From coexistence to social interaction

Using public squares for refugee integration in Berlin

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ABSTRACT

This report analyses how public squares in residential urban areas can be used for the integration of refugees and gives recommendations to policy makers on that matter. It does so in the context of the current 'refugee crisis', with a focus on Breslauer Platz in Berlin. The promotion of positive social interaction between refugees and the local population in their arrival country is considered a crucial factor for the successful integration of refugees. Public squares offer a great opportunity to increase social interaction and community cohesion.

INTRODUCTION

"Public spaces are the 'glue' that holds society together, the places where we meet different people, share experiences, and learn to trust one another" (Holland, Clark, Katz & Peace, 2007:45)"

Every year, the Society for the German Language (GfdS) publishes the 'word of the year': one which has most shaped public discourse in Germany. In 2015, the chosen word was 'refugee' In 2015 alone, nearly 900,000 refugees arrived in Germany. It was also the year when German chancellor Angela Merkel said "Wir schaffen das!" - We can do this! (Council of Europe, 2015) uniting Germans with a positive message for the new challenge and thereby introducing what is being referred to as the "new welcoming culture". The increased number of refugees arriving in Europe has indeed been identified as one of the major challenges faced by European policymakers presently (Sunderland, 2016). Germany, amongst all European countries, has accepted the most refugees, a large num-

FIGURE 1 NUMBER OF REFUGEES REGISTERED IN BERLIN - UNTIL AUGUST 2015
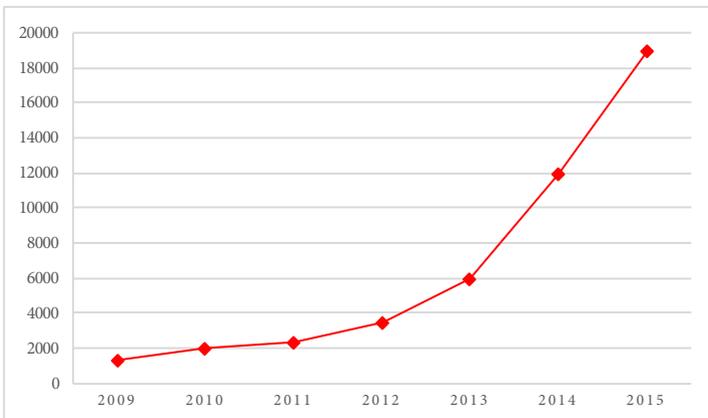
Source: Brenner, 2016

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ber of which have settled in urban areas (Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2017). Figure 1 illustrates the sharp rise in refugees registered in the country's capital, Berlin.

The successful integration of these refugees bears many opportunities for an aging society like the one Germany has, if it is done properly. However, just like the majority of European countries, the fears associated with the arrival of refugees and an 'integration failure' have fuelled the rise of (new) right wing populist parties. In Germany, there is no doubt that this was the driving factor behind the rise of the AfD (Alternative for Germany party). Successful integration requires a variety of actions, from language courses to housing, schooling and working opportunities, but also actions such as the promotion of positive social interaction[1] between Germans and newly arriving refugees. Public spaces offer a great opportunity to increase social interaction and foster community cohesion (UNESCO, 2017). These interactions can help reduce stereotypes among the local population and can also have an empowering effect on the migrant community by creating a sense of ownership and belonging (Gebhardt, 2010) (Holland, Clark, Katz, & Peace, 2007). However, diverse urban public spaces can be a mixed blessing. They are not conflict-free as the encounters of people with different lifestyles, values, cultural backgrounds and interests can also lead to further segregation and marginalisation. Public spaces can concentrate so called 'anti-social behaviour' and criminality (ibid).

Academics, practitioners and policy makers are starting to recognise the seismographic effect of public spaces and much has been written about how better spaces can be created that allow positive social interactions between people of different backgrounds. However, there seems to be very little research on how these approaches and theories can adapt to the specific challenges of forced migration. This paper aims to contribute to filling this gap, and to inform policy makers who aim to use public spaces as instruments of integration in urban communities.[2] For this pur-

1. 'Positive social interaction' refers to everyday processes by which refugees and local residents engage with one another, helping them to build networks and supportive relationships with each other (Orton, 2012)

2. Public spaces can also be parks, roads, beaches. This paper however focuses on the specific relevance of squares in residential areas

pose, I focus my analysis on the Breslauer Platz (BP) in Berlin. BP is a square in the south-western district of Friedenau. The former city hall, Rathaus Friedenau (RF), is located in the square and was turned into refugee accommodation in 2016. More than 300 refugees currently reside there.

In this paper, I analyse:

1. How the use of BP by refugees living in the RF and the loc population has influenced their relationship; and;

2. Whether the square has fostered social interaction between the two groups.

Moreover, I also distil the specific underlying dynamics of the findings, in order to provide an understanding of how refugees experience public squares in ways that are different to local populations and how this relates to their design and organisation.

Methodology

Guided by Holland et al's studies of social interaction in public spaces (2007), I use a mixed methods approach, including: qualitative analysis of literature from urban planning, contemporary social theory, migration studies, on the ground observations, in-person conversations and written interviews.

In the first phase of research, I scrutinised theories on social interaction and gathered knowledge on design-strategies for public spaces using urban design literature, frameworks by practitioners, and case studies from other countries. Demographic data on the local population and refugees was collected through openly available sources of the administration of Berlin and Tempelhof-Schöneberg and through a questionnaire that was sent to the director of RF refugee accommodation. Furthermore, I used first hand observations at BP, geographical data from Google Maps, and assessments of local community organisations to build a comprehensive picture of the physical characteristics of the square and its re-design efforts.

In the second step of my research, I conducted interviews with nine 'constant observers' - employees and business owners of the restaurants and shops surrounding BP - to gain a better understanding of how the square is used by different groups, the interactions between refugees and locals, and the atmosphere towards refugees in the area. Due to interviewees' time constraints I used a semi-structured questionnaire that allowed for short answers, while also giving participants an opportunity to elaborate on their experiences and share anecdotes.[3] I also conducted eight interviews with business owners and employees at Winterfeldplatz square, who served as a control group. Winterfeldplatz is very similar to BP in regards to its design and use, but not in proximity to a refugee shelter. Further information on the selection of the square and control group interview results are found in Appendix B2 (online).

Since many of the interviewees at BP had reported negative sentiments of their older customers towards refugees, I visited the nearby retirement home Evangelisches Seniorenheim Albestraße to further investigate this issue. At the retirement home, I conducted a semi-structured face-to-face interview with the quality manager of the facility and the chairwoman of the Home Advisory Board.

Due to security regulations, language barriers, and time constraints, it was not possible to conduct interviews with refugees. In the last phase of my research, I conducted a face-to-face interview with Orkan Özdemir, the founder of the refugee aid network Friedenau Hilft, and a written interview with the director of RF refugee accommodation. These interviews gave insights into the use of the square by refugees and refugee-focused activities and initiatives by local residents.

Originally, I planned to analyse three different types of spaces – one square in a residential area, one larger square in a more touristic area and one park. The decision to focus on one type only however permitted me to conduct more in depth research. Squares

3. The translated questionnaire, transcribed anecdotal experiences and further explanation on the methodology can be found in the Appendix B1 (online)

in residential areas were chosen as the object of analysis because they are the type of space where refugees and locals are most likely to meet on a day to day basis. The findings may still have relevance for other types of public spaces. However, differences concerning the way these spaces are being used and the type of people accessing them need to be considered.

In the following chapter, I will introduce the theories that form the point for departure for this paper. Chapter 3 ('The case study') then introduces Friedenau, BP, and the refugee accommodation in RF. Chapter 4 ('From coexistence to social interaction') presents the findings of the primary research and analyses them using the theoretical concepts. It aims to give policy makers valuable insights to the specific challenges of the integration of forced migrants into the public sphere. Lastly, Chapter 5 ('Conclusion and recommendations') provides a summary of the findings, gives recommendations to policy makers as well as civil society organisations in refugee-receiving communities, and makes suggestions for further research.

PUBLIC SPACES AND STUDIES OF DIFFERENCES

What makes a good public space?

Attention to public spaces and to how they can enhance community building is not novel. In addition to academic studies, many practical frameworks and guides for policy makers have been produced. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, and building a good public space depends on the type of space, its location within a city, and the kind of people who use it. The Project for Public Spaces (PPS), 'the central hub of the global placemaking movement' (PPS, 2017), was able to develop a 'place diagram' (see Appendix A (online)), which contains the key attributes, intangibles

of a 'great' public space and ways to measure them by evaluating more than 1000 spaces around the world. According to the Place Diagram, a 'great' public space needs to be visible, easily accessible and serviced by different modes of transport, create an atmosphere of safety and cleanliness, be used by different types of people for different activities and people should use it to socialise with friends and, acquaintances, as well as a place to meet new people (PPS, 2017c). Things that might matter to urban designers, such as the architecture of houses or the shape and size of public squares, do not seem to matter to the people using them. Users of public spaces do not look up to the things surrounding them but care about what is at eyesight (Whyte, 1980). Good quality of sitting space has shown to be a key success factor (Holland, Clark, Katz, & Peace, 2007) (Whyte, 1980). William H. Whyte, a pioneer in the studies of public spaces, also found that if there are more women using a public space, it becomes more attractive to other users (ibid).

Studies of differences

Heterogeneity is an intrinsic feature of the city. Being in the heart of cities, public spaces are at the centre of this heterogeneity as a rich mix of people meet on a day to day basis. Studies of difference have therefore strongly influenced the way spaces are analysed through geographers and urban planners (Finscher & Jacobs, 1998) (Goonewardena, Kipfer, Milgrom, & Schmid, 2008). Views on city design were merged with analysis of cultural and political economy perspectives, aiming to understand how people of different age, gender, ethnicity and, sexuality meet in the public sphere.

What these theories share is their conception of identity as a socially produced phenomenon which is temporary and changing (Pratt, 1998) (Massey, 1995). At the centre of their analysis lies the study of power structures, how these are reflected in public spaces, and how they in turn contribute to the formation of identity (Allen

& Pryke, 1994). Based on these, we know that public spaces have a great potential to create social interaction and promote integration as 'claiming social space and being seen in public becomes a way [for minorities] to legitimate their right to belong in society' (Holland, Clark, Katz & Peace, 2007: 1). At the same time, theories from social psychology show that people living in ethnically diverse neighbourhoods have a higher tolerance for diversity, are more open to change and give less importance to conservatism and power values[4] (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). However, these encounters also bear the risk of conflict, marginalisation and repression of already discriminated groups (Pratt, 1998: 35).

4. Studies were controlling for differences that existed between different groups before the experiment to rule out the risk of reverse causality (Roccas & Brewer, 2002)

THE CASE STUDY

Friedenau

Friedenau is a district in the South-Western borough Tempelhof Schöneberg. Spreading approximately across 46 km², it is one of the smallest districts of Berlin, but the one with the highest population density of all 96 districts in the city. Friedenau has a low mean age and a large number of residents below 18 years (Bezirksamt Tempelhof Schöneberg 2015). The last Berlin parliamentary election in 2016 showed that the population in Friedenau is situated in the central left part of the political spectrum and that Germany's new right wing populist party, the AfD received much fewer votes than in other districts (Die Landeswahlleiterin zu Berlin 2016). Özdemir, one of the founders of the local refugee organisation 'Friedenau Hilft!' and Borkowska, the director of the RF refugee accommodation, both reported a high motivation among the local population to engage in refugee aid activities (Özdemir, Interview, 14/03/2017) (Borkowska, Interview, 08/04/2017).

Breslauer Platz

The Breslauer Platz (BP) is in an eastern part of Friedenau (red circle in Figure 3) that is considered a high residential area (Bezirksamt Tempelhof Schöneberg 2015). The square is surrounded by cafés, restaurants and few retail stores. It was built in 1875 and has been used for market activities ever since (Rheinstraßen-Initiative, 2009).

Three streets border BP: the Rheinstraße, which is a large two-lane street where cars move with an average speed of 60-70 km/h (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt 2013), and the Niedstraße and Lauterstraße streets, which are both extensions of two relatively calm residential streets. The Rathaus Friedenau (RF) which contains the refugee accommodation, is on the northern side of the square.

As can be seen in Figure 3, there is a pavilion in the center of the square, which is under monumental protection and currently contains a kiosk and a Turkish food stand. BP mainly consists of a large stone surface that is used for the market. People have referred

FIGURE 3 FRIEDENAU, BRESLAUER PLATZ AND RATHAUS FRIEDENAU

Source: Google Maps, 2017

to it as a 'stone desert' (Schilde, Interview, 06/03/2017) a 'dilapidated square' (Ludwig, 2014) and a 'dull parking space without vegetation' (Rheinstraßen-Initiative, 2009). There is little green space in the centre of the square. There are three double benches behind the pavilion, three round benches surrounding trees on the side of the Lauterstraße and one bench on either side of the stairs leading to the entrance of the RF. Additional chairs are provided by cafés and restaurants, but are reserved for guests. Interviewees have criticised the lack of sitting space and bad alignments of benches behind the pavilion (Schilde, Interview, 06/03/2017). An additional impediment is the issue of low maintenance and enforcement of regulations. Trash is being disposed of on the square (Feldt, Interview, 06/03/2017) and cars are parking in non-parking zones (Schilde, personal conversation) (Özdemir, Interview).

In the past, multiple players have worked towards improvements of the situation. After a six year long dialogue between local residents, their neighbourhood associations, business owners and policy makers, an agreement on the redesign of BP was reached in 2011. Some of the benches are the result of the redesign that happened in 2013. In addition, there was an agreement that the Lauterstraße should be closed to traffic in order to increase the size of the square and make it more accessible for pedestrians (SPD, 2015). The resident initiatives also promoted a better use of the pavilion for cultural activities and the instalment of a decorative fountain; however, this could not be implemented due to financial constraints (Initiative Breslauer Platz, 2011). Aside from few small improvements, little has changed. In fact, some agreed upon items never came to fruition. The Lauterstraße was never fully closed to traffic but has instead been transformed into a "play street" with a speed limit.

Refugee accommodation at Rathaus Friedenau

The RF (red circle in Figure 3) is the former city hall of Friedenau and used to be in the hands of the district. Because of high costs associated with the maintenance of the building, it was sold in 2015 to the Berlin city real estate company BIM and the Friedenau administration was transferred into the city hall Schöneberg (Dobberke, 2015). Originally, the Berlin tax police were supposed to move into the building. However, at the end of 2015 the Berlin administration decided to turn the building into an emergency refugee shelter, which opened in February 2016 (Borkowska, Interview). At its peak, 400 people lived in RF. At the time of this research, it had 329 inhabitants. In May 2017, the transformation from an emergency shelter into a shared long term accommodation for 300 inhabitants started. It will most likely be completed in April 2018 (Noetzel, 2017). Refugees currently living in RF come from many different countries and fall under the category of 'particularly vulnerable people'.[5] 193 of the 329 inhabitants of RF are women and 136 are children (Borkowska, Interview). In the small backyard of the city hall (approximately 20x20m), a playground has been setup that is mainly used by the younger children living in the building (Özdemir, Interview).

5. This entails the following groups of people: women traveling alone, women with children, pregnant women and people from the LGBT community (Borkwoska, Interview)

FROM COEXISTENCE TO SOCIAL INTERACTION

Visibility of diversity – a mixed blessing

In our case study, the existing conditions appear ideal: our local community of interest is not prone to the anti-refugee narratives and is open to refugee-related volunteering activities. The refugee community consists mainly of women and children, who are less frequently the subjects of negative media coverage and whose pres-

ence is said to increase the overall attractiveness of public spaces (see Chapter 2 ('Public spaces and studies of differences')) (Project for Public Spaces, 2017c).

Yet, all parts of the qualitative analysis conducted for this paper have demonstrated that the presence of refugees at BP has not been conflict-free. On the contrary, their presence seems to have increased negative sentiments towards refugees, as reported by five out of nine 'constant observers'. Among the control group, the 'constant observers' at the Winterfeldplatz, six of eight interviewees said that refugees were not discussed among customers and only one reported negative sentiments towards refugees. At Winterfeldplatz, the negative sentiments were based on a fear of terrorism, whereas at BP they seemed to be related to first-hand encounters with refugees using BP.

According to the Senate Administration for Health and Social Affairs, no increase in the incidence of criminality was found in any of the areas surrounding refugee accommodations (SPI Stiftung, 2016). In our case however, four out of nine 'constant observers' at BP reported negative experiences concerning the behaviour of mostly young refugees. These experiences were also mirrored by the complaints of local residents, discussed by both Özdemir and Borkowska. Common grievances included: conflicts between passing parking cars and children playing, increased noise pollution, a lack of parental observation of younger children, gang building, commercial theft and violence among refugees (Özdemir, Borkowska, Interview).

These observations confirm the findings presented in Chapter 2 ('Public spaces and studies of differences'): visibility of diversity does not always automatically improve tolerance and remove tensions between different groups. I argue that these tensions result from differences in means, needs, and socialisations of the people using the square and the particular characteristics of BP itself.

Different people, different needs and means

In contrast to other migrant communities, refugees are often more vulnerable (Pressé & Thomson, 2007), which is particularly the case for the women and children living in RF. Furthermore, many refugees have experienced trauma prior to or during the migration process, and therefore choose not to leave the building (Özdemir, Borkowska, Interview). Nevertheless, in the same way that public spaces are especially important in low-income, high density residential environments, (Strydom & Puren, 2013), BP has been key in the RF refugee community's integration. For the inhabitants of the emergency shelter, the RF and BP form a centre of life (Borkowska, Interview). Refugees often live in clustered accommodation, children have less access to organised sport activities and their space to play is very limited within their homes (Berding, 2012). The square is therefore frequently used by women to socialise with friends and by children to ride bikes, play soccer and take part in other games (Borkowska, Interview).

According to Özdemir, the violent behaviour observed during these activities can be attributed to the traumatising experiences shared by many of the children and adolescents (Özdemir, Interview). The problem of parents not observing their children can be traced back to two factors: firstly, many refugees come from rural areas, where children have grown up in safe surroundings for unsupervised play (Özdemir, Interview). Secondly, the mothers who live in RF are single mothers. Therefore, they carry a large responsibility, which they cannot share with their partners (Borkowska, Interview).

As described in 'Breslauer Platz', BP is per se not necessarily a 'good' square. Lack of good quality seating, green space, a general uncleanliness and an uninviting appearance limit its use largely to market days. The lack of seating was partly improved by the provision of chairs and tables by the cafés and restaurants. However, these facilities are only used by the local population and not by

refugees. Seven out of nine local observers reported that refugees never or rarely purchased local goods. Two observers explained this through the lack of financial means of refugees.[6] The physical separation of refugees sitting on the benches next to RF and local residents sitting outside restaurants and cafés creates a clear image of 'otherness', inscribed by the economic disparity of the two groups inhabiting one shared space.

It is also clear that BP is not very suitable for the groups that need it the most - namely, the children living in RF. Özdemir believes it was a wrong decision to choose RF for this specific target group. However, since the refugees did not choose RF as their home, he also thinks that it is a 'matter of fairness' to make the best out of the situation (Özdemir, Interview). One measure that would improve the quality of the square for all residents and, the safety of refugee children particularly, while reducing complaints by local residents, is the full closure of the Lauterstraße, and traffic calming measures of the Niedstraße (see Chapter 3.1). Studies have shown that traffic-blocked streets have a higher potential for social integration, when measured in frequency of neighbourhood contacts (Sauter & Hüttenmoser, 2006). The district parliament (BVV) voted for the implementation of both measured in 2016 (Noetzel, 2016). In addition, an embellishment of the empty stone surface is a measure that would likely be welcomed by local residents, refugees, and business owners alike. However, this aesthetic adjustment is limited by the needs of the market stand owners, who need the flat stone surface to put up their stands. The physical transformation of public squares is always limited by legal as well as budgetary constraints and can become a matter of political conflict. Conflicts of interest are inherent to the nature of public spaces that are used by a number of people with contrasting needs(Dangschat, 2011).

As recommended through the 'masterplan integration' of the Berlin Senate (Berliner Senat, 2016), the operator of RF, SIN e.V., organised a round table for all residents to deal with the increasing complaints of local residents. At the meeting, individuals could

6. Refugees receive mainly receive contributions in kind. Refugees in shared accommodations receive pocket money that varies between 76 and 135 € per month (Creutzburg, 2016)

voice their concerns and engage in a dialogue with the operator and the residents.

One can only hope that the dialogue and the many social activities organised by local refugee aid organisations (which target specifically the children and adolescents among refugees), will continue to ameliorate the existing situation. Not much more than a year has passed since the refugee accommodation was opened and several interviewees have already reported improvements.

Positive visibility through social interaction

For a sustainable integration and community development, a peaceful coexistence of different groups is desirable but not sufficient. What is crucial however is the interaction that takes place between these different groups (Dangschat, 2011). Many of the problems described in the last chapter, can be mitigated through the creation of an inclusive community. A study that is currently conducted by the Robert Bosch Stiftung showed that refugees valued social contacts with Germans more than material support (Robert Bosch Stiftung 2017) (Stiftung, 2017).

However, as highlighted by Dines, Cattell, Gesler, & Curtis (2006: x): "while public spaces might be frequented by a range of different groups, this [does] not necessarily mean that there was any contact between them". The situation seems to be no different at the BP. All constant observers reported that there is no interaction between refugees and locals at BP. Policy makers and civil society share the responsibility to create settings in which encounters between refugees and locals can happen in a peaceful manner (Robert Bosch Stiftung 2017). The refugee aid organisations of Friedenau are recognising the need to "create a network for refugees in the neighbourhood" (Özdemir, Interview) (Friedenau Hilft!, 2016). The problem about these forms of social interaction is that they only reduce stereotypes among those people who are already relatively open and tolerant. Combined with the negative

dynamics described in the last chapter, this bears a risk of segregation of the local community in pro- and anti-refugee.

A way to prevent this from happening would be to increase the use of the BP for the social activities organised through civil society organisations. The hosting of festivals, markets or sport events at public squares has been valued as particularly relevant for migrant communities (Berding, 2012) (UNESCO, 2017). The organisation of social activities at the square could increase positive visibility for those who are not necessarily involved and would strengthen the quality of the space for other users. In spring 2016, Friedenau Hilft organised a festival, where participants donated food and ate together. It was visited by approximately 500 local residents and 50 refugees (Özdemir, Interiew). Many of the constant observers remembered the festival as a moment of social interaction and a positive event for the area. Local residents also gave positive feedback to Friedenau Hilft, highlighting that it "brought life back to the square" (Özdemir, Interview). However, except for the festival and a few informal soccer games, the BP has not been used for any social activities between refugees and locals (Borkowska, Özdemir, Interview).

Much can be learned from organisations in other cities and countries that use festivities to promote social interaction and create positive visibility.[7] What has shown to be most successful is the creation of positive images of multiculturalism and events where refugees can share their stories. As shown by Butcher, Spoonley and Trlin (2006), neighbourhood discrimination often originates from a lack of knowledge about the background and situation of refugees. These activities can also turn around the improvement of the square itself. "Participatory Placemaking" offers a way to react to different needs of a heterogeneous user community and creates a sense of ownership among those involved (Karkukli, 2013)(Bereswill & Götz, 2012).

An increased usability of the BP on non-market days would not only foster social interaction, positive visibility and increased

7. Inspiration can be drawn through the collection of 'good ideas in integration' presented at Cities of Migration website, which contains several hundred case studies from countries all over the world (Cities of Migration, 2017)

living quality for inhabitants but also has economic potential for the surrounding businesses (Rheinstraßen-Initiative, 2009). The economic spill-overs of social activities were also mentioned by several 'constant observers' at Winterfeldplatz.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Take-away for urban policy makers in refugee receiving communities

In this paper, I find that public squares are of special importance for refugees and specifically for their children. Making these squares accessible for locals, migrants and refugees alike should thus become an essential part of integration policies in welcoming communities. Few studies exist on the specific needs of refugees in public spaces and these might differ largely among different refugee populations. Nevertheless, I was able to identify certain characteristics specific to forced migration that influence the way refugees use public squares and that policy makers and practitioners should keep in mind, when designing squares in the context of refugee integration:

◗ Refugees often have limited financial means
◗ Refugees often have limited living space in their arrival country
◗ As a group, refugees often have different demographic characteristics, in terms of age and gender, compared to local communities
◗ Refugees are often traumatised through experiences in their home countries or during the flight
◗ The majority of refugees do not speak the local language at the time of arrival
◗ Some refugees move from rural to urban settings

◗ Many refugees are removed from stabilising family settings

The case study also confirmed that public squares can be a mixed blessing. Power structures inscribe themselves into spaces. Especially for refugees, who are already a marginalised group, this can limit their access to squares and have disempowering effects. Furthermore, I found that the visibility of cultural diversity can increase negative sentiments towards refugees and thereby divide the local population into pro-and anti-refugee factions. This effect was found although the refugee community analysed consists of women and children only, whose presence is usually considered positive. In the worst case, a vicious cycle can be created where the bad experiences of host communities increase racism which might in turn decrease the use of the square through refugee communities and negatively influence the refugee's willingness to integrate(Jalkh, 2017) (Dines, Cattell, Gesler, & Curtis, 2006). A better design of squares that takes into account the specific ways refugees use these spaces can only partly help to mitigate these conflicts. One should not forget, that public spaces are areas where people of different beliefs, needs and preferences meet and that it is inherent to the nature of these spaces that conflicts between different users emerge. Policy makers are advised to create settings in which conflicts can be negotiated between equals, with the participation of all users of squares.

Furthermore, my recommendation is to create places that do not just allow for coexistence but create a setting for social interaction. Local civil society carries a special responsibility to actively promote positive interactions between the different groups and to direct volunteering activities at public squares. The facilitation of social activities in public squares can have positive spill overs for residents, and businesses. It can create positive counter images that also reach those members of community that would normally not be in contact with refugees and can thereby counteract a segregation of the society.

Furthermore, it is of utmost importance that there is a turn-around from a needs based, towards a capability approach, where the rights of the arriving population are not only respected, but where they are enabled to become active citizens (UNESCOCAT, 2010). Regarding public squares, this means that policy makers and local neighbourhood initiatives should foster the participation of refugees and migrants in the design and maintenance of places. Much can be learned from the worldwide 'Placemaking' movement which shows that much can be done despite financial and bureaucratic constraints. Inclusive 'Placemaking' can help to mitigate conflicts arising from different needs of diverse users, lead to social interaction and increases the positive visibility of refugees by showing them as active parts of the society (PPS, 2017b). It gives refugees a feeling of ownership and responsibility (Strydom & Puren, 2013).

Obviously, the power of spaces is limited. It cannot dissolve the macroeconomic factors, social and housing policies, that form the roots of social segregation (Gebhardt, 2010) (Dangschat, 2011). The recommended measures will not remove all conflicts from the public sphere, which would also not be desirable. Integration cannot be achieved over night and it is precisely those social struggles through which societies find and re-define themselves (Nutt, 2014).

Limitations of this paper, external validity and recommendations for further research

I recognise that there are several limitations to my research. Firstly, the informative value of the demographic data used is limited. It says very little about peoples' beliefs and needs since we cannot assume that people act in the same way conditional on their gender or age group (Dangschat, 2011). The interviews that were conducted with the 'constant observers' and people who are in reg-

ular contact with refugees were helpful in this regard but cannot fully solve this problem. Additionally, the assessments of the 'constant observers' concerning sentiments towards refugees might be influenced by their own opinion on the topic. People might have also felt pressured to give socially desirable answers which would result in a response bias (Furnham, 1986).

Future research should directly observe movement patterns on the square and people's opinion should be monitored through surveys. Refugees should be interviewed and surveyed face-to-face. It would be ideal to conduct this research over a longer period of time to create trust in the community and identify changes in interactions, how these correlate with sentiments towards refugees. In order to further understand the role of space design for social interaction and integration of refugees, a third square should be identified, which (in contrast to BP and Winterfeldplatz) should be a "good square" and in proximity to a refugee accommodation.

The extent to which findings can be transferred to other types of public spaces is limited since they are often used for different purposes and by different users. Demographic information on different users of spaces, just like cultural, political and economic settings, should be taken into account on a case to case basis, as they will shape the outcome of policies implemented. Although the findings of this research cannot be representative for all situations in which local communities aim to integrate arriving refugees, I nevertheless hope that my recommendations can be helpful for urban policymakers of refugee welcoming communities outside Friedenau, Berlin and maybe even Germany.

Recommendations for the city administration of Berlin, the municipal administration of Tempelhof-Schöneberg and the local civil society on the organisation[8] of the BP

◗ Regular open tables for all users of BP that allow the negotiation of conflicts should be organised. Language support for participating refugees should be provided.

◗ Participatory 'Placemaking' that includes low cost, short-term changes should be promoted and refugees should be included in re-design efforts.

◗ Refugees should be encouraged to participate in cleaning activities organised by neighbourhood initiatives.

◗ Refugee aid organisations and neighbourhood initiatives should join forces in order to discuss how BP can be used to become a centre for integration activities. Seasonable strategies are needed and the focus should be on refugee children and cultural activities that reflect all cultures present, such as:

◗ Market stands where refugees and volunteers can sell food from refugees' home countries.

- Story-telling sessions where refugees can share stories about their home countries, their lives before the flight and their experiences made during the flight (depending on the openness of the refugees to talk about these issues).

- Small scale sport events for children that include both refugee and local children.

- Cultural festivals – international celebrations can be used as themes.

◗ Social workers that offer counselling to refugees need to be aware of the experiences with racism, exclusion and discrimination that can take place in public spaces and need to offer special support to victims.

◗ Business owners should be approached for the development of a 'Welcome to Friedenau' card, which gives refugees reduced prices in selected cafés, restaurants etc.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. FRIEDENAU, BRESLAUER PLATZ AND RATHAUS FRIEDENAU

Source: Project for Public Spaces, 2017

APPENDIX B1. INTERVIEW METHOD AND RESULTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH 'CONSTANT OBSERVERS' AT BRESLAUER PLATZ & RATHAUS FRIEDENAU

◗ Interviews conducted on March 2, 2017
◗ 9 participants: waitress at Café Breslau, store manager at Netto supermarket, ice cream seller, seller at Turkish snack stand, newsstand seller, seller at Thoben bakery, seller at Thürmann bakery, seller at Rudis store, seller at Subway restaurant
◗ A semi-structured questionnaire was used that allowed for short answers but also gave interviewees the opportunity to share anecdotal experiences
◗ As suggested by Steinar (1996) I started with questions that participants could answer easily, in this case questions about customer characteristics, and then proceeded to more difficult and sensitive topics, such as questions related to the refugees.

Anecdotal evidence

Ice cream seller:
◗ There was a big chaos at the beginning. The Breslauer Platz was very loud and the situation was a disaster. But the situation has improved with time
◗ We made negative experiences mainly with children of 7 to 12 years. They stole and begged. I know that surrounding places like Netto and the Café Lula made the same experiences. Not so long ago there was a one year old child alone in the store. I wanted to first call the police but then contacted the security personnel of the Rathaus Friedenau instead and they got the parents to come.
◗ In 2016, I called the police because there was a mass-brawl between refugees, with knifes.

◗ The refugees are sitting at the benches and on the stairs in front of the Rathaus Friedenau

◗ At the beginning the people were very positive towards the refugees. But after all the problems came, the mood turned. Now the situation has calmed down. You see less young men. Mostly children and women.

◗ The festival in the summer 2016 was received very positively

Store manager at Netto supermarket:

◗ We have had mixed exeriences with the mainly young refugees that come here. Both positive as well as negative experiences.

◗ Some of the kids eat in the store and then leave the rest of the food lying around. They have also stolen food.

◗ I think the negative sentiment towards the refugees is stronger than the positive one. Because the negative experiences are hard to forget.

Seller at the Turkish snack stand (in the pavilion)

◗ The refugees come to buy from us if they have money. They have problems with the language but besides that I haven't made any negative experiences. It's mainly the adolescent refugees that come. I think it is impressive how fast they are learning German.

◗ I never see any interaction between the refugees and the local people. But the benches in front of the Rathaus Friedenau are used by both, refugees and locals.

Seller at newsstand:

◗ The refugees and the locals don't get along. The refugees are not welcome among the locals

◗ The customers talk a lot about the refugees and that they aren't welcome.

Seller at Thürmann bakery:

◗ The sentiments towards the refugees are not very positive. Especially among the older customers we hear many complaints about the behavior of the refugees. They also make racist comments. But it was more of a topic when the refugee accomodation opened. Now there is less discussion about the topic

Seller at Rudis store:

◗ The refugees mainly buy locks, bowls and folders for applications

◗ At the beginning there was a gang of 3 to 4 children between the age of 4 and 14 that came to steal. Now they are banned from the store

APPENDIX B2. INTERVIEW METHOD AND RESULTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH 'CONSTANT OBSERVERS' AT WINTERFELDPLATZ (CONTROL SQUARE)

Selection of Winterfeldplatz as a "control square":

◗ The two squares are in the same borough and therefore have users with similar characteristics. Both squares have a retiree home close by;

◗ Both squares have a similar size. The Winterfeldplatz is slightly larger;

◗ Both are market squares and their center is a large stone space;

◗ Both squares have very few benches, both squares have a kiosk and are surrounded by cafes and restaurants;

◗ Both squares are surrounded by streets that are frequented by traffic. The Winterfeldplatz does not have a bordering high street;

◗ The aim was to interview the same number of people at both squares. Ths was however dependent on the amount of cafes, restaurants and shops surrounding the squares and the willingness to talk of the 'constant observers'. At both squares only two people maximum weren't open to talk. The "opt out / opt in selection bias is thus assumed to be small;

◗ Additional limitation: the types of places where 'constant observers' work where slightly different. At Winterfeldplatz there are more restaurants, at Breslauer Platz there are also bakeries and shops.

Selection of Winterfeldplatz as a "control square"

◗ Interviews conducted on March, 30, 2017 (28 days after interviews at Breslauer Platz)

◗ 8 participants: AKI Tatsu Sushi place owner, head of service at Amrit indian restaurant, waiter at Berkis Greek Restaurant, waiter at Boussi Falafel, waiter at Café Eckstein, kiosk owner, waiter at Miss Honeypenny Café, waitress at MayWay Café

◗ Questionnaire of Breslauer Platz interviews was edited slightly:
  - Question on social interaction between refugees and locals was replaced by question on the use of the square in general.
  - Because several interviewees at Breßlauer Platz reported violent behavior of refugee children, a question was added on whether people had observed violent behavior at Winterfedplatz.

◗ Questions about characteristics of customers helped to test for similarity of local population in the two squares. Result: both areas have high amount of families. Winterfeldplatz is in a gay area and has more tourists visiting.

◗ A semi-structured questionnaire was used that allowed for short answers but also gave interviewees the opportunity to share anecdotal experiences

◗ As suggested by Steinar (1996) I started with questions that participants could answer easily, in this case questions about customer characteristics, and then proceeded to more difficult and sensitive topics, such as questions related to the refugees.

Anecdotal evidence

Head of service at Amrit, Indian restaurant::

◗ There are 2-3 refugee families from Syria that come here regularly. They actually live in Wedding but they come all the way here. These families are really nice. I can say I've made 100% positive experiences with them.

◗ It's a fun area around here. But some time ago there was more going on. Since they built a playground nearby there are less parking spaces available and the business isn't going very well.

◗ The square is never used. Nobody even sits on it.

◗ here was a big chaos at the beginning. The Breslauer Platz was very loud and the situation was a disaster. But the situation has improved with time

Waiter at Berkis Greek restaurant

◗ It is a nice square. But if there are no events, it is never used. We also have problems with parking spaces. There aren't enough and those that are there are always occupied.

Owner of kiosk:

◗ The square is dead. That's such a pity. There are just no attractions. Once a month there is a bicycle market. I think there should be more of such events that use the square. That brings people and is good for the business.