstream media reported a growth in number. It was represented as a public security problem and the government was accused of "permissiveness" ("Ada Colau, a permissive mayor"; Gubern, 2016). This prompted the government 'of the Commons' to enforce a regulation on the use of public space preventing concentrations (Barcelona City Council, 2005), when in its electoral program it had promised the immediate repeal of said regulation. The conflict caused a distancing between the government and the social movements in the city, generating tension in the very bases of the political party.

Now, continuing the analysis of the factors that conditioned the capacity for action, we certainly find that the context of austerity imposed severe limits. The municipalists fronts came to an administration subjected to a new budget stability by Law 2/2012 (Spanish Government, 2012a). This law restricted local autonomy, limited the spends of the councils and established the inability to include new services in municipal budgets.

A catalogue of "innovative policies inspired by other international cities could not be taken under this framework" (City Councillor from Madrid Now remarked; I3). This is one of the elements that could explain why certain services considered strategic were not implemented. The capacity for innovation was limited since the services to be financed within the municipal budget had to have been developed before in the same administration.

Another relevant element has been the strength of the bureaucratic-administrative structure and its ability to perpetuate, making changes in its own functioning difficult. Street-level bureaucrats' testimonies indicate that the constraints are set by "the structure itself," referring to an administrative system that makes change difficult. They also refer to the slowness of the institutions, "the procedures are long and execution times slow" (I2). We can define this as the tension between the political change and the institutional management times. In our interviews we also find that, among the elements indicated to overcome these limitations, there was the need to work on resistance coming from within the institution. Resistance to change was stronger in conservative sections like the Police Department, but also in Social Services (I2). For example, in the case of housing inspections and reports made by municipal technicians within the proactive census policy in Barcelona. Some municipal workers made a more conservative reading of the law than the city government, so it was necessary internal pedagogy, sensitivity and even training processes (I5).

Key actors in this process are professionals working in areas of cultural and social diversity to the extent they particularly have a certain discretionary scope to apply these measures or programs (Lipsky, 1980). Among the advantages of this leeway is the ability to adapt to individual situations, and among the possible drawbacks is that they can contribute to legal uncertainty or inequality and can frustrate the compliance with policy objectives (Gidley, Scholten, & Van Breugel, 2018).

Summarising, the governments of the 'cities for change' managed to innovate and implement policies that improved the lives and expanded the rights of immigrants. It was not a collective general political commitment, but rather measures driven by politicians who were once pro-migrants and non-border activists. Government actions caused division and rupture in migrants' social movements, as the Manteros Union illustrates. It will be valuable to include the views of these critical groups in the analysis. Future lines of research could precisely contrast the vision faced between managers and managed, between politicians and social movements. We observe here a fracture in the mutual trust process that led to the emergence of a movement suspicious again of the institutional sphere.

6. Conclusions

In Spain, there has been a restrictive and punitive turn in immigration policy that is directly connected to the economic recession and austerity policies as of 2008. On the one hand, there are strong economic and social cuts in basic welfare services that had had universal coverage, such as healthcare. On the other hand, control mechanisms in the form of identifications and detentions spread throughout the urban territory. In our analysis we have emphasised the links between both dimensions. The restrictive and punitive turn are both strongly connected to the state's production of irregularity, based precisely on the differentiation of profiles under the regular/irregular division. This is linked to a conception in the governance of migration that is based on a differential inclusion that delimits categories of non-belonging and limits citizenship.

Through the study we have intended to illustrate what are the possibilities and limits of radical municipalism in governing the cracks of the immigration control in Spain. Have pro-migrant policies succeeded in protecting and expanding the rights of irregular migrants? Old politics have addressed reception and integration through pragmatism and thinking almost exclusively of those migrants who are in a regular situation, hence the emphasis on civic integration criteria. It has also been shown that restrictive and punitive approaches lead to increased vulnerability and criminalisation of immigrants. At this point, we have also seen how integration policies are conditioned by the ideology of the ruling party, being this an open debate that deserves more attention.

Examining the cases of Madrid and Barcelona and the new approach to immigration during the municipalist fronts (2015–2019), we noted that, if there is political will, cities and local administrations are able to move forward creative solutions. In the analysis we have observed that, together with measures aimed at providing greater resources to services already functioning, such as the attention offices, new policies have been promoted with the primary goal to protect the rights of irregular immigrants. Intervention areas are from pro-active census policies facilitating access to healthcare and other social services, to changes on municipal regulations to avoid administrative irregularity, criminalisation and persecution. From the perspective of the activists and the policymakers interviewed, these city level responses can help to build more inclusive societies in the long run, so far as can build trust between law enforcement agencies and migrant communities. However, we have also observed how governmental actions can also produce divisions within migrants' social movements, as it happened in the case of the Manteros Union, undermining therefore the mutual trust.

Despite the political will we have also found important institutional constraints that limit the action and powers of municipalities when implementing progressive immigration policies. Municipal workers emphasised resistances coming from within the institution. They also highlighted the little capacity to transform the administrative structure and its inertias, such as

slowness. Moreover, the austerity measures enforced by the state implied a significant reduction in the autonomy of the municipalities, limiting not only budget but also powers and, therefore, cutting off the possibilities of political transformation. With regard to competencies in immigration matters, cities can extend and equate the rights of irregular immigrants, but always within the current legislative framework of the Aliens Law. The measures examined here managed to curb the impact of the exclusion of basic social services such as health. They also contributed to diminish criminalisation and persecution, however they had limited capacity to subvert the logic that underlies the Aliens Law, that is, to alter the irregularity condition. This causes the change to be more symbolic than transformative in quantitative terms. However, despite these limitations and obstacles, the cases of Barcelona and Madrid illustrate well how cities and local administrations are protagonists in providing radical solutions for protecting undocumented migrants. These cases provide concrete measures that may be suggestive to test in other contexts and societies. They show it is possible to oppose institutional practices and make the right to the city more extensible to immigrant populations.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

The Role of Institutional and Structural Differences for City-Specific Arrangements of Urban Migration Regimes

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Abstract
In recent years, an increasing influx of migrants to Europe has led to a heated public discourse about integration capacities within receiving countries such as Germany. During this period, German society, with its changeful immigration history, is again challenged to provide policy responses and foster migrant integration, especially in urban areas. The efforts of cities along that path, however, vary greatly. Complementing locality approaches on immigration and integration policies, which are focused on metropolises and the U.S.-American context, this article is an empirical application for understanding institutional and structural conditions for local variations in integration strategies in Germany by presenting a comparative analysis of four mid-sized cities. The particular research interest lies on discourses from interviews with local authorities and civil society actors. Our analysis reveals city-specific streamlines: For instance, discourses at a center of the 'knowledge society' focused on a strong municipal power structure that allowed communally-financed, sustainable projects to evolve from a historically-grounded commitment to welcome migrants and from high financial capacities at its disposal. In another case, discourses revolved around a city's financially constraints, which were equalized by compensatory civil society networks. In other cities, progress was associated with spontaneous local happenings or individual innovative leadership. These street-level patterns create a degree of locality within the global migration discourse, since they emerge from the interplay of financial, economic, and demographic features; historical concepts; or local events. We therefore contend that urban planning initiatives would profit from considering place-specific institutions that influence integration stakeholders, which are regime-makers and foster institutional, migration-led changes.

Keywords
city-specificity; institutions; integration strategies; migration; spatial analysis; urban context; urban migration regimes

Issue
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1. Introduction

When a growing number of refugees, mainly from Syria, left their country to enter the EU via Central European countries in 2015, but were stopped at the Hungarian border, German Chancellor Angela Merkel famously announced: "We can do it." In the following year, the number of asylum applications reached more than 745,000 in Germany and, for the first time, exceeded the historical peak from 1993 (about 440,000 applications in the course of the Yugoslav wars; German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2020). Even though the numbers have steadily decreased since then, dropping to about 122,000 applications in 2020 (German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2020), German society, as well as the European Community as a whole, has become increasingly polarized between those representatives accepting and welcoming new migrants into

their communities, and others rejecting them, supposedly due to their overburdened local integration capacities. In addition, the emergence of some radical, or even aggressive populist resentment has increasingly been undermining societal cohesion.

Despite these recent political turbulences, migration is not a new topic for German society. According to German population statistics, migrants are defined as 'persons with a migrant background' (Federal Statistical Office, 2017), meaning that the individual concerned, or at least one parent, did not receive German citizenship by birth. This definition varies from other concepts used at the international level. The United Nations (2019, p. 3) defines international migrants as persons "who are either living in a country other than their country of birth or in a country other than their country of citizenship." However, we use the German concept in this article since it subsumes the diverse immigration groups in Germany's recent immigration history. This includes immigration of 'guest workers' from the 1960s; ethnic German repatriates from the former Soviet Union, Poland, and Romania; the refugees with peaks in the 1990s and around 2015; or immigrants in the context of EU free movement. Parallel to a decline of immigration at the turn of the millennium, a critical debate evokes questioning whether integration is still an adequate terminus to be used (West, 2013), not least since many immigration groups have been living in Germany for almost half a century. As a consequence, scholars within the academic discourse have gone a step further and analyzed Germany according to its 'postmigrant' identity building (e.g., Foroutan et al., 2014). Nonetheless, with recent immigration peaking in 2015, these discussions devolved again into rhetoric on immigration that can roughly be put between exclusion and welcoming culture (cf. West, 2013). In the meantime, the country has become one of the top global destinations of immigrants—comparable with Saudi Arabia—and, in 2019, hosts around 13 million migrants and thus stands at second place following the U.S. (51 million; United Nations, 2019). While already back in the 1970s there was a debate on whether Germany should in fact be termed a country of immigration due to its high numbers of international migrants (Filsinger, 2009), Germany is now once again challenged to strengthen social cohesion in order to stop an increasing polarization of German society.

This future of the German immigration society depends to a great extent on how successful integration will be at the local level. This is particularly relevant in urban areas, since large gateway cities, but also suburbs or some smaller-sized towns, have proven attractive for migrants (Çağlar, 2014, p. 8), causing them to function as integration hubs in global society. It is here, in these cities, where it will be determined if "we can do it" or not. As a consequence, integration strategies have become central tasks in modern urban planning. The efforts to provide successful integration strategies, however, vary greatly between cities. With a comparative case study in four mid-sized German cities, the article aims to show how institutional and structural conditions influence local discourses of stakeholders in urban migration regimes. It uses key statistical data from the cities and discourses from semi-structured interviews with urban integration stakeholders, i.e., individuals working for local authorities, welfare associations, and non-governmental organizations. These urban authorities and civil society representatives who are providing integration services, measures, or programs are core players within the urban migration regimes, which we define as an ensemble of local discourses, institutions, networks, and power relations related to the processes of arranging and negotiating the challenge of migration and integration (cf. Pott, 2018, p. 121).

The article begins by introducing the theoretical framing and method. This is followed by a detailed analysis of the discourses with integration practitioners in the four cities, which will show that urban agents are strongly shaped by local institutions, and, at the same time, these stakeholders as regime-makers themselves form place-specific institutions. We then close with a synopsis on our findings about the meaning of locality and draw conclusions for urban planning initiatives and the global migration discourse.

2. Contextualizing Urban Migration Regimes in Their Local Institutional Context

Despite a heated public debate about local policies in dealing with refugees' immigration peaking in 2015, Schammann (2015, p. 162) misses an equally intensified research debate on local immigration policies in the German context, especially in politics, which is still mainly focused on national and European political development. The few existing studies, moreover, are primarily focused on metropolises (e.g., Pütz & Rodatz, 2013; Wiest, 2020), despite the fact that also smaller and medium-sized cities are becoming increasingly relevant as places where migrants settle (Çağlar, 2014, p. 8). By analyzing discourses and inherent institutions in four medium-sized cities in Germany, this article aims at responding to the lack of locality studies in the German context. It is contextualized in two major theoretical avenues.

First, we draw from existing locality approaches that were mainly conducted in the U.S.-American context and investigated the role of different "historical, institutional and discursive trajectories" (Çağlar, 2014, p. 17) for the existence of local patterns of urban immigration and integration policies. To give some examples, Bauder (2016) discussed how local policies and practices of 'sanctuary cities' differ in international comparisons throughout socio-demographic, historical, and political contexts within cities. Similarly, in the U.S.-American context, Walker and Leitner (2011) found specific reasons (e.g., the geographical location of cities, the share of foreign-born population) for the fact that local policies

are directed "either to promote immigrant integration or to exclude (undocumented) immigrants from settling" (Walker & Leitner, 2011, p. 157). Glick Schiller (2013, p. 888) detected varying "narratives of culture and creativity," such as the promotion of multiculturalism as a tourist attraction in Paris, and an open image for global talent-seeking in Dallas. In the German context, for instance, Wiest (2020) has illustrated the influence of historical conceptions and socioeconomic conditions on local attitudes towards migrants in districts of Munich and Leipzig, ranging from "unexcited and routinized coexistence" in more cosmopolitan, economically well-positioned urban regions of Munich, to more skepticism in the East German city related to "realities and debates of racism and growing xenophobia" (Wiest, 2020, p. 123). A further example is provided by Schammann (2015, pp. 177–178), who illustrated that the Asylum Seekers' Benefit Act or *Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz* is implemented in German municipalities differently, depending, roughly put, on welfare-orientated, liberal or regulatory, restrictive policies. Outside the rather narrow field of migration studies, these approaches correspond to the broader idea of an 'inherent logic of cities,' a term coined by Berking and Löw (2005). This logic is assumed to be the result of historical conceptions and a comparative understanding of a particular city against other cities. For instance, Gehring and Großmann (2014, p. 111) found that, due to the affirmation of certain self-images or even symbolization, the experts they interviewed ascribed different connotations to problems depending on which city they belonged to.

To adequately reflect the evolution of these kinds of local patterns and variations, as a second theoretical avenue, we draw from institutional theory, thus paying attention to the dynamic and complementary character of underlying institutions and structures. Even if a common definition of institutions is still missing (cf. Glückler, Suddaby, & Lenz, 2018, p. 3), the widely-established differentiation by Scott (2001) into regulative (e.g., legal or economic factors), normative (e.g., values, traditions), and cognitive institutions (e.g., common believes) can be used as orientation. Glückler et al. (2018, p. 2) recognize a growing interest in the "spatial dimension of institutional life." These authors (Glückler et al., 2018) argue that—next to an 'institutional turn' in geography—a 'spatial turn' in institutional theory that culminates in questions like "what it is that makes it easier to unlock the potential of one region than that of another" can also be observed (Glückler et al., 2018, p. 2). By applying this approach to migration studies in our empirical analysis in order to understand institutional and structural conditions for local variations, we also address the shortage of enhanced theoretical analyses on the production of (urban) space in the context of migration regimes (Pott, 2018). The study responds to an increased need for qualitative approaches in migration studies so that one can capture the complexity of factors and the role of individual and social movements responsible for different urban immigration policies as proclaimed by Walker and Leitner (2011, p. 174). Considering that these movements "do not exist in a vacuum," but rather evolve within a specific milieu out of the specific "local social, demographic, and geographic context of these policy responses" (Walker & Leitner, 2011, p. 174), our study seeks to explain the reasons why local variations exist and, thus, why something happens in one city but not in another. The substance of a locality becomes relevant as an expression of social relations and movements and, thus, in line with Dell'Agnese (2013), the geographical boundary of the city is referred to as a level of abstraction in order to conceptualize space.

3. Method: Localizing Urban Migration Regimes in Four German Cities

In Germany, the four states of Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg, Hesse, and North Rhine-Westphalia have the highest shares of migrants outside the city-states or *Stadtstaaten* (see Figure 1). In order to spread the case studies across the country, one city was selected in each of them. Thus, the focus is given to cities in the Western part of Germany, with the awareness that cities in the Eastern part reveal specific, more skepticism patterns in dealing with migration as highlighted in other studies (e.g., Wiest, 2020). We specifically focus on small and medium-sized cities with a population between 50,000 and 150,000 (see also section above). For the selection process, the economic and sociodemographic background of 89 cities (selection criterion: proportion of migrants above national average, i.e., $>$ 19%; Federal Statistical Office, 2017) within these four federal states were evaluated in terms of the following three aspects: share of migrants (indicator: share of migrants), financial and economic capacities (indicators: core fiscal debt per capita and unemployment rate), and knowledge assets (indicators: highly qualified individuals at place of residence and at place of work).

As a result, the following four cities were chosen (see Figure 1): Arnsberg, a rapidly aging city, has the smallest share of migrants of the four cities (20.2%), moderate financial and economic capacity, and a fairly small proportion of highly qualified employees (8.7%); Erlangen, a center of the 'knowledge society' (traditional university town, numerous high-tech industries), has a moderate share of migrants (28.7%), a strong financial capacity, and a significant share of highly qualified employees (31.2%); the third city, Heilbronn, is a stable, dominant economic center in its region and has a high proportion of migrants (43.7%) and a strong financial capacity, but only a moderate number of highly qualified employees (11.9%); and Offenbach, just east of Frankfurt, a traditional industrial location currently undergoing structural transformation. The city has the highest share of migrants in Germany (49.7%) and the weakest financial capacity (and the highest unemployment rate) of the four cities. Furthermore, it has a relatively large segment

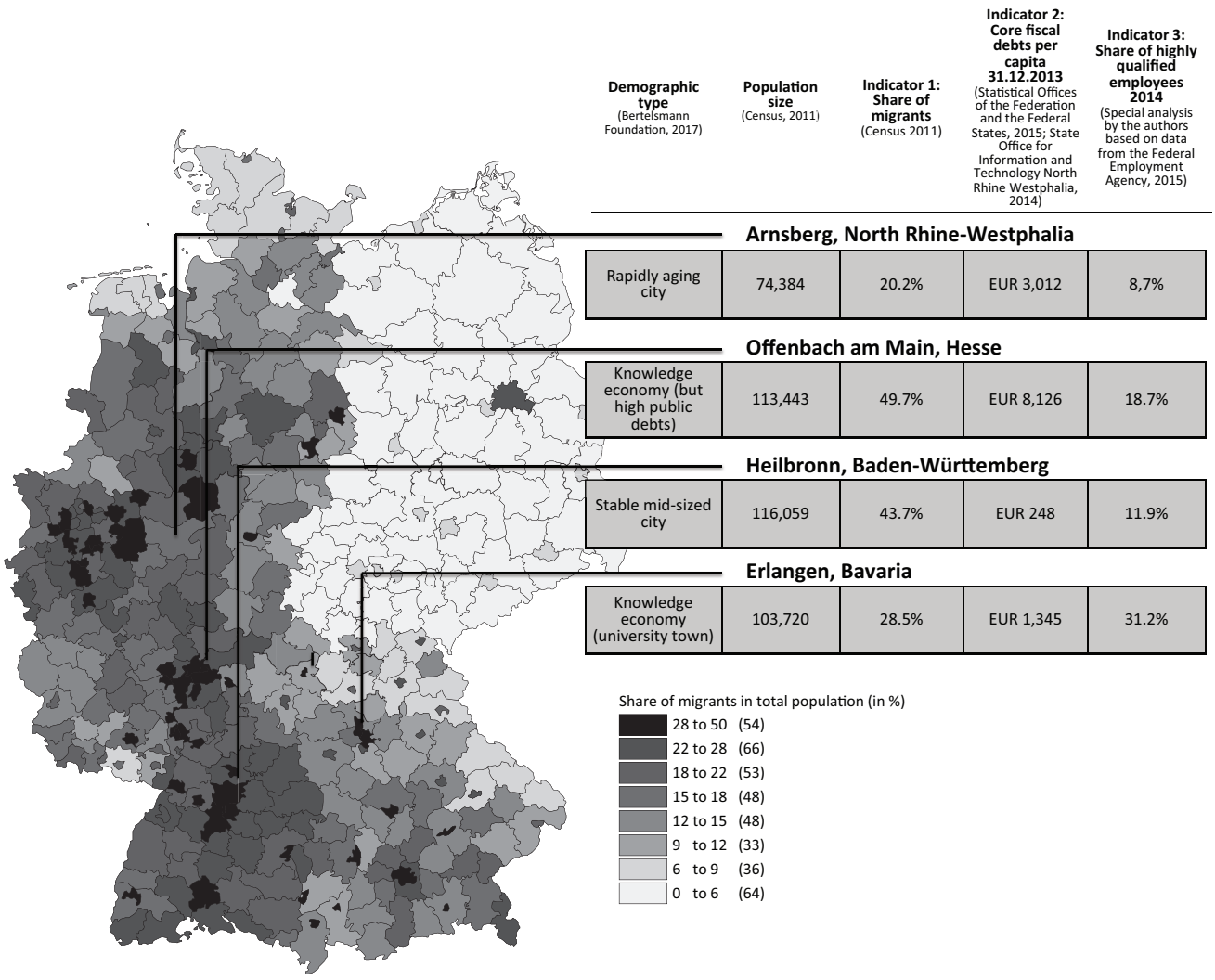

Figure 1. City characteristics of the four urban case studies in Germany.

of highly qualified employees (18.7%) due to its vicinity to the global metropolitan region of Frankfurt.

All four cities have high shares of migrants from earlier periods of immigration (e.g., generation of 'guest workers' or ethnic German repatriates), but also show some more recent particularities (e.g., a particularly high level of immigration of EU citizens to Offenbach and the increased reception of refugees in Erlangen).

A total of 35 semi-structured interviews were conducted with integration practitioners in these four cities. Interviewees from the following groups—in equal proportions—were included: 1) charitable associations, representatives from councils of foreigners, and social enterprises, 2) welfare associations, and 3) local authorities. These experts are active in the field of integration for the cities on a salaried or voluntary basis and provide projects, programs, or measures that are directed toward improving integration in different areas of life. This includes immigration counseling, mentoring projects, vocational orientation, talent seeking programs, sport programs, or intercultural projects such as intercultural gardening or intercultural theatres. All interviews asked about the aim of the experts' own services, a general assessment of which factors enable or hinder practitioners from acting innovatively, and local attitudes towards migrants, as well as future challenges for the city and the experts themselves. The interviews were transcribed and then analyzed with the help of MAXQDA using a deductive/inductive method of categorization (Kuckarz, 2014). The deductive element was used since the interview guide was originally directed to prove the practical relevance of an existing indicator set on social innovativeness (results published already in Bund, 2015; Bund, Gerhard, Hoelscher, & Mildenberger, 2015). However, the analysis additionally included an inductive part because we gave the interviewees the most possible freedom to talk about those themes that bother the experts most. This inductive part has revealed three main themes and builds the starting point for the following analysis (see Figure 2): main motivation of the experts as a response to the most pressing challenges in the cities, the experts' specific assessment of the local government strategy, and their collaboration with other key stakeholders in terms of power relations. As a second

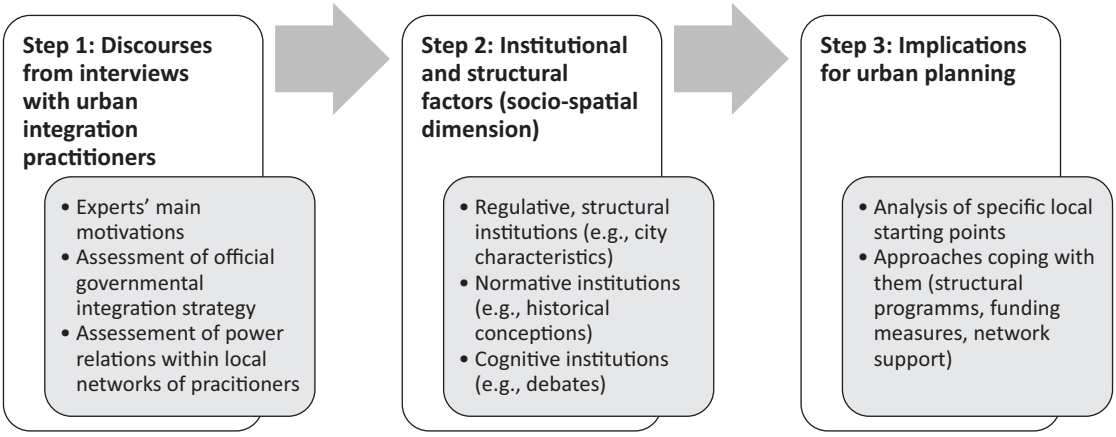

Figure 2. Study design.

step, when presenting these discourses, we pay particular attention to the institutional and structural elements underlying them. From here, as a third step, we derive some approaches for urban planning in the conclusion.

The research design has also some major limitations. The selection process for these urban case studies is only exemplary but, nonetheless, we use these structurally diverse cities as prototypes that are studied, not for their own sake, but as "specific exemplars of some more general phenomenon whose investigation as part of the complexities of the particularity of places enables a closer analysis of its real workings" (Massey, 1993, p. 148). Furthermore, using the perceptions and discourses of integration practitioners of course implies the risk of respondent bias in the experts' reporting of institutional capacities or characteristics of their cities. We tried to mitigate this by representing the whole network of integration practitioners from all sectors. The experiences from the interviews let us assume that experts might be partially concealing problematic concerns, especially in contributions by local authority experts, but they also include unexpected critical voices by local authorities as will be shown in the analysis.

4. Analyzing City-Specific Discourses in Urban Migration Regimes

In this section, we analyze in more detail the specific discourses in each city. The three main themes will be analyzed for every city (Step 1) by using exemplary quotes from the interviewees. Which institutional and structural conditions are relevant for the development of city-specific discourses will be discussed and summarized for each theme (Step 2). A synopsis of these two steps is given in Figure 3, while the implications for urban planning are discussed in chapter 5 (Step 3). As will be shown, there is a complex interplay of factors that determine the evolution of these discursive streamlines. As our qualitative analysis has established, the key characteristics of cities is one of several factors that is of relevance here.

To protect the anonymity of the interviewees, only rough attributes are given: the first part refers to the organization the expert belongs to ('ngo' for migrant associations and social enterprises, 'welfare' for welfare organizations, 'authorities' for local authorities). The second part refers to the city the expert belongs to (ARN for Arnsberg, ERL for Erlangen, HEI for Heilbronn, and OFF for Offenbach am Main). Finally, the interviewees were numbered consecutively in each city.

4.1. Main Motivations of Urban Stakeholders

The first theme addresses what the urban stakeholders view as the cities' biggest challenges they try to respond to with their work. In Offenbach, a city with a particularly high share of migrants, the biggest challenge in the view of many experts is the particularly high pressure to act. All representatives from the welfare associations complain about overburdening: "With the 40 hours I work here every week, I cannot accomplish everything" (welfareOFF3). Another example is the following statement: "Think about it: we have 50% of people with migration background and four suppliers for immigration counseling….I have had 662 cases in the last year….And that's not counting the Bulgarians" (welfareOFF5). Some stakeholders believe that the city's economic difficulties have been exacerbated by immigration:

> Those [foreign guest workers] who—after the industrial sector had disappeared—stood on the street….That is what the city of Offenbach is still taking its time in coping with….Until the 1970s we had immigration for the purpose of employment…now it again shifts towards immigration in the context of free movement of people coming from Eastern Europe. (authoritiesOFF1)

This challenges the urban strategy: "A city that…is itself poor…then if other social groups come they are made into scapegoats" (welfareOFF5). Several experts see a kind of polarization in the city. A critical assessment of

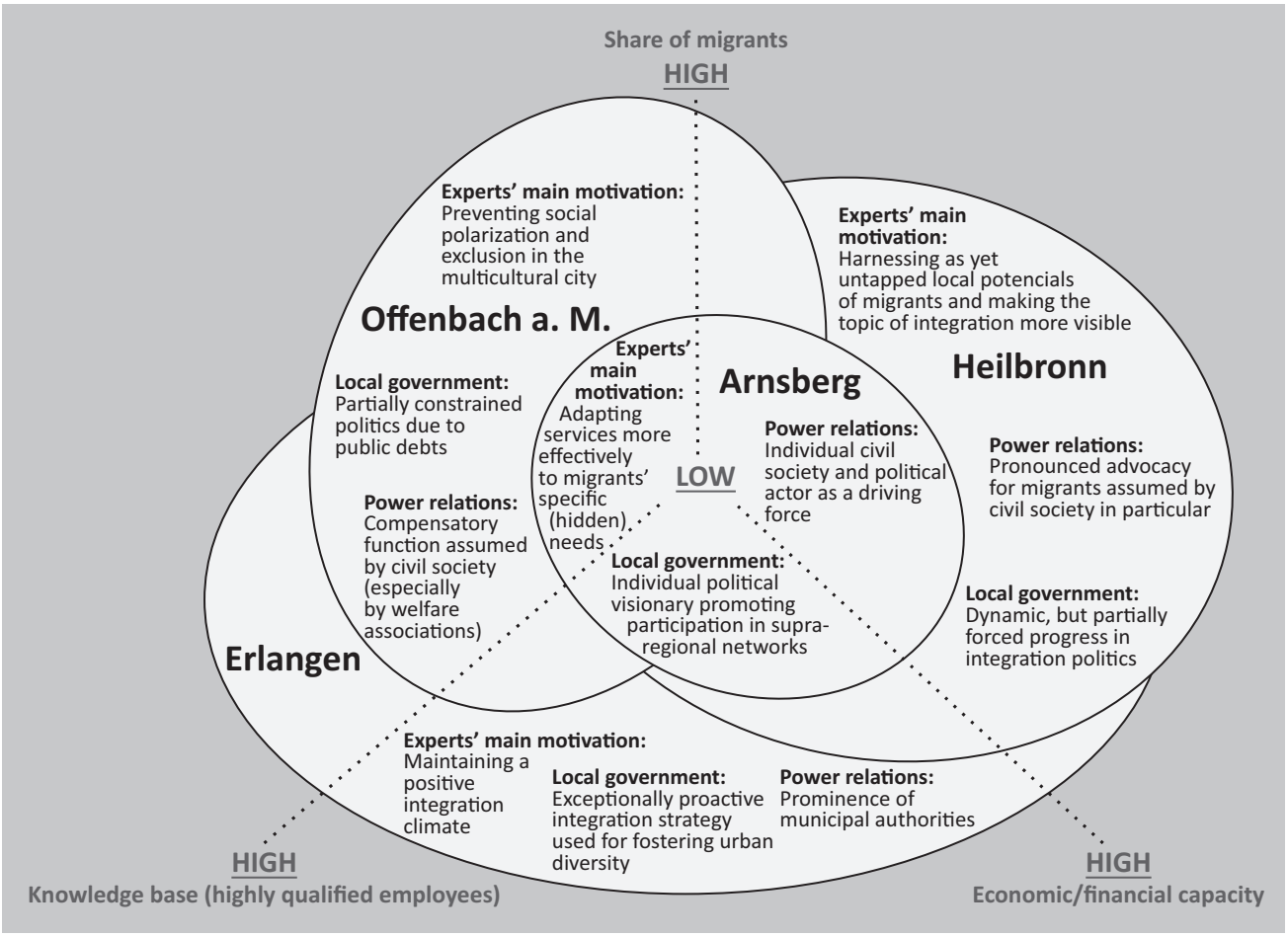

Figure 3. Synopsis of city-specific discourses and their relation to city characteristics. Note: For detailed information on structural data see Figure 1.

the multicultural flair, however, is the exception: "You only have to go in the city center of Offenbach. There is nothing German anymore. Even the C&A is a Turkish clothing store" (ngoOFF6). However, a recurring motivation among almost all experts is to create initiatives for peaceful coexistence in the multicultural city—an exemplarily statement is the following one: "When you walk onto the market square, you hear thousands of languages you don't understand. And I am delighted. I say we have the whole world here at home. Why do we only see problems?" (welfareOFF4).

Heilbronn, a city with also a particularly high share of migrants, was an attractive destination for 'guest workers' and ethnic German repatriates. In Heilbronn, however, preventing polarization was not the major theme of the interviews: "Considering that in the inner city 46% of the people have migration background, one can state that it is quite peaceful here" (welfareHEI3). The most frequently recurring topic voiced by the integration stakeholders was their strong motivation to harness the untapped potential of migrants. Several stakeholders stress the idea that the city would certainly benefit from greater efforts to integrate migrants into the education and labor system and to enhance political participation: "If the city acts right now regarding these foreign teenagers, it can only profit from it" (ngoHEI2a). This main objective is addressed by several initiatives. For instance, this includes an association committed to new talent seeking in the Turkish communities or an intercultural theater that, with its theater productions and subsequent discussions with the audience, aim at reflecting local realities in immigration societies (e.g., conflicts in Turkish families when young people turn away from religion). The experts, especially civil society actors, place greater emphasis on this objective of unfolding potentials and making the topic of integration more visible because some of them still observe distanced attitudes toward migrants, as illustrated by the following quote: "It's not necessarily xenophobic, but people in Heilbronn are also sometimes distant because they don't know how to deal with strangers" (ngoHEI6).

The lower share of migrants in Arnsberg, in turn, is also reflected in the interviews. Some experts even report about a partial lack of demand for the services:

> It's just that I always need a certain number of participants—about 10, 12 participants—and I can't get so many people together….However, many cultural groups are living here that are just well-integrated too; they live with us and among us

> and they don't want to hear anything from us. (welfareARN4)

However, this increases their motivation to adapt services more effectively to migrants' specific needs: "One has to join forces and begin by determining the needs….One really has to go out there and ask which projects we can establish" (welfareARN3). The pressure to act is not as great as it was during earlier periods of immigration: "For instance, in the course of the Bosnian war…there was an integration climate that could have taken a negative turn" (ngoARN5). The recent situation thus gives them the opportunity to address the more hidden needs that indeed exist, such as in cases of social isolation of women or intercultural conflicts as cited by an NGO representative: "For example, we had a Kurd [in the project], and then the Turkish participants didn't want to participate in the project anymore. That is interesting…the problems are being brought here by migrants'' (ngoARN7).

Finally, in Erlangen, many experts refer to the immigration history of the city starting from the Huguenots to the later immigration of Siemens employees or of refugees: "Well, the city is used to it already, but just with all the Siemens employees, who come from all over the world…every now and then there is one weirdo who sees things differently, but those are exceptions here in Erlangen" (ngoERL2). However, in Erlangen, a controversial debate on refugees' housing arrangements has begun, thus challenging the—in the view of all experts—generally largely open-minded attitude towards migrant integration that many stakeholders aim to maintain. Statements like the following ones are found in almost all interviews in the city:

> There are sometimes—how shall I put it—situations in which you realize: Okay, it's not like that yet, at least not among the whole population. What has been going on with the refugees just now…[namely] that many neighbors [i.e., citizens who are living in the vicinity of refugees' accommodations] were scared. (welfareERL3)

Some experts were surprised to see this kind of critical debate arising: "And then we thought: Whoa there! From Erlangen? With its 'tradition of openness'?" (ngoERL7)—the city's official slogan.

To sum up (see also Figure 3), the local situations and dominant themes that trouble the experts differ strongly in the four cities. In the two cities with a particularly high share of migrants, the experts are mostly challenged by a huge pressure to act, especially in the field of immigration counseling, where there is a requirement to prevent polarization and a desire to harness the yet untapped potentials of migrants. In turn, a lower share of migrants gives integration practitioners the opportunity to uncover hidden needs or to maintain an overall positive integration climate. This is backed up by other studies that show that the share of migrants (e.g., Wells, 2004) and especially the growth of this share in cities (Walker & Leitner, 2011) play a major role in accounting for differences in local integration policies. In this regard, it is decisive if the individual pressure can be met by a local government or if cities become overstrained. These aspects will be addressed in the next section.

4.2. Assessment of Local Government Integration Strategies

Progress and innovativeness of integration highly depend on whether the local authority is able and willing to see integration as a cross-sectional and high-priority process (e.g., Gruber, 2010). Apart from a rough differentiation into service-oriented, inclusive, and regulatory politics (cf. Marrow, 2009), the motives that underlie specific city marketing differ in cities and range from traditional "belief systems" (Walker & Leitner, 2011, p. 165) to multicultural city strategies that are directed toward a "fabrication of exotica" (Shaw, Bagwell, & Karmowska, 2004, p. 1984). In our analysis, with the help of the experts' assessment on how they view the local governmental strategy in their city, we present examples to reflect these differences in local policy styles.

In Erlangen, almost all experts acknowledge that the city has an exceptionally proactive integration strategy: "There is a sense of cosmopolitanism—which is the city's slogan: a tradition of openness. You can feel that" (welfareERL3). To illustrate the historically-rooted meaning of migration, the local authorities even started a project on the city's immigration history in collaboration with the town museum. Similarly, Walker (2014, p. 524) discussed the historical dimension of such inclusive integration strategies. The inclusive policies in her study in suburbs of Evanston and Takoma Park—in a way similar to Erlangen—were grounded in a "tradition of welcoming immigrants and promoting social justice" that evolved as part of a longstanding experience with immigrants at these places, "which may in part explain their more tolerant positions" (Walker, 2014, p. 524). An important driver for introducing a culture of welcoming in Erlangen was a problematic concern in 2011 about one employee of the city's immigration authority who was accused of treating refugees in an inhuman way. This conflict was broadly discussed in local media as 'Sheriff merciless': "This landed as a kind of bombshell in the town hall" (ngoERL5). A welcoming principle was pursued from this time forward by the coordinating office for integration. This office was introduced in 2008 and local authorities attach great importance to the sustainability aspects of their projects: "When we start a project, I always try to support it with communal budgets in order to increase its sustainability" (authoritiesERL1). For instance, two large-scale projects that were initially financed by external funds have been continued by the city itself. This includes a project on educational sponsorship or a club as meeting point for intercultural exchange.

In other cities, they claim that projects depend much more on external funding. Then it is important to quickly respond to such external calls, find partners, and provide a formal statement by the local authority to confirm that a specific local need really exists. Thus, having a well-equipped integration staff, as is the case in Erlangen, allows for more supportive structures and thus affords the luxury of fostering innovative projects with the help of both internal and external funding.

Despite a similarly high proportion of migrants and an equally reliable financial situation like Erlangen, it can be assumed from the interviews in our second city, Heilbronn, that the progress made in integration strategies was partially forced by public pressure resulting from newly released population statistics that were published as part of the city's second integration report (City of Heilbronn, 2014). The report actually revealed an unexpectedly high share of migrants in the city: "And there I felt a great deal of insecurity and that many people saw the numbers for the first time, and they were completely stunned: What, so many?" (authoritiesHEI1). Prompted by the publication, dynamic progress was initiated and many interviewees in Heilbronn are grateful to the integration commissioner, whose position was initiated in 2008 and later on assigned directly to the mayor's office (City of Heilbronn, 2014, p. 25): "Since the position of integration commissioner was created, the city has already set an example; they see something needs to be done. There had been initiatives before of course, but not pooled like that" (welfareHEI3). Firstly, this proves the capacity of a financially well-positioned city to quickly build well-structured networks, and, secondly, illustrates that spontaneous developments can change policy styles within a short time (see Daamen & Doomernik, 2014, who reported the spontaneous arising of regulatory policies in the course of a violent crime caused by an unauthorized migrant).

In Offenbach, a proactive government strategy is hampered by scarce financial resources. Even if several stakeholders argue that the city started their engagement for integration relatively early—for instance an integration commissioner was installed in 1998—they also indicate a missing overview of the variety of existing integration measures and insufficient coordinative power of the local authority: "We tried…to provide transparency. Which measures? That [namely providing an overview of existing integration measures] is not possible…we don't have personal resources to do so…so many measures…but principally the same approach" (authoritiesOFF8). This is related to the limited financial capacity of the city: "The most important thing is definitely to overcome the debts" (authoritiesOFF1). A representative of the welfare association put it more dramatically: "I think Offenbach is the second most indebted city in Germany; nothing can be done here anymore….I guess you could actually remove politics here" (ngoOFF6). The federal state of Hesse, for example, provided funding for a project, which strengthens the role of migrant associations and thus helped the local authority to at least partly compensate for its financial difficulties. Some experts also explain that the city, in the course of increased immigration of Bulgarians and Romanians, has been focusing on security and regulatory issues. This is an issue raised by several interviewees: "Well, they don't want to have poverty immigration anymore….The city of Offenbach has undertaken regulatory measures consistently and on a massive scale…so integration policies are subordinate" (authoritiesOFF1). This also affects the society as a whole in the view of some experts: "That means, regulatory measures, overstaffed houses, deporting illegal people or not allowing them to come here—that influences the society very much, if this is in the media" (ngoOFFO5).

Arnsberg, finally, has a relatively low proportion of highly qualified individuals and is also the smallest and most peripheral of the four cities while enjoying considerable recognition in superregional networks (for instance, as a member of the European network CLIP—Cities for Local Integration Policies). Many interviewees associated the recognition it enjoys with the strong support for political visionaries: "We have a very innovative mayor….He's a driving force…a pioneer" (authoritiesARN1). This strong political visionary shows that individual dynamics play a seminal role for local regimes—independent from other structural constellations. In Arnsberg, the restructuring of the immigration authority toward an office for immigration in 2000 started relatively early compared to other cities and has installed its own staff unit: "Begging to department heads…that will not work; rather it has to be a mandate from the highest administrative level, then it will be taken seriously" (authoritiesARN1).

We conclude from this section that integration stakeholders are confronted with different local policy styles ranging from very proactive strategy making in the field of integration to partially insufficient political structures. With regard to the frameworks relevant for the evolvement of these local patterns, our case studies have shown that structural conditions such as the financial situation of a city (see Figure 3) impact not only on local authorities, but also on the whole network of integration practitioners. It has furthermore illustrated that progress in governmental integration strategies can also be fostered by historical dimensions, but also by public pressure due to certain events, advocacy assumed by civil society, or individual innovation leadership.

4.3. Assessment of Power Relations within the Local Network of Integration Practitioners

In urban research, the negotiation of power is also related to processes and arrangements between urban government and non-governmental actors (e.g., Hendriks, 2014). Some authors even refer to an individual "geography of nonprofits" at the local level (DeFilippis & Faust, 2014, p. 1198) and describe the

dependency of the civil society's scope on specific structural conditions (e.g., Lake & Newman, 2002). In our selected cities, power relations become evident in terms of a varying "immigrant advocacy assemblage" (Leitner & Strunk, 2014, p. 951) that ranges from the dominance of government actors to a variety of non-governmental stakeholder groups.

The proactive governmental strategy in Erlangen, having the highest share of highly-qualified employees in our study, goes hand in hand with a high municipal dominance in integration issues: "All the activities or actions related to the topic of integration…are usually controlled and organized by the city of Erlangen" (authoritiesERL8). An example illustrating this coordinative engagement of the local authority is the so-called integration conference taking place every year that is used for presenting integration activities of the city to citizens and interested audiences. Van Winden, van den Berg, and Pol (2007, p. 529) described structural characteristics of 'knowledge cities' like Erlangen and one criterion is their high degree of urban diversity including cultural diversity. In Erlangen, this endeavor to foster urban diversity is reflected by the local authority's strong commitment to ensure sustainable, professional integration services. As shown by several studies, there is a correlation between a large number of citizens with advanced university degrees or absence of economic insecurity and a pro-immigrant perception (e.g., Daamen & Doomernik, 2014; Gerhard, Hoelscher, & Wilson, 2017; Walker & Leitner, 2011). One expert expresses this as follows: "Erlangen is a rich city. Siemens, the university, everything is here. If you do not have to fight for your own livelihood, it is quite simply much easier to be generous and sympathetic" (ngoERL5). However, a strong municipal dominance may also carry a risk of turning into rigidity. For example, when too much focus is put on justifications such as survey data or evaluations used by the cities to demonstrate that a certain project is successful in addressing a specific local need. The ability to respond quickly "is one aspect that is missing in the city in the context of innovativeness. Thus, they [the local authorities] always need a justification for everything" (ngoERL2).

Power relations in Heilbronn are very different from Erlangen. The network of urban stakeholders in the view of the experts is generally very cooperative, but we found a particularly pronounced advocacy for migrants assumed by civil society in Heilbronn, which overtakes—close to what Leitner and Strunk (2014, p. 960) call—"struggles…for more welcoming policies": "Because there were simply enough young migrants who had the knowledge and the skills, and we said: The time has come now. Now we have to act too. And we have to show ourselves" (ngoHEI6). In Heilbronn, the interviews give the appearance that there is still a need to build trust on the civil-society level and to gain greater recognition of the topic of integration in the city. Some urban stakeholders are thus still heavily engaged in assuming advocacy for migrants, which, in their view, the local authority does not sufficiently care for in the past. This is similar to what Bauder (2016, pp. 5, 8) found in the United Kingdom in terms of "grassroots practices of solidarity" pursuing the aim "to create unity among activists, urban political and civic actors, as well as illegalized migrants and refugees" (Bauder, 2016, p. 8) as a sign of neoliberal politics. Looking back at how their initiatives began, many of the civil society actors in Heilbronn broach the issue of building trust in civil society within the urban context: "So it's a lot of personal spadework, persuading and also cultivating contacts" (ngoHEI6). This advocacy and their persuasive endeavors, along with a kind of defiance on the part of some civil society actors, reveal a dynamic moment of shifting power in Heilbronn.

In Offenbach, too, civil society is an important player within the local network. However, compared to Heilbronn, where the interviews give the appearance that there is still a need to build trust with civil society, here especially welfare associations have become highly respected players: "Yes, it works very well in Offenbach. And if one [representative of welfare associations] says something in working groups, it works" (welfareOFF4). This expert makes the point that, for example, the police or regulatory official agents do not dare to talk in a negative manner about specific immigration groups in their presence. Networks are, in the view of all experts, of great significance against the backdrop of the financial constraints on local authorities: "If one has almost no money, it does not work at all without networks" (ngoOFF6). Thus, agreeing with the view of several experts in Offenbach, a robust and compensatory civil society network has developed as a counterpart to the local authority's limited capacity: "We strongly cultivate this network in Offenbach" (welfareOFF3). Especially the experts from welfare associations report unanimously that collaboration is characterized by high levels of trust and an effective, flexible use of skills and competences among the individual agents of the local network. One example clarifies it: "I like to give some people away, take others on, and so on; everyone [the colleagues] knows their preferences, special qualifications, who one can cope with best, what one doesn't like; we know all of that because we've been working with that colleague for years" (welfareOFF5). This kind of flexibility, however, is also necessary as shown by the following quote: "The suppliers of immigration counseling have always been treated as stepchildren to a certain degree….We/the suppliers comprehensively support each other" (welfareOFF3).

Finally, in Arnsberg, in addition to the role of political visionaries, all experts expressed their gratitude to one particular charitable association that was established in 1969, and still plays an outstanding role in the overall integration network today, and in close cooperation with local authorities is caring for the language development: "The biggest accomplishment was that she [the founder of the association] drew political and public attention to the need for action; that people [the migrants] couldn't

simply be left alone" (ngoARN5). This association organizes the yearly event 'DIES Internationales' as a platform to present organizations in the field of integration, and includes shows and culinary specialties, as well. This is a prominent event, even beyond the city borders and appreciated by all interviewees. These individual initiatives are mainly responsible for the city's positive reputation throughout Germany with regard to its best practice models for improved integration.

Power relations in cities thus vary strongly between municipal dominance and compensatory civil society networks. Shortcomings such as financial constraints of local authorities can be partially compensated by a strong civil society. Furthermore, backed up by existing studies, a high number of highly-qualified persons in the population (see Figure 3) might also foster an increased municipal power fostering knowledge-induced growth and urban diversity by pursing a proactive strategy in dealing with migration and integration. In cases where a clear assignment of power was not possible, our analysis confirms the role of 'opinion leaders' that, as individuals, are strongly involved in capacity-building for institutional transformations (see also Mutch, 2007).

5. Conclusion

Our analysis directs attention to the complex interplay of regulative, structural institutions (e.g., financial, economic, demographic features), normative institutions (e.g., historical conceptions), as well as cognitive institutions (e.g., local debates) that, in a complementary way, produce a specific urban environment in which local variances—in this article illustrated by city-specific discourses—evolve. In summary, the discourses revealed some major tendencies. One, for instance, is that especially stakeholders in the field of immigration counseling are confronted with signs of overstraining in those cities with high shares of people with migration background or strong recent immigration flows. Structural conditions such as the financial situation of a city impact not only on staff in local authorities themselves, but also on the whole network. This is because strong engagement by municipal integration actors helps to provide a well-structured, transparent landscape of integration services, preventing double work and supporting application processes toward third party funding. Moreover, in the case of local authorities lacking capacities, a mechanism allowing for compensatory networks in civil society is of fundamental significance. Historical dimensions, including the maturity and power of networks or individual experiences with earlier immigration, are equally important conditions shaping variations in the discourse of the urban agents. Finally, a proactive urban migration regime can also be fundamentally fostered by individual innovation leadership or the potential of spontaneous events for turning around local politics. Migration studies are thus challenged to precisely analyze the complex dynamics of the production of (urban) space (Pott, 2018, p. 113). We focused on the integration practitioners as key players within these regimes. Without having longitudinal evidence, the examples from our analysis selectively show that these practitioners commit to a tradition of openness, they arise awareness to the realities of immigration societies, or they join forces and compensate the missing capacities of local authorities. With their 'voices' negotiated within and along local and over-regional networks in "spaces of circulation" (Jonas & Ward, 2018), these urban agents can be regarded as 'regime-makers' and they have major responsibilities in the negotiation of processes on migration and integration at the local scale.

Shedding light on this rhetoric on the origins of discourses of successful or failed integration policies by cities will help to moderate today's controversial and often very emotionally-charged debate on migration. Understanding these origins is an important feature for bottom-up policies and urban planning (Step 3 in Figure 2) because it takes into account which individual opportunities and challenges exist within urban frameworks (for the role of knowledge institutions in these urban planning processes see van Winden, 2010). This applies, first, to analyzing structural starting points and institutional factors such as specific historical conceptions or power constellations within cities. Second, based on these observations, planning and policy makers can address these starting points with the help of structural programs and funding instruments that foster self-help, and are of particular relevance to those cities that are affected by structural change and limited public financial capacity. The results from our interviews underline that there is also a necessity for thinking about alternative funding instruments that also enable a donor to access representatives of cities that do not have the capacities for undertaking a professional application process. A further instrument refers to the promotion of (existing) networks at different levels that have to be used for knowledge exchange and particularly to pass on good-practices that might derive especially from cities that have the specific possibility to pilot innovative projects and sustain effective (elements of) projects.

Finally, 'regime-making' as a process constantly in motion does not end at the local level; rather, these regimes are embedded into national and global scales that are mutually interdependent. We began this article with a quote by German Chancellor Merkel in 2015 which could be paraphrased as "Yes, we are responsible and willing to practice integration." As this article has shown, this general call to action needs a profound, localized response in terms of place-specific integration strategies that—in an admittedly rather complex way—adhere to local institutional frameworks with their specific histories, limits, and opportunities. Then, local integration can be improved by identifying strategic failures and challenges. Integration strategies thus have to be viewed as a result of individual capacities among local governments and civil society actors. The place-specific institutions on

which these capacities rely provide the important substance of locality necessary for the global migration and integration discourse.

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Article

Postmigrant Spatial Justice? The Case of 'Berlin Develops New Neighbourhoods' (BENN)

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Abstract
This article discusses the introduction of a new urban policy in Berlin, Germany, in the frame of postmigrant spatial justice. In 2017, Berlin established so-called 'integration management programs' in 20 different neighbourhoods around large refugee shelters as a response to the growing challenges local authorities faced after the administrative collapse in 2015/16. A new policy agenda provides the opportunity to learn from previous policies and programs—especially when it is addressed to the local dimension of integration, a widely and controversially discussed issue. Drawing on fieldwork conducted in Berlin in 2018 and 2019, this article discusses how migration is framed in urban social policy against both postmigrant and spatial justice theory.

Keywords
BENN; Berlin; critical urban research; forced migration; migration policy; refugees; postmigration; social city; spatial justice

Issue
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1. Introduction

Berlin has endured turbulent years regarding forced migration and its subsequent policies. Since 2013, the increased opening of refugee shelters in Berlin and beyond has not only attracted media attention but also fuelled right-wing populist discourse. In addition, the local Berlin authorities, namely the Berlin State Office for Health and Social Affairs collapsed under the high pressure of taking in drastically increased numbers of refugees in 2015/16. This caused long waiting lines, and spontaneously built tents by voluntary organisations providing food, water, and shelter to asylum seeking persons. These local impacts are embedded in broader global processes, as the immigration of hundreds of thousands of people to Europe exposed weaknesses in the European migration regime (Hess, 2016, p. 6). The increased immigration also increased the research studies on these issues. However, studies on refugees operate in a field of tension: While the research often intends to draw attention to the various problems and discrimination experienced by asylum-seeking people, explicitly focusing on 'refugees' singles these people out as a distinct group. The postmigrant perspective seeks to overcome this binary and allows for an understanding beyond migrants and non-migrants by conceptualising a migration society everyone is part of (Römhild, 2015). This article adopts this perspective for a current research project on an urban social policy programme in Berlin that is running from 2017 to 2021. The programme called BENN—'Berlin develops new neighbourhoods'—was introduced in neighbourhoods with large refugee shelters. In total there are 20 teams working in the neighbourhoods as so-called 'integration managements' (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Wohnen [SenSW], 2021). As an 'integration' programme it does not focus on the typical 'integration policy' measures, such as the improvement of language skills, education, or labour—instead, the BENN programme focuses on encounters. BENN is based on the idea that people with

fewer resources (e.g., refugees) are more dependent on the neighbourhood and the available resources such as self-help networks, local associations, and social organisations, or even shopping facilities and building infrastructures (Franke, Schnur, & Senkel, 2018, p. 8). This policy is therefore discussed in the context of the Just City as the ultimate goal of planning (Marcuse, 2009, p. 1). Can planning and policy interventions such as BENN bring about more social and spatial justice? Or in other words: Can the BENN programme initiate a transformation towards postmigrant spatial justice? In exploring this question, the article first introduces the broader context of the research project from which this question arises. Secondly, the article sets the theoretical basis through bringing together postmigrant theory and spatial justice theory. The analytical framework is then discussed regarding the BENN programme and the empirical findings. In the discussion, the empirical findings are linked back to the theoretical framework.

2. Context of the Research Project

This article draws on material from an ongoing research project that is interested in knowledge–power relations and the framing of migration within the field of urban social policy. The first empirical phase focused on the institutional setting and the newly introduced integration managements of the BENN programme. 19 expert interviews were conducted mainly with BENN integration managers between 2018 and 2019. This is supplemented by participatory observation; specifically, during internal Senate events and by analysing the protocols from these events. In addition, written material that focuses on 'local integration' was researched and analysed such as federal as well as Berlin state urban social policy documents, scientific studies, reports, and evaluations. A second empirical phase was planned but had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic crisis. The aim of this phase was to talk to people that the BENN programme wants to address, including marginal and subaltern perspectives. The already collected material can reveal institutional logics and governing processes or as Wacquant (2020, p. 17) put it:

> The sociology of marginality must not fasten on vulnerable 'groups' (which often exist merely on paper, if that) but on the *institutional mechanisms* that produce, reproduce and transform the network of positions to which its supposed members are dispatched and attached.

The material was analysed with an open coding process (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 42) and several themes occurred regularly throughout the material. However, the postmigrant perspective is nothing that has evolved from the empirical data. It is rather a postmigrant lens through which the empirical material is analysed retrospectively.

3. At the Intersection of Postmigration and Social Justice Theory

3.1. Postmigrant Perspectives

Like many other academic concepts, postmigration does not have a fixed definition but rather includes multiple perspectives. The term 'post-migrant' can be used as a label for people who have not had a migration experience themselves but are nevertheless marked as migrants. In this vein, the concept serves as a means of producing counter-hegemonic knowledge, gives voice to migrants, makes marginalised types of knowledge visible, challenges national myths, reveals new concepts of difference, and generates a new awareness of history (Yildiz, 2018, p. 19). However, critics have argued that this understanding runs the risk of renewing established labels and categories (Römhild, 2015). In following on from an enhanced use of the postcolonial, Bojadžijev and Römhild (2014) propose a more radical renewal by conceiving not only migrants, but by constituting a postmigrant society. In this view, everyone is affected by migration and becomes a shaper of society (Bojadžijev & Römhild, 2014, p. 18). For Foroutan (2019, p. 19), postmigrant societies have accepted their immigration reality socially, politically and as part of their collective identities. One central aspect is dissolving the binary of natives and immigrants, of 'us' and 'them' (Mecheril, 2011), of the 'West' and the 'rest' (Hall, 1992), into an understanding of society as one of coexistence (Foroutan, 2019, p. 19). Mecheril (2014), as one of the main critics of the postmigrant concept, denounces the prefix 'post,' since 'post' rather expresses a distant perspective towards migrants. However, he acknowledges that the concept still grasps fundamental points of criticism of the way in which migration is addressed (Mecheril, 2014, p. 108). What has turned out to be a greater obstacle, though, is the translation from theory to empirical research, as the depiction of societal conditions runs the risk of falling into the trap of 'othering' and culturalist reduction (Dahinden, 2016; Römhild, 2015, p. 38). In this article, postmigration is less of a translation process, but rather an interpretative approach towards the new policy intervention in BENN.

3.2. Towards Postmigrant Spatial Justice

Drawing on Friedrich Engels' study *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845), Kemper and Vogelpohl (2013, p. 14) stress how social relations are unstable in principle and that social dynamics are determined by crisis and conflict (Kemper & Vogelpohl, 2013, p. 15). This implies that forces to overcome an unsatisfactory situation can develop from these conditions themselves. This is what the authors regard as social transformation (Kemper & Vogelpohl, 2013, p. 15). Since the social and the spatial are inherently connected (Massey, 2007), both need to be considered for social transformation.

The BENN programme is inherently spatial by considering the following: Firstly, it is unique to the city and state of Berlin; secondly, it works with a conception of the local as neighbourhood and even carries neighbourhood in its name; and thirdly the programme is tied to the need of an existence of a refugee shelter. However, notions like neighbourhood or local can be problematic as analytical categories as they suggest an inner coherence and clearly defined boundaries. This perspective latently underestimates state power, and it reveals little about the actual relevance of certain scales (Füller & Michel, 2008, p. 8). In addition, a framing of such spaces as static and stable fixed sites runs the danger of conforming and reifying the governance structures of migration that divides space into containers and disperses migrants accordingly (Hinger, Schäfer, & Pott, 2016, p. 445). This is not to say that space is not relevant, on the contrary. An analysis of the different forms of spatial production can provide deep insights into the respective constructions of truth and reality (Roskamm, 2012, p. 186). As Wiest (2020, p. 4) has stressed, postmigrant approaches have been little discussed in the context of space despite its relevant connections. She opens many departure points on which this article ties in with. Questions of urban citizenship (Lebuhn, 2013) as well as the right to the city (Lefebvre, 1968/1996) discuss questions of participation, equal rights, and access, that have also been at the centre of questions about spatial and social justice. Spatial justice involves a conflict of interest over space at a certain time or as Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos (2015) suggests: "To put it simply, spatial justice is the question that arises when a body desires to move into the space of another body." For Massey, spatial justice then lays in the possibility of plurality: "When many people and multiple communities experience satisfied claims to the same singularly occupied space, then the experience of spatial justice is maximized" (Pierce, 2019, p. 10). What is regarded as satisfied claims can be further analysed through the lenses of equality, democracy, and diversity, as Fainstein (2009) has suggested. Marcuse (2009) theorizes spatial justice with an emphasis on social injustice such as unequal access to urban resources, education, and civil rights and the various spatial consequences and outcomes. In contrast to Marcuse, Soja (2009, p. 2) understands space not as an outcome, but as the primary variable determining social inequalities and argues for a distributive understanding of spatial (in)justice. The idea of the distribution of values follows Rawls (1972/2001, p. 44) question of justice, that states, if given the choice, individuals would always choose a system of equal opportunities, which prevents excessive concentrations of property and wealth. This has been criticised from a Marxist perspective, first and foremost from David Harvey. Inequality and injustice result from a capitalist mode of production, that in turn calls for a production-side account of justice rather than relying on the distributional forms of justice (Harvey, 1973). The redistributive model of spatial justice highlights that the normal workings in the everyday of space inherent an injustice in distribution, as the "accumulation of locational decisions in a capitalist economy tends to lead to the redistribution of real income in favor of the rich over the poor" (Soja, 2009, p. 3). In this manner, socio-spatial transformation would create equality and equal distribution to achieve social and spatial justice. However, when there is not enough for everyone, how should an equal distribution play out? In Berlin, there is a shortage of affordable housing for low-income groups. Refugees in shelters that have been granted asylum and have the option to move out of the shelter often do not find affordable flats and are therefore forced to stay in the shelter. As Fainstein (2009, p. 2) explains with Nussbaum (2000, p. 135), for a society to achieve democratic deliberation, equality is fundamental. Structural differentiation, through the assignment of a certain (residence) status in combination with unequal access to housing, education, labour market, healthcare, and social welfare as it is the case between citizens and refugees, can therefore hardly be considered an equal background condition. With the introduction of deliberative concepts like communicative planning, planners are asked to listen specially to subordinated groups (Healey, 1997). Fainstein (2009, p. 2), however, points to the tension between deliberation and justice: "After deliberation people may still make choices that are harmful to themselves or to minorities" (Fainstein, 2009, p. 2). Poststructuralist and feminist scholars have also pointed to the limitations of the redistributive model and urged for a recognition of difference (Young, 2000). Justice requires not simply formal inclusion, but social relations should be central, as they differently position people and condition their experiences, opportunities, and knowledge of the society (Young, 2000, p. 83). In urban planning, the concept of diversity refers to recognition (Fainstein, 2009, p. 4) that is merely the "recognition of the other" (Fainstein, 2009, p. 5). However, as the postmigrant perspective seeks to overcome the binary between 'we' and 'the other,' recognition of diversity could be the transformation from the periphery to the centre. Migration is placed at the heart of society; everyone is affected by it and everyone is involved in shaping the postmigrant society (Römhild, 2015). However, there is another tension between equality and recognition of difference:

> Recognition claims often take the form of calling attention to, if not performatively creating, the putative specificity of some group and then of affirming its value. Thus, they tend to promote group differentiation. Redistribution claims, in contrast, often call for abolishing economic arrangements that underpin group specificity. Thus, they tend to promote group dedifferentiation. The upshot is that the politics of recognition and the politics of redistribution often appear to have mutually contradictory aims. (Fraser, 1997, p. 16)

Spatial and social justice, in the way Fainstein is pushing forward through equality, democracy and diversity, reveals the many tensions and contradictions that may well clash or require trade-offs between each other and within each of these norms (Fainstein, 2009, p. 5). A transformation towards postmigrant spatial justice can therefore not fully evolve but is always connected to tensions and trade-offs; especially in the case of defining justice.

4. Shifting Historical Discourses about Participation with Regards to Migration and Asylum Seeking

Although migration to Berlin has been an issue since its founding, the focus of this article starts with the German recruitment agreements since the 1950s. West Berlin remained largely unaffected by the labour migration until 1964 with the building of the Wall and the related economic boom. In the following years, hundreds of thousands of labour migrants came to West Berlin (Seidel & Kleff, 2008, p. 29). The idea that the so-called guest workers are only staying temporarily and have no intention in long-term residence has led to a political non-acceptance of social realities, which has prevented any political discourse in West Germany for decades (Bade, 2001, p. 393). More than 20 years after the recruitment started, West Germany slowly realised that a permanent residence of the recruited workers was imminent, and the issue was given more attention. One major development in this respect is the Kühn Memorandum (1979), which is seen to mark a policy change (Rudolf, 2019, p. 26). For the first time, migration was not neglected by the West German Government, but recognised as a fact and became a local policy issue (Rudolf, 2019). The next years saw contrary developments with increased xenophobia. In contrast to West Berlin, immigration to East Berlin played a much smaller role. A noticeable shortage of workers in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) only became noticeable in the beginning of the eighties (Seidel & Kleff, 2008, p. 30). The GDR signed a bilateral agreement with Angola, Cuba, Mozambique, and Vietnam to train workers in East German enterprises as a source of cheap labour (Kil & Silver, 2006, p. 105). The workers lived in communal residences or dormitories near the factories entirely segregated from the German population and were required to receive permission for travel beyond the communal residence (Kil & Silver, 2006, p. 105). In East Germany, there was barely a discourse on equal rights and participation. In re-unified Germany, increasing (racially motivated) acts of violence against immigrants in East and West and a significant rise in unemployment forced a new debate on migration and participation at the local level. Solutions to these problems were addressed after a change of government through several political interventions such as the reform of citizenship law (2000), the establishment of an Immigration Council and the Immigration Act (2005), in which the task of integration was enshrined in law (Filsinger, 2018, p. 318). Two implications are important here: First, through these developments, municipalities obtained a different status and authority in questions of migration and participation through the Immigration Act and the labour market policy reforms (Hartv I to IV), and the revision of municipal integration policy (Bommes, 2018, p. 108). Second, the broad consensus on the necessity of integration and state support is supplemented by the recognition that integration requires not only the performance of immigrants but also that of society (Thränhardt, 2008, p. 45). Although it could be concluded that Germany recognised to be an immigrant country in theory, migration is far from being sustainably embedded in the national self-perception or in the population (Espahangizi, 2018, p. 36). The new policies introduced a cross-disciplinary focus through pooling of resources and focusing on space resulting in the emergence of integrated urban neighbourhood development across Europe. Programmes like the Social City programme in Germany aim to serve as curative or preventive intervention in deprived neighbourhoods (Uitermark, 2014, p. 1426). The idea that the immediate living environment plays a crucial role in the activation of resources and forms of capital is also the foundation of the BENN programme. However, the developments after 2015 and the public discourse show that the previously fought struggles for recognition and rights for migrants do not apply to refugees. According to the German law, there are many different statuses for people seeking asylum, all of which carry different rights and obligations. The different legal statuses have consequences for the provisions on residence permission and access to participation measures, such as housing, language, education, labour market, and civic engagement (Aumüller, 2018). As a result, there is a gradation which divides people into hierarchical categories and which is linked to access of social resources and encounters. This separation is led by the means of different policies. Basically until 2014, the predominant position in federal politics ignored the need for participation policy measures for refugees and asylum-seekers (Aumüller, 2018, p. 181). The changes of 2014 with the implementation of a new law affect such individuals for whom the federal authorities are more likely to issue residence permits. In contrast, the new law contains many tightenings such as additional threats of sanctions or the allocation of residence (Federal Government, 2016). In Berlin, participation of refugees is regulated through the 'Overall concept for the integration and participation of refugees' (Juretzka, 2017), which was developed through a participation process of civil society, migrant organisations, self-organised refugees, NGOs and welfare associations. Although these diverse actors inscribe themselves as experts, this does not guarantee a real democratisation of the city, but needs constant negotiation (Neumann, 2019, p. 29). Berlin is part of the Solidarity City network that claims a 'city for all' and access for everyone without exception, including the illegalised and the unseen

(Neumann, 2019, p. 29). Although local efforts are made to support refugees, Berlin still operates within the national framework and barely provides a just and safe space in the sense of 'sanctuary cities' (Bauder, 2016).

5. BENN—'Berlin Develops New Neighbourhoods'

5.1. General Working and Main Actors of the BENN Programme

The SenSW has fundamentally developed the BENN programme, designed the programme structure, and is responsible to monitor the activities carried out by the local integration managements. It is the central administrative and financial management actor that bundles and distributes funds. The 20 local integration managements each consist of a local office with usually two to four employed personnel located in the neighbourhood in the vicinity of a large refugee shelter. If the refugee shelter is located within an existing neighbourhood management area (from the Social City programme), the respective neighbourhood management is increased with staff and receives additional funds. Although the SenSW is the contracting authority, the members of the BENN teams are employed by various external private organisations. The BENN teams are instructed to act as mediators between different groups of inhabitants in their respective neighbourhoods as well as between the inhabitants and the respective administration. This is fostered by discursive interaction which is said to be the basis for planning practice that aims to act in public interest (Mill, 1951). The BENN teams are asked to listen to neighbourhood inhabitants, with special attention to subordinated groups. This process is very close to what communicative planning aims to do. To achieve the goal of activating individuals and organisations in the neighbourhood, the programme institutionalised a neighbourhood forum and a resident's council in each neighbourhood. The neighbourhood forum serves as a platform for meeting and exchange for the whole neighbourhood. Here it is discussed what people regard as important and decide together about foci of action. Another central element of the BENN programme is the "activation and integration of the shelters residents" (SenSW, 2021, p. 3) through a residents' council. A few people aim to serve as representatives for the whole shelter, as well as formulate needs and ideas to improve the quality of life in the accommodation. Postmigrant spatial justice with a focus on equality would address the unequal access to urban resources, through the redistribution of resources or through paying attention to questions of representation and decision-making processes (Marcuse, 2009). The BENN programme aims to address the latter through the neighbourhood forum and the residents' council. However, the distribution of project funds is exclusively decided upon within a steering group, consisting the area coordinator of the SenSW, the district and the respective BENN team. Thus, people in the neighbourhoods have no direct influence on the allocation of project funds.

5.2. Structural and Institutional Embeddedness

A closer look at the funding structure of the BENN programme can reveal the urban social policy context within which it is located. Parts of the programme are funded by the Investment Pact for Social Integration in the Neighbourhood (Investitionspakt Soziale Integration im Quartier). Between 2017 and 2020, the federal government provided 200 million euros annually to create spaces for education and encounter through the promotion of construction measures (Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community, 2021). The remaining funding is provided by the Social Cohesion programme (until 2019 Social City programme) which is part of the German *Städtebauförderung* (Urban Development Funding). The Social City/Cohesion programme was implemented to address particularly disadvantaged neighbourhoods through the allocation of funding in the residential environment since 1999. One of the central contradictions is the addressing of social problems through interventions in the built structures (Walther, 2001). Berlin came up with a different interpretation as it implemented the neighbourhood management programme with interdisciplinary teams working in local offices to introduce participation concepts and activate the local population (Quartiersmanagement Berlin, 2021). Likewise, the BENN programme is particular to Berlin in its interpretation of the Investment Pact for Social Integration in the Neighbourhood. Moreover, the BENN programme adopts many of the structures established in the Berlin neighbourhood management programme, like the local teams, the steering group, the decision structures for the inhabitants, and many more. It is the Senate Department for Urban Development and Housing that is responsible for both, the Social City programme and the BENN programme. That is insofar surprising as at least for BENN with its focus on refugees, the Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs would be expected to run such a programme. In Berlin, the Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs generally deals with migrant topics and runs the State Office for Refugee Affairs (Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten [LAF]). The LAF was established as a result of the administrative collapse of the Berlin State Office for Health and Social Affairs in 2015/16. The main areas of responsibility include the reception of refugees as well as the provision of monetary and in-kind benefits, health and illness benefits as well as the provision of housing including the construction of new buildings. Issues around refugee shelters frame the intersection of LAF and BENN. The same Senate Department enacted the Law on the Regulation of Participation and Integration in Berlin (PartIntG) in 2010 as the first federal state to legally regulate participation structures and to promote and enforce equal

participation of people with a migration history in Berlin. The law was evaluated in 2019 and is now being revised. One of the main revisions reframes migration and conceptualises a migration society in combination with the elimination of the term 'integration' and the recognition of people who are affected by discrimination and who are attributed a migration background (field notes, October 2020). However, the connections of the BENN programme to the Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs and the LAF remain marginal. Moreover, the experience and long-standing knowledge of institutions in the field of migration including civil society and migrant organisations, have not conceptually enhanced the BENN programme.

5.3. BENN in the Context of Postmigrant Spatial Justice

5.3.1. Ambivalences Caused by Socio-Spatial Division

The underlying and guiding assumption of the BENN programme is that neighbourhoods with large refugee shelters (like deprived neighbourhoods) cause instability and problems far beyond the very place, and therefore need to adopt external stabilising elements. In this sense, the BENN programme addresses socio-spatial divisions that primarily derive from the principal accommodation and spatial separation of people within the asylum-seeking process. Without these mass accommodations, the BENN programme would not exist. This form of accommodation as involuntary clustering is a major form of spatial injustice (Marcuse, 2009, p. 3). However, the BENN programme also allows for a dedication of governmental funds to detect general conditions and specific problems in refugee shelters. Usually, non-governmental organisations and politically motivated groups have drawn attention to deficiencies in the shelters. State actors usually have little resources to address problems directly related to the refugee shelter, such as a change of operator, or the regular exchange of residences as one BENN manager explains. She illustrates how the allotment garden association developed an area at their disposal together with the refugee shelter through BENN. "Even if this is not altruistic," she says:

> They would not have thought that far ahead. Through BENN the refugee shelters have certainly slipped into focus from time to time, which they would not have been otherwise. And that, I think, is quite a lot that such a programme can achieve. (I9 interview BENN manager)

One BENN team initiated their work even before the refugee shelter was built and could therefore run actions and information campaigns about the shelter beforehand. The BENN manager explains that the programme has worked with those, who live in flats or who meet in the community centre (I7 interview BENN manager). Here, another controversial point becomes obvious. The programme aims to especially activate people in shelters, who are often undergoing the asylum-seeking process. Since the accommodation of the people undergoing the process keeps changing, they have fragile ties to their local area, and their primary need is to find independent housing. This might be one reason why the participation of refugees remains quite low in the BENN activities, which the BENN teams repeatedly mention (various interviews and field notes).

5.3.2. Imagined Groups

Building on the SINUS milieus, the BENN programme works with the so-called "migrant milieus." In general, the milieu approach describes differences in the society with the intention to capture structures of inequality (Burzan, 2011, p. 89). The study of lifestyles is closely linked to the interests of market research, which aims to find out the typical consumption styles in each case by determining the milieus (Burzan, 2011, p. 105). Since 2008, the milieu research has been transferred to the so-called migrant population. In contrast to the general Sinus model, not only social situation, life phase or national origin were recorded, but also basic values, attitude patterns, and specific needs in everyday life (for an overview of the different milieus see Hallenberg, 2018, p. 8). The BENN teams are required to figure out what milieus are predominant and develop respective activation strategies. For example, it is suggested that if there is a large concentration of 'precarious' people in the neighbourhood, they should be addressed in an approachable, non-judgmental, and not pitying or lecturing manner, and that anglicisms and foreign words should be avoided (Kuder & Schaal, 2019, p. 13). 'Consumer hedonists,' in contrast, should be visited in pubs or gyms, "playful elements," "charm offensives," and "cool neighbourhood celebrities" can contribute to their activation, but a certain volatility should always be expected (Kuder & Schaal, 2019, p. 14). These labels and group affiliation are externally ascribed. Individuals are neither able to choose their group, nor are they able to change the label. Especially when group affiliations become fixed or stable, and when people have little possibilities to move between those different milieus, there is a danger of stereotypical stigmatisation (Burzan, 2011, p. 123). Furthermore, the coexistence of horizontal groups does not reveal existing power relations and asymmetries (Erdem, 2013, p. 101), combined with the danger of legitimising the existing order of inequality (Meyer, 2001, p. 265). In addition, the BENN programme juggles with another dimension of imagined groups. One of the main objectives the BENN programme that is frequently stressed is the activation of "old" and "new" neighbours through encounters and joint actions (SenSW, 2021, p. 1). Initially, the programme has the potential to overcome this binary by addressing the neighbourhood and its needs instead of a group. However, the constant emphasis of the binary "old" and "new" neighbours

contributes not only to the imagination that such a group exists in reality, it also reinforces the discourse between 'we' and 'the other.' Although this has been reflected by some BENN teams, there is little room for discussion and no general questioning of the categories.

5.3.3. Redistribution Issues

A third ambiguity points to the promotion of the neighbourhood as a place of encounter and as a resource for forms of capital. BENN is not intended to address structural participation measures (like the facilitation of access to housing education and labour market), but it is assumed that resources can be made available in the local context:

> Because it is said that structural integration processes probably run better when there is contact between these two groups. Someone who manages to get into German networks at a relatively early stage and who manages to establish friendships is assumed to have more information and contacts resulting in faster access to housing and work. (I2 BENN manager)

In this sense, the teams organise festivals, language classes, cooking and sporting events, and secure participation through the various formats. But the resources of everyday life for refugees and asylum seekers are not necessarily located in the vicinity of the refugee shelter. People in shelters are often relocated between shelters, between cities, some may be even deported or send to other countries. Their objective is to leave the shelter and find a space for their own. In addition, children sometimes keep staying in schools in districts where they were previously accommodated resulting in long distances commuting. Another big issue is connected to the provision of special food needs:

> We have heard from some women that they [travel 20 minutes one way] every day because, the shelters [only] have a mini fridge. And having a big family [requires] having to buy halal meat [and] there are no Halal products here [locally]. (I10 BENN manager)

Consequently, networks and friendships are spread at least all over Berlin, but more likely over borders of cities and nations. In this respect, it is questionable if it is really the near surrounding from which resources and forms of capital can be gained. And if so, what exactly can be provided by the neighbourhood? This question is especially relevant for neighbourhoods with scarce resources, i.e., with not enough spots in schools and kindergartens, with a lack of competent teachers and pedagogics, with an inadequate provision of health care services and with generally little public funding available. Resentment and frustrations are the consequence then, as one BENN manager describes:

> What I often encounter is this case: We are so neglected here and live out our existence with Hartz IV [unemployment benefit] or with bad jobs and then the refugees come and that is where the millions are put in. And that is frustrating. (I18 BENN manager)

To activate something where there are few resources is thus another important limitation evident in the work of the BENN programme.

6. Postmigrant Spatial Justice: A Utopian Project?

Spatial justice is a demand when at least two bodies move into one space and justice is reached, when all interests are mutually satisfied. In this sense, it is a utopian vision of a not yet reached socio-spatial configuration. In a similar vein, the concept of postmigration demands a shift in perspective on how migration is perceived and positioned within society. A transformation towards postmigrant spatial justice in the context of equality, diversity and democracy is permeated by tensions and internal contradictions. The question arises: Which norm is more prevalent and which aspects of postmigrant spatial justice remain rather weak? The BENN programme introduced in this article is a participation policy for refugees and other inhabitants. The view into history reveals that there is a potential for shifts towards a postmigrant conception of society. However, this is not equally applicable for all individuals, but it variates with the different status. This signals rather an inclusion of certain groups than a shift in perspective. If society keeps framing refugees as the 'refugee other,' then migration is still placed on the periphery. The BENN teams act as a mediator between the different groups in the neighbourhood as well as between the inhabitants and the administration. Here, the BENN teams follow the direction of communicative planning as deliberative democracy. However, structural inequality and hierarchies of power are almost completely concealed. Within the BENN framework, individuals do not have the same status, in contrary. There is a huge hierarchy in combination with different rights and possibilities of access between the different groups. Moreover, people have very different goals and needs in terms of everyday life: For some, the highest priority is to leave the shelter and move into flats while others are already able to live in flats and have other priorities. Without dissolving these spatial formations, the 'refugee other' keeps being othered through spatial practices, even when being socially more included. What this article therefore reveals is that no matter how transformative a policy may be it is nevertheless embedded in and dependent from broader structures. Even if the BENN programme was designed in a completely postmigrant spatial justice manner, it is embedded in the structures that separate refugees from other people through laws, policies, and through the socio-spatial separation in shelters. Although the programme cannot address structural inequalities, it could

have incorporated experts from migrant organisations and from other Senate Departments, districts administrations and civil society organisations in the creation of the programme as well as in the decision making for the allocation of project funds. Furthermore, the programme could have been more emancipated from the Social City programme. Although the structure has proven to be sustainable for 20 years, the context in which BENN operates is slightly different and therefore needs different foci of attention. BENN has come up with several instruments to activate and involve inhabitants in decision making and the distribution of project funds. However, as democracy can only evolve under the background condition of equality—and equality cannot be achieved within the scope of the programme—these instruments are most likely deemed to fail. The stereotypical and potentially stigmatising use of milieus is not contributing to an understanding of a postmigration society. The BENN teams have raised these issues themselves, but little space and resources have been made available to address the role of BENN in co-constituting differentiating and excluding notions of society. A transformative postmigrant and just policy therefore needs to consider the various logics of exclusion, discrimination, and racism inherent in society. Finally, if the programme continues beyond 2021, the experience and knowledge of the previous years should be considered, not replacing old BENN teams with new ones. Nevertheless, despite all this critique, the BENN programme has proven to be a progressive emancipation from the federal policy, it allocates state funding to focus on problems related to spatial injustice of refugee shelters and it aims for the participation of inhabitants and establish networks to achieve social cohesion. After all, the BENN programme opens many debates about postmigration and spatial justice rather than answering them, and there are many points of discussion and analysis for further research.

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Article

Disrupting Dialogue? The Participatory Urban Governance of Far-Right Contestations in Cottbus

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Abstract
This article investigates how municipal governments negotiate far-right contestations through the format of citizens' dialogues and contemplates to what extent they disrupt established assumptions about participatory urban governance. In doing so, I want to contribute to emerging scholarship on reactionary responses to migration-led societal transformations in cities via scrutinising their effects on institutional change in participatory practices. Building on participatory urban governance literature and studies on the far right in the social sciences, I argue that inviting far-right articulations into the democratic arena of participation serves to normalise authoritarian and racist positions, as the far right's demand for more direct involvement of 'the people' is expressed in reactionary terms. I will show how this applies to two prominent notions of participation in the literature, namely, agonistic and communicative approaches. This argument is developed through an explorative case study of two neighbourhood-based citizens' dialogues in Cottbus, East Germany, which the municipal government initiated in response to local far-right rallies. While a careful reading of these forums reveals productive potentials when the issue of international migration is untangled from context-specific, socio-spatial problems in the neighbourhoods, my analysis also shows how the municipality's negotiation of far-right contestations within the citizens' dialogues serves to legitimise far-right ideology. I find that to negotiate today's societal polarisation, municipal authorities need to rethink local participatory institutions by disentangling these complex dynamics and reject far-right contestations, while designing dialogues for democratic and emancipatory learning.

Keywords
agonism; cities; communicative planning theory; far right; local democracy; municipal government; participation; populism; racism; urban governance

Issue
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1. Introduction

Discussions on how migration initiates institutional change in cities often focus on the emancipatory potential of participatory practices such as urban citizenship or how co-production strategies between civil society organisations and public administrations can foster inclusive policies. Scholars, however, have neglected changing forms of participation instigated by reactionary responses to migration-led societal transformation. Addressing this gap, this article attends to far-right contestations of such transformations in cities and asks how they disrupt established assumptions about participatory urban governance. The contemporary rise of far-right politics poses new challenges to municipalities across the globe, fuelling racism and xenophobic attacks on marginalised groups—calling into question an increasingly plural and diverse urban order. Some scholars argue

that the growing influence of far-right actors confronts urban practitioners (policymakers, planners, advocates, and organisers) with the practical question of how to deal with a divided public (Rivero, Sotomayor, Zanotto, & Zitcer, 2020). Others claim that "the 'invisible' contract governing a multicultural…city is under threat" (Khakee, 2020, p. 179).

In Germany, many municipal governments have used public citizens' dialogues as an instrument to react to far-right rallies, which have drastically increased since the long summer of migration in 2015 (DIFU, 2019). However, studies examining such practices dealing with far-right contestations are scarce. How are far-right contestations negotiated through participatory processes? To what extent do they disrupt established assumptions about participation in the literature? Based on case study research in the East German city of Cottbus, I hope to answer these questions.

Promoting people's participation in urban processes has long been a key issue in discussions about urban governance. This is aimed at recognising people's voices in city-making, which are viewed as a crucial element to carry out urban development in a more effective, sustainable, and just way (Forester, 1989; Healey, 1992; Innes & Booher, 2004). However, so-called communicative approaches to participation have been widely problematised, particularly regarding their inability to re-negotiate power asymmetries in extremely unequal urban contexts (Cornwall, 2002; Fainstein, 1999; Flyvbjerg, 1996; Huxley & Yiftachel, 2000; Miessen, 2011; Purcell, 2006; Roy, 2009). One strand of critique derives from agonistic approaches to participation, stipulating that inclusive urban governance processes need to start not from a position of trying to resolve conflict in order to achieve consensus, but from a position of acceptance of uncertain situations and continual dissent and opposition (Bäcklund & Mäntysalo, 2010; Beaumont & Nicholls, 2008; Gualini, 2015; Pløger, 2004; Verloo, 2018). Ultimately, they view conflict as a productive resource in people's involvement in city-making. In this article, I want to build on these debates, exploring how both approaches are put to the test in times of far-right contestations. To do so, I bring the literature on participatory urban governance into conversation with studies on the far right in the social sciences, which reveal the ambiguous participatory agenda of far-right politics and point towards mechanisms of contestations that are deeply reactionary.

Referring to these discussions, I examine the negotiation of far-right contestations through state-led citizens' dialogues in Cottbus, which the municipal government launched in response to a series of far-right rallies that took place in 2018. Analysing how these public dialogues were designed at the nexus of communicative/agonistic approaches to participation, I propose that such participatory practices can reveal small windows of democratic opportunity in a climate of rising reactionary politics. This can happen if and when they help to dissect racialised conflicts, disentangling the issue of international migration from context-specific neighbourhood problems. However, in a second step I add complexity to this argument, demonstrating how open-ended participatory formats aimed at fostering dialogue between long-term residents supportive of far-right politics and municipal government representatives can serve to normalise far-right agendas. Thus, I argue that such citizens' dialogues escape communicative and agonistic assumptions about participatory processes alike, as they offer a platform for reactionary articulations that ultimately disrupt democratic dialogue.

The article is structured as follows: I start by exploring the debate on participatory urban governance, introducing critiques of communicative approaches and highlighting agonistic perspectives as one prominent alternative. I go on to define far-right contestations by drawing on social science literature about the far-right and identify the far-right's ambiguous participatory agenda. Suggesting that the contemporary rise in far-right politics demands a new perspective on participatory processes, I propose to bring these two literatures into conversation. Third, I introduce the city of Cottbus and reflect upon the methods used in my qualitative fieldwork. Subsequently, I analyse two citizens' dialogues in their respective neighbourhoods—Sachsendorf and Sandow—in detail. After presenting this case, I conclude by discussing the need to reconfigure participatory processes that aim to negotiate far-right contestations (regarding the design of both format and content) if they are to remain within the remit of the democratic arena.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1. Participatory Urban Governance: Tracing a Manifold Debate

Urban studies scholars have long approached participatory urban governance from distinct conceptual angles. As it would go beyond the scope of this article to review this rich debate in detail (for an overview see Frediani & Cociña, 2019), I focus on two approaches that are rooted in larger discussions in social theory between Jürgen Habermas and Chantal Mouffe, namely, the notions of 'communicative' and 'agonistic' engagement. First, communicative approaches to participatory urban governance were put forward by authors such as Patsy Healey, John Forester, and Judith Innes in the 1980s. The conceptual assumption of this 'communicative turn' in participatory urban governance is that if rules are designed to guarantee equality for deliberating parties, participants can likely find a rational consensus (Forester, 1989; Healey, 1992; Innes & Booher, 2004). This perspective was developed to address the undeniable limitations of positivist, comprehensive-rationalist governance tools in city-making. Instead, it gives "priority to the process through which decisions are made and stresses the significance of undistorted speech, [allowing] the relation

of group identities and the explicit recognition of difference…to define a desirable set of social relations" (Fainstein, 1999, pp. 259–260).

For the last decades, these strategies have figured prominently among researchers and practitioners alike, using such relational understandings of participatory processes as a tool to address the complex socio-spatial dynamics of city-making, and attempting to recognise people's voices within this process. However, criticism of this 'communicative turn' has been widely advocated by scholars from different disciplines, causing the publication of books with titles such as *Participation: The New Tyranny?* (Cooke & Kothari, 2001) or *The Nightmare of Participation: Crossbench Praxis as a Mode of Criticality* (Miessen, 2011). These critiques draw attention to the need to unpack the different conditions within which participation is practiced, warning of the foregrounding of local actions that leaves structural processes unchallenged (e.g., Arnstein, 1969; Cornwall, 2002; Fainstein, 2010; Flyvbjerg, 1996; Purcell, 2006). More specifically, the Habermas-inspired communicative approach is criticised for "privileg[ing] communication at the expense of its wider social and economic contexts" (Huxley & Yiftachel, 2000, p. 333). In this vein, masking deliberation as neutral strategy provides "an extremely attractive way for neoliberals to maintain hegemony while ensuring political stability" (Purcell, 2009, p. 140). Consequently, critiques have highlighted that the emphasis of communicative approaches on consensus building hides social complexities, diversities (Miraftab, 2019)—and conflict.

Agonist approaches to participation have directly emerged from this last criticism, acknowledging conflict "as a constitutive element of social relations [in the city] and as a source of their strength and ability to innovate" (Gualini, 2015, p. 3). Inspired by Chantal Mouffe's theory of 'agonistic pluralism' (Mouffe, 2000), this perspective politicises ideas of plurality and inclusion in participatory processes (Swyngedouw, 2011; Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2015). Conflict is viewed as a productive force, potentially transforming antagonism (conflict between enemies) into agonism: "A relationship between adversaries, not enemies" (Mouffe, 2000, p. 102). Hence, city-making "should ideally be a place for strife about legitimate options and meanings on the road towards reasonable and commonly agreed solutions or among mutual adversaries" (Pløger, 2004, p. 72), whereby collective passion (rather than rationalist deliberation) is viewed as a channel through which citizens articulate themselves (Amin, 2002; Beaumont & Nicholls, 2008; Mouffe, 2000; Verloo, 2018).

Thus, agonistic notions understand conflict as radically different to the communicative ideal, namely "as one that is neither physical nor violent, but a friction that emerges on a content and productive level, a conflict played out within the remit of the democratic arena" (Miessen, 2011, p. 101). However, Bäcklund and Mäntysalo (2010) have argued that even though the paradigmatic shift from communicative to agonistic participation has sparked fruitful theoretical debates at the nexus of planning and democratic theory, little scholarly attention has been paid to the empirical facets of this shift. They lament that this contributes to widening the gap between theory and practice. Based on their own empirical research, they point to the tensions between agonistic theory as municipal *Leitbild* and urban practice. Specifically, they find that both theories often co-exist in the participatory practices offered by city administrations, generating 'institutional ambiguity' (Bäcklund & Mäntysalo, 2010, p. 348), whereby new conceptual ideas about participatory urban governance are merely imposed on top of existing administrative and institutional structures, leading to 'shallow practical reform' (Bäcklund & Mäntysalo, 2010). In a similar vein, others have argued for the need to move beyond the communicative and agonistic divide in participatory practices and, indeed, combine both conceptual perspectives in urban analysis that is more connected to empirical research (Beaumont & Loopmans, 2008; Bond, 2011; Legacy, Metzger, Steele, & Gualini, 2019; Van Wymeersch, Oosterlynck, & Vanoutrive, 2019).

Against this backdrop, I want to contemplate to what extent these established assumptions about participatory processes are disrupted when conflicts escape the democratic arena and can no longer be viewed as moments of communicative or agonistic negotiation in the city. What happens if urban actors bring far-right articulations to the negotiation table? And how can we rethink modes of participation in cities facing this challenge?

2.2. The Ambiguous Participatory Agenda of the Far Right and Its Mechanisms of Contestations

To understand the challenges the rise of reactionary politics poses to participatory urban governance processes, I draw on insights from social science literature about the far right, shedding light on the far right's ambiguous stance towards public participation and its modes of contestation. In doing so, I want to contribute to the debate on participatory urban governance by stipulating that the rise of far-right politics demands a new perspective on participatory practices. Let me first clarify some terms, however: I purposefully refer to the 'far right,' not 'right-wing populism' to capture the contemporary surge of reactionary politics. In doing so, I follow political scientists who have argued that to label contemporary reactionary currents as 'populist' is to fundamentally downplay their threat to democratic institutions (for detailed terminological debates see Mondon & Winter, 2020; Mudde, 2007). The far right is used as an umbrella term to recognise common traits between reactionary political actors, including the extreme right, the (populist) radical right, and (neo)-fascists (Mudde, 2019), suggesting that what they hold in common are antipluralistic, racist, anti-feminist, nationalist, and authoritarian attitudes and ideologies. This core element of the far right entails the belief that "the nation state should

be inhabited only by native people; and that societies must be strictly ordered and infringement severely sanctioned" (Mudde, 2007, pp. 18–23) However, in the vast literature on this contested subject, a dominant position distinguishing the 'extreme' from the 'radical' variants of far-right politics with regards to the different democratic elements that constitutes them. While the extreme right is essentially hostile towards constitutional democratic principles, the radical right holds oppositional attitudes towards liberal democracies (Mudde, 2019, p. 8).

Concerning the far right's perspective on participatory practices, acknowledging these two different political strands within it is crucial. First, the extreme right essentially rejects the foundations of democracy, i.e., popular sovereignty and majority rule. Second, the radical right accepts the essence of democracy in the name of 'the people,' albeit while opposing key elements of liberal democracies, i.e., minority rights, rule of law, and the separation of powers (Barney & Laycock, 1999). Further, radical-right leaders promote a 'plebiscitarian linkage' between the executive and 'the people,' which refers to the idea that they tend to act as the embodiment or more efficient executor of the general will of 'the people' once in government (Canovan, 2002, p. 34).This points towards the tension between the radical right's rhetoric of more direct participation and the actual democratic aspirations embodied therein (Canovan, 1999, p. 14; Paxton, 2019), essentially failing to grant citizens control over decision-making processes (Barney & Laycock, 1999). In practice, these opposing strands often overlap, rendering the participatory agenda of far-right actors profoundly ambiguous (Canovan, 2002, p. 34). The entangled heterogeneity of far-right participatory articulations also alludes to the far right's multifarious organisational structures, with a majority of contemporary far-right actors often simultaneously engaging in the electoral and the protest arenas (Castelli Gattinara & Pirro, 2019; Rucht, 2018). Thus, there are emerging publications that address the interconnection between the success of far-right parties and right-wing street movements (Froio, Gattinara, Bulli, & Albanese, 2020), which also applies in the case of Cottbus, as I will illustrate subsequently.

To operationalise my analysis of the negotiation of far-right contestations by municipal governments, I borrow from German sociologist Heitmeyer to define three mechanisms of contestation. According to him, the core aim of contemporary far-right politics is to contest and destabilise the institutions that uphold the tenets of open societies in liberal democracies. Its ultimate goal is to install a new, authoritarian order (Heitmeyer, 2018, p. 239) by way of, first, promoting a 'dichotomous world view' in an increasingly complex world, presenting a supposedly tempting alternative of clarity and control. This often takes the form of imagining 'the people' as a homogenous entity whose identity, ideas, and will can be fully represented, versus the 'elite.' Another divisive dichotomy concerns the racist distinction between 'the people' and the 'alien other' (in contemporary Western societies most notably immigrants, Muslims, or refugees—not the 'native elite'). Second, far-right politics advance the 'emotionalization' of societal problems and politics. This 'emotionalised politicisation' (Heitmeyer, 2018, p. 252) is an effective strategy to instigate a sense of loss among supporters of the far right, e.g. linking structural problems like rising social inequalities to feelings of fear. Finally, far-right politics use 'control' as a means of power to install a supposedly new sense of order, by way of returning to an imagined 'old' order. As such, far-right solutions are promoted as attempts to 'gain back control' for individuals and a subset of society alike. In the next section, I examine how these mechanisms of far-right contestations are negotiated through participatory processes in the case of Cottbus.

3. Situating Cottbus

An hour and a half by train from Berlin, the mid-sized city of Cottbus is located in the federal state of Brandenburg, close to the Polish border (see Figure 1). Like many cities in East Germany, it experienced urban shrinkage since the 1990s, facing economic and demographic decline (Bernt, 2009) after German reunification in 1990 came with a neoliberal 'shock therapy' (Grubbauer & Kusiak, 2012, p. 13), precipitating the drastic reorganisation of the region's economic system. In 1990, Cottbus still had

Figure 1. The location of the case study, Cottbus (in Brandenburg, Germany). The map is oriented North. Source: German Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy (2021).

a population of approximately 134,000 (Stadt Cottbus, 2019b). Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, this number dropped drastically, reaching a historic low of 99,500 in 2012 (Stadt Cottbus, 2019c). Throughout the former German Democratic Republic up until now, the coal-mining industry was the most important economic sector in the region (IASS, 2018). However, the city's unemployment rate has long been one of the highest in Germany, today it is at 7.4%, as compared to the national average of 5.6% (Stadt Cottbus, 2019a). Against this backdrop, the city is slowly growing again due to the arrival of international migrants that began in 2015. In 2019, approximately 8% of Cottbus' population were foreigners compared to 3.4% in 2011 (Stadt Cottbus, 2019b). Accordingly, in 2016 the city had just over 100,000 inhabitants. The influx of international migrants has mainly consisted of Syrian refugees, whose absolute number comprised 2,472 in 2018 (Stadt Cottbus, 2019b). These refugees largely moved to the city's peripheral prefabricated housing estates that had been built under socialism, which are also characteristic for Sachsendorf and Sandow, the two neighbourhoods that form the subject of my study. Both neighbourhoods were particularly hit by the city's demographic decline and part of the national redevelopment plan *Stadtumbau Ost* (Urban Restructuring East) focused on demolition (Liebmann, Hagemeister, Haller, & Nelle, 2010). In a nutshell, Sachsendorf and Sandow consequently underwent symbolic marginalisation and became increasingly home to elderly lower social classes (Kabisch & Peter, 2014).

3.1. A note on Research Methods

My subsequent discussion of two citizens' dialogues in these neighbourhoods is based on a qualitative and explorative single-case study of the city of Cottbus (Yin, 2014). The empirical data used for this article comprises participant observation, 16 semi-structured interviews and document analysis. First, I participated in several neighbourhood-based citizens' dialogues that took place across the city during 2018 and 2019. In addition to these in-person observations, I watched and transcribed the video recordings of the events in Sachsendorf and Sandow, which were made available on the city's website. This facilitated my data analysis, as it allowed to systematically code the different contributions made by residents. I chose to examine the neighbourhoods of Sachsendorf and Sandow in detail for two reasons: On one hand, both are attractive neighbourhoods for refugees due to low rents and have experienced rapid diversification over the last years (for a thorough analysis for the transformation of peripheral neighbourhoods in East Germany due to the arrival of refugees, see El-Kayed, Bernt, Hamann, & Pilz, 2020). On the other hand, it is those neighbourhoods where voter turnout for the far-right party Alternative for Germany (AfD) has been the city's highest, encompassing 23,6% and 26,5% respectively in 2019's municipal elections (Stadt Cottbus, 2019d; for more insights on the socio-spatial conditions of the AfD's electoral success see Förtner, Belina, & Naumann, 2020).

Second, I returned to Cottbus in the summer months of 2020 to conduct interviews with government officials, politicians involved in the organisation of the participatory formats, local social workers and residents that had participated in the dialogues. I conducted these interviews during the global Covid-19 pandemic, which posed specific challenges, as we have explored elsewhere (Nettelbladt & Reichle, in press). Third, I complemented these investigations with the analysis of textual resources, such as development plans from the city administration. Additionally, I scrutinised the websites of local far-right actors to obtain an understanding of the envisioned strategies and motives they had to attend the citizens' dialogues. Lastly, newspaper articles covering the citizens' dialogues provided another view of the way the participatory strategies were perceived in Cottbus and beyond.

3.2. Cottbus as a Bastion of Far-Right Organisation

Scholars of far-right politics and activist working on the prevention of far-right politics have characterised Cottbus as a place par excellence for the mobilisation of the far-right in Germany. Since the 1990s, Cottbus has served as a far-right hub, connecting 'concerned citizens' with far-right intellectuals who have managed to activate long-established neo-Nazi networks in the region. A particularly active actor has been the local extreme-right movement *Zukunft Heimat*, which holds close ties with *völkisch* authoritarian groups, as well as the local branch of the AfD, which had gained 27% in the municipal elections in 2019 (Fröschner & Warnecke, 2019, p. 7). This melange of far-right actors points to the porous borders between parties and movements (Froio et al., 2020). For example, since October 2020, the founder of *Zukunft Heimat* serves as chairman of the AfD in Brandenburg's state parliament. This far-right presence in the city has harmful consequences for the far-right's targets: 2016 alone saw 41 officially registered far-right violent attacks in Cottbus, the largest number in the state of Brandenburg (Opferperspektive, 2021). Further, the municipal government in Cottbus has consistently downplayed this threat and was referring to the city's violent far-right youth groups a 'passing fad' in the 1990s (Emcke, 1999).

Between 2017 and 2018, Cottbus witnessed fortnightly rallies organised by *Zukunft Heimat*, gathering between 2,000–3,000 people protesting against the right to asylum, the influx of international migrants, the 'political elite,' 'fake news,' and 'gender ideology.' Speeches given at these rallies proclaimed racist and anti-Semitic positions, as well as conspiracy theories (Botsch & Schulze, 2018), and the atmosphere was dominated by the hostile and aggressive mood of participants carrying signs demanding the abolition of the Federal

Republic (Botsch & Schulze, 2018). During the following months, migration became a particularly politicised topic in Cottbus, with international media outlets reporting on far-right violent attacks on refugees (Brady, 2018; Buck, 2018), while local far-right actors successfully shaped this media discourse to connect migration to questions of security. Long-term residents complained about the municipal government's failure to 'protect' them from the alleged effects of migration, which briefly pressured the mayor into declaring an 'immigration ban' that was, however, not actualised (Rafael, 2018).

It is in this context, that the mayor (Christian Democratic Union of Germany) announced the citizens' dialogues as a direct response by the municipal government to the far-right rallies in a meeting of the city council in April 2018 (Stadt Cottbus, 2018). During this meeting, the reason for the envisaged dialogues was clearly articulated by party members from the Greens, die Linke, and the Social Democratic Party of Germany as being the far-right rallies, as the following statement by a member of the Greens illustrates: "We welcome the mayor's effort of launching a dialogue among all Cottbussers…where we should urgently address the far-right tendencies in our city" (Stadt Cottbus, 2018). Meanwhile, members of National Democratic Party of Deutschland and AfD took the position of far-right protestors. Interestingly though, when the dialogues started in May 2018, the initiators did not directly address the original cause. Rather, the intention for the participatory forums was framed as an opportunity to "simply get into an exchange with each other about the problems in our city, no matter if we [residents and municipal government] agree or not," as the mayor proclaimed during the first forum.

3.3. The Citizens' Dialogues: Aim, Design, Participants

Thus, the official reason for organising the dialogues was to ameliorate the perceived uneasy relationship between residents and the municipal government, based on an "observed lack of trust in state institutions" (Chairman of the City Council, Citizens' Dialogue Sachsendorf) among residents. Accordingly, the goal of this participatory process was not to arrive at a concrete planning outcome like, for instance, a development plan. Rather, participation in the citizens' dialogues was viewed as an end in itself. In this sense, the citizens' dialogues were designed with both communicative and agonistic elements in mind: First, regarding the consensus/conflict nexus, as I will illustrate, the organisers repeatedly stressed that the participatory forums should be a space for "disagreeing views" (thus, siding with agonism's emphasis on conflict), while also highlighting the need for "the common ground of informed arguments" (Interview, civil servant, August 17, 2020), alluding to the communicative emphasis on deliberative consensus. Second, regarding the nexus of rationality/emotions, they claimed that "we should keep with the facts, but not abandon emotions" (Stadt Cottbus, 2018); thus, simultaneously calling on rational and passionate debate.

Asked why this aim could not be achieved through existing participatory structures, one civil servant claimed:

> We basically felt that the existing participatory institutions [e.g., townhall meetings or consultation hours for residents] did not suffice to deal with the situation. We wanted to talk differently with residents who did not feel like they were being heard. (Interview, August 26, 2020)

This quotation illustrates the logic underpinning the municipality's strategy: By means of designing a forum where "everyone has to tolerate each other's opinion" (Moderator, Interview, August 27, 2020) officials hoped to reduce people's dissatisfaction. This entailed the assumption that, "if protestors' concerns are taken seriously by the municipal government, far-right mobilisations by local extreme-right groups become less attractive" (Moderator, Interview, August 27, 2020).

The municipality's decision to locate the citizens' dialogues at the neighbourhood level was explained by one of the moderators in Sachsendorf: "It is the neighbourhoods where the problems, questions, worries, needs, and challenges are that are at the centre of our discussion" (Citizens' Dialogue Sachsendorf).

Each event followed the same top-down set-up: The mayor and chairman of the city council were seated on a stage and residents were invited to sit in front of them. Leading personnel of the local administration participated, including staff from the *Ordnungsamt* (municipal office of public order), the department of urban planning, and the department of social affairs. Additionally, the staff of the local immigration office, the police, and the municipal housing company were present. All events were moderated by two professional mediators, who were mostly in charge of facilitating the speaking order, which was structured in a hierarchical question-answer format that lasted two hours. At the beginning, the moderators laid out formal rules of discussion, telling people to raise their hands to contribute and to not interrupt others. Afterwards, residents were allowed to stay and have one-to-one conversations with municipal representatives. In both neighbourhoods, the dialogues took place in local schools and approximately 140 residents showed up.

However, it is striking that residential groups with an international background hardly participated. In Sandow, a total of 33 residents spoke up, all of them long-term residents of the city. In Sachsendorf, 3 out of 24 residents that spoke publicly presented themselves as refugees. Furthermore, it is not clear how many far-right activists participated, as the events were open to all residents in the respective neighbourhoods. Based on my participant observations and document analysis, it

appears that there was no pre-organised effort to agitate the events, however, the majority of long-term residents promoted far-right ideology, perhaps mirroring the high electoral success of the AfD (see Section 3.2). It is important to point out, though, that there were other long-term residents that showed solidarity with residential newcomers.

4. Productive Conflict or Normalisation of Far-Right Ideology?

The motives and logic underpinning the design of citizens' dialogues in Cottbus explored above indicate an attempt by officials to create a space of agonistic disagreement, while maintaining a deliberative order. Even though they were designed in a top-down manner, the forums were agonistically framed as an open-ended process, whereby the coming together of residents and the municipal government constituted the primary goal.

4.1. Moments of Agonistic Conflict

Indeed, at times, this design allowed for the emergence of the transformative potential of conflict. This happened when racialised neighbourhood conflicts were untangled, separating the issue of international migration from socio-economic urban problems. For example, a prominent topic was the issue of housing. Most refugees in Sachsendorf and Sandow now live in apartments owned by the city's housing company. In this context, long-term residents were concerned "if there will still be affordable housing in the future" (Citizens' Dialogue, Sandow), implying that it was 'the refugees' taking away affordable housing. As representatives of the housing company were present, these worries could quickly be removed, as they could point to the statistics on vacant flats. Another example was the issue of litter in public spaces. Several residents blamed refugees for 'not cleaning up after themselves,' promoting a racist logic of 'dirty foreigners,' as this comment by a long-term resident illustrates: "I live directly next to them refugees]. And I don't even want to start talking about the litter. It's everywhere! It's everywhere! Is nobody teaching them how to clean up after themselves?" (Citizens' Dialogue, Sachsendorf).

However, another long-term resident countered this racist framing, directly challenging the claim by pointing to the "typical German litter" in the neighbourhood, stating that trash "is not an attribute of the refugees" (Citizens' Dialogue, Sachsendorf). Thus, I argue that the dialogues became productive whenever participants or municipal actors managed to stir the debate away from a narrow focus on alleged migration-induced problems. This certainly underlines the usefulness of negotiations at the neighbourhood scale, allowing for the discussion of concrete socio-spatial problems when dealing with broader societal polarisation trends. In the case of Cottbus, this discussion can be read in the context of the neighbourhoods' histories of reconstruction. Yet, during the dialogues topics such as housing or public space remained underrepresented. Instead, what dominated the debates was the instrumentalization of migration (Radvan & Raab, 2020, p. 14), meaning that alleged migration-induced problems served as a vehicle for the articulation of far-right attitudes and ideology by some of the participants. This was not rejected by institutional actors, as I will explore in the remainder of this article.

4.2. 'Tolerating' the Far-Right as a 'Democratic Gesture'

The municipal government's idea to 'take people's worries seriously' often legitimised far-right agendas. I illustrate this process, shedding light onto the three mechanisms of far-right contestations explored previously, i.e., a dichotomous world views, the emotionalization of societal problems, and a control paradigm.

First, in both neighbourhoods, a recurring theme was the differentiation between 'us' and 'them.' I interpret this as purposeful 'othering' of migrants (Hall, 2006, p. 47) or the 'political elite' (Heitmeyer, 2018) to defend the privileges of the established majority group. For example, refugees are continuously referred to negatively by long-term residents and institutional actors alike. This took various forms, with civil servants portraying refugees as a financial burden to the city and long-term residents propagating stereotypes such as unlawful behaviour or their 'backward' Muslim culture. In Sachsendorf, this is illustrated by an openly racist statement: "The Islamic State has gotten its claws into Cottbus. Muslim youth gangs have staged an uprising and have tried to divide Cottbus among themselves" (Citizens' Dialogue, Sachsendorf).

This contribution shows the construction and devaluation of a homogenous, essentially 'alien' group that is rejected based on ascribed negative characteristics held to be incompatibly with the majority 'we' (Radvan & Raab, 2020, p. 25). This occurs through the homogenisation and imagination of a group of young people as Muslim 'gang' accused of Islamist violence, echoing the growing prominence of Islamophobia in Europe (Wolfreys, 2018). Additionally, many participants blame the federal government for the city's alleged problem with migration. In both instances, city officials actively support this narrative: For example, a civil servant from the department of social affairs insinuated the "duty of immigrants to integrate" (Citizens' Dialogue, Sandow) and the mayor proclaimed multiple times that "frankly, the federal government let us down [in the management of international migration]" (Citizens' Dialogue, Sandow).

This speaks to a second aspect of contestation, namely the emotionalization of migration. Participants in the dialogues stated that they felt threatened by the increasing presence of migrant families, despite there being no evidence for heightened crime rates in Cottbus in correlation with the arrival of refugees.

However, instead of correcting this line of argument, the organisers encouraged it by underlining that the emotional and subjective perception of residents should be heard. Prompted in an interview about the dangers of euphemising the impact of such racist claims, one moderator replied: "We think facts are our life, but what counts is the subjective and objective sense of security. They only go together; this is what we wanted to recognise at the dialogues" (Interview, July 27, 2020).

Yet, the initiators' desire to create a space where participants can articulate their emotions did not extend to the targets of racist comments. Representatives of the city council actively negated experiences of racism when voiced by refugees themselves (even though these contributions remain rare, see Section 3.2. for an indication of the lack of diversity of participants), as the following exchange illustrates: "Hello, I come from Syria….I've been in Germany for two years and I live in Cottbus….Why do people hate refugees?" (Citizens' Dialogue, Sachsendorf). A representative of the city council answered:

> Nobody hates you…we live in a country with humanistic values. This is what I can say in the name of all Germans. Germans are people that are always ready to help and protect….All in all, there is hospitality towards those who really need protection and really try to integrate. (Citizens' Dialogue, Sachsendorf)

Thus, the open question about hate against refugees is denied by a local politician, pointing instead towards abstract claims such as 'humanism' of 'all Germans.' Given the history of far-right violence in Cottbus, this deeply ignorant denial of racist attitudes against refugees fuels and normalises the agenda of far-right actors.

Finally, the municipal government's negotiation of far-right contestations during the dialogues can be illuminated through the way it furthered the far-right's control paradigm. This became apparent when migration was linked to questions of security and order in public spaces: Long-term residents repeatedly lamented the noise of refugee children (Citizens' Dialogue, Sandow) or expressed fear of leaving the house at night due to the presence of newcomers (Citizens' Dialogue, Sachsendorf). The following contribution by a long-term resident exemplifies these concerns, also juxtaposing today's perceived insecurity with an imagined, more orderly past before the arrival of refugees:

> When I moved here about 15 years ago, it was possible to leave the pub drunk and walk home at night. Now I wonder what to do in the evening. That is actually a reason to despair, I have to say….What's next?….Should we all carry weapons? (Citizens' Dialogue, Sachsendorf)

Examining how the city administration responded to such claims, it is striking that officials underline their responsibility to ensure security, as the following comment by a civil servant of the *Ordnungsamt* illuminates: "A clear message: In cooperation with the police, we have the matter under control and are showing strength. Every day" (Citizens' Dialogue, Sachsendorf). Evidently, the intention of such responses is to appease people's fears. However, given the context of such statements, it is highly questionable if evoking a law-and-order rhetoric is an effective strategy to reduce such fears. Moreover, referencing the importance of a strong police presence can be read as implicit confirmation of the residents' statement, furthering the idea of refugees as a threat to the neighbourhood.

4.3. The Limits of Participatory Urban Governance in Negotiating Far-Right Contestations

Overall, my analysis shows that the municipality's negotiation of far-right contestations throughout the citizens' dialogues in Cottbus escapes agonistic and communicative approaches to participatory urban governance alike. While the organisers initially used an agonistic understanding of participation to frame the dialogues' open-ended gesture, they also highlighted the need for rational debate. However, throughout the course of the citizens' dialogues in Sachsendorf and Sandow it became clear that the execution of this envisioned format allowed for the disruption of democratic dialogue, as representatives of the city administration and the city council, as well as the moderators, treated far-right contestations as a legitimate aspect of conflict. Crucially, the design of the dialogues as conflictive spaces of 'tolerated disagreement' served to normalise far-right attitudes.

This normalisation occurred through four dimensions, two of which relate to questions of format, while the two others concern matters of content: 1) Apart from designating formal rules regarding the speaking order, organisers did not deem it necessary to lay out democratic principles such as minority rights to guide the participatory format. 2) This was aggravated by the fact that organisers failed to consider the composition of participants when designing the formats; refugee networks in the neighbourhoods were not specifically invited and information about the citizens' dialogues only advertised in the local newspaper and on the city's website, in German. 3) At the content level, organisers did not reject racist comments by participants, and at times even encouraged them. This was legitimised as they repeatedly highlighted the need for long-term residents to articulate their subjective feelings. In doing so, organisers dangerously conflated genuine empathy with the emotionalization of migration. If the municipal government's aim was to engage residents in democratic discourse, the idea of listening to the dissatisfied without clearly objecting to racism appears counterproductive. 4) Finally, the legitimisation of far-right articulations became evident as the organisers' replies to comments by long-term residents reinforced a dichotomous world view (both with

regards to the 'native we' vs. 'immigrant other' and in relation to the accusation of the 'elites in Berlin,' i.e., the mayor blaming the Federal Republic for the city's alleged problems with international migration) and with regards to the far-right's control paradigm. The latter became clear when residents voiced security concerns linked to the arrival of refugees in both neighbourhoods, which city officials reinforced.

5. Concluding Thoughts

To summarise, the aim of this article was to examine how far-right contestations of migration-led societal transformations in cities put established assumptions about participatory processes to the test. Specifically, I focused on the nexus of communicative/agonistic approaches to participation as prominent positions currently discussed in the literature on participatory urban governance. Bringing them into conversation with social science literature about the far right, I showed that contemporary far-right contestations evoke a different set of questions to those usually posed in research on participatory urban governance processes. Those insights illuminated the ideological and organisational heterogeneity of far-right actors, ranging from extreme-right to radical-right positions, and stressed that the far right's participatory agenda in the name of a homogenous imagination of 'the people' is deeply reactionary and incompatible with democratic negotiation. Consequently, scrutinising the case of Cottbus, I argued that the agonistic idea of taming antagonism into agonism in the context of surging far-right contestations is deeply problematic. Framing racist and authoritarian articulations as a legitimate side of the conflict is to vindicate them. Equally so, the communicative ideal of rational debate is profoundly disputable, as it treats far-right articulations as a legitimate side of an argument.

In Cottbus, the municipal government launched citizens' dialogues that combined both these approaches to participatory urban governance in responding to local far-right rallies. Crucially, this new format was introduced at the neighbourhood scale, as existing participatory institutions such as the city council were thought to pose too high a threshold for residents to participate in. Indeed, my analysis shows that the neighbourhood-scale proved to be a fruitful site of negotiation as it helped disentangle the issue of international migration from context-specific socio-spatial problems. In Sachsendorf and Sandow, these problems were implicitly linked to the neighbourhoods histories of reconstruction and demolition. However, the dialogues also served as a platform for far-right positions, as the municipal government and city administration did not reject reactionary claims. In this context, the ideas of agonistic strife and rational consensus building normalised key tenets of far-right politics and disrupted the possibility of democratic dialogue. The municipal government appeared utterly complicit in this process of disruption, as it furthered: 1) a dichotomous worldview in the form of racist language and 'anti-elite' sentiments, 2) the emotionalization of societal problems by framing migration as a security threat, and 3) the installation of a 'control paradigm' that calls for authoritarian politics. Contemplating the metaphor of disruption, it appears that while the power relations inherent to the participatory formats in Cottbus rupture the democratic ideals of theories of participatory urban governance, they also present a certain continuity with critiques of participatory processes.

Thus, to conclude, I contend that municipal leaders need to reconfigure the practice of participation to negotiate contemporary far-right contestations regarding both format and content of such participatory endeavours. In a climate of rising reactionary forces, locating societal negotiations at the neighbourhood level proves productive, as such interventions hold the potential to address the roots of political grievance and disempowerment by recognising past injustices (Bollens, 2012, p. 235). However, municipalities are urged to reject far-right articulations by conveying the importance of democratic principles themselves. In terms of format, municipalities need to actively seek to include a diversity of participants so that citizens' dialogues represent the views and concerns of all residents in the neighbourhood. This could either be achieved through a closer exchange between the municipal government and neighbourhood-based community organising when preparing the events or through democratic experiments such as civic lotteries that would ensure the random sampling of participants.

Nevertheless, as I illustrated by analysing the shift that was made in the council meeting, from the municipality's focus on the far right to concentrating on the issue of trust between long-term residents and the city government, it is striking how there was almost no effort to address those most vulnerable to, and/or suffering from, far-right attacks in the city. This could be achieved, for instance, by considering local meetings where municipal actors specifically listen to the targets of far-right attacks, attempting to mobilise a different emotional register, one that recognises the harmful consequences of far-right contestations. Regarding content, municipal governments need to design guiding parameters of dialogue that address the limits of democratic content, i.e., that protect against all kinds of discrimination as a precondition of participation. This also entails designing participatory settings in such a way that participants are comfortable and recognise it as a(n) (un-)learning process and are open to the revision of previously held standpoints. Finally, negotiating far-right contestations takes the courage to endure antagonism in case participants refuse to give up far-right positions. Otherwise, 'hostile democracy' (Süß & Kolioulis, 2020) prevails.

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Conflict of Interests

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Article

Migration-Related Conflicts as Drivers of Institutional Change?

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Abstract
This article examines the role of social conflicts in the context of migration and discusses the relation between such conflicts and institutional change. We understand conflicts as tensions that evoke contradiction between different social groups or institutional actors. Varied urban contexts together with dynamic immigration of heterogeneous population groups can induce negotiation processes that affect institutional settings and actors. Conflicts have therefore been an integral part of urban coexistence, and cities have always been places where these conflicts play out. We assume that conflicts are social phenomena, which have multiple causes and effects. Public assumptions about conflicts in connection with migration often have a negative or destructive impetus, while conflict theory ascribes to conflicts potential positive effects on societal change. Conflicts can represent forms of socialization and the possibility of adapting or changing social conditions. This article discusses the extent to which migration-related conflicts induce institutional change. Using qualitative empirical results from the BMBF-funded research project MigraChance, we present a case study that reconstructs the emergence and course of a conflict surrounding the construction of a Syriac-Orthodox church in Bebra (Hesse) in the 1990s. Analyzing this conflict both in depth and in relation to its local context, we show that migration is only one part of what we refer to as migration-related conflicts, and we shed light on the complexity of factors that can result in institutional change. Change can also occur indirectly, in small steps, and with ambivalent normative implications.

Keywords
change; conflicts; Germany; institutional change; migration

Issue
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1. Introduction

In heterogeneous urban contexts and in the course of dynamic immigration of heterogeneous population groups, conflicts have always been part of urban coexistence. Thus, cities have always been places of conflict (Amin, 2002; Valentine, 2008). For that reason, we consider it necessary to understand the dynamics and impacts of conflicts, and their role for social development. In this article, we will focus on social conflicts in the context of migration, which we understand as everyday manifestations of profound societal negotiation processes.

In the German context, the interpretation and implications of conflicts became the subject of debates in public media, politics and interdisciplinary scientific discourses in recent years. Several authors in the field of German migration research see conflicts in connection with immigration as a sign of successful integration rather than rising problems. This is a relatively new perspective that gained popularity within the last decade. In this interpretation, descendants of migrants challenge the legitimacy of the hegemonies and institutions of the host society and therefore, more conflicts may arise (El-Mafaalani, 2018; Treibel, 2017a). Hence, one central aspect of migration research is the analysis of shifting power relations between long-established residents and immigrants (Treibel, 2017b). On the one hand, the rediscovery of the political dispute points to hopes for a revival of democracy and its

institutions (Mouffe, 2014). On the other hand, it reveals a demand for an adaptation to the long-denied realities of migration. Since cities are ultimately the result of sustained, long-term (im)migration, these effects must—and should—be found locally, and "institutions, from administrations to municipal enterprises, museums, libraries and educational institutions need to change to pay justice to the ever-growing social diversity. This change has become a matter of survival" (Terkessidis, 2010, p. 8, authors' translation).

In the past, the academic and, particularly, the political debate often ethnicized and culturalized conflicts about migration and adopted a focus on problems (Bommes, 2010). These terms describe the attribution and reduction of conflicts to ethnic or cultural differences between groups of people based on their actual or attributed national, ethnic, cultural or religious background. For us, migration-related refers less to the features assigned to groups or individuals. Our stance on migration rather examines the negotiations related to it and to the associated societal and institutional change. Hence, our approach focuses on conflicts in which a local society discusses the object of conflict in relation to migration, where migration becomes a reason itself. We are thus interested in examining the relationships between migration, conflict and institutional change.

The expectation that guided our research was that, in the course of such migration-related conflicts, institutional change occurs as a process of adaption to new societal realities. This change, we assumed, would manifest in the creation of new institutions, the adaptation of existing institutions, the formation of new networks of actors, or through learning processes in pre-existing structures. Furthermore, in conflicts, actors would negotiate the validity of norms and values and thereby question and reaffirm the legitimacy of existing institutions. Finally, conflicts can also accompany the establishment of institutions and negotiate their role and position in a local society.

Our contribution addresses the question of how the conflict under investigation—the planned construction of a Syriac-Orthodox church in the German small town of Bebra in the mid-1990s—influenced local institutional settings. With this in mind, we review the assumptions within theories of institutional change and its relation to conflict and analyze how the aforementioned conflict became a particularly contentious process. We trace the complexity of this conflict in detail and reveal how different institutions interacted with its dynamics. To conclude, we discuss the interrelationship of conflicts and institutions with an emphasis on the specific ways they are intertwined and highlight less expected moments of change.

2. Conflict, Migration and Institutional Change

Our research interest combines topics rarely associated with one another in the common body of literature on conflict theory, migration research and theories of institutional change. Much is known about institutional change at the level of nation-states. At the subnational level, there is growing attention to institutional change but the field is largely "underexplored" (Evenhuis, 2017, p. 510) and the same holds true for the municipal level. Recent years have seen increased interest in the role of conflict in institutional change especially by institutional economists (Shami, 2019; Zikos, 2020). However, theories of institutional change have paid little attention to conflict theories, whether on a national (Resch, Kersting, & Müller, 2019) or international level (Mitchell, 2005). Even though conflict research on a local level paid attention to migration, particularly to so-called ethnic conflicts (Hüttermann, 2000), conflict theory engaged less with migration despite its inherent interest in drivers of social change. Migration research, finally, paid attention to the development of migration-related institutions like foreigner's advisory councils but much less focused on conflicts. In order to examine how these topics are related conceptually, we will review existing theories in the following paragraphs.

Conflict theory attributes certain effects to social conflict. Coser (1957) assumes that "no group can be entirely harmonious" and that therefore "conflict is an essential element in group formation" (Coser, 1957, p. 31). Another assumption is that the negotiation of power is a basic element that "creates [groups'] interests in change as well as interests in the status quo" (Dahrendorf, 1988, p. 28). Thus, social conflicts can have an effect on social structures when goals, values or interests among opponents are negotiated (Coser, 1957, p. 151). Moreover, conflicts would lead to "revitalize existent norms; or [contribute] to the emergence of new norms. In this sense, social conflict is a mechanism for adjustment of norms adequate to new conditions" (Coser, 1957, p. 154). Recent work in conflict theory emphasizes the role of conflict for democracy (Comtesse, Flügel-Martinsen, Martinsen, & Nonhoff, 2019). Most prominent here is the argument supported in the work of Mouffe (2014), and more recently in planning theory (e.g., Pløger, 2017): Democracy is best understood as 'agonistic pluralism.' Conflicts cannot—and should not—be eliminated, as the acceptance and legitimation of conflicts is precisely what characterizes pluralism, and thus pluralistic democracy (Mouffe, 2014).

Many scholars define institutions to be either "formal—such as laws, procedures, contracts, statutes etc.—or informal—such as norms, conventions, traditions, routines etc." (Evenhuis, 2017, p. 511). These formal and informal rules structure the interaction between actors. Kingston and Caballero (2009) suggest that "institutions are resistant to change, in part due to people's emotional attachment to existing institutions, and in part because change threatens existing patterns of status, wealth, and power" (Kingston & Caballero, 2009, p. 166; Steinmo, 2008, p. 129). However, "There is no consensus on how to conceptualize either institutions themselves

or the process of institutional change" (Kingston & Caballero, 2009, p. 151). Institutional theorists disagree on assumptions about why institutional change is triggered, often emphasizing stability rather than change. Kingston and Caballero (2009, p. 156) suggest that "institutional change is usually incremental since it is often easier to achieve consensus on small adjustments than to effect major changes to existing rules."

Theories of institutional change usually distinguish between two approaches: intentional design or evolutionary development. Steinmo (2008, p. 133) suggests that "the evolutionary approach sees outcomes as contingent and non-predictable rather than linear and predictable." Mahoney and Thelen (2010, p. 7) point out that the existing approaches "provide answers to what sustains institutions over time." This explains why they are less focused on conflict but on stability. Knight (1992), however, is an exception along with a small group of historical institutionalists who "explore power relations and integrate agency into the analysis rather than seeing actors as prisoners of the institutions they inhabit" (Steinmo, 2008, p. 133). Knight (1992) links institutional change to the role of distributional conflict and power asymmetries. He challenges theories that emphasize the collective benefits of social institutions and instead follows the idea of the discriminating effects of social institutions: "According to this alternative approach, social institutions can be explained in terms of their beneficial effects on particular segments of the community. It suggests a central focus on the conflict of interests inherent in distributional questions" (Knight, 1992, p. 8).

We derived three points of interest from the literature of theories of institutional change. First, the role of power inequalities; second, the relevance of historical context; and third, the influence of endogenous and exogenous factors on the respective object of study. The study of 'power inequalities' as a means of explaining change is relatively common in conflict theory, but rarely appears in theories of institutional change. Many authors in this field consider:

> Institutional change as a centralized, collective-choice process in which rules are explicitly specified by a collective political entity, such as the community or the state, and individuals and organizations engage in collective action, conflict, and bargaining to try to change these rules for their own benefit. (Kingston & Caballero, 2009, p. 155)

Knight (1992), on the other hand, argues that institutional change can be explained primarily by analyzing "how the asymmetries of power in a society influence the evolution of social institutions" (Knight, 1992, p. 14). This is where conflict theory comes in: "The sociological theory of conflict would do well to confine itself for the time being to an explanation of the frictions between the rulers and the ruled in given social structural organizations" (Dahrendorf, 1958, p. 173). While Dahrendorf and Knight point to the necessity to consider power as a relevant category of conflict, Mahoney and Thelen (2010, p. 8) state that "institutional outcomes need not reflect the goals of any particular group"; institutional change can also occur as an unintended consequence. Hence, power and conflict influence institutions. The "outcome of conflict among groups" (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010, p. 8) need not be congruent with the goals of those involved in the conflict.

It is important to consider history in order to understand past policy decisions as a framework affecting actors' identities, their attitudes toward change, their role in the policy negotiation process, and the array of viable alternatives (Kingston & Caballero, 2009, p. 156). On a sub-national level Evenhuis (2017, p. 522) shows that a path dependency approach "starts from the idea that changes in institutions build on and are conditioned by already existing institutions, through a dynamic and ongoing process." Because of its particular attention to context and path dependence, historical institutionalism can be inspiring here. From its perspective, behavior, attitudes, and strategic decisions take place within a particular social, political, economic, and cultural context. History is not understood as a sequence of independent events. Rather, historical institutionalism emphasizes how different factors influence each other—therefore, authors of this body of literature are interested in the interdependencies and the multidimensionality of factors (Kingston & Caballero, 2009, p. 128): "Thus, by deepening and enriching their understanding of the historical moment and the actors within it, [these theorists] are able to offer more accurate explanations for the specific events that they explore" (Steinmo, 2008, p. 127).

Exogenous influences, like shocks, can be the impetus for institutional change (Kingston & Caballero, 2009, p. 168). Since institutions tend to be stable until confronted with them (Steinmo, 2008, p. 129), these institutions and involved actors need skills and routines to deal with exogenous influences. On an institutional level, little is known about these skills and routines. Thus, Kingston and Caballero (2009) pay attention to the individual level to analyze how actors process complex information. According to them, actors constantly process exogenous influences with the help of their bounded rationality. Forms of bounded rationality include communications skills, information processing skills, calculation skills, preference formation skills, and emotional skills. Consequently, institutions are considered the result of intentional human problem solving (Kingston & Caballero, 2009, p. 175). Kingston and Caballero however conclude that "further theoretical and empirical work is needed to clarify the role of bounded rationality, of collective and individual learning, and of endogenous preferences as drivers of, or impediments to, institutional change" (Kingston & Caballero, 2009, p. 178).

Initially, we conducted our research under the assumption that conflicts would provide stimulus for institutional change. Instead, we found that examining

conflict alone is not enough to understand change. Rather, for social conflicts the aforementioned interplay of power asymmetries, changing historical contexts, and the influence of exogenous factors and endogenous capacities helps to explain change.

3. Methods

Our contribution is based upon studies carried out as part of the BMBF-funded research project MigraChance (2018–2021). This project examines migration-related conflicts and their impact on institutional change in the three cities of Leipzig, Gelsenkirchen and Bebra. Research includes the reconstruction of two migration-related conflicts in each case study.

For Bebra, we analyzed the conflict over the Syriac-Orthodox church because it has been the main conflict around migration in this town, and everyone we'd ask about migration-related conflicts would mention the story of the church. The empirical data for our conflict analysis was gathered using a mixed-method approach, including qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2002); 15 guided interviews (Przyborski & Wohlrab-Sahr, 2014) with people involved in the conflict in the mid-1990s; 20 further on-site conversations; two local workshops; and data from personal and official archives as well as local newspapers. Further analyzed documents include draft resolutions; extracts from building and planning committees; district council resolutions; and documents like personal letters and notes. Based on these materials, we analyzed and mapped the elements of the conflict to understand its dynamics and institutional effects (Fisher, Abdi, & Ludin, 2007).

Generally speaking, we regard the reconstruction of conflicts as a difficult endeavour, since narratives surrounding them always represent certain perspectives. These narratives differ according to the position of speakers and represent a retrospective view of what happened. Therefore, there can never be a 'correct version' of the story of a conflict. This reveals that conflicts are difficult to describe merely in terms of 'what happened.' Conflict stories are perspective-based narratives of the experienced course of events. Being aware of this potential pitfall, we first describe the historical context of the case study and briefly introduce the circumstances under which the Syriac-Orthodox community found its way to Bebra. Focusing on the year 1996, we will then outline the polarizing conflict and include the main lines of the arguments in the debates. Following this, we reflect which social issues were negotiated during the course of the conflict, and which institutional changes occurred.

4. Case Study Bebra: Historical Context

Bebra is a small town in Northern Hesse with approximately 14,000 inhabitants (Hessian Land Statistical Office, 2020). Because of its location in the center of Germany, Bebra was one of the most important railway hubs up until 1990 (Budnik et al., 2020). When Germany was still divided, Bebra was one of eight border-crossing points and handled the inter-zone passenger and freight traffic between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic. For readers unfamiliar with the context—after World War II, Germany had been divided into two states (1949–1990): the Federal Republic of Germany in the west and the German Democratic Republic in the east. Bebra was able to maintain a role as an important railway junction even during the division, despite its location at the edge of the Western zone. In addition, the municipality benefited financially from the so-called 'marginal zone funding.' The so-called 'zonal border area' received a high level of spatial planning attention and special funding within the framework of regional structural policy in order to compensate for the disadvantages caused by its location. This came to an end with reunification in 1990. Moreover, with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and construction, undertaken by the German Railway Corporation, of a new railway transit structure that passes Bebra without stopping there, the city lost its role for rail traffic. A process of deindustrialization began. The result was a significant loss of jobs. Where the German railway company once employed up to 4,000 people in the city, today only a few hundred workers remain (Tom, Former Mayor, Interview, 2018, October 16).

Bebra has had a long history of international immigration and with it a relatively high share of migrants for a small town. The first documented immigration to Bebra took place due to the expansion of the railway network in 1849 (Meng, 1969). One century later, following the recruitment agreements of the federal government with Italy in 1955 and even more so after similar agreements with Greece, Spain and Turkey in the early 1960s, immigration of migrant workers developed further, also in Bebra. These agreements aimed at meeting increased demand for labor in a time of economic growth and initiated the immigration of hundreds of thousands of so-called 'foreign guest workers' to Germany, whose stay was supposed to be temporary. Due to the so-called oil crisis and a worsening economy a 'recruitment ban' came into force in 1973 and many so-called 'guest workers' returned to their countries of origin. Still, the overall number of immigrants grew through the process of family reunification—as long as they were working in Germany, guest workers had the right to bring their families. The migrants who stayed increasingly rented or bought apartments in Bebra's inner-city neighborhoods, where comparatively cheap and less attractive living space was available.

From 1980 forward, asylum was the primary means by which migrants arrived. This was the result of an increase in forced migration, but also resulted from the lack of other legal possibilities for immigration to Germany. Later, the number of asylum-seeking Syriac-Orthodox Christians from Turkey rose to comprise 30%–40% of the total number of refugees (Sven, Former

Head of the Workers' Welfare Organization, Interview, 2019, June 25). Many of the latter already had some local contacts reaching back to Germany's guest worker period. In the early 1990s the share of the foreign population in Bebra was twice as high as in neighboring communities. From the 2000s onwards, the proportion of the foreign population decreased. Immigrants partly received German citizenship plus their children were born as German citizens, and also due to shrinking refugee migration to Germany, and an increasingly restrictive border regime. As a result of its enduring migration history, people from over 80 nations and their offspring are presently living in Bebra. While official local statistics encompass only the category of 'foreigner,' city officials assume 60% of newborns have a so-called 'migration background' when the national origin of grandparents has been taken into account (Tim, Former Director of the Local Youth Center, Interview, 2018, September 19).

The first members of the Christian Syriac-Orthodox community migrated to Bebra over the course of several decades from the Tur Abdin region at the border of Turkey and Syria. They first came as 'guest workers' between 1961 and 1973, while the worker agreement between Germany and Turkey was still in place. They later brought their families, enlarging the community within Germany through family reunification. Between 1973 and 1986, additional Syriac-Orthodox Christians applied for asylum, as the Turkish Muslim majority increasingly pressured Christians in the Tur Abdin region. In a key decision, the Hessian administrative court recognized the Christians living in the southeastern provinces of Turkey as being a persecuted group. According to the court, they were exposed to massive attacks by Turkish security forces because they, like the Kurdish civilian population, were suspected of supporting the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party, founded in 1978, which tried to separate from Turkey in order to establish an independent Kurdish state; "Turkish Christians are entitled to asylum," 1995; for a detailed overview and presentation of the empirical material, see Budnik et al., 2020). As persecuted Christians, there was no way back to Turkey for most of them. 143 Syriac-Orthodox Christians acquired German citizenship between 1985 and 1995 (City of Bebra, 1996).

5. The Conflict about the Construction of a Syriac-Orthodox Church

Since the 1970s, the Syriac-Orthodox community had been practicing their faith in the local Catholic Church upon the invitation of local Catholic leaders. The community began thinking about constructing their own church building in 1990, and they eventually bought farmland in 1994 with the help of the local Catholic and Protestant churches. There was no development plan for the purchased land. Therefore, the city of Bebra had to approve the change in land use status so that the building project could be implemented. At the beginning of 1996, the decision on the change of the land-use plan was due for a vote by the city council.

The body rejected the change. The city council at first mainly addressed planning issues, e.g., the size of the project, traffic issues with agricultural vehicles and parking problems. Opponents of the project quickly expanded the topics to aspects of inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts and fears regarding living together. In a speech on behalf of the Christian Democratic Union, a city councilor pointed to the growing number of Muslims and Kurds and suggested that "gatherings of several thousand people with their religious opposites [have] a negative impact on our city, [and therefore] the local population is overwhelmed with that many cultural and religious contrasts" (City of Bebra, 1996b). A letter from the Syriac-Orthodox community to the Christian Democratic Union reconfirmed their intention to build a Christian church and not a mosque (Syriac-Orthodox Community, 1996). Additionally, they pointed out that "half of our parishioners are German citizens—with all duties and with all rights" (Syriac-Orthodox Community, 1996).

The atmosphere heated up. Public reporting and the mobilization of networks quickly expanded the circle of actors involved as well as the range of conflict issues addressed. Rapidly, the supporters' side organized itself and began building alliances beyond questions of national belonging in favor of religious belonging. The conflict polarized the urban society, which became clear through the two public information events in March and April 1996 at the latest. Contrary to the intention to contain the conflict, both events resulted in further hardening of the fronts, emotional stress and mutual accusations as this impression of a participant shows:

> As a young person, there were tears in my eyes that evening. Supporters of the community center were booed, and were even interrupted….A look at the faces around me revealed such anger, such rage, [which] I have never experienced before. ("Never experienced such anger," 1996)

The dynamic led to increased threats and intimidation, especially against supporters of the church. They were increasingly "publicly insulted and harassed with anonymous threatening phone calls" (Schaake, 1996). The number of public statements by local but also external politicians, private individuals and institutions increased significantly after the event.

Internal and external pressure on the local actors, and especially the newly appointed mayor (Christian Democratic Union), who has been elected in September 1995 and came into office in March 1996, increased. Proponents of the church repeatedly demanded objectivity. For example, the Green Party stated that "the polemical stirring up of emotions must be removed from the arsenal of political debate" ("Do not stir up emotions," 1996), and the Social Democratic Party warned

against an "emotional occupation of the topic" ("SPD warns," 1996). Letters to the local newspaper, the mayor, and public letters from politicians with polarizing and emotional content appeared in the local press. A headline in the local newspaper about the search for a "home for the suffering church" can serve as one example of the charged atmosphere ("Planned community," 1996). Readers' letters said they were "horrified" that a Christian party was refusing a Christian church and commented that fear is "not a good advisor" ("CDU to refuse construction of a new church," 1996). Supporting and opposing petitions followed. In addition, the church-supporting supra-regional media attention also grew. In 1996, one of the largest nationwide news services, *Der Spiegel*, ran a headline referencing a threatening phone call made to the head of the city parliament, a supporter of the church ("We'll set your house on fire,'' 1996).

The process so far had shown that public debate quickly escalated, making it difficult to find a solution or compromise. Politicians attempted to keep the topic out of the public. Therefore, further negotiations at the so called 'roundtable' took place in sessions closed from the general public and media. Participants agreed that only the moderator should inform the press about the status of negotiations. With the participation of representatives from the Social Democratic Party and the Christian Democratic Party, the mediating churches and the Syriac Orthodox Christians, the congregation made new concessions regarding size and location of the church building. They joined forces to look for alternative locations. Eventually, the Christian Democratic Union got out of the negotiations and refused any further participation, which sidelined the issue until after upcoming municipal elections in 1997 (Protestant Church Council, 1996). After four sessions, the roundtable eventually failed in the summer of 1996, although the opponents had gradually gotten closer to reaching a compromise.

Public attention and excitement subsided. Almost all parties avoided raising the issue of the project in their election campaigns, thus preventing further escalation. Negotiations continued—albeit without the public's knowledge—and the town administration examined alternative locations. From this point on, it is difficult to reconstruct further negotiations and mediations since no documents or media coverage are available, and interviewees would jump directly to the results of the resolution in their reconstructions. As far as we know, talks between the mayor and the Syriac-Orthodox community continued. Neither side made any statements to the press or the public on the status of the negotiations. In November 1997, the city council presented a compromise for the controversial church building: the conversion of the vacant former Federal Railway School, a training center for railway apprentices. Due to its location in the inner-city area, approval from the political parties in the city council was not required. After a year full of polarization, a lot of pressure and dissent from outside for the local decision-makers, and some much needed time for rest and silence, almost all sides considered this location a success. The new location simultaneously opened up the possibility of giving in to public pressure and finding peace without losing face. The decision-makers, and above all the mayor, framed the compromise as a "good solution for everyone" from the start (Tom, Former Mayor, Interview, 2018, October 16). In particular, the mayor emphasized the urban development advantages for the city and minimized the probability of further conflicts. The open conflict came to an end at this point.

In 2002, the conversion of the Federal Railway School into a church was finally completed. Positive portrayals dominated the press and the statements of political decision-makers like the former mayor who stated that "everyone is satisfied" (Tom, Former Mayor, Interview, 2018, October 16). One journalist described the church building as a "highlight in the cityscape [which] is at the same time an upgrade for Bebra" ("New church to be consecrated tomorrow," 2002). His editorial on the church building begins with the words:

> The windows and doors were smashed, the roof broken—an eyesore in the middle of Bebra. The former Federal Railway School on Eisenacherstrasse in Bebra was threatened with becoming an eternal ruin. But thanks to the commitment of the Syriac-Orthodox Church and cultural association, the building has become a jewel. ("Joy over their own place of worship," 2002)

6. Institutional Change

We will now discuss several aspects of institutional change related to this conflict, beginning with the role of institutions in the conflict dynamics. Following this, we will examine how the conflict correlates with changes in institutions with respect to the three dimensions derived from the literature review. In doing so, we will first consider the role of power asymmetries in the intended design of an institution for immigrants and, second, include the importance of alliance building for the implementation of the project. Thirdly, we take into account the institutional ways of dealing with the conflict, e.g., the role of the chosen dialogue formats. This endogenous procedure was influenced by exogenous forces on local institutional decision-making levels. Fourth, we will discuss short-term and long-term, small-scale institutional change and associated development of institutions.

The changing historical context in part explains the emergence of the manifest conflict. This changing context—meaning exogenous influences on local conditions like immigration or political change—challenged fixed institutional frameworks. Core aspects of the historical change in the 1990s were the intense process of deindustrialization due to German reunification, the loss of

Bebra's importance as a national railway junction (peripheralization), increasing refugee migration to Germany and Bebra, and the long-lasting stigmatization and devaluation of Bebra as a 'Turks town' (or worse) since the 1970s. Further, the nationwide racist discourses have to be taken into account—riots and mobilizations against migrants had begun already in the 1980s and peaked at the beginning of the 1990s, resulting in the implementation of far more restrictive immigration laws. For years, a controversial public and political debate on international immigration to Germany, recognition of the reality of post-war immigration (which conflicted with self-perception of an ethnically homogenous national state), and the conditions and future of the multicultural society had been going on at the national level. This broad discourse also dominated the 1995 mayoral campaign in Bebra, where the rejection of further immigrants and planned construction of a mosque had been controversially debated.

Conflicts like the case of the Syriac-Orthodox church reflect societal negotiation processes around local urban development in an increasingly plural society with changing balances of power. In the foreground of the conflict stands the intentional establishment of a religious institution, the Syriac-Orthodox church and community center. With regard to immigration, local politics is permeated by hegemonic claims of the host society. At the same time, it shows that the host society itself is divided between support for and rejection of a religious center to be built by immigrants. The immigrant group is surprised that these hegemonic claims and their enforcement are directed against them. At the same time, they also have allies with influence and power, namely the local churches. The alliance of Christian churches and Syriac-Orthodox immigrants also brings a powerful argument to the center of the discussion: the claim that the shared Christian religion is a more powerful source of legitimacy than the question of geographical origin. This is evident in the Syriac-Orthodox Christians' emphasis that they were building a church and not a mosque, thus hinting at a common line of identity. In this way, the emphasis on religious affiliation is used powerfully to set oneself apart from supposed religious minorities.

The conflict is an example of how exogenous and endogenous parameters influence local institutions and, therefore, the dynamics of the local conflict. Institutions like the municipal administration and government were challenged in dealing with the conflict. Exogenous parameters included, on the one hand, the increasing external pressure of social organizations, churches, NGOs and civil society actors, and alliances between regional and national institutions. The media, yet another institutional actor, played a key role. On the other hand, national and local laws were decisive. Building laws, together with the exact location of the envisioned church project, induced administrative procedures, which prolonged the planning process and made the church a matter for the local government. A different location for the property would have resulted in different procedures, and an inner city location enabled rapid construction of the church. The dynamics of the conflict were fueled by campaigns in the coinciding mayoral election, which only took place due to a change in regional law. For the first time, the mayor was to be elected directly by the local citizens. Migration became a major issue in the election campaigns and preventing the construction of the Syriac-Orthodox church served as a litmus test for the Christian Democratic Union candidate who won. A big part of his success was rooted in the promises made about preventing further international immigration.

Skills and routines of actors in institutions such as election periods, public hearings and participation, and internal political competition intersected with the process of planning and deliberating on the church project. One such routine is to address conflicts with the organization of a public hearing. Here, a major endogenous learning process occurred because the hearings unintentionally contributed to the escalation of the conflict. The result was that institutions turned away from the general public; negotiations continued in camera without any external communication to the regional press or other external actors, thus shutting off external influences. The concept of bounded rationality may help explain this learning process. It may explain why the actors insisted on their veto of changes to the land-use plan, as they had a limited sense of the scope the conflict would bring to the city. It may explain the general population's resistance to change and their assumption that city politicians had to implement their desires, since politicians are believed to embody the will of the electorate (which opposed further immigration to the city). On the individual level, actors have learned that their skills to assess how the conflict would develop under increasing external influences are limited; and they have learned that their routines for orientation, their skills for communication and ways of handling information are limited, too. On an institutional level, institutions have learned to close themselves to the outside world in response to exogenous influences.

In the presented case, we saw an institutionalization of short-term formats like roundtables and information events, which aimed to resolve tensions but failed to do so. Long-term formats for encounters and exchanges were initiated, such as festivities and cultural exchanges like the 'intercultural weeks,' which continue to exist even after the manifest conflict has subsided. On the initiative of the Baptist pastor, it was decided to hold a joint prayer for the "peace process" (Ralph, member of a local religious community, Interview, 2019, July 15). Long-term establishment of dialogical formats, especially those with the goal of promoting 'intercultural exchange' like the working group Intercultural Life, were composed of representatives from different parties and faith communities. The foundation of these formats needed committed and strongly networked individuals. Years after the conflict, the former youth center director

was brought into the city's administration to fill the position for 'intergenerational coexistence.' He is considered a key figure in communication with migrant youth and families of all origins. With the help of his network function, the city administration acts at the interface between civil society, administration and politics. The most obvious institutional change is the Syriac-Orthodox church itself and the associated change of the immigrant's role in local society. Today, the community is a recognized part of the urban society. Thanks to them and other established migrant communities, the city was able to deal successfully and without larger conflicts with increasing arrivals of refugees from 2015 onwards. This growth has also led to a demographic stabilization of the number of inhabitants, which had been decreasing continuously in the years prior, following the regional trend. In the wake of this development, the city today represents itself as a 'prime example of integration' in the region.

7. Conclusion

In the course of migration-related conflicts, institutional change occurs as a process of adaptation to shifting societal realities, and has to be considered part of a broader societal transformation. Conflict stimulates a sometimes reluctant development of institutions (Steinmo, 2008). Our example shows that this change is not always spectacular and obvious. The analysis of institutions shows a tendency to refuse change and to keep the status quo after successfully dealing with conflicts. An immediate and direct effect on institutions and their development is hardly clearly visible. Accordingly, processes of institutional learning and change do not necessarily manifest themselves in a formally documentable way. They are rather gradual, small-scale and difficult-to-observe informal changes (e.g., change in action strategies, without direct restructuring or reorganization of institutions). According to Kingston and Caballero (2009), the common ways that institutions respond to challenges are shaped by external parameter shifts. We assume that, during the course of conflicts, there is always a complex structure of influencing external and endogenous factors that lead to iterative change processes in institutions (unless it is a matter of intentional design 'from above'). Institutional learning includes both the establishment of temporary exchange formats designed to resolve immediate conflict as well as long-term local meeting networks. It also includes strategic refusal to communicate, increasingly non-transparent action and the evasion of established institutions as a reaction towards exogenous influences.

In migration-related conflicts, actors negotiate the validity of norms and values (Coser, 1957) as well as locally changing power relations (Dahrendorf, 1958), by questioning and reaffirming the legitimacy of existing institutions. This negotiation is particularly linked to a changing social and historical context. The analysis of the context indicates that migration itself is only one aspect—without necessarily being a condition—of the conflict's emergence. The simultaneity of experiences of crisis due to national and local societal changes thus influenced perceptions of immigration, and the ability to negotiate the changing roles of both long—and newly-established citizens. In this sense, migration-related conflicts can be understood as struggles over power (Knight, 1992), such as the local immigrants' push for recognition and participation. It is a struggle over the resources of participation and co-determination of further local development. These conflicts are processes determined by structural path dependencies, collective emotions, spatial conditions, values and attitudes, actors, their interests and relationships, and supra-regional discourses. The subsequent complexity of the conflict impedes the ways institutions will handle conflict.

Furthermore, well-known and established institutions of conflict resolution, like public information events and roundtables, can stand in the way of a more fundamental institutional change. To a limited extent, these tools are suitable to handle conflicts. However, their use in conflict situations is not always appropriate due to the emotional character of public conflicts. An information event can thus lead to open polarization and emotional stress, but does not provide the tools to deal with this. Negotiation is suppressed through the claim of objectivity (that resides in the instruments). Even though it contradicts common assumptions regarding communicative and participative planning, we observe that citizens' assemblies—as a type of institution for conflict resolution—can ultimately lead to further polarization instead of conflict resolution.

We consider the connection of conflicts and institutions to be relational in both directions at different scales. We observe interdependent, ambivalent interaction that co-produces these very conflicts and institutions. Conflict-solving institutions like roundtables or public hearings can contribute to the escalation of conflict dynamics rather than containing them. This dynamic is rooted in the intrinsic character of these formats. On the one hand, they are meant to serve the objective discussion of controversial public issues. On the other hand, they trigger polarization and emotionalization of social debates. Institutional formats for dealing with conflicts focus primarily on the rational side of conflict resolution and exclude debates about emerging emotions. The unspoken emotional injuries linger as latent tensions and thus further fuel the conflict. The analysis of migration-related conflicts can point out such grievances and draw attention to their effects on local societies and institutions. It remains an outstanding task to integrate the perspectives of emotional conflict resolution into existing institutional frameworks.

The analysis of local migration-related conflicts provides insights into the complex interdependencies between migration, conflict and institutional change. The analysis also reveals the difficulty in understanding

institutional change over a short period of observation. Institutional change is often a result of long-lasting processes rather than a sudden development. Research of local migration-related conflicts needs more scientific attention in order to better understand the role of historical context, changes in local power relations, and the inclusion of endogenous and exogenous influences on institutional change. For this purpose, more local empirical research should be conducted in the thematic field while also taking the emotional side of conflicts into consideration. The theoretical landscape would benefit from a dialogue between conflict theory and theories of institutional change in modern immigration societies in order to explain how local urban societies are subject to permanent institutional change.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

The Negotiation of Space and Rights: Suburban Planning with Diversity

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Abstract
The increasing suburbanization of immigrant settlement in Canada's major receiving cities has created unprecedented challenges for municipalities. Despite emerging research about the rise of ethnic suburbs in Canada and abroad, the role of suburban municipalities in facilitating immigrant integration and planning with diversity remains unclear. Based on mixed-method ethnographic research, this article investigates how immigrant and racialized communities in the Greater Toronto Area have significantly transformed suburban places and built institutionally complete communities. However, the rapid development of these spaces has not been fully recognized or supported by municipal planning authorities. Conflicts related to land use, public engagement, and public realm development expose planning's failure to keep pace with the diverse needs of immigrant communities, who must continually negotiate and fight for their use of space. Furthermore, the lack of effective civic engagement not only ignores immigrant and racialized communities as important stakeholders in suburban redevelopment, but also threatens to destroy the social infrastructure built by these communities and their 'informal' practices that are often not recognized by the planning 'norm.' Without appropriate community consultation, planning processes can further sideline marginalized groups. Lack of consultation also tends to prevent cooperation between groups, impeding the building of inclusive communities. It is imperative for municipalities to better understand and encourage community engagement and placemaking in ethnic suburbs. This study offers several recommendations for suburban planning with diversity.

Keywords
Canada; diversity; ethnic suburbs; immigrant settlement; institutional completeness; social infrastructure; social space; Toronto

Issue
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1. Introduction

Across North America, immigrants are increasingly bypassing the inner city and settling directly in the suburbs. In the US, the majority of immigrants (61%) live in suburbs (Singer, Suro, & Wilson, 2011) and the Toronto region where this research is situated, 50.6% of immigrants have settled in peripheral municipalities (Vézina & Houle, 2017). Traditionally, immigrants were drawn to North America's inner cities as seen in the locations of many typical Chinatowns and Little Italies (Gardaphe, 2003; Lai, 1988). However, the inner city is no longer the first choice for contemporary immigrants, who tend to settle directly in suburban areas for jobs, schools, safety, housing affordability, and wider community networks (Wilson & Svajlenka, 2014). Other important factors such as exclusion from inner-city socioeconomic fabrics (Tzaninis, 2020) and gentrification-induced displacement have further pushed immigrants out of city centres (Hulchanski, 2010; Keil, 2017).

Immigrant suburban settlements often manifest in noticeable ethnic landscapes that feature not only one-stop shopping destinations offering cultural goods and food, entertainment, and personal and business services, but also ethnic institutions (e.g., places of worship, schools, community centres) acting as community

hubs. Despite this now-established settlement trajectory and emerging research about the rise of immigrant suburbs in Canada and abroad (Dean, Regier, Patel, Wilson, & Ghassemi, 2018; Farrell, 2016; Gao-Miles, 2017; Harrison, Moyo, & Yang, 2012; Keil, 2017; Li, 1998, 2009; Lo, Preston, Basu, Anisef, & Wang, 2015; Lung-Amam, 2015; Qadeer, Agrawal, & Lovell, 2010; Tzaninis, 2020; Wang & Zhong, 2013; Watson & Saha, 2013; Zhuang, 2015, 2019, 2020; Zhuang & Chen, 2017), how ethnic communities influence and negotiate space, (re)define place, and (re)shape community in Canadian suburbs remains unclear. In addition, the role of municipalities in engaging in multiculturalism and managing ethnocultural diversity is relatively unexplored (Fincher, Iveson, Leitner, & Preston, 2014). As a result, the growing diversity of the suburbs presents an important opportunity for both planning researchers and practitioners to prioritize the peripheral (Keil, 2017), interrogate the interplay between suburbanization and immigration (Farrell, 2016), and combat perpetuating racial and spatial injustices (Goetz, Williams, & Damiano, 2020). As ethnic suburbs become more established and numerous, it has become imperative for suburban municipalities to clarify how ethnic communities have shaped and reshaped these places, and more importantly, what municipal planning interventions (e.g., planning policies and processes) are appropriate and effective to manage unprecedented social, cultural, economic, physical, and political changes that challenge conventional suburban planning.

Conventional suburbs are typically characterized by 'desolate placelessness' (Friedmann, 2010). They are often anonymous and lack spatial distinctiveness. Ethnic communities as important stakeholders have much to offer their suburban neighbourhoods, by bringing diverse social, cultural, and economic practices to the space and reinventing a sense of place and community. Suburban municipalities should better recognize and use the contributions of ethnic communities to combat the far-reaching social and economic consequences of lack of distinctiveness (Gleye, 2015; Johnson, 2017; Zhuang & Chen, 2017).

Previous empirical studies have reported how ethnic communities have significantly transformed existing suburban neighbourhoods and resulted in municipal conflicts related to land use, built form, traffic and parking control, economic development, place-making, and community engagement (Fincher et al., 2014; Harwood, 2005; Linovski, 2012; Lung-Amam, 2015; Poppe & Young, 2015; Zhuang, 2019; Zhuang & Chen, 2017). Obstacles facing municipalities may include but not limited to the following: lack of cultural competence, systemic inequality, ineffective community outreach, lack of social infrastructure policy, and imbalanced social and economic priorities. These issues demonstrate municipalities' varying degrees of uncertainty and unpreparedness in addressing ethnocultural diversity and differences, resulting in reactive and ad-hoc planning responses. Other municipalities have intentionally promoted ethnic suburbs as symbols of multiculturalism and used them strategically in their city branding strategies (Dwyer, Tse, & Ley, 2016; Pottie-Sherman & Hiebert, 2015; Schmiz & Kitzmann, 2017). Such approaches have been critiqued on the basis of cultural commodification and top-down approaches to 'selling ethnicity.' These empirical findings from different jurisdictions point to the need for more comprehensive empirical research on the immigrant suburb phenomenon and its implications for suburban planning with diversity as "positioning planners so that they are more effective, creative and visible in their engagement with ethnic and racialized difference in the contemporary neoliberal city should be a priority" (Fincher et al., 2014, p. 1).

With half of its population born outside of Canada and speaking more than 140 languages, Toronto is well known as one of the most multicultural cities in the world. The increasing suburbanization of immigrant settlement in the Greater Toronto Area offers an excellent opportunity to explore the aforementioned issues. The emerging suburban Chinese and South Asian neighbourhoods are the most visible examples of ethnic concentrations in the Greater Toronto Area and the subject of this research. The terms 'Chinese' and 'South Asian' used in this article are umbrella terms that refer to people whose ancestry originates in China or the Indian subcontinent countries respectively, and whose birthplaces are not limited to other parts of the world including the West Indies, Africa, Asia, and Europe. Despite both terms representing a large spectrum of heterogenous intra-group differences along cultural, religious, linguistic, and geographic lines, the Canadian Census classifies Chinese and South Asians as 2 of the 10 visible minority groups.

South Asians have much shorter mass immigration history in Canada than Chinese immigrants who were among the early settlers in the 1800s, but have grown very fast as the largest visible minority group in the Greater Toronto Area and in Canada (one and two million respectively) followed by the Chinese group (0,7 and 1,6 million respectively; Statistics Canada, 2019). These two very diverse communities have concentrated in Toronto's inner and outer suburbs including Scarborough, Etobicoke, Markham, Richmond Hill, Brampton, and Mississauga. There is not a universally agreed-upon definition of an 'ethnic' place because the ethnic-oriented businesses and institutions are not necessarily limited to immigrant or racialized owners/operators catering to co-ethnic members, and mainstream institutions (e.g., groceries, banks, car dealers) can also target an ethnic clientele by hiring staff from the same group and delivering cultural goods and services. Therefore, the suburban 'ethnic' places presented in this article refer to businesses and institutions clustering in close proximity to Chinese and South Asian residential settlements, and "represent certain ethno-cultural characteristics in 1) the goods and services offered and/or 2) the physical

features of their storefronts or streetscapes" (Zhuang, Hernandez, & Wang, 2015, p. 223).

This research involved a mixed-method approach to explore eight Chinese and South Asian neighbourhoods in six suburban regions of the Greater Toronto Area (Mississauga, Brampton, Etobicoke, Richmond Hill, Markham, Scarborough; see Figure 1) based on two research questions:

RQ1: How have immigrant communities shaped and reshaped suburban neighbourhoods?

RQ2: What is the role of municipal planning in managing diversity and facilitating inclusive community-building in these neighbourhoods?

The following sections will first introduce the research context in relation to Canada's suburbanization and the methodological approaches adopted in this research. Next, it will use the case studies in the Greater Toronto Area to illustrate how ethnic suburbs have been constructed through spatial concentration and the development of ethnic-oriented social infrastructure that supports institutional completeness. It will further analyze the tensions between ethnic communities and municipalities in the negotiation for space and rights, and the incompatibility of municipal planning policies and engagement processes. The article concludes with several recommendations for suburban planning with diversity.

2. Research Context

The concept of ethnic suburbs, or 'ethnoburbs,' is not new. Li (2009, p. 29) coined the term 'ethnoburb' to describe "suburban ethnic clusters of residential and business districts within large metropolitan areas. They are multiracial/multiethnic, multicultural, multilingual, and often multinational communities in which one ethnic group has significant concentration, but does not necessarily comprise the majority." In her study of the Chinese community in Los Angeles, the ethnoburb provides ethnic communities with opportunities to build upon an ethnic economy and transform the space into a global economic outpost (Li, 2009). Moving beyond the Chicago School notion of enclaves in central cities (Logan, Zhang, & Alba, 2002), Qadeer et al. (2010) studied the evolution of suburban ethnic enclaves in the Greater Toronto Area. Here, an 'enclave' refers to both spatial concentration as the necessary condition and "the formation of ethnic businesses, services, institutions and associations" as the sufficient condition (p. 317). In other words, Breton's (1964) concept of 'institutional completeness' referring to the number, size, and variety of institutions that an ethnic community has developed, in fact, is fundamental to make an enclave. These institutions may include formal "organizations of various sorts: religious, educational, political, recreational, national, and even professional" (Breton, 1964, p. 194), which provide strong social ties within the ethnic community, and in turn, create pull factors to attract ethnic group members and sustain ethnic enclaves (Nicholls & Uitermark, 2016; Qadeer et al., 2010). It also raises questions about to what extent ethnic enclaves affect the social integration process of immigrants (Vézina & Houle, 2017). However, the notions of 'enclave' and 'ethnoburb' are being challenged by Gao-Miles (2017, p. 99) in her study of an Australian suburb where the spatial formation of ethnicity was conceptualized as interethnic and trans-spatial. She criticized the ambiguity about the degree of spatial concentration, the ignorance of the multiethnic features of these suburban spaces, and "unproblematized binary relations between the white majority and the ethnic other." Considering the analytical perplexity, this article will use 'ethnic/immigrant suburbs' instead to refer to the broadly defined suburban ethnic concentrations.

In addition to the concerns about "problematizing visible minorities through ethnicization" (Gao-Miles, 2017, p. 84), the emerging ethnic suburbs have challenged the spatial assimilation model and raised questions about increasing segregation and underlying social

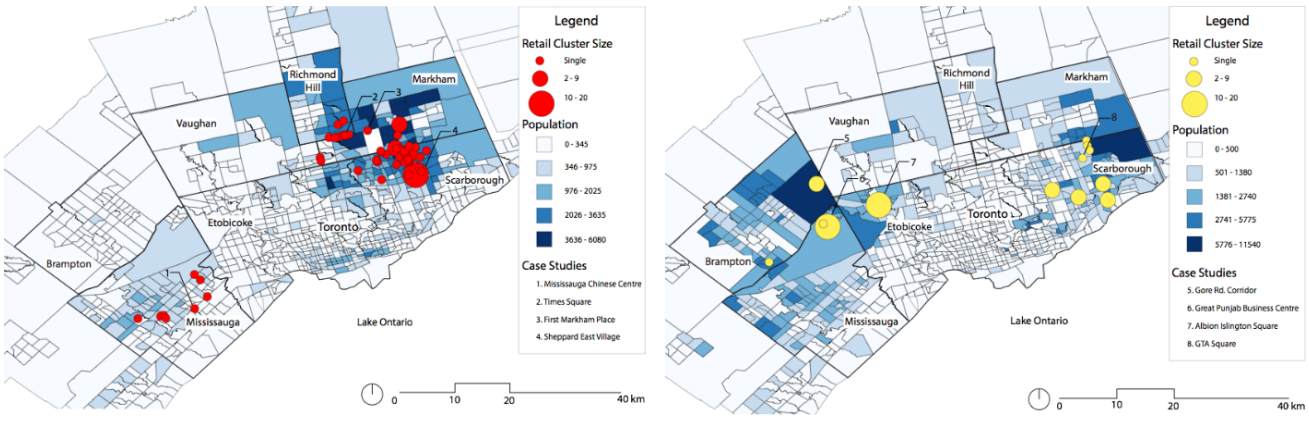

Figure 1. Locations of the eight case studies in relation to Chinese (left) and South Asian (right) populations and retail clusters in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area.

and spatial inequality within the suburbs (Farrell, 2016; Fincher et al., 2014; Keil, 2017). Logan's (2014) study of metropolitan America revealed the separate and unequal nature of suburbia where the increasing suburban diversity "does not mean that neighborhoods within suburbia are diverse" (p. 4), suggesting a high degree of segregation similar to the trend observed in central cities.

"In contrast to a story of decline, decay, exception and violence that has been taking shape in the diverse working-class suburbs of the United States," Keil (2017, p. 68) argued that Canada's suburbanization trajectory is different from the American one, and "embedded in an alternative narrative of Canadian immigration and suburbanization." To better understand Canadian suburbia, he further argued: "We had better start in the urban periphery where we find Brampton, Mississauga, or Markham, all suburban municipalities with majority 'visible minority' populations" (Keil, 2017, p. 68). The 'hyper-diversity' represented in these majority minority places refers to an intense diversification of the population in socioeconomic, demographic, and ethnic terms, as well as with respect to lifestyles, attitudes, and activities (Tasan-Kok & Ozogul, 2017). Although multiculturalism and diversity are largely embedded in Canada's national identity, the diversity discourse runs the risk of being used as a 'glamorized' blanket statement to describe differences in communities without addressing systemic issues of inequity, and a mismatch "between the macro-scale perception of diversity in Canada and the local implementation of national policy" (Tasan-Kok & Ozogul, 2017, p. 115). The growing diversity challenges suburban governance, policy, and spatial organization that conventionally lacks the supportive social, spatial, and physical infrastructure to build social cohesion among diverse community members as evidenced in Toronto's inner suburbs that are characterized by poverty, ageing high-rise rental apartments, racial and spatial segregation, and insufficient public services (Charmes & Keil, 2015; Keil, 2017; Pitter, 2016; Poppe & Young, 2015; Tasan-Kok & Ozogul, 2017). There is a need to expand the understanding of diversity and use it to interrogate its connection with equity and social justice. Common suburban planning issues related to the growing ethno-cultural diversity are also reflected in the following examples in Toronto's suburbs: 1) immigrants and racialized people being excluded from planning decisions; 2) lacking social infrastructure that is ethnic-oriented; 3) tensions with segregated and incompatible land uses; 4) using space in ways that attract municipal opposition; and 5) expressing cultural identity within a planning context that does not always consider cultural values (Dean et al., 2018; Hackworth & Stein, 2012; Lo et al., 2015; Poppe & Young, 2015; Tasan-Kok & Ozogul, 2017; Walton-Roberts, 2011; Zhuang, 2019).

Bottom-up grassroots initiative and community activism is one way to tackle the lack of social and physical infrastructure in suburban spaces, as illustrated in Toronto's Jane and Finch neighbourhood where racialized residents and community organizations used leftover suburban spaces (e.g., basements, warehouses, unprepossessing malls) to build social infrastructure that supports social ties and community bonding (Tasan-Kok & Ozogul, 2017). As Klinenberg (2018, p. 5) advocated, social infrastructure as "the physical places and organizations that shape the way people interact" is critical in fighting inequality. However, the community-based fights for space and rights are still insufficient to solve the fundamental planning problems over the long term, partly due to the rigid planning system that generally lacks cultural sensitivity to accommodate diverse needs from underrepresented communities. More importantly, the White supremacy inherent in the planning profession and practices has been an act of racial exclusion, ranging from redlining, exclusionary zoning, White codes, to systemic racial discriminations on housing and public transit (Goetz et al., 2020). These gaps are exacerbated by the settler-colonial planning paradigm and the rise of anti-immigration sentiments, which have renewed conflict over who owns and belongs to/in local spaces including multicultural suburbs (Viswanathan, 2009).

In her seminal work advocating for equity, diversity and inclusive planning, Sandercock (2003, p. 4) argued that, "contemporary cities are sites of struggle over space, which are really two kinds of struggle: one a struggle of life space against economic space, the other a struggle over belonging. Who belongs where?" The manifestations of multicultural suburbs have several implications for the work of planners including changing physical form (whether 'exotic' design fits in with the neighbourhood's character), demographic change and social inclusion (who belongs to and in the neighbourhood) and competing claims for community authorship (who gets to tell the story of the neighbourhood). Fincher et al. (2014) argued that as a lived reality, multiculturalism requires local planning to engage with ethnocultural differences and support social inclusion beyond the common focuses on settlement services and/or economic benefits. The theories of planning for and with multicultural diversity, such as communicative/collaborative planning emphasize the planner's role in mediating among stakeholders involved in the planning situation (Fainstein, 2000). Traditional engagement methods fail to effectively reach and incorporate the lived experiences of marginalized and immigrant groups and the transformative power of their local knowledge. Without appropriate community consultation, planning processes often marginalize already minoritized groups. This lack of consultation also tends to prevent cooperation between groups, thus impeding the building of inclusive communities.

Researchers have also argued that a truly comprehensive engagement process should create opportunities for dialogue that engage a full cohort of community members (Thomas, Pate, & Ranson, 2015; Toolis, 2017; Zhuang & Chen, 2017) and consider any ingrained power imbalances (Eckenwiler, 2016; Nejad & Walker,

2018). City planners can play an important role in creating opportunities for dialogue around place and ensuring that all community members are included. It is thus important for them to consider the specific context of each city where immigrants settle. Rios and Watkins (2015) called planners 'cultural brokers,' meaning that they can function as intermediaries to navigate and negotiate between policies, practices, and the diverse groups with different needs and different perspectives on place. The goal is not to come to a weak consensus or compromise between different cultural communities, but rather to create new spaces where recognition, respect, and trust can be encouraged (Rios & Watkins, 2015).

Municipalities, and especially city planners who are at the forefront of urban development, need to develop a clear understanding of the processes and mechanisms involved in the making of ethnic suburbs, where conventional planning practices (e.g., homogeneity and segregation in land use and by socioeconomic status) is often at odds with an increasing public commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. By focusing on Chinese and South Asian communities in Toronto's suburbs, this study will help clarify how ethnic neighbourhoods are shaped in a range of suburban contexts, and how municipalities could 'manage' diversity and plan inclusive communities.

3. Research Approach

The research started with the identification of Chinese and South Asian residential and business concentrations in the six studied suburban areas. The data were collected through mapping Chinese and South Asian residential concentrations based on the 2016 Canadian Census and extensive site visits to 112 Chinese and South Asian retail clusters of more than 3800 businesses that are in close proximity to the residential population of the respective communities. Eight case study neighbourhoods were then selected for more in-depth investigations (Figure 1).

Semi-structured interviews and three focus groups were conducted with 77 key informants, including immigrant entrepreneurs, city planners, an architect, developers, business improvement area managers, and religious and community leaders. The interviewed merchants and other community members were recruited through door-to-door visits and snowball referrals. These individuals either live, work, and/or operate their business in the studied neighbourhood. As a result, their lived experiences and engagement in the area provided important insight into the interview questions, such as business location preferences, perspectives on neighbourhood change and community development, the construction of cultural identity, barriers to engagement, and working relationship with municipal officials. The professionals (planners, developers, and one architect) were recruited based on their active involvement in local development matters. They provided professional opinions about the role of planning policies and public engagement processes in shaping the neighbourhoods and building inclusive communities. In addition, intercept surveys were conducted with 81 visitors at each case study site (minimum 10 each). They were asked about their users' experiences when shopping, socializing, and seeking community services in the area, and their views on the neighbourhood's characteristics and cultural identity.

At least five visits to each case study site were conducted to gain first-hand observations and collect business baseline data (e.g., business composition, ethnic contents, vacancy, etc.). Archival research was used to provide historical and demographic information of the areas. Finally, a thorough policy review was carried out to provide the regulatory contexts. Policies, bylaws, and related plans, guidelines, and studies were reviewed from one single-tier municipality (Toronto), two upper-tier municipalities (York and Peel Regions), and four lower-tier municipalities (the Town of Richmond Hill and the Cities of Markham, Mississauga, and Brampton). Richmond Hill and Markham are under the governance of York Region, and Mississauga and Brampton are under the governance of Peel Region. The municipal documents and field observational data helped contextualize local developments in each study site, while the census and business data helped compile neighbourhood socioeconomic profiles.

The following sections present the dynamic nature of the case study neighbourhoods followed by the discussions about negotiating space and rights and the planning responses reflected in policies and public engagement processes.

4. Building Institutionally Complete Communities

According to Breton (1964), institutional completeness can be measured using two indicators: the density and diversity of local institutions. Using this measurement, the case study sites have relatively high degrees of institutional completeness, satisfying the needs of co-ethnic community members as well as the community at large. These sites generally are situated in areas with more ethno-cultural diversity than the city average based on various demographic indicators such as ethnic origin, visible minority, recent immigrant and foreign-born population, religion, mother tongue, and home language. These are the typical majority minority neighbourhoods with hyper-diversity as suggested in the literature. Table 1 highlights the visible minority and foreign-born populations in the study areas. The growth of immigrant populations drives the demands for both ethnic and mainstream retail, and the concentration of ethnic businesses served as the catalyst for nearby residential developments attracting the co-ethnic community, because they offer a large variety of cultural goods and personal and professional services that specifically cater to the diverse cultural needs of the ethnic communities. For example, both Chinese and South Asian clusters heavily feature service-oriented businesses, such

Table 1. Ethno-cultural profiles of the eight case study neighbourhoods.

	Population	Visible Minority	Foreign-born Population
Toronto	2,503,000	46.4% South Asian: 11.9% Chinese: 11.3% Black: 8.3%	49.4%
#7 Albion Islington Square	9,928	52.9% South Asian: 46.3% Black: 27.6% Latin American: 9%	54.9%
#4 Sheppard East Village	34,964	81.5% Chinese: 63.3% South Asian: 17.6% Black: 6.1%	69.5%
#8 GTA Square	17,881	90.4% Chinese: 54.8% South Asian: 25.1% Filipino: 6.7%	70.5%
Brampton	433,806	57.0% South Asian: 55.6% Black:21.7% Filipino: 4.9%	47.5%
#5 Gore Rd. Corridor	11,648	56.7% South Asian: 59.3% Black: 12.1% West Asian: 4.2%	61%
Mississauga	668,599	48.8% South Asian: 41.3% Chinese: 14.1% Black: 12.3%	51.3%
#6 Great Punjab Business Centre	24,363	79.1% South Asian: 63.6% Black: 17.2% Southeast Asian: 4.2%	64.3%
#1 Mississauga Chinese Centre	25,861	28.7% South Asian: 26.1% Filipino: 17.3% Chinese: 15.1%	48.4%
Markham	261,573	65.2% Chinese: 52.4% South Asian: 26.4% Black: 4.7%	56.5%
#3 First Markham Place	12,157	79.9% Chinese: 78.7% South Asian: 11.4% Black: 1.9%	67.2%
Richmond Hill	162,704	45.7% Chinese: 46.8% South Asian: 15.3% Black: 4.7%	51.5%
#2 Times Square	15,716	69.3% Chinese: 67.4% South Asian: 12.6% West Asian: 5.7%	64.4%

as hair and beauty salons, health clinics, and offices for law, immigration, accounting, educational training, real estate, and travel, representing 47.9% and 52.8% of the total businesses, respectively. Retail businesses accounted for nearly one-third of the businesses in both Chinese (29.8%) and South Asian (28%) neighbourhoods, and the rest were food-related (Chinese: 22.4%; South Asian: 18.8%), such as restaurants, grocery stores, bakeries, takeout eateries, banquet halls, etc. Compared with mainstream retail facilities that generally provide balanced shares of services, retail, and food-related businesses, the much higher composition of ethnic-oriented services found in these sites suggest that they are not only the shopping destinations, but also play an important role in facilitating day-to-day social activities and serving a wide range of community needs, needs that may not be fulfilled by mainstream institutions (e.g., language school, Chinese medicine clinic, cultural goods and services). From this perspective, suburban ethnic retail spaces can also be considered important community spaces providing essential community services. They help build the needed social infrastructure that can benefit the community at large.

Retail sites were also well integrated with other ethnic-oriented institutions on site or within proximity, such as places of worship, private schools, and community centres. These ethnic places complement each other in providing needed infrastructure and act as important community anchors. This level of institutional completeness is most prominent in the South Asian Great Punjab Business Centre and Gore Road corridor case studies. The former houses the Sikh Heritage Museum and is strategically located next to a long-established Sikh gurdwara and a Sikh private school. The latter has two Hindu mandirs, a gurdwara, two banquet halls, a recreation centre for seniors and youth, a Sikh private school, and an Islamic service centre onsite, and is located near another long-established Hindu temple and the site of a newly proposed mosque. These ethnic-oriented institutions play important roles in the social and economic vitality of the neighbourhoods, as in addition to visiting the shops, residents and visitors frequent the place for multiple daily prayers and for easy access to community services.

This finding is further confirmed by extensive field observations and 81 intercept surveys with visitors. Many social activities, especially among co-ethnic members, were observed in various types of retail spaces (e.g., storefronts, food courts, parking lots, lobbies and hallways of indoor shopping malls), including seniors practicing tai chi and fan dance, playing chess and walking, parents chatting with each other at children's extracurricular learning centres, youth hanging out in programmable spaces in indoor malls, co-workers socializing during lunch hours, and visitors and community members attending indoor and outdoor cultural events. These retail spaces, in fact, create 'third places,' a term coined by Oldenburg (1999) referring to spaces that promote social interactions and community-building. They are part of the social infrastructure that serves as the building blocks of public life (Klinenberg, 2018). The following intercept survey data provide more details of visitors' experiences in these retail third places: Nearly one-third (29.6%) of the visitors who completed the intercept survey indicated that they came to the retail areas for social reasons other than shopping. Many respondents interacted with strangers in the shopping areas (21%); many others knew some of the business owners or operators personally (25.9%). Of the 81 intercept survey respondents, 58 (71.6%) were members of the respective ethnic community. The vast majority of respondents (95%) felt at home in the retail area they visited. When asked whether the shopping area reminded them of another place, many referred to similar ethnic retail clusters in the Greater Toronto Area or significant landmarks in China and India, such as the Section 17 in Chandigarh in Punjab, or Times Square in Hong Kong. Nearly half of the respondents (46.9%) considered the shopping area to be a public space that people could access without spending any money. One respondent said that in his culture (Tamil): "Males go work; household wives come to [the mall to] hang out after they're done their chores.''

Unlike conventional suburban neighbourhoods that are generally homogeneous, segregated, and 'placeless,' the studied Chinese and South Asian neighbourhoods present a high degree of institutional completeness and both communities have significantly transformed the spaces by adding new meanings, new identities, and new community functions. However, the rapid changes that accompany growing concentrations of immigrants can also create tensions as they have not been fully recognized or supported by municipal planning authorities. Conflicts related to land use, public engagement, and public realm development continue to arise, exposing planning's failure to keep pace with the diverse needs of immigrant communities, who must continually negotiate their use of space and fight for their rights to their spaces. The following sections explore the challenges and the role of municipalities in managing diversity and facilitating or impeding ethnic communities' engagement in suburban neighbourhoods.

5. The Negotiation for Space and Rights

5.1. Ethnic Succession and Redevelopment Pressure

The eight case studies were investigated in more depth to reveal the processes and mechanisms involved in the evolution of suburban ethnic neighbourhoods. With regard to strip malls, two prominent and long-established retail neighbourhoods reflect how ethnic businesses organically readapted existing shopping strips and transformed the neighbourhoods: Albion Islington Square Business Improvement Area in Etobicoke, which primarily features South Asian businesses; and Sheppard

East Business Improvement Area in Scarborough, which has a mix of Asian-oriented and mainstream businesses.

Both inner suburb locations experienced rapid suburban developments in the 1950s and 1960s featuring low-density and car-oriented streetscapes, and the strips were initially occupied by European and mainstream businesses as business owners and shoppers recalled. With the influx of South Asian and Chinese immigrants to the respective areas in the 1980s, ethnic businesses started to move in and occupy storefronts along retail strips that were built on major arterial roads and are in close proximity to high-density residential areas with a large number of immigrants. Both areas have grown to include 200 and 500 businesses, respectively, and are currently operated under the City of Toronto's Business Improvement Area program, which is a joint partnership between the city and local business people to maintain and improve physical streetscapes, promote economic development, and enhance community life of the business areas. Both Business Improvement Areas are actively involved in beautifying the streetscapes by putting up lights, flowers, and banners and hosting street festivals. However, compared with the most successful inner-city Business Improvement Areas, which are typified by compact built forms, mixed uses, buildings with historic and architectural value, and pedestrian-friendly streets, the suburban strip malls are the exact opposite: They are disadvantaged by physical and structural barriers to rejuvenation and public gathering. These strip malls could easily be targeted for intensification and redevelopment, as suggested by Linovski (2012), which could translate to increased pressure on the current ethnic businesses which look less desirable from a conventional urban design perspective. These two strip malls illustrate the challenges faced by the majority of ethnic strips in this study: They shared similar re-adaptation processes associated with immigrant settlement patterns but are facing an uncertain future. As one Business Improvement Area manager who grew up in the neighbourhood commented:

> A lot of [immigrant] businesses have been here for 20 or 30 years. The social connection [they] have established with the residents or consumers is definitely important and they know the area in and out….This area has been vibrant and viable for so many years that it definitely gets missed. And sometimes people don't know that we have such a concentration of ethnic stores….I definitely think our area should never be forgotten…[If] these big box stores [were] coming here and replacing these small businesses…destroying everything and then rebuilding to make it look like every other area…we wouldn't be open to it.

These retail 'third places' serve as important social infrastructure in the neighbourhood. Beyond their shabby appearances and poor physical conditions, there was an active social and economic life that should not be ignored or removed in the name of redevelopment or gentrification.

5.2. Tensions with Incompatible Land Uses

The other six shopping plaza and indoor mall case studies were mainly created by ethnic developers. Interestingly, four of the six retail sites (Gore Road corridor, Great Punjab Business Centre, Mississauga Chinese Centre, and the Greater Toronto Area Square) are zoned as employment and industrial uses that were not intended for retail commercial. Therefore, a rezoning process is required to add retail uses to these industrial lands. However, municipalities generally endeavour to protect the supply of employment lands and permit non-ancillary retail uses only when they directly serve the primary function of the area. These incompatible land uses easily created tensions between the municipalities and the business communities as reflected in a 10-year controversy in the case of the Great Punjab Business Centre.

The initial retail development proposal targeting the South Asian community was not accepted. In order to gain the planning approval, the developer then modified the proposal, indicating it would be used as industrial units (e.g., warehousing), not commercial, which means each unit cannot exceed 20% of the floor space for retail use according to the city's zoning bylaw. However, over time, many South Asian business owners have tried to convert the units to 100% retail use in order to meet the increasing needs of the community and capitalize on the growing ethnic market. One planner recalled: "Some have gone ahead and done that, some have been prosecuted. There have been applications to the Committee of Adjustment to make modifications to those to have 100% retail and we've resisted that so far." Some business owners appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board (now called the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal), a quasi-judicial body that handles appeals of land-use planning disputes, but were turned down because the proposed uses did not comply with the bylaws. Without a clear solution to incompatible or even illegal uses, some local retail stores hid their merchandise (e.g., clothing, fabrics, jewelry) at the back of the store and claimed their business was a warehouse when bylaw enforcement officers arrived.

After 10 years of controversy, the planning policy department is now reconsidering the site and a rezoning process is underway. Specifically, the city has exempted the site from conducting a municipal comprehensive review as part of a rezoning application, as explained by the Planning Manager:

> Because we want to preserve as much of the industrial land as possible, until we want to take a look at it comprehensively or holistically across the entire city to see which areas we're comfortable with having that conversion done. And so this area was one

> of the ones that were identified, saying we won't be terribly upset if it converts over to retail. Part of that reason is because I think it's been operating for retail, and you do have a school to the immediate south and [the gurdwara].

This decision sent a welcoming message to the local business owners who purchased individual units from the developer but were generally uninformed about permitted uses within their business. Although it took 10 years for city planners to finally acknowledge the importance of this retail centre to the local community, the decision indicates that municipalities are willing to understand the needs of ethnic communities and be flexible in planning to find a common ground to support the creation of an inclusive community.

5.3. The Need for Community-Based and Culturally Sensitive Planning and Design Approaches

Many ethnic establishments in this study feature generic North American suburban architecture with no visible exterior ethnic markers, with the exception of a few case studies where cultural identities are unapologetically expressed through elaborate architectural features and public arts (Figure 2). These features help inscribe these sites with cultural, historical, and political meanings. For example, the elaborate Hindu and Sikh temples on the Gore Road resemble religious architecture in India; the 43-feet tall entrance archway and other replicas of Chinese architectural and gardening features at the Mississauga Chinese Centre symbolize Chinese culture; a statue of the founder of the Sikh Empire at the Great Punjab Business Centre commemorates the community's history; and on the same site, a Komagata Maru monument and a Sikh Heritage Museum remind visitors of how Sikh immigrants fought to claim their space and rights in Canada despite being excluded by the earlier discriminatory immigration policies. It is clear that ethnic communities are securing a sense of belonging and identity through their placemaking practices.

The actual place-makers who initiated these cultural, commercial, and religious places were in fact, the ethnic developers, who led the negotiation with planning authorities and hoped to make an influence by addressing community needs and achieving business success. For example, the development of the Hindu Sabha Temple was a result of displacement from the governmental land expropriation to make way for a toll highway. The temple as the first structure built in the middle of farmlands 30 years ago was the catalyst for the later neighbourhood development along the Gore Road corridor which is now surrounded by residential subdivisions and centres over 400 businesses, places of worship, and community facilities serving the South Asian community.

A Sikh retail developer I interviewed was among several ethnic developers who have built retail plazas in the area and has been working closely with the community by listening to their concerns (e.g., the lack of worship and community space in the neighbourhood). As a result, instead of building more retail units, they moved forward with the development of a gurdwara on the retail site and built "the best of its kind in North America" with high building standards, sophisticated vernacular styles, and spaces for community activities. This developer further commented about how short-sighted the city was and how important to engage the community to correct the wrong policy direction and reshape the space:

> The City made a big mistake. We know for a fact that the area has been over-zoned for retail. As a result, the area is overdeveloped with retail and some businesses have not survived due to the competition….So, I would say as the developer we have done much to influence the character of the plaza, however, it is also very much the community that contributed to the character….We have received feedback from a lot of folks saying they are very grateful about being able to walk to the plaza [and the gurdwara]. We feel good that we can provide a greater community good for people, aside from just the business and profitability side of it.

Another criticism is about the rigid design guidelines that only reflect the conventional cultural values, as the retail developer further revealed:

> The physical features of the [retail] building [we built] do not represent a cultural design….The City said the windows must match the oval windows of the

Figure 2. Cultural expressions in architectural features and public arts. Note: From left to right: Sikh Gurdwara; Mississauga Chinese Centre; and Monument and sculpture at the Great Punjab Business Centre. Source: Author.

> approximately 100-year-old church nearby. We didn't originally want oval windows but had to design it accordingly to be approved.

An architect also echoed the insensitivity and how "indifferent" planners were towards culturally sensitive designs during the Great Punjab Business Centre site plan approval process:

> The planning department has too much input on [conventional] design….We were fighting for having more public space than parking spaces [because of the need for community events and pedestrian flow]…[Also], I don't think they had much to say [about the Sikh architectural design]….I wonder if they were either happy completely…or because they never dealt with something like this before that was one of the hurdles on their end.

The architect further emphasized the importance of gaining community input and support through the creation of public art and a Sikh Heritage Museum as defining features of the space. Similar cultural needs were also expressed in the interviews with merchants and community members across the study sites, such as more public spaces for cultural events, artwork with cultural expressions, Asian night markets, and sidewalk sales. These cultural views of space and social infrastructure present new challenges and opportunities to conventional suburban planning and design.

6. The Planning Responses: Policies and Public Engagement

The five municipalities in this study present prominent immigrant and racialized populations as shown in Table 1. Various documents identify the impact that these communities have had on the municipalities. For instance, the Town of Richmond Hill's (2020) official plan acknowledges that the presence of immigrants has fueled the demand for ethnic commercial businesses. Similarly, the Regional Municipality of York's (2015) retail trends study concludes that the growth of immigrant populations will drive demand for both ethnic and mainstream retail; the City of Toronto's (2019, pp. 3–39) official plan highlights the economic opportunities and connections brought by immigrants which means "Toronto's economy is 'plugged into' the rest of the world in ways hardly imaginable 30 years ago." However, these acknowledgements only highlight the economic benefits associated with immigration without explicit statements on developing a permissive policy environment to support ethnic communities' place-making efforts and settlement needs. Only the City of Brampton's (2020) Official Plan expressly states that planners ought to be flexible and adaptive to the needs of growing immigrant populations. There is a lack of institutional support in these official planning policies despite many of them listing place-making and human-scale development as one of its development objectives.

Overall, it appears that planning policies accommodate ethnic communities by reacting to their presence, rather than planning proactively for them. For example, the City of Mississauga's (2018) Dundas Connects Master plan considers the Mississauga Chinese Centre area as a unique commercial corridor, which draws regional markets and provides cultural goods and services not commonly found in other places. Similarly, the City of Brampton's (2018) Vision 2040 acknowledges the Gore Road corridor's significance for the South Asian community. The resulting policies support the ongoing commercial activity in the area. However, this policy direction seems to be at odds with what the community needs as discussed in the earlier section.

Since public engagement is required in planning legislation, municipalities generally have high-level vision statements that address inclusive engagement with the public. Some of the more substantial references to immigrant communities appear in economic development and strategic planning documents, such as in Richmond Hill's economic development strategy that labels engagement with immigrant communities as a high priority action and an opportunity to drive business investment. However, conventional public engagement approaches generally lack careful consideration of how to effectively engage immigrant and racialized communities in decision-making (Grewal, 2020). It often results in mistrust between municipalities and the communities, potentially harming their long-term relationship and the city's sustainability.

The interviewees in this study collectively revealed the struggle that ethnic communities face in the absence of municipal support or recognition. Many of these communities remain invisible or insignificant in municipal agenda or major redevelopment initiatives. For example, Sheppard East Village is a popular landing pad for newcomers but is also stigmatized with poverty and crime. The local businesses and residents have been actively working with planners and politicians to fight for relaxed zoning regulations and transit development for a decade; yet their appeal for revitalization still has not been addressed by the City partly due to the lack of a comprehensive retrofitting scheme that can address widening socioeconomic disparities in the area. In the case of the Gore Road corridor, the interviewed senior planner who was working on the Official Plan review surprisingly had no knowledge of this vibrant community hub and had to locate it on Google map. Local community members were not consulted in any major developments around the area until recently, when the City launched its Vision 2040 Strategic Plan. The City invited local businesses and residents to a series of neighbourhood walks to collect community input concerning the future of the corridor. Similar issues were brought up by interviewed merchants who operated their businesses along the major transit corridor that connects Richmond Hill and Markham.

While new suburban retrofitting schemes were promoted through public transit investment and intensification, these immigrant entrepreneurs who were directly affected were not engaged. It was largely due to the ineffective public engagement approaches (e.g., town halls) that discouraged immigrant entrepreneurs who faced language barriers and had fear of power imbalance to actively participate.

When asked about planners' outreach experiences in ethnic communities, one interviewed community planner working on a major revitalization project near the Great Punjab Business Centre admitted that:

> We don't get a lot of questions and asking for help from the South Asian business owners. I think some of them are still trying to understand who we are and how this works….There is a discrepancy in terms of what the businesses want to do for marketing and what [the city] wants them to do.

When asked about the role of planners in supporting immigrant place-making and creating inclusive communities, most of the interviewed planners agreed that municipalities can encourage people to do things for the greater community and can even enable things by granting permission. However, they felt it should be the people who initiate place-making, whether the developers or the communities, rather than the city. One senior planner at the City of Brampton stated:

> So really [we are] looking at planning like a tool to kind of support the community. But if it's us [planners] coming in and governing what place-making is or what sense of place is, that's a total failure from my perspective. I don't think that works because we are not from that community so you can't really speak on that behalf.

The lack of active outreach prevents planners from effective communication with ethnic communities and the co-creation of better communities that leverage the strengths of diversity. The Mississauga Strategic Plan observes with a critical lens that:

> Widespread cultural diversity hasn't translated into a rich urban environment, in architecture, services, or retail. Mississauga's diversity has the potential to express itself more prominently, to fundamentally change the experience of the city, and leverage our identity as a mature urban centre. (City of Mississauga, 2009, p. 26)

It is also important to clarify the municipal processes (e.g., policy, planning and design, public participation) related to ethnic neighbourhoods, and to identify strategies and processes that support or hinder ethnic place-making.

7. Discussion and Conclusions

Toronto's diverse demographics bring the world to the city. However, a diverse population does not necessarily mean inclusive integration. What has remained challenging is how to best understand immigrants' integration processes and experiences in cities and neighbourhoods. Clarifying the effects of global migration on local communities is important for cities to consider municipal governance, policies, infrastructure, and service provisions required to facilitate and support immigrant settlement and integration. As revealed in the case studies, suburban ethnic neighbourhoods have not been seriously considered and integrated into planning processes and outcomes. Many of these communities have a high degree of institutional completeness fuelled by the demands for cultural goods, services, and spaces that facilitate cultural practices, ethnic bonding, and social interactions. The ways they function and organize with mixed uses, social infrastructure, and cultural expressions are considerably different from conventional suburban neighbourhoods that are typified with segregated land uses, homogenous landscapes, and auto-oriented built environment (Gao-Miles, 2017; Lung-Amam, 2015; Zhuang, 2019). More importantly, the developments of ethnic-oriented institutions were largely driven by members of the ethnic communities (e.g., developers, entrepreneurs, religious groups), who not only demonstrated strong desires to take part in the (re)investment of suburban spaces, but also demanded more flexible and adaptable municipal policies and regulations to acknowledge and support ethnic places and infrastructure. As demonstrated in this research, suburban municipalities lack a thorough understanding of the cultural needs of ethnic communities and the role of social infrastructure in supporting institutional completeness. Furthermore, the lack of effective civic engagement not only ignores immigrant and racialized communities as important stakeholders in suburban redevelopment, but also threatens to destroy the social infrastructure built by these communities and their 'informal' practices that are often not recognized by the planning 'norm.'

It has become imperative for suburban municipalities to understand the social, economic, cultural, political, and physical constructs of these ethnic neighbourhoods and be more proactive in engaging ethnic communities in the co-creation of inclusive communities. There is an urgency to identify and change the narratives in how municipalities should recognize immigrant communities' perspectives on neighbourhood change and community development, the way they build and use social infrastructure, the construction of cultural identity, and the barriers to engagement. The social infrastructure developed in these institutionally complete communities should be promoted as community assets and be further enhanced through explicit policies and programming. Consultations and negotiations should take place to ensure that inclusive spaces supporting the community's

diversity can be created. Non-consultative planning processes also threaten to erase the informal place-making practices and outcomes that emerge within immigrant communities as they attempt to meet their own needs from the margins and preserve their cultural identities. An inclusive and equitable public consultation process will not only amplify the voices of minority communities, but also enhance civic engagement for everyone.

In conclusion, this study offers the following recommendations for planning practices. First, consideration of social equity and inclusion should be the municipality's priority and employed in all decision-making. Municipal policies must apply an equity lens to a range of immigrant settlement and integration matters, such as housing, education, employment, entrepreneurship, transportation, community services, and connect these matters to the broader community context, especially in the planning for the public realm, neighbourhood change, heritage preservation, and community resilience. Equitable and inclusive policies will help ensure a level playing field for ethnic communities to fully participate as key players. Their formal and informal place-making and community-building practices should not be ignored or removed from the institutionalized process.

Second, municipalities should revisit municipal policies, engagement processes, programming, and service deliveries to ensure they are culturally sensitive and appropriate for diverse communities.

Third, planners should prioritize community engagement and collaboration to inform decision-making. Public consultation conducted as a minimum statutory requirement may do little to promote community ownership of plans, particularly when working with groups who face a myriad of barriers to engagement, including language, age, gender, or feelings of powerlessness.

Fourth, planners should also avoid tokenistic public consultation approaches. A renewed and empowered community process should be adopted to ensure under-represented groups have their own space to voice their concerns and engage in the co-creation of planning solutions.

Finally, a high degree of institutional completeness should be considered an asset of the suburban neighbourhood. Municipalities should conduct asset mapping of the existing cultural facilities and (re)invest in the established social infrastructure. This asset planning process should also involve considerations of shared spaces, uses, and services with the wider community, which will help transition from co-ethnic bonding to intercultural bridging.

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Article

Promoting Interculture in Participation in German Urban Planning: Fields of Action for Institutional Change

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Abstract
Germany has been a host country for immigrants for a long time, but an institutional transformation to promote interculture in urban public administration in general, and participation in urban planning in particular, has only just begun. This article addresses institutional frameworks and proposes strategic elements for interculture in participation, based on transdisciplinary, participatory, and transformative research in two German cities. Interculture means overcoming access barriers, based on cultural norms and stereotypes, to open up participation for groups who have been underrepresented so far. The article presents four types of barriers to interculture: a selective implementation of interculture guidelines, an institutional culture that leaves room for 'othering' of immigrant groups, top-down definitions of participation procedures, and an inter-departmental division of labour. In response to these barriers, we elaborate two fields of action: the establishment of spaces for reflexivity and of a 'phase zero' that helps to build trust and long-term relationships with immigrant communities. These fields of action do not offer any concrete road map. Instead, they focus on the institutional context for action, its structures, self-understandings, and the scope for individual action, and are thus much harder to address. The transformative, participatory, and transdisciplinary research setting bears both challenges and potential, but the article argues that it is beneficial for urban studies in light of the challenges that cities are facing.

Keywords
Germany; institutional transformation; interculture; migration; participation; public administration; real-world laboratory; transdisciplinary research

Issue
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1. Introduction

Since the 1960s, Germany has been a host country for immigrants and refugees. According to the 2019 German sample census, about 26% of the German population have a so-called 'migration background' (*Migrationshintergrund*), which is the statistical category attributed to first-generation immigrants and their descendants (Destatis, 2020). Proactive integration policies and measures, however, have only fairly recently been discussed and implemented. According to earlier conceptions of integration, immigrants and their families were expected to somehow automatically assimilate and 'blend into' a German mainstream society that was imagined as homogeneous and self-contained. Unsurprisingly, this did not happen as smoothly as expected. Although some 'blending in' did take place over time, changing German society in many ways, statistically the category

'migration background' still has an impact on different social spheres such as educational performance, employment, or political representation.

Another area where, according to many planners, a 'migration background' plays out is participation. In Germany, citizen participation (*Bürgerbeteiligung*) is a legal obligation for spatial interventions according to the code of building law. It intends to offer stakeholders the opportunity to voice their concerns and—directly or indirectly—influence decision-making processes. In some cities, it is the task of municipal planning departments to organise participation; in others, they assign this task to intermediaries or private planning agencies. Participation processes and methods vary—somewhat along the 'ladder of citizen participation' (Arnstein, 1969)—from information events to participatory workshops and self-governed neighbourhood funds.

An important objective of these efforts is to address and mobilise organised civil society, home and shop owners, small entrepreneurs, and residents across all classes and milieus. However, it turns out that in many participatory events that are 'open to all' only the so-called 'usual suspects' (Groeger, 2002) show up, who are more often male than female and tend to have an academic and native German background. There have only been a few efforts to transfer successful strategies for approaching underrepresented groups from urban renewal programmes to 'mainstream' planning events and procedures (Difu, 2003).

Interculture is still not part of most job descriptions in planning departments, and it is not always easy for planners to translate the needs of interculture into their own task areas. However, while a lack of strategic knowledge and resources could be addressed more or less easily, we argue in this article that barriers exist beyond the immediate participation process, related to the institutional framework, which prevent a more comprehensive integration of issues of 'interculture' into participatory planning.

In this article, we present findings from on-going research that strives to find ways for making participation processes more inclusive in a participatory, transformative, and transdisciplinary research setting. Similar to much of the existing literature, the research searches for strategies for the enhancement and better understanding of participation and the broader inclusion of different (immigrant and non-immigrant) groups in urban development (Eurocities, 2014). In this article, the presented arguments highlight the second focus of our research, which aims at identifying and transforming institutional frameworks to promote interculture in participation (Scholten, 2020). The research complements literature on intercultural opening and institutional change by applying these concepts in the context of participation in urban development and by drawing attention to institutional barriers and fields of action that impact or prevent institutional change.

In Section 2 of the article, we introduce the concepts of 'interculture' and 'intercultural opening,' which address the need for a systematic institutional change to reduce barriers related to a 'migration background' in different institutional settings and societal areas. By addressing mechanisms of exclusion and 'othering' (Ahmed, 2012; Jungk, 2001), the interculture concept draws attention to power imbalances and the effects of privilege (Gaitanides, 2016, p. 119; Roska, 2012, p. 7). At the same time, it presents dimensions of institutional change for interculture in participation (Terkessidis, 2018). In Section 3, we present our research design and methods. In Sections 4 and 5, we identify institutional barriers to interculture in participation and subsequently focus on two fields of action that, according to our findings, deserve more attention when it comes to an intercultural re-definition of participatory planning and, in consequence, to institutional change: the establishment (1) of spaces for reflexivity and (2) of a 'phase zero' that predates concrete participation events. Our concern is to highlight the vital role of the institutional framework for the implementation of interculture. We conclude by reflecting on the potential of transdisciplinary research settings for this type of research problems, the benefits and the risks.

2. Interculture, Intercultural Opening, and Institutional Change

In contrast to other European countries, Germany is still on its way from being an immigration country (*Einwanderungsland*) to being an immigration society (*Einwanderungsgesellschaft*). Thus, the institutional transformation towards interculture and diversity is an on-going process that started only recently (Terkessidis, 2018, p. 96). It is reflected in academic debates on the 'postmigration society' (*Postmigrantische Gesellschaft*), which plead to recognise immigration and population diversity as 'normality' that structures society, and to establish a narrative on a "new, pluralistic national identity, open to immigration that becomes in a mid-term perspective part of the collective memory" (Foroutan, 2019, p. 219). This would need a "new dynamic of integration, based on recognition, negotiation, ambivalence, antagonism and alliance" (Foroutan, 2019, p. 24) with an impact on the (co-)production of urban space. Protagonists also argue that the 'othering' of both immigrants and their descendants, for whom they have invented the terminology 'new Germans' (*Neue Deutsche*), naturalises social inequalities and unequal societal participation and suppresses plurality, even if it results from the explicit wish to act in favour of othered 'target groups' (Terkessidis, 2017, p. 36). They have also shown how, intentionally or not, 'othering' is potentially linked to racism (Ahmed, 2012).

Organisational approaches and related academic debates on intercultural opening since the early 2000s focus on top-down systematic approaches, human

resource development (in terms of interculture competencies in public administrations) and the cooperation of public authorities with migrant self-help organisations (*Migrantenselbstorganisationen*, MSOs; Gaitanides, 2016, p. 122; Schröer, 2018). Many municipalities have established (non-binding) training programmes to build up intercultural competence among their staff and adopted 'diversity management strategies' in order to counter the risk of culturalisation of public action (Schröer, 2018, pp. 243–256). While protagonists of the postmigration discourse demand a pro-active critique of racism, based on postcolonial theory, recent literature on strategies for intercultural openings of public administrations (Colinas, 2018; Gesemann & Roth, 2018) fails to explicitly acknowledge institutional racism and the—often gendered—power structures related to them (Scholten, 2020, p. 220). A reflection of white privilege (Dyer, 1997) is still missing both in intercultural opening literature for public administrations and in public (planning) administration.

In terms of participatory urban planning, target group-focused strategies have been playing a significant role, although they are ambivalent. On the one hand, targeting and homogenising city users 'with a migrant background' in participatory planning has been interpreted as yet another example for racialising practices by public institutions and for "differentiating power" (Terkessidis, 2004, p. 99). On the other hand, authors have argued that the explicit recognition and representation of oppressed groups supports their self-organisation and empowerment (Young, 2005).

An example that illustrates this ambivalence is the German Socially Integrative City (*Soziale Stadt*; or, since 2020, *Sozialer Zusammenhalt*) programme, initiated in 1999, which targets deprived neighbourhoods for extra urban renewal funding. One indicator (among others) for a deprived neighbourhood was an above-average share of residents 'with a migration background,' whose participation in urban development is an important objective. The failure of many participation concepts to reach their 'target groups' was attributed to the intermediaries carrying out the programme rather than to how public administration had planned, implemented, and steered it (Difu, 2003). At a later point, a critical governance analysis of the programme brought to light the institutional barriers to immigrant participation (Schnur & Drilling, 2009).

A break-through for more awareness of 'superdiversity' as "transformative diversification of diversity" (Vertovec, 2007, p. 1025) or 'hyperdiversity' (Tasan-Kok, van Kempen, Raco, & Bolt, 2013) of people 'with migrant background' was related to a survey on immigrant consumption patterns and milieus in Germany (vhw, 2009). The study revealed that more or less the same milieus can be found in immigrant and non-immigrant residential groups. A recent update stated that experiences of exclusion (or self-exclusion) contribute to participatory abstinence of immigrant populations (vhw, 2018). This shows that there is still a long way to go for institutions to become more sensitive towards interculture and diversity and ready to remove all structural hurdles, "mostly invisible, unspoken and unnoticed obstacles" (Terkessidis, 2018, p. 9).

In terms of implementing interculture, the following strategic elements come up repeatedly (Gaitanides, 2016): (1) the discursive development of an intercultural mission statement; (2) quantitative monitoring of involved or affected groups; (3) a qualitative analysis of access barriers; (4) the dismantling of these barriers; (5) external networking with integration officers and MSOs; and (6) human resources development. Intercultural opening, defined as a cross-sectional management task, requires "bottom-up linkage to the workforce" (Gaitanides, 2016, p. 123). Strategically, this means a step-by-step internal re-organisation of institutions and of their collaboration with others, which works not only for public institutions but also for MSOs and civic initiatives. Also, Terkessidis (2018, pp. 142–161) pleads for more strategic interventions in terms of (1) the institutional culture in the sense of its constitution, rules, and norms (which, for example, can be laid down in a jointly developed interculture code); (2) the workforce (evidence-based, proactively targeted recruitment campaigns); (3) the material design of spaces and communication proposals; and (4) the basic strategic orientation. He demands "verifiable standards, comprehensible goals and also the necessary flexibility to be able to change direction if something does not work" (Terkessidis, 2018, p. 165).

There has been little research so far on the implementation of interculture in planning and its effects and, more generally, on the transferability of the concept to this field. Manuals address interculture in participation mainly with reference to material design and communication tools (Landeshauptstadt Wiesbaden, 2015; SenStadtUm, 2011; SenSW, 2019; Stiftung Mitarbeit & ÖGUT, 2018). A recent evaluation of democratic reliability, representativeness, and transparency of participation processes in Germany showed that as a political goal, diversity is reflected in objectives, methods, and tools for participation, but not in terms of institutional change (Selle, 2019, p. 37). The author found that one of the key requirements for a jointly developed interculture code for planning processes—transparency of internal processes—was often not fulfilled and remained an issue of power (Selle, 2019, p. 41). In contrast to the present practice, he called for evaluations of participants and the interests they represent (Selle, 2019, p. 35). Another important issue that has been documented in guidelines and political goals, but hardly ever translated into recruitment practices, is the diversification of the planning staff. Based on these observations, the research presented here took an institutional approach to rethink barriers to interculture in participation and to enhance encounters between planning authorities and post-migration civil society.

3. Research Design, Methods, and Database

To translate interculture into the field of participatory urban planning, we developed a transformative, participatory, and transdisciplinary research setting in the context of a three-year project, funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, which will end in May 2021. The project aims to understand how to design participation processes in urban development so that they become more accessible to residents, local shop owners, and small entrepreneurs with migrant and non-migrant backgrounds. One focus is on the role of online services.

In two urban neighbourhoods, located in two big German cities, the project initiated real-world laboratories (RWLs; Renn, 2018; Wanner et al., 2018), displayed as the two case studies in Figure 1. RWLs are important research frameworks for transformative research (Scholl & Kemp, 2016) because they aim at co-designing and testing solutions for urban problems, thus changing institutional or individual routines and behaviour. Transdisciplinary research teams define and co-produce both problems and solutions in collective research processes. In the case of this research, the core team consists of co-researchers from academia (urban planning and design faculties), professional consultancies, and state and municipal employees in urban administrations. Also, two so-called 'inner-administrative RWL project groups' (*verwaltungsinterne Projektgruppen*, ViPs) with members from different departments concerned with participatory urban development and planning, migration and integration, and human resources development, were established to accompany the research process. The core team organised real-world interventions and experiments to further elaborate strategies for an intercultural opening (see Figure 1). Some authors have called transdisciplinary research "inherently inefficient" due to, e.g., different performance criteria and levels of commitment, but we agree with their expectation that it will "produce high social and academic impact when undertaken properly" (Gaziulusoy, Ryan, McGrail, Chandler, & Twomey, 2016, pp. 57, 63).

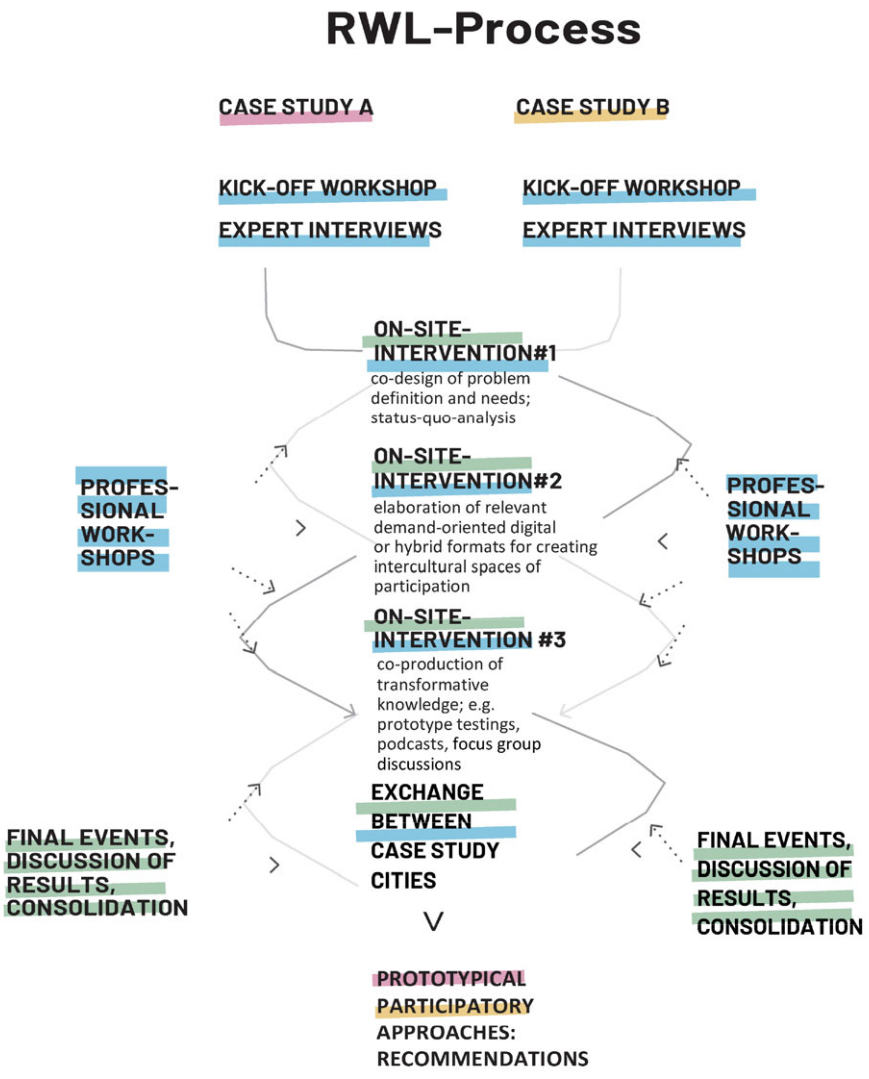

Figure 1. RWL process. Source: INTERPART Project.

For the mobilisation of stakeholders as co-researchers and research participants, the organised interventions and workshops needed to provide exactly the kind of intercultural participatory settings that the research intended to identify. To meet this challenge, the team kept adapting and differentiating the participatory co-design methods continuously, based on both the gained experiences with different engagement strategies and on topical findings from interventions and workshops. The methodical approach differed according to the type of co-researchers: Participatory co-design methods that addressed residents and initiatives were primarily based on boundary objects and storytelling formats. In contrast, the co-research with municipal employees and intermediate actors relied on guided interviews and interactive workshop formats such as world cafés, small group and online discussions.

The findings presented in this article are based on 24 expert interviews, ten professional workshops with administrative staff, and an analysis of relevant local documents and guidelines on citizen participation and interculture/integration. All interviewees—selected either because of their professional roles or their individual interest and engagement for interculture and participation—work at various levels of administration and deal with the topic of participation in a broader sense, mostly in planning departments, but also in the field of statistics, civic engagement, anti-discrimination, etc. Many of them were members of the above-mentioned ViPs. Half of the interviewees were women and the other half men, and eleven out of 24 interviewees held leadership positions. The research team recorded and transcribed the interviews and analysed them, following the research style of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1997), using theoretical coding (Flick, 2005, pp. 258–271) in a process that included alternating phases of open and axial coding with the software MAXQDA (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2019). The professional workshops included the presentation of interim results, the common interpretation of findings, and conclusions for the respective next steps. Based on the minutes, the research team extracted the core statements and used the core coding categories of the interview analysis for interpretation. One key objective was the specification of the interculture concept for participation in urban development.

The transdisciplinary research setting helped the researchers from different institutional backgrounds recognise and reflect on their 'situated knowledge' (Haraway, 1988) and to better understand the relational dimension of knowledge and knowledge production. Discussing and validating the findings with the ViPs proved to be an excellent case in point. It brought to the fore different positionalities and embodied knowledge across co-researchers of different genders, 'migration backgrounds,' and professional roles, assumptions of sameness and difference, and personal attitudes. At the same time, it helped to develop a basic common understanding of the research. Framing research encounters as performative interventions, where identities are not only presented but also reconstructed (Rose, 1997; Valentine, 2002), called for reflexivity during the entire process.

4. Institutional Barriers to Interculture in Participation

To identify institutional barriers to interculture in participation, the expert interviews with municipal staff proved to be an informative source, as the discussions covered topics such as intercultural opening, racism in institutions, or (online) participation in urban development. The analysis of the research data shows that institutional barriers to participation often relate to well-thought-out bureaucratic structures and procedures that match the needs of the administration but are hard to understand and not always very appealing to people outside the institutions. In transdisciplinary research, the need to explain these apparently self-evident common-sense realities and norms tends to cause long debates and sometimes frustration, but it may be exactly these factors that make a difference. We clustered the institutional barriers we found into four types:

First, selective implementation of interculture concepts: For many employees in public administrations, interculture seems to have little to do with their job description. Accordingly, they perceive interculture concepts—even if fixed in guidelines of the municipality—as an option, not a self-evident task. A municipal staff member described it as follows:

> If I were to ask my colleagues: "Intercultural opening, what does that mean to you and what do you think about it?" I would certainly be met with astonished looks, not because they don't care about the topic or because they reject it, but simply because they don't have it on their radar in their everyday lives, because it hasn't played a big role so far. (#cd013, translations here and in the remainder of the article by the authors)

As a result, the topic is anchored unequally in different municipal departments and its implementation depends to some important extent on individual attitudes. An interculture code as proposed by Terkessidis (see before) is a crucial step towards a transformation of 'institutional culture,' but it needs to be specified and anchored in evaluable implementation measures.

Second, processes of 'othering': Another barrier we identified in our data is the 'othering'—often without thinking—of clients and colleagues who are attributed a migration background, regardless of their origin, self-definition, and preferences. Protest by the 'othered' individuals is often interpreted as personal sensitivity (#ws01w). In interviews with municipal staff members, some described certain ethno-cultural groups as homogeneous, backward, and traditional. Examples include the generalising assumption of a hierarchical under-

standing of gender roles (#hs024) or the expectation that migrants have little understanding of participatory approaches because they expect state institutions to act in an authoritarian manner (#pp001, #cd005).

These attributions that homogenise, simplify, and normatively classify a highly diverse 'group' are part of current institutional cultures and as such to some extent accepted. 'Othering' may also refer to terminology, like the before-mentioned residents 'with a migration background.' Addressed in these terms, they may not feel invited to participate. Although the term 'citizen participation' seems innocent enough, apparently it does not appeal to those residents without German citizenship (around 14% of the population in 2019; Destatis, 2020). Processes of 'othering' are difficult to discuss, particularly when linked to institutional racism. One reason might be the widespread perception of racism as an intentional individual attitude. At the same time, this indicates a lack of space to reflect on one's daily routines, which are also shaped by structural conditions.

Third, top-down definition of accessibility: Local administrations often design institutional services and tools without consulting the persons in need of their services as experts or—in an advocate position—their self-organisations. Planners state that they observe unequal access to participation, but do not always reflect that the reasons may be linked to how they design the participation process. Instead, they stress the public character of participation, which provides—from their point of view—equal opportunities for everyone to participate. When asked if they had planned any participation events specifically for an intercultural encounter, a municipal staff member answered: "Not that I know of….This does not mean that the events are only for Germans but that there are events that take place and whoever comes is there" (#hs025). A lack of multilingual information or invitations in an easy-to-understand language are typical examples of this type of barrier, based on implicit notions of normality, in this case regarding language skills and educational level. This kind of constraints can be classified as what Terkessidis calls material design in institutions, such as accessibility of buildings, forms of communication and media design, or the scheduling of participation events (Terkessidis, 2018, pp. 151–155).

Fourth, horizontal and vertical division of labour: The data suggest that planning departments often lack direct contact with the urban population and notably migrant communities. One reason for this 'contact gap' can be found in administrations' organisational and communication structures. In the sense of a division of labour between public administration and service providers or intermediaries, the municipal administration is responsible for strategic decisions on participation, while service providers like planning companies or neighbourhood management offices implement participation concepts and do the work 'on the ground.' One interviewee who works in urban planning stated that intercultural dialogue was an important objective in urban renewal for deprived neighbourhoods, but not in her professional field that addressed the public in more general terms (#sh001). A similar division of labour exists on a horizontal level between different departments, which can lead to a silo mentality and a lack of harmonisation.

Although programmes, projects, and manuals are in place that aim at overcoming the migrant/non-migrant dichotomy and promote interculture, it obviously remains a difficult task in the context of long-established institutional routines. Often, these efforts are bundled in pilot-projects or programmes with a strong social objective, such as local integration strategies for refugees. When interculture is to be introduced across the board, far-reaching efforts are needed to remove institutional barriers, which do not rely only on the personal commitment of individuals. The following sections specify examples of such efforts.

5. Promoting Interculture in Participatory Planning: Two Fields of Action

In this article, the focus is on institutional change towards interculture in participatory planning. The findings presented in Section 4 suggest that in the two case study cities, many planners recognise the need to enhance interculture and have strategic and methodical knowledge, even if they do not feel responsible for the implementation themselves. However, for the systematic implementation of interculture targets in (participation for) urban development, the institutional framework is also important. Coupled with a strong political commitment, the institutional framework cannot only support planners to promote interculture but also provide them with networks and cross-sectoral knowledge. Based on the analysis of barriers, the research team identified four fields of action: (1) the establishment of spaces for reflexivity within (planning and related) departments; (2) a 'phase zero' that starts before participation processes for any specific planning project; (3) staff recruitment and human resources development; and (4) the creation of inter-departmental linkages, so that 'silo thinking', which sometimes prevents linkages between departments working on different angles of the same problems, can be overcome. In this article, we focus on the first two fields of action.

5.1. Spaces for Reflexivity

The RWLs provided evidence that spaces for reflexivity of institutional and professional cultures are essential for institutional change in general, and for intercultural opening in particular. These spaces can be defined as temporally and spatially fixed opportunities for exchange. They may be either explicitly dedicated to interculture-related topics or casual networking events for different actors that leave room for open debate. The research team pursued different strategies to create these spaces. In one case study city, members of

the research team joined a regular cross-departmental 'jour fixe' on participation to initiate a debate on the relevance of interculture in different fields of planning. For the first time, participants from different departments shared their professional experiences on this topic and discussed ways of 'mainstreaming' good practice.

The research team also organised two digital conferences on online participation and institutional racism, which brought together municipal officers, immigrant initiatives and NGOs and gave room for different perspectives, needs and strategic impulses for developing targeted online resources and social media. In the other case study city, the research team invited municipal participation and integration officers and planners to develop a joint strategy to combine participation and integration guidelines. Also, the team organised a two-day online meeting for the ViPs from both case study cities and provided the opportunity for them to present, discuss, and contextualise their respective strategies and experiences. The feedback from these events showed that participants welcome these opportunities to support intercultural opening and a change of institutional culture. The events provided a 'protected space' for collective professional and individual reflection on topics that had rarely been addressed before. An external facilitator (like a research project) proved to be useful both in department-specific and cross-departmental cooperation that is relevant for spatial intervention.

While reflection is worthwhile in any field of professional practice, the spaces we propose need to offer the opportunity for reflexivity (Rose, 1997), where 'taboo' topics like discrimination, privilege, and racism can also be addressed. One important issue is the personal understanding of interculture and its benefits. Interviewees and workshop participants from both local administration and NGOs understood interculture either in the sense of a better representation of particular target groups or in the sense of a representative turnout of participants. An integration officer stated in an interview:

> So that means I can always say I have the age groups; I have the genders; I have whatever and of course also groups of a certain origin. And when….I have a certain percentage of people with a European migration background, then [the process] should be representative—unless it is a target-group oriented project where….I'm only addressing the target group. (#pp001)

Some co-research partners drew attention to the fact that a 'migrant background' in itself is of no greater importance for participation than other social categories such as class or gender, and that intersections between these categories must be considered. As one interview partner put it: "One cannot say that the group of migrants is homogeneous and there can be one single solution for addressing them. It is diverse, right?" (#sh002). However, as in public debate in general, the homogenising of cultural stereotypes does exist in participatory planning as well. During the research, there was a constant tension between, on the one hand, the reference to 'particular needs' of immigrant groups, thus essentialising cultural difference, and, on the other hand, the assumption that in a super-diverse urban society, every individual is different and different barriers of access need to be addressed equally. As the following quote illustrates, planners recognise the need to reflect institutional and individual prejudice, bias and eventually racism, which needs time and space:

> This also has to do with power: How can you get people involved who usually do not have much influence, for example? Or how can participation become legitimate, in the sense that as many people as possible are involved, to get a broader picture of people's interests? (#sh002, interviewee from an urban development department)

Other issues that are hard to tackle in traditional on-the-job training are individual positionalities and experiences with privilege and discrimination. Despite some people's (self-)understanding, planners are not neutral experts, but people with a particular social position, too, which they do not often have the opportunity to ponder. As one interviewee from the urban renewal department argued, the staff's attitude toward interculture depends necessarily to some degree on personal experience with discrimination and privilege. While negative experiences are part of some people's lives, it is a mere 'luxury' for others to think about interculture, apparently because they are not confronted with stereotypes and discrimination in their everyday lives. Accordingly, they need incentives to reflect upon interculture (#sh001). The RWL debates illustrated the difficulties to address these questions among colleagues. Some interviewees linked interculture and diversity competencies to self-evident aspects of living together such as democracy, respect, and empathy (#cd008, #cd009) and to questions of planning efficiency (#sh002). However, what is self-evident to some is not at all self-evident to others. A change of perspective needs spaces for reflexivity.

A third important issue that came up in several interviews and workshops and also deserves more attention is language—not only in terms of multilingual settings for participation and publicity material, but also the translation between planners' bureaucratic terminology and everyday concerns. One interviewee from a neighbourhood development team, with particular focus on the integration of newly arrived refugees, stated: "By language, I do not just mean different languages, but…professional language so that many people say, 'I can hear, but I cannot understand"' (#cd006). This last issue not only concerns immigrants but many residents, local shop owners, and small entrepreneurs—migration background or not—who have trouble understanding bureaucratic language and procedures. Planners need to

reflect on how this privileges particularly well-organised (academically trained) interest groups who can influence decision-making processes to their advantage.

5.2. Phase Zero

The RWLs show that it takes a 'phase zero' for constant networking and dialogue so that MSOs and other initiatives are not only addressed when it comes to concrete participation projects but that a common trust base is established. For the interviewees, 'good' participation means procedures that directly address stakeholders at the local level, in spaces and settings they use regularly and are accustomed to. Interviewed members of MSOs particularly welcome the idea of being proactively invited and included in urban decision-making processes, as they position themselves as representatives for migrants' interests in all policy areas. Municipal interviewees, particularly with a background in integration and immigration departments, also consider MSOs to be important stakeholders and bridging institutions between planners and urban residents with a migrant background (#pp001). This corresponds to the hypothesis that inter-group contact has positive effects on the reduction of stereotypes and prejudices—under three conditions: cooperation (working together for common goals), encounter at eye level (similar status), and support of private-public interaction by authorities or institutions (Allport, 1954; Dangschat & Alisch, 2014). However, many planning departments have no capacities to keep in touch beyond immediate consultation needs, which makes it harder to maintain an appreciative relationship. According to co-researchers from different spheres, only a personal and long-term approach can help to build trust, as personal trust relates to people, not functions. Thus, a trustful relationship could be interrupted when a particular contact person leaves the department. Particularly in times when a new generation enters municipal administrations, transitions must be planned carefully.

So far, the German planning system has no framework for a 'phase zero,' i.e., opening an intercultural dialogue long before a planning process has started. One of the case study municipalities is considering the establishment of a budget for a (part-time) position responsible for intercultural dialogue at 'eye-level' and for networking with MSOs. At the same time, the position is supposed to promote inter-administrative sensitivity and awareness for interculture. The research also contributed to the intercultural design of a local partnership for neighbourhood development. Since these activities have just started to have an effect, it is impossible to say what comes out of them. However, giving impulses for new networks and cooperation seems promising in terms of long-term institutional transformation—under the condition, however, that planners proactively counter the effects of power relations, which may result from unequal information bases, language, and rhetorical skills, but also from various definitions of belonging and identity. "Participation is something for Germans," one resident stated in a street survey undertaken by a research partner. Thus, networking can only be a first step, particularly in super-diverse urban settings. A greater diversity of participants is no end in itself but needs to be linked to policy objectives such as fighting poverty or improving education and employment opportunities. A 'phase zero' can help to keep these objectives in mind and to link participation to concrete improvements (e.g., in terms of living conditions or service provision), which may in turn motivate others to make their voice heard.

The RWLs also explored ways to create a 'phase zero' with cross-media and multilingual tools, at the same time addressing the above-mentioned question of language. Project interventions included workshops, narrative elements and installations during project events in public urban space. For example, a wooden archway with a multilingual doorbell provided a playful setting for passers-by and for local initiatives to get in touch with each other on topics such as leisure and open spaces, supported by Google Translator. The project also experimented with more comprehensive storytelling formats: one-on-one discussions, group discussions, and podcasts that presented different perspectives on local spaces and connected them. A third example was the development and testing of a user-oriented easy-language and image-oriented online-tool, which can be used for immediate feedback on concrete spaces and planning proposals. The prototype is still in the making and will be available open-access at the end of the research.

Interviewees from MSOs and intermediary organisations such as neighbourhood management see participation in urban planning and development as a medium for the empowerment particularly of refugees and those immigrants who have come to Germany only recently (#cd006). They also stress, however, that public authorities' perceptions are often limited when it comes to the participation of immigrants: There are many other ways in which residents contribute to and participate in local development on a day-to-day basis, even if they do not join formal participation events. Often, planning departments only recognise those forms of engagement that are linked to specific planning projects and initiated by planners. However, there are many other forms of engagement such as voluntary work, assistance to neighbours, informal get-togethers, and forms of support that contribute to urban cohesion and deserve more recognition and appreciation. Taking them into consideration may also slowly result in a shift of power balance.

6. Conclusion: Towards Interculture in Participation

What have we learnt about strategies to promote the interculture perspective in participation? Our findings suggest that the interculture concept can be helpful to identify both barriers for participation and fields of action. It goes beyond declarations of intent or guide-

lines and helps to support transformation in public administrations.

The interculture concept challenges planning administrations in many German cities because it calls for mainstreaming interculture into different planning sectors. Currently, the objective to counter selective participation and to expand participation of underrepresented groups is more or less well-established in urban renewal and development programmes for deprived neighbourhoods. These often include particular instruments, tools, and formats to address residents 'with a migration background' and other underrepresented social groups. A transfer of these experiences to other planning-related departments, however, only rarely takes place on a systematic basis. It takes an explicit political will and an institutional framework that allows time and space for reflexivity and for dialogue with colleagues and supervisors to implement general knowledge and institutional targets into everyone's work—even if it does not have to do with participation or immediate contact with residents 'with a migration background' on a regular basis.

All four fields of action concern institutional change at the municipal level and must be interpreted and adapted to local contexts, which vary. Although they may seem simple enough, they are by no means self-evident or uncontested, as they require strong commitment and leadership translated into frameworks for interculture and empowerment. They imply leaving individual 'comfort zones' and accepting different types of knowledge, which—as we experienced for ourselves in our research—can be a great challenge. At the same time, identifying fields of action for the promotion of intercultural participatory planning is certainly not enough, as it does not automatically propose one particular direction of change. Which action is supportive of interculture in participation again depends to some extent on the local context, e.g., in terms of the local immigration history; the social position, resources and needs of stakeholder groups whom planners meet or hope to address; and the existence and engagement of local agents of change, such as civic initiatives, migrant NGOs, and integration councils. In the super-diverse socio-spatial settings of many German cities, there can be no easy and once-and-for-all strategies.

Thus, the fields of action we identified do not offer a concrete road map, but instead, they focus on the institutional context for action, its structures, self-understandings, and the scope for individual action, and may thus be much harder to address, although our findings certainly suggest that they are worthwhile. The openness of the interculture and intercultural opening concepts make them 'empty signifiers' (Gunder & Hillier, 2009) at first sight, just as sustainability or gender equity. However, these examples show that vagueness also has its benefits, as it allows labelling different activities pointing in the same direction and opens up windows of opportunity for collective action. At the same time, contradictions and ambivalences remain. For example, target-group oriented participation processes are based on definitions by planners or other administrative staff who may or may not be sensitive in terms of interculture or who may use their everyday understanding without reflecting that target group definitions themselves are expressions of power of those who define them. Furthermore, they single out certain groups 'with special needs,' homogenising and possibly victimising them. However, this can also raise awareness for those needs that get lost in other public events. The 'postmigration' perspective, on the other hand, claims that singling out target groups prevents the normalisation of immigration and the mainstreaming of interculture, as special events for particular target groups signal that it is they who need to change, not the institutional frameworks. Our impression is that although these two perspectives contradict each other, it may be these ambivalences that inspire reflexivity and lead to fruitful discussions with colleagues, civic initiatives, and other urban actors, to enhance curiosity and engagement.

This is also true for the research process itself, as the contradictions also played out here. The members of the research team represent institutions—universities, planning offices, private consultancies—and thus are caught in their particular institutional logics, restrictions, and scopes for action. They face their own institutional constraints, which certainly makes transdisciplinary research an adventure. We conclude that similar to broader political guidelines such as sustainability, gender equity, or justice, interculture is a process that needs to be constantly refined, rather than a condition that could be fixed and preserved over time. For future research, this means that researchers need to recognise, name, and reflect trade-offs between different—partly contradictory—research strategies. More than in other research settings, every strategic decision in transdisciplinary RWLs has its own benefits and pitfalls, e.g., for the relationship with research partners between respectful 'eye-level' communication, dependency, and different (political) interests. While strategic decisions are unavoidable, they certainly have an impact on research results (and how they may be instrumental to different political intentions). Complying with external expectations (e.g., of handy solutions) and at the same time insisting on the complexity of these questions and raising attention to the social construction of knowledge, to power structures and struggles for interpretative predominance prevent easy answers. There can be no perfect solutions: They must remain messy.

The way this research has addressed questions of interculture and postmigration is to some extent part of a particular German debate on collective identity, belonging, and citizenship. Consequently, it is a particular case with limited transferability to other contexts, since planning institutions in German-speaking countries differ in many ways from elsewhere, as do the understanding of participation and the way diversity, migration, and interculture are framed in politics and society. However,

at the same time, this difference may highlight blind spots and thus help to reflect on differences and similarities and what is behind them in other contexts. It may make concepts and processes of knowledge production, as well as implicit knowledge that is usually taken for granted, accessible to debate. This research could be a first step towards an inter- or transnational exchange on these topics.

Beyond interculture, cities face many challenges today that call for a transformation of institutional frameworks. A tangible benefit of RWLs for public authorities is the experience that transformation needs to go beyond the 'usual' re-shaping of funding schemes, instruments, etc. The experience from this research shows that transdisciplinary RWLs create a better understanding of multiple perspectives, but that it takes time to establish a common working basis. Finding a balance between pragmatic solutions and standards of academic excellence challenges the boundaries between research and practice. However, transdisciplinary research will become increasingly important, and its opportunities and risks will remain on the agenda for future debate.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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