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Perception of home among refugees and integration process

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Declaration

I, Nadiya Kohut, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

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Abstract

In the past few years, European nations have received an increasing numbers of refugees and have faced challenges in integrating them successfully into society. Due to these challenges, refugees are often resettled multiple times. This research aimed to gain understanding on how this affects refugee integration, focusing specifically on housing and refugees' personal perceptions on the concept of 'home'. The research found that due to refugees painful experiences, refugees responded to resettlement in diverse ways: most relatively satisfied with their housing while still referring to their past homes with a 'then and now' dichotomy and a longing for family and former neighbours. Safety and security were recurring themes, especially for families, but other important issues in order to feel at home and gain a feeling of belonging were social inclusion, acceptance and understanding of local regulations.

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Introduction

Due to increased numbers of refugees over the last few years, Norway is now facing the challenge of accommodating and integrating a large amount of people. Scholars argue that the process of integration is complex and multidimensional, which can mean different things depending on the actors and their perceptions and interests (Castles *et al.*, 2003; Korac, 2003). Understanding the meaning of integration and its complexity is also important for scholars and policymakers: it will help them to set clear goals, plan appropriate strategies and activities as well as evaluate results (Valtonen, 2004).

In order to facilitate discussion among scholars and policy makers and demonstrate the complexity of the integration model, Ager and Strang (2008) look at integration as a complex process which is based on ten core domains of integration, divided into four groups: foundations, facilitations, social connection, markers and means. Markers and means are considered to be key aspects and policy indicators of integration, and are often used by national and local governments. Markers and means as a group includes employment, education, health and housing. The meaning of housing here goes beyond the physical dwelling, and also includes social aspects and their environment. Housing is essential for the integration process because it facilitates access to further services, such as education, healthcare, employment opportunities, etc. (Carter & Polevychok, 2004). In addition, housing can impact refugees' "physical and emotional well-being" (Ager and Strang (2008).

In this research, refugees' housing and the settlement process will be studied through the concept of "home". The meaning of home goes far beyond the physical location and is associated with a number of meanings, based on personal, social and cultural aspects (Hauge, 2009). "Home", for example, can be associated with a range of feelings and emotions, such as with feelings of safety and security, belonging, privacy, family, etc. At the same time, home is a socially constructed term, and depends on a person's own perceptions and values (Sommerville, 1997). There are many approaches which study the relationship between people and place. While the essentialist approach sees people as constantly rooted to their home of origins, the denaturalistic approach separates people and claims that home can be created without attachment to any specific place (Sampson & Gifford, 2010).

This idea is highly relevant for refugees' settlement process, due to their experience of displacement and uprooting. As Valtonen emphasizes, refugees face "sharp transition" from displacement to "settlement" in new places, which are often so different from their

homelands – both culturally and geographically (Valtonen, 2004:70). Knowledge on refugees’ understanding of “home” can positively contribute to their settlement process, improve housing experience and facilitate better integration which will benefit the host society as well as refugees.

Research question

Adequate housing and accommodations are important for refugees’ well-being and successful integration into host-countries. However there is not enough knowledge about how refugees themselves perceive and define their housing experiences. As was discussed in the introduction, satisfaction with housing conditions is directly connected to “home” definition and perception. In my thesis, I aim to understand what ‘home’ means for refugees, whether it is possible to recreate a home feeling in a host-country and what factors contribute to it. Knowledge regarding refugees’ perception of home and their experiences during the settlement process, can help to contribute towards improving of the housing process for refugees as well as the integration process itself.

Research question: **“How important is “home feeling” for refugees?”**

My research question is divided into 3 parts:

- What is the meaning of home for refugees? What are the factors which contribute to it?
- Whether and how refugees have managed to recreate a “home feeling” during the settlement process.
- How perceptions of home among refugees are connected to feelings of belonging (integration)?

Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of 4 chapters. Following the introduction, chapter 1 provides literature review on main research’ concepts and approaches as well contextual background. Chapter 2 will represent description of methodology, used in the research. In turn, chapter 3 will provide major findings of the research. Finally, chapter 4 will represent summary and discussion of the research

1. Theoretical framework and contextual background

In this chapter I will explore the existing literature on concepts and approaches in studying refugee integration as well as introduce multiculturalism as an alternative to the integration approach. I will closely discuss Ager's integration model in order to show the complexity of the integration concept. In addition, I will briefly introduce integration policies and settlement process of refugees in Norway. Because my research focuses on refugees' perceptions of home and their settlement experience in a host-country, I will review the academic literature on concepts of "home", "place" and connection between people and home in refugee studies. Finally, the last chapter will focus on connections between the concepts of home, refugees and refugees' integration.

1.1. Integration, multiculturalism and refugee policies

1.1.1. Understanding of integration

The term "integration" is widely discussed among scholars, policymakers, the public and media. However, the meaning and understanding of integration varies significantly among actors and depends on their own interests and perceptions (Cheung & Phillimore, 2013, Castles *at al.*, 2003). Schibel *at al.* point out that integration is "a word, used by many but understood differently by most" (2002:4). At the same time, scholars emphasize that the concept of integration is poorly defined; it is also a chaotic, contested and contextual term (Atfield *at al.*, 2007, Berry, 2012, Korak, 2013). Integration is also seen as a complex process, where numerous actors are involved: individuals, refugees' communities, the state, different institutions, host-society, etc. (Cheung & Phillimore, 2013). Schibel *at al.*, however, stress that integration is often simplified to the process "through which individuals and groups newly arrived in a territory interact with the people who are already there" (2004:4).

Understanding the meaning of integration and its complexity is important for scholars and policymakers: it will help to set clear goals, plan appropriate strategies and activities as well as evaluate results (Schibel *at al.*, 2004). According to academic literature on refugee integration, there are several characteristics which define the integration process and reflect its meaning. First, integration is a "two-way process", which indicates the willingness of a host-society to accept and adopt to changes (Strang, 2010). However, it should not be confused with the process of assimilation, where refugees assimilate due to the expectation that they fully adopt host-society culture (Atfield *at al.*, 2007). Secondly, the integration

process is also multidimensional due to a range of issues and interconnected processes related to integration (Schibel *at al.*, 2004). Thirdly, many scholars see integration as a non-linear process – it does not necessarily go evenly from one phase to another in a predicted logical way. Atfield *at al.* argue that while a refugee could be successfully integrated in one area, she/he could still be far from progress in other areas (2007). Finally, integration is a rather subjective process, where refugees and their perspectives should play a major role. For example, refugees should have a right to make decisions about how they want to integrate: at what pace and to what extent (Valtonen, 2004). In addition, refugees should be seen as individuals with different needs and preferences (Atfield *at al.*, 2007, Castles *at al.*, 2003).

Atfield *at al.* highlight two approaches to studying refugee integration. The first approach focuses on various domains “in which refugees might be integrated”, while the second approach attempts to “identify factors that might influence refugee’s integration” (2007:12). Zettler (2002) defines integration within four main domains: legal domain, statutory domain, functional and social domain. The legal domain is concerned with the legal rights of refugees and the process of gaining citizenship in the host-country. The functional domain is the most popular within policymakers; it focuses on functional means (such as education, healthcare, employment, and housing). The statutory domain refers to providing refugees’ support through different actors, such as the government, NGOs, volunteer organisations, etc. Finally, the social domain reflects the participation of refugees in the social life of the host/society as well as achieving a sense of belonging to the host-country (Atfield *at al.*, 2007). While scholars pay more attention to factors and domains of integration, there is, however, very little awareness of the interconnectedness of the integration domains. In addition, the main challenge for integration studies is the lack of an analytical framework which would allow studying integration from different angles (Ager& Strang, 2008, Korak, 2013).

Another conceptual framework for understanding integration is offered by Valtonen (2004). According to Valtonen’s conceptual frame, integration should be understood within the following concepts: emancipation, parity, interdependence and cultural integrity. Emancipation is a “freedom from systematic and structural oppression”, as well as free access to social welfare systems (education, health and social services) (Valtonen, 2004:88). It can be achieved by providing formal legal status to refugees. The author emphasizes that, while integration can be successful in some areas due to state support, it might be undermined in others (for example, the labour market) due to the structural context. Thus Valtonen argues

that in order to ensure participation of refugees, they should be able to get accesses to education and labour market in very early stage after arrival (2004).

Parity is another important factor for refugees' integration. It refers to conditions when "the personal and social resources and characteristics of the settling person are valorised fairly in society" (Valtonen, 2004:89). It also relates to equality (the main principle of integration), where refugees are entitled to have the same opportunities as Norwegians. In order to achieve this in the labour market, for example, refugees' previous job experience and education from their homelands should be fairly recognised which will make them able to complete with Norwegians on the job market. In addition, refugees are often obscured from participation due to negative stereotypes. Negative images about refugees lead to their devaluation: "people are seen to have certain characteristics, which set them apart from mainstream society" (Valtonen, 2004:90). Refugees also experience different forms of discrimination due to their race, which also obscures parity (Berry, 2012).

The concept of interdependence refers to all informal interactions which helps refugees to build social bonds within ethical community. As a rule, refugees don't have many opportunities to participate in local social life, thus due to social activities within communities they can build social bonds from one side and participate in community organisation activities from another side. Valtonen highlights the effectiveness of state policies which aim to increase the amount of refugees from similar ethnic groups, which helps to build strong connection between them.

Finally, cultural integrity is another factor for successful integration, which characterizes the "person's ability to shape the term and pace of cultural adjustment" (Valtonen, 2004:91). To the author's view, integration should allow mixing both the refugees' and host-society's cultures to a satisfactory degree for refugees; thus it helps to protect refugees from losing their identities. According to Valtonen's research, ethnic communities often help refugees to preserve their own culture while introducing them to the culture of the host-society within their own cultural frame.

1.1.2. Conceptual framework on integration by Ager & Strang

As an answer to challenges in defining and understanding the integration concept, Ager & Strang developed a conceptual framework. Their multidimensional model of integration is based on ten main domains which best reflect the complexity of the integration process. The

authors argue then their model might not represent all social, cultural and economic processes connected to integration; it should rather be used as a tool for scholars and policymakers for further discussion and interpretation of the integration concept.

Ager & Strang’s integration model is based on ten core domains; the domains are interrelated and equally considerable. The domains are divided into four groups: foundation, facilitators, social connection, and markers and means (tab.1)



Pic.1. Ager and Strang’s core domains of integration (2008: 170)

“Rights and citizenship” are considered to be the foundation of the integration process. The authors stress that for successful integration, the government should create clear and effective policies on citizenship for refugees. In this way refugees’ will be protected; in addition, it will allow them to feel equal with the rest of society. Providing refugees with equal rights as to citizenship is very important: “These rights do not in themselves define integration, but they underpin important assumptions about integration” (Ager & Strang 2008: 175). If the state limits refugees in their rights, it will give a wrong message to society about refugees. Citizenship and citizens’ rights can differ in different countries, yet this concept is essential for understanding “principles and practice of integration” (Ager & Strang, 2008:176).

Another group of domains - markers and means - include “housing”, “education”, “health” and “employment”. These domains are often used by national and local government as key aspects and the policy indicators of integration. However, Ager and Strang point out that progress in these areas does not necessarily represent successful integration: “it is problematic to see achievement in these areas purely as a marker of integration” (2008:169). In addition, “housing”, “education”, “health” and “employment” can be both markers and means of integration in the same time.

“Employment” and “education” are believed to be essential factors which define integration; they give refugees economic independence, opportunity for socialising, help to boost self-confidence and develop belonging to host-environment (Bloch, 1999). Despite the fact that refugees are often well-educated people with a range of work experience and skills, they end up accepting low-paid jobs, which does not require education. This so-called underemployment is due to the difficult process of recognition of their education and previous work experience (Ager & Strang, 2008, Duke et al, 1999).

The “housing” domain is seen, not just as dwelling, but also a social and physical environment where it is located. Ager & Strang argue that housing influences refugees’ “physical and emotional well-being” (Ager & Strang, 2008:171). Satisfaction with housing among refugees is fundamental for the integration process because it helps in accessing further services such as education, healthcare, and employment opportunities (Carter & Polevychok, 2004). Locality and space of housing play an important role: in order to feel “like home” it matters where they live. In addition, housing is inevitably linked to neighbourhoods and social inclusion (Atfield *at al.*, 2007)

Finally, “health” is important for refugees, as many of them suffer from psychological, physical and emotional trauma after leaving their countries (Mackenzie et al., 2007). Thus good health conditions and access to health services contribute to all aspects of refugees’ lives. Quite often, however, refugees are hindered from accessing healthcare services due to the lack of information about such services and language difficulties (Ager & Strang, 2008).

The next group of domains – facilitators – are meant to help in “removing barriers to integration” and provide “social inclusion of refugees” (Ager and Strang 2008:182). In this group, the authors consider two specific factors which they claim have never been mentioned within integration framework before: “language and cultural knowledge” and “safety and stability”. While removing “language barrier” will facilitate refugees’ access to social life, job opportunities and the welfare system create safety and stability which will make them feel “more like home”.

Finally, the authors define the last group of domains – social connections – which together with facilitators play the role of a “connecting tissue” between the foundation of integration and marker and means of integration, such as healthcare, education, housing and employment. The importance of the social domain in the integration process was highlighted

by many scholars (Zettler et al., 2006; Cheung & Phillimore, 2013; Corac, 2003). In their framework, Ager and Strange used the theory of social capital, developed by Putnam (1993). According to the theory, social connection can be defined within three groups: social bonds, social bridges and social links. “Social bonds” are connections with family and co-ethnic, co-religious and other types of groups; within these groups, refugees support each other, practice their religion and tradition, share useful information, etc. “Social bridges” reflect relationships between refugees and the host-society. Social bridges hinder refugees’ exclusion while empowering them, increase participation as well contributing to feelings of belonging and “home feeling”. “Social links” represent the relationship between refugees and state institutions. Accessing the many instructions and services still remains challenging for refugees because of structural barriers and lack of proper policies.

1.1.3. Multiculturalist approach

Multiculturalism is a general term used as an ideology and public policy which is often referred to ethnic and cultural diversity within specific geographical areas. It advocates the idea of peaceful coexistence of different cultures in the same society, providing equal conditions for everyone (Berkes, 2010). According to multiculturalism, society should recognise and accept differences between cultural minorities, therefore multiculturalism is also called “the politics of pluralism”, “the politics of recognition”, “the politics of identity” and so on (Fernandez, 2012:53). At the same time, multiculturalism is discussed by scholars as a contested and complex concept: it “means many different things to many different people in many different situations” (Clyne & Jupp 2013:41; Nye, 2007). Nye emphasises that multiculturalism should be understood contextually: for example, the UK model of multiculturalism will not necessarily work in Malaysia, France or Canada. Thus multiculturalism can be defined as a “complex range of issues associated with cultural and religious diversity in society, and the social management of the challenges and opportunities such diversity offers” (2007:110). To celebrate and accept cultural diversity is not enough for multiculturalism to succeed; instead, the state has to create policies in order to manage the issues connected to cultural diversity and allow minorities to root into society (Nye, 2007; Taylor, 1994).

Multiculturalism can also be described as the way in which “society deals with cultural differences” (Nye, 2007:113). Nye defines four main stages which are important for this process: recognition, observation, tolerance and engagement. Recognition within society and

the state is a basis for multiculturalist thinking as well as a first step in dealing with differences in society. The next stage is observing differences, which gives the possibility to all actors of the process to learn and gain some knowledge about each other. This stage does not necessarily lead to positive consequences, as parties can learn some values and traditions of the other which they are not used to and therefore are not comfortable with. Thus, tolerance (acceptance) is required in the next stage after parties learnt about differences. Parties should be able to tolerate differences in values and practices; this tolerance, however, is always limited to different extents due to different reasons. First, it will always be hard for them to tolerate every traditions from different culture, moreover there are some things which shouldn't be tolerated, like things which are illegal in the host-society. Tolerance should also be mutual: not only should the majority accept the cultural traditions and values of minorities, but also the other way around. The last and most difficult step is to achieve "engagement across differences" (2007:114). This step requires active participating in each other's activities and learning tolerance from each other.

The multiculturalist approach, however, has some limitations. Firstly, multiculturalism is not universal: what works for one society might not work for another. Therefore, it should be understood and applied contextually. Also, society is not homogeneous. In addition to cultural and religious, there are also other types of differences in society: from socio-economic classes to political differences. Lastly, relationships in society are prone to change and therefore, under certain circumstances, peaceful coexistence in society may transform into hostile relationships (Nye, 2007).

Multiculturalism has a long history of transformation and development; lately, however, it is often perceived as opposite to integration (when integration is mixed with assimilation) (Nye, 2007). While assimilation is a rather one-way process where newcomers are expected to conform to the dominant culture of the host-society, during integration both the host-society and newcomers are expected to adjust to each other. Therefore, integration and multiculturalism have common roots (Modood, 2011). The basis of multiculturalism lies in the idea that diversity is beneficial for society, thus different cultural groups can harmoniously coexist in society, In addition, the key concept of multiculturalism is equality: "multiculturalism proclaims equivalence of different cultures and makes no distinction between them and most importantly does not indicate a dominant culture" (Berkes, 2010:4). At the same time, integration is based on equality between hosts and newcomers. However,

the integration approach is individualistic, where newcomers are seen as individuals while multiculturalism defines them in groups (minorities, differences) without recognising individuals (Moodod, 2011). Multicultural policies advocate the rights of minorities and gives voice. On the other hand, multiculturalism ignores differences within minorities (for example, gender, classes, religion differences, etc.), which can also lead to conflict within groups (Nye, 2007).

Kymlicka points out that, despite the fact that integration ideas are not always consonant with multiculturalism; it should not be seen as a threat to multiculturalism (2012). Moreover, multiculturalism and integration can and should go hand in hand. Moodod suggests combining ideas of integration and multiculturalism in a whole new approach, which would accept the “concept of difference” while “critiquing or dissolving the concept of groups” (2011:8). This approach allows celebrating diversity and recognising individuals rather than groups (ibid). However, it could be a mistake to lay aside the idea of groups, as humans are both individuals and group members.

1.1.4. Integration policies in Norway

Norway experienced its first significant wave of migration in 1970s; in response to this migration and its socio-economic effect on both on migrants and the hosts-society, the state introduced migrant policy and policies aimed at restricting and controlling migration. This resulted in changes in migrant applications to asylum and family reunions (Cooper, 2005). Migration policies in Norway have undergone certain changes during the last years; however, there are two main features which have remained stable throughout the years: restriction in immigration (migrants should be granted a permit in order to live and work in Norway) and equality in treatment (all official immigrants in Norway have the legal right to equality with local opportunities and treatment (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012).

Refugees’ integration policies, as a rule, are determined by existing theories, concept definitions, various academic findings on refugees and the country’s historical and police context. Thus, changes in understanding of integration inevitably affect refugee policies (Valenta & Bunar, 2010). The multiculturalist approach influenced Norwegian policies in the 1980s: there was more emphasis on recognition of cultural difference, and those immigrants and Norwegian society had a mutual responsibility to adapt to each other’s cultures; moreover “immigrants’ cultures had a right to protection against the forces of assimilation”

(Hagelund, 2002:407). By the 1980s, the number of refugees in Norway had increased dramatically as had public concern about it, which led to the increasing success of the Progress party (anti-immigration party) in elections. As a result of this, immigration and integration policies were taken to political debate. Integration policies were changed in the direction of assimilation: from then, refugees were required to study the Norwegian language and “adapt to Norwegian ways and values” (*ibid*, 2002:405). Understanding of integration had changed: “freedom of choice” for different cultures was reduced to “respect for immigrant’s culture”, which later became “obligation to participate” in learning culture of host/society (*ibid*, 2002:407).

From the 1990s till now, refugee policy has been more focused on refugee participation in economic life and the labour market. The integration model has been focused onto “institutional equilibrium”, where refugees’ employment and their relationship with the welfare system compensate each other. Refugees get access to the welfare state which supports them and provides opportunities for employment; once refugees have a job, they contribute to the welfare system. The main idea is that refugees get equal life opportunities with Norwegians, thus the state provide refugees with the special social programs which enable them to learn Norwegian and prepare themselves for working and social life in Norway (Backas, 2015; Brochmann, 2003).

Nowadays, Norwegian integration policy is known for its generous and strong welfare system as well broad assistance during the resettlement process and integration. However, Norwegian refugee policy has not been able to achieve equality: “differences between refugees and the rest of the population in all aspects of everyday life are large” (Valenta & Bunar, 2010:480). The authors insist that in order to address this issue, the state should improve the settlement process of refugees by reducing the level of control (*ibid*, 2010). Successful integration should lead to equality; increased participation of refugees in social life will make them self-sufficient and allow them to take responsibility. Thus society will also benefit, both economical and socially (Berry, 2012).

1.1.5. Refugees’ settlement process in Norway

According to Norwegian law, there are two groups of refugees who are entitled to participate in the settlement program in Norway: “former asylum seekers who have been granted a residence permit or resettlement refugees who have been granted a residence permit in

Norway pursuant to an agreement with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees” (Government Bill, 2014). In addition to access to dwelling, refugees are entitled to participate in the social welfare program, which is called the “Introduction program”. This program was designed as an answer to critique of earlier integration policies from 1990-2000 (so-called “social benefits regime”), characterized by generous social security benefits for refugees with poor conditions for participating in training. The new program (launched in 2004) aimed to increase participation of refugees, increase their competition in the labour market and assist them in their transition to working life (Djuve, 2010).

The introduction program is a compulsory program for refugees between the ages of 18 to 55, which is meant to assist refugees in the integration process. This includes learning the Norwegian language and culture and to prepare them for work and their future life in Norway. The program includes different services, such as Norwegian lessons (550 hours), social studies (50 hours), work-training, advisor and information support. In the beginning of the program, the refugee and his “primary contact” (advisor from the municipality) develop an individual plan according to the refugee’s qualifications, needs and goals for the future. The program is designed for 2 years; however, the duration of the program may vary according to refugees’ progress and needs. During the whole program, participants are entitled to receive introduction grant (fixed monthly allowance); in addition, refugees are allowed to hold part-time work as long as it does not affect their attendance and progress in school (Backas, 2015; IMDI, 2014; Hagelund, 2002).

The introduction program is tightly connected to the distribution of refugees during the settlement process. Refugees can choose themselves whether they want to use the government’s help in the settlement process or not. Refugees lose their right to participation in the Introduction program and their right to the introduction grant if they choose to do the settlement process without help; they, however, still have a right to free Norwegian lessons (IMDI). At the same time, “refugees who need settlement assistance are to be offered housing in a municipality” (Government Bill, 2014). The Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDI) cooperates closely with municipalities in order to accommodate refugees in certain areas. There are several factors which determine the choice of settlement place. IMDI receives information from the refugee reception centres about refugees’ preferences and the justification for the choice. Also, it depends on the capacity of the municipality (availability of qualification services and the housing market) to accept refugees and provide them with

housing and training during the Introduction program. Finally, the Norwegian government uses a “dispersal strategy”, trying to mix minorities and majorities in order to distribute refugees among municipalities proportionally and create viable and harmonic neighbourhoods (Backas, 2015; IMDI, 2014).

The refugee housing policy in Norway can be called “steered settlement”: the government and municipalities make the final decision while taking into consideration refugees’ opinions and preferences (Backas, 2015; Borevi & Bengtsson, 2014). These policies have undoubtedly demonstrated positive results, especially in terms of employment rate and enrolment into education program in early stages after the program: “47% of the refugees who completed the introductory programme in 2013 found employment or entered education straight away” (Backas, 2015). Despite the benefits, the refugees’ settlement process in Norway gets a fair amount of critique. First, the government is being criticized for exercising control during the whole process: refugees are “forced” to participate in the Introduction program, otherwise they will lose their grants. As a result, refugees are restricted in regards to their preference of where to live, because settlement of refugees is connected to the Introduction program (Borevi & Bengtsson, 2014). In addition, other scholars emphasize that settlement dispersal prevents refugees from building social contact within co-ethnic groups (Andersson, 2003). Hagelund, however emphasizes, that while state welfare services within the settlement process come with certain conditionality, it is not only done for the state’s but also for refugees’ benefit (2005).

1.2. “Home” concept and its connection to refugees’ settlement

The concept of home and relationship between people and place are particularly important in refugees’ context due to the forced displacement which refugees experienced before arriving in the host-country. “The way space and place are conceptualized, applied and expressed within the field of refugees studies and in policy work are important for how refugees are understood and represented” (Brun, 2001:15). The understanding of “home” concept is essential for my research, because I want to explore the perception of home among refugees, how they are shaped and what factors can contribute to achieving a “home” feeling in the host-environment. In this part of the chapter, I will explore theoretical approaches in understanding place and home as well as connections between “home feeling” and refugees’ settlement process and how they affect the integration process.

1.2.1. Theoretical approaches in understanding of “home” and relationship between people and place in refugees’ context

In the existing literature, the concept of home is inseparably connected to studies of “place” and its interaction with people: home is seen as a “significant type of place” (Easthope, 2004:128; Habte, 2017). Since home is a complex and contested term, there are several approaches which attempt to explain the nature of home and discuss the relationship between people and home.

The essentialist (naturalized) approach claims that people have a “natural and inseparable connection to their place of origin” (Habte, 2017:13; Sampson & Gifford, 2010). This approach is often used in refugee contexts, assuming that refugees have constant tight and deep roots with their countries of origin which shapes their natural and cultural identities. Thus, when refugees are being moved and detached from their homelands, there is a risk of losing their identities. According to the discourse, a person belongs to the place where she/he was born: thus refugees will never be able to belong to the host-countries. This discourse is often employed by politicians in order to justify an argument that refugees should return to their homes of origin (Brun, 2001; Habte, 2017).

The essentialist (naturalized) approach is criticized by scholars who suggest denaturalising of the relationship between people and place. They claim that the connection between people and place has become weaker due to the effects of globalization, thus people can create home through the memories and feelings without attaching themselves to a specific place or territory (Habte, 2017; Makki, 1992; Sampson & Gifford, 2010). As Easthope emphasizes, “while homes may be located, it is not the location that is “home”; instead home should be considered as a place which holds a range of different meaning for different individuals, such as social and emotional meaning, etc. (2004:135). Moreover, some scholars argue that denaturalising is “loosening of the bonds between people, wealth and territories” (Brun, 2001:19). Habte, however, stresses that it can be dangerous to use this discourse in the refugee context (2017). Denaturalization relationship between people and place is “equally risky in a world that continues to distribute rights and social membership along territorial boundaries” (Sampson & Gifford, 2010:117). In addition, detaching people from place in the refugee context would mean to ignore their past experience and thus neglect their ability to produce home, develop social networks, etc. It would contribute to an already pervasive perception of refugees as passive victims (Habte, 2017).

Instead, Brun suggests adopting a new approach to use in refugee studies - a middle-ground between “essentialism” and “denaturalization” (2001). The new approach, reterritorialization, appreciates deep and long-lasting connections between refugees and their homes of origins; at the same time it admits the possibilities for creating connections to new a place (host-environment) (Brun, 2001; Habte, 2017). The reterritorialization approach focuses on refugees’ ways and practices to create attachment to new places and development of social networks, while bearing in mind their experience and relationship with the “old home”. As Brun argues:

Reterritorialization as an analytical concept thus demonstrates spatial process and spatial strategies that refugees and displaced people develop in contradictory experience of being physically present in one location, but at the same time living with the feeling of belonging somewhere else” (2001:23).

1.2.2. Meanings of home

Home is a complex and multi-levelled concept which reflects different dimensions of people’s lives. Habte discusses spatial and habitual aspects of home: while the spatial aspect refers to the psychological place, dwelling, room, house, etc., the habitual aspect goes broader and relates to places of people’s everyday activities, such as streets, neighbourhood, café, gyms, etc. (2017). Douglas, however, argues that home is not a shelter, not a house neither a household. She adds a new dimension – time – to a physical meaning of home: “home is organisation of space over time” (1991:294). This organisation and structure of space is very individual, because it is created for the particular people who live in this particular time and particular space (*ibid*). At the same time, home is inseparably connected to people and their relationship within the home and outside, therefore home is a place “with the unique mixture of relationship, which configure social space” (Massey, 1995:61). Easthope argues that it is not the physical appearance or structure of the house nor the neighbourhood that makes place a home, but rather “meanings, which are inscribed in places” that makes them home (2004:136).

Home as a type of “place” is also understood as a social construct. As Sommerville argues:

Home is physically, psychologically, and socially constructed in both "real" and "ideal" forms and the different types of construction always occur in combination, as part of a single process (1997:228).

According to a social constructivism approach, our understanding and perceptions of the world are influenced by different factors, such as cultural background, experience, our family's values, interactions with social and physical environment, etc. Thus our knowledge is socially constructed: it does not represent objective reality, but is rather a product of our interpretation of reality (Haslanger, 1995; Habte, 2017). Our meanings and understandings of home are also socially constructed and shaped by different factors (Easthope, 2004). Instead of trying to find a singular and unified definition of the home concept, scholars suggest to study the concept of home within a "broader historic and social context of people's life" (Persell, 2012:160; Douglas, 1991; Malett, 2004).

One of the important dimensions of home, especially for refugees, is the feeling of security and safety. Refugees normally refer to different types of safety: first, because of refugees' painful experiences, safety is mentioned as something akin to peace, something opposite of danger – an "absence of harm" (Habte, 2017:23; Malett, 2004). Also, refugees refer to another type of safety, so called ontological security, which is based on feelings of wellbeing, achieved due to steadiness in both material and social aspects of life (Dupuis and Thorns, 1996). However, feelings of stability and safety do not necessarily go hand in hand: refugees may experience feelings of safety, but not stability (Habte, 2017).

Control and freedom is another concept related to understandings of home (Parcell, 2012). At home, people need to be able to "exercise control over space", which makes them feel that they "exercise degree of autonomy over their lives" (*ibid:160*). In many cases, home is just related to a physical place, dwelling; therefore private ownership of the place can supposedly help a person to exercise certain control over home and as a result achieve "home feeling" (Malett, 2004). However, Windson argues that ownership is not necessary a condition for "home feeling": "people who are not classified as homeowners may in fact have feeling of at-homeness" (2010:2012). Similarly, freedom (privacy, independence) is connected to home: when a person is constrained by different rules in public, it is therefore important to have privacy and freedom where the relationship with outside society can be ignored (Parcell, 2012).

In addition, home is inevitably connected to social relationships with family, neighbourhood, and society. However, Mallet argues that the connection between family and home is contested (2004). According to scholars with a traditional point of view, home is the place where a person has lived from the time of birth, where the child grew up, a place where the

person felt happy, comfortable and stable (Malett, 2004). This view was criticized as an irrelevant model of family and family relationship in the modern context. In addition, home and life with family is experienced by some people in negative way due to violence, conflicts, etc. Thus, the importance of the relationship between home and family should be recognised, however the impact of other factors should also be considered, such a culture, gender, class, stage of the life cycle (Persell, 2012; Malett, 2004). The meaning of home is also related to social contact with neighbours, friends and the rest of society, which can change over time due to life circumstances (as in the case of refugees). “Home, therefore, consists of human relationships shaped through interactions, activities, memories and feelings about people in place, feelings that can change over time” (Habte, 2017:24).

Emotions and feelings is another dimension of the home concept. Many refer to “home feeling” or a feeling of “being at home”, which people experience due to developing an attachment to their place. Parcell argues that a person can feel comfortable and safe in any place which is not a “tradition house” (for example, homeless people on the streets) as long as they have the feeling of attachment or belonging to their places (2012). Thus, belonging could be described as a subjective process, “deep emotional attachment to people and places, which gives meaning and security to people’s life” (Samson, 2013: i). Habte argues that since feelings of belonging are connected to society, it is inevitably linked to the process of inclusion and exclusion, particularly in refugee contexts (2017). However, feelings of belonging depend not only on place and society, but also on individual’s preferences and experiences: someone prefers to belong to society and be similar while others prefer to be unique (May, 2011; Samson, 2013). At the same time, the concept of home is linked to formation of an individual’s identity: both within individuals’ minds and within interactions with the outside world (Easthope, 2004). Individuals’ attachment to home helps to develop and strengthen their self-identity: “there is no place without self, and no self without place” (Habte 2017; Casey, 2001:406).

There are a range of emotions which are embedded in the meaning of home. Longing for home is, perhaps, one of the most common of refugees’ feelings. What differentiates refugees from other types of migrants is that they were forced to leave their homes and move to new places; hence it was not their conscious choice. As Valtonen emphasizes, refugees face “sharp transition” from displacement to “settlement“ in new places which are often so different from their homelands, both culturally and geographically (Valtonen, 2004:70). In

the early stages, keeping memories about their “old home” helps refugees to save their identities (Malett, 2004). Similarly, during later stages, “constructing images of the homelands partly keeps the myth of return alive and partly assures the pain of separation” (Graham & Khosravi, 1997:128). Such nostalgic and romantic memories, however, lead to “fetishization of homeland” and creating images of the ideal home. Nostalgic motives and feelings are usually present in home decorations as well as in food, music, TV programs from homelands, etc. Creation of the ideal image, in refugees’ case – “home in homeland” – may lead to separation from the host-society (ibid). The ideal home is criticized for being established in opposition to real (natural) home. Thus, many people spend their life in a search of “home, gap between the natural home (conceived as the home environment conducive to human existence) and the particular ideal home where they would be fully fulfilled” (Malett, 2004:69).

Some scholars see home as a spatial journey between past, present and future, a “place of origin (however recent or relative) as well as a point of destination” (Malett, 2004:77). Therefore, the meaning of home will always be influenced by people’s past experience (“past symbols”). Following this approach, home is not necessarily a fixed place; a person can be “away” and still can be “at home”. Moreover, home is not a matter of place; it is rather a matter of “presence or absence of particular feelings” (Malett, 2004:77). Thus home can be reconstructed in any place (Ahmed, 1997; Habte, 2017; Taylor, 2015).

1.2.3. Home, settlement process and refugees’ integration

As discussed earlier, home is a complex, contextual and multidimensional concept where physical, emotional, social and cultural aspects of people’s life are deeply embedded.

In understanding a person’s connection with their home, we go some ways towards understanding their social relationship, their psychology and their emotion and then we begin to understand their “lived experience” (Easthope, 2004:135).

Thus understanding the meaning of home and the relationship between people and their homes gives a framework for understanding their behaviour, emotions, motives as well their interactions with society, conflicts, etc. It also provides insight into understanding people’s wellbeing and the political economy of home (ibid).

Understanding the concept of home is extremely relevant in refugee contexts. Sampson & Gifford argue that “the importance of place in the refugee’s experience cannot be underestimated” due to their painful experience (2010:116). Refugees were forced to flee from their homes; moreover, many had to change several places (homes) even before arriving to the host-countries (Phillips, 2006).

For many, the process of resettlement is part of the continuation of their forced displacement, culminating in their forced re-placement in a third country (Sampson & Gifford 2010:116)

Brun emphasizes that the settlement process for refugees is exceptionally difficult and a “contradictory experience”: while they still feel tight connections to their homes of origin, which they had to leave behind, refugees should find possibilities to rebuild connections to the new places in their host-country (2001:23). In addition, studies shows that home and place play a crucial role for health, recovery and psychological wellbeing of refugees: “for those who have been forcibly and violently uprooted from place, the restorative powers of place and place-making are not to be underestimated” (Sampson & Gifford (2010:117). Finally, perceptions of home and the relationship between home and the individual is strongly connected to the individual’s ability to create a feeling of belonging and attachment to the host-environment.

Kissoon argues that home has fundamental meaning for refugees’ integration as it is a place “from which other trajectories are embarked upon and a site for regeneration and rehabilitation (2006:76)”. In addition, home is important for wellbeing, satisfaction and belonging as well as for feelings of security, safety, comfort, freedom, etc. which are particularly important for refugees. Kissoon suggests that home can be used as the indicator of refugees’ integration, through which we can acquire the knowledge of their perceptions, feelings and experiences (2006).

2. Methodology

2.1. Introduction

The main goal of my research was to find out what ‘home’ means for refugees, whether is possible to recreate a home feeling in a host-country and what factors contribute to it. I intended to explore the perception and understanding of home among refugees through their life stories and settlement experiences in host-countries, which would naturally involve descriptions of opinions, values, feelings and emotions. Thus, I decided to choose qualitative research strategy as it is best suited for deep and complex understandings of social phenomena (Berg and Lune, 2013). Also, qualitative research helps to “empower individuals to share their story and to hear their voices”, which was one of the essential tasks of my research (Creswell, 2013:48). Qualitative research is also appropriate for studying refugees as it enables researchers “to be able to hear the voices of those who are silenced, othered, and marginalized by the dominant social order” (Liamputtong, 2010:19). My aim was to hear what home means for refugees and to learn about their reflection on the settlement process in a host-country. As Habte suggests, I explored the research question from the refugees’ angle and looked at refugees “as experts with respect to their own experiences” (2017).

This chapter will include description and justification of the choice of research design and methods for data collection. Also, I will provide a detailed description of the process of my field work in Trondheim municipality as well as give my personal reflections on it. Finally, I will discuss the procedure of data analysis and address ethic issues in my research.

2.2. Research approach

Deciding on an approach for qualitative research helps the research to identify their role and organise the structure of the research as well as helps in choosing methodological tools for data collection and analysis. In my research, I aim to explore the perceptions of home among refugees through their life and settlement experience, therefore I decided that the narrative approach will best suit my study. The narrative approach is an interpretative approach in social science, based on “storytelling”, where the respondent becomes a “narrator” and the respondent’s story becomes an object for study and unit for analysis (Moen, 2006). It allows the researcher to explore the experiences of respondents through their stories and own observations. In the narrative approach, the words of the respondent are given a special power: the researcher gets the story from respondents, who “organize their experiences of the

world into narratives” (Moen, 2006:60). In my case, I used narrative approach to find out how respondents understand home, and its various meanings to them.

The narrative research approach empowers respondents in a way that they contribute in identifying important themes in research (Elliott, 2005). In addition, close cooperation between the researcher and respondent during the interview helps to structure the interviews in a better way, thus the researcher can get richer data (Mishler, 1986). Since there is insufficient knowledge about how refugees themselves perceive their experiences in a new country and what home actually mean for them, it was essential for my research to hear the voices of refugees. I choose to use the narrative approach as it would allow me to disclose the opinions of refugees through their stories.

The narrative approach allows the researcher to provoke storytelling, interpret the story and analyse the story from different angles. The researcher has to ask himself the questions: what do the participants say to us, how do they say it and why do they say it? (Czarniawska, 2004). This was useful in my research as I wanted to understand how the refugees’ perceptions of home were shaped, how they varied among participants and what factors influenced them.

At the same time, the narrative approach can be challenging for the researcher in different ways. As Greswell comments, the narrative approach requires gathering large amounts of information; in addition, the researcher must be familiar with the context of the life of the participants (2013). Also, since the stories of respondents are “fixed in written text” and later interpreted by the researcher, there is a risk that the researcher’s opinion can influence the research findings to a large extent (Moen, 2006:62). While recognising that it is not always easy to know whether stories are framed by respondents or the researcher, Phillips, however, argues that "stories can be both made, and true, at the same time!" (1997:108).

2.3. Data collection

In this section I will discuss the methods for data collection in my research, as well as explain the choice of data collection tools such as sample, sampling strategy and location.

2.3.1. Semi-structured in-depth interviews

Interviews is one of the most common methods for data collection in qualitative research. Weiss (1995:1) emphasizes the importance of interviews for qualitative studies:

Interviewing gives us access to observations of others. Interviewing can inform us about nature of social life. We can learn what people perceived and how they interpreted their perceptions. We can learn how events affected their thoughts and feelings. We can learn about all their experiences from the joy through the grief...Most of the significant events from people's life can become known only through interview.

The choice of interview should be determined by the research question and the main goals of the research. As I aimed to understand the perceptions of 'home' among refugees and how those perceptions were shaped, it was important for my research to collect detailed information about the participants' life before and after arrival in Norway, their life routines, family traditions, cultural norms, etc. – everything which might have influenced their understanding of the word "home". In addition, I was interested in "housing trajectories" of refugees and their feeling in every place where they have been living during their life. I decided that semi-structured interviews would best suit my study because I would be able to direct the participants gently through the interview while they would have the freedom to reflect their opinions and feelings (Bryman, 2015). This type of interview would allow a certain flexibility and divergent outputs in answers; that would help me as a researcher to get detailed and rich data. Bryman emphasizes that flexibility during the semi-structured interviews allows the researcher to see how the participants describe different life events and what shapes patterns in their behaviour (2015). In addition, semi-structured interviews can help to obtain new topics, issues and ideas, which are apparently important for participants which the researcher would not think to include in the research (Liamputtong, 2010).

Questions for the interviews were designed in a way which would help respondents to reveal their experiences and feelings and allow the researcher to receive in-depth answers. As Leech (2002:665) argues, "question order is important for substantive reasons as order affects what occurs in interviews", therefore I planned my interview order strategically. In the beginning of the interview, just after the short introduction, I decided to quickly ask what home means for respondents, without allowing them to think long about it. The intention for this was to pull out the intuitive answers (so respondents would answer what they *feel* that home *is* for them, rather than what they *think* what home *should be*). Afterwards, I proceeded with the questions about life and housing experiences before and after arriving to Norway. At the end of the interview we came back to discussion of the meaning of home, but this time I intended to capture deeper perceptions as seen through the lens of the life experiences of respondents.

Other than this, I tried to be flexible with question's structure and allowed participants to tell their stories in a way that was convenient for them.

2.3.2. Sample, sampling strategy and settings

The choice of sample and sampling strategy in my research was determined by the research question and the availability of participants. In my research, I was particularly interested in refugees from Trondheim municipality, since my research was linked to the NTNU¹ research on the effect of the physical environment (development of local centres) on quality of life and integration of refugees in Trondheim. In addition, Trondheim municipality was rated as the municipality with one of the best indicators of integration in Norway in 2016 (IMDI). Therefore, I was particularly interested in whether refugees have managed to recreate their "home" feelings in Trondheim municipality as well as whether housing is important for integration.

The only criteria for participation was refugee status, as well as that the person have lived in Trondheim municipality for at least 6 months and speak Norwegian or English. I set the language requirement because it would be too costly for me to cover the expense of translation; in addition, translation in qualitative interviews can affect the process of interpretation of meanings (Van Nes *at al.*, 2010).

In narrative studies, researchers often choose purposive sampling strategy as it allows choosing participants which are either suitable for this specific research or available; in addition, the researcher aims for informants who have rich stories to tell (Creswell, 2013). Initially, I was interested in participants who have lived in Trondheim for at least two years and hopefully already attempted to organize "home", thus their story would be interesting for research. However, it was not easy to get in contact with many refugees in the beginning of my research, so I decided to talk to those who were available, despite some of the participants not having been in Trondheim for very long. In addition, it was of particular interest for me to further investigate the differences in perceptions of refugees with different lengths of stay. I was not particularly interested in any specific nationality, age or gender; moreover, I aimed for variety among respondents because it would significantly broaden my data analysis as well as enrich my discussion:

¹ NTNTU project : Lokalsenterutvikling som strategi for bærekraftige byer – bosetting og integrering av

Inclusion of a broad range of participants allows for identification of fundamental similarities and differences as well as potentially important qualifying conditions for explaining variations within categories (Valtonen, 2004:74).

In addition, I conducted four interviews with officials who are in some way involved in the process of refugees' settlement in Trondheim municipality. For me it was important to get opinions and reflections on the settlement process from different points of view. I planned my interviews strategically so I could talk to people from different departments who assist refugees at different stages of their settlement process in Trondheim: IMDI (The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration and Diversity), Flybo team (housing providers from the settlement department of Trondheim municipality) and the Qualification Center for Immigrants. In addition, I interviewed Eli Støa, a professor from NTNU, who conducts research about refugees' integration and physical environment, but who is not directly involved in refugee settlement. This strategy enabled me to look at the research question from different angles and capture a full image of the issue.

The location for the interview was chosen according to each refugee's preference, as it was important for me that respondents felt as comfortable as possible as my informants.

2.3.3. Observation

Observation is important instrument for data collection in qualitative research: it allows researcher to immerse themselves in the participant's social and physical environment and helps to enrich the data (Bryman, 2015). Researchers chooses what to observe and how to observe according to the research topic and goal. For example, a researcher can focus on the social environment and interactions with people, conversations, activities, physical places, etc. In addition, a researcher can choose how to observe: actively (by being a complete participant) or passively (by being a complete observer) (Creswell, 2013).

Since my research focuses on perception of home among refugees, I naturally decided to observe the physical setting – the homes of informants. However, I was not able to conduct all interviews in participants' homes; therefore I could only do observations of the homes where I was invited (nine out of sixteen places). In addition, I was interested in participants' connection to their housing; for this I paid attention to voice, intonation, movements, and the gestures of participants when they talked about their places (or when I had an opportunity to

observe participants in their homes). The results of my observations as well as my personal reflections were written down in my field work journal.

2.4. Field work and personal reflections

2.4.1. Informant recruitment

Once I decided to conduct my research in Trondheim municipality, I immediately started to think about how I would recruit informants for my research because I, myself, had never been to Trondheim before and did not have any contacts there. In addition, Eli Støa, a professor from NTNU, with whom I had my very first contact regarding the research, expressed her concern about difficulties with employment of participants. The professor suggested that I contact the department in Trondheim municipality that is responsible for the housing program from Husbanken² for refugees. Employees from this department provided me with contact details for three potential participants, whom I contacted immediately and asked for the possibility of interviewing them. As a result, I arranged a meeting with two of them. In addition, I managed to make an interview agreement with one more refugee, whose contact I received from a friend from Oslo.

Yet, I was concerned about how challenging it would be to gain access to more informants: because of the distance to Trondheim and budget constraints I would not be able to travel to Trondheim frequently. Therefore my only hope was to access new informants with the help of the existing ones through the snow-ball strategy (when new informants act as links in a chain from the initial participants). Snowballing is very effective: it helps to recruit informants in a short time. In addition, the researcher benefits from interviewing recommended and trusted person instead of unknown (Habe, 2017). Despite its effectiveness, this sampling method has several weaknesses. Firstly, it negatively affects divergence among interviewees as people from the same social environment often share common characteristics (nationality, age, religion, etc.). For example, twelve of my informants were from Syria, which could potentially skew my findings. In addition, snow-ball sampling can cause issues with anonymity if many participants belong to the same community (Josselson, 2013).

² Norwegian State Housing Bank (Husbanken), which implement Norwegian housing policy in national level

I was very lucky that my first three interviewees recommended me further to their friends and acquaintances, so that I had three new contacts the very next day. Surprisingly, further recruitment went even smoother; some of the informants provided me with multiple referrals. As a result, I ended up interviewing sixteen refugees (five women and eleven men), including twelve refugees from Syria, three from Palestine and one refugee from Ethiopia. Age of the participants varied in age from twenty to forty-five years old. Finding women to interview was another challenge in my research. Luckily, one of the most responsive participants introduced me to his wife and she helped me to get in touch with her girlfriends and persuaded them to meet with me.

2.4.2. Interviews

The main goal of interviews in qualitative research is to “create a conversation that invites the telling of narrative accounts (stories)”, therefore it is essential for good interviews to create a comfortable situation which will invite participants to open up and tell personal things to a strange person (Josselson, 2013:9). For this reason I let refugees choose the place for the interview; when they could not decide, I suggested a few places (my preferences were based on distance, accessibility and low level of noise). I also gently asked every participant if I can meet them in their homes, yet I did not insist if someone was not enthusiastic about it. Overall, I conducted interviews in the following sites: participants’ homes (nine interviews), cafés (four interviews), participants’ work place (two interviews), a park (one interview). All the interviews with officials were conducted at their offices. The length of the interviews varied from 1.5 to 3 hours. In my opinion, interviews that were conducted at participants’ homes, were longer and more detailed; participants were noticeably more relaxed compared with those who I interviewed outside. However, interviews were often interrupted by other family members and children: in some cases I had to stop the interview and recording and then start again. I must emphasize that I felt very welcomed in every home: I was treated like an honourable guest. I was offered to share a cup of tea and sometimes a meal together with informants and their family members. This gave a nice insight into the social and physical environment of the interviewee. While visiting informants in their homes, I was well aware of certain risks. My informants were recommended to me by previous interviewees, which made me feel rather safe. I was also listening to my intuition – for example, I refused an invitation to visit one of potential participants at his place as I suspected he might have ulterior motives.

From another side, interviews conducted in cafés were shorter in length and less deep; one interview was interrupted due to the level of noise – we had to move to a nearby café.

Another participant was concerned that people at other tables in the café might hear his story, therefore we found a secluded bench in the park and continued there.

Initially, I planned to conduct individual interviews, as this allows the researcher to fully focus on the participant and their story. However, two of the female informants preferred to be interviewed together: they said they would feel safer and they would not need to worry about language issues. In addition, I interviewed in groups one married couple in their place and employees from the Flybo team. As Dilshad argues, during the group interviews, individuals interact with each other as in real life which gives better possibility for observation. In addition, the researcher can take a more passive role than in individual interviews (2013). However, group interviews posed a few challenges for me. In the case of the group interview with two women, one informant was rather shy and it was difficult to pull out a story from her while the other participant dominated the whole interview. In addition, it was challenging to transcribe the group interviews due to similarities in voices; it was difficult to understand who said what.

2.4.3. Relationship with participants

As usual, individuals have various personal reasons for participating in interviews: they want to be useful to society or particularly to the researcher, they want to be heard, they are eager to get new experiences or maybe they just want to offload some personal burdens. Whatever the reason, the main task of the researcher is to build a trustworthy relationship which will encourage participants to freely express their feelings and experiences (Josselson, 2013).

I started my interviews with a short introduction of my project and the reasons why I decided to work on this topic. In addition, I found it useful to provide interviewees with background information about myself, emphasizing that I am a masters student from Ukraine, who has lived in Norway for a few years. It helped me to explain that in some ways I can relate to refugees (because I am also a foreigner in Norway) and I can understand the many challenges they are going through. I think it was an important moment where I began gaining trust among participants and building relationship with them. Josselson points out two important moments for building a good relationship in narrative research. Firstly, the researcher should be a good listener, so that informants feel that their experience is valuable. Also, the researcher's attitudes are very important: the researcher should accept the role of "learner" while the participant is an "expert" (2013). I felt it was easy to get an instant "connection"

with some informants while others were a bit shy, but they become more and more engaged in the conversation towards the end of the interview. Sometimes, when I felt the participant's answer on some question was not sufficient, I disclosed some story from my own experience to make participants understand my question better and encourage them to tell their story. However, I knew that by doing so I might influence participants' answers to some extent. Therefore, whenever it happened, I put a note in my field work journal so I could take it into consideration while analysing the data.

In addition, I was concerned that my experience and personal assumptions might influence the design of the interview questions, the interview process itself and the interpretation of the findings. Being a foreigner in Norway and having to deal with many challenges in a new country made me understand refugees better and helped me to establish trust and a good relationship with them. However, I had my own perspectives on the meaning of home and Norwegian society which might have influenced and shaped my research. For example, like most of the refugees, I had also suffered from lack of communication during the early stages of my stay in Norway; therefore I also had an image of Norwegians as "cold" people. In addition, I experienced challenges due to the so-called "information gap", while as a foreigner I did not know certain information and I did not know how to access.

My other concern was friendship with some of the informants. Many of the participants were so friendly, so they offered me assistance with recruitment of new informants, accommodation during my next trip to Trondheim, invitation to family dinners, etc. I felt very tempted to accept these offers, but I was not sure to what extent I could get involved with the participants without losing my "professional role" (Hämäläinen et al., 2013). Finally, I decided that friendly relationship with participants was not necessarily a negative thing for my research; moreover it could be positive given that I was new in Trondheim and didn't have any contacts there.

2.4.4. Language differences

In qualitative research, language plays an essential role, because meanings and perceptions are captured from stories, expressed in words. There is a strong interconnection between language and meaning: "language is used to express meaning, but the other way round, language influences how meaning is constructed" (Van Nes et al., 2010:314). The most important, and perhaps, most challenging is the process of translating interviews because

meanings which are translated, interpreted and expressed by the researcher in his findings should be as close as possible to the meanings and perceptions expressed by interviewees in their stories (Van Nes et al., 2010). The difference between those meanings can cause problems with the validity of the research: for valid research it is important that informants' perspective is represented "clearly and accurately" (Noble, H., & Smith, 2015:3).

While bearing those challenges in my mind, I interviewed refugees, whose native language was neither Norwegian nor English. I offered informants a choice as to which language they preferred to use for interviews: four interviews were held in English, and the rest in Norwegian. Many informants demonstrated enthusiasm for speaking in Norwegian because they believed it would be a good way to practise the language; also, some informants could not speak English at all. Considering that not every participant had sufficient language knowledge, during the interview I tried to make sure that participants understood exactly what was asked in my question- In some cases, I had to rephrase questions in a way that participants understood it. In my opinion, interviews which were conducted in English, were richer and I could get better insight of the participant's life experience. During some interviews that were held in Norwegian, I felt that the interview misses depths due to an insufficient level of Norwegian of the informant (for example, interview 4). In addition, I was concerned about the validity of the interviews; therefore I decided to use the respondent's validation during the interviews: I frequently checked informants' answers by asking if I understood them correctly.

Language differences also posed challenges during the process of transcription of the interviews: I remembered exactly what participants meant by saying specific things and how he/she said it, but sometimes I felt that after translation, the meaning looked "flat" and did not convey the participant's experience. Therefore I spent a fair amount of time on the transcription of interviews, as I tried to reflect the meaning as close as possible to the original one. Initially, I planned a data verification stage in my research: to send transcribed interviews to participants so they can read and approve it before I started data analysis. (I informed them about this in the consent form in the beginning of interviews). However, most of my informants refused, saying that this stage is unnecessary – they said they trust me; in addition many interviewees emphasised that they would not have time for it and those who could not speak English would not even be able to read my translated transcriptions.

In addition, I needed special help with the translation of interviews with officials from Trondheim municipality due to the strong accent (Trønder dialect) and use of technical words. I asked for help from my friend, a native Norwegian, who works in a similar field. He helped with translation and explained specific meanings and words used by officials.

2.5. Data analysis

I started my data analysis by carefully examining the transcriptions of interviews and observation notes, which were obtained during my research. I started with open coding by looking for the keywords and ideas. First, I carefully examined interviews one by one without comparing it with others; at this stage I had to re-read and re-listen to interviews a few times to better understand the perspective of the participant. While listening to the interviews, I could vividly imagine the participants, remember their facial expressions and once again feel their stories.

My research aims to explore a few issues: perceptions of ‘home’ among refugees, factors which are important for ‘home feeling’ and how housing is connected to integration. Therefore, I identified eight questions which would best reflect the main issues of my research and then I started to group codes into themes within every question. Themes in qualitative research are built from group of codes which shape common ideas (Creswell, 2013). For example, in the question: “What makes you feel good in Norway”, I identified several themes aggregated from participants’ answers, namely “friends”, “freedom”, “family here”, “job” and “equality between people”. In addition, answers from different respondents were coloured in different colours so I would be able identify informants while doing analysis. In addition to using a coding table with themes, I used my observation notes from the field journal. Generally, observations included voice intonations, facial expressions, gestures, changes in intonations and expressions when participants talked about different subjects, sentences’ order which participants used, etc. Also, when I interviewed participants at home I was interested in the relationship between participants and housing; I observed and noted how they feel about housing, whether they put effort into making it look like home, how they felt while being home, whether they looked happy and relaxed, etc.

For analysis in narrative research it is important to understand: what are the participants saying to us? how are they saying it? why are they saying it? what is the story behind it?

(Czarniawska, 2004). I decided to analyse the themes from participants' interviews within the following categories, which in my opinion, are important for my research: "age", "gender", "country of origin", "marital status", "length of stay in Norway" and "level of education (university)" and "number of times they changed places (homes) before coming to Norway". The choice of categories was rather intuitive.

Interpretation of data is a complex process, which requires "abstracting out beyond codes and themes" for obtaining larger meaning (Greswell, 2013:187). The most challenging part for me was to reduce my data to the most important themes – I felt that I could miss some significant ideas and my informants would not be heard as they were hoping while participating in interviews. In addition, I was concerned whether I understood the meanings and perceptions the way my informants revealed them. Whenever I felt unsure about any particular meaning, I went back to the interviews and observations to study them again.

2.6. Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are critically important in qualitative research, which focuses on people's experience, behaviour and perceptions. Due to active interaction between participants and the researcher in every stage of the research, the researcher has to address several ethical issues: anonymity and confidentiality as well as possible consequences for informants because of their participation in the research. In addition, the safety and wellbeing of informants should be guaranteed and prioritised during every stage of the research. (Sanjari *at al.*, 2014). In the beginning of the interview, I handed a Content Form to all participants (both in Norwegian and English) and let them read it. In addition, I introduced my research and explained orally how and where the research can and will be used. I also asked whether participants agreed to be recorded during the interview. Participants were aware that they could withdraw from the interview without explanation and could chose not to answer questions if they didn't want to.

The names of participants were kept anonyms during the whole research. However, when I started to analyse perceptions among refugees within the categories, such as age, gender, nationality, it was clear that revealing such details may cause refugees to be identified. The risk of being recognised was also high due to the snowball strategy which I used to recruit my informants. In order to minimise the risk of being recognised, I decided not to disclose the

exact age of the participants and their length of stay in Norway, using approximate numbers instead.

Some studies consider refugees as a vulnerable population; because of their life experience, many might have suffered from serious emotional and physical trauma. Therefore, researchers are advised to take extra consideration while doing research on refugees (Mackenzie et al., 2007, Kissoon, 2006). Yet, other scholars call for rethinking vulnerability and suggest that researcher should not be restricted by general ethical norms; rather they should be able to follow those ethical rules which are the most appropriate for her\his research (Denzim, 2010, Perry, 2011). I tried to avoid sensitive topics (such as religion, the situation in their homelands, politics, etc.), however many refugees were willing to talk about it and discussed those topics in their stories. Habte emphasises that sharing painful experience in their stories and revealing their true feelings can give emotional relief to refugees, so-called “therapeutic pay-off” (Habte, 2017). I noticed that some of the informants seemed to be relieved after we talked, while others even expressed gratitude at being listened to. I also felt that for some informants (especially those who were just freshly settled), participating in the interview was simply an opportunity for communication and may be a chance to get some attention, which they miss in their lives.

2.7. Accessing the quality of research

In qualitative research, there is always a risk that findings can be inaccurate or biased because of subjective and interpretative nature of the data. Validity measures the accuracy of the obtained data; issues with validity may arise at different research stages. In my research, I experienced issues with validity during the interviews due to the differences in languages and during interpretation of the data. In order to minimise validity errors during the whole study, I decided to use another method which consists of “clear exposition of methods of data collection and analysis” (Mays & Pope, 2010:51). I provided the choice of methods in data collections analysis as well detailed personal reflections from the duration of my field work, so that readers can judge for themselves the quality of the data.

In addition, I had certain influence over the research results. In order to increase the credibility of my finding, I disclosed some of my personal perspectives and bias which could have shaped the research findings (this was discussed in the section “Field work and personal reflections” and in the discussion chapter).

3. Findings

This section will provide the results of interviews with 15 refugees of different backgrounds, who have settled in Trondheim municipality. The goal of my project was to understand what the meaning of “home” is for refugees and how their perception of that meaning has been shaped. Also, the project aims to find out whether it is possible to recreate the feeling of “home” in a foreign country, and, if so, what factors contribute to it. Finally, my research will explore how the perception of “home” among refugees has been connected to feelings of belonging, and ultimately, of integration. In order to answer my research questions, informants were asked about their understanding of “home,” as well as about their life before and after their arrival to Norway. This section will consist of four parts: first, a background of the informants interviewed; second, my findings on the perceptions and the meanings of the word “home,” as well as which factors were important in creating a “good home” according to informants. The third part of the section will present results from the interviews, which refer to the current housing (i.e. living situation) of refugees and associated experiences in Norway. This part will also disclose the results representing the connection between integration (belonging) and the feeling of home among refugees. Finally, the last part will focus on interviews with officials from Trondheim municipality in connection to settlement of refugees.

3.1. Background on informants

Background information provided about the interviewees in my research gives a “context for deeper, and fuller, understanding of the empirical data” and will therefore play a crucial role in further discussion of the results (Clark, 2006:6). Thus, I will disclose important details on my informants, but will do so in a way that minimises the risk of them being recognised (more discussion in Methods sections).

The background information on the informants was synthesized in the table below (tab.), wherein every informant was given a random number from 1 to 16. All of the informants have already been granted refugee status and have completed or were participating in an introduction program for refugees at the time the interviews were held. All informants, except one (number 7) were able to speak Norwegian (on different levels) and

most interviews were held in Norwegian. Most of the informants are from Muslim background, except two, who are Christians. However, none of the interviewees considered themselves practicing Muslims, as they mentioned that they do not go to mosque and do not fast during Ramadan.

For some interviews (Interviews 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14), I was invited to the informant's house. I will disclose the description of the interview locations further, where it is relevant.

Table 1. Background on informants

Informant number	Age (approximately)	Gender	Country of origin	Marital status	How many years in Norway (approximately)	Have to change places before coming to Norway	High education (University level)
1	40	m	Syria	s	2	yes	yes
2	30	m	Palestine	m	9	yes	yes
3	20	m	Syria	s	2	no	unfinished
4	40	f	Ethiopia	d	13	no	no
5	late 30	m	Syria	m	4	no	yes
6	30	m	Syria	m		yes	yes
7	40	m	Syria	m	2	no	no
8	late 30	f	Syria	m	3	yes	yes
9	late 20	m	Syria	s	2	yes	unfinished
10	20	f	Palestine	s	3	yes	no
11	30	f	Syria	m	3	yes	yes
12	late 28	m	Syria	s	3	yes	vocation education
13	late 30	m	Syria	m	4	yes	vocational education
14	20	f	Syria	m	4	yes	no
15	middle 20	m	Syria	s	2	yes	yes
16	40	m	Palestine	m	10	yes	yes

3.2. The meaning of “home”

3.2.1 Safety and stability

Interviews reveal that the perception of home among interviewed refugees is closely connected to safety for them and their families. Nine informants mentioned this as the first and most important thing when they were describing what home means for them:

For me, it means safety. It is the most important thing. Here I have peace, I don't need anything else (Informant 13).

Home means safety; it must be safe, especially for my children (Informant 4).

Some interviewees emphasize that home is where they were born; however the unsafe situation there forced them to compromise their opinion:

For me, home is where my homeland. But the home I had, it is not as it was, and it is not safe there. What I am dreaming about is the home without war. When there is a peace (Informant 12)

The home feeling for me means safe, stable. That is all my things about home. This what I don't feel it in my home country (Informant 2)

At the same time, some informants refer to home as safety and stability, which is connected to their future situation (i.e. job situation, situation with citizenship, etc.):

I have a stable place to stay, but not a stable home. I feel I can be kicked for any reason. I hear a lot of people who has citizenship and they lose it and go back home.... I feel I can be kicked for any reason (Informant 2)

I don't have job and because of it I don't feel safe. I don't know what happens (Informant 7)

Informant 2 has been living in Norway for almost nine years. He managed to reach a certain level of economic wellbeing, established his own successful business and bought his own house. Yet, it does not make him feel secure about his future. Every now and then he hears stories from the media about some refugees who have lost their citizenship and were sent back to their countries. It makes him feel more insecure about himself and his family's future. He is not familiar with Norwegian regulations, and does not know his own rights or what might cause problems in the future.

3.2.2. Family

Most of the informants (15 out of 16) describe family as a basis for their understanding of home. Not only was “family” mentioned by almost every interviewee, it was also prioritised as the most important, or in some cases, the only important factor for “home feeling”:

Home where is my family (Informant 5)

The most important is the family, your parents, your siblings; we cannot live without each other (Informant 10)

My family is the first, and second, and third. So it is everything for me (Informant 15)

Interviews show that having family around appears to be one of the most important conditions for recreating the feeling of home in a new place for many refugees.

If I can bring my family here, then I will feel like home (Informant 13).

If I could have my family close to me, I would be so happy and would feel home (Informant 8).

Family, in most cases, includes not only one's closest relatives, such as parents or siblings, but also grandparents, cousins, uncles and aunts as well.

Only one refugee (Informant 1) did not mention family as a basis for home. He has a difficult relationship with his parents due to changing religion. Later in our interview, however, he admits that he misses his family:

I am thinking a lot about my family in Syria. They said I don't have chance to have them (family) here.

Longing for families is a feeling of both single refugees and those who already have their own families. During the interviews of spouses, who both are refugees and have two small children, the wife narrates the difficulties of living in a foreign country without relatives:

I miss family. To have our families around us. And knowing that when we need help, that they can help us. When we need help, when we feel bad or bored, we could always just go downstairs and meet them (Informant 14).

Here, family is mostly referred to as practical support (help). This young woman highlighted that it is easy to raise children more easily when grandparents are available to help. Also, there are always many other children, whether cousins or siblings, around so the kids have company to play together.

At the same time, single refugees describe how they miss their family in a slightly different way.

I miss waking up on Fridays and have good breakfast with my family (Informant 9)

When I even talk to them, I am so happy! (Informant 15)

Here the family appears not so much as a physical thing, but rather a source of love, something they cannot easily find in a host-country.

Informant 9 emphasizes that having his own family would help him to overcome longing for his family and build a feeling of home.

One day I am going to create my own family, so part of finding a right person to stay with, having children, may be even in Norway, so then it can be possible to create this good atmosphere and create a nice family.

While some refugees have part of their families residing in Norway and other countries in Europe and therefore can travel to visit them, other refugees do not have the chance to see their families as they are still in their home countries. In the houses of some interviewees, which I had chance to visit, I did not see any photos of family or relatives on the walls or any other places, which we can often find in many homes in Norway. Many refugees, however, keep daily contact with families through the phone or different software applications:

Home is where my family is.... Part of my family is in Canada, part lives in Ecuador, part lives in Turkey. But I can have my own atmosphere, when I open my laptop, open Skype and chat to my family (Informant 9).

As Dobson emphasizes in his book, refugees manage to create an atmosphere of presence of their family in the room during the regular online session with the help of “eyes, that exchange looks, voices that talk and ears that listen” (2004:220).

3.2.3. Freedom and control

At the same time, seven of the interviewed refugees connected meaning of home to freedom. While they talk about freedom, they refer to different types of freedom. Two young men (informant 6 and 15) are both from Syria; they talk about political freedom:

...I can do what I want. That is home for me.

Freedom! We do not have this in Syria now. I can talk about what I want; I can do what I want.

Both of them suffered from the Syrian government regime; one of them was persecuted and arrested but managed to escape.

Informant 1 brings up the cultural restrictions, which limit people's freedom. He says that he did not feel free in Syrian society, even before the war started:

Home is where I find my heart, where I can feel like a free and I can do what I like. This is enough for me. Because, you know, in Syria before war, before all the problems, it was very hard time for me because they have hard society about freedom.

Other informants (11 and 12) connect freedom to independence, freedom to choose and be able to make decisions about their life and future:

I like freedom. I like that nobody will decide for me, i can make decisions for myself now (Informant 12).

So home for me, it is independence in all senses (Informant 11)

Both interviewees are young people in their 20-30, and their stories have certain similarities: they have been living with their families all their lives before coming to Norway.

For informant 16, a Palestinian refugee, who has lived in Norway for 10 years, freedom goes beyond safety, but also means possibility and choices. As a small child, he had to leave his home country and spent most of his life in Lebanon. However, he emphasizes that only in Norway he started to feel at home:

There are no rules against Palestinians here, I can do what I want, I can achieve my dreams. I can breathe!

However, not everybody experiences positive feelings about freedom in their new place. For example, informant 10 has the opposite perception of her life in Norway:

But I feel bad, I feel controlled, that somebody has a plan for me and I have to follow it. We have to follow so many rules.

Also, the theme of control (over own life, over house or future) was mentioned in connection to home feeling. The need of ownership of the apartment is mainly expressed among male refugees:

Owning my own place would be great. To have more control (Informant 9).

If I want to crush all the house, it is my thing! (Informant 2)

3.2.4. Housing conditions and physical things

Interviewees were asked to describe what is important for a “good home”, and for those who could not answer the question, I asked them to describe their “dream house”. Although interviewed refugees prioritised such things as family and safety in their perception of home, many informants later in the conversation referred to housing conditions, as to something which contributes to home feeling and which is important to make them feel good in the host-country.

Informants (2,3, 7 and 14) emphasized that they would like to live in a larger house (apartment) to have space for the whole family or also for the relatives (friends), who might be coming for a visit:

For me, good home is a nice big house...The house should be big, that whole family, many generation can live there (Informant 7).

While sharing memories about their “first” home, almost every refugee emphasised that they had “large”, “big” apartment (or house), where the whole family could live. Another interesting tradition is that many generations are used to living under the same roof and the house is usually enlarged by building new floor on the existing one:

My family lived in the first floor, my brother lived in second floor, my other brother, lived on 3th floor and I built myself place on the 4th floor (Informant 14)

Several interviewees (both married and singles) said that it was important to have a nice area outside, where children can play:

I dream about small garden, and place for my kids to play (Informant 15)

Majority of the younger refugees demonstrated preference to live in city, closer to the center:

I would prefer to live with car noises, with city vibes (Informant 9)

I like it to be in the city, I grew up in city (Informant 15)

The size of the house (apartment) and location were mentioned as considerable factors for “good home”. Other physical things connected to home and housing do not seem to play such an important role for creating home feeling among refugees. Surprisingly, no one referred to

conditions of dwelling, special furniture, design, etc. Only informant 1 mentioned the library as the physical thing which drives him back to his previous life and his first home:

I miss my library. I had 5000 books in my home library. When I lost it, I lost maybe 20 years of my life.

3.2.5. Social life (friends and neighbours)

At the same time, every interviewee emphasized the important of social life for creating a “good home”. Interviews reveal that having good relationships with neighbours is critical for many refugees.

Neighbours are extremely important! If I have perfect location, for example near the sea, but have bad neighbours, I would not be happy. Neighbours are exactly as my family (Informant 16)

The most important for good home are neighbours. In Islam, it is important (Informant 14).

Moreover, for many refugees, neighbours are much more than the people who live nearby, they are “like a family”. When describing their life and home in their homelands, many informants shared nice stories about their neighbours. According to the stories told by informant 2, 3, 6, and 15, it is very common to share food with each other :

When you make some food, a special food, for example and I know that my neighbours don't have it and cannot taste it, I just take one piece and deliver to them (Informant 2).

In addition, it is common that neighbours are involved in other common activities: their children play together when they are small and go to school together when they are older; adults gather daily after dinner and sit outside in the gardens while drinking coffee and playing cards, etc. In this way, neighbours become a big part of social life as well as create an important base for “home feeling”:

If I go on the street 200 metres I have to say hi to 200 people. That is serious! If I am bored, and have nothing to do, I can just go outside, and I will always meet somebody to talk to ((Informant 6).

Only one of the interviewees revealed that he was not close to his neighbours, as his family lived on a remote farm:

We lived 1 km from neighbours; we met them often to play football together. But we were not super close (Informant 12)

Although interviewees have different backgrounds and ages, everyone (except informant 12) apprised of active social life in their home country. In addition to immense socializing with relatives and neighbours, informants used to socialize at work, study place, etc. Informant 1 describes his life when he became a student:

I had a lot of friends. Just I used my home for sleeping. Nothing more!

Informant 15 describes his social life in Syria as “good” and “different”:

Social life does not mean just party and alcohol. There we have nice cafe, we could go there, have coffee and play cards. I had friends, I could not meet them every day, but I still met them very often, it is very important.

Almost half of refugees (7 out of 16) revealed that that social life and friends is what they miss the most from their home country.

According to interviews, socializing with friends and neighbours is an important part of everyday life. Friends, family and neighbours are the thing which gave refugees the feeling of comfort and happiness; therefore it is often connected to meaning of home.

It was simple life, but I loved it so much... We always had time for each other (Informant 6)

3.2.6. Life before and after

While discussing the meaning of home, it is worth emphasizing the theme of life “before and after”, as a considerable factor which influences perception of home among refugees. Many of the informant, as any of us, have undergone certain changes during their lives which can be described as “moving from one fixed, known status or circumstances to a new one” (Krulfeld, 1994:30). It can be, for example: marriage, starting education or a new job, getting children, etc. In addition to those changes, refugees were forced to leave their homes and search for new ones; many had to change several “homes” during their trip to their current destination. Therefore, the meaning and perception of home has also changed for some informants during different life stages:

Still it is a big difference when we talk of what home was before for me and what it is now (Informant 5)

Informant 5, a young married man from Syria with 2 children, has lived in Norway for 4 years. He was the first of his family who came to Norway, the wife with his son came afterwards, and his younger daughter was born in Norway. He emphasized that before (in his home in Syria), it was important to have a big nice house and to be in close relationship with neighbours. Now, however, after he got married, moved to Norway and has children to take care of, for him home means family and a place where he can “feel good and do not feel stress”. He, of course, wants to have a nice home where all family members have a good space, however, his perception about “good home” has changed. For example, social life and neighbours are not so important, he simply does not have “so much time for other people” as he has to work two jobs.

Informant 6 explains the difference between his two homes:

If I talk about Syria and Norway, it is like mother and wife. Mother you cannot choose, I did not choose to be born in Syria, so it is like my mother, I love Syria. I have decided to come to Norway, the same as I decided to marry my wife. I feel like Trondheim is my home. But I will never be like my home in Syria.

Informant 3, a single young man from Syria, had lived together with his family all his life. Therefore, the meaning of home has become different for him when he was forced to leave his home country:

It means different things. Home now and home before. First, I must be with my family, but now it is very difficult. Then, when you live with your family, it means everything, it means different things.

Informant 1, a young Syrian man from a rich family near Damascus, used to live in a big house with his parents and then moved to a separate apartment when he started studying. He used to have good space and even a library for 5 000 books. After his home in Syria was bombed, he move first to Lebanon and then to Norway. He had lived in different reception centres for almost 2 years where he shared his housing with people from different backgrounds. Due to such dramatic changes on his life, his perception of home has changed. Here is how he describes his small room in a central apartment in Trondheim:

Like heaven! Exactly like heaven! This is a difference. I lived in the same room with 6 or more persons, 2 from Eritrea, one from Iraq, no language to understand. And here I am in the personal home. Like heaven! Exactly like heaven!

3.2.7. Is home a fixed place?

One of the goals of my research was to understand whether it is possible to recreate the home feeling in a new place and how refugees manage to achieve it. Majority of interviewees (9 out of 16) reported that it is possible to recreate home in a new place:

I think it is possible, you can get home feeling in different places, all depends on you (informant 5).

Informant 9 had to change several place before coming to Norway and two places in Trondheim, yet during this long journey, he has learned how to recreate home feeling :

But I can have my own atmosphere, when I open my laptop, open Skype and chat to my family, or listen to Arabic music..., it is all inside of the mind, how I feel is more than what I see.

In the same time part of the refugees (informants 2, 7,10) agree with the statement that home is a fixed place and therefore cannot be recreated anywhere else:

The feeling which family gives to place, called home, cannot be substituted with nothing. And home is the family. So it will not be possible to get the same home feeling in other place (Informant 7).

Other informants (informants 6 and 11) could not give a clear answer. They admitted that it might be possible to feel at home in a new country, but only to some extent:

It will never be 100 percent the same as it was in the place where you were born (Informant 6)

I don't know...maybe I can create home here...with my own family, but it still will be different (Informant 11)

Finally, informant 1 and informant 15 demonstrated conscious unwillingness to recreate home feeling in their new place. Moreover, respondents revealed that the difficult situations in life taught them not to get any close feeling to a place and now they made certain efforts not to attach themselves to the new place:

If you attach your body to one place, to one country, it will be difficult to continue living. I decided that I will not attach word home to some place. Home can be inside of my heart (Informant 15).

For me, I don't like to have any feelings, special feelings for this place. Because if I give my feelings to this place, this home, I will like it as my own home, it will be special. After maybe little bit time, I will have to move out. I will feel like something will break my heart again” (Informant 1).

3.2.8. Longing for the home country and myth of returning home

While talking about the meaning of home, many refugees expressed in some way a sentimental longing for the homeland, which affected their perception of home:

Sometimes I miss stones and sand from my country. I miss everything, even air (Informant 6).

In addition, such “fetishization of homeland“ contributes to constructing of a pervasive image of the ideal home, according to which the only true and ideal home can be in the refugee’s motherland (Graham&Khosravi, 1997:128):

But for me home is where my homeland. There is a place where I was born, that is everything for me (Informant 13)

While highlighting the difference between the current place and homeland, refugees admit that they miss their “old homes”:

It will never be like my home in Syria (Informant 6).

I miss everything from my old home (Informant 7).

At the same time, half of the informants reported that they plan to return home when the circumstances allow them to go back:

If my problems are finished, I want to come back to Palestine. And I always just think about that (Informant 2).

But if everything goes fine in Syria, I will move there right away. Even though I have good life here, I want to come back. I will just come back to my place (Informant 5).

While informants realised the bonuses of life in host-country, such as education, job opportunities, safety, etc., they want to return to the homeland. Some hope to come back to the old places and life which they used to have, yet other informants are aware of inevitable changes.

But now I don't know if I want to back and live there, even if the wars stop. Because everything is going to be different now (Informant 11).

I know it will not be the same. I know I will not be able to get my job back. But it is not important. The most important is that it is my homeland. And want to live in society, where I belong to (Informant 15)

Informant 15 described his happy life in his home land: he lived together with his parents, was one of the best students at university and managed to achieve a significant career right after graduation. Now he realised that his home in Syria is different from the one he left, yet he insists that “people will be the same” despite everything.

3.3. Life in Norway, current “home” and integration

3.3.1. Housing conditions and its importance

The size of the housing is the first thing which most of the informants comment on when revealing their housing history in Norway. Informants (4, 5, 6, 7, 13 and 14) reported that their dwellings were not spacious enough and that they would prefer a larger one. All the informants mentioned above have children. While informant 4, 5 and 6 managed to find new housing and moved out, informant 7 with his wife who is expecting a baby, and married couples (informants 13 and 14) still continue to live in their current dwelling, which they get from municipality

While size of the apartment and lack of space are the main concerns among refugees with families, single refugees seem to prioritise location. Informant 9, an intelligent and calm young man, received his first housing from the municipality. The place was located in the suburb, approximately an 1 hour by bus from Trondheim. He was happy with the housing conditions and neighbours, yet he did not enjoy living there:

It was too cold and too dark, and I felt that I need more people around me, because I don't feel comfortable to have level of quietness. I would prefer to live with car noises, with city vibes.

At the same time, informant 4 complains that she does not feel safe living in an area where many refugees live, because she does not feel safe.

Informant 15 also decided to move out from his first housing, which was offered by municipality. He emphasizes that neither size of the housing nor proximity to downtown is important for him, but living among other refugees makes him feel safe and relaxed:

In my second place, I like it so much more. You know why? Because many foreigners live there too. So I feel like one of them. Before, in my first place when I was in the bus, I was the one with the "dark head" in the bus, now in my new place, there are so many foreigners, so now it is opposite, you can hardly see one "white head" and most are "dark heads", like me. I like it. Many people are from Turkey, Syria, I feel safer, they are from the same culture, I feel so good there. It does not mean that I am friend with everybody, no, I don't know many people from here, but it makes me feel safe.

At the same time, refugees who are married and have children are more flexible with location preferences:

It does not matter if it is central or not, it is nice to live both, outside the city or in centrum. As long as you have a car, it is not so important (Informant 13).

For instance, informant 5 does not mind spending extra time daily to drive from his current house to work and back. His first place was very central, but small for his family with 2 small children. He is satisfied with the new place, where he moved 3 months ago, as there is enough space for every member of the family.

Although the majority of informants were not totally happy with the size of their current dwelling or location, no one complained about the physical conditions of the house, lack of furniture, etc. The only exception was informant 2 who emphasised that he really needed a bidet in his bathroom:

I cannot live like that! I only have tank with water and it is so difficult!

He applied for a permit to install a bidet in his own apartment in a block building, however his application was rejected. He ended up selling the apartment and buying a house, where he was allowed to make changes and installations.

Most of the refugees demonstrated flexibility and an open mind while describing physical characteristic of their current housing. Informant 15 and 9, however, emphasized that satisfaction with accommodation is very important for their development and integration into the host-country.

Yes, housing is important for integration. When I am happy with where I live, I can do other things and develop myself (Informant 15).

3.3.2. Using of neighbourhood and local centres

Similar to the finding in the previous paragraph, refugees showed flexible attitudes and did not express specific requirements or expectations towards the neighbourhood area. Majority of the informants are satisfied with the neighbourhood area and local facilities:

Here is nice, children-friendly area. We also have everything, we live may be 10 min from local center City Syd, and everything is there.

I live at Flatåsen; it is 30 min from centre. It is nice place, typical Norwegian suburb. Very nice, nice nature, and very very quiet. I like it very much.

The refugees I interviewed live in different locations: informants 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 12 are settled in apartments close to downtown, while the rest live in apartments and houses outside of the city centre. Most informants reported that they have easy access to the local centres and facilities (stores, cafes, gym, etc). Two interviewees, young girls age 20-30, however, reported inconvenience of their locations (Ranheim and Brundalen).

We have shop not far from me, but there is no cafe, or place for activities! But if I want to take coffee, I have to go to centre to the cafe; we don't have anything close to me.

At the same time, the interviews reveal that even informants who can enjoy easy access to local stores and other facilities, do not use them or use them to a very small extent:

I mostly use shopping center to buy stuff and do the grocery. But other things I don't use much (Informant 3)

All I need, I buy in Sweden or some stuff I can buy in place close to my work (Informant 5).

I do not use cafe often, only with the people which I do not know. But I can do shopping sometimes (Informant 6).

Some informants also admit that they prefer to buy food in Arabic stores, even though it is not in their neighbourhood.

At the same time, interviewees complain about lack of affordable free-time activities (places) in Trondheim area. Informant 2, who has lives in Trondheim for 7 years, prefers to take his family for a tour to Sweden whenever he has free time:

It is educational city; there is not so much free places to relax. I am living here for maybe 7 years, I don't see more then Leo's Lekeland for kids or Pirbadet. No, not so much activities that you can have. Every activity here is very expensive... When I need to go to some places, I go to Sweden.

Informant 13 and 14 reveal that they (and many of their friends) cannot fully enjoy local restaurants due to several reasons, such as expensive prices, not enough room for kids, religious restrictions and short opening hours:

We don't go to restaurants; there is no place for kids. I have 2 kids for example, and my friend has 5, it will be no space for us (Informant 14)

Here in Norway, weekend is the worse time. We do not drink. For Norwegians, to spend weekend is to drink. But we do not drink! At home we could go to restaurants and have a good time. Restaurants are open 24 hours. Here everything is closed so soon (Informant 13).

Also, due to religious restrictions, informant 14 is not able to use swimming facilities:

Also I miss places where I could go to the beach or swimming pool and swim. Here they don't have separate places for women as we had, so it is difficult for me. Many of my girlfriends say the same, they cannot go to swimming pool here, and it means the kids cannot go neither.

Such small details, however, escalate into a deeper problem, as the woman and her kids are hindered from active and healthy life and socialisations with others, and as a result they cannot feel “like home” in the Norwegian environment.

Public transportation is another issue which seems to affect women to a larger degree than men. The Majority of interviewees did not mention getting around the city as a problem: half of the male informant use cars to get around the city while others walk or take buses. At the same time, only one female reported using a car while others use public transportation or depend on their husbands (or other relatives):

My husband drives me if have to go somewhere(Informant 8)

Informants 10 and 11 complain about the inconvenient schedule of local buses, which prevents them from participating in social life, meeting friends, training, or even travelling:

I always have to take a bus to get to the center, to the shopping center, or anywhere. And it is not a problem, but bus does not go very often. Also, if I want to go to the airport, and plane leaves at 7, it is hard. Bus starts at 6, but how I can get to the airport. I have to take a taxi. I don't have anyone who can drive. I like this place and apartment, but really, this is so difficult. In the evening, if I want to meet my friends in the center, I have to go home early, because there are no buses in the evening. It is very hard. It is the same if I want to go for training, there is nothing in my area, I have to take bus everywhere. I wish there was better offers of public transport.

3.3.3. Neighbours and social life

The second part of this chapter has already revealed that social life and relationships with neighbours play a vital role in refugees' perception of home. As Netto emphasizes in his research, refugees "satisfaction with accommodation is strongly related to their perception and experience of the neighbourhood (2011:292). Informant 8, a young married woman, who had changed homes three times in different countries before coming to Norway, reveals that she feels like home here:

We have super nice neighbours. We feel so good here, and that is because of them. They are so kind, they always talk to us, and they want to do everything for us (Informant 8).

Moreover, the interviews reveal that not only relationships with neighbours but also communication with host-society and social life contribute to home-feeling among refugees. When asked about their current living situation, many informants repeatedly referred to this issue. Nine out of sixteen interviewees describe communication and socialisation with Norwegians as one of the main challenges during their settlement in Norway:

This is very important for refugees and in general for all people, who live here. To communicate! (Informant 1)

I feel very lonely. But when I sit in pub for example and there are many people, but I still feel lonely. They look at me and think: oh, he is a not Norwegian, refugee. And they turned their back to me. I don't force them. I don't know why people are afraid of us, refugees, what have I done to them? (Informant 3).

Some of the informants made attempts to build relationships with Norwegians and some of the attempts become successful. Informant 2 tried to take initiative (invited his neighbour for a dinner and offered help with heavy grocery bags), but in response the neighbour threatened him with the police. He had to try many times before his neighbour become friendlier:

But now, we are good friends, she keeps visiting us even after we moved.

Informants with children seem to have better possibilities for socialising and communication than single refugee:

We got a few friends (Norwegian families) because of our son. We met them in kindergarten on parents' meeting, also when he goes to visit some kids from his kindergarten in their place (Informant 13).

I have one very close neighbour. She sometimes watches my kids; she does not have her own family. Her doors are often opened for my family. Kids come to her; she always gives them something nice (Informant 4).

Informant 6 came Norway as single man, met his girlfriend while he was in a refugee camp and married her afterwards. As he experienced socialization with Norwegians both as a single and as a married man, he emphasises that people are more friendly and open if you are married and have children; at the same time they get more suspicious of single refugees.

At the same time, some refugees have managed to enjoy communication with Norwegians and establish their social life in Norway. Informant 12 is a very social and energetic young man. He spent most of his life on a farm in the Syrian countryside, where he did not have friends. In contrast, in Norway he easily talks to strangers in the street and at the store; has great relationships with his neighbours (both young and elderly):

I did not have so many friends home, I have more friends in Norway than I had in Syria. I have friends from different countries, but I like my Norwegian friends more.

Many refugees reported that they do not have an arena where they can meet and socialised with Norwegians. Informant 1 noted that he feels particularly good in his church, as he gets to talk to other people:

I feel like home when I am in church.. But not because of the place or building, but atmosphere and a lot of good people. Just because I get contacted there, Norwegian people came to me alone and talked to me without knowing me from before. They say hello, we want to speak to you, we know a lot about you, you came from Syria, and can you tell us a bit about your life. This was like miracle for me, miracle in this country!

Similarly, informant 4 describes his feeling about his working place:

I felt myself that I am like other people, not worse than them, not different. The boss came to me many times, talked to me, asked how I am, and he did the same to others. I felt that I am not different, felt like I am home. Everybody liked me, everybody tried to help me, and I felt the same like I am with the family.

Informants emphasize that they are willing to communicate more with Norwegians and get to know them better, but they need more activities and places for it. At the same time, informant 6 highlights that it is important for the host-society to take initiative:

I think that Norwegian people, if they can, they should become a bit closer to us, take contact, and take first step, because we, refugees may just be too shy to do it. The first step is so important.

Informant 1 insists that there should be more organised activities, where refugees can have possibilities to meet and communicate with Norwegians, get to know them as well as have opportunities to properly introduce themselves.

3.3.4. Feeling like home, belonging and integration

When asked to describe their feeling about life in Norway, interviewees demonstrated different reflections, which can be roughly grouped into two groups. First group (7 out of 16 informants) admitted that they feel like home in Norway. The groups consist of both single refugees and refugees who have their own families:

Norway is my home. It gave me freedom and protection to me and my family. Yes, I started to live my life here (Informant 16).

It is my home. But I start feeling like one of them (Informant 12).

Informants from group two (9 out of 16) revealed that they don't feel like home in Norway, neither do they feel that they belong to the host-society. Informant 10 and 11 define cultural differences between societies as one of the reasons which prevent them from feeling at home in Norway:

I cannot feel home here in Norway, because life is so different here (Informant 11).

Many refugees experienced loss of identity due to the dramatic situation in their homelands and forced migration. For example, informant 14, a middle aged man, was one of the best electricians in his town in Syria: his work was well-paid and he managed to build a house for him and his fiancé. As he lost both his house and his occupational status after arriving in Norway, he feels devalued:

If we had anything here, but we don't. We are none here, so I would say, no, I don't feel like home here and I don't belong here.

At the same time, part of the interviewees, who initially expressed strong positive or negative answers towards this question, demonstrated certain flexibility during the interview and expressed, that they are not totally certain about their opinion. For example, informant 9, who initially reported that he feels at home in Norway, later revealed that:

It is hard to tell. Maybe in 5 years, yes, but I need more time and also Norwegians need more time to understand me and accept me. We both need time.

Other refugees also referred to time as a healer, time as a possibility to cope with changes and time as a hope for achieving a better life and integration. Informant 7 hopes that with time he will be able to speak better Norwegian and find a job, while informant 8 looks forward to improve her Norwegian level and receive Norwegian citizenship.

But still, as long as there is no job, I do not feel a part of society or like other people here (Informant 7).

I have not been here for long enough, only 3 years, but now I speak better Norwegian, but I hope I will be able to speak better. Also, when I get citizenship here, I will feel more part of Norway I think (Informant 8).

However, informant 2, successful businessmen who has lived in Norway for 9 years, emphasizes that he is not integrated and will never feel that he belongs to Norwegian society:

You are not Norwegian even if you get Norwegian passport and even if you speak Norwegian, even if you buy a house, even if you got a company, even if you have Norwegian people working for you, it is not meaning that.

Many informants reported that their children (or younger siblings) have been able to adjust to the new situation easier and have managed to integrate better than adults:

But my little sister, she is 8. She goes to school here, she looks at her classmates and she wants to be like them. But I am different, I don't know if I will ever be like Norwegian (informant 10).

Other informants also mention that location and place are very important in order to become integrated into the host-society:

I think place plays a major role. Where do you live and with whom (Informant 9).

He emphasizes that he felt it was easier to integrate after he moved to his new place in town:

It helps to live together with the person who is originally from this country; it helps to understand some small details, not only to learn the language, but to see what they have for a breakfast. It helps me to understand people better. I like when houses are close to each other, it is very strange for me when houses are so far for each other and you have no one to talk to

3.3.5. Discrimination and bullying/harassment

Interviews revealed that some informants experienced racial harassment and bullying during their stay in Norway. The case of bullying was mentioned in relation to refugees' children (Informants 2, 4, 16):

My daughter has a darker skin and she was bullied in school. Last time she was suffering for 6 months, she even did not want to go to school (Informant 16).

I have a daughter, she was in kindergarten, now she is in second class, but since she was in kindergarten, she always said: Papa, why they tell me I need to go home? (Informant 2).

Informant 4 had to change school because her kids were bullied. At the same time, she admits that she was racially harassed at her work place by one of the employees:

“...he called me "Hi nigger" and asked me when I was going to go back to Africa.”

Also, refugees emphasized that discrimination due to their race, nationality or refugee status prevents them from finding (getting) a proper job and better housing, or even from socialisation with the locals. Informant 2 and informant 14 feel that their professional qualities are underestimated because they are not Norwegians:

I was working hard, playing with kids; she was sitting and looking at her mobile all the time. And she got job just because she is Norwegian, and I am not (Informant 14).

I have one worker working here for me, he just says: why you should be my boss, I should be your boss! I said: but it is not a big deal, you can be my boss, just do my work, I will be happy to work for you. It did not come from nothing! He wants to have the same just because he is Norwegian.

Informants 7 and 13 attempted to find proper housing themselves (without help from the municipality), however they complained that it was difficult (or sometimes was not possible) to find housing:

But I could not find anything better; that was the only one who responded to my letter. Nobody wants to rent a place for refugees (Informant 7).

Informant 3 complains that he is deprived of socialisation with the local people because he is a refugee:

I feel very lonely. But when I sit in pub for example and there are many people, but I still feel lonely. They look at me and think: oh, he is a not Norwegian, refugee. And they turned their back to me.

Despite the fact that several refugees experienced discrimination, informant 6, however, emphasizes equality while talking about his life in Norway:

I like that equality among people; all are under the same rules, regardless of who you are. At my work, everybody is Norwegian, but they take care of me, they make sure that I understand language and I feel they love me.

3.3.6. Information gap

Another important issue, which prevents refugees from feeling at home and integrating into the host-society is the “information gap”, the lack of knowledge about certain rules and regulations as well as the traditions and cultural norms of the host-society. Informant 2 emphasizes the importance of the “information gap” for refugees:

It is a kind of problem, we don't know many things! The only problem in Norway is this gap. And if it closed I will not go back to my country.

The interviewee brought many examples (both from everyday life and business experience), when he was automatically expected to know certain regulations and rules while at the same time it was difficult (and sometimes just impossible) for him to find information about it.

This is I feel bad because we live here, we get citizenship, and I think: oh, I see there are a lot of rules I don't know about. And when I do a mistake with the government, with tax or something, they are coming, they need to make a problem, and they give me a fine. I said: I did not know about this. But they say: this is not our business that you don't know, but I really don't know. They said: you live here, you speak Norwegian, and it is your problem.

When we lived in Bjolsen (our old place), we just put grill outside in balcony and tried to grill. It is very small; it is not even a big one. And I just see that my neighbours started to complain: it is not allowed! Did you read the book? I said: which book? The book about rules. I did not know about this.

When informant 13 was injured at his work place, he was not sure whether the medical expenses should be compensated by the employer:

I paid approximately 1000 nok for everything. I don't know much about rules and insurance. I don't know. We do not have experience. And nobody told us about free lawyer. This is a first time I hear about it. I did not know anything.

Also, when asked if they are familiar with different programs, which are specifically created to support refugees (such as programs from the municipality and Husbanken, social

programs, etc.), some informants admitted that they have very little knowledge or never heard about it (Informant 6, 7, 10, 13):

I helped 4 people to get into this program. Many people just don't know about this program! I told my workers about it, I have 4 persons from my work, and they applied (Informant 2).

3.3.7. Stereotypes and media

Many interviewees (informant 3, 8, 6, 10, 15, 16) report, that in everyday life they often have to deal with widespread stereotypes of “refugees, created by the media. According to the interviews, refugees are mostly perceived either as terrorists or passive victims, who came to Norway to take advantage of the Norwegian system:

Norwegian should remember that we are humans, do not call us refugees or terrorists. They write about bad things which other refugees have done, and then Norwegians read it and think: oh, those refugees!! Do not generalise! (Informant 3)

Everybody thinks that we came because we want their money and that we like staying home, watching TV and using their money. But it is not true!!! We used to have money and we have a very rich culture, I wish we had a chance to show it to Norwegians (Informant 10).

Such stereotypes shape the perceptions about refugees in the receiving society, which hinders refugees from feeling welcomed in the host-country and complicate their communication with Norwegians. Informant 15, for example, revealed that he is almost forced to avoid his landlord, who does not like Muslims and tries to make arguments about it:

He is very nice, but he does not like Muslims. So we have many discussions about it, he thinks that we are all brainwashed. I cannot argue with him, he is the landlord.

In contrast, informant 6 attempted to counter wrong images of refugees by giving an interview at the local newspaper where he shared his life story and told about the traditions of his country. He admitted that his attempt was successful; some Norwegians took contact with him and even arranged a meeting:

She told me she was so surprised when she met us (me and my wife). She said when she sees news on TV, she had different impression about refugees, but then she met us, she completely changed her mind.

3.3.8. Norwegian rules and regulations

Although many refugees praise the efforts of the host-state and appreciate the opportunities given in a new country, they still point out that it is difficult to achieve home feeling in Norway, due to particular flaws in the system.

Informant 13 contends that with his current temporary passport he is not able to travel to any country in the Middle East, where he can visit his family and relatives. He emphasizes that he is not afraid of any other challenge which refugees might face in the host-country, but for him it is crucial to be able to see his family:

The most important is my family. And we have problems. We have some kind of temporary travel documents; we can use it while traveling in Europe. But we cannot use it to enter Arabic countries... I just need to be able to travel and see my family. All refugees think about it.

Also, almost half of refugees complain about imperfections in the Norwegian system, such as long waiting time for application approvals, making appointments with NAV and people from the municipality, etc.:

Also, system is very slow!!! You have to wait so long everywhere, to get appointment, to get your application approved, etc. I wish the system was more efficient and fast (Informant 11).

In addition, interviewee 10, a young girl who has lived in Norway since 2015, reveals that she feels constantly pressured and controlled by the system:

But I feel bad, I feel controlled, that somebody has a plan for me and I have to follow it. We have to follow so many rules.

In the same way, informant 12 disagrees that every refugee should have to dedicate 2 years to studying the Norwegian language; he withdrew from the Introduction program in a little over one year and started to work right away:

I cannot just study. And spend so much time for this. So I decided that it was enough for me.

Another issue, which was mentioned in several interviews, is qualification (approval of education and professional skills) in the Norwegian system. The majority of my informants (10 out of 16) either have education from their home countries or were not able to complete it due to the war. At the same time, qualification processing requires a lot of time and documents to provide; as a result some refugees decided to give up, start working (informant 2, 5) or take a new education instead (informant 6, 9):

It takes a lot of paper and a lot of time, so I did not process things. It is so difficult for me to get more papers because of my situation. I just got some papers from my university, I sent it to NOKUT to fix it, but they asked for more papers, and it is not so easy for me to go there now and take it (Informant 2).

I have master degree but I have not approved my diploma here in Norway. I wanted to continue my study in university, but it takes so long to pass Bergen test (Norwegian language test). So I started with my work (Informant 5).

Informant 13, an electrician with 10 years' experience from his country, is currently unemployed. He is in the process of approving his working skills and getting certificate of apprenticeship: for this he should work several hours as a trainee ("praktikant"):

I am working at some place, my other colleague he has no experience at all. And Norwegians work so slow. I must admit, I can work better and more effective than them, but I need this certificate! The problem is that it is not easy to find a place where company wants to take you in as "praktikant". I have been waiting for 9 months before I finally got a place as "praktikant". It may take 2/3 years.

The informant admits that the period of waiting to become "certified" makes him feel "worthless" and helpless; at the same time, it does not allow him to feel "like home".

3.4. Interviews with officials

3.4.1. Introducing informants

This part will provide highlights from the interviews with officials from Trondheim municipality and a professor from NTNU, as well as demonstrate their perspectives on

accommodation of refugees in Trondheim. Table 1 introduces representatives and their role and connection to refugees' resettlement process.

Table 2. Information about participants

	Name	Organisation	Position	Role of organisation (connection to settlement process)
Representative from IMDI	Fiffi Namungunga	The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration and Diversity, (IMDi Midt-Norge)	Senior adviser	Help refugees (or migrant) to get a place in municipality. Distribution of refugees. IMDI presents refugees' needs and wishes to the municipality and they take over the process of settlement.
Representatives from Flybo	Marie Sandvik and 2 more colleagues	Refugees settlement department, (Flyktningsbosetting Helse- og velferdskontor Heimdal og Lerkendal), Trondheim kommune	Flyboteam, Employees	Work with settlement of refugees directly from refugee's reception center or from other places; accommodating refugees in both the public and private sector according to information about refugees and availability of housing. Preparing place before arrival and coordination.
Representative from INN	Anna Kristina Knudsen	Qualification Center for Immigrants (Kvalifiseringscenter for Innvandrere (INN), Trondheim kommune)	Head of Department	Preparation of dwelling (picking up the key, furnishing the place, checking the standards). Meeting at airports, following to housing, showing around. Providing information about Introduction program. Support in earlier settlement stage. Following up during and after Introduction program. Information support
Representative from NTNU	Eli Støa	<u>Department of Architecture and Planning</u> , Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)	Professor	Involved in research on the effect of physical environment (development of local centres) on quality of life and integration of refugees in Trondheim

3.4.2. Importance of housing in the integration process

While reflecting their perspective about the settlement of refugees in Trondheim, all interviewees agrees to different extents that housing affects the integration process of refugees. The representative from NTNU, however, argues that the importance of housing has not been recognised among housing providers and policymakers:

It is very little awareness that dwelling can play a big role in integration process. According to municipality and IMDI, language and job is the most important thing for integration. But I think, that it is not easy to describe that dwelling is important too. Yes, refugees get a place to live and maybe they are even satisfied with it: they have roof to live under, place to sleep, but not more than this. But this is also the place where they meet with environment, this is the place where refugees meet neighbourhoods and build their relationship.

The professor emphasizes that housing is much more than a physical environment. It is essentially a place for refugees' socialisation and learning the culture of the host-society; the place where they connect themselves to and develop feelings of belonging to the neighbourhood and society.

At the same time, the representative from Flybo highlights that satisfaction with housing and place is also vital for refugees' study and future development:

Housing is very important, if refugees are not happy with the place where they live, their introduction program will be delayed or it will take away their focus from the program.

According to interviews, location of housing (place, municipality) seem to be less important, however, some of the representatives emphasize that refugees who are settled in smaller municipalities have a better chance for integration:

So integration depends also on where refugees live. The smaller is the place, the better integration (Representative from Flybo)

But I even think that small place is more positive, if there are enough possibilities to find work afterwards. And the adviser in small kommune (municipality) does not have 65 participants, so then refugees can have more time with adviser and adviser can follow them up more closely during their integration process (Representative from INN).

The representative from IMDI emphasizes that it is important to settle refugees according to their needs. At the same time, it is the task of IMDI to distribute (locate) them proportionally among different municipalities:

We can see how many refugees were settled before, how many of them got high education, how many of them are without education. And we try to balance them... That is a very important task even though it is not us who settle them directly.

3.4.3. Main challenges in refugees' settlement and obstacles to successful integration

From the perspective of the representatives, there are a numbers of obstacles which restrict refugees' settlement in Trondheim municipality as well as hinder refugees from achieving "home feeling" in a new place. The representative from Flybo, who provides refugees with housing, complains about the lack of dwellings in the private sector:

We don't have enough housing in private sector; we get people who are recommended by reception center to be placed in private sector, but we don't have enough dwelling for them. It can be because not everybody from private sector wants to rent apartment to refugees; that is why it is so difficult.

Better offers in housing would help to avoid situations where refugees have to live in groups with others (5 or 6 people together), which is not suitable for everyone.

In addition, representatives from Flybo underscore that they provide accommodations for refugees according to the data from the Reception Centre. In order to improve the settlement process, they need better and detailed information about the refugees to be able to find housing according to the refugees' needs.

While house providers from Flybo are involved in search for housing for refugees, Qualification Center for Immigrants (INN) assists refugees after their arrival, coordinates refugee's enrolment in the Introduction program and provides information support. The representative from INN points out several problems, which to her view, impede the settlement process for refugees as well as their integration. One of the biggest obstacles is lack of resources:

I think that more money should be invested in the system, in a way that we can have enough employees who can follow up refugees closely and money for good projects for improve qualifications of refugees. That is the biggest problem; I think that is the main key.

When numbers of employees does not increase according to the numbers of refugees, refugees are going to suffer from the lack of information and support, and as result the lack of knowledge. According to the INN representative, the amount of refugees per one adviser has increased from 25 to 65/69 for the last few years:

We can only check the most important things and provide them with only the most important information.

Also, cooperation with the municipality and universities is another key for successful settlement. The possibility to start working and getting experience, as well as learning the Norwegian working culture, is essential for integration:

We cannot provide enough practical training for our participants. It would be really great if we could provide more training already in the earlier stage of introduction program, so the refugees have possibilities to learn more.

The representative from INN suggests that the local municipality should take responsibility and assist in providing places for training. In addition, the county municipality should somehow simplify the process of certification so that refugees are able to get their education (work experience) from their homelands approved in a shorter period of time:

At the same time, the representative from IMDI stresses the importance of education for refugees:

We believe that the most important things for integration are education and work. We do believe that when person begins with education, person gets to know the system here in Norway.

Therefore, it is very important that employees in the municipality are qualified enough to be able to help refugees to seize those opportunities:

I believe that it is mostly depends on workers in municipality. If they do not see possibilities, it will difficult for refugee to get opportunity.

In addition, there are more chances for refugees to integrate, if the municipality can provide them with activities, online courses, and engaged them in social life.

The professor from NTNU also emphasizes the importance of socialization for refugees. She believes the neighbourhood can be “social arena”, one of the places where refugees can both get social contacts and feel themselves connected to the host-country, and therefore feel “like home”:

I think "home feeling" goes beyond private feelings, but also include belonging to neighbourhood and society. For example, in borettslag (cooperatives) they have dugnad

(voluntary work when neighbours get together and fix clean, paint or tidy things up). This is a good arena for refugees to meet neighbours. But it can also involve some conflicts because refugees do not understand what it is and why they have to do, but nevertheless even such a conflict is a possibility to socialise, talk, discuss, and try to solve problems. But if neighbours do not meet at all, then of course, conflict will be avoided, but also refugees miss the opportunity to become a part of society.

Research, conducted by the professor and her students, demonstrates that refugees hardly ever use local centers (or use it to a very limited extent). In order to improve the current situation, the professor believes that cooperation between neighbours should be organised in a better way, and that more activities should be offered, where refugees can get more active and social:

It is not enough just to have center with some shops and parking space around, it must be some activities which will attract refugees.

The professor also highlights another important challenge in refugees' settlement which prevents refugees from feeling at home in Norway:

I think that main challenge is that municipalities foremost think about practical things: they have refugees, which needs a place to live and they vacant dwellings in municipality for them to offer, so they do it without thinking for example: which kind of dwelling suits best for refugees, refugees with family or single, refugees with different cultural backgrounds...

There are different types of housing like "enebolig" (stand alone, private house), rekkehus (cottages, which have common walls with the neighbours), block apartments or borettslag (apartment in cooperatives), thus some types of housing can suit one type of refugee but does not suit others.

In addition, all four representatives agree that the personal attitudes of refugees, and the effort which refugees are willing to make, play a crucial role in the process of settlement and further integration:

In order to be happy, person should be able to accept changes. I think but many who does not feel happy here, they cannot forget about their all lives and that is very easy to understand. But this keeps them from being happy. Those who managed to find a balance

between future and past, those who can think that I am here now, here I live, here my kids will go to school and kindergarten, so they manage to connect their "home feeling" to Norway, to Trondheim (Representative from INN).

I think it is different, how much efforts refugees put to get to know the system and build the network: some of them are only in contact with those who speak Arabic , while other are more active and try to find information and get themselves into Norwegian environment (Representative from Flybo).

The representative from IMDI also points out that refugees' effort is essential for them to be able to adjust to a new environment and refugees are responsible to "knock on the door" in order to have the door opened.

At the same time, the professor from NTNU suggests that both Norwegians and refugees should be more aware about different mentalities: Norwegian should understand that it might be difficult to make refugees see and understand things as they do, while refugees should not expect to have exactly the same housing and life as in their home countries:

They (refugees) can talk about situation they have now or about the situation they had in their home country, but it is not possible to have it exactly the same way here, because Norwegians mentality is so different.

4. Discussion

The chapter will provide analysis of the prevalent trends and considerable deviations in the findings of my research. In order to answer the research question, I will analyse the results through the theoretical conceptual framework. In addition, I will disclose (where it is relevant) the analysis within categories as well as my observations in order to explain trends and compare the results. Section 1 will discuss perceptions of home among refugees; section 2 will focus on findings about refugees' experiences within the settlement process and their life in Norway; section 3 will discuss conversations with officials from Trondheim municipality, IMDI and NMBU.

4.1 Perceptions of home among refugees in Trondheim municipality

The research findings revealed that refugees connect home to various feelings. The most predominant answers were safety and security, and some informants mentioned stability and freedom. As scholars argue, home is a multidimensional concept, which reflects different aspect of people's life (Habte, 2017). Many refugees left their homelands because of persecution, war, economic and political instability and thus their past experience ("past symbols") had a strong impact on their perceptions of home (Malett, 2004). Therefore, home for refugees means a safe place, where they and their family feel protected from harm and danger. Stability, on the other hand, is related to ontological security, and basically means feelings of wellbeing achieved due to stable material and social life. What is significant is that the participants who mentioned stability were both middle aged married males, however one of the participants was a newcomer while the other had lived in Norway for a substantial period of time. While the newcomer was not employed and did not have time to achieve economic wellbeing, the refugee who has lived in Norway for 7 years and has a solid job, worried about losing his citizenship due to pervasive stories in the media. This can be discussed within the legal and functional domain of integration, developed by Zettler (2002). The refugee-newcomer had chosen to look for housing without help from the municipality due to family reasons, thus he lost his right to the introduction grant and as a consequence his access to some functional means was limited.

Freedom is another feeling which refugees relate to the meaning of home. Whether it is political freedom ("talk about what I want" and "do what I want") or freedom as privacy and independence from others or freedom from cultural restriction, it is the "past symbols" which determined why this particular context of freedom is important for informants. For some,

past experience is also added to negative experience from the host-country, where they feel controlled and dominated by the state system and rules. Similar attitudes among refugees were mentioned in the research of M. Korac, who examined different integration models in Europe. She highlights that the state-controlled integration model is often perceived as controlling and pressuring amongst targeted refugees (Korac, 2003).

Other informants, especially males, refer to home as a place where they can “control or at least exercise degree of control over space”, which gives a feeling of autonomy over own life and freedom and thus contributes to home feeling (Parsell, 2012). This refers to the possibility to have the freedom to change the setting in their places, build or reconstruct something within the housing, etc.

Furthermore, findings demonstrated that for all participants (except one) home is associated with family, regardless of their background. This phenomenon supports the traditional scholars’ view which emphasizes the significance of family for the meaning of home: “without the family a home is only a house” (Malett, 2004:74). However, for most refugees the family issue still remains painful: they are involuntary separated from parents and siblings who now reside in different countries, without hope of seeing them or being reunited in a short while. At the same time, some of the single respondents hope to build a new family in the host-country and to create their very own home.

In addition, the research results predominantly suggest that a close relationship with neighbours as well as active socialisation are inseparably connected to the meaning of home among refugees. While assumptions about relationships between people in society are socially constructed and predominantly influenced by culture, the importance of social interactions for refugees should be recognised. Thus, building social connections (social bonds and social bridges) is extremely important for refugees: it can potentially relieve their longing for the family as well as help to develop feelings of belonging to the host-environment (Ager & Strang, 2008). This is specifically relevant for newcomers who need more support compared to others: “they suffer from fresh trauma of forced displacement and have not had time to develop community support networks evident in established groups” (Phillips, 2005:544).

Although none amongst those interviewed referred to physical characteristics of home while explaining the meaning of home, it was mentioned later during interviews as preferences or minor preconditions for a good (ideal) home. According to Douglas, home “as organisation

and structure of space” is very individual; therefore different people can value different physical characteristic of home (1991). The size of the home was a predominant factors in descriptions of the physical side of home among refugees: many would prefer larger dwellings, where every family member (both existing and potential) can fit. At the same time, none of the informants referred to conditions inside the dwelling, special furniture, design, setting; these findings can be explained by Easthope’s definition of home, who argued that the place becomes home not because of the physical things, but because of the “meanings, which are inscribed in places” (2004:136). In addition, the understanding of home is not a stable thing, it changes over time as individuals get older, experience small and big events in their life, etc. (Malett, 2004). Fleeing from their homelands was a critical moment for refugees when many re-evaluated their understanding of the word home and their life, thus perceptions of home can now be defined as “before” and “after”. While some things and place can be important to individuals at a certain time of life (before), it can be irrelevant later (Habte, 2017).

The findings also demonstrate that because of longing for their “old homes” after forced resettlement, refugees tend to gradually substitute the image of “remembered home” by an image of the “ideal home” (Malett, 2004). While keeping memories of the home helps refugees to save their identities and cope with the pain after resettlement, such idealisations can lead to separation from the host-society and it keeps the myth of returning home alive. This was also demonstrated by my research findings: the majority of the informants emphasized that they would want to return back once the situation there allowed that. Paradoxically, it is not only newcomers who consider returning home, but also refugees with different lengths of staying in the host-country.

Finally, refugees demonstrated different perspectives about the possibility and need to recreate home in the host-country. The majority of informants agreed that it is possible to construct “home” or that it is at least partly possible (with some preconditions, such as family around, safety, etc.). As Brun suggests, refugees manage to get connected to a new place in a host-country while still feeling belonging to their homelands and “old homes” (2001). One of the participants suggests that instead of focusing on outside attributes (such a physical house, location, country), he rather focus on his feeling: “it is all inside of the mind, how you feel more what you see”. Other informants consciously choose not to get attached to any place, ignoring connection to any physical place, in order to prevent pain due to potential re-

displacement. Such denaturalistic approaches can be harmful as refugees may risk losing their identities (Sampson & Gifford, 2010).

4.2. Settlement experience and life in Norway

Refugees' settlement process includes a range of "activities and processes of becoming established after arrival in the country of settlement" (Valtonen, 2004:70). Since refugees have different backgrounds, different perceptions about home, attitudes and expectations, they experience the settlement process in different ways; yet at the same time there are some striking similarities. Building relationship between place and individual does not entirely depend on individuals, but also on the "economic, social and economic realities" around him (Easthope, 2004:129). Thus analysing refugees' experiences can help to show the pitfalls of the settlement process as well as ways to improve it.

4.2.1. Dwelling and neighbourhood

The Research findings predominantly revealed that interviewed refugees, in general, are satisfied with the dwellings (physical aspect of it) to different degrees, however there was one participant who was extremely unhappy. While younger participants indicate their interest in the location of the dwelling, older and married interviewees prioritise size and comfort. Significant divergence was noted in the answers of two young refugees with very similar background: while one felt happy living in the area with a prevailing population of refugees from different countries, the second informant consciously chose to move to new place, where he shares an apartment with two Norwegians in order to get closer to the Norwegian culture. Despite the similar background, the respondents chosen different ways to attach themselves to the new social environment: the first one through the "social bonds", while the second one – through the "social bridges". This example supports Valtonen's model of integration and the idea of "cultural integrity", which suggest that refugees should have a right to choose in which way, at what tempo and to what degree they integrate (2004:92).

Furthermore, the findings imply that the majority of refugees' demonstrated satisfaction in relations to the physical attributes and physical conditions of the house, furniture, and design. The only two refugees (male and female) who complained about it were refugees who has been in Norway for a substantial period of time (7 and 13 years respectively) and had changed housing several times in Norway. This phenomenon can be explained by the change in understanding of home among newcomers and "experienced refugees": "before" and "after" (Malett, 2014). While newcomers are still dealing with pain after displacement, such

things as “furniture” or other home attributes are not important for them as long as they feel safe. On the other hand, it might also be connected to refugee housing policy that states that if refugees reject the housing from municipality, they will not get help in their search for a new one (unless there are solid grounds for it).

How refugees use the neighbourhood revealed striking similarities: the majority hardly use the local centre and neighbourhood area, mostly concentrating their activities at school, the working place, their own dwelling or friends’ dwellings. As a professor from NMBU suggests, local centres and the neighbourhood should be developed in a way that they offer something which refugees can themselves relate to. As occurs from my findings, women use the neighbourhood even less than men, thus special adjustments can help to include as well as empower women: female hours in the swimming pool or training studios, restaurants with larger space for the kids, better offers on public transport during the late hours, weekends, etc.

4.2.2. Information gap and understanding the Norwegian system

As refugees come to a new country, they don’t only meet a new society and new environment, but also new regulations and rules (both legal rules and traditions). One of the common challenges for refugees is to learn, understand and accept those rules. In the beginning and during the introduction program, refugees are being introduced to basic rules and cultural norms, however refugees have to find out and learn the rest of the information themselves during their settlement process.

As the interviews reveal, such challenges are experienced by both newcomers and refugees who has been in Norway for a substantial period of time. The nature of their challenges might differ as refugees need different information during different stages: from information on how to pay bills for rent to information about loans and owning a business. According to one of the “experienced refugees” who has been in Norway for 7 years, such “information gaps” (lack of information) prevents him from feeling part of the society and significantly influences his perception about his role in the host-country. The “information gap” is a serious barrier in the way of refugee integration, which is partly addressed within the “facilitators” domain (Ager & Strang, 2008). While the state offers various services where refugees can get help and advice, paradoxically not all refugees know about such services. This is well illustrated by the experience of one of my informants: when he got injured during

this internship (praksis), he did know where and how to ask for advice and help in regards to compensation.

4.2.3. Discrimination, bullying and stereotypes

Discrimination and racial harassment is another factor which influences refugee settlement experiences. As the research findings demonstrate, refugees experience discrimination due to their race, nationality or refugee status during different stages of the settlement process which prevents them from finding a job, finding proper housing as well from socialising. Those, who experienced discrimination are both men and women as well as their children with different backgrounds and different lengths of stay in Norway. Respondents revealed that stereotypes which see refugees as “victims” and refugees as “terrorists” are the most prevailing stereotypes which they have to deal one. While equality is the base principle for integration, very little is done to address these issues. Netto suggest that refugee discrimination should be addressed on an institutional level as well as within “individual social interactions” in everyday life (2011).

4.2.4. Socialization

As the previous section revealed, socialization is closely connected to perceptions of home among refugees. For many refugees, especially newcomers, neighbourhoods appears to be the only place where they can communicate and develop social contacts with locals. In addition, having good relationships with neighbours is traditionally linked to home feelings in many cultures. As findings suggest, good relationships with neighbours define satisfaction with housing for many refugees. Moreover, participants in my research tend to value good relationships with neighbours so high that, other characteristics of home, such as size, location, etc., were no longer important. For most, it is not only simple communication, it is the opportunity to feel included, welcomed; it is also the possibility to share their culture as well as learn about the host-culture. This step could be seen as building “social bridges”, which empower them as refugees, increase participation and contribute to feelings of belonging (Ager & Strang, 2008). It can also be seen as a stage in the multiculturalism model when refugees are seen, recognised and accepted by neighbours – thus minorities can root into society (Nye, 2007).

4.2.5. “Home-feeling”, belonging and integration

Feeling at home is a complex feelings which involves a range of emotions and depends on many processes. It is particularly difficult to achieve for refugees, as many of them are still suffering from displacement and being uprooted from their home of origins (Bryn, 2001). Refugees have to find a middle ground between HOME (ideal or remembered home from the homeland), where many of them still belong to – and home, which they have now (home as safety and potential future). Thus for many refugees, home is a journey between those two ‘constellations of home’ (Habte, 2017:84). To achieve the “home feeling”, refugees should therefore create connections to the new place, feelings of belonging, deep attachment to a place, group or society (Bryn, 2001).

As it appears from the findings, the majority of refugees don’t feel “like home”, neither do they feel integrated. According to the reterritorialization approach, belonging is the necessary persecutor for feeling home, therefore it is important to identify the barriers which hinder refugees from finding connection and attachment to the host-environment. Such factors as discrimination and lack of socializing, information gap and cultural difference prevent refugees from feeling home here. In addition, many refugees feel devalued in the host-country, where their previous work experience and education is not automatically recognised and the qualification process is long and complicated. As equality is the main principle of integration, therefore it is important that “personal and social resources and characteristics of the settling person are valorised fairly in society” (2004:90).

Surprisingly, the findings did not suggest any correlation between length of stay in Norway and feeling of belonging among participants. Paradoxically, the participant who has lived in Norway for over seven years still didn’t feel at home in Norway, however in some ways he can be defined as integrated: he has reached a certain economic wellbeing, managed to buy a house, etc. At the same time, some of the newcomers (with the length of stay not more than 3 years) already feel like they belong to the host-country. Every refugee experiences a “journey to home” in different ways, while for some it is shorter, for others it takes a longer time. This process of the journey is both influenced by the host-society and refugee policy, but also depends on the refugee’s ability and will to “regain control and establish “ in a host-country (Habte, 2017:87; Korak, 2003).

4.3. Settlement process from the perspective of officials

Refugee settlement is a complex process, which is based on a range of activities and the cooperation of different state institutions. As the research findings reveal, the officials who

are involved in the settlement process in Trondheim municipality recognise the impact of housing on refugees' integration. However, the issue has not received enough attention due to the obvious lack of knowledge about how refugees experience the settlement process and what they need in order to become integrated.

According to the officials I interviewed, there are several predominant challenges which obstruct refugees' settlement. The first challenge is connected to the lack of resources, which would enable municipalities to involve more employers to follow up with refugees as well as organise special internship programs. In addition, the personalities and professional qualifications of advisors for refugees play an important role: the advisor should guide the person and assist him in making decisions rather than doing everything for him. As Hagelund argues, "the helper/supervisor dichotomy is a key discursive resource when trying to work out solutions to these dilemmas. The aim is to guide without eliminating responsibility" (2005:677). Instead, the advisor should rather be a "supervisor" than a "helper".

In addition, the representative from INN emphasised the difficult process of approving refugees' education and job experience which prevent them from participation in the labour market as well as hinders their socialization. Duke *et al.* stress that efficient refugee policies should enable refugees to "convert their skills and qualifications, so they can be used in a new situation", for example, refugees who should be able to receive vocation training (199:107).

Those providing housing emphasized shortage in social housing as well as lack of offers from the private sector: with better variety in housing, it would be possible to settle refugees according to their needs and preferences. Poor variety of housing, government housing "dispersal strategy" and restrictions on refugees' impact on the choice of housing for themselves complicates the process of building connection to a new place, which is important in the refugee context as: "by choosing where to live, one also chooses where to belong" (Backas, 2005:69; Netto, 2011). Finally, interviewees emphasized that refugees' attitudes, perceptions and expectations regarding housing can hinder them from successful settlement and integration. This is a prevailing argument in some of the government institutions which encourage refugees to be more active and take initiative. On the other hand, refugees are quite restricted in their choices about housing due to settlement policies.

Conclusions

The main goal of the thesis was to understand what ‘home’ means for refugees, whether it is possible to create a ‘home’ feeling in a host-country and what factors contribute to it – exploring perceptions and understandings by listening to refugees’ stories. In addition, this thesis attempted to explore the settlement process from refugees’ perspectives and its connection to feelings of belonging. Interviews with the main informants (refugees) were designed in way which would allow for capturing their feelings and experiences rather than just their point of view.

The concept of home is complicated and a multidimensional issue which has different meanings for different people at different periods of time. Understanding of home is particularity complex and sensitive in the refugee context due to the displacement and uprooting which they experience. Participants’ meanings of home were related to several themes, such as safety and security, family, freedom, neighbours and social life. The perception of home among participants appeared to be influenced by their life experiences before resettlement, their cultural and families’ values. At the same time, painful experiences due to displacement, persecution and dangerous situations in their home countries had a strong impact, dividing their lives into two periods – before and after. In addition, most of the refugees experienced inevitable longing for families and their home of origins; in order to cope with the pain, many kept referring to “remembered home”, which with time will turn into “ideal home”. Such a phenomenon is common for refugees; however, it can have negative consequences, as it hinders individuals from creating connections with a new place.

Refugees experience complex and unique challenges during the settlement process, as they have to deal with a new and different environment (both geographically and culturally). As Bryn emphasises, refugees find themselves in “contradictory situation” where they still belong to their homes of origins, but they should live and try to connect to a new place. Some refugees develop strategies to cope with the issues: as many refugees still don’t feel secure about their futures, they ignore any feelings and attachment to places in order to prevent pain during the next resettlement. Others focus on feelings in their mind, feeling and believing that home can be created anywhere.

In addition, there are certain challenges which refugees face during the settlement process, such as lack of socialisation, discrimination due to their status, difficulties in understating new rules and system, exclusion in the job and housing market, etc. All these challenges

hinder refugees from active participation in the normal life of the host-society; moreover it prevent them from building connections to a new place and feeling like they belong (deep attachment to a place). Home means different things for refugees, therefore not everybody has a need to create a home which is very close to their home of origin. Yet, refugees should have a possibility to connect and relate themselves to a new place which will give them a feeling of belonging.

In conclusion, housing plays an important role in the integration process of refugees, and is both a means and a marker for successful integration. Refugees who are happy with their housing and manage to connect themselves to a new “home” are more likely to integrate better and become part of the host-society.

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Appendix A. Content Form

Informasjonsblad

Tittel på prosjektet: «Hjemmefølelsen» blant flyktninger og integreringsprosess

Forsker: Nadiya Kohut

Dette forskningsprosjektet skal gjennomføres av Nadiya Kohut for NMBU (Norwegian University of Life Science), NTNU og Husbanken. Hovedmålet er å skaffe kunnskap om flyktningers oppfatning av hva er «hjem», hvordan denne oppfatningen ble til og gjenskapt i løpet av bosettingsprosessen. Prosjektets mål:

- Å forstå hvordan følelsen av å være «hjemme» blir til. Hvordan kan denne bli gjenskapt og oppnådd i en situasjon hvor flyktninger bor i et vertsland?
- Å høre stemmen til flyktninger og utforske deres oppfatning av «å være hjemme».
- Å utforske hvordan flyktninger har opplevd og utviklet følelsen av å høre til et nytt hjem. Hvordan har de benyttet seg av det sosiale og fysiske miljøet rundt seg?
- Å forstå hva hovedhindringene for at et bosted skal oppfattes som et hjem.
- Til slutt er målet å forstå hvordan flyktningers oppfatninger av «hjem/hjemme» (eller hjemmefølelse) kan indikere hvor langt man har kommet i integreringsprosessen.

Deltakelse i prosjektet er helt risiko- og kostnadsfritt. Resultatene vil bidra til utformingen av anbefalinger med hensyn til bosetting av flyktninger.

Dette intervjuet er anonymt og konfidensielt. Ingen skal kunne identifisere deg. Ingen vil vite om du deltok i dette intervjuet. Ingenting du sier under intervjuet vil kunne påvirke deg. Datasikkerheten vil opprettholdes med hensyn til personlige opplysninger og informasjonen som deltakeren deler under intervjuet.

De blir spilt inn på bånd og transkriperert. Informanten skal få transkripsjonen og vil få muligheten til å korrigere eventuelle feil. Informanten kan stoppe intervjuet og trekke seg fra forskningen når som helst uten å trenge å gi noen grunn

Din deltakelse i denne studien er frivillig. Du kan velge tid og sted for intervju.

Ved eventuelle spørsmål, kan jeg kontaktes på telefon (40578544) eller e-mail (nkohutua@yahoo.com)

Samtykkeskjema for deltakelse i prosjekt

Prosjektet: «Hjemmefølelsen» blant flyktninger og integreringsprosess

Jeg har lest og forstått informasjonsbladet om prosjektet	Ja <input type="checkbox"/>	Nei <input type="checkbox"/>
Jeg har blitt forsikret om at mine personlige opplysninger holdes hemmelig	Ja <input type="checkbox"/>	Nei <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Lagring and fremtidig bruk av informasjon:</i> Jeg gir min tillatelse til lagring eller elektronisk behandling av den innsamlede informasjonen til forskningsformål	Ja <input type="checkbox"/>	Nei <input type="checkbox"/>

Deltakernavn (blokkbokstaver) | Signatur | Dato

Fylles ut av forsker:

Jeg, undertegnede, har tatt meg tid til å forklare studiens karakter og formål til ovennevnte deltaker på en måte som vedkommende kan forstå

Navn (blokkbokstaver) | Signatur | Dato

Appendix B. Interview guide (for refugees)

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Background, housing trajectory, housing circumstances and life (in home country and in Norway), perception and definition of home during all phase of life, connection to integration

Introduction of myself and project

Confidentiality and anonymity (informants will be given consent form)

Background

Country of origin age, education, level of English/Norwegian, marital status employment now, religion.

Perception of home?

What means home for you?

To your opinion, is home a fixed place? Is it possible to recreate home (“home feeling”) in different places?

To your opinion what is important for a good home:

- a) physical things (f.e. size of house, distance to town, parking space, nice area, parks, playground, neighbourhood)
- b) others (good neighbours, better interaction, role in society, better job, belonging, participation, inclusion, etc)?

Life and housing condition back home?

Where and how did you leave? Together or separate with relatives? How many people?

Physical description of home and neighbourhood?

How was your life? what did u do? Study or worked?

How did you socialize? Practice religion? Did you have many hobbies?

How long have you lived there?

Have you changed home before coming to Norway? Have you been traveling outside your country?

What did you like about home in your country?

How was the life and housing condition in Norway?

How long have you lived in Norway?

Where do you live? How many people live? Family or not? How did you get the house? Could you choose the house (apartment)? If yes, why did you choose this one?

Can you tell me about your life in Norway (what do you do now)? How does your normal days and weekend look like? Do you feel happy and satisfied with your life now?

Physical description of house and neighbourhood. How far is your house from working place? How do you get around? Do you use neighbourhood location and how ?

What is your relationship and interaction with neighbours? How is your social life in general? Do you have many friends, are they Norwegians? Do you have many activities, hobbies? Do you meet people from your county (other refugees)? If yes, how and where?

Do you practise your religion here?

Perception of home

What are the main difference between your current home and home that you had in your home country? What do you miss from old home the most?

Do you feel your house (apartment) in Norway become home for you? What do you like (don't like) about it?

Are there any other places in town and activities (things) which help you to feel more home in Trondheim? Which places you like here? Which places are important for you?

What makes you feel good here in Norway (shopping, meeting friends, going to church, fishing, etc)?

What do you need here in Norway to feel yourself home?

Are you feeling happy with your life in Norway?

Do you feel that you have become a part of Norwegian society (integrated)? Do you feel you belong here? Why? Do you think your housing conditions are important in integration process?

What is your plans (dreams) for future? Would you like to stay here ?

What can be done in order to make you (and other refugees) feel better (more home) in Norway?

Appendix C. Interview guide for authorities

Interview questions (for Flybo and INN)

1. Can you please introduce yourself?
2. Can you describe where you work (organisations, department, position)
3. How your organisation's work is connected to refugees and integration? Main directions of work
4. What are the responsibilities of your department?
5. How does municipality organise settlement of refugees? What are the rules? Can they choose the place where they want to live? Who is being prioritized and why?
6. How municipality follow up the refugees after they helped them to find a place to live?
7. What happened if refugees refuse to live in place, offered by municipality?
8. What kind of program do you have for refugees to help them to buy a house (apartment)? Can you tell more ("from leie til eie", "bostotte"), etc? How do they work? Who has a change for it?
9. What are the main obstacles in settlement for refugees by municipality?
10. To your opinion, what is important for refugees to be happy with their home here in Norway? And how it can be achieved?

Interview questions (for IMDI)

Can you please introduce yourself?

1. Can you describe where you work (organisations, department, position)
2. How your organisation's work is connected to refugees and integration? Main directions of work? I know IMDI work in 3 directions: settlement, employment, and education. Can you please tell a bit about it?
3. What are the responsibilities of your department?
4. How does IMDI organise settlement of refugees? How it can be improved?
5. How IMDI follow up the refugees after they helped them to find a place to live?
6. What are the main obstacles in settlement for refugees by municipality
7. To your opinion, what is home for refugees, what is important for refugees to be happy with their home here in Norway? And how it can be achieved?
8. In your opinion, is settlement of refugees important for integration process? How? Why?
9. How integration process can be improved?

Appendix D: Coding table

What home means?						
<p>it must be safe, safety safety is important safe Safety!! For example in Syria, before the war, it was one of the safest Muslim countries. When it was safe, I could live with my all family, everything was good. So I do not care if my house is big or small, it is not so important, but safety is. The home feeling for me is means safe, stable. That is all my things about home. This what i don't feel it in my home country But the home i had, it is not as it was, and it is not safe there. What i am dreaming about is the home without war. When there is a piece <i>Here i have piece, idon't need anything else. For me it means safety. It is the most important thing</i> Home it means safety</p>	<p>Stable Stability</p>	<p>home means for me my family, my country. And home without family is not good. family . everything for me. and my family I have my own family, but I still don't feel like home here. May be because my parents are not here with me Home where is my family. And home is the family Home means family for me, that is the most important thing It is where my family is. I don't feel like home here yet, since i am separated from my family, but it can be childish just to say to say that home is only where my family is Home is means family The most important is the family, your parents, your siblings; we cannot leave without each other It means family. My family is the first, and second, and third. so it is everything for me.</p>	<p>Where i feel good and do not feel stress I don't feel relaxed in Norway, and it is important It is important to feel good It means place, where i can relax. If you don't have home, you have nothing.</p>	<p>Still it is a big difference when we talk of what home was before for me and what it is now. I know that i cannot live now as i lived before, i cannot have it how it was anymore. It means different things. Home now and home before. But when i come home here i had different feeling when i came home in Syria. If I talk about Syria and Norway. It is like mother and wife. Mother you cannot choose For my side it is to different BEFORE AND NOW I feel like Trondheim is my home. But i will never be like my home in Syria It is a difficult question. For example, it is different what i had home and what is now</p>	<p>where I can feel like a free Freedom. i can say what i want, i can do what i want, That is home for me. Freedom So home for me it is independence in all senses.</p>	<p>where I find my heart home is everything. There is a place where i was born, that is everything for me But for me home is where my homeland.</p>
<p>safety</p>	<p>stability</p>	<p>family</p>	<p>feeling good and relaxed</p>	<p>Difference in home perception</p>	<p>freedom</p>	<p>Different answers</p>

Is it possible to recreate home in other place?

<p>so then it can be possible to create this good atmosphere and create a nice family .But i can have my own atmosphere, when i open my laptop, open Skype and chat to my family, or listen to arabic music..., it is all inside of the mind, how i feel more what i see Yes, it is possible to create home anywhere</p> <p>Yes if i can bring my family here, then i will feel like home</p> <p>it is possible to create new home in new country i think it is possible, you can get home feeling in different places, all depends on you Yes, i believe it is possible to get a new home in a new country, at least for me. Yes, definitely. i feel home here I am very happy, but it does not mean that I like everything here - Yes, i definitely <i>I think you can get home feeling in different places. For me, where i can feel safe, it means home for me.</i></p>	<p>No, i do not think it is possible to get a "home" in a new place. Even though my family is here, we do not live all together as in Syria..So it will never be the same.</p> <p>the feeling which family gives to place, called home, cannot be substitute with nothing. And home is the family. So it will not be possible to get the same home feeling in other place.</p> <p>No</p>	<p>It will never be 100 percent the same as it was in the place where you were born I don't know...may be i can create home here...with my own family, but it still will be different. I cannot feel home here in Norway, because life is so different here.</p>	<p>May be after war, a lot of refuges, came from hard and difficult war, like me. We try to find a special idea about our lives. Ok, we try to like..how can i explain it for you.. because we had to move and change places many times..For me, idon't like to have any feelings, special feelings for this place. Because if i give my feelings to this place, this home, i will like as my own home, it will be special. After may be little bit time, i will have to move. i will feel like something will break my heart again</p> <p>Yes. It is philosophy. If you attach your body to one place, to one country, it will be difficult to continue living. I decided that iwill not attach word home to some place. Home can be inside of my heart</p>
<p>yes</p>	<p>no</p>	<p>partly possible</p>	<p>don't want to create home feeling and get attached</p>

Want to return back?

If my problems are finished, i want to come back to Palestine. and i always i just think about that.

But if everything goes fine in Syria, i will move there right away. Even though i have good life here, i want to come back. I know that here in Norway, if i want a good job and good payment, i have to study again...master, phd..i am finished with this. If i come to Syria, i can use my education, may be will come back to the same working place, at University. I will just come back to my place.

I am planning to go to Syria, i hope in 2-3 years the war will be finish.

I think i want to go to Syria if war is over. But it can take time. Still, i don't know if i can live there. The system is so different.

I hope to go back to Syria if things get better. But i want to take education here first

if everything in my country becomes better, i will go back home.

If Syria is finished with war, we want to go back, if not, we will stay here

i want to go back to Syria and visit the place where i lived. But now i don't know if i want to back and live there, even if the wars stop. Because everything is going to be different now.

I don't want to go back to Ethiopia, no, it i snot safe there

I feel home here, i don't want to go back to Syria. I want to stay here

For now, i want to stay here, i feel this culture is related to me now, more than anything else, i feel like i belong here, because i am going to be part of the society, where i can contribute

I like it here so much. I don't want to move out from here. It is my home, but it is different of cause my home in Syria.

I want to stay here, my life is here

- I do not think it will be better in Syria soon, may be in many years, and may be 10. I want now just to focus on my life here, I want to learn Norwegian, find job and have a good life here and provide good life for my children.

But if i can get good job and can get my family here, or may be establish my own family, may be i would want to stay, i don't know

No, here is my home

yes

No

**Do you feel like home in Norway? Do you feel you belong here?
Do you feel you become part of Norwegian society?**

<p>Norway is my home, my children are here.</p> <p>Yes! But i feel i belong here, but i also hope that they also feel that belong here.,</p> <p>Yes, my life is here. AndI will go outside my borders, to be more like Norwegians.</p> <p>It is my home.</p> <p>. But now, i have another home, Trondheim, But i will never be like my home in Syria. if i travel abroad, i cannot wait to go back to Trondheim, not to Norway, but to Trondheim. my place where i live, i feel to my house, i feel relax, i feel like i am going back home</p> <p>Norway is my home. It gave me freedom and protection to me and my family. Yes, I started to leave my life here.</p>	<p>You are not Norwegian even if you get Norwegian passport and even if you speak Norwegian,</p> <p>For me not, not at all. My family is here, my brother is here, but i don't feel that i will be like these people one day. I don't think that i will ever belong to this society. I have not changed, but it is just for me</p> <p>No!!i don't think about it as about my home. Because sometimes, for example, i want change something in the house, maybe pain the wall, and i cannot. Because it is not mine</p> <p>If we have anything here, we are none here, so i would say, no, i don't feel it</p> <p>- No!! It is impossible!</p> <p>No. Not at all. It is better now, because i have learned Norwegian a bit, i can talk to people, i can go shopping myself without help. i feel a bit more independent. But still as long as there is no job, i do not feel a part of society or like other people here.</p> <p>I cannot feel home here in Norway, because life is so different here</p> <p>It is the culture, i can not change Norwegian culture, to be in a good relationship. The refugees are not integrated. Still, there is a big hole</p> <p>No, i don't feel so. For example, i am not getting invited to Norwegians for a visit</p> <p>ican not be the same as Norwegians, but i want to learn traditions and language.</p> <p><i>No, i do not feel home here.</i></p>	<p>may be 50 percents. I have not been here for long enough, only 3 years, but now i speak better Norwegian, but i hope i will be able to speak better. Also, when I get citizenship here, i will feel more part of Norway I think. Yes, but i feel that i belong here somehow</p> <p>May be not 100 percents yet. But i start feeling like one of them. When it was 17th of Mai, i went to parade, and i celebrated it. But Norway means so much for me. i feel that i belong here.</p> <p><i>Yes, a bit. it is coming slowly.</i></p> <p>Integrated? Yes, in some way, but not totally. It is not easy to answer....i am not sure that i belong here, i have only been here 3 years.</p> <p>It is hard to tell. May be in 5 years, yes, but i need more time and also Norwegian need more time to understand me and accept me. We both need time. I am integrated, i am open-minded, but i just need more time.</p> <p>I was here only 1 year. I feel may be i have integrated a little bit.</p>
yes	No	to some extend

What is important to for a “good home”?							
<p><i>If i could have my family close to me, i would be so happy and would feel home</i></p> <p>family and house, me and my wife</p> <p>if my family could come to Norway and we could live close to each other, then i would also feel like home.</p>	<p>The most important for good home is neighbours. In Islam it is important</p> <p>neighbours are very important, my kids will be playing with their kids</p> <p>yes. It is very important. That is very important for us, especially for us</p> <p>And also neighbours are very important, it is important to have good relationship with them</p> <p>The neighbours are important</p> <p>In Syria we always have such a good relationship with neighbours, and it is like a family</p> <p>Neighbours are extremely important! If I have perfect location, for example near the sea, but have bad neighbours, I would not be happy.</p> <p>Neighbours are exactly as my family</p> <p>to have many neighbours, which i can be close in my “dream house” all neighbours are like my family</p>	<p>i would prefer to live with car noises, with city vibes</p> <p>big house, which nice balcony and small garden, and place for my kids to place.</p> <p>I like it to be in the city, i grew up in city</p> <p>i like small home, not like big home</p> <p>So i like big house, with garden</p> <p>i feel better as i have a big house, i have all of may family and i have a small garden outside, so kids can play outside. So i feel safe.</p> <p>Does not have to be big, but nice neighbourhood i important, nice and safe area around.</p> <p>I like to live in the big house with good place for the children</p> <p>For me good home is a nice big house... The house should be big, that whole family, many generation can live there</p> <p>I dream about house, does not have to be very big, but modern. It is better it is not very far from center</p>	<p><i>it does not matter if it is central or not, it is nice to live both, outside the city or in centrum. As long as you have a car, it not so important.</i></p> <p>If i could choose, i would prefer to live in a bigger house, but i can very satisfied with the small place too, as long i have the atmosphere</p> <p>So I do not care if my house is big or small, it is not so important, but safety is</p>	<p>Maybe, having something related to my culture, for example. Like having some channels in Arabic, putting some kind of painting, which related to my country and my culture. Making simple things, like cooking Syrian food home, the feel the smell....</p>	<p>if i want to crush all the house, it is my thing!</p> <p>owning my own place would be great. To have more control. I am not very restricted here, still some small details when you live on your own. It can be stressing, to move from one place to another all the life. It plays a major role.</p> <p>I wish I could own my own place, that is my biggest dream</p>	<p>i have a stable place, but not a stable home. I feel i can be kicked for any reason. I hear a lot of people who has citizenship and they lose it and go back home.</p>	<p>good job</p> <p>that is important when you have a good job, and when you like what you do</p> <p>To have job is important</p> <p>as long as there is no job, i do not feel a part of society or like other people here.</p> <p>Also, if i get good stable job, if will be even better.</p>
family	neighbours	importance of house (apartment) size and location	location and size are not important	something related to my culture	ownership and control	stability, connected to future	job

What do you miss the most from your home?

<p>i miss my sisters. My mom. If my mom can come here, at least for a visit, i will not ask for anything else in my life <i>I miss family. To have our families around us. And knowing that when we need help, that they can help us</i></p> <p>I must come back to my family, because i like waking up on Friday (Friday in Syria it is like Sunday on Norway). So i like waking up on Friday and have good breakfast with my family I miss my family</p> <p>My family is here, but may be i miss my grandmother, she is not here, and some uncles are not here</p>	<p>I miss my job</p>	<p>I miss food.. food</p>	<p>I want to go back home, want to live in society, where i belong to</p> <p>Contact and relationship with society around me</p> <p>I miss everything and everybody.</p> <p>Also see my friends, and going outside. That is what the best is. That is what i really miss.</p> <p>i miss the social life.</p> <p>I miss my old friends, from Syria.</p> <p>I miss my neighbours</p>	<p>Weather</p> <p>Weather affects many things. In Syria we have great weather all the time that is why you can be more active. You can visit your friends, family, here life stops at 21.00</p> <p>So I only miss sun. It is cold here</p>	<p>but i miss the whole atmosphere, also my small room, where i have studiedfor many many years. i like my city so much, and i want just to go back to Syria and visit the place where i lived</p> <p>When i am finished with work, i just go home and stay with family and go to bed early. But in my family, we are used to sit together with neighbours and other relatives, sit together and enjoy evening. Kids would be playing together, women talking between each other and men would sit and smoke outside, but we were all together. And we don't have this in Norway. I really miss it , and i would be happy if we had something like this in Norway Sometimes i miss stones and sand form my country. i miss everything, even air I miss everything from my old home i miss the most is my country - the people, the places.</p>	<p>My dog and my horse</p> <p>i miss my library. i had 5000 books in my home library. when i lost it, i lost may be 20 years of my life.</p> <p>I miss my dog</p> <p><i>Also i miss places where i could go to the beach or swimming pool and swim. Here they don't have separate places for women as we had, so it is difficult for me</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Family</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">job</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">food</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">society, people, neighbours</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">weather</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">whole home atmosphere</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">domestic animals, other stuff, some activities</p>

What makes you feel good here in Norway?

<p>My friends. Good friends mean everything for me</p> <p>Yes, it is my Church. But not because of the place or building, but atmosphere and a lot of good people. Just i get contacted there, Norwegians people came to me alone and talked to me without know me from before.</p> <p>I really like Norwegian people, especially people in Trondheim. They are not racists, i have never experience anything like this. I am just saying about my experience, Norwegian were so nice to me and to my wife.</p> <p>But we have very nice neighbours, so i really like it here because of them.</p> <p>Norwegians are very nice people, I mean in Trondheim, they are friendly and nice, I am happy to live here</p>	<p>i like freedom. I like that nobody will decide for me, i can make decisions for myself now</p> <p>Freedom. We do not have this in Syria now. I can talk about what i want; i can do what i want</p> <p>There is no rules against Palestinian here, I can do what I want, I can achieve my dreams. I can breathe!</p>	<p>My family is here. I found a man of my dreams, i got married with him, i got my child here</p> <p>My family and my kids</p>	<p>It was at my job. I felt myself that i am like other people, notworse than them, not different. Everybody liked me, everybody tried to help me, i felt the same like i am with the family</p> <p>My job, I love what I do</p>	<p>here is safe and my children are happy here.</p> <p>Here, i feel myself very safe</p> <p>i feel safe here, that is everything i was dreaming about. I am not afraid of anything</p> <p>i feel comfortable and safe</p>	<p>i like that equality among people, all are under the same rules, regardless of who you are: king or simple person. For example, in Syria, if you work in police, you are the highest; you do not need to follow any rules. Here everybody is the same.</p>
<p>friends, communications</p>	<p>freedom</p>	<p>family here</p>	<p>Job</p>	<p>safety</p>	<p>equality between people</p>

**What are the main challenges of refugees in Norway?
What can be done in order to make you (and other refugees) feel better (more home) in Norway?**

<p>i think the biggest problem for refugees is to get and make contact with Norwegians. If Norwegians can take contact themselves, it will help a lot for us to feel a part of this country.</p> <p>The only thing i would like Norwegians to be friendlier and open towards refugees. I wish they would try to get to know us</p> <p>This is very important for refugees and in general for all people who live here. To communicate.</p> <p>I need more contact with Norwegians. May be i need help from kommune or special organisations.</p>	<p>The most important is my family. And we have problems. We have some kind of temporary travel documents; we can use it while traveling in Europe. But we cannot use it to enter Arabic countries... I just need to be able to travel and see my family. All refugees think about it</p>	<p>In Syria i had everything, i had my own house, i had my car, i had job. Here i have nothing</p>	<p>It is a kind of problem, we don't know many things! The only problem in Norway is this gap. And if it closed i will not go back to my country. I think it will help to give us a lot of information, a lot activities, a lot things because now we are on different sides.</p> <p>My adviser in Trondheim kommune is not so helpful</p>	<p>What happens when we go and search for job? They reject us! There are always some rules and some requirements. I think they should give us opportunity to show and to prove that we are active. Make it easier for us to get a job, we do want to work! it just takes years to the certificates and approval of our education and job experience from homeland.</p>	<p>But system is not good, it should be improved. But i think it is better in Sweden. i think in Sweden they have better knowledge about refugees, but in Norway they don't have much information about refugees, that is why system does not work well.</p> <p>i hope they will have more refugees here who study. But i think some people can participate in society faster than others. It is good for them, to be accepted and having a state permit faster than others, so sometimes the integration process can be accelerated for those who are ready for it.</p>	<p>Norwegian should remember that we are humans, do not call us refugees or terrorists.They write about bad things which other refugees have done, and then Norwegians read it and think: oh ,thoserefugees!! but that was only one percent. Do not generalise! One person made mistake or something bad, but do not write that refugee did it.</p> <p>I wish people were more opened, and we have a chance to show to all that we are not like they think. i really want this stereotype about refugees to be finally broken.</p>	<p>I think place plays a major role. Where do you live and with who. It helps to live together with the person who is originally from this country; it helps to understand some small details, not only to learn the language, but to see what they have for a breakfast. It helps me to understand people better. I like when houses are close to each other, it is very strange for me when houses are so far for each other and you have no one to talk to ..</p>	<p>Also, refugees have to respect the Norwegian culture, where we come. But also they also should respect us</p> <p>And somehow Norwegians need to accept it and integrate, help refugees to integrate in society. In good way. To start with children, instead of saying go home, why are you coming to my country. This is not for all, but this idea, must be worked on. If it goes like that, relationship will be better and nicer and Norway can benefit</p> <p>I just want to be accepted and treated like others</p>
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<p>i feel very lonely. But when i sit in pub for example and there are many people, but i still feel lonely. They look at me and think: o, he is a not Norwegian, refugee. and they turned their back to me. I don't force them. I don't know why people are afraid of us, refugees, what have i done to them?</p> <p>Yes, my kids are very happy and friendly but sometimes they come from school and kindergarten and complain that there were mobbed, because they don't look like Norwegians. , i think it is important to fight with mobbing (both in school and at work). That is where it starts; people have to teach their children to accept us, to respect other kids. We are form different countries, may be different religion, but we all are humans</p>					<p>But i feel bad, i feel controlled, that somebody has a plan for me and i have to follow it. We have to follow so many rules.</p> <p>What kommune can do. I did not come here with kommune, so I don't have my housing from kommune, i found it myself. Now i want to move, because according to Norwegian rules, child must have the private room. But we applied many times and asked for help in kommune, but they say that cannot help me, they say - we did not bring you here, you come yourself (self-settlement), so you need to do everything yourself.</p> <p>Also, system is very slow!!! You have to wait so long everywhere, to get appointment, to get your application approved, etc. I wish the system was more efficient and fast.</p>	<p>She (my new Norwegian friend) said when she sees news on TV, she had different impression about refugees, but then she met us, she completely changed her mind</p> <p>When they see the Muslim, the think that we are complicated, they think we have hard mind, but we are normal people as you, we just have different religion. But we all humans just like you. Also, another thing, everybody think that we came because we want their money that we like staying home, watching TV and using their money. But it is not true!!! They think that we are very poor, that Syria is like African countries, but it is not. We used to have money and we have a very rich culture, i wish we had a chance to show it to Norwegians. We just had to escape from war. I wish this image of us could be changed.</p>	<p>Yes, housing is important for integration. When I am happy with where I live, I can do other things and develop myself.</p>	<p>I am very afraid about the future; there are many talks in this society. I don't know if i can use my hijab in future. I hope they will not put so much pressure on us that we have to change and be exactly like this.</p>
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<p>My daughter has a darker skin and she was mobbed in school. Last time she was suffering for 6 months, she even did not want to go to school. I had to talk to teacher several times</p> <p>i think that Norwegian people, if they can, they should become a bit more closer to us, take contact, take first step, because we, refugees may just be too shy to do it. The first step is so important.</p> <p>i don't have many Norwegian friends,</p> <p>I believe if people around are more social and treat refugees better. this is very important</p> <p>I wish there was some activities that we can do together with Norwegians, for example go for walk or skiing. I tried it once, i need to practise more, but i need company for this.</p>					<p>I wish they start giving us a chance. For example, my uncle is an engineer. In Syria, he was a leader in a big company, but here he cannot use his potential fully, because of the language skills and his age. He cannot study something new now, he is too old for this, but i wish the has an opportunity to use his experience her.</p>	<p>The propaganda on TV should be stopped. They should stopped showing this bad storied about refugees, so then people can change their attitudes. People just making their bad images about refugees from the TV and newspaper.</p>		
<p>contact with Norwegians, communication</p>	<p>traveling to visit families</p>	<p>have nothing here</p>	<p>information gap (hole)</p>	<p>job situation</p>	<p>system in Norway</p>	<p>wrong image of refugees from the media</p>	<p>housing</p>	<p>respect, acceptance</p>

Using of local neighbours

<p>Very good place. I feel good and comfortable and happy. Everything is close</p> <p>I am very close to Trondheim Torget and they have everything there. I also use library, which is close to my place.</p> <p>I like everything. I don't have any special favorite places, I like everything because it is safe</p> <p>Yes, we live in (Granhaugen). close to City Syd. There are shops, gym and many other things there</p> <p>But there is some small center, where apr. 6 stores, also we have arabic store there, and gym. It takes 5 min</p> <p>- i have not used it much, since i have just moved a few days ago (to Solside), but i am going to use it a lot. I want to exercise more, i want to meet my friends more often, go to library, i could not do all those things in my previous place. My previous place was meant for families, not for single people.</p> <p>-</p>	<p>No, there are two shops, which can be reached by bus or by walking. But if i want to take coffee, i have to go to center to the cafe, we don't have anything close to me. Just houses.</p> <p>I always have to take a bus to get to the center, to the shopping center, or anywhere. And it is not a problem, but bus does not go very often. Also, if i want to go to the airport, and plane leaves at 7, it is hard. Bus starts at 6, but how I can get to the airport. I have to take a taxi. I don't anyone who can drive. I like this place and apartment, but really, this is so difficult. In the evening, if i want to meet my friends in the center, i have to come home early, because there are no buses in the evening. It is very hard. It is the same, if i want to go for training, there is nothing in my area, i have to take bus everywhere. I wish there was better offers of public transport.</p>	<p>It is educational city, there is not so much free places to relax, any be i am wrong. I am living here for may be 7 years, i don't see more then Leo's Lekeland for kids or Pirbadet</p> <p>No, not so much activities that you can have. Every activity here is very very expensive.. When i need to go to some places, i go to Sweden</p> <p>Sometimes i like to go to Trondheim Torget to have a coffee, but it is not very often, because it is expensive here.</p> <p>During the normal weekends, if i don't have to work, we to go to Sweden with whole family. Activities and shopping are too expensive here</p>	<p>Sometimes i go to center, or to the sea, or til Bjolsen to the mountains.</p> <p>i like to go to Lade, and sit on the beach , close to the sea. Then i feel very relaxed and i feel like home.</p> <p>yes, i like to go to forest.</p> <p>Chess club</p> <p><i>Is the best here, in our place</i></p>	<p>There are many things are here as we live close to the center. I mostly use shopping center to buy stuff. But other things are i don't use much.</p> <p>I do not use cafe often, only with the people which i do not know. But I can do shopping sometimes.</p> <p>There are shops not far from here, library, etc.</p> <p>Sometime we do the grocery here, some time we go to center because we want to go to Arabic store and buy Arabic food.</p>	<p>Al i need, i buy in Sweden or some stuff I can buy in Center, close to my work, and there are many shops close to my work. I use the car most of the time.</p>	<p>We walk, if we go to center, we have bus</p> <p>. I have parking near my house and bus to the city is 3 min away. Bit I myself drive car everyday</p> <p>I live near Trondheim Torget, I walk everywhere</p> <p>Mostly walking, but take bus when I go to school</p> <p>I have a car</p> <p>I drive car to work and back, it takes 40 min fro my place</p> <p>now we have car, so my husbands drives me if have to go somewhere.</p> <p>I walk or use my bicycle</p> <p>Bus</p> <p>I mostly use buses</p>	<p>Here in Trondheim there are no places with the food which i like.</p> <p>Here in Norway weekend is the worse time. We do not drink. For Norwegians, to spend weekend is to drink. But we do not drink, in Syria we could go to restaurants and have to good time. Restaurants are open 24 hours. Here everything is closed so soon</p> <p><i>Also i miss places where i could go to the beach or swimming pool and swim. Here they don't have separate places for women as we had, so it is difficult for me. And it is not only me. Many of my girl friends say the same, they cannot go to swimming pool there, and it means the kids cannot go neither.</i></p>
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<p>I am very satisfied. It is central (live in Solside), i have everything close: gym, shops, and restaurants.. I use the shops around and gym.</p> <p>I live at Flatasen, it is 30 min form center. It is nice place, typical Norwegian suburb. Very nice, nice nature, and very very quiet. I like it very much</p> <p><i>There is nice. childrenfriendly area. We also have everything, we live may be 10 min from center, and everything is there. Also we have Rema 1000 just 2 min from us.</i></p> <p>yes. Also because it is outside of the city, and better for the kids. very good for kids. But in this place, i feel more relax,</p>	<p>In Ranheim, it is almost the same. The bus connection is not good. Bus does not go often, especially on the summer. It is hard or take bus when you want, it is easier in the winter. During the day time it is not problems, after 19.00 we only have bus once per hour. And in Sunday it is horrible. We have shop not far from me, but there is no cafe, or place for activities, or cafes. Everything is in the center. It is very difficult without the car.</p>					<p>But my working place is far, so i have to take bus every day</p>	<p><i>We don't go to restaurants; there is no place for kids. I have 2 kids for example, and my friend has 5, it will be no space for us.</i></p> <p>In Syria i worked as dancer in ballet, i did not find any place like this, where i can train here in Trondheim</p>
<p>Happy with place, good access to facilites</p>	<p>Not happy with the places,</p>	<p>Not enough activities, very expensive</p>	<p>Favourite place</p>	<p>Using local center to some extend</p>	<p>Not using local centers</p>	<p>How do you get around?</p>	



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