Qualitative Field Study of Host Community/Refugee from Syria Relations in Croatia, Germany, Jordan and Sweden

FOCUS Research Project Deliverable 4.2

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Content

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 5
2. INTRODUCTION 7
   2.1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS 9
   2.2. SENSITIZING CONCEPTS 9
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY & STRUCTURE OF ANALYSIS 15
   3.1. SAMPLING 15
   3.2. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION 15
   3.3. DATA ANALYSIS 17
4. CROATIAN QUALITATIVE FIELD STUDY 22
   4.1. SAMPLE 22
   4.2. LIMITATIONS 23
   4.3. CODING RESULTS 23
   4.4. PERSPECTIVES ON INTEGRATION – THE STATUS QUO 23
   4.5. ON INTERGROUP RELATIONS 25
   4.6. AVENUES FOR NEGOTIATING INTEGRATION 34
   4.7. POWER, CULTURAL, SOCIAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL STRUGGLES AND RAPPROCHEMENTS 44
   4.8. PERSPECTIVES ON INTEGRATION – CONCEPTUALIZATIONS AND OUTLOOK 51
   4.9. CONCLUSION 58
5. GERMAN QUALITATIVE FIELD STUDY 61
   5.1. SAMPLE 61
   5.2. LIMITATIONS 62
   5.3. CODING RESULTS 63
   5.4. PERSPECTIVES ON INTEGRATION – THE STATUS QUO 63
   5.5. ON INTERGROUP RELATIONS 65
   5.6. AVENUES FOR NEGOTIATING INTEGRATION 73
   5.7. POWER, CULTURAL, SOCIAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL STRUGGLES AND RAPPROCHEMENTS 86
   5.8. PERSPECTIVES ON INTEGRATION – CONCEPTUALIZATIONS AND OUTLOOK 92
   5.9. CONCLUSION 99
6. JORDANIAN QUALITATIVE FIELD STUDY 102
   6.1. SAMPLE 102
   6.2. LIMITATIONS 103
   6.3. CODING RESULTS 104
   6.4. PERSPECTIVES ON INTEGRATION – THE STATUS QUO 104

6.5. On intergroup relations 107
6.6. Avenues for negotiating integration 115
6.7. Power, cultural, social and geographical struggles and rapprochements 127
6.8. Perspectives on integration – conceptualizations and outlook 132
6.9. Conclusion 136
7. SWEDISH QUALITATIVE FIELD STUDY 138
7.1. Sample 138
7.2. Limitations 139
7.3. Coding results 140
7.4. Perspectives on integration – the status quo 140
7.5. On intergroup relations 141
7.6. Avenues for negotiating integration 150
7.7. Power, cultural, social, geographical struggles and rapprochements 152
7.8. Perspectives on integration - conceptualizations & outlook 156
7.9. Conclusion 157
8. FINAL SUMMARY & NEXT STEPS 161

Glossary

FGD	Focus group discussion
RC	Receiving community participant
AC	Arriving community participant
RQ	Research question

List of Tables

Table 1: General overview of themes, categories and codes 18
Table 2: Participants' sociodemographics Croatia 22
Table 3: Participants' sociodemographics Germany 61
Table 4: Participants' sociodemographics Jordan 102
Table 5: Participants' sociodemographics Sweden 138

List of figures

Figure 1: General overview of FOCUS 7

1. Executive Summary

The FOCUS project is undertaking a range of research and piloting tasks which aim to improve understanding of dynamic integration and to assist the implementation of effective practices. As part of this work a detailed *programme of qualitative research* has been undertaken in four countries. This report presents the *country-specific findings* of this research, which will be further consolidated in a cross-site analysis to be completed in the coming months.

> "to provide a deeper understanding of the current sentiments and relations among and between members of the arriving and receiving communities; explore both opportunities for and barriers to integration from both perspectives as well as to generate hypotheses that guide future interventions for dynamic integration."

The purpose of the qualitative research within FOCUS is:

The work was based on guidelines developed following an extensive review of the current state of research in this area and key knowledge gaps which require further exploration (consolidated in D3.1 Research design and methodology).

- Focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with members of the receiving communities and with members of the arriving communities in a total of 10 site in four countries which have different experiences of migration from Syria in recent years (Sweden, Germany, Jordan, Croatia).
- The FGDs were recorded and their transcripts were translated and analysed using Thematic Analysis. Several virtual coding workshops among the research partners ensured the development of a coding frame that captured and structured significant information at all sites.
- The core of this report involves the presentation of the findings for each of the four countries (Sections 4-7). Each of these sections is presented with a similar format while the analyses reflect the findings in those sites alone.
- As a background to these findings, Section 2 presents a brief introduction of the research questions and the sensitizing concepts, while Section 3 recaps of the methods of data collection and analysis.
- A final résumé presents an initial brief review of emerging patterns across sites in advance of the fuller cross-site analysis to be contained in the upcoming deliverable D4.3 Cross-site analysis (section 8).

The use of a common methodology, focus group guide and structure for coding/analysing across the countries was successfully undertaken. It has provided country reports which can now form the basis of the next stage of evaluation.

Over the course of the thematic analysis, four themes including several categories and codes emerged:

1. The theme "Perspectives on integration" contains participants' reflections on "How integration has evolved so far", its representation in "Feeling integrated" but also more abstract ideas that point to "Understandings of ideal integration", associated "Responsible actors" as well as an outlook into the "Future effects".
2. The theme "On intergroup relations" represents "Attitudes and perceptions towards the outgroup", "Intergroup contact" as well as "Perception of threat", other "Intergroup feelings"

and resulting “Self-perception on one’s own group”. It also captured “Behaviours and behavioural intentions”.

3. The theme “Avenues for negotiating integration” contains perceived “Barriers to integration” and “Facilitators of integration”, which are then explored on a deeper level as “Legal and institutional barriers” and “Individual, social and economic resources”.
4. The theme “Power, cultural, social and geographical struggles and rapprochements” represents different societal and institutionalized organizing principles that operate on different levels in the integration process in a defined locality and includes codes on “Racism and discrimination”, “Culture”, “Religion”, Locality” and “Language”.

2. Introduction

After a brief recap of FOCUS components and objectives, this chapter proceeds to outline the main research areas of the qualitative field studies. The chapter concludes with remarks on the challenges imposed by the outbreak of COVID-19 on the implementation of the FGDs.

The FOCUS Project

Forced migration has become a significant focus of public debate in recent years. Globally, 22.4 million people have fled their countries of origin as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations and ecological crisis. The Syrian crisis, as one of the main contemporary drivers of forced displacement globally, has resulted in 5.6 million refugees seeking protection in neighbouring countries as well as in Europe. In 2015 and 2016, the EU experienced an unparalleled influx of more than 1 million refugees and migrants from Syria and other countries (UNHCR 2018). This situation impacted the life trajectories of displaced persons and poses multiple challenges for public services as well as labour markets and social cohesion in communities that received them.

The need to understand the different and evolving dimensions of integration underpins the work of FOCUS. FOCUS aims to better understand the relations between receiving and arriving communities[1] and investigates the social dynamics and conditions of integration. This is being accomplished by comprehensive mapping and field research conducted in four countries with different experiences of the recent Syrian forced migration: Jordan, Croatia, Germany and Sweden. The research component in this project explores the socio-psychological and socio-economic factors that foster the integration of the receiving- and arriving-communities and contributes to the literature by empirically testing the holistic and dynamic idea of integration outlined by Ager and Strang (2004, 2008). It does this based on shared quantitative and qualitative methods conducted across the 4 countries.

The knowledge acquired from the research component is used to transform and strengthen existing promising solutions for social- and labour market integration, that will be brought in the living well together resource (WP5). The goal of this resource is to support policy makers, municipal actors, civil society organisation and other stakeholders in the field in responding to the needs of both refugees and host communities. In addition, we also want to establish a network of receiving communities and provide advice to policy makers. The structure of FOCUS is illustrated in the following figure:

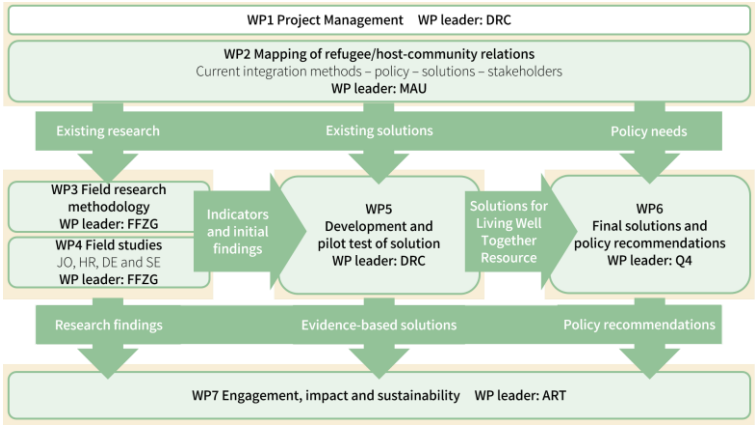

Figure 1: General overview of FOCUS

1 The initially utilized terms of host community and refugees were substituted with 'members of the receiving and arriving communities'. This is mainly due to the problematic nature of the former terms which contradict the dynamic two-way process of integration, perpetuating a hierarchal power structure, whereby one group is the host and the other is a guest.

Report on Qualitative Field Studies

This report presents the findings of the qualitative field research conducted in Jordan, Croatia, Germany and Sweden in the form of four comparable country reports which will provide a basis for a further systematic cross-site analysis.

> "to provide a deeper understanding of the current sentiments and relations among and between the receiving communities and members of the arriving community from Syria explore opportunities and barriers to integration from both perspectives as well as to generate hypotheses that guide future interventions."

The purpose of the qualitative research within FOCUS is:

By implementing FGDs with members of the receiving and arriving communities, the qualitative research aims to supplement and deepen the findings of the Project's survey and secondary data analysis. In addition to the triangulation of other research strategies, the qualitative research in FOCUS strives to explore, describe and contrast the complex and diverse phenomena related to integration.

The report is structured as follows:

- This chapter introduces the research questions, which have already been defined (in D3.1 Research design and methodology) as a result of a thorough literature review (D2.1 (Mapping of Host Community/ Refugee Relations). The chapter proceeds with a section on sensitizing concepts[2], which shed light on background ideas that inform the discussion in the results part.
- Chapter 3 illustrates the overall methodological approach underlying the research, which is consistent among all sites.
- Chapters 4 to 7 present the country specific reports. Each chapter is dedicated to one country and provides information about country-specific sampling as well as the results of the analysis of the FGDs.
- Finally, the final résumé summarizes the arguments of the country reports and provides a brief outlook at some of the issues to be addressed in the forthcoming qualitative cross-country analysis (D4.3 Cross-site analysis).

COVID-19

Finally, it is important to note that the outbreak of COVID-19 imposed significant and varied challenges to the implementation of the FGDs, including a delay in their completion. The in-person FGDs were delayed from Spring to Autumn 2020 with the exception of Sweden, where virtual sessions were held. Given the infrastructural capacities of Sweden and the wide use of digital services among both the receiving and arriving community, a virtual solution seemed only viable at this site. Other partners decided to wait for the gradual lifting of the restrictions. In Jordan, Germany and Croatia the remaining FGDs were conducted in summer under strict hygiene regulations and in close consultation with the respective responsible departments at the universities.

2 'Sensitizing concepts' is a widely spread approach in qualitative research. The idea originated with Blumer (1954), who coined this term as a demarcation to definitive concepts. The purpose and logic behind these concepts will be addressed in section 2.2.

2.1. Research questions

The qualitative research was conducted by taking into account all the research questions defined in D3.1 Research design and methodology. These research questions derived from a thorough literature review conducted at an earlier stage of the project's work and are outlined in the report D2.1 Mapping of Host Community/Refugee Relations. Given the qualitative research's specific purpose of making and describing significant new distinctions as well as exploring the relationship between these phenomena (Asper & Corte, 2019), the following research questions were considered to be in the foreground:

- RQ 1: What is the nature of intergroup relations between host community members and refugees in four study sites?
- RQ 2: To what extent do host community members and refugees interact and what is the nature of these interactions?
- RQ 3: What are the characteristics of host community members and refugees that hinder or facilitate the socio-psychological integration?
- RQ 4: How is the host community members' perception of socio-economic integration of refugees and their perception of the impact of refugee migration related to hosts' socio-psychological relations with refugees?
- RQ5: How is the socio-economic situation of refuges related to their socio-psychological integration?

2.2. Sensitizing concepts

Sensitizing concepts within qualitative research have emerged as a contrasting approach to definitive concepts (Blumer, 1954). They are intended to serve as guiding notions that facilitate the exploration process of collected data without being trapped into a rigid theoretical and conceptual framework that may limit the inductive function and objective of qualitative research to explore certain phenomena.

> "A definitive concept refers precisely to what is common to a class of objects by means of a clear definition in terms of attributes or fixed benchmarks (…) A sensitizing concept lacks such specification of attributes or benchmarks and consequently it does not enable the user to move directly to the instance and its relevant content. Instead, it provides the user with a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances. Whereas definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitizing concepts merely suggest directions along which to look." (Blumer, 1954: 7)

Blumer explains best how a sensitizing concept differs from a definitive concept:

Against this background, sensitizing concepts should be understood as "*starting points for building analysis, not ending points for evading it*" (Charmaz, 2003: p.259). This section begins with this particular understanding of sensitizing concepts and applies this approach to shed light on some of the central concepts addressed during the FGDs across all sites that have a potential for further problematization. These entail *integration, culture, religion, language, perception of threat and racism*.

Given the complexity and the manifold subjective understanding of these concepts across and within different sites, sensitizing concepts open the field up for discovering, interpreting and understanding these phenomena without adhering to a strict theoretical framework. Accordingly, the conceptual

discussion in this section is not meant to predefine the above-mentioned concepts based on specific parameters, but rather "offers ways of seeing, organizing, and understanding experience" (ibid.: p.259) related to these concepts. In line with the approach, it is important to underline that this part does not serve as a comprehensive literature review.

2.2.1. Integration

The meaning of integration remains highly contested with no standardized definition in the centre of research. Very often, the term is used to mean assimilation (e.g., Bowskill et al., 2007), with integration being understood as a one-way process carried out by newcomers adapting to a host society. Various aspects of this understanding have been criticized as it implies asking newcomers to discard their own culture, and it perceives the receiving society as homogeneously mono-cultural. Furthermore, such a definition disregards important societal factors that can facilitate or hinder integration while shifting the responsibility for this process to the newcomers (Castles et al., 2002; Goodman & Kirkwood, 2019). The European Union officially follows an understanding of integration equivalent to a two-way process, as recently restated in the EU action plan on integration and inclusion 2012-2027 (European Commission 2020). Nonetheless, projects funded from the European Integration Fund were found to focus predominantly on the arriving communities, thus lacking a clear strategy for translating this understanding into practice (Sebastiani & Martín-Godoy, 2020).

A more holistic and multi-dimensional definition refers to integration as a complex two-way process which starts upon the arrival of the newcomers in the receiving community (Bakker 2014). It "takes place at every level and in every sector of society" (Castles et al., 2002) and requires both members of the arriving community as well as the receiving community to adapt to each other.

In line with this approach, Ager and Strang (2008) postulate four 'Core Domains of Integration': the *foundation* (rights and citizenship), *facilitators* (language and cultural knowledge, safety and stability), *social connection* (social bridges, bonds and links) as well as *means and markers* (employment, housing, education, health).

2.2.2. Culture

The concept of culture is highly complex and has had a long history of being defined and re-defined. Recent approaches agree on the idea that culture as learned behaviour is transmitted from one generation to another and has a function of adaptation to the eco-cultural and socio-economic contexts humans are living in (Samovar & Porter 2004, Keller 2007). Another shared understanding is that culture implies external/material aspects like activities, artifacts and institutions as well as internal/symbolic representations such as values, beliefs, styles and interpretations (Triandis & Brislin 1984, Samovar & Porter 2004, Keller 2007).

A further well-known and helpful concept to understand culture is Bourdieu's (1999) *Habitus.* The Habitus of a person is incorporated knowledge which is structured by their living conditions and in turn defines their perception, thinking and acting. This way, culture is inscribed into an individual and reproduced by it.

In the context of migration, the process by which a group of individuals come in a prolonged and continuous contact with a different culture is known as *acculturation* (Redfield et al., 1936). Berry's conceptualization of acculturation best illustrates the complexity and multi-dimensionality of this process which goes beyond the dichotomous and simplistic understanding of acculturation as either retaining original culture or adapting the receiving community's cultural practices, values and norms. According to Berry's conceptual framework, acculturation involves four main acculturation strategies: *assimilation, separation, integration and marginalization* (Berry, 1997). Assimilation signifies immersion in the new culture and detaching oneself from original culture; separation refers to the adherence to

one's original culture, accompanied by a rejection of the new culture; integration reflects the desire to find a balance between two cultures; marginalization implies a distancing from both cultures as a result of forced cultural loss in country of origin and experiences of discrimination and exclusion in the new county.

Much of the literature on culture and integration focuses on acculturation and strives to explore the factors that can influence acculturation. One important identified predictor is perceived cultural distance, with literature suggesting that the larger the perceived gap between both cultures is, the more difficult it is for members of the arriving community to cope with the new environment and the more probable it is that they have psychological distress (Galchenko & Van de Vijver, 2007; Suanet & Van de Vijver, 2009).

There is also evidence that the receiving communities' acculturation goals concerning migrants' culture and the receiving country's mainstream culture influences the attitudes and behaviour towards arriving community members. Goals to adopt some aspects of migrants' culture accompanied by the goal for members of the arriving community to maintain their culture results in more positive attitudes and behaviours towards members of the arriving community (Geschke et al., 2010).

2.2.3. Religion

While scholars in the past have defined religion as the relationship with God or the belief in the supernatural or personification of the forces of nature (Pivovarov, 2015), recent research has aimed to define religion more holistically.

> "[…] religion is a volitional system that structures the normative understanding of one binary – the subject in their (a) internal states of consciousness and (b) observable action – in a manner that conditions and is conditioned by the normative understanding of another binary, viz., that of (a) the individual subject in relation to (b) the social world and the wider, physical or natural, world." (p.682)

A quite abstract understanding has been promoted by Nemec (2020) who stipulates the following:

Amore compact definition was provided by Pivovarov (2015) who explains religion "as a form of individual and public consciousness which sacralizes the human relationship with the Absolute" (p. 52).

Research interest in the question of whether religion promotes or inhibits social participation is very prominent and precedes by far the discussion on integration in the context of migration and can be traced back to the writings of Max Weber on the protestant work ethic (Weber, 2016 [1904-1920]). The role of religion in the various aspects of an individual's life remains in the centre of social research, with a growing body of literature examining religion and Islam[3] in particular as a main predictor of integration (Beek et al., 2020; Connor and Koenig, 2015; Fleischmann & Phalet, 2012; Lindley, 2002).

The literature on the relationship between both variables has suggested that the impact of religion and religiosity on integration trajectory is mediated by societal context, a finding that can be best demonstrated based on the discrepancies seen in the narratives and research on religion and integration in the United States vs. Western Europe (Foner & Alba, 2008). While religion is mostly viewed as facilitator of integration in North American literature, Western European scholarship tends to focus on religion, especially Islam as a source of conflict that undermines integration efforts (ibid.). These discrepancies can be partially attributed to historical processes that assign religion a different meaning and position in both societies, with secularization and stronger detachment from religiosity in Western

3 According to Buijs and Rath (2006) there are few thousand publications focusing on Islam and Muslims in Western Europe

Europe being important explanatory factors (ibid.). Foner (2015) argues that religion in Western Europe has become a salient social boundary marker and a source for societal division that is to a certain extent comparable to the role of race in the American context in deepening social cleavages. Ben-Nun Bloom et al. (2015) show that religion affiliation has an impact on the receiving communities' perception of migrants and their expectations regarding possible integration – a shared religious social identity of members of the arriving and receiving community enhances welcoming attitudes whereas different religious identities support anti-immigration policies (Ben-Nun Bloom et al., 2015).

Though there is evidence that religion affiliation impacts socio-economic integration in terms of educational attainment (e.g. Fleischmann & Phalet 2012) and employment outcomes (Lindley, 2002; Connor & Koenig, 2013), the overall literature in this field points to different inconsistencies in the findings that according to Kogan et al. (2020) can be due to methodological limitations. When controlling for ethnic origin and social class, not all studies have found a singular impact of religion (e. g. Khattab et al., 2011). This shows that data limitations complicate the disentanglement of often related or overlapping discriminatory factors against Muslim people in Western societies such as race, religion, culture, type of migration and class. Further to this, Kogan et al. (2020) indicate that there lacks a systematic knowledge about the channels and mechanisms in which religion can facilitate or hinder integration, a gap which authors have attempted to fill in a recent research.

Religion plays a prominent role in the acculturation and integration process as it characterizes social identity. In a study on the role of religion on the acculturation of members of the arriving community from Syria as conceptualized by Berry (1997), respondents reported religion as the main reason for the perceived difference between Syrian and European culture (**Ş**afak-Ayvazo**Ğ**lu et al., 2020: p. 1). **Ş**afak-Ayvazo**Ğ**lu et al. (2020) concluded that the strength of religious belief has an impact on immigrants' acculturation strategy; people with a salient religious identity favoured integration whereas people who considered Islam as less important to their identity were more likely to abandon their religion as an assimilation strategy.

2.2.4. Perception of threat

Perception of threat is a widely used and thoroughly studied construct of great interest in explaining intergroup relations. It is often explored alongside negative attitudes, as a potential predictor of negative beliefs and behaviour towards members of the other group.

Two types of perception of threat are of special interest to the researchers of socio-psychological integration: *perception of realistic and perception of symbolic threat*. Perception of realistic threat is defined as an experience of threat posed by members of another group to political or economic power, or to physical wellbeing (Stephan &Stephan, 2000). Perception of symbolic threat includes perceiving differences in moral, values, standards, beliefs and attitudes between one's own group and an out-group which are seen as threatening to wellbeing of one's group (Stephan and Stephan, 2000). Therefore, in context of integration, realistic threat is related to the socio-economic resources, while symbolic threat is related to culture and religion.

Both types of threat perception predict prejudicial attitudes towards refugees and are susceptible to social desirability (Schweitzer et al., 2005). Symbolic threat was found to be a better individual predictor of attitudes towards members of the other group, but when these types of threat are interacting, such interaction was found to be strongly associated with negative attitudes. The same study found gender differences in levels of threat and prejudice with male participants expressing higher levels of perceived threat and more prejudicial attitudes than females. Additionally, expressing prejudice and perception of threat is related to the tendency to answer in a socially desirable way: participants who believe that prejudice and threat perception are not socially desirable tended to express less of both.

One quasi-experimental study showed that perception of realistic threat is greatly influenced by events happening in the area participants live in, with locals showing significantly higher perception of realistic threat after an attack of Syrian militant forces in Lebanon, and significantly reduced threat perception after an offensive by Hezbollah forces (Braithwaite et al., 2019). Some studies suggest that the level of perceived threat depends on the group the participants are thinking about, with higher levels reported in the case of irregular migrants (Murray and Marx, 2013).

It is apparent that perception of threat is a construct which can help explain attitudes and behaviour of members of the two groups, but it is not exclusive to the members of the majority (in this case, receiving community). More research is needed to determine the manifestation of this construct in the minority community.

2.2.5. Racism

Another way of conceptualizing intergroup relations which reflects psycho-historical as well as power dimensions is the concept of racism. When social scientists began to deal with the definition of racism in the mid-20th century, they first regarded it as an ideological phenomenon, later alternative institutionalist and racial formation perspectives emerged which understood racism as systemic and as an organizing principle (Bonilla-Silva, 1997).

Bonilla-Silva (1997, 2015) introduced his own framework starting from the concept of racialized social systems. “This term refers to societies in which economic, political, social, and ideological levels are partially structured by the placement of actors in racial categories or races” (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; p. 469). In this framework, racism as an ideology stems from race relations, but gets autonomous and fulfils the practical function of rationalizing interactions between races. In a later work, Bonilla-Silva described further characteristics of racism:

> “[…] (1) racism is embedded in the structure of a society, (2) racism has a psychology, but it is fundamentally organized around a material reality (…), (3) racism changes over time, (4) racism has a “rationality” (actors support or resist a racial order in various ways because they believe doing so is beneficial to them), (5) overt, covert, and normative racialized behaviours (following the racial etiquette of a racial order) are all paths that “racial subjects” (…) have in any society, and (6) racism has a contemporary foundation and is not a mere remnant of the past.“ (Bonilla-Silva,2015: p. 74).

According to this line of thought, racism is much more than individual prejudice; it is rather a systemic feature of the social order of a state and society. The deep rooting of racism in social structures leads to racial inequality being understood as a natural process and not as a result of power structures and racial domination. Accordingly, race should be understood as a social construct and a product of

> “[Racism] inscribes itself in practices (forms of violence, contempt, intolerance, humiliation, and exploitation), in discourses and representations which are so many intellectual elaborations of the phantasm of prophylaxis or segregation (the need to purify the social body, to preserve ‘one’s own’ or ‘our’ identity from all forms of mixing, interbreeding or invasion) and which are articulated around stigmata of otherness (name, skin colour, religious practices).” (ibid.; 17-18).

"social thoughts and relationships", that have no biological or genetic origins as has been argued for decades (Bonilla-Silva, 2015).

Within the framework of "*racism without race*", Balibar (1991: p.21) has demonstrated that the characterization and hierarchization of social groups can be based on social boundary markers that go beyond race and include culture and religion. Balibar explains that this type of racism rests on the "*insurmountability of cultural differences, a racism which, at first sight, does not postulate the superiority of certain groups or peoples in relation to others but 'only' the harmfulness of abolishing frontiers, the incompatibility of life-styles and traditions.*" (ibid.: p.21). Departing from line of thought, many scholars have subsumed religion-based discrimination such as Islamophobia under racism (eg. Fekete 2009; Shooman 2011). Balibar explains this type of racism:

Recent research has found that refugees perceive racism in their receiving countries and build their biographic narratives around it, namely trying to prove that racist prejudices against them are false (Leudar et al., 2008). Furthermore, racism has been found to be a key factor for preventing social cohesion of refugees: racism in essential areas such as employment and housing as well as the reproduction of racist images in the media impede the development of a sense of belonging, participation and legitimacy of refugees (Dandy & Pe-Rua, 2015).

The borderline and interplay between perception of threat and racism is elusive. It is beyond the scope of this study to negotiate and align both concepts but to rather explore the data against their background. It is important to not as well, that much of the theoretical debate about racism is confined to the Western context and there is a dearth of theoretical work on how racism functions outside the Western world.

2.2.6. Language

Language plays an important role in the discourse of integration. While governmental institutions promote the importance of arriving community members learning the language of the arriving country and argue in favour of bilingual competency as a relevant factor for educational and professional success (Esser, 2006), social scientists are critical about European language testing regimes.

For instance, in the German political discourse, German language skills have been regarded as requirement for new citizens to exercise their political rights and as key to integration. This approach has also been called "emancipatory liberalism: making immigrants independent and autonomous individuals by forcing them to learn the language" (Oers et al., 2010: p. 72).

Though this approach can promote arriving communities' agency, it has various problematic aspects. First of all, receiving communities are imagined as linguistically homogeneous, which is why language is central for constructing identity – "[m]onolingualism is considered the norm, and it is ideological in nature" (Hogan-Brun et al., 2009: p. 37).

Moreover, there seems to be a hierarchy of languages in which the language of the receiving society has a bigger value than the mother tongue of newcomers. Paradoxically, the EU promotes the M+2 principle (mother tongue + two other languages) (Council of the European Union, 2014), but in the case of migrants 'M' seems not to refer to their mother tongue, but to the national language (Hogan-Brun et al., 2009). Additionally, the term of 'language deficit' always means a deficit in the national language, the knowledge of other languages seems to have little to no value.

Beside these conceptual problems, language regimes are being instrumentalized for gatekeeping purposes: controlling migration has always been an implicit or explicit goal of language requirements, as many newcomers cannot live up to the image of the ideal immigrant due to age, illness or education (Oers et al., 2010). For this reason, Hogan-Brun et al. (2009) speak of language tests as powerful instruments of gatekeeping. Or as Oers et al. (2010) put it: "language and integration requirements prevent migrants from accessing a more secure residence status or naturalisation, and hence serve as a means of prolonging their exclusion" (p. 325).

3. Research methodology & structure of analysis

This chapter outlines the methodology applied across the four separate countries and the actions taken to overcome unanticipated challenges which emerged in Spring 2020. In addition, it details the themes and codes developed for analysing the final transcripts.

As outlined above, the purpose of the qualitative research is to address "the same issues with different methods" (D3.1 Research design and methodology, p.21), thus supplement and triangulate the findings of the quantitative research also fielded in the four countries. Following the concept of dynamic integration, as in the survey, the receiving community has been included into the qualitative research on equal footing as the arriving community. The methods of data collection and qualitative analysis were aligned in accordance with this purpose. All steps of data collection and data analysis were guided by the "methodological awareness"[4] (Seale, 1999) and quality criteria defined for qualitative research (Steinke, 1999).

3.1. Sampling

In alignment with the quantitative survey, the FGDs were conducted within the timeframe between December 2019 and October 2020. This was a longer than anticipated timespan and mainly due to the lock-down and other restrictions on group gatherings caused by the outbreak of COVID-19 2020. All in-person FGDs were hosted in centrally located facilities and were carefully selected with respect to their influence on participation and group atmosphere.

During recruitment, the following inclusion criteria were used to ensure maximum heterogeneity and diversity:

- Age between 18 and 65 years,
- balance of both genders, while aiming at no less than a third of one gender among the overall sample,
- variance concerning socio-economic status (education and job situation),
- if possible, including a migratory background among some participants in the receiving community focus group

All partners aimed to build a sufficiently heterogeneous sample in order to attain "maximum contrasts" and data saturation (Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006). Information on participants' recruitment, country specific sampling as well as limitations is addressed in the respective country chapter (see section chapter 4-7).

Separate groups were held for members of the arriving and receiving communities.

In the case of one country an alternative approach was required due to COVID-19 related restrictions, however inclusion criteria were consistent.

3.2. Method of data collection

FGDs were chosen as the principal method of data collection as they enable the gathering of both verbal/narrative information and interactional information. The interaction among participants as well as with the facilitator leads to deeper exploration of the phenomena under investigation. To ensure e

4 Methodological awareness does not request social researches to resolves methodological disputes but to reflect upon the chosen philosophical and methodological preconceptions and their implications (Seale, 1999).

comparability of results among partners, a detailed FGD guideline was developed (D3.1 Research design and methodology).

The length of the discussion was set at a maximum of 120 min with an optional break. Basic refreshments were provided. Each group was conceptualized to include 4 to 8 participants. The FGD facilitator was assisted by a note taker. FGDs with the receiving community were held in the official national language. The FGDs with the arriving community were all facilitated by an Arabic speaking moderator with the exception of Croatia, where an Arabic interpreter was available.

Due to contact restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, it was agreed to include the possibility of virtual discussions in the case of Sweden. The approaches taken are detailed in the relevant chapters.

Discussion format

After registration and welcome, participants were requested to sign an informed consent form.

All participants were reminded of their right to withdraw their consent prior, during and after data collection by contacting the leading researcher indicated on the study information sheet. As part of the introduction, some general socio-demographic data related to the participants (such as age, gender and education/ occupation) were gathered at all sites prior to the start of the discussion.

The formulation of open, inviting questions to encourage participants to associate, reflect and discuss the topic under research was of special importance. These questions will be outlined in this report to address the intersubjective traceability[5] as one of the core quality criteria of qualitative research.

Introductory questions, guiding and concluding questions were defined. The discussion was initiated by presenting the introductory questions, which were very general in nature, providing the participants with the needed space to associate and respond freely based on their subjective experience. The following introductory questions were raised:

- For the receiving community, e.g. “For you personally, how did the integration of host- and refugee community from Syria in (city name) and (country name) evolve so far?”
- For the arriving community, e.g. “How integrated do you feel in (city name) and (country name)?”

In order not to disrupt the group discussion while keeping the focus of the discussion on the topics of interest, the following guiding questions were formulated:

1. “To you, what does “integration” mean?
    a. “What would it look like if it was working perfectly?”
    b. “What do you think are the biggest barriers to this?”
    c. “You can go ahead and elaborate on any ideas, even if they seem illusory.”
2. “For you personally and for the city/country as whole, what impact do you think that the integration of refugees from Syria will have?”

Besides these questions, the setting and stance of the facilitator were thoroughly defined. To foster an open and diverse discussion among participants, it was emphasized that the facilitator would adhere

5 Intersubjective traceability means that other researchers or readers shall be able to follow the research steps taken, including the reflective processes involved.

to an inquisitive, yet neutral and non-judgmental stance, guaranteeing a safe group atmosphere. Specific moderation techniques entailed 'the pause'; waiting for a certain amount of time before intervening, and 'the probe'; a request for further information from participants without imposing one's own views.

Though a strict operationalization of the concept of dynamic integration would have required the same questions for both communities, asking the receiving community members about their status of integration might have been overwhelming and unclear for the discussants as it is not a yet common terminology used with persons without migratory background. Despite the differences in this specific question, it was possible to develop a common coding frame that captured the material of both communities as outlined in the following section.

3.3. Data analysis

After a thorough discussion about different approaches, 'Thematic Analysis' (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Terry, Hayfield, Clarke, & Braun, (2017) was selected as the method for analysing the FGDs. Thematic analysis is utilized for both deductive as well as inductive coding procedures. This specific method allows for the formulation and structuring of preliminary codings based on the relevant variables defined in D3.1 Research design and methodology as well as the new phenomena and themes emerging from the discussion. Furthermore, Thematic Analysis provides an easily comprehensible and clearly defined taxonomy and coding procedures, thus ensuring consistency across all coders. To align all partners' analysis of their material, a coding frame was developed (see below). The analysis was conducted by using software NVivo 12 (QSR International, 2019) or MAXQDA (VERBI Software, 2019/20).

A taxonomy of elements of analysis based on different levels of abstraction was developed:

- *Unit of analysis* – empirical anchor in the material, mostly a single sentence, but also parts of sentences or several sentences that reflect a clear thought;
- *Codes* – first level of abstraction, a clear comprehensible representation of the unit of analysis;
- *Categories* – second level of abstraction, aggregating of single codes;
- *Themes* – highest level of abstraction, structuring of several categories, including information on their contexts and the relation to other themes or categories;
- Coding frame – overall systematization or hierarchical structure of themes, categories and codes;
- *Memo* - A note from the researcher on the individual coding elements, description to guide all researchers.

Concerning transcription, each partner produced a full verbatim transcript of the recorded material which was then translated into English prior to coding. During the coding procedure, the following steps were implemented:

- *Step 1:* Units of analysis were determined and their meanings captured by a unique code. Units of analysis reflecting the same meaning were represented by the same code. Novel thoughts and concepts were grasped by new codes, that added further information to the coding frame.
- FFZG provided a sample coding of their first two transcripts including the preliminary codes and categories. HU/CHAR coded their material with theses preliminary codes adding further

codes and suggesting minor changes to the existing codes in meaning and/or structure. Both codes and categories were clearly described in memos and shared with all partners. Each partner coded two FGDs and sent it to HU/CHAR for data integration including their suggestions for changes to the coding frame.

- *Step 2:* In a first coding workshop in September, all involved partners shared their experience with the preliminary coding frame. After that, individual codings were discussed in the group to align the understanding of the codes and the individual researchers' coding styles. Furthermore, the researchers had the chance to present difficult passages of their material for mutual coding. As a result of the workshop, new codes were added to the preliminary coding frame. Subsequently each partner recoded one FGD and coded one new FGD to test the new coding frame. The results were then sent to HU/CHAR for data integration.
- *Step 3:* In a second follow-up virtual workshop, the further need to add codes was discussed. When a new code was proposed, the group carefully looked into individual codings to evaluate if new distinct information was grasped by the code. As a next step, a hierarchical structure developed by HU/CHAR was debated and commented by all partners. Following the workshop, each partner coded two more transcripts for a further test of the coding frame. HU/CHAR integrated the data of all partners.
- *Step 4:* The final coding frame with minimal adjustments on definition of codes and revision of the structure was fixed in a third coding workshop. Thereafter, all partners (re-)coded all their material.
- *Step 5:* As a last measure, all researchers joined to revisit codings that were identified as requiring clarification at a later stage of analysis. This resulted in no further changes to the coding frame as the information could be captured by existing codes or was identified to be irrelevant.

The thematic analysis resulted in four themes that emerged from the categories and codes with common meaning and content on a more abstract level. Table 1 below provides an overview of all themes, categories and codes.

Table 1: General overview of themes, categories and codes

Theme	Category	Code
Perspectives on integration	How integration has evolved so far	
	Feeling integrated	
	Understandings of ideal integration	
	Responsible actors	
		Receiving community
		Arriving community
		Governments
		NGOs and INGOs
		Private Sectors
		Media
	Future effects	

On intergroup relations	Attitudes and perceptions towards the out-group	
	Perception of threat	
	Self-perception of one's own group	
	Intergroup contact	
	Partnerships	
	Intergroup feelings	
	Intragroup relations	
	Behaviour and behavioural intentions	
		Acceptance
		Help
		Empathy and taking perspective
		Rejection, reservation and (self-) exclusion
Avenues for negotiating integration	Barriers to integration	
	Facilitators of integration	
	Legal and institutional barriers	
		Family separation
		Recognition of certificates
		Legal status of residence
		Governmental and NGO services
		Rule of law, rights and entitlements
	Individual, social and economic resources	
		Education
		Integration courses
		Housing
		Work
		Health and psychological wellbeing
		Age
		Health system
		Financial services
		Macroeconomic situation
Power, cultural, social and geographical struggles and rapprochements	Racism and discrimination	
	Culture	
	Religion	
	Language	
	Locality	

The first theme named as ***"Perspectives on integration"*** subsumes perceptions and reflections on the term and process of integration in general and entails five different categories. Participants expressed their views on *"How integration has evolved so far"* and how these experiences were manifested in the affective state of "Feeling integrated". Respondents reflected as well on their "*Understandings of ideal integration*" and elaborated on how they perceive the term integration in contrast to an ideal integration. Furthermore, participants discussed the "*Responsible actors*" for integration which are

represented in the codes "Receiving community", "Arriving community", "Governments", "NGOs and INGOs" as well as "Media". The last category of this theme "*Future effects*" contains an outlook on future development of the relations between members of both communities and the overall effects of the integration process. For the structure of this report, the theme "Perspectives on integration" is divided into two sections, with the first section focusing on the status quo ("How integration evolved has so far" and "Feeling integrated") presented at the beginning of each country chapter on results and the second section addressing the conceptualization and outlook of integration ("Understandings of ideal integration", "Responsible actors", "Future effects"), introduced in the last section in each chapter on results.

"*On intergroup relations*", the second theme, integrates eight categories about different aspects and descriptions of lived experiences and attitudes towards the intergroup relations between receiving and arriving community. Participants voiced various narratives, prejudices and stereotypes about the respective outgroup that were listed under "*Attitudes and perception towards the outgroup*". Participants expressed different aspects of "*Perception of Threat*" indicating feelings of fear that the outgroup may jeopardize their socio-economic status, physical and/ or mental safety and/ or socio-cultural identity. The category "*Self-perception*" includes any reference to the participants' own group and social identity in demarcation to the outgroup. Participants brought up different experiences, facilitating contexts and qualities of "*Intergroup contact*". The information on the category "*Partnerships*" between receiving and arriving community members, which is the most intimate form of intergroup contact, was only condensed enough in Jordan and Croatia to be presented at this stage. In addition to experiences of threat, a number of other "*Intergroup feelings*" were expressed. Apart of intergroup contact and relations, participants brought up experiences, opinions and perceptions that refer to "intragroup relation" and access to one's own group. Within the intergroup relations, different "*Behaviours and behavioural intentions*" were distinguished, which were captured as distinct codes: "Acceptance", "Empathy and taking perspective", "Help" & "Rejection or reservation to others (self-) exclusion".

The theme "***Avenues for negotiating integration***" focuses mostly on the socio-economic indicators and resources, which enable or impair integration, as seen by the participants. The categories "*Barriers to integration*" and "*Facilitators of integration*" explore this on a more general level. The other categories and subsumed codes tackle separately each avenue, in which integration is negotiated. "*Legal and institutional barriers*" summarizes the codes or information on "Family separation" and its consequences for integration, experiences with "Recognition of certificates" obtained outside the receiving context, "Legal status of residence" and its implication, experiences with "Governmental and NGO services" as well as "Rule of law, rights and entitlements". The category "*Individual, social and economic resources*" includes well-known socio-economic aspects of integration, but also additional resources which are necessary for integration, mainly individual and social resources. Codes representing social and socio-economic resources, which were included in this category are: "Education", "Integration courses", "Housing", "Work", "Health and psychological wellbeing", "Age", "Health system", "Financial services" and "Macroeconomic situation". Significant information on the code "Macroeconomic situation" only emerged in Croatia and Jordan, whereas accounts on "Integration courses" were only pronounced in Germany. "Age" and "Health and psychological wellbeing" are considered individual resources which can benefit arriving and receiving community members in the integration process. Regardless of this distinction, it is important to note that all of these indicators of integration are in fact present on an individual level, which implies that there are no strict boundaries between individual, social and economic resources.

The fourth theme that emerged from the data was "***Power, cultural, social and geographical struggles and rapprochements***". The categories under this theme represent different societal and

institutionalized organizing principles that operate on different levels in the integration process in a defined locality. "*Racism and discrimination*" contains all thoughts, feelings, attitudes and descriptions indicating discrimination by the receiving community with regards to the rights of refugees and the distribution of resources as well as personal accounts of racism, members of the arriving community have been subject to. "*Culture*" and "*Religion*" represent all references to cultural and religious practices, perceived differences and similarities as well as their negotiation in the public and private spheres. The category "*Language*" explores the distinct role of language in integration. The last category under this theme "*Locality*" highlights all references to attributes of specific localities as well as their negotiation in the integration process. Even though ***gender*** as another important aspect of power dynamics within and among the two communities was addressed in various moments of the discussions, information was not sufficient and deep enough to be represented as a single separate category.

In the following chapters, the research findings of the qualitative field study in each country is presented. At the end of each country chapter there is a short summary of results. While the next stage of the research is the preparation of a detailed cross-site analysis of the results (D4.3 Cross-site analysis), a final résumé is presented to provide some early, outline similarities and differences among the different sites.

Given the different contextual circumstances at each site, there is inevitably a variation in density and relevance of the different themes, categories and codes. Research partners thus had the liberty to decide how to present the information on code level. Variations and omissions from the shared coding frame will be indicated in footnotes.

Moreover, the different disciplines and subjectivities of the researchers might not only be reflected in the style of writing, but also in the way data has been presented and structured on a code level. Following the quality criteria of qualitative research, discussions held within and across the different sites allowed the research teams to reflect upon the researchers' subjectivities in the process of drafting the results.

4. Croatian qualitative field study

In this section, focus groups conducted in Croatia are described and the results of the Thematic analysis are presented for all four major themes and their categories/codes. A summary and conclusion of the results is presented at the end of the country report.

4.1. Sample

All FGDs were conducted in Zagreb. The study location was chosen based on the number of resettled refugees from Syria in the area (see 4.2 on limitations).

Participants were approached using the snowball method, through personal and professional networks using an interpreter of Arabic - a native speaker of Arabic trained to translate between Croatian and Arabic for the purposes of the field study. All potential participants received an invitation letter with information about the study and time and place of focus groups.

At the beginning of every focus group discussion, participants were provided with the information letter and were given time to read through it and ask any questions. The moderator introduced the study and described participants' rights. Participants then provided their consent by signing the informed consent sheet. A trained interpreter of Arabic facilitated the communication in the arriving community focus groups.

Total of eleven members of the *arriving community* participated in two focus groups, six females and five males. Their duration of stay in Croatia ranged between nine months and four years, with the majority residing in Croatia between 2.5 and 3.5 years. Five were unemployed at the time of the study, two were students and four were employed. Total of twenty-one members of the *receiving community* participated in three focus groups, thirteen females and eight males. Five were students at the time of the focus groups, thirteen were employed, one was retired and three didn't provide information on their current occupation, but named their master's degree. Excluding participants who are still university students, ten participants were highly educated, two finished secondary education, two finished primary education and one did not provide information on the completed level of education. No receiving community participants had a migratory background.

Table 2: Participants' sociodemographics Croatia

Community		**Receiving**	**Arriving**
Participants	Total	21	11
	Male	8	5
	Female	13	6
	Diverse	0	0
Residential duration (years)	Range	-	9 m – 4 y
Migratory background		0	-
Place of residence	Zagreb	21	11
Education	Primary	1	
	Lower secondary	1	
	Upper secondary	2	
	Bachelor's or equivalent level	6	
	Master's/ doctoral or equivalent level	10	3
	Unknown	1	8

Labour status	Employed	13	4
	Unemployed	0	5
	Pupil, student, further training, unpaid work experience	5	5
	In retirement or early retirement	1	0
	No answer	2	0

4.2. Limitations

Because the number of arriving community members in Croatia is small, it was necessary to organise focus groups in a city where the probability of everyday interactions between receiving and arriving community members was the highest. Therefore, all focus groups were organized in Zagreb as it is the capital city of Croatia with the majority of arriving community members.

Only two arriving community focus groups were held due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of the epidemiological constrains, it was not possible to organize the third focus group in person, and because the moderators of focus groups are not native speakers of Arabic, it was not possible to organize an online focus group either. Therefore, all interpretations drawn from arriving community focus groups are based on two focus groups instead of originally planned three.

In receiving community focus groups, a half of the participants were highly educated, leading to participants with primary and secondary education being underrepresented. Additionally, a majority of participants held postgraduate degrees or had studied humanities and social sciences. Even though integration includes both socio-economic and socio-psychological dimension, it seems that persons with background in areas of humanities and social sciences are particularly interested in the topic and more likely to offer to participate in research The limited size of the arriving community and COVID-related restrictions meant that a better balance was not possible.

4.3. Coding results

In the following sections, the content of the four major themes which emerged from the Croatian focus groups are presented and interpreted.

4.4. Perspectives on integration – the status quo

Participants expressed their views on integration processes to date, as well as on future relations between the members of two groups, and effects integration might have on them and their social group. They also talked about the meaning of term “integration”.

Arriving community participants expressed the degree to which they feel integrated with the receiving community and what influences this feeling. Participants of all focus groups discussed the actors that play an important role in integration. They viewed receiving and arriving community members as being both responsible for integration processes, as well as governments, NGOs and INGOs. The media was perceived as having the potential to both positively and negatively influence the relationships between receiving and arriving community members. References within these codes will be presented in the following sections together with interpretations and relations to other findings.

This theme is split into two parts due to the context of codes. The first part consists of codes “How integration has evolved so far” and “Feeling integrated” which are on a personal level. The other three codes, “Understandings of ideal integration process”, “Responsible actors” and “Future effects” are related to overall process of integration and integration on an abstract level and will be presented later in the report.

4.4.1. How integration has evolved so far

Receiving community participants were more likely to discuss the history of integration process in Croatia than the arriving community participants. Opposing opinions were expressed, with some receiving community participants believing that refugees are not well integrated into the society, while other stated that the integration process is going well.

RC9: "Personally, I could not say that we have integrated refugees into our society. I don't have such an impression." [Zagreb, pos. 134]

RC17: "*I think it's pretty difficult* [integration and relations between refugees and local population]*." [Zagreb, pos. 35]*

A distinction was made between refugees and migrants who are trying to pass through national borders illegally:

RC18: "For the time being, I think their integration works well. But I'm talking about people who passed through all of our inspections. It's another story about those who are climbing over the borders." [Zagreb, pos. 39]

As in some other references made by the receiving community participants, it is visible that migrants are perceived as a diverse group in which some are thought of more fondly (for example, Syrian refugees, as mentioned in the category "On intergroup relations"), while others are perceived in a negative light as taking the opportunity to migrate to Europe alongside refugees from Syria.

Some receiving community participants believed that integration processes are working well:

RC21: "I think the integration in Zagreb works excellently. We had several Syrians in my school, and everyone was taken care of, economically as well. They are taken care of on all sides – the city, schools, associations." [Zagreb, pos. 107]

RC20: "Well, I think that integration in Croatia is relatively successful because there are only a few of them [refugees] here." [Zagreb, pos. 135]

Because receiving community participants rarely had direct contact with arriving community members, it seems they do not have a clear idea of the current integration policies. Participant who did have direct contact in the school environment stated that the integration processes work excellently. The question remains whether children are better integrated than adults. Elementary schools are obligatory and arriving community children are automatically included in the education system as soon as possible. On the other hand, adults have to find a job using their own resources and employers are not bound by law to employ them upon request.

AC3: "Croatia is slowly getting better despite the problems with the health sector. Now, things are slowly getting better." [Zagreb, pos. 108]

To summarize, participants feel they not well acquainted with the integration processes and practices in Croatia. Opinions of receiving community participants on whether the arriving community is well integrated are mixed. There are some indications that children and adults are not equally well integrated.

4.4.2. Feeling integrated

Arriving community participants in Croatian focus groups spoke about the degree to which they feel integrated. Language and work were once again mentioned in a context of successful integration:

AC6: "Having conversations at my workplace. I talk, I can talk… I feel 70% integrated." [Zagreb, pos. 60]

AC1: “Concerning me, as a girl who goes out, talks and works, I think I'm getting around pretty well. […) [I’d say I feel] 90% [integrated].” [Zagreb, pos. 142; 147]

AC8: “When I talk in Croatian, they don’t look at us like we’re foreigners, I feel like one of them.” [Zagreb, pos. 165]

Autonomy is also important to arriving community members, and it seems to play a great role in feeling integrated:

AC4: “I would say the same because at first, when we just had our asylum granted, and then I was doing everything, everything by myself. And now, I'm doing everything by myself too so... it’s a 80% or more [feeling integrated].” [Zagreb, pos. 62]

Work and language are related – language enables refugees to look for and find a job, and working with receiving community members allows for practicing and further learning the language, as well as establishing positive relationships in and out of the workplace. Together with personal independence, they are crucial for feeling integrated in the receiving country.

4.5. On intergroup relations

This theme subsumes descriptions, lived experiences and attitudes towards the intergroup relation between receiving and arriving community.

Under the theme “On intergroup relations”, a series of categories representing different aspects of the socio-psychological integration arose from the FGD. They are: “Attitudes and perception towards the outgroup”, “Behaviour and behavioural intentions”, “Intergroup contact”, “Partnerships”, “Intergroup feelings”, “Intragroup relations”, “Perception of threat” and “Self-perception”. “Behaviour and behavioural intentions” is a category overarching several other codes: “Acceptance”, “Empathy and taking perspective”, “Help”, “Rejection or reservation to others (self-) exclusion” and “Other, undefined behaviour”.

In the following section, each of the categories and related codes will be described and exemplary quotes presented. Special attention is paid to relations of one category to another.

4.5.1. Attitudes and perception towards the outgroup

In focus groups conducted in Croatia, attitudes and perception of the other group were mostly expressed by the members of the receiving community. These participants believed that attitudes of members of the receiving communities (their own group) towards arriving communities are generally neither positive nor negative, but also thought that there is a lack of interest on their behalf in the integration process:

RC21: “I don’t think people have an attitude towards that because they didn’t have any direct contact with them. I think that even when we had the toughest time with the immigration crisis here, people still didn’t feel it. It was bombastic in the media, but I think people simply didn’t have any connection with it. I think most Croats did sympathize with them and I think that, if Croats had to choose whether they felt positively or negatively about asylees, prevalent experience of Croats would be positive. I think that to some woman in Lika [region of Croatia] who, I don’t know, cares only about her land/not that I’m spreading any prejudice towards anyone, I just don’t think she cared or that she now cares about that.” [Zagreb, pos. 77]

Participants related attitudes to personal characteristics, such as political orientation, age and place of living. They implied that persons with right-wing political orientation are more prone to negative

attitudes, while left-wing oriented individuals are more likely to accept members of the arriving community:

RC5: "Well I think…To me it seems that those who are more left-wing, that they are more tolerant towards refugees, and right-wing people are less tolerant. And I have an impression that there's a gradient, but I think it correlates with…I don't have any particular indicators, but…when I talk to people, it seems to me it's about it." [Zagreb, pos. 109]

Age was mostly related to acceptance and openness towards others, with younger people perceived as having more positive attitudes towards other group. Other references to age will be explained in further sections on behavioural intentions:

RC3: "Well, I think among older people it is mostly quite negative, I'm talking about my mom too who is…like, "watch out, this happened, and that happened, blah blah blah", while, when I'm talking to younger people, they are more open and they think that migrations and people mixing are a normal occurrence and that it has happened before throughout history. But yeah, it depends a lot on the age." [Zagreb, pos. 93]

Members of the receiving community also expressed a stand that the attitudes differ between urban and rural areas, with people living in cities holding more positive attitudes:

RC11: "I would say that the perception is a lot different in bigger cities – for example in Zagreb, where larger volunteer and relief organizations already exist. This helps refugees who may have already finished the first leg of their journey and are now moving towards some kind of integration, unlike those parts of rural Croatia that are on the so-called refugee route. Some kind of differentiation needs to be made here because…if you're traveling and passing through, of course people living in those parts of the country will view this integration differently than people living in larger places." [Zagreb, pos. 40]

While thinking about factors influencing attitudes, both members of the arriving and receiving community mentioned Croatia's Homeland War and experiences of Croats as refugees during 1990s as factors which influence receiving community members' attitudes:

RC5: "Well, I think that some of it [negative attitude towards migrants] has to do with the War [reference to the war in 90's which partly involved armed conflict with the Muslim community in Bosnia Herzegovina] and the rest of it…" [Zagreb, pos. 71]

RC21: "If it weren't for our experience from the 90's, their attitude would be different." [Zagreb, pos. 105]

AC5: "So Croatia has given emigrants to other countries. Currently, the process is a little bit the other way around." [Zagreb, pos. 100]

AC4: "I would say that at first…Croats understand our situation. They also had their war …" [Zagreb, pos. 240]

It seems that this shared experience has a potential of promoting empathy, acceptance and positive thoughts about arriving refugee communities. However, receiving community participants emphasized that Homeland war in the 1990s could still have negative influence on attitudes, because that conflict included three nations (Serbs, Bosnians and Croats) and three religions (Orthodox, Muslims and Catholics). Religious differences were considered important by receiving community participants and will be reflected upon in a later section on code "Religion".

Receiving community participants mostly considered that the number of asylum recipients in Croatia is so small that it will not have an impact in the society. They also believed that Croatia is not an attractive host country and that refugees leave as soon as they are granted asylum.

RC1: “With such a small number, a small influence, minor… [1700 approved refugees in Croatia over several years]. We are lacking several times more workers in tourism than the number of persons in asylum in Croatia.” [Zagreb, pos. 123]

RC4: “Yes, but those Syrians don’t want to stay here. They won’t be able to survive, just like Croats can’t.” [Zagreb, pos. 154]

RC17: “Everyone’s searching for something better. Just like our people are trying to move forward, so they do as well.” [Zagreb, pos. 129]

RC21: “I don’t think it depends on us that there are so few asylees in Croatia, but it’s because they don’t want to stay here with us. I guess the country would grant more asylums if asylees wanted to stay.” [Zagreb, pos. 187]

The majority of participants believed that the further migration of refugees from Croatia is due to the macroeconomic state of Croatia which is viewed as poor and lacking job opportunities.

4.5.2. Perception of threat

Perception of threat was referenced mostly in receiving community focus groups and in regards to two aspects – job market and religion/culture. Receiving community participants often referred to the job market competition as a barrier to positive relations between Croats and Syrians:

RC4: “They’re now competing with the rest of Sisak citizens for a few jobs that are there… Relations cannot be good if Syrians and Croats are competing for a limited number of jobs.” [Zagreb, pos. 56]

Having a stable socio-economic situation was seen as a factor that could influence how receiving community members perceive refugees:

RC11: “If you’re struggling to buy a property, and you see that refugees receive the apartments [free temporary accommodation], I believe that your attitude will be negative. If you’re competing for a job and see that a refugee got the job, I believe that what will prevail in society is the perception that ‘why we are helping them when we do not have enough even for ourselves.’ This is something I’ve often seen on portals and in comments sections – ‘why don’t they go to their neighbouring countries, but come here to us, when we are not a rich country.’ I think that each individual’s perception depends on his own position. If your housing is taken care of, if you have a good job, you will not be thinking a lot about refugees or their attempt at integration. However, if you’re in some…. groups, any category in which you could find yourself with a refugee, then it becomes like ‘you’re my competition’. Not because they are Syrians, but because they want the same job as you do.” [Zagreb, pos. 68]

RC13: “Let’s be real, you’ll always help your own first. There are people who will be very bothered by helping refugees. The ones who depend on state aid will have issues with that.” [Zagreb, pos. 78]

Indeed, the receiving community participants argued that arriving refugees must be helped, but also believed that help should not be withheld from the locals in need:

RC5: “If we teach them the language, these people can get their bearings that way, but the job competition… Some basic education, especially in language, that’s something everyone should get…They should have the same rights as we do, to education…and to find work and accommodation… but they should not be helped out too much with subsidies, apartments, benefits, because we also have quite a lot of our own population that needs to be taken care of.” [Zagreb, pos. 82]

RC4: “Yes, the main thing is that if something is supplied to Croats, only then it can be applied to newcomers too. That’s it.” [Zagreb, pos. 160]

Difference in religions between receiving and arriving community members was seen as a source of symbolic threat. Receiving community participants also referred to history of conflicts during the 400 year Ottoman rule over this part of Europe (see category "Religion").

RC18: "But it's a good question why only Syrians [are in the focus of this study]. I would include religion here. We won't be talking too much about religion, of course, it's…another story, but there are a lot of Catholics among Syrians and a lot of our people are actually afraid of the Muslims' entry. That is why I want to say that we're more accepting of Syrians than some Iranians or refugees from other countries." [Zagreb, pos. 53]

RC7: "Well yeah, we've been threatened by Muslims for centuries." [Zagreb, pos. 115]

Statement of one arriving community participant shows that arriving community members are aware of the threat the members of the receiving community perceive:

AC11: "To break the fear that exists between us [would be perfect integration]. The main opinion Europeans have is that if you're from Syria, you might be carrying a gun." [Zagreb, pos. 304]

This is in line with the conclusions drawn upon the references of intergroup feelings – arriving community members are well aware of the way receiving community members perceive them and believing that the locals have a negative image about them likely has negative repercussions on the psychological wellbeing of arriving community members and their motivation to stay and integrate.

On the other hand, receiving community participants provided explanations as to why they feel threatened and concluded that contact could change the opinion of receiving community members and reduce fear and anxiety:

RC20: "I think that society itself reacts better to asylees when they encounter them, than a priori when they hear some foreigners are coming here, that they will steal our jobs. There are different prejudices against them, that they're terrorists or that they're coming here just because we're offering them some social rights. I think society reacts much better when they actually meet these people. I wouldn't say there's some negative integration in question here, it's just that society is more or less uninformed." [Zagreb, pos. 42]

RC17: "I think it's like, when you meet people, when you see that they're not some dangerous crowd, meaning that they would rob you or hurt you. I think that a lot of negative feelings come from people who don't know and spread panic more than it's really necessary." [Zagreb, pos. 81]

In summary, it is clear that the receiving community members feel threatened by the arriving community and are more likely to express these concerns. The threat is mostly related to job market, but cultural differences are also seen as potentially endangering. Lack of contact with members of the arriving community is seen as a factor evoking perception of threat, showing that contact is a powerful facilitator of integration, contributing by possibility of positive relationships.

4.5.3. Self-perception on one's own group

The category "Self-perception" includes the references participants gave about their own group and in relation to the other group. Receiving community participants viewed their own group as closed-off to others, culturally maladaptive and prone to exclusion of others, including refugees:

RC12: "I think that we are generally a nation that is very limited in terms being open to other nations, other subcultures, and especially toward people who come due to necessity and flee an awful situation, which is war, and seek refuge with us. We as a nation have very little sensitivity for this. In fact, even if we have it, we just don't think about it, it's not the first thing that goes through our head…we do not have that sensibility developed." [Zagreb, pos. 39]

RC12: “As a country, Croatia is extremely, this might sound harsh, pure in terms of nationality and religion. We’re a rare country where most people are Catholic and white. It is irrelevant whether it is a refugee or an Asian person who is not a refugee, but they have come here to work. People will be sceptical of that person, let alone a refugee about whom we already have a predetermined attitude. Not because that’s what we want or because you’re a prejudiced person or I don’t know what, but because you cannot ignore this impression that was installed into you through upbringing, education, society, environment. As much as we, at some conscious level, think that we want to accept all people around us, all nationalities, religions, races, I think that we are still very cautious deep inside. So when it comes to refugees, we are on the more cautious and restrained side.” [Zagreb, pos. 74]

RC12: “We have not met with a significant number of Muslims; this is a very unknown situation to us. We are only now beginning to meet with more diversity in society as far as religion and race go.” [Zagreb, pos. 74]

On the other hand, receiving community participants believed that Croats would be ready to learn about other cultures if it was offered and they were motivated to do so:

RC15: “If properly offered to them, they are [ready to learn about Syrian culture]. Not as something forced, or with the feeling that it is obligatory. If it were offered as something that would arouse their interest, then gladly. I think people are generally interested and that people in Zagreb like to go out to events, exhibitions, lectures, there are a lot of events and I think…they’re generally interested, but only if they experience it as their own initiative, and not something imposed. Like they have to.” [Zagreb, pos. 145]

Interestingly, even though receiving community members believe their society is closed-minded, one arriving community participant stated the very opposite:

AC11: “The simplest example of accepting customs, we in Syria are a more conservative society, and they’re open-minded here.” [Zagreb, pos. 310]

A level of contradiction is present in receiving community focus groups – on one hand, participants mostly agreed that Croatian society is closed-off to foreigners, prone to rejection and not ready to accept other cultures and religions. On the other hand, participants often mentioned war experiences as a bond between Syrians and Croats, indicating that the Homeland War and migration as refugees of Croats to other countries during the 1990s also positively influenced sympathy of Croats towards refugees from other countries looking for safety and security. Generally, Syrians are viewed positively, more so than other refugees and, perhaps because of this shared experience.

Arriving community participants didn’t extensively talk about characterizing their group the way receiving community participants did. They believed that members of their group are not interested in staying in Croatia. This is a shared narrative with the receiving community participants.

AC3: “I think that no one wants to come and stay here in Croatia. Most of the people [refugees] think of Croatia as a transit country through which they will someday go to some western country.” [Zagreb, pos. 292]

AC6: “I think that…this is for them [asylees] like a/they’re temporarily trapped in a room and now they’re waiting for the doors to open. To leave Croatia.” [Zagreb, pos. 290]

AC10: “Whatever happens, I don’t think we’d ever feel at home because we’re not at home.” [Zagreb, pos. 380]

4.5.4. Intergroup contact

The majority of receiving community members did not have direct experiences with arrivals from Syria. Some were in contact with Syrians during their collage years, in 1970's when quite a number of foreign students from the Middle East and Africa came to study in the former Yugoslavia, many of them at the University of Zagreb. However, this was a long time before 2015/16., so only a few of the participants had such an opportunity. They have indirect contact through their children in school, or through someone else who works in an NGO helping arriving community members. Indications of direct or indirect intergroup contact expressed in the discussions reflect mixed experiences:

RC10: "I just wanted to say, since I live in an area where there are so many of them, half the houses in the street where I live have never had any bad relationships with them. They are well-behaved and nice. For example, they have never attacked me; I even saved two refugees from death, my daughter did the same. The other half of that street and of my neighbours have a lot of problems with them. They break into houses, steal, take other people's things in broad daylight, they come into yards, they may get drunk and throw bottles around." [Zagreb, pos. 58]

RC10: "[People] keep asking me how come I don't have any problems with them. Well, I don't, they're nice to me. […] The children too, their parents and young people and everything, and they're nice to me and they say hello meaning they do want to talk with us. The part of the population that has had bad experiences with them simply avoids them, while I'm closer to the station and this part never had any bad experience with them." [Zagreb, pos. 58]

RC15: "It's hard for me to say how society in general breathes. We can talk about wonderful cases and about bad cases like mine unfortunately was. For example, I said in the teachers' room today that I was going to a focus group on refugees, and all 3 colleagues who were with me in the room reacted absolutely negatively to the topic and started citing negative examples and experiences with refugees from their own life. I know 3 people are a small number and a non-representative sample. We didn't get deep in the discussion, but all 3 of them quickly shared that they had horrible experience…just an example of what's it like, 3 out of 3 people didn't react well." [Zagreb, pos. 62]

The former quote shows how teachers working with refugee children can express negative experiences which is significant due to the importance of school for integration of arriving community children. The positive influence of school was mentioned earlier, with both receiving and arriving community members mentioning school as helpful to young arriving community members. Therefore, it seems that differences are present not only in the way healthcare professionals approach arriving community members (described in the category "Behaviours and behavioural intentions"), but also that this could be true for educational staff as well.

Receiving community members made a clear distinction between refugees arriving from Syria and from other countries and were much more open to Syrians:

RC18: "Yes, absolutely positive [experience with Syrians], but even…I'll limit myself to Syrians. We won't be talking about Lebanese, but…everyone was free riding alongside Syrians, it's another story." [Zagreb, pos. 90]

RC16: "I remembered you [addressing 21*] mentioning how you've met a lot of Syrians when you were a student. I know a lot of people from the older generation who met Syrians when they were students. For example, I'm talking now from the perspective of Zagreb. Okay, it can't be generalized on whole Croatia…a lot of people are familiar with them, it's not like no one ever heard of Syria and doesn't know anything about them. There are people who are familiar with them, who had experience with them, positive one, when it comes to Syrians, I think people have a positive experience." [Zagreb, pos. 92]

RC16: “I don’t know, I think we, as a society, are really positive when it comes to Syrians. I’m not talking about all of the asylum seekers or all of the refugees, but when it comes to Syrians I think we’re…” [Zagreb, pos. 49]

Arriving community participants also shared various experiences they had with the receiving community. They mostly express positive relations and pleasant contact, and some described their friendships. Negative experiences seem to be related more to the governmental services than to informal relations:

AC4: “I have lots of friends and at the beginning they used to have boundaries with me…but everything was fine later. There are always boundaries with people, but when they get to know each other, everything gets all right. I've met a lot of people in the kindergarten and they were very kind to my daughter. My daughter didn't know anything at first, but everybody helped her once they've seen we're normal people who live normally. Everything was okay then. So far, I had no troubles. And I really like Croats.” [Zagreb, pos. 240]

AC8: “Some treat us well; some treat us badly when they realize we’re foreigners.” [Zagreb, pos. 192]

AC1: “Even those who do know that I'm an asylee, that I’m not from here, never told me that I don't belong here.” [Zagreb, pos. 262]

Pleasant experiences at work were also mentioned by arriving community participants:

AC1: “I had a very nice experience here once. Once at work, I was approached by a woman who realised that I’m not from here. Her face was very nice, she was smiling…and she started talking very nice to me, actually she was careful and then…she showed interest in me.” [Zagreb, pos. 262]

AC4: “My experience is the same, when I was working at the beauty salon, people coming in and who knew about Syria. Some people don’t know about Syria. Lately a lot of people do know. And…it’s nice, they empathize with us and talk and…it’s a nice experience for me. They even tipped me more. [laughs]” [Zagreb, pos. 263]

AC11: “To break these barriers that exist between refugees and Croats, it can happen through work, through collegial relations. I have a lot of friends among my co-workers, we go out and hang out.” [Zagreb, pos. 316]

AC9: “I’m talking about those…when there are festivals or holidays like Christmas, they don’t leave us celebrating it alone. They give us a chance to hang out [neighbours].” [Zagreb, pos. 199]

To summarize, contact was greatly emphasized and positive contact was often referenced, which is the core of socio-psychological integration. Arriving and receiving community members are in contact in various places and situations, from governmental services, work environment to informal context such as neighbourhood. Majority of receiving community participants stated that they did not experience direct intergroup contact, probably due to the low number of arriving community members in Croatia. Even though members of both groups experienced negative contact, the majority described positive relationships with members of the other group.

4.5.5. Partnership

Participants in Croatian focus groups did not refer to intergroup partnerships often. Two such references were made, indicating a belief that romantic partnerships between refugees and receiving community members are unlikely or unlikely to be accepted.

RC2: “Young people today have a hard time starting a family, let alone with Syrians. [laughs)” [Zagreb, pos. 141]

RC5: “I can imagine young people entering a relationship with Syrians, but, from all the people I know, I can’t imagine that…mom, grandma, whatever, dad, saying that’s good for their child. At least not at first, at least not at first. I think they, ones I know personally, no one would say “Oh I’m so happy for you” , but” Oh how, why him?” [Zagreb, pos. 143]

4.5.6. Intergroup feelings

Intergroup feelings were not often addressed in Croatian focus groups. Feelings of displeasure and apprehension were expressed by a receiving community participant who had an unpleasant contact with migrants passing through Croatia, breaking in and vandalising her summerhouse. Another person expressed fear to stay home alone after cases of vandalism in her neighbourhood were claimed to be linked to migrants. However, another feeling expressed by receiving community members was sympathy with refugees:

RC16: “We sympathize with them [Syrians] because of our historical memory. I mean, I’m too young to judge it that way. These people are…not fleeing because of economical misfortune, or some other misfortune unknown to us, but these are people who used to live normally one day and lost everything the other. I think Croats, citizens of Croatian Republic, mostly sympathize with them.” [Zagreb, pos. 51]

This sympathy was recognized by arriving community participant in other focus group:

AC4: “I would say - they sympathize with us [Croats].” [Zagreb, pos. 95]

As previously analysed in the section on intergroup attitudes and perceptions, both receiving and arriving community participants expressed a belief that Croatian community has the capacity to sympathize with war refugees from Syria. This emotional connection that can be established between the members of the two groups based on war experiences might be a facilitator of integration, as it may reduce the perceived differences and encourage empathy and pro-social behaviour.

One arriving community participant expressed the feeling of humiliation caused by the way members of the receiving community act towards the refugees:

AC7: “That look humiliates us [when hosts look at refugees with contempt].” [Zagreb, pos. 249]

4.5.7. Intragroup relations

Intragroup relations were mentioned only in arriving community focus group and only a few times. Younger participant who is a university student and has good English language skills said that her social circle is mixed, possibly indicating that language and age influence the capacity to have wider social network which includes members of both arriving and receiving communities. Another participant explained how she misses her community back in her home country, indicating that the lack of relations with own group can pose an issue for members of the arriving community.

4.5.8. Behaviour and behavioural intentions

“Behaviour and behavioural intentions” is a distinct category under the theme “On intergroup relations”. It includes codes “Acceptance”, “Empathy and taking perspective”, “Help”, “Rejection or reservation to others, (self-)exclusion, and “Other, undefined” which encases examples of behaviour that cannot be drawn under any of the former codes. All references to actual behaviour or intentions to behave a certain way were coded with appropriate codes from this category.

In Croatian focus groups, participants mostly referred to examples of acceptance and help provided to members of the arriving community. Receiving community members talked about the way arriving community children are accepted in schools:

RC8: “Well I think it was fine because they used to invite her to birthdays and so, and they would hang out. I don’t think it was…she was accepted. But I think that age group is prone to acceptance so…it wouldn’t be expected if they already were half-adults, right, so their approach would be for more mature than in younger…” [Zagreb, pos. 49]

An interesting relationship between codes “Acceptance” and “Age” [part of the category “Individual, social and economic resources”) emerged with receiving community participants holding strong beliefs that younger people are more prone to accepting new cultures and experiences:

RC5: “In high school and elementary school there is better acceptance, but in the older generation…it is very difficult.” [Zagreb, pos. 69]

RC1: “People who are more open to changes, who are more ready to accept something different. So regardless of age, but it is mostly young people because they grew up in more changeable conditions, so they are more open to changes. So, consequently these are younger people due to a different societal experience that they had. Those who are attached to the traditional, the known, who value security more, who want nothing to change for them and who are in fear of everything that is different, these are the people who will have more difficulty accepting immigrants.” [Zagreb, pos. 104]

Older receiving community members were seen as more likely to reject arriving community members:

RC5: “I don’t know, I’m under the impression that the thinking of older people is quite closed off, only Croats and that’s it. Maybe it’s that I only know too many older people who think like that, but that’s my impression, that they are mostly against good relations with the immigrants…” [Zagreb, pos. 71]

Arriving community members described experiences of being rejected by the receiving community members mostly in the context of healthcare system and while looking for housing:

AC1: “For example, in the neighbourhood where I live, staff is not open-minded and they didn't want to register me with a doctor so I've given up. When I'm ill, I decide not to go to see a doctor.” [Zagreb, pos. 188]

AC10: “When it comes to finding a house, accommodation actually, they know you’re Syrian, but as soon as they see you look like this and that you’re with children, they immediately reject you.” [Zagreb, pos. 103]

Feeling rejected is related to poor psychosocial wellbeing and could be greatly demotivating for arriving community members. Furthermore, should they feel rejected by the healthcare professionals (or any other governmental system or service), this could lead to serious consequences regarding their safety, security and health, as indicated in the example above. Two additional quotes show experiences of rejection (or acceptance) by health staff:

AC4: “I’d say getting registered with a doctor is the most important process. If they accept our people, they register us.” [Zagreb, pos. 191]

AC1: “It depends on the location and health staff, what kind of opinion they have about asylees, whether they are open-minded or not.” [Zagreb, pos. 184]

These examples show that arriving community members have various experiences with the healthcare staff, with some of them feeling accepted and receiving help, while others experienced rejection.

Some arriving community participants felt accepted by Croats and related this to similar war experienced as described earlier. Also, one participant felt that the religion of arriving community members is accepted in Croatia:

AC11: “If we’re talking about religion, I think they’re quite accepting here.” [Zagreb, pos. 314]

Arriving community participants were likely to take the perspective of receiving community, especially while justifying the unpleasant behaviour they experienced:

AC6: “Somehow I feel like it's a phobia of…of…I don’t know. I guess they [Croats] had an experience where people really worried and then it looked a little bit…like trying hard not to make a mistake.” [Zagreb, pos. 251]

AC4: “[…] once people realized that you're a foreigner, that you have an accent, they get scared. It proves that they mostly didn’t have good experience with foreigners.” [Zagreb, pos. 276]

Similarly, to threat perception described in a later section, arriving community participants not only recognize the behaviour of receiving community members, but tend to explain it.

Experiences of helping behaviour were mostly related to educational context and were referenced by both arriving and receiving community participants:

AC2: “Yes, I get a lot of help from classmates, and my teacher helps me a lot as well. I can rely on myself too.” [Zagreb, pos. 174]

AC4: “My daughter didn't know anything at first, but everybody helped her once they've seen we're normal people who live normally.” [Zagreb, pos. 240]

RC8: “At school, they organized help with certain subjects, and she was well-received.” [Zagreb, pos. 45]

RC6: “They are in an unenviable position when they come here, and we are the ones who need to help them first, so that they can communicate to us their ideas and their culture.” [Zagreb, pos. 77]

In arriving community focus groups, NGOs which help were also discussed. Participants had various experiences with these organizations, from help with language and translating, to help with paperwork and school. Participants also concluded that NGOs do not provide significant financial help.

4.6. Avenues for negotiating integration

This theme focuses mostly on the socio-economic indicators of integration, as seen by the participants of receiving and arriving focus groups. It includes the following broad categories: “Barriers to integration”, “Facilitators of integration”, “Individual, social and economic resources” and “Legal/structural barriers”. Category “Individual, social and economic resources” includes well-known socio-economic aspects of integration, but also additional resources which are necessary for integration, mainly individual and social resources. Codes representing social and socio-economic resources comprising this category are: “Education”, “Financial services”, “Governmental and NGO services”, “Health system”, “Housing”, “Macroeconomic situation” and “Work”. “Age” and “health and psychological wellbeing” are considered as individual resources which can benefit arriving and receiving community members in the integration process. Regardless of this distinction of codes representing resources, it is important to note that all of these indicators of integration are in fact present on an individual level, and therefore strict lines between individual, social and economic resources are non-existent.

Lastly, the category “legal and institutional barriers” comprises of separate codes representing different areas in which the legal system or governmental structures can hinder integration process: “family separation”, “legal status for residence”, “recognition of certificates” and “role of law, rights and entitlements”.

In the following sections, categories related to socio-economic integration will be presented in detail and significant references from focus groups will be quoted and interpreted.

4.6.1. Barriers to integration

Certain factors can impede the integration process. These factors are referred to as "barriers" to integration, and were discussed among receiving and arriving community members alike. It is important to note that this code co-occurs with other codes to a great deal, because the barriers are often described in the context of socio-economic integration. Even though closely related to other codes, "barriers to integration" refer to direct mentions of factors which are seen as hindering integration process.

One of these factors is the administrative system in Croatia. Receiving community members feel that the programs and procedures aiming at integration are not well planned or executed which in turn creates obstacles for refugee integration.

RC4: "The problem is the continuity and permanence of government policies. A program lasts for 4 years, and then a new government comes into power and stops the program…that's not good. It's not good for us, neither for Syrians."

RC7: "Meaning, if we don't have a fixed procedure, everyone's doing according to themselves, then the integration is not the same for everyone. It's important to have a well-established procedure. I think it's a big problem when things are done ad hoc."

Receiving community members feel the refugees experience same issues with bureaucracy as themselves. Moreover, they feel that the lack of tolerance towards other people is generally present, not only rejection of people from other countries, but also from other regions of Croatia. An interesting notion is present in their narrative – issues with services, job market and intergroup relations are seen as "typical Croatian problems".

RC16: "When I think about what obstacles they can have, I think they can have identical problems like any other person living here – come across a fool, get stuck in bureaucracy, difficulties with the language. […] Well, I mean…they might come across some negative situations because they're from a different country. We might be sceptical towards foreigners, people from different cultures. We're sceptical even towards people from different parts of Croatia and the same can be reflected in violence. They could be obstructed in a successful integration by typical Croatian problems." [Zagreb, pos. 143-145]

Socio-economic aspects of integration were also seen as potential barriers to integration, with emphasis on language and work.

RC18: "Language is the first obstacle. Maybe our country should take care of that." [Zagreb, pos. 146]

RC21: "The biggest issue in that perfect integration is that in those 2 years they're taken care of and everybody helps them, but if they don't find a job, then they have to look for another country. Same as we do. And it's not a fairy tale situation even for the host community. Otherwise, they encounter the same problems as the rest of us do. They have similar problems as we do." [Zagreb, pos. 169]

RC20: "I'd agree that employment and job finding are some of the obstacles. Just like it's an obstacle for us to find a job, but I think it could be even worse for them precisely because there are still prejudices despite us being open-minded. But I know there are still some prejudices." [Zagreb, pos. 170]

Arriving community participants also talked about the issues they feel as barriers to integration. Similarly, to what the receiving community participants were saying, arriving community participants mentioned issues with administrative services, work, accommodation and the duration of subsidized housing.

AC4: “Yes [I’m doing important things in my life by myself and that indicates that I’m well integrated] because people working in administration, when we need some papers, they don't know the laws and the rights we have or they have to ask someone else. It made things difficult for us… and it was our first experience of integration here.” [Zagreb, pos. 64]

AC3: “I think the most important thing is to have the opportunity to work, to have a job and that's the main problem. Another problem is our accommodation, we only get 2 years of subsidized housing and that passes very quickly. My problem is even more difficult since I have a family of six. Even if tomorrow I’d got a job that pays higher than the minimal wage, I wouldn't be able to survive here with a family of six.” [Zagreb, pos. 370]

AC7: “Those 2 years of subsidy are over now, we need to both work and learn the language. How?” [Zagreb, pos. 423]

Return of refugees from other countries to Croatia was also seen as an issue – the process of integration which started in one country is interrupted by returning the refugee to another country where they must start the process anew.

AC3: “Two and a half years there [in Austria], then coming back here and/and everything here is completely different again, schools and the rest so...” [Zagreb, pos. 85]

In conclusion, it seems that members of both groups recognize the same factors as barriers to integration, specifically work, language and duration of housing subsidy. Receiving community members in Croatia believe that the general public lacks tolerance towards people from other cultures, which can be an issue for refugees as they may be rejected and perceived as a threat. Return from other countries after having lived for some time is seen as a firm barrier to integration in Croatia, as it brings the refugee back to the start of the integration process, especially if the countries from which they are returned are quite different than the new receiving country.

4.6.2. Facilitators of integration

Facilitators of integration are factors that benefit the arriving and receiving community members in the integration process. Barriers and facilitators are not exclusively opposed to one another. Each indicator of integration can be both a barrier and a facilitator, depending on the context and situation. For example, intergroup contact can be a barrier to integration if it is negative and unpleasant but also a strong facilitator if it is positive and leads to development of positive relationships. Likewise, knowing the language is a facilitator, while lack of language proficiency is a barrier.

In Croatian focus groups, arriving community participants discussed what eases their stay in Croatia. Work was often mentioned as a facilitator of integration, not only as a socio-economic resource, but also as a socio-psychological one. Language and positive relationships with receiving community members were also seen as facilitator of integration.

AC6: “First of all, it's work [that helps me feel good]. Being able to talk and have friends at work. […] Having friends at work who help you and make you feel like it doesn't matter who's a Croat and who's a foreigner [makes me feel good here].” [Zagreb, pos. 341; 344]

AC5: “If you work, you don't feel as a foreigner or like you’re living in a foreign country.” [Zagreb, pos. 346]

Interestingly, it was also stated that the way of life in Syria is not so different to Croatia, and that this similarity helps them to feel better in Croatia. It is important to note this, as receiving community members often expressed belief that the culture of arriving community members is significantly

different to Croatian culture (further explanations in the section on theme “Power, cultural, social and geographical struggles”).

AC2: “For me it’s not…hard because my lifestyle here is not that different from the one I had in Syria. […] I think the way of life here is not very different than in Syria. It's possible that it helps me.” [Zagreb, pos. 377]

To summarize the findings of “barriers to integration” and “facilitators of integration”, work and language are factors which were seen as both. They have the potential to disrupt the integration process if issues arise with the inclusion of refugees into the job market and with language learning. On the other hand, arriving community participants who have a job and are able to communicate with their colleagues emphasized how this relation between work and language helped them integrate through forming of positive relations with receiving community members.

4.6.3. Legal and institutional barriers

Family separation, issues with acquiring legal status for residence and difficulties in getting a recognition of certificates are considered legal or structural barriers, because they are directly related to the justice and administration systems. In Croatian focus groups, these barriers were briefly mentioned. Arriving community members briefly talked about the family they are separated from in the framework of family reunification.

AC4: “I'm a little sensitive. My problem is that I’m a little sensitive and I want my family. I feel lonely without them. And I miss my community too… That’s why I can’t… I’m a bit weak.” [Zagreb, pos. 357]

AC6: “I have a mom, and dad, and three sisters in Syria in Aleppo. And they have nothing, no internet to talk… nothing.” [Zagreb, pos. 359]

AC10: “We miss them [family] very much.” [Zagreb, pos. 378]

AC9: “I’m happy that I’m with my family now. I was lonely, but now I’m with my son. If they’re happy, then I’m happy, and the country here is very pretty.” [Zagreb, pos. 461]

AC8: “When I’m with my family, it helps.” [Zagreb, pos. 450]

It is obvious that arriving community participants feel sadness and miss their family. Closeness of family members seems to be a facilitator of integration, probably through positive influence on psychological wellbeing.

Receiving community participants briefly discussed how Croatia grants legal status for residence and showed that they are not well acquainted with the procedure and conditions for application:

RC16: I don’t know about the current situation, but I saw a documentary long time ago in which they said that Croatia is merciless when it comes to granting asylums. I’m not sure what’s the situation now, but I remember us being overly strict and known for delaying asylum seekers for years until they would eventually give up. I have a feeling that we were borderline fair when it comes to granting asylums. Being strict, that’s fine, but delaying you because I don’t want you here… that’s another thing. [Zagreb, pos. 196]

RC21: “I don’t believe that the country wouldn’t grant asylum if everything was in order after all these inspections and documents checks.” [Zagreb, pos. 197]

On the other hand, some arriving community participants were transferred back to Croatia which they experience negatively.

AC11: “Regarding my case, I was granted asylum here. Then I was given accommodation, I stayed here for a month and then went to Germany for work. I stayed there for 7 months and was deported back

here after that. I went for work there, my contract was supposed to be ok, but they told me that I was granted asylum in Croatia and that I have to go back here." [Zagreb, pos. 434]

AC3: "It wasn't me who decided to come here, I was transferred here. I've spent 2,5 years in Austria. […] After 2,5 years, if you come back to a different country, then… what else can I expect to feel except like this." [Zagreb, pos. 80; 82]

Transfer was already discussed under the category "barriers to integration" – disruption of the integration process in one country by being returned is especially severe when the two countries differ significantly in language, customs, laws and regulations and general socio-economic state.

Finally, recognition of certificates was briefly discussed, mostly in terms of access to the job market. As presented previously, arriving community members often face the challenge of finding a job appropriate to their level of education and qualifications.

AC5: "Even those who're highly qualified don't have the opportunity to progress because the system claims that "90% of people that came are not educated, we need to start from the basics with them". So that even highly qualified don't have opportunity to progress." [Zagreb, pos. 136]

One participant described how she applied for recognition of qualifications which were accepted.

AC9: "First I was translating it. They asked for a list of things I needed to prepare, what classes did I have, how many hours was that, how many credits, and I had to translate all of that and submit it to the Ministry of Education and I got the recognition after that. […] My diploma was also recognized here, but I still can't find a job." [Zagreb, pos. 404]

This example shows that recognition of qualifications does not equal finding a job easier, only adding to the evidence that arriving community members in Croatia experience great issues in finding work.

Mentions of financial services, governmental and NGO services were exclusive in arriving community participant's groups. Participants discussed their experiences with banks, with some having issues with opening a foreign currency account in a specific bank, while others had no issues of that sort. Governmental services were mentioned very briefly and in the context of issues with language communication.

When thinking about the rule of law and the rights and entitlements refugees have, receiving community participants believe that integration also consists of refugees behaving in accordance with Croatian laws and that they should respect the rules and regulations of the country they live in.

RC1: "First, respecting the regulations of the country they live in, that they live according to laws, with everything… that they have integrated in their local communities… " [Zagreb, pos. 193]

RC13: "Publicly they have to be… not Croats, but citizens of the Republic of Croatia who behave in accordance with our laws and customs." [Zagreb, pos. 85]

As presented and interpreted in the previous sections on governmental, financial and health services, arriving community members often face administration workers who are not aware of their rights, thus refusing to provide a certain service (e.g. signing up to the local general health practice). It seems that an overall education of service workers who come into contact with refuges is needed – such programme would ease the administration processes for refugees because they would be granted services they are entitled to by law (and are crucial for their overall wellbeing and socio-economic situation), and the service workers would work through these processes easily and without dilemmas on the procedures or entitlements.

4.6.4. Individual, social and economic resources6

This category comprises codes representing the socio-economic indicators of integration. Participants in all focus groups mentioned one or more of these indicators as crucial for integration of refugees and the receiving community. Integration requires resources. In this case, resources are understood as factors which can hinder or facilitate integration, but are described on a more concrete level than the aforementioned codes "barriers to integration" and "facilitators of integration". The resources participants discussed can roughly be divided into three sections: individual resources, social resources and economic resources. This division is not strict. For example, education is an individual resource (level of one's education, further qualifications, requalification), a social resource (class, friends in school or courses, language acquisition and practice with others), and an economic resource (leads to better job opportunities).

Education

In Croatian focus groups, education is seen as an important aspect of integration. Receiving community members listed some examples of refugee children integration into the school environment. They also emphasized the importance of education for refugee children and believed success in school is a good indicator of integration (described under the theme "perceptions of integration").

RC21: "I used to work for a long time in a primary school. I was a headmaster for 23 years. About 4 years ago, we received a Syrian girl. She's in the 4th grade now. And we were all in wonder, but we were a school after all, an educational institution. When you have a problem or a situation, you embrace it or attack it from every side. The husband was a chef, mom was a music teacher and they had two little girls. Now both of them are in our school. They came and because the city/I wanted to say Bandić [mayor of Zagreb]/gave them an apartment near our school so the girl came to us. When I see them nowadays or when I recall our first encounter, you can't believe these are the same girls today." [Zagreb, pos. 59]

On the other hand, education of receiving community children was seen as a key in raising tolerance and openness to others which was assessed as lacking in Croatia.

RC15: "[…] to raise a child who'll be able to live in peace with itself and with others, who won't feel threatened by these excesses, those incidents. That's the key. I wouldn't base it so much on the economy, I would emphasize education. That's where we need to direct our forces." [Zagreb, pos. 89]

An arriving community participant who attends a school shared her experiences in the school environment, mostly emphasizing the difficulties with language. Enrolling into the university is seen as difficult because of the language barrier, but also because of its cost, as described by another participant.

AC8: "It's very hard. School subjects are hard and I don't understand very well what the teachers are saying in the class and I'd need an extra teacher to explain me everything at home, but we've been searching and it's hard. Now I have state exams. […] I'm a senior now. I have a few…universities/they accept only a few foreigners in college, it's going to be a very big problem since I don't know the language. I've been here for 4 years, I need to take exams in Croatian, math as well, but there's a text part of the exam that I need to solve and understand, I might take physics too, and I need to understand all that text. 4 years is too short for me to understand something like that, it takes longer. And there are

6 Neither arriving nor receiving community participants of Croatian focus groups mentioned the role of integration courses or other non-language courses. Language courses will be presented in a separate section on language. Therefore, it seems that the integration courses are not part of the arriving community experiences or that they do not see them as vital for their integration.

not many faculties that accept foreigners. I don't know what will I do later, am I going to pass the state exams because of the language or not." [Zagreb, pos. 33; 347]

AC7: "I have two seniors, they should start college next year. For them to get enrolled in college, I'd need to finance them. No one really thinks how can an asylee finance two university students. […] My son wants to study IT. He really likes that, but I don't know how to pay for that, and that's very important." [Zagreb, pos. 410; 411]

Education is a very important aspect of integration, not only because of the socio-economic element (acquiring competencies and qualifications used in the job market later on), but because it is a meeting point of receiving and arriving community and a place where language and culture are learnt about (by both groups). From the socio-psychological perspective, not only is school important for forming relationships between children and young adults, but also because it brings together parents, thus helping the integration process in both generations.

Housing

In Croatia, an asylum beneficiary is entitled to subsidised accommodation, with the state either providing an apartment or financing rent for the period of two years. Receiving community members discussed housing mostly as an important aspect of independence of refugees, and alongside work as an important indicator of integration. Arriving community participants talked about their experiences of discrimination while searching for appropriate accommodation:

RC18: "I know some things through some agency because we have an apartment that we rent and we came in contact with the agency for finding accommodation for asylees who passed all those police controls or whatever and were granted an asylum." [Zagreb, pos. 37]

AC4: "I think that my experiences with finding accommodation were not really positive because once people realized that you're a foreigner, that you have an accent, they get scared." [Zagreb, pos. 276]

AC7: "Yes, of course [we had problems with finding accommodation]. When they realize we're refugees, they tell us apartment's not available." [Zagreb, pos. 106]

AC10: "When it comes to finding a house, accommodation actually, they know you're Syrian, but as soon as they see you look like this and that you're with children, they immediately reject you." [Zagreb, pos. 103]

These references show that receiving community members are reluctant to rent apartments/houses to refugees which is an issue for arriving community members who receive accommodation from the state for a period of two years. Another potential problem is the adequacy of housing, with some arriving community participants experiencing issues due to the size of the family and inadequate housing solution:

AC3: "Another problem is our accommodation, we only get 2 years of subsidized housing and that passes very quickly. My problem is even more difficult since I have a family of six." [Zagreb, pos. 370]

AC10: "The most important thing is to, when we search for a house, to find a place where we can feel comfortable because me and my 3 children live in a single-room apartment now." [Zagreb, pos. 265]

Based on the experiences arriving community participants shared, it is evident that three major socio-economic elements are often barriers to integration: work, housing and healthcare system.

Work

In the Croatian focus groups, work was the most often referenced socio-economic element. Both receiving and arriving community members agree that work is (alongside language) the most important

facilitator of integration. Similarly, to the education, it is primarily socio-economic element and a life necessity, but also brings into contact members of both groups, enables forming of relationships and experiencing positive contact. Even though receiving community members see work as an essential part of integration of refugees, they also express notions of perceived threat to their own place in the job market, with some believing that the competition for work increases as refugees arrive in Croatia (more on perception of threat in the section on theme "On intergroup relations").

The code "work" frequently occurs together with the category "Understandings of ideal integration" (part of the theme "Perspectives on integration"), because both receiving and arriving community members placed a strong emphasis on the importance of work for integration.

Arriving community participants also talked about the recognition of qualifications and the difficulty of finding work which corresponds with their qualifications.

AC5: "I have a friend here who's a doctor, a paediatrician, and he can't work here as a doctor. This country needs doctors, but he's working at a pizza place. A doctor can't be working at a pizza place. He has a chance to work, but not as a doctor…" [Zagreb, pos. 130]

AC6: "Being welder is the best. Yes. Doctors can't go abroad to work, but a welder - if I go to Germany, I can. I take €1000 and more. But a doctor, to go abroad for work… hardly." [Zagreb, pos. 133]

Others discussed the difficulties with work in general, whether it was with the salary or with finding any kind of work due to language and religious insignias, which shows that they are discriminated on the basis of their religion (for further information see also category "Racism and discrimination").

AC7: "Now I'm looking for a job and there's no job." [Zagreb, pos. 27]

AC9: "I really wanted to learn the language but it's very hard. I don't know the language; I don't speak Croatian so I can't work. […] If I knew the language, I'd be looking for a job too and I'd work and integrate faster." [Zagreb, pos. 45; 143]

AC10: "It's very hard to find a job. […] And it's a problem also when you wear a hijab, then you have that problem of finding a job. […] If only they'd give us more job opportunities." [Zagreb, pos. 80; 82; 467]

They also discussed the effects work has on their lives. Some described very positive experiences with receiving community members at work.

AC6: "The best option is for people to work. […] If you work, you don't feel as a foreigner or like you're living in a foreign country." [Zagreb, pos. 201; 346]

AC1: "I had a very nice experience here once. Once at work, I was approached by a woman who realized that I'm not from here. Her face was very nice, she was smiling and she started talking very nice to me, actually she was careful and then she showed interest in me." [Zagreb, pos. 262]

AC4: "My experience is the same, when I was working at the beauty salon, I had different people coming and who knew about Syria. For example, some people don't know about Syria. Lately a lot of people do know. And it's nice, they empathize with us and talk and… it's a nice experience for me. They even tipped me more. [laughs]" [Zagreb, pos. 263]

In summary, work is seen as crucial for integration of arriving community members. Difficulties in finding work are recognized by both receiving and arriving community participants. Work is considered beneficial for both socio-economic status and for socio-psychological integration.

Health system, health and psychological wellbeing[7]

Health system and related services were mention frequently in arriving community focus groups. Participants often talked about their negative experiences with service representatives while they were applying for health insurance, as well as their mixed experiences with health providers.

AC3: “The trouble is health insurance because we have our ID cards - as soon as they see it, they react a certain way, I guess they think we don’t have health insurance. […] Then I feel like I hate that I've decided to come to Croatia [when I have trouble with health services].” [Zagreb, pos. 74; 78]

AC5: “I think doctors don't know the system, who pays, that Croats pay for their insurance, that the Ministry [of health] pays for our [health] insurance. When I go to the doctor, they don’t know who pays for it and they tell me that they can't register me.” [Zagreb, pos. 196]

AC1: “It depends on the location and health staff, what kind of opinion they have about asylees, whether they are open-minded or not. […] For example, in the neighbourhood where I live, staff is not open-minded and they didn't want to register me with a doctor so I've given up. When I'm ill, I decide not to go to see a doctor.” [Zagreb, pos. 184; 188]

Experiences the arriving community participants share show that Croatian health system was not well prepared for the arrival of refugees – health service providers are not well informed about the rights of asylum beneficiaries and therefore show reluctance in registering them in their practice.

Psychological health was directly referenced in the receiving community focus groups. These participants recognize the need for psychological evaluation and support among refugees who are in higher risk of developing psychological issues due to their experiences before and during refuge. One participant emphasized the importance of psychological well-being for integration:

RC1: “Depends also on the state these people came in. If they came traumatized, the question is how soon can they even take part in society, given their traumas and everything they’ve been through. I mean, I don’t know how’s with that. […] Professional psychological help should be provided. And any other kind of help they need. That is the only humane and right thing [to do].” [Zagreb, pos. 162; 164]

In summary, health was mostly discussed in terms of the health system in Croatia which seems to have been unprepared for the arrival of refugees.

Age

In Croatian focus groups, age was mentioned in two contexts: in the receiving community focus groups, it was seen as a factor influencing attitudes and acceptance of refugees; in the arriving community focus groups it was seen as a factor related to language practice. Receiving community members believed younger people are more likely to accept refugees in Croatia. Therefore, age can be seen as an individual resource facilitating integration – a younger person might be more open to contact and positive relationships with members of the arriving community, which is an indicator of socio-psychological integration. Co-occurrence of “age” and “acceptance” is further elaborated under the theme “On intergroup relations”.

RC17: “I think these younger generations are ready [to accept refugees]. Us, who are middle-aged, hardly, but young people definitely yes. They’re more open, travel more, they’re more educated and consequently more open.” [Zagreb, pos. 227]

7 Health system and Health and psychological wellbeing are two separate codes nested under the code ‘Individual, social and economic resources’. In Croatian focus groups, health system was often referenced, but health and psychosocial wellbeing was not, which is why these related codes are presented together here.

In arriving community members, age can be an individual resource which facilitates integration through forming of social networks and language acquisition. Here, the participant describes how age hinders language learning:

AC5: “I have learned Croatian, but it's difficult for me to practice it with people because I’m old. I don't know why, but I can’t practice it.” [Zagreb, pos. 117]

It is possible that younger refugees are able to form mixed social circles. Schools and universities are places of frequent contact and social exchange, so it is possible that younger arriving community participants have more opportunities to form relationships, practice language, learn about the receiving community culture and customs and share their own, thus actively working on their integration and integration of members of their social circle.

Macroeconomic situation

Receiving and arriving community participants in Croatian focus groups agree that Croatia is a socio-economically poor country. This challenging macroeconomic situation is seen as influential for all aspects of one’s socio-economic integration, especially access to the job market. Arriving community members feel that Croatia is not an economically stable country and recognize that a lot of receiving community members are migrating due to poor economic situation to other European countries.

AC5: “I'm 100% integrated because now I'm just like a Croat – I'm thinking how to find a job abroad [laughter]. It’s not good economically. I want to go there later.” [Zagreb, pos. 128]

AC3: “The salary here is not enough for living, food, bills. That's why people leave.” [Zagreb, pos. 373]

Receiving community members discussed the link between poor economic status and rejection of other groups. They attribute a portion of negative attitudes and indifference towards refugees to the socio-economic status of Croats and believe that individuals who have better living conditions are less likely to feel threatened by refugees and to reject them.

RC16: “I also think that predominant atmosphere here is that “everyone’s threatening to us” probably comes from our economic issues. When you’re troubled by your own existence, then you care less for anybody else. […] That [poor socio-economic] state shapes the atmosphere of being concerned only with yourself, whether you’ll succeed, have enough food for tomorrow. Not that you’re necessarily a bad person, that state simply shapes the atmosphere in which no one’s welcome because… who’d be taking care of that then.” [Zagreb, pos. 233; 236]

RC21: “No, we’re a poor nation and we firstly have issues with employment and that’s the foundation of everything.” [Zagreb, pos. 199]

RC13: “Croatia is not an economically weak country; Croatia is a poor country. Not only in the European Union, so it cannot afford much in the context of its own problems.” [Zagreb, pos. 78

RC11: “Speaking of the perception by Croats of people who come here looking for work, better life, whatever, they should bear in mind that Croatia is an economically less developed country.” [Zagreb, pos. 68]

This notion is also evident when receiving community participants are expressing their opinions on public attitudes and perception of threat (both described under the theme “On intergroup relations”).

4.7. Power, cultural, social and geographical struggles and rapprochements

The codes under this theme represent different societal and institutionalized organizing principles that operate on different levels in the integration process in a defined locality. They relate to power dynamics and their manifestation in negotiating hegemony, e.g. over local cultural and/or religious practices and symbols. The underlying question is who has the upper hand to define who is "integrated" and what are the criteria to qualify as such.

This theme comprises five categories: "culture", "religion" as a separate aspect of culture, "language" which, as was shown so far, is crucial for both socio-economic and socio-psychological integration, "locality" which is a category describing local differences in managing integration processes, and "racism and discrimination" which describes cases of racism and negative discrimination, as well as those thoughts of focus group participants which are racially biased.

4.7.1. Racism and discrimination

Receiving and arriving community participants touched upon racism and discrimination of refugees. Receiving community participants described what they believe is the common opinion of the Middle East, interpreting racism and discrimination of Muslims:

RC6: "I think that many people still, despite different postcolonial theories, still view the area of the Middle East negatively, we project on this whole area everything that is wrong with society as a whole. If someone else, some person from the West raped someone, it would be the news, but it would be talked about less than when a person from the Middle East does it, because the Middle East still represents all that is bad, and in the context of Western society we use them as a chance to say 'it's not us, it's their fault'." [Zagreb, pos. 72]

RC14: "When someone is raped, and it turns out that the perpetrator was an immigrant, for example. Ok, it might have happened, I'm not saying it didn't but… many of such things are done by the locals every day, much more, but it does not matter in that case. When a Syrian does it, then the whole nation is guilty, and when one of us does it, then it is isolated and only the individual is guilty, and all the rest of us are ok." [Zagreb, pos. 50]

Some participants explained the potential origins of racism and discrimination:

RC9: "A lot begins with upbringing and education. If, for example, a child reads a comic book in which the main villain is Syrian, has darker skin, it will probably grow up with the wrong opinion, it will not see refugees as equal people, but in some other light." [Zagreb, pos. 122]

Throughout the focus groups, racist and discriminatory comments were made by certain participants:

RC4: "And of course, they should be allowed to be whatever they choose to be in private. […] I think that the ideal scenario includes the Croatian side stopping emigration of Croats, i.e., that the conditions to live and to work are such that Croats want to stay. And then, when we ensure that, then we can accept immigrants to fill in parts of Croatia that are empty. [meaning that the refugees should populate the parts of Croatia from which Croats migrated due to economic reasons]" [Zagreb, pos. 85; 152]

RC9: "I just wanted to build upon that - who would finance it, if you have a sufficient number of refugees who integrate perfectly into society, so they themselves contribute to the economy and then, say, because of their culture they should pay a higher tax." [Zagreb, pos. 106]

RC10: "They are <u>even</u> well-behaved and nice. For example, they have never attacked me. [emphasis by the researcher]" [Zagreb, pos. 58]

RC13: “At home, you can do whatever you want, in your own four walls. No problem. […] Of course you can’t walk around having your face wrapped up, what’s the matter with you! […]And again, I would rather give a job to Ivan [common Croatian Catholic name], than to Abdullah. That’s a fact, that’s how it is. Regardless of qualifications or knowledge. Especially if they don’t know a word of Croatian.” [Zagreb, pos. 83; 93; 155]

Even when they are not expressing racist and discriminatory thoughts directly, it seems that some participants hold stereotypes and wish to pose boundaries to refugees (being what they want in private, reallocation, paying higher taxes, wearing a hijab, employment).

Arriving community participants described their experiences of discrimination and racism:

AC7: “I’m looking for a job, but I haven’t found a job because I wear a hijab. There are also people here who are afraid when they see I have a hijab and that I’m a Muslim. I don’t know why. I was once in a bus with a bag and one man came and looked at my bag… as if I had a bomb. … People have said thing about my hijab. […] Someone spat on me [while wearing a hijab]. […] Once I was in an office [to resolve some administrative issue] and the service provider asked me if I knew how to sign the papers or if I should sign it with a fingerprint.” [Zagreb, pos. 88; 93; 94; 251]

AC10: “Yes, correct [I think people are not giving me a job because I’m wearing a hijab]. I was in a hospital and someone said “hey, hey” to me and when I looked at the guy, he pointed at my hijab and did this [makes a throat cut gesture].” [Zagreb, pos. 85; 99]

AC8: “For example, when we were searching for an apartment, there were some people who would say we can check the apartment, but when we tell them we’re Syrians, they immediately say no.” [Zagreb, pos. 194]

These examples show that not only did arriving community participants have negative experiences due to their appearance and origins, but were also threatened and harassed for it. In combination with category “intergroup contact”, it is evident that refugees have different experiences with receiving community members and that such difference could in part be influenced by the tendency of some receiving community members to discriminate members of Islamic religion. Arriving community participants are aware of such stereotypes and discrimination:

AC5: “A lot of people have a stereotype of immigrants… that they’re Muslims, that we don’t allow our women freedom… but they don't understand that there are also different Muslims. I don't know why they have a stereotype that all Muslims are the same... poor or…” [Zagreb, pos. 243]

Based on the experiences shared by arriving community participants, it seems that racism and discrimination are most often present in resource allocation (e.g. health services, landlords, …], making for a strong structural obstacle to integration. Other barriers to integration as seem by participants are macroeconomic situation in Croatia, perception of threat and tendency to reject foreigners, and refugees’ experiences of racism and discrimination. The interplay of these factors is surely complex and open for further research.

4.7.2. Culture

Both receiving and arriving community participants of Croatian focus groups discussed the difference in culture between Croats and Syrians. Receiving community members generally believe that the cultures are very different and some believe that Croats are not ready to accept a culture they believe is different in so many aspects.

RC1: “That was mentioned in political elections, and I don’t know how much we’re ready to accept such a different culture. […] Unfortunately, culturally we [members of the receiving community] are not yet ready neither as people nor as a culture.” [Zagreb, pos. 54; 74]

RC6: “I think that, unfortunately, intercultural exchange is not understandable to most people and that not enough is being done on integration in the sense of the worldview, in the cultural sense.” [Zagreb, pos. 72]

RC12: “Maybe Syrians and Croats do not fit each other to live in the same space because their cultures are too different. We can adapt to them a little…but to what extent should we allow them to overwhelm us with their culture? I don’t know, it’s a very difficult question and I have no answer to that, but I don’t think either of the extremes are good.” [Zagreb, pos. 94]

Receiving community also discussed to what extent should they involve themselves into learning about the culture of the receiving community members:

RC5: “As far as culture goes, it is different, but it’s normal that we also learn about other cultures and that they learn about ours.” [Zagreb, pos. 69]

RC4: “I think your question implies an exchange of cultures, and I don’t think it’s that important that we learn about Syrians and their culture. It’s important that we understand that they are different and that we help them. They are the ones who should learn to live in our culture. We need to give them a chance for it, but…we don’t need to become half-Syrians or 10% Syrians for it to be successful. Do you understand? We only need to give them a chance, but we don’t need to explore their culture, it is back there in Syria.” [Zagreb, pos. 83]

RC6: “We need to work on us also learning about their culture, and not only them about ours. And we need to work on creating some sort of mutual tolerance among us, and among them. […] I think it does mean something if we show that level of goodwill [by learning about their culture]. We don’t need to get deep into history or something, I don’t know what, we don’t even get deep into the history of some neighbouring countries, to just show goodwill… that we will not reject them.” [Zagreb, pos. 72; 84]

Lastly, some receiving community participants were optimistic and believed that members of their group might be interested in learning about other cultures if information were presented in a proper way:

RC13: “I do a lot of lectures about travel and people are interested in this. I’m broadening their horizons a little bit. They are fantastic, but they are different. If we were to come there and practice our customs, we would not have a good time.” [Zagreb, pos. 142]

RC15: “If properly offered, they are [ready to hear about Syrian culture]. Not as something forced, or with the feeling that it is obligatory. If it were offered as something that would arouse their interest, then gladly.” [Zagreb, pos. 145]

In the arriving community focus groups, culture was sometimes seen as a facilitator of integration (see the theme “Avenues for negotiating integration”), because participants felt their way of life in Croatia is not different than in Syria.

AC5: “For me it’s not hard because my lifestyle here is not that different from the one I had in Syria. […] We have the same lifestyle. The similarity.” [Zagreb, pos. 350; 351]

AC2: “I think the way of life here is not very different than in Syria. It's possible that it helps me.” [Zagreb, pos. 350]

AC1: “I think that my way of life here is almost the same as in Syria.” [Zagreb, pos. 381]

Some believed that the appearance of refugees while looking for a job influences their chances of getting it and that they should remove their cultural and religious symbols:

AC10: “And it’s a problem also when you wear a hijab, then you have that problem of finding a job.” [Zagreb, pos. 83]

AC5: “I think that it’s very important for her [AC1*] not to be wearing things to look like she’s not from here. That’s very important.” [Zagreb, pos. 265]

This raises the question of racism and discrimination which refugees might experience due to their culture (and religion). More on this topic is discussed in a later section.

Another topic that was mentioned in both receiving and arriving participants’ groups was food. Arriving community participants shared their experiences with receiving community members warning them about pork in the dish and how they see these warnings:

AC4: “I’d say it’s a sign of respect [when RC members warn me about pork]. […] I’d say it’s a good thing.” [Zagreb, pos. 257; 258]

AC11: “At my work, we work with different sorts of meat – lamb, chicken, etc. My colleagues know that I don’t eat pork and they respect me. In that case, they respect my decision not to eat pork. [...] For example, when they offer us something, they immediately tell me if it’s chicken, to be careful and not to eat that.” [Zagreb, pos. 327; 329]

Food as a bridge between receiving and arriving community members was further described in the theme “On intergroup relations”.

To summarize, receiving community participants perceive differences in cultures greater than the arriving community participants do, and have mixed beliefs on the willingness of their group to learn about the Syrian culture. Some receiving community members agree that intercultural exchange is important and should be encouraged in both groups. However, there are clear instances of justifying the receiving culture as dominating, leading to discrimination recognized by the arriving community members. Arriving community members have positive experiences with receiving community members caring about their dietary customs, but also perceive that marking such as wearing hijab reduces their chances of getting a job clearly indicating experiences of discrimination.

4.7.3. Religion

Both receiving and arriving community participants touched upon religion as a factor influencing their relations. Receiving community members in Croatia believe that their main religion, Catholicism, is not accepting of members of other religions and that this transfers to the Catholics’ rejection of people of different cultures:

RC5: “[Catholic Church promotes] Love towards Catholics, of course, not everyone.” [Zagreb, pos. 111]

RC7: “Well, yes, and that can also be seen in the Nordic countries that are mostly atheist, but are in fact much more open to novelties, to refugees, and have put in a lot more effort to integrate them into their society. And we, like you said, Catholics, we fell short in that regard.” [Zagreb, pos. 113]

Receiving community members tried explaining the tendency to reject Muslims:

RC1: “But these fears have a historical foundation. When we look at history, Muslims and Catholics, and that whole clash, collision of the faiths and cultures, we have historically passed on to next generations, this negative attitude to Islamism, to Muslims.” [Zagreb, pos. 114]

RC7: “Well yeah, we’ve been threatened by Muslims for centuries [referring to the invasions of the Balkan regions by the Ottoman conquerors].” [Zagreb, pos. 115]

They also touched upon the prevalence of Catholics in the population of Syrian refugees, believing that they are mostly Catholics and therefore more similar to the receiving community members. They also believed that Muslim Syrians differ from Muslims from other Islamic countries:

RC18: "But it's a good question why only Syrians [are accepted by RC]. There are a lot of Catholics among Syrians and a lot of our people are actually afraid of the Muslims' entry. That is why I want to say that we're more accepting of Syrians than some Iranians or refugees from other countries." [Zagreb, pos. 53]

RC1: "But I can't imagine employers being ok with Syrians coming and saying they need to pray at 10, noon, 2 o'clock...for them to accept that. Any of them."

RC4: "I don't think Syrians are that kind of Muslims [who pray several times a day]."

RC1: "Okay, not all of them, but there are some. There was a segment on TV about Syrians who were employed at a carwash, they work as they should, but they are praying, but it's a really rare thing."

RC4: "Yes, but those religious Syrians are not religious in a way such as those from UAE. It's a bit different, as far as I know… not much, but…" [Zagreb, pos. 132-137]

Arriving community members briefly reflected on the differences in religion and concluded that they are not great and that acceptance of other religions is essential part of integration:

AC7: "For an integration to be ideal, every person should be able to feel free…what they believe in. Regarding religion, what they believe in. It's important to be free to believe. We in Aleppo had all kinds of religion and I had never felt like I was different. I had friends of all religions." [Zagreb, pos. 243]

AC11: "If we're talking about religion now, I think they're quite accepting here." [Zagreb, pos. 314]

AC9: "It's not that important for me because we're the same religion as Croats. When it comes to food, there's not much difference." [Zagreb, pos. 334]

When comparing the narratives of receiving community members on cultural and religious differences, there seems to be an interesting contrast between views on culture and views on religion – while cultures are seen as very different and an obstacle to integration, religion is not. Even when participants discuss the differences between Catholic and Muslim church, they describe Syrian refugees as Muslims who are different than other Muslims – implying smaller difference between the majority Catholic receiving community and Syrian Muslims. If we define religion as a part of culture, the question remains why receiving community members believe that they are culturally more different to refugees than in terms of religion. Furthermore, it is interesting that arriving community members perceive less of these differences.

4.7.4. Language

Language was so far mentioned as a crucial aspect of both socio-economic and socio-psychological integration, co-occurring with codes from all other themes ("Avenues for negotiating integration", "On intergroup relations" and "Perspectives on integration"). A number of informative quotes were presented, showing that participants perceive language as crucial in the integration process.

In the Croatian focus groups, language was most often mentioned alongside individual, social and economic resources, mainly work. It was also present in conversations on intergroup contact. When thinking about ideal integration, many participants believed that language learning is crucial for integrating arriving and receiving community members. Language learning was also frequently seen as a responsibility of the arriving community members, but also of the receiving community and their government which should ensure Croatian language classes.

Arriving community members mentioned language in relation to communicating with governmental services and described their ways of managing to communicate with service representatives. In Croatia, Ministry of Internal Affairs often hires Arabic-speaking members of the arriving community who have already integrated in Croatia, know the language and legal procedures to act as interpreters for newly arrived refugees who have not yet had the chance to learn Croatian or are unable to communicate in English (such employment is temporary in nature and is not a reliable source of income). Other refugees are able to communicate in English and/or use Google Translate, or have a family member, often children, do it for them.

Arriving community participants feel Croatian is a difficult language to learn and feel language classes are not well organized:

AC5: "Here, the language is really difficult. […] They [Croatian government] need to identify those who are seriously willing to learn something. Sometimes it happens that they organize a language class for 9 people, and only 2 of them are serious… others don't come and then they decide to dismiss the class. Then even those who do want to progress actually don't have a chance to. […] Why is language so important, because that's the first thing by which you can identify foreigners." [Zagreb, pos. 305; 329; 338]

AC7: "The language course wasn't very well organized. The courses were badly organized at the time we came here." [Zagreb, pos. 419]

As mentioned before, language and work are closely related, as arriving community members see their lack of proficiency in Croatian as a barrier to finding work:

AC9: "I really wanted to learn the language but it's very difficult. I don't know the language; I don't speak Croatian so I can't work. […] If I knew the language, I'd be looking for a job too and I'd work and integrate faster." [Zagreb, pos. 45; 143]

Not only is socio-economic integration affected by language, so is socio-psychological integration, and to the same degree. Ability to communicate means the opportunity to establish positive relationships between arriving and receiving community members, crucial for overall integration process.

AC10: "When I came here it was awful for me because I didn't know the language. I didn't know how to talk to people." [Zagreb, pos. 167]

In summary, language seems to be at the basis of integration in general. It is considered imperative for integration by receiving and arriving community members alike, it allows refugees to find work and to communicate with the service providers. Not only that, but language ensures inclusion of refugees into the local communities, for example through communication with their neighbours and teachers of their children in school. Language is a powerful tool which drives all other levels of integration. It is felt that language courses are not adequately organized in Croatia, which poses a problem for arriving community members who are motivated to learn the language and stay in Croatia.

4.7.5. Locality

The code "locality" refers to mentions of geographical regions, countries or terms describing a region (such as "urban" and "rural") in the context of integration. Locality was mentioned in two contexts: (1) comparison of attitudes towards refugees among people living in urban and rural areas and (2) comparison of Croatia to other European countries.

As described under the theme "On intergroup relations", receiving community participants believe that people living in urban areas are more prone to acceptance of refugees than those living in rural areas. They believe larger cities are more open to newcomers:

RC4: “From the other, more pragmatic point of view, it could be said that larger cities are more open to such ideas, but in larger cities there is generally no need to for more population. We need to populate smaller [less populated] areas, and those are where people are more close-minded, less ready to accept people who are different.” [Zagreb, pos. 75]

RC16: “Zagreb [capital of Croatia, around 1 000 000 citizens] was pretty open because of the historical context and it’s not the first time we have… people of colour in Zagreb. I mean, I don’t want to turn out to be racist, that’s very dangerous these days. [laughs]. But people in Zagreb had the opportunity to meet different people. I feel like integration in Croatia mostly applies to Zagreb. Probably to some other cities as well, but I don’t think they go to some rural parts. […] First of all, they should be integrated in bigger cities if you ask me. Larger cities are more open.” [Zagreb, pos. 103; 152]

When comparing Croatia to other countries, Germany and Sweden are mentioned most. Germany is regarded as a country which was unsuccessful at integrating Turkish migrants, but is also seen as a country with great experience in integration practices.

RC2: “I just wanted to mention Germany, because I have some relatives there, and their experience with refugees and the Turks… the way that some person coming from Turkey needs to go through and what Germany offers, to educate and the salary and social aid…. it’s individual, but my impression when I was there is that it has not been successful. Those people just didn’t want to accept the culture, they approached it more as a conquest - we will procreate, we will take all the jobs you won’t do, we will wrap ourselves, and everyone was shocked.” [Zagreb, pos. 87]

RC1: “Maybe we should see what works best in other countries/if they have some experience, and I’m sure that Germany has a lot of experience with these things.”

RC4: “They have the experience, but their experience is that they have not managed to integrate the Turks into their society.” [Zagreb, pos. 173-174]

On the other hand, Croatia is seen as a country which has problems different to those of Germany, implying that the integration cannot be the same in two countries:

RC14: “Germans say for example that refugees stimulated their economy by doing jobs that the locals did not want to do because it was low-payed. Here, the situation is that we ourselves agree to do some low-paying jobs just to have a job. We are not in a position like Germany, to have so many jobs that the locals do not want to do.” [Zagreb, pos. 71]

Sweden is also seen as an example of a ‘rich’ multicultural country, but one which has issues with integration of refugees:

RC13: “Rich countries can do that [financially support the needs of refugees]. Germany can, Sweden can. Okay, Sweden is not a good example, apparently, it’s a catastrophe there. I wasn’t there but… they have big issues because they accepted too many of those that they maybe shouldn’t have. This is very difficult for us here.” [Zagreb, pos. 87]

Interestingly, arriving community participants described receiving community members in Croatia as “better” than those in Austria or Germany, implying that they had more positive experiences in Croatia:

AC3: “When it comes to people, honestly, they are better than in Austria or Germany. […] They behave better…” [Zagreb, pos. 91; 94]

Still, arriving community participants believe Croatia is a transit country to many refugees and some wish to go to Western European countries themselves:

AC5: “I'd like to move somewhere in Western Europe.” [Zagreb, pos. 130]

AC3: “I think that no one wants to come and stay here in Croatia. Most of the people [refugees] think of Croatia as a transit country through which they will someday go to some western country.” [Zagreb, pos. 292]

AC6: “Yes, immediately. We have to go. Go abroad. Yes, other countries, Germany, France, ...” [Zagreb, pos. 293]

In summary, two types of differences are present in participants’ narratives – the difference in openness to other between urban and rural areas within Croatia, with urban areas perceived as more open to multiculturalism and refugees. The other difference is between Croatia and other Western European countries, with special emphasis on Germany. Germany is a long-time destination of Croatian migrants looking for work (together with Ireland lately), and therefore it is of no surprise that receiving community members compare Croatia to German policies towards newcomers. What is interesting is that Germany and Sweden are seen as rich countries with a long tradition of incoming migration which were not able to integrate some migrants and are seen as an example of good and bad practice at the same time. Arriving community participants mostly see Croatia as a transit country which is not appealing to refugees who are focused on moving towards other European countries.

4.8. Perspectives on integration – conceptualizations and outlook

The is the second half of theme “Perspectives on integration” and in contrary to the first part which is related to personal experience of integration, this part contains more abstract thoughts on integration as well attributions of responsibilities and an outlook into the future effects of integration. It includes codes “Understanding of ideal integration process”, “responsible actors” and “future effects” which will be presented and interpreted.

4.8.1. Understandings of ideal integration

Ideas of ideal integration were shared by participants in both receiving and arriving community and are one of the most referenced topics in Croatian focus groups (alongside work, attitudes, and perceptions and intergroup contact). “Understandings of ideal integration process” is related to codes “responsible actors” and “effects and images of future relations” which will be described in a later section. But because of these connections between codes, references to ideal integration can be split into four separate sections, of which two relate to aforementioned sub-codes: (1) what is integration in general and how to achieve it, (2) indicators of successful integration, (3) role of government and administration systems (related to “Responsible actors”), and (4) arriving community in relation to receiving community (related to “Effects and images of future relations”).

Receiving and arriving community participants have similar views on what integration is and what is necessary to achieve it. Job, education for children, housing, and language were seen as imperative for integration by both groups. Additionally, openness of the receiving community is also important, which shows understanding that integration involves both groups.

RC20: “It seems to me that for a successful integration it is always necessary to have openness and readiness for cooperation on both sides." [Zagreb, pos. 137]

RC1: “For them to become useful citizens of this country as soon as possible, to get jobs as soon as possible, for their children to enrol into schools as soon as possible, to become engaged in the local community as soon a s possible, and to become independent as soon as possible, so that they don’t depend on subsidies, the state, no one. [The perfect integration would be] To get a job so they can take care of themselves financially and then little by little…one job, then another, until they reach some higher standard.” [Zagreb, pos. 146]

AC4: “I’d say, immediately after we arrived, we could start learning language, and if they provided counselling about employment, offer us help about that and give us instructions on how to get a job. And to help us with accommodation so we could move forward as soon as possible [would be an ideal integration]. In my own experience, two years of subsidy is not much. It didn’t mean much because my husband needs to work at the same time since, at a time, we didn’t have anything, no jobs, and now that we have to work… we can't live only on the subsidy.” [Zagreb, pos. 324]

AC3: “Ideal integration starts with language learning.” [Zagreb, pos. 302]

Culture and religion were also mentioned in the context of perfect integration. Some participants believed that ideal integration includes freedom of belief, cultural and religious practices. Other receiving community participants believed that refugees should fully adopt culture of the receiving community, in fact describing assimilation process rather than integration. . The following quotes show that arriving and receiving community participants have a similar understanding of cultural freedom as a part of integration:

RC14: “Generally speaking, in perfect integration, everyone should be able to practice their culture and customs as long as doing so does not endanger others’. Not to fight each other, right? In practice… I don’t know, if it were perfect, maybe in schools really, if they did not want to eat pork, they would get pork-free food and no one would be angry about it. […] Well we’re talking ideal, perfect. Let women be covered; in perfect integration no one would be angry if she took it off, nor would anyone insult or ridicule her if she didn’t.” [Zagreb, pos. 101; 103]

AC7: “For an integration to be ideal, every person should be able to feel free. Regarding religion, what they believe in. It’s important to be free to believe. We in Aleppo had all kinds of religion and I had never felt like I was different. I had friends of all religions.” [Zagreb, pos. 243]

AC11: “Maybe for them to accept our customs a little bit, and for us to accept theirs [would be an ideal integration].” [Zagreb, pos. 302]

Lastly, when thinking about the steps necessary for integration, arriving community participants recognized the wish to move further to other European countries as a barrier to integration in their currently receiving country.

AC11: “The most important thing is to accept that our future is here. If we’d accept that, it’d be easier for us. Our most important problem is that we’re planning on how to go to work abroad… how to work in Germany and not here. […] Everyone needs to understand that we’re here and we need to plan our life here.” [Zagreb, pos. 452; 454]

This reference can be linked to the joint belief of receiving and arriving community members that refugees do not wish to stay in Croatia, but move further to the West and North Europe. It seems that such thinking and planning to go further abroad results in reluctance to invest efforts into integrating in the local community, perhaps because this notion demotivates refugees to seek jobs and learn the Croatian language which are viewed as cornerstones of the integration process.

Receiving community members were more likely to talk about indicators of integration – measurable outcomes showing the degree to which refugees integrated with the receiving community. Because labour market, education, housing and language were recognized as imperative, it is logical that indicators of successful integration revolve around these areas of socio-economic integration.

RC4: “For example, here’s a concrete indicator [of integration]– for how long can they keep their jobs, how often do they change jobs. […] The speed of learning the language for example [is an indicator of integration]. If it takes 5 years for someone to learn the language…” [Zagreb, pos. 198; 201]

RC8: “Children’s success in schools [as an indicator of integration]. […] Well, both…success and…the level of education they reach over a certain number of years [are indicators of integration].” [Zagreb, pos. 210; 213]

Interestingly, when thinking about the indicators of ideal integration, both receiving and arriving community participants said that integration is successful when no differences can be observed between refugees and receiving community members:

RC13: “If people become functional members of society in every sense [that would be an indicator of a perfect integration]. […] That they are, except in some…cosmetic details, no different from us sitting here.” [Zagreb, pos. 96; 98]

RC16: “Not to see them as “others”. To not see any differences [would be an indicator of successful integration].” [Zagreb, pos. 180]

AC5: “Yes, so no one knows I’m an asylum beneficiary [would be an ideal integration].” [Zagreb, pos. 313]

One receiving community participant recognized that integration takes place on multiple levels of the society, with both governmental system and local communities having responsibility in the process:

RC20: “I think this question [what are relations between host community members and refugees like] could be divided into an institutional attempt to integrate asylees into society, and a societal attempt – the way society reacts to them.” [Zagreb, pos. 42]

Receiving community participants often talked about the ideal integration at the governmental level, referring to the way refugees should be welcomed and what procedures should be established to ensure successful integration:

RC1: “They should be received in an organized way, there should be plans in place for including them into society because our cultures are dissimilar in many ways.” [Zagreb, pos. 57]

RC7: “I would also add that it’s important to have a fixed procedure. Meaning, if we don’t have a fixed procedure, everyone’s doing according to themselves, then the integration is not the same for everyone. It’s important to have a well-established procedure. I think it’s a big problem when things are done ad hoc.” [Zagreb, pos. 168]

RC4: “I think that one component of that procedure should be to register what has been done for an individual person. So that it can be known how many services were spent on which person, so that it does not happen that the same person uses the same programs several times, but rather that it is distributed justly. That there is a registry in which it is noted how a person is progressing in integration.” [Zagreb, pos. 191]

Arriving community participants referred to the note “asylum beneficiary” on their ID as something they would like removed.

AC6: “Ideal integration would be to actually…to just remove the word “asylee” from the ID cards.” [Zagreb, pos. 312]

AC5: “I think it would be very good if it didn't say that we're asylees on our ID cards, in fact, to have the same ID cards as Croats and that only police could realize through the code number that we're asylees.” [Zagreb, pos. 318]

ID cards are used in all state services, from entering the job marked to applying for health insurance. ID cards are needed for financial services (banks), but also for services which are not related to the state or financial system, for example during the signing of a contract with the telecommunications service

provider. These wishes expressed by arriving community participants seem to point out that the label "asylee" causes issues when they communicate with service providers and they see it as an obstacle to integration and discriminatory.

A certain degree of threat perception is present in the way some receiving community participants see integration. Cultural freedom and freedom of religion were seen by both receiving and arriving community participants as a part of integration. On the other hand, some receiving community participants expressed beliefs which reflect an element of threat perception from the arriving community and a position of dominance.

RC13: "When in Rome, do as the Romans do. The least I expect from the people who have come here is that they absolutely assimilate into our culture, language and customs. At home, they can do whatever they want, but outside, they must not differ from us in their behaviour. Therefore, in my opinion, women should not be covered up. When we were in Iran, my wife covered herself up, no problem. But when they're here, I expect them to take it off. […] As I said, when you're in Rome in, do as the Romans do. They should adapt to our customs, not impose their customs on us. It is good that we are not a rich country, so for most refugees we are just an obstacle on the way to Germany, Sweden. As for those who remain…my opinion is that, and it might not be correct, it is my opinion that they would adapt after all. They would embrace our customs, language, culture. At home, you can do whatever you want, in your own 4 walls. No problem." [Zagreb, pos. 55; 83]

RC9: "Here, I have an example or anecdote, an instruction from hiking. I was hiking and there's a rule "if anything happens, first secure yourself and then help others". Meaning, if you're not tied to rock, if rocks start to break, he's falling, you're also falling… are you going to catch his hand and fall together with him? No, that won't be good. You secure yourself first and then help him." [Zagreb, pos. 111]

RC5: "My opinion is somewhat similar if we understood each other correctly because what I said about the school and language, that's as far as I would go with integration into society. We give them language [education], and the rest… […] They need to be given a chance to have a starting position equal to ours." [Zagreb, pos. 147; 151]

Examples of threat perception, discrimination and racism are analysed in more detail in sections on intergroup relations and discrimination/racism. What is evident from these quotes is that some receiving community participants encouraged integration, but actually described assimilation – they would allow refugees to practice their customs, but only in private. In public, they are expected to fully assimilate with the receiving community. Below the superficial support for freedom of culture and religion, some participants clearly expressed preference for assimilation into the Croatian society, rather than for integration of the arriving community. These beliefs contrast those expressed by other participants who cherished the diversity of cultures and religions and encouraged freedom in practicing customs of refugees.

For arriving community participants, positive intergroup relations play an important role in integration:

AC8: "Hanging out [is an ideal integration for me]. To hang out with people our own age. It's also very nice when they invite us to their homes and when they make Croatian lunch for us. It's very nice of them, even though I don't really like a Croatian lunch [laughs]. And I also like playing chess at their place." [Zagreb, pos. 255]

AC10: "Everything that was said, not to look at us like we're less worthy. Not to humiliate us for being refugees. We came here because there's a war there." [Zagreb, pos. 259]

4.8.2. Responsible actors

Integration involves members of receiving and arriving communities, but also the governmental system, NGOs and INGOs and private sector. Additionally, focus groups show that the media is viewed as an influential actor in sharing information and forming attitudes of the general public.

Arriving and receiving communities[8]

Receiving community members hold strong belief that refugees have a share of responsibility in their integration and should show a good will to integrate:

RC7: "First, it would be to show good will, readiness to learn a new language and new culture into which they are coming - that's an expression of good will, and a wish to integrate. Then we have something to work with." [Zagreb, pos. 182]

RC11: "I would say that…it's a complicated question. I'd say that [the relationship between Croats and refugees] depends on the individual. I would say that we Croats in general, if we see that someone is trying to integrate, learn the language, when they send their children to school and are looking for work… For example, I was very surprised 2 weeks ago when my Uber driver was a gentleman who didn't speak a word of Croatian. Pleasantly surprised because, clearly people are trying to find a job. I'd say we view it positively. However, my opinion is that if we see that someone has come here, has not found a job, is not trying to find it or to learn the language, I would say that our perception is a lot more negative. In my opinion - with good reason." [Zagreb, pos. 46]

RC13: "[Integration is the responsibility] of those who want to integrate. If they have no desire, no intention, then you can do nothing with them." [Zagreb, pos. 126]

This notion of "taking responsibility and showing good will" seems very important to the receiving community members.

Similarly, arriving community participants though of their own role in their integration and concluded that they have to make an effort to learn the language and to get accustomed to the cultural differences:

AC1: "I think that you need to go out and ask to learn the language by yourself. Organize something actively." [Zagreb, pos. 327]

AC11: "We need to accept those customs that are here. To be more precise, in Syria I might not accept a relationship with a girl who had relationships before, but this is quite normal here." [Zagreb, pos. 312]

AC7: "As someone living in this society, I must accept the customs that are important here and I also think that they should accept me and my customs." [Zagreb, pos. 322]

Responsibilities of receiving community, according to receiving and arriving community participants, are to help refugees, accept them and take an open stance towards them.

RC8: "And if there are, as there surely are, differences in the acceptance of refugees among citizens, meaning some people being against the integration, some being open and thinking it's okay and normal, regardless, work should be done on promoting openness." [Zagreb, pos. 121]

AC7: "Mainly, they should treat us the same as anybody else. […] As someone living in this society, I must accept the customs that are important here and I also think that they should accept me and my customs." [Zagreb, pos. 267; 322]

8 Arriving community and Receiving community are two distinct codes which are here presented under same subtitle because of the number of references and for the sake of interpretation of data.

Governments, NGO, INGOs and private sector[9]

Receiving community participants often referred to the responsibility of the government or institutions in integration. Some believed that Croatian government has an important role in the integration processes, while others expressed the concern for the costs of integration and their burden on the national budget.

RC9: "I think the state should somehow give some education on culture, language, behaviour, giving some temporary jobs so that they can get back on their feet. But there is the conflict… whom will we help first, our own [people] or them." [Zagreb, pos. 86]

RC4: "But I think that quite big investments [in integration] are needed and that Croatia, and individual citizens, should not be paying for this. Those who should be paying are America and Western Europe who are responsible for the situation. I deeply believe that Western Europe, but mostly America, are responsible for what happened in Syria, that's why they should pay for the care of refugees. And if they want some people to stay in Croatia, Western Europe and America should be paying for that." [Zagreb, pos. 60]

RC8: "Well, I think that Croatia, as a modern state and a member of the EU should definitely, despite our feelings and how we see it and what are the historical implications, actively engage in making a program for the integration of refugees because that's a part of the European policy in general." [Zagreb, pos. 121]

Receiving community participants named several civil society organizations which help refugees in Croatia, showing interest and knowledge in this regard. Arriving community participants also talked about the role of NGOs in their integration, and weighted which ones helped them the most.

AC3: "Most people get the job through organizations [that help refugees]." [Zagreb, pos. 211]

AC5: "I asked a lot of organizations for help, but they don't think I need any help. I asked them to help me with paying for "Croaticum" [high quality Croatian language course], but they told me I don't need any help. They [organizations] only want to help us with small things, but not with serious ones. […] They [name of an NGO omitted] only help with food and clothes, but I need help with my life. I need help to be able to live well." [Zagreb, pos. 388]

AC4: "They [organizations] don't help a lot financially. [Name of the NGO omitted] doesn't help at all, except with Christmas presents." [Zagreb, pos. 389]

It seems that NGOs play an important part in including arriving community members into the job market, but are able to provide only limited financial aid, which is not appreciated by the arriving community

Media

The media was exclusively discussed among the receiving community participants. Participants most often referred to the media in general, daily news on television and newspapers. Some receiving group participants who do not have direct contact with refugees mentioned that they based their opinions on the information provided by the media. Media was also seen as both positive and negative – participants stated some positive examples of integration which were featured in the news/television programs, but also believed that the media is much more likely to publish negative information about the refugees than positive one.

9 Role of Governments, NGO and INGOs and Private sector are three distinct codes which are here presented together because of the number of references and to enable interpretation of data.

RC7: “Especially because the media are creating a pretty negative image of refugees in the public, and we are all building our image of them mostly through the media. None of us here actually are in contact with immigrants, right? We create the image based on what we were told. I mean, immigrants are often negatively portrayed in the media, negative things are highlighted. Negative things are being put into the centre, and some of the positive things are not mentioned, they don’t mention that these immigrants are working, learning language and culture and I don’t know. Negative things should not be hidden, but they are somehow being put in focus.” [Zagreb, pos. 66]

RC9: “I base my opinion mostly on stories and media, but I’d say, lately, the media does not help much, they even hinder the situation.” [Zagreb, pos. 66]

RC14: “What people think, I don’t know. I can only judge based on different articles in which media make up and inflate things. Especially these right-wing portals that use the fear of refugees to collect political points. […] In my opinion, some media are certainly damaging the relationship between refugees and Croats, spreading an atmosphere of xenophobia and scaring us with some Jihad, which is of course complete nonsense.” [Zagreb, pos. 50; 52]

RC19: “And we lack information about it and we need to be cautious about all the information we get from the media because the media really tries to push the information that will unnecessarily instil fear or worry among the citizens. […] Meaning that the media are politically saturated. We won’t be hearing the same information both from one and the other media. They have their own opinions. And they promote their political opinions through their own channels and that’s why there are opposing images in the society. That’s why it’s important to check all the information we get or to have our own experience. We should decide whether to believe in something or not based on our own personal experience.” [Zagreb, pos. 43; 178]

RC20: “To me it seems that the media went with a positive story and that they were the ones who encouraged positive attitudes towards asylees broadcasting things such as “we were also refugees seeking asylum once”, but some smaller loud groups were spreading information and fear saying that refugees are, I don’t know what kind of people, who will harm us and our society.” [Zagreb, pos. 48]

Receiving community participants make a distinction between right and mainstream news portals and believe that right-wing portals have a negative influence on the relations between refugees and receiving community. This is in line with the role of political orientation in forming of attitudes which participants recognized (described in the section on theme “On intergroup relations”). It seems that receiving community participants recognize the influence of political orientation in forming of attitudes and perception of threat, which is in line with findings from a recent meta-analysis of quantitative studies showing that right-wing oriented persons are more likely to express negative attitudes towards asylum seekers/refugees than left-wing oriented individuals (Cowling, Anderson and Ferguson 2019). The media is clearly seen as a mediator of information with the power of shaping attitudes of public in both positive and negative way.

4.8.3. Future Effects

Arriving and receiving community participants envisioned future relations between the two groups and possible effects integration could have on their respective communities. From the arriving community perspective, it was voiced that future relations depend on the experiences the receiving community members have with refugees:

AC5: “It depends on whether there will be good, normal immigrants here. If yes, then it will be fine. If some lunatic comes along that will damage our reputation, then it will be bad. […] I think that if some immigrant was to do something bad here, then it's normal that it would affect us all.” [Zagreb, pos. 273; 274]

It is clear that this participant is concerned about the possibility that migrants who pose a threat to the receiving community might endanger the efforts of other refugees to integrate. Another arriving community participant believed that the wish of refugees to stay plays an important role in the relationship between the two groups:

AC6: "I think that it depends on whether refugees decide to stay here." [Zagreb, pos. 272]

Receiving community participants believe that Croatia is a poor country and that macroeconomic state will influence the relations between refugees and members of the receiving community:

RC4: "I think the relations will develop badly if the general economic situation in Croatia is bad. […] If the economic situation in Croatia is poor, these relations will be poor as well. Relations cannot be good if Syrians and Croats are competing for a limited number of jobs." [Zagreb, pos. 56]

RC12: "It depends on how our economic situation will be going. If it goes downhill, then it will not have a good effect on opinions. If it goes uphill, meaning if all our basic economic needs are met, then it should go in a positive direction." [Zagreb, pos. 76]

Other participant recognized the negative influence the media will have on future.

RC7: "Well I think the relations will develop slowly and with difficulty. Especially because the media are creating a pretty negative image of refugees in the public, and we are all building our image of them mostly through the media." [Zagreb, pos. 66]

Receiving community participants also considered the degree to which integration of refugees would impact their society, and in what way:

RC13: "Officially… I think integration doesn't have an impact on society, there are too few of them so far." [Zagreb, pos. 129]

RC21: "It would only enrich us." [Zagreb, pos. 218]

RC19: "I also think it would have a positive impact on me and society in general, on Croatia too. I think we need that and we need to become more open towards others. Not only Syrians, but others as well." [Zagreb, pos. 223]

As described in the section on intergroup relations, receiving community members believe that the current number of asylees in Croatia (around 600) is very small and that it would not have a direct impact on them.

4.9. Conclusion

A total of 32 participants provided their opinions and experiences in three receiving and two arriving community member focus groups. These groups provided data which related to the following themes: Perspectives on integration", "On intergroup relations", "Avenues for negotiating integration" and "Power, cultural, social and geographical struggles and rapprochements".

The significant majority of participants of all focus groups agreed that integration includes changes in both groups, cultural understanding and freedom of expression. "Ideal integration" was seen as a state in which no differences are made between the members of the two groups, indicating that lack of discrimination and mutual support is seen as essential for integration.

"'Ideal integration' was seen as a state in which no differences are made between the members of the two groups"

Language, job, education and housing were seen as crucial for integration by participants of all focus groups and indicators of successful integration are mostly based on these areas of socio-economic integration. Arriving community participants also emphasized positive relations with receiving community members as important for their integration.

Both receiving and arriving community members are seen as responsible for integration process, with receiving community members holding responsibility for accepting, helping and being open to refugees, and refugees for showing interest in integration and for the receiving country. Even though they admitted to having narrow knowledge of the integration processes in Croatia, receiving community participants emphasized the importance of a systematic approach to integration and the role of well-organized governmental services, providing some criticism to the way the government approached integration proves so far. At the same time, arriving community participants described issues they faced with administrative services, work, accommodation and the duration of subsidized housing. Out of all other actors responsible for integration, the media was seen as very influential in forming public opinions, both in a positive and in a negative way.

"receiving community participants emphasized the importance of a systematic approach to integration and the role of well-organized governmental services"

Work and language are seen both as facilitators and barriers to integration, and work was often mentioned as a main facilitator of integration, not only as a socio-economic resource, but also as a socio-psychological one. Furthermore, both receiving and arriving community members placed a strong emphasis on the importance of working towards integration. Arriving community participants talked about the difficulties they face with recognition of their qualifications and with finding work which corresponds to their qualifications, but also described very positive experiences with the receiving community members at work.

In the school environment, arriving community children and young adults face difficulties with language. Enrolling into the university was seen as difficult because of the language barrier, but also because of the costs. Experiences of arriving community participants show that Croatian health system was not well prepared for the arrival of refugees – health service providers are not well informed about the rights of asylum beneficiaries and therefore show reluctance in registering them in their general practice. A potential solution for this issue is to provide clear information on the rights of asylum beneficiaries to the variety of service providers. This could prevent misunderstanding between the arriving community members and health sector employees, and help ensure that refugees receive needed healthcare. When thinking about the rule of law and the rights and entitlements refugees have, receiving community participants believe that integration entails refugees behaving in accordance with the Croatian laws and that they should respect the rules and regulations of the country they live in.

"Experiences of arriving community participants show that Croatian health system was not well prepared for the arrival of refugees"

Receiving community participants believed that attitudes of their group towards refugees are neither positive nor negative. Some individual characteristics were seen as related to attitudes, manly age, political orientation and urban-rural residence: younger, left-wing oriented receiving community members and those who live in cities were viewed as more likely to accept arriving community members. Croats believe that their society is generally closed-off to foreigners and that members of their group are more likely to reject other cultural groups than to accept them.

Contact was seen as especially important for integration. Participants in all focus groups described instances of positive and negative intergroup contact, but examples of positive contact dominated.

References to contact in governmental services, work, kindergarten, school and neighbourhood were provided by arriving community members. Arriving community members had mostly positive experiences with the receiving community, but also described situations in which they were rejected by healthcare workers. Some had mixed experiences and believe they depend on the individual with who they are in contact. Recent experiences of war and refuge seem to bond Croats and Syrians and are recognized by members of both groups as a potential to encourage receiving community members to sympathize with refugees. Receiving community participants referenced threat perception and linked it to the job market and culture/religion. They also believed that persons in a better economic situation are less likely to feel threatened. At the same time, arriving community participants showed sensibility for attitudes, feelings and behaviour of receiving community members. They reported experiences with the receiving community members as mostly positive.

"Recent experiences of war and refuge seem to bond Croats and Syrians"

Receiving community participants perceive differences in cultures greater than the arriving community participants do. In relation to cultural differences, arriving community members had positive experiences with receiving community members caring about their dietary customs but also perceive that cultural and religious marking such as wearing a hijab reduces their chances of getting a job which indicates experiences of discrimination. While receiving community participants see their and Syrian culture as very different, religion is not seen that way. They describe Syrian refugees as Muslims who are different than the Muslims from other countries – implying a lesser difference between receiving community (majorly Catholic) and Syrians.

"Receiving community participants referenced threat perception and linked it to the job market and culture/religion"

Language is uniformly considered the basis for all other levels of integration. Arriving community participants believe language courses are not adequately organized and find it difficult to learn the Croatian language.

During the focus groups, receiving community participants had a few statements which are racist and discriminatory. Arriving community members described some negative experiences where they were discriminated or harassed by the receiving community members due to displaying cultural and religious markers.

5. German qualitative field study

In the following section, the sampling of the German field study is presented and the limitations of the research are discussed. Subsequently, the results are outlined and a conclusion is drawn as a final step.

5.1. Sample

As outlined in D3.1 Research Design and Methodology, six FGDs were conducted in Berlin, Hamburg and Leipzig, which are the same locations included in the quantitative surveys. The study locations were chosen based on the number of resettled refugees from Syria in the areas. It was intended to hold a 'mixed' FGD that involves both members of the arriving and receiving community in one discussion during Autumn 2020 but this could not be realized due to the introduction of COVID-19 restrictions.

As part of the recruitment strategy, information about the participation in the study was distributed using the snowball method via social media, institutional mailing lists, established platforms for study advertisements and other personal and professional networks of the researchers involved. All participants received the study information after signalling interest in participating in the study.

Twelve members of the *receiving community* participated in the study, of whom six were female and six male. Age ranged from twenty-two to sixty-seven years. Six participants had a migratory background according to the legal definition in Germany[10]. One participant attained lower education, three participants had upper secondary education and eight participants held a university degree. Concerning the current employment status, six were employed, one looking for employment, four students and one retired person.

As for the *arriving community*, nineteen members participated in the FGDs, of whom twelve identified themselves as male and seven as female with an age range between twenty-one and sixty-three years. One participant attained lower secondary education, four persons had upper and post-secondary education, while the remaining thirteen had university-level education. In terms of employment, three participants were employed, eight currently looking for a job and five were attending further trainings or language courses and two persons were doing an apprenticeship.

Table 3: Participants' sociodemographics Germany

Community		Receiving	Arriving
Participants	Total	12	19
	Male	6	12
	Female	6	7
	Diverse	0	0
Age range (years)	Range	23 – 67	21 - 63
	18-29	3	4
	30-49	8	9
	50-67	1	6

10 Germany officially defines migratory background in the following manner: A person has a migratory background if he or she or at least one parent was not born with German citizenship. In detail, this definition includes immigrated and non-immigrated foreigners, immigrated and non-immigrated naturalized persons, (late) repatriates as well as the descendants of these groups born as Germans. Displaced persons from the Second World War have a special status (under the Federal Displaced Persons Act); they and their descendants therefore do not belong to the population with a migratory background. (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2020)

Residential duration (years)	Range	8 – 46	3 - 5
Migratory background		5	-
Place of residence	Berlin	4	8
	Hamburg	4	6
	Leipzig	4	5
Marital status	Single	9	7
	Married	3	12
Education	Lower secondary	1	
	Upper/secondary	3	4
	Short cycle tertiary education		1
	Bachelor's or equivalent level	6	10
	Master's/ doctoral or equivalent level	2	4
Labour status	Employed full time	3	2
	Employed part time	3	
	Unemployed	1	8
	Pupil, student, further training, unpaid work experience	4	5
	Apprenticeship		2
	Fulfilling domestic tasks		8
	In retirement or early retirement	1	

As illustrated in Table 3 both the receiving as well as the arriving community sample can be considered heterogeneous with regards to the parameters on gender, age and education.

5.2. Limitations

Though the interactive and dynamic aspect of the focus group discussion method is its greatest potential strength, it is also a methodological shortcoming. One of the most essential factors is social desirability, which exerts pressure on participants to utter views that are in line with what is perceived as socially acceptable, creating a certain extent of reluctance among participants to fully express their honest and true opinion on such a sensitive topic. Despite the applied strategies by FGD moderators to minimise such bias through the provision of assurance and prefacing certain questions, the pressure resulting from social norms could still be felt in certain moments of the discussion, e.g. by redirecting the discussion to less conflictual topics. This methodological limitation was taken into account when interpreting the results and drawing conclusions.

A further general limitation of FGD method is inherent in the role of the moderator. Though there was a strong emphasis on the importance of limiting the intervention of the moderator to a minimum to give participants ample room to self-manage the discussion without substantial influence on the outcome of the discussion, it was inevitable for the moderator not to intervene at certain junctures of the discussion. This was especially pronounced in the FGD in Berlin with the arriving community, which had a fierce debate due to religious differences among the participants. Furthermore, the influence of the moderator goes beyond certain interventions or other explicit behaviour and extends to subtle roles and characteristics. For example, the fact that the facilitators in Germany were researchers associated with German institutions and the European Union (as part of the EU Project) may have limited to some extent open expression between the moderator and the participants. In some instances of the Berlin FGD with the receiving community, participants' non- and preverbal behaviour contradicted their verbal accounts. This contradiction was perceived by the facilitator and note taker as sarcasm, retained

aggression or mistrust. Almost in all FGDs with the arriving community, participants felt obliged to express their gratitude to Germany, especially after expressing a certain criticism. Such statements were often directly targeted to the moderator.

An unforeseen complication in the implementation of the field work was the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic. This had important implications to the recruitment process, resulting in a selection bias of participants, which was more evident in the FGDs with the receiving community in Hamburg and Leipzig. Despite the implemented hygiene measures to account for the safety of the participants, there was a strong reluctance among people to participate in such long sessions with other persons. Despite the fact that the number of participants in the FGDs with the receiving community was relatively low, vivid and well-saturated discussions evolved among the participants, allowing them to thoroughly express their opinions and interact with one another.

5.3. Coding results

In the following sections, the content of the four major themes which emerged from the German focus groups are presented and interpreted.

The following significant dialogue among arriving community members summarizes not only the perceived intergroup relationship but represents an assessment that seems valid as the core organizing principle in the integration process:

AC2: “The German can continue his life unconcerned, but it is us [refugees] whether Christians or Muslims, that will remain confronted with the problem.”

AC7: “Yes, we are the ones concerned with the problem.” [Berlin, Pos. 476-477]

Four themes consisting of several categories and codes elaborate and contrast this broad assumption from different angles and positions between and within the arriving and receiving communities.

At this point, it is important to note that members of the receiving community showed great difficulty to limit their accounts to the specific target group of this study and in many cases referred to refugees in general.

5.4. Perspectives on integration – the status quo

The first theme subsumes perceptions and reflections on the term and process of integration in general. It was split into two parts of which the first half contains accounts on the current status of the integration process or “How integration has evolved so far” also represented as the affective state of “Feeling integrated”.

5.4.1. How integration has evolved so far

This code contains subjective perceptions about the process of integration on a societal and individual level. The discussion among the receiving community about this specific issue was very vague and inconclusive at the beginning and seemed to be limited to the assessment of abstract bureaucratic processes at the state level. The evaluation of the current status of integration was very diverse and contradictory. On the one hand, the integration process was described as initially chaotic and overstraining, on the other hand, it was described as inconspicuous and partly unnoticed:

RC3: “[...] and now all of a sudden two million new refugees are supposed to arrive, whom we should integrate best in the big cities, who should get a flat, in the best case in Mitte or in Moabit, where the housing market is already relatively scarce. I find that relatively difficult.” [Berlin, Pos. 32]

RC4: “But in Berlin I don't think it's really noticeable that we have taken in so many refugees. I can imagine, also from stories of other people from Lübeck or Dresden, in the villages it is much more noticeable than in Berlin.” [Berlin, Pos. 287].

Those with a migratory background tried to incorporate their own migration and integration experience in the discussion. In this context, discussants expressed discontent and disappointment towards the current status quo as they would have expected that Germany, as a country with decades of (flight) migration, would learn from preceding migration movements and develop better procedures and offers in order to prevent social segregation (see also category “Racism and discrimination):

RC2: “Germany has BECOME a country of immigration, but we are still not living up to that. There is the question of migratory background. I have been here for 50 years. [...]. So I am only since the beginning of the 80s, I got the German citizenship. But still this title remains attached, this migratory background, which means that society is divided.” [Berlin, Pos. 321]

The discussion among the arriving community, on the other hand, was much more vivid and personal. Participants described much more a process of habituation, experiences of rejection and acceptance and assessed their adaptation efforts in everyday life.

AC6: “[...]I mean in this society, and as we got influenced by this society, we started to influence it. They started to know our Syrian dishes, the Syrian culture and they started to know who we are. [...]” [Berlin, Pos. 527]

5.4.2. Feeling integrated

This code was dominated by specifications on the degree of integration in the form of percentages, a response behaviour which clearly reflects an understanding of integration equivalent to assimilation as best illustrated by this quote:

AC4: “By 100 percent, I mean being like the German citizen who lives in Germany and grew up here in terms of way of thinking and mentality. It is impossible for me as an Arab to become a German.” [Berlin, Pos.9]

In this context, members of the arriving community criticized the unequal opportunities for participation in society, as the following quotation shows:

AC1: “I was a consultant of university press in Syria. Here the only job I get offered is cleaning toilets. Something that does not make me think of integration.” [Berlin, Pos.520]

Within the receiving community, elaboration on what it means to feel integrated in society was limited to those with migratory background. By drawing on their own experience, those members acknowledged the complexity of such a notion, asserting that “feeling integrated” requires much more than social participation and access to different social resources (see theme “Avenues for negotiating integration”). Their description seemed to allude to what is known as the “sense of belonging”, without naming it as such. A similar behaviour is observed among members of the arriving community, who avoided using the term “belonging”. A possible explanation for this might be the fragility of such a feeling, as in not knowing if one is entitled to feel "belonging" to society and fearing the possibility of being denied of such a right. The following quote illustrates how fragile this feeling could be:

RC13: “[…] I find that somehow strange, that this is somehow no guarantee, even if you think: ‘ok, you live here now in the third generation, you are actually integrated, you have no idea about the country, where you somehow have roots.’ And then suddenly someone comes and disputes this feeling again. The fact that this is somehow very, very constructed is this "being integrated […]” [Leipzig, Pos. 36]

5.5. On intergroup relations[11]

This theme subsumes descriptions, lived experiences and attitudes towards the intergroup relation between receiving and arriving community.

5.5.1. Attitudes and perceptions of the outgroup

The discussions revealed various images, prejudices and stereotypes about the respective outgroup, i.e. arriving and receiving communities, which appeared to be generalized and quite polarized in their quality.

From the point of view of the receiving community, it was difficult to distinguish between different groups within the arriving community. There was, however, a general narrative that depicted refugees as vulnerable and helpless with a subtle emphasis on their heavy traumatization. Within this narrative, there was an expectation and to a certain extent even a demand that refugees show gratitude and make genuine efforts to integrate into society.

An opposing narrative to that of 'victimization'[12] was one dominated by an overall negative attitude and perception towards refugees. (see also category "Racism and discrimination"). Within this narrative, refugees were described as less educated, less cultured, lazy and were characterized as being homophobic, parasitic, exploitative and criminal. As a further demarcation to the "victim" narrative, it was contested that Syrian refugees - like other refugee groups - do not only come to Germany to save their lives, but for economic reasons as well. This alludes to the public debate present in Germany about so called 'economic refugees' ['Wirtschaftsflüchtlinge'], for whom the perceived desire to take part in the accumulated economic wealth in Europe is denied as it is not considered a sufficient reason for migration. Such views did not remain unchallenged; other members rejected claims by pointing out to the role of institutional barriers in hindering refugees from integrating into society (see theme "Avenues for negotiating integration"). The discussion dynamic showed that some of these negative expectations and attitudes were pre-reflexive in nature; subject to change after exposure to different information or experiences:

RC7: "[…] I lumped perhaps almost all refugees together, unconsciously, let's say. And so, after this book, I thought, no, this is not true and there are some, I don't know how many, but there are refugees who really want to achieve something. Or some people say that all refugees are social parasites, for example something like that, yes, and now I think, no, you can't lump them all together." [Hamburg, Pos. 12]

It is important to note, that those participants reflecting negative attitudes towards refugees were depicting Syrian refugees as "better" than other refugee groups, asserting their higher level of education and discipline:

RC1: „I also have a better picture of the Syrian refugees, if I am honest, because I also know that there are many educated people, that it was already a culture, that was highly educated, I also have a more positive impression than with other population groups." [Berlin, Pos. 276]

The arriving community painted a very contradictory and ambivalent picture of Germans and Germany as a nation. Germany and Germans were claimed to be simply "better". The laws, order, security situation and discipline were praised on the one hand, while on the other hand the arbitrary interpretation of laws, the lack of flexibility and the Germans' distanced and withdrawn attitude were

11 The code "Partnerships" was omitted because of lack of saturation in the German field study.

12 This finding is in line with Fassin, D., & Rechtman, R. (2009). The empire of trauma: An inquiry into the condition of victimhood. (R. Gomme, Trans.). Princeton University Press.

criticized. The openness, inquisitiveness and cooperativeness of Germans were acknowledged, while at the same time the quick loss of interest and contact avoidance were seen as difficult to cope with. The description of Germans often entailed idealizing tendencies, which were followed by differentiation and critique. Two quotes illustrate such conflicting views on Germans:

AC14: “But there are a lot of such nice friendly Germans, I am not saying that all the Germans are just like him! There are lots of amazing Germans and they help us. They even tell us that not all the Germans are like that. There are many Germans who have awareness and they understand the situation. They understand that we just want to live.” [Hamburg, Pos. 54]

AC9: “[…] the German society is already an introvert society. The Germans do not have strong connections to one another, so how can they then get closer to us?” [Hamburg, Pos. 126]

Idealizing perceptions of Germans were counteracted by accounts of personal experiences of religious and racial discrimination (see also category “Racism and discrimination”). It was controversially debated whether this part constituted an extreme right-wing minority or the majority of the German population and whether regional differences played a role (see category “Locality”). Furthermore, members of the arriving community felt that Germans hold a predominantly economic interest in the refugees, expecting them to adapt, integrate quickly into the job market and to pay taxes.

A striking dynamic that could be observed in the course of all FGDs among the arriving community was that any that any criticism of Germans was immediately followed by positive accounts of Germans and expression of gratitude. Though the moderator of the FGDs with the arriving community was not German, it could be still hypothesized whether meeting in a German institution and having a moderator that is associated with a German and European Union research project created some reservation among participants. Another interpretation may be that members of the arriving community internalized the above mentioned narrative of the vulnerable refugee that had to adapt and show gratitude.

German citizens with migratory background were depicted as more hostile towards refugees by both the arriving and receiving communities. Apparently, one’s own migration experience does not necessarily prompt empathy as one might think (see code “Empathy and taking perspective”). Data from this study was not condense enough to develop detailed hypothesis on the relation to other categories like “Racism and discrimination” and “Perceptions of threat” that may clarify this observation. Participants also referred to certain groups among themselves as examples of failed integration. It is relevant to mention that the arriving community often referred to 'Germans’ as the receiving community and this often excluded those with migratory background, especially from the Arab world.

5.5.2. Perception of threat

Fears or threat experiences were almost exclusively addressed by members of the receiving community. The perception of threat was particularly tangible in the description of a sudden and uncontrollable "wave of refugees" [RC3, Berlin, Pos. 12] that has stirred fear among Germans as best illustrated by the concrete example of a neighbourhood in Leipzig:

RC8: "[...] at the beginning of this street there are these two buildings opposite to each other, and one of them was always empty, there they said that refugees would move in, so before that there was really ... huge fear. So all these protests were only caused by fear. That you really didn't know anyone before, who was so ... yes, different [laughs), you could say that. So you neither knew who was coming nor ... you somehow really knew before ... foreigner in that sense." [Leipzig, Pos. 44]

The feeling of threat in the above mentioned example was intensified by the surrounding fences that segregated refugee housings and raised the question of whom that fence was supposed to protect in reality – refugees or German residents of the neighbourhood.

Fears of increased crime were expressed in the Berlin discussion with specific reference to the sale of drugs in certain places and the rape crimes reported in the media. There was a strong tendency to generalize in this debate, without any distinction between various immigrant groups. It became evident that the perception of another person as foreign can trigger feelings of insecurity and perception of threat (see category “Racism and discrimination”).

The perception of threat went beyond crime, and was reflected upon as a more substantial threat to German laws. There was a tangible fear that certain cultural practices such as polygamous marriages can lead to change in laws for the aim of protecting children (see code “Rule of law and entitlements).

With regard to the future, the perception of threat was reflected in the fear of a further massive influx of refugees that would jeopardize one’s privileges:

RC1: "I think we can talk like this, but we can also talk when thirty, forty, fifty million want to live here someday. Will it still work then?" [Berlin, Pos. 142]

RC2: "Yes, it's probably more or less the same argumentation, the fear that it would mean to have less.” [Berlin, Pos. 97]

In addition, members of the receiving community expressed fears about the social shift to the right, the growing popularity of right-wing parties, and the normalization of racial discrimination in public discourse:

RC5: "20 years ago, no one had ever discussed such topics in public. And nowadays it is common practice to say something against refugees. [In politics] nothing gets discussed constructively […] And this is what I am afraid of, that the whole thing will get even worse.” [Hamburg, Pos. 78]

5.5.3. Self-perception on one’s own group

Discussions and reflections on one’s own group have been much more virulent among participants from the arriving community than among members of the receiving community, which may indicate the shaking of social identity and self-esteem triggered by becoming a refugee and/or a minority in Germany.

Members of the receiving community reflected on their lack of knowledge about the situation of refugees, which demonstrated the passiveness or lack of interest in actively seeking knowledge.

An ostensible supremacy interconnected with residence over various generations was observed:

RC9: “I think that many people [...] who have been somehow German for generations, that they see it as a thing […] in the sense that they pull out a bit of self-confidence from it, or that it's an important piece of identity and that not everyone is allowed to have it. And that's why when other people look different or their great-grandparents lived somewhere else, it's like: ‘Aha! But I live here and I'm PURE German’.” [Leipzig, Pos. 39]

On a more latent level, a sense of superiority among Germans or of Germany were manifested in references to the complexity of the German language, in utterances as Syrians “were already a culture” [RC1, Pos. 276]] in comparison to other arriving communities, the pride in law and order in Germany and the perceived mission of the German state to train arriving community members and send them back to develop the global south.

Associations with the presence of the Nazi history in one's family, society and Germany as a nation were made. It also surfaced as a hindrance to talk openly about the political handling of refugee situation in the discussions:

RC3: "I think it's a little strange to say "barracks" because of our past." [Berlin, Pos. 95]

Participants reflected on their privileges as well. The reluctance to take up low paid jobs by the receiving community as well as to deal with the circumstances of refugees were expressed. On a similar note, the self-centeredness among the receiving community was attributed to the high level of economic development:

RC2: […] The more developed the society is, the more selfish are the single individuals, that's the same everywhere, that has nothing to do with Germany […]" [Berlin, Pos. 340]

In the Berlin arriving community FGD, a fierce debate on social identity and self-perception emerged. One argument revolved around the question on whether Syrians are religiously more tolerant than Germans. It was also debated whether the Syrian identity is based on being Muslim or not, and how Syrians are different from 'other Arabs'. Christian Syrian participants who constitute a minority in Syria strongly opposed this notion by bringing up their own experiences of discrimination in Syria and raising the question on whether one is first and foremost human or Muslim. In all discussions, every claim of being superior to the Germans was followed by self-critique, as these examples of Hamburg and Leipzig FGDs show:

AC9: "This is the basics. In our religion and in the Holy Quran, it confirms the equality and there is no discrimination between races. We do not discriminate against anyone."

AC14: "Wallah, we discriminate against each other's and we have even destroyed our own land!"

AC9: "What?"

AC14: "We discriminated and destroyed the land and did not apply any roles of equality."

AC9: "That is the catastrophe, because these are our basics!" [Hamburg, Pos. 61-65]

AC18: "With all respect to all of you, but sometimes you meet a Nazi and he is, wallah, better than 100 persons in Syria!" [Leipzig, Pos. 252]

Facing the challenges of displacement and integration, a need to remind oneself of one's identity as well as the positive qualities became evident:

AC8: "'My son, I want to ask you a question?' I tell him: 'Forget that we are in Europe, Ok?' He says: 'Ok!' I ask him: 'What are we?' He says: 'Arabs!'" I tell him: 'What is our religion?' He says: 'Islam!'. I tell him: 'In the end, we are what? Here, how do we want to live? Forget that there is a European society outside. We are in our house, our home. That means, as Muslim Arab human being I have to live with all my traditions and rituals." [Berlin, Pos. 352]

AC1: "The people of Syria are especially hardworking and generous people. The Syrian works even in his own country from 6 in the morning till 6 evening not asking more than to be protected by God. And he comes here, he loves to work and likes to integrate in work. He is always an active human being. He is not passive. He is not "negative". The Syrian person is always active and leaves his fingerprint wherever he goes. [Berlin, Pos. 500]

The quotes of the arriving community show the dynamic character of their self-reflective processes and its strong interrelation with aspects represented in other codes (see also category "Culture", "Intragroup relations", "Intergroup feelings"). Moreover, it may be argued that the perception of threat projected by

the arriving community is more likely to be expressed in the self-questioning of refugees' own social identity.

5.5.4. Intergroup contact

Many of the participants from the receiving community reported not having any direct contact with the arriving communities from Syria. This was evident in their increased reliance on media as their main source of information throughout the FGDs. The lack of contact with refuges was perceived as "natural" and was not questioned in any way:

RC2: "Well, I mean in the immediate environment - we're probably all like that - we have no direct contact to them. So, what we know, what we MEAN to know, is the information from the media, which bombards us!" [Berlin, Pos. 6]

Those that had "real contact" [RC4, Berlin, Pos. 7] could depict more vivid and differentiated experiences and views about the living situations and needs of the arriving community. The avenues for intergroup contact that were highlighted included shared housing, education and sports clubs:

RC8: "I also had personal contact with them and I know that they are actually already well supported regarding education and they are happy to take advantage of it and can actually also quickly learn the German language and can integrate themselves well here in the professional fields and so on." [Hamburg, Pos. 7]

Participants referred to the work environment, e.g. as police officer as the main resource for contact. Yet, such limited contact experience was criticized as a potential for bias:

RC3: "I have also had a lot of contact with people who cannot be integrated and what can I say? I experienced the wave of refugees in 2015 at first hand down in Munich, and all the media, how they showed the people there, all the families, all the men. I work for the police myself. They told them that if you carry on like this, you will be deported, then they waved their passports and said: 'No, I come from Syria, I will not be deported.' Yes, that is just my experience. Not all bad, there are quite a few that can be integrated well." [Berlin, Pos. 12]

Reflecting on ways to foster integration, participants suggested neighbourhood, cultural or specifically tailored sports events (see category "Facilitators of integration") as potential activities. Furthermore, they discussed the effect of immediate contact in everyday life and the role of contact in learning the language (see category "Language").

Participants from the arriving community described their different attempts - successful and unsuccessful - to establish contact with Germans. The following quotes illustrate the barriers in establishing first contact:

AC6: "They took a little distance, safety distance, when I used to greet them. That was the first ten days. Two weeks later I knocked on my neighbour's door and said "here is a dish of food". He thanked me and smiled." [Berlin, Pos. 481]

AC16: "[…] it was me who was introvert and I did not try to integrate with my neighbours because of my fears to express myself. When I felt I dare to do that, and although they are old people in pension and they have their own accurate lifestyle, I managed to break this status, and there was no problem with them." [Leipzig, Pos. 115]

Time resources and the tendency to remain in one's own group (see category "Intragroup relations"), but also the perceived sense of supremacy of the Germans were named as further hurdles for intergroup contact. There was a general assumption that intergroup contact may be easier in Berlin (see category "Locality"). As benefits of contact with the receiving community, participants emphasized the impact

on language acquisition as well as getting access to social networks and information. If not in the immediate neighbourhood, participants referred to “language cafés" as a place for facilitating intergroup contact:

AC13: “I would like to tell [name of AC11] that as long as you are not working, there is a Sprach-Café [German for language café], we can go there and integrate with the Germans. The Germans are helpful. They know how the system works. Through this Sprach-Café, they can solve your problem.” [Hamburg, Pos. 147]

Those participants who reported friendships with Germans tended to compare them to their relationships with Syrian friends and came to the conclusion that there was no difference:

AC7: “[…] I know I have a lot of friends and acquaintances and so on, and I have good relations to Germans. Me, for me personally, I feel I have the ability to communicate with a German person easily. Sure, the first factor - that was the first obstacle - was the language. We already talked about this. But I have good strong friendships with Germans. I see them, I see that I can trust them. I am proud honestly of being friends with them. Because people [Germans] I dealt with, they are really like the Syrian friends that I am proud of.” [Berlin, Pos. 459]

Besides specific programs like language cafés, residing in close proximity to receiving community members were reported to have the biggest potential to facilitate relationships [see code “Housing”).

5.5.5. Intergroup feelings

In addition to experiences of threat, a number of other feelings were expressed, though sometimes in a subtle manner. Within the receiving community, the notion of refugees wanting to stay in Germany on a permanent basis stirred feelings of resentment. Indirectly, outrage and opposition were expressed when it came to sharing social benefits with the arriving community:

RC1: “He now has a claim to the basic pension, he has a claim to pensions, payments, five years here he gets the German citizenship, he has a claim to a BASIC PENSION, WHERE MY GRANDPARENTS have worked hard for forty, fifty, sixty years on the FIELD and should he get it because he lives here for five years? -No!” [Berlin, Pos. 248]

In contrast, the arriving communities emphasized their feeling of gratitude and sense of obligation to make a contribution to the society, e.g. in form of paying taxes.

5.5.6. Intragroup relations

Both the receiving and the arriving community described a certain inertia in coming into contact with the outgroup. Within the discussion in Berlin, the receiving community expressed their concerns about the emergence of detached ‘parallel societies’ established by different migrant groups competing among each other to ensure their socio-economic control. The receiving community attempted to substantiate this notion by referring to extreme examples of clan formation among different migrant groups:

RC3: "[…] clan members came in the 70s, 80s, partly also in the 60s and we have them more or less not completely integrated, more or less a small part splits off. What we now see is clan crime. What happened a year or two ago and now is really becoming public in the media that they are contesting their territory and they want a piece of the pie now, that is the problem.” [Berlin, Pos. 41]

The arriving community acknowledged the self-organization of its own community and in contrast to the receiving community, they did not perceive it as self-exclusion but a positive resource, e.g. in terms of seeking out specialists from one’s own group if needed:

AC1: "I tell you something that confirms what you said. If there is a Syrian doctor and a German doctor. I go to the Syrian. I trust him more than the German." [Berlin, Pos. 526]

Both groups discussed discriminating tendencies within their own group. Particularly in the receiving community in Leipzig, there was an open discussion about the formation of right-wing extremist groups, which caused concern.

5.5.7. Behaviour and behavioural intentions

Within the intergroup relations, different behaviours and behavioural intentions were distinguished, which will be described in the following.

Acceptance

For the receiving community, the question of acceptance was dependent on the number of refugees received in Germany, as this quote shows:

RC1: “And I also can't tell you how many Syrian refugees live here now. I think concerning those who stay here already, it would be possible that all of them stay permanently. But as I said we can't take in thirty or forty million, that's just the thing.” [Berlin, Pos. 12]

For the arriving community on the other hand, the issue of acceptance was closely related to two main questions: Who takes the first step and to what extent are refugees really accepted among the receiving community?

AC1: "I believe that a German person accepts you if you accept them.” [Berlin, Pos. 87]

AC3: "[...] we accept the Germans, but Germans do not accept us. A small percentage of Germans accept us [...]" [Berlin, Pos. 93]

There was disagreement on whether acceptance should be conditional or not. Some participants from the receiving as well as the arriving community agreed that it is a prerequisite to speak the German language (see also category “Language”), have a job, pay taxes and adhere to the laws in order to be accepted. The willingness to accept younger people seemed to be stronger, which is mainly due to the economic benefits they bring (see code “Age”).

Other participants argued that acceptance should be unconditional, regardless of one’s religion or culture. Departing from this understanding, it seemed logical that social acceptance should precede legal acceptance. To some of the receiving community members unconditional acceptance would also imply that refugees should not be judged if they chose to stay among themselves and not learn the language. Within the arriving community, the necessity to accept different partnership and family models of the receiving community was discussed. Partnerships and close friendships with the opposite gender were controversially debated.

Help

Participants named several examples of providing as well as receiving help. Providing members of the arriving community with accommodation, e.g. by offering a vacant room in one’s apartment, offering financial aid, volunteering as a tandem for school children, helping to deal with official institutions or bureaucracy and showing support and resistance to deportation were some of the examples for help addressed during the discussion in the three sites.

Controversial pictures on how members of the arriving community perceived help are evident in this quote:

AC2: “[…] And so, how she helped her? She looked with her for a school. And now she is at university for two years. She is studying pharmacy in a city here in Germany. She has a lot of friends at university, all

of them are Germans and a lot of them are guys. Not as boyfriends but male friends, real friends. She tells me: 'Mama, if I face a problem, I just call one of them, and I find them rushing, all rushing - they and their families - to help, to help me!'" [Berlin, Pos. 415]

AC8: "Their feelings are momentary. They sympathize with you. You feel they want to demolish the whole world for you and they make efforts and maybe it is not in their hands but at the same time you feel that their feelings are momentary. You go to an employee, he sympathizes with you, you feel that he is really sad […] but at the end when you go out, he forgets. He forgets that you entered. You left and it is over." [Berlin, Pos. 550]

What this participant may refer to is a strong urge to help when confronted with persons in desperate need for assistance, leading those 'helpers' to make promises without having the resources to offer persistent aid.

Places like language cafés, other organizations or immediate neighbourhoods were named as venues for help and support. Participants of the receiving community discussed how the rather passive parts of the population can get motivated to engage in integration (see category "Responsible actors"). Interestingly, only few of the participants were engaged in such initiatives.

Empathy & taking perspective

During the discussions, participants from both the receiving and the arriving community attempted to take the other group's perspectives and reflect upon the challenges and obstacles that the other group could encounter.

The receiving community expressed empathy for the struggles of learning the German language as well as the physical and psychological strains of flight and integration especially when confronted with the idea of an objectifying asylum process:

RC3: "It's as if I would send you to China and now say: "Learn Chinese!" You will also look at me puzzled. I imagine that's quite difficult. And above all: many people were exhausted because they had been walking and driving from the bottom to top for three, four or five consecutive months and then telling them: "Here, first learn the Basic Law", I find that difficult." [Berlin, Pos. 100]

Those with contact to members of the arriving community showed a higher tendency to take perspective. Participants stressed that every individual faces different challenges and comes with different needs and motives. Participants also tried to understand why members of the arriving community withdraw from society as a reaction to discrimination and racism:

RC5: "And when these people hear that, 'Oh, we're just labelled as social parasites here,' or as rapists or as lazy people, then the motivation to integrate also declines for these people. Because if they think: 'If we are pushed into this corner anyway, why should we integrate ourselves? Why should we approach the majority of the population?' Then we'll just stay among ourselves." [Hamburg, Pos. 145]

Empathy took a different form and mechanism among the arriving community, as it was particularly pronounced in relation to racism. For members of the arriving community, empathy was essential for understanding the discrimination and rejection they are subject to, as the following quote reflects:

AC17: "Even the Nazi person that we think he is a monster. He is not. He is a human being, kind, helpful, and generous, but he has some thoughts, you know!" [Leipzig, Pos. 220]

Rejection, reservation and (self-)exclusion

Within the group discussions, different forms of rejection and (self-)exclusion were highlighted. Members of the Leipzig receiving community addressed the protest and legal appeals against the establishment of asylum housing in their neighbourhood. The sense of rejection was mostly

pronounced when Berlin participants discussed whether refugees should be allowed to stay in Germany permanently and how many more refugees should be permitted to reside in the country. The question on how to deal with refugees who were perceived as not willing to integrate – by sanctions or deportation, was a further source of contestation and rejection. As mentioned above, there was also strong objection to sharing social benefits with members of the arriving community.

Participants from both the receiving and the arriving community reflected on the interplay between rejection and (self-) exclusion:

RC2: "And from the migrants [perspective], you feel this rejection and withdraw. But those who actually want to get into society, but feel this distance and withdraw, find no POSSIBILITY to get involved in society and withdraw only BECAUSE OF THIS." [Berlin, Pos. 157]

RC5: "But if you always just sit at home and do nothing and just read the Bild-newspaper, then you will continue to shut yourself off and don't give integration a chance." [Hamburg, Pos. 102]

AC14: "But this neighbour is really bad and he never came to communicate with us at all. The point from this story is to ask you how I can integrate with such people like that? How can I integrate with Germans like that?" [Hamburg, Pos. 48]

Participants from the arriving community presented their various experiences of rejection and discrimination. Especially Women wearing hijab in public or at work were subject to extensive discrimination and offense (see categories "Racism and discrimination", "Religion" and "Culture"). Other themes on the interrelation of rejection and self(exclusion) that were controversially debated included language and social benefits. In relation to the former, the question was whether or not learning the German language should be interpreted as a form of rejection and self-exclusion by both communities. As for social benefits, discussants agreed that relying on social benefits without any efforts to get into the job market was clearly a sign of withdrawal or rejection of one's social responsibilities.

5.6. Avenues for negotiating integration

This theme focuses mostly on the socio-economic indicators of integration, as seen by the participants of receiving and arriving focus groups. It includes the following broad categories: "barriers to integration", "facilitators of integration", "legal/structural barriers" and "individual, social and economic resources". Category "individual, social and economic resources" includes well-known socio-economic aspects of integration as well as additional resources which are necessary for integration, mainly individual and social resources. Despite this distinction, it is important to note that all of these indicators exist on an individual level as well. A strict line between individual, social and economic resources cannot be drawn.

Overall, this section offers a deeper insight into the issues perceived by both communities as barriers or facilitators to the overall integration process. It begins with a general and abstract overview on the results of the discussion and proceeds to tackle separately each avenue, in which integration is negotiated.

5.6.1. Barriers to integration

The discussion on the barriers of integration was very prominent among both groups and across all sites, which reflects the dominant perception that integration in Germany remains to face multiple barriers and challenges that are yet to be overcome.

For the receiving community, the main barriers can be attributed to the German authorities, whether on a national, federal or local level. There was an outspoken criticism of the governments' integration

policies, especially in the realm of housing, which for many seemed to be perpetuating segregation and the marginalization of refugees:

RC9: “the way Germany is dealing with the refugees now is that they are pushed to the edge of society, in the sense of reception centres and so on. And my experience from [city in southern Germany] shows me that they have such huge barracks there, and they send all the refugees there and uh into small rooms, where five or six people live in them, who are already traumatized by this refugee experience / or by this experience of flight, and that nothing is really done, that they somehow get into the working world, but rather the opposite” [Leipzig, pos. 8]

Within the receiving community’s prevalent understanding of integration as a state managed process (see category “Understandings of ideal integration”), the state was depicted as the main responsible actor for deterring refugees from fully integrating into society.

RC8: “Yes, and that's exactly the problem, I think. Politics doesn't show us the right way at all but STOPS us from being able to integrate properly.” [Hamburg, Position 171]

RC4: “Well, the authorities are constantly stopping them from integrating themselves even more, for example by offering them a job where they earn their own money.” [Berlin, Pos. 9]

The criticism of the state apparatus extended to the asylum-seeking system and the residence regulations, which suppress the genuine efforts of the arriving community to integrate into society. The insecurity and fear triggered by the short residence permits and the uncertainty about being granted a long-term perspective in Germany were identified as factors that can prevent refugees from intensifying their efforts in establishing the foundations for their integration in the country.

RC10: “a prerequisite for integration is that people should not be afraid because of their status and so on, that's very important. Because if they are existentially afraid that they will be deported in six months, why should they simply invest time to build up human relations with ‘Mrs. Müller next door’, when I know they will anyway l be sent back to camps in Greece or somewhere else in six months.” [Leipzig, pos. 120]

Though there was a general tendency among members of the receiving community to frame the barriers of integration as a state driven problem, there were few voices who acknowledged that some of the problems may also lie within the society of the receiving community. Nationalism, self-interest, and the categorization along the lines of migratory background were identified as further societal barriers that could block and slow down the integration process.

RC9: “Yes, and perhaps it makes integration difficult when some Germans then realize "Okay, now refugees are coming here and somehow want to have German citizenship or want to be German” but they themselves have been here much longer and they correspond much more to this typical German image. This is then seen as a danger […] the identity then gets a little bit, yes, in danger. So maybe this national idea is then simply one of the things that are harmful for the integration process somehow, because they should not or do not want to be integrated.” [Leipzig, pos. 41]

RC1: “People have become more selfish, selfish society, you see it when you want to get off the subway, nobody lets you get off, you have to fight your way through to get off. And, um, many people in Berlin too, um, simply don't have the time to do that. So, I prefer to use the time I have for myself than to spend my last two or three hours a day on some other project if I don't have any incentives.” [Berlin, pos. 339]

RC2: “Yes, he is with migratory background, he is without, he is a real German, he is a foreigner. This discussion should, that is if we really want to have cohesion in society, be abolished.” [Berlin, pos. 322]

Discrimination and racism were mentioned on the fringes of the discussion on barriers within the receiving community, but were not framed as salient barriers, but rather as an event or phenomenon that some arriving community members encounter.

Members of the arriving community drew extensively on their own personal experience when discussing the barriers for integration, distinguishing between the individual and institutional nature of such barriers. While institutional barriers referred to the political, legal and institutional dimension including policies and practices, the individual barriers focused on the personal factors such as age, health, educational attainment, language acquisition as well as employment. The role and meaning of each category will be examined separately below.

Within the discussion on the institutional barriers, the focus was on the bureaucratic system and the individual experience with staff members within the respective authorities. Racism and inconsistency in the application and interpretation of law depending on the mood and preference of the public employees were recurring issues in the focus group discussions:

AC6: “sometimes the moodiness of some people in higher positions affect your encounter with them, maybe his mood on Monday is different than Friday afternoon. That can affect the laws that you abide by. And that affects your integration. That is why you will encounter very diverse stories, indeed. If you want to look at individual cases, you will get tired and therefore you cannot generalize […]. Everyone has his own story. There are people who applied for citizenship, and they got it in 6 months. Some applied for citizenship and they got it in three months. They applied for citizenship and the employee went to "Urlaub" and then he went to the boss, and the boss took revenge from him and the request for citizenship took one year and half. And those are moody individual cases.” [Berlin, pos. 659]

AC9: “This is another obstacle. The job centre worker is racist, honestly. So much racist. He is racist and hates the refugees. Can you imagine I want to work and build my future and he tells me go stay home! I do not want to stay home, and he tells me so.” [Hamburg, pos.84]

Though there was no mention of intergroup contact as a barrier for integration among members of the receiving community, many in the arriving community addressed the introversion of the German society and hence their lack of access to members of the receiving community as a main problem (see also category “Attitudes and perceptions of the outgroup”), which indicates that social network and intragroup contact is a salient component of the arriving community’s understanding of integration (see also category “Understandings of ideal integration”).

AC18: “Many people are not happy in Germany and they want to go back to their homelands. Personally, one difficulty of integration with the Germans that they are introvert people. They are not willing in general to get to know new people. There are few exceptions but in general they do not like to get to know new people. They have their own world in which they live.” [Leipzig, pos. 345]

5.6.2. Facilitators to integration

The content of the discussion displayed an interdependent relationship between the codes on facilitators and barriers to integration-. It is important, however, to note that the discussion on the facilitators was far less dense than that on the barriers and was mainly dominated by testimonies and statements of members of the arriving community who highlighted some of the factors they personally considered as conducive to the overall integration process. Language was by far the most underlined issue; while the lack of language was perceived as a major obstacle, a strong command of the German language was seen as a substantial facilitator that could be the key for obtaining a job and facilitating a good life in Germany (see also code “Language”). Other issues included age, knowledge about law and cooperative public employees in the authorities, all of which will be further discussed below.

Apart from the classical parameters of integration such as age and language, there was a strong emphasis on the social and sport activities such as football as an avenue for encounters and social interaction, especially among children.

RC10: “I experienced initiatives with school children, sports competitions with mixed teams and that worked out quite cool […] they are kids of ten or eleven years old and they were like ... after ten minutes friends because they were the same team. Of course there was always the normal stress between them when children play football [laughs], but in the end they were like that [friends]. And despite that many of the refugee children could not speak good German, they played together and they could communicate somehow. Most of them had already been to schools, they were ... mostly from Syria and they knew very little German, but they could somehow communicate together. And that / Well I thought it was great, like these soccer tournaments with mixed teams. And maybe do more of those things where people are, uh ... in such a mixed constellation, not only in sports, but maybe in other things, theatre, I don't know. So music, maybe make music. That kind of thing. It might bring people closer together.” [Leipzig, pos. 133]

For the older generation, a member of the receiving community in Leipzig, which was part of the former GDR (East Germany), saw the history of displacement of many Germans as a possible resource for creating bridges and fostering mutual understanding. Activities revolving around similar issues were hence considered an opportunity to encourage the older generation which had no prior contact with recent refugees to meet some of them.

RC11: “especially for older people I thought that was good - um, sharing experiences of displacement. So just here in the new federal states, as they are still called, people who fled the GDR met with refugees and talked about their experiences of flight and many, many parallel feelings at least came up. Or even older people who were, uh, practically driven out of the old German territories after the Second World War. And I thought that was a very, very good thing for people who - just here in this corner - have no experience at all with the fact that people from other cultures come here because it was never the case. Um, and that there was a lot of understanding for each other / also just FROM refugees FOR the fears of older, uh, German people” [Leipzig, pos. 136]

5.6.3. Legal and institutional barriers

This theme covers the barriers inherent in the legal and institutional bodies. They incorporate laws, policies and practices implemented by public agents.

In general, it is important to state that receiving community members criticized the diversity of legal and institutional regulations and their enforcement in the different German states. Arriving community members did not explicitly address these differences. Yet, their anticipations of a better situation for arriving community members living in Berlin compared to the other two states and the discussion on the differences in the certificate recognition mechanisms among federal states indicate that members of the arriving community are to a certain extent aware of the inconsistent legal realities in different localities in Germany (see category “Locality”).

Family separation

There was a brief reference by members of the receiving community to family separation as a potential barrier to integration. Yet, their contribution to this topic was in general rather limited consisting of stories they heard from third parties, as illustrated in the following quote: *RC4: “She told me a lot about the problem that he has been working here for two years as a volunteer but not really making progress and his wife can't relocate to him.” [Berlin, Pos. 27]*

It does not come as a surprise that the nature of the discussion on family separation among members of the arriving community was rather emotional in nature and driven by their own biography, as illustrated in these statements:

AC19: "I am a mother, I taught for 24 years in Syria. My family is so far displaced. We were 5, a mother, a father and 3 children. Every part of the family is in somewhere else. I have only one child here. My husband lives in Iraq. I have one child in [city x in Germany], the other one is in [city y in Germany]." [Hamburg, Pos. 135]

AC16:"We are all having difficult circumstances, therefore, we came here. There is a war. Everyone has around 4 to 5 dead persons in their family at least. All my family for instance are displaced. I live here in Germany and I came alone. I only have my cousin in Berlin. In all Germany I have no brothers, no relatives, nothing." [Hamburg, Pos. 105]

Such stories seem to be present in the memory and consciousness of the majority of refugees from Syria, as they remain to be separated from their families and relatives due to the strict family reunification regulations. For many, family separation and its subsequent psychological impact seem to be a burden that makes integration for many difficult, hindering a full sense of belonging in Germany.

AC8: "For sure integration is hard to be honest. A human still feels homesick. There is something that makes him long for his family, because we did not all come together here. Some are in Sweden. Some in the Western and some in the Eastern part. Some in Poland. And that is the life of all Syrians now" [Berlin, Pos. 286]

Despite the destabilizing impact of family separation on members of the arriving community, there is a strong sense of determination not to surrender to this pain and loss, but rather to resist it and move on with the hope that one day they will be reunified with their beloved ones.

AC5: "However, I have to move on, to study, to work and to write the C1[13]. Every day I cry for my children. Inshallah I have a strong belief in Allah that we will all get together one day again." [Hamburg, Pos. 135]

AC2: "As I told you, all of us have circumstances. One should not give up and not say I have a difficult circumstance; my family is under bombs. I come from Affrin. All my family in Affrin have been displaced due to the bombs and all those things. That did not influence me. I took my own way." [Hamburg, Pos. 107]

Recognition of certificates

The discussion on the recognition of certificates was limited to members of the arriving community in Hamburg. This code was particularly connected to the discussion on work. The group in Hamburg consisted mainly of highly qualified persons, who were not able to have their certificates recognized and hence access jobs in their fields of specialization. Among these were doctors, teachers and administrators, who perceived this issue as a major barrier to any genuine integration. The discussion was dominated by a strong feeling of frustration and a strong urge to vent their anger as a coping strategy. Despite the attempts by the moderator to address other issues and questions, participants kept returning to this topic, which reflects the extent of burden this issue inflicted on them. For them, a rejection of their certificates meant a loss of many years of hard work and investment and a necessity to start again from scratch, which for many was not even a viable option:

13 C1 refers to the standardized assessment of language proficiency level developed by the "Gemeinsamer Europäischer Referenzrahmen für Sprachen". Levels range from A1 up to C2. Level C1 for instance indicates language competencies that include technical language. B2 level, which is the official requirement to start an apprenticeship, indicates language skills sufficient for holding free conversations (see also https://www.europaeischer-referenzrahmen.de/).

AC14: “My Problem is that I could not get it [the recognition of my certificate] although I have worked in Syria for 20 years. I have applied and I finished the B2 and then applied at the Gesundheitsbehörde [authorities for health] and they asked me to bring documents from my university in Syria. I brought those documents. They asked me to bring another document from Syria to show where I worked there, in which centre, in which hospital. I managed to bring these documents as well. However, they said no, I am not entitled to work" [Hamburg, Pos. 25]

AC15: “I have studied 5 years in Syria, here the same study is done in three years, so in Syria I studied 2 extra years. I wanted to equalize the certificate, they said I have to go back again to the first year. How come and I have studied already 5 years!” [Hamburg, pos. 53]

RC13: "How can all these years simply go away! Haram [such a pity]!" [Hamburg, Pos. 54]

Participants displayed different coping strategies with this hurdle. While some struggled with the idea of starting a new field of studies because of their age and responsibilities, others were willing to leave the past behind and find a new specialization and saw it even as an opportunity to finally change their specialization:

AC10: “Here in Germany the person should have at least the minimum level. If they do not recognize my certificates, I will not give up and do nothing. I will try to start something else, something new, even if it is out of my field. In my case it is better than saying I am studying 7 years not even 4 years and they do not recognize my degree. I left geology behind and now I will start the third year of nursing. Totally different specialization for me but I am really satisfied […]” [Hamburg, Pos. 80]

AC12: “Also, I do not have any papers to prove my work as an administrator. But I have no problem, I want to change my Field anyway.” [Hamburg, Pos. 226]

Legal status for residence

Members of both the receiving and the arriving communities referred to the long asylum-seeking process and the feelings of marginalization and insecurity resulting from refugee´s status as factors that amplify the barriers for integration.

RC4: “The German state doesn't give them the right to get work on their own. They are then allowed to work somewhere as volunteers for two years, but they are not allowed to build their own lives somewhere” [Berlin, pos.7]

AC7: “[…] but I see till now for example, there are a lot of big obstacles for integration. Integration has not been easy. For example, we are talking as Syrians who came here, I know some people who spent one year or two without a residence permission, without work permission, and they are just waiting for a respond from bureaucracy. This affected the process of integration. The bureaucracy existing in Germany influenced integration in a negative way. A very big influence.” [Berlin, pos. 552]

It was noticeable that there was a conflation among members of the receiving community between the legal status of recognized Syrian refugees and other unrecognized protection status. For instance, suspension of deportation is rarely guaranteed to protections seeker migrating from Syria.

While some acknowledged and appreciated the progress in processing asylum applications, others perceived it to be too long and argued for the importance of a faster procedure that does not exceed the period of three months.

RC1: “Well, it would also be nice if the asylum application would be decided in three months. And then he would know whether he has asylum status or not. Three months asylum, done.” [Berlin, Pos. 321]

The rationale for arguing for more secure and long-term permits is not always driven by a humanitarian approach. For one member of the receiving community, it was rather a question of cost benefit and a return to investment as described in this quote:

RC3: “So, a lot of people think that in three or four years, when it is all supposed to be over down there [in Syria], which I don't think it will be, they're all going to leave. It is not like that. They can then choose whether they go down or stay here. It would be stupid, first we try to put a lot of money into it and try to integrate them and then we say like, um, 'Bye'.” [Berlin, Pos. 220]

Governmental and NGO services

As explained earlier when presenting the results of FGDs on barriers, governmental services and bureaucracies were perceived by both groups as major barriers for integration. Members of the arriving community complained about racism, inconsistency in the application of law and recklessness when dealing with the authorities. Such hurdles with authorities have become a constant struggle in their daily lives:

AC4: “There are obstacles, but we already got used to it. Just like a lizard. As brother [NAME 7] mentioned, there is bureaucracy, delay of documents, disturbance with documents, but we got used to it. It became a part of our daily life.” [Berlin, pos. 578]

The most pronounced issue was, however, the inconsistency of employees’ decision and treatment of members of the receiving community. Members identified different factors that could influence the public employees’ attitude and behaviour, which included language and educational background:

AC9: “They deal with you according to your mentality and the knowledge you have, if you understand the language or not. This is how they deal with you, according to your language skills and the capacity of understanding.”

AC11: “They deal with you according to your limit of knowledge whether you know the thing is your right or not!” [Hamburg, pos. 283-284].

Rule of law, rights and entitlements

The stance of members of the arriving community towards law and the rule of law was ambiguous to a certain extent. On one hand, there was an outspoken criticism of German law in terms of its arbitrary interpretation and implementation as well as its intrusion into family life in terms of how to raise children and what practices to apply:

AC11: "There are things that you are obliged to do, but there are other things that you are not obligated to do. Therefore, there is a difference between integration and cohabitation with the society. For instance, we refuse 80% of the German family laws."

AC14: "Yes we refuse them, right" [Hamburg, pos. 157-158]

AC11: “The Law in Germany is a very rubbery law”

AC9: “Exactly!”

AC11: “If you read the terms and conditions of the job centre, you will find that every single rule has its exception.”

AC9: “Exactly”

AC11: “It says in that case this thing happens. But the agent has its space to interpret the situation according to what he sees.”

AC14: “[Sigh], the agent.”

AC11: “Therefore, the agent may give you something that is not your right or gives you something extra, but if the thig is your right, the agent cannot deprive it from you.” [Hamburg, pos. 271-277].

AC19: "This is what I am telling you! here the law protects you. There the law is against you! Here is a state of law! [Leipzig, pos. 343]

On the other hand, there was a strong sense of appreciation of the rule of law in Germany. The notion that members of the arriving community can claim their rights when subject to injustice by filing complaints and resorting to the judiciary seemed to be a vital resource for empowerment. There was, hence, a strong emphasis on the importance of acquiring knowledge about law entitlements as a way to fight discrimination.

AC17: “Do not give up your rights or anything you believe it is your right. This is the difference - as she said- between our society and the society here. If you think that the thing is your right, you will take it despite their refusal. If it is not your right, you will not take it. May be the agent helps you to get something that is not your right, if the agent - as AC10 said- likes you or wants to help you and makes it easy for you. He may give you a privilege than the others. However, he cannot deprive you from a thing that is your right.” [Hamburg, pos. 267]

AC16: “We do not understand all laws, but we have to work on ourselves, to try, to search [...]” [Leipzig, pos. 211]

The rule of law was discussed to a lesser extent among members of the receiving community and took a different trajectory. In the opinion of some members, law abidance was a fundamental requirement for refugees to stay in Germany. It was argued that their stay should be made conditional on the extent they adhere to law, an issue which seemed far more important than language and work, as articulated by the following member of the receiving community in Leipzig:

RC10: “So they can still exist in the country as long as they adhere to the laws” [Leipzig, Pos. 19]

There was also fear that the presence of members of the arriving community will jeopardize some of the social laws in Germany as part of the attempt to adapt to the customs they bring with them to Germany as could be the case with polygamy:

RC3: “polygamy was previously more or less forbidden in Germany and now it is tolerated for the sake of the children’s well-being. And I find THAT relatively HARD, that laws are being overridden only for the well-being of the child.”

RC2: “Well, polygamy is not allowed here in marriage, but a man can have three, four, five, six girlfriends, there is no law against that [laughs] and with every girlfriend you can have children!”

RC3: “But down there it is allowed to have so many wives, as long as you can feed them.”

RC2: “...and that you married her...”

RC3: “Right! “

RC2: “Probably not through civil law, but through Sharia or what? Inc.”

RC3: “In any case, the office said that they recognize marriage in this way and finance the journey from woman to woman and I think that's pretty hard”

RC2: “if they approve, that is of course HARD” [Berlin, pos. 71-78]

5.6.4. Individual, social and economic resources[14]

This theme focuses on individual characteristics, social as well as socio-economic factors that have been identified as relevant resources in facilitating or blocking integration.

Education

Schools were seen as a social resource as it constituted an avenue for establishing social relations between both communities This notion was a recurring issue in the discussion of the receiving community which considered it to be particularly important for the older generation that has little contact to members of the receiving community. Through their own children and the interaction with school, parents can get in contact with their children´s friends or even meet other parents after school.

The school system was discussed in a positive light in the FGDs. One favoured initiative on both sides was the provision of welcome classes at schools, where children from Syria and other countries had the opportunity to learn their mother tongue, a measure which was perceived as important for fostering integration.

RC3: “[T]here is a school "Gymnasium" that offers Arabic language classes. I was shocked and asked the teacher "Arabic classes?" she said "yes" and I asked her about the reason. She said, they saw that there are a lot of refugees and so on and she has worked in this school and they started offering Arabic classes.” [Berlin, pos. 541]

RC7: “So what I would like to have in terms of children and school, not only for refugees but for foreign children in general, that uh, so that there is/ it is not so well implemented yet, the school could offer classes in their language of origin. And that / In Berlin, I think it is quite common, in Hamburg a few schools do something like that. I think that plays a strong role, too for the culture of welcoming, […] and I think that could also contribute to a good integration.” [Hamburg, pos. 204]

One of the issues addressed by the receiving community in relation to schools is the need to sensitize children for topics like racism and discrimination. This is how educational institutions could nurture tolerance and acceptance among children and ensure that the next generation is more aware of these dynamics and hence less susceptible to discriminatory and racist attitudes:

RC7: “Well, I had the idea, I think you could teach something like racism [inc.] in school or more about colonialism, the history of colonialism. So that the children learn from a very young age, it's bad. And then you have the hope that the children do not grow up as prejudiced as some of them do now.” [Hamburg, pos. 82]

Integration courses

The issue of integration and languages courses was mostly relevant to members of the arriving community in Hamburg. In this discussion, participants discussed the importance of tailoring language courses to the professional fields and proposed to learn the language during a training instead of requesting B1 level prior to the training:

AC13: “This is what it should be. They should distribute us according to our professions. The engineers go to the site projects; the doctors go to the hospitals. But now you put us all together in one course, how can they?!” [Hamburg, Pos. 184]

This is a special dilemma for many since the recognition exams of academic or professional trainings, as a medical doctor, are held in German language. On a more basic level, attending the integration course in German language was criticized as inefficient, too. ´

14 The code “macroeconomic situation” was omitted because of lack of saturation in the German field study.

There were also complaints about racist encounters and content in language courses, as one member of the arriving community clearly described:

AC14: “In the B2 language course, the teacher was telling us that the refugees are lazy and they just take the money from German tax payers.” [Hamburg, Pos. 126]

Receiving community participants in Berlin FGD focused on how to organize and time compulsory language and integration courses to be most efficient and effective. Leipzig receiving community participants emphasized instead that attendance should be rather on a voluntary basis.

Housing

Neighbourhoods offered members of the arriving community the opportunity to get in contact with other members of the receiving community. The quality of these experiences seemed, however, to vary. While some referred to positive experiences with their neighbours, others reported exclusionary and racist encounters that extended to intended attempts by their neighbours to have them expelled from the building.

AC6: “Once my German neighbour knocked on my door, he knocked on my door saying that he found - we heated with coal - He told me that he found a very good offer on coal and he bought it for us and carried it on his shoulder and he is 60 years old! Bringing coal and carrying it to me. My other neighbour, I just knocked on his door and said that I had a problem with my toilet. He brought his tools and lay on the ground of the bathroom and started fixing it. Another neighbour saw me having a problem with my bike. He told me to just give him the key. He spent three hours repairing my bike and then he knocked on my door telling me to go out and that my bike was ready. So, we, we start with a smile.” [Berlin, pos.485]

AC14: “I live in the second floor and I have 2 neighbours, in the first floor there is a German family, a man and his wife and his daughter; on the other side there is a German woman who lives alone. This woman is so nice. When we arrived, she came to get to know us and I used to invite her. I want really to integrate and she loved to come and visit me. From time to time, she comes and we talk. She was helping as well my kids to find jobs in the beginning. On the other side, I cannot find a word that describes the other guy neighbour. […] I could not respond back for what he says. one time, two time, three time. When I learned the language and I responded to him when he came, he started to write complaints to the housing company, until we received a warning from the housing company that they will kick us of the building if they receive a further complaint. Can you imagine! look, both are Germans living with me, the woman is really wonderful. The man is really bad.” [Hamburg, pos.32]

Similar images of rejection and opposition by neighbourhood residents to having refugees living in their neighbourhood were addressed throughout the discussion among members of the receiving community. A further addressed manifestation for racism in the realm of housing was the recurring incidences of landlords renting their places exclusively to Germans and rejecting the application of other foreigners and refugees (see also category “Racism and discrimination”). Fenced buildings, camps and barracks were some of the terms used to describe the reception centres of refugees and asylum seekers, all of which allude to the isolation and segregation of refugees and asylum seekers.

RC12: “When they moved in and the people understood that there was nothing they could do about it, so it was probably just a protest, where they said "Oh come on, now let's try to get them out of there", but when they moved in, that was nothing.” [Leipzig, pos.48]

RC5: “And also, regarding apartment search for example, there it is often the case that many end up in Hamm or Harburg, I don’t know. So personally, my feeling is that much more should be done about this subconscious hidden discrimination. And that everyone has the same chances, even if one now, I would say, ...”

RC7: But I think it's a good idea in itself but I've read so many times somewhere, 'The apartment is only rented to the Germans' or something like that." [Hamburg, pos.191]

There was a recognition by the receiving community for the need of some sort of action to end the discriminatory and exclusive practices in the realm of housing. One of the proposed suggestions was based on the introduction of affirmative action in terms of quotas to ensure that landlords do not exclusively rent to Germans, as depicted in this conversation in Hamburg:

RC5: "Yes, yes, I think it's difficult to implement but there has also been a women's quota for a few decades or even years now for example in the Bundestag where 30% have to be women or something like that. Well, women's quota. […] Well. I don't want to create a bureaucratic monster but you could pay attention for example when you have ten apartments in one house, for example, um ... and in these ten apartments live only Müller, Meier or, uh no idea, Schmidt, then you know: Okay, something's wrong. Perhaps the city could say: "Okay, Mr. Landlord Whatever, I'd like to ask you to …uh, with a surname of a refugee..." [Hamburg, pos. 195]

Work

Employment was a central theme in the discussions among members of the arriving community who identified access to the labour market as one of the most fundamental aspects for a successful integration and emphasized that integration on an individual level will remain incomplete as long as refugees are unemployed:

AC2: "And I say that in order for integration to function, work is necessary" [Berlin, position 294]

AC14: "But how can we integrate and they do not allow us to work! My husband for instance is a chemical engineer. He finished the B2 and thanks to Allah, he found a job. My language was better than his. But after he started working, now his language is perfect!" [Hamburg, position 294]

As the last quote illustrates, work does not only constitute an important economic resource, but also a vital individual and social resource. Gaining a foothold in the labour market helps improving one's command of the German language as work facilitates social interactions with Germans and offers members of the arriving community an opportunity to practice their language on a regular basis. The benefit of work goes far beyond material and monetary benefits and extends to the individual's psychological wellbeing and feelings of personal independence:

AC9: "Psychologically, work makes one feels good".

AC14: "Yes sure, the person feels good psychologically, it gives a feeling of independence." [Hamburg, pos. 118-119].

It became evident throughout the discussion that being a diligent worker is part of the self-perception of being Syrian, a notion which is best exemplified in the following two statements:

AC9: "Work is life. The Syrian people are one of the most active peoples. Everyone wants to work, no one wants to sit " [Hamburg, pos. 120]

AC14: "I have a lot of Syrian friends, who are engineers […] even Germans prefer to hire a Syrian rather than a German, because a Syrian is diligent at his work" [Berlin, pos. 525]

These quotes clearly illustrate that having a job is part of the arriving community's social identity and self-image (see also category "Self-perception of one's own group"). Involuntary unemployment is threatening this identity and hence negatively affecting the members' feeling of self-worthiness and subjective wellbeing.

AC14: “It also has a positive psychological impact when the person ends the dependency on the job centre. We have ended this dependency two years ago, and now we are really feeling fine. Even the Germans' view to us is different now, because now we are working and not taking the money from the taxes they pay. Therefore, the person should try hard to find a job.” [Hamburg, pos. 117]

A further important notion embedded in the last quote is the idea of how employment status affects Germans’ perception of Syrian refugees. In their view, being employed elevates them as individuals to a higher social status that meets the expectations and norms of Germans (see also category “Attitudes and perceptions of the outgroup”). The aspiration to ensure social acceptance and improve their “image” among Germans is embodied in their strong sense of self-obligation to thank the Germans for their efforts and pay them back by standing on their own feet, working and paying taxes.

AC10: “We have to work and participate in the society. We should thank the Germans as well for the chances they gave us because they hosted us. Arab countries like Saudi Arabia did not even receive us and in other countries refugees have lots of problems. And here in Germany they hosted us. Therefore, we have to work" [Hamburg, pos. 12]

AC2: “We have to work to make Germans feel that they [Germans] helped us and that we now can stand on our own feet and thank them. They [Refugees] say thank you when they work and prove themselves. In fact, there are a lot of Syrians who worked and proved themselves.” [Berlin, pos. 508]

While members of the arriving community are keen to find a job and work, the problem of over-qualification is a problem. Due to language barriers and rejection of their certificates and work experience in Syria, members of the arriving community receive job offers that are far below their qualification level, as illustrated by this participant who was a professor in Syria:

AC1: “In my work in Syria, I was the king of the day. The only job I get offered here is to clean toilets.” [Berlin, pos. 632]

A person trained as a doctor in Syria shared a similar experience:

RC14: “I mean I tried to go to the organizations and they welcomed me to work with them but at the end they just offered me to work in Buffet.” [Hamburg, pos. 37]

Participants have also complained about structural racism that has impaired their chances to access jobs. This was particularly pronounced among women wearing hijab who were rejected job opportunities for the sheer act of wearing the scarf.

AC3: “The employer told me, if you tell me now that you want to take off the hijab, I will let you sign the contract. I told him that it was a laboratory, and everyone is supposed to cover their hair or to have at least very short hair. He told me that it was his problem with hijab and that he had employed a Syrian woman who took off her hijab. I told him that that is she and that is me, I am not going to take off the hijab. We discussed for a long time and at the end he told me that I had two days’ time to think.” [Berlin, pos. 93]

Within the discussion among the receiving community about who is considered to be integrated in Germany and who is not, the dimension of language and work were strongly emphasized. The onus is on members of the arriving community who are expected to learn the language and gain a foot in the labour market to prove that they are integrated in the society.

RC3: “So, for me, above all, language is the key to integration. You first learn the language of the country. Then, integrated also means that I have integrated myself on the job market, maybe an apprenticeship, or a job or even studies, of course. For me, these are two important aspects for me that are related to integration.” [Berlin, pos.71]

One member of the receiving community felt deceived by the German politics because they made them believe that refugees arriving to Germany are highly qualified and can be easily integrated in the labour market. Yet, he explained that their presence has become a reality that one should accept and make use of, but in return Germany should stop labour migration from other countries and focus on integrating the refugees present at the moment.

RC3: “I think Germany has missed the chance, because you hear in the whole media that workers, care workers are required everywhere, and as was already stated, the average age of refugees is 25 or 26 years. And with 25,26 you're in a good position and [inc.] you can work for twenty or thirty years. And, um, they haven't done so much to integrate them into these professions yet. And one could actually imagine, that more should happen from Germany's side and not to take from Spain or Greece, um, it's not refugees, actually EU members, but to recruit even more people from these countries so that they can work here. We have enough manpower, and we simply have to take the opportunity to use it with the people who have just come here. Even if they are not those very highly qualified dentists and lawyers, which Mrs. Merkel has led us to believe.” [Berlin, pos. 216]

Health and psychological wellbeing

Members of the arriving community have noted that unemployment and family separation accompanied by their experience of war and displacement had implications on their mental health, which in turn impeded their integration process in Germany. Such implications were discussed in more detail in previous sections on employment and family separation.

Images of traumatized refugees were occasionally described by the receiving community when embarking on the debate on integration. Some members argued of the importance of receiving psychological support and therapy to be able to lead a normal life. Yet, one member was concerned that some members of the arriving community will be hesitant to seek help as they are not acquainted with the culture of psychotherapy:

RC11: “You can talk about psychological help here in Germany these days, you can talk about it, even if you do psychotherapy or something like that, you can deal with it more openly. But I have made the experience and a refugee told me that in Syria it's not like that, so with uh ... psychological help. This awareness that there is such a thing as psychological illness or psychological trauma in general.” [Leipzig, Pos.141]

Age

The issue of age arose many times in relation to language and work and in the discussion on facilitators and barriers. There was a consensus among both groups that younger people have an advantage over older people in learning the language and finding a job.

AC12: “I believe that old people are having unfair chances to communicate and integrate with the Germans than the younger ones. I can see the youth can integrate and communicate much more with the society and that reflects their progress in the society. The parents are having unfair chances to do so because they are always busy with the family issues and sometimes they are too shy to go and communicate with the Germans.” [Hamburg, pos. 291]

RC10: “you, younger people have a structural advantage of being better integrated when you come here. It's easier with the language, you learn all the norms, how to behave. And the older you are, that's one of the obstacles to being integrated. Or yes... accepted. Sometimes even the younger ones are not accepted, but yes ... that's another question” [Leipzig, 34]

This structural advantage increases the chances of younger members of the arriving community to be accepted by Germans, leaving older people at the margins of the society. This in turn poses the question

of whether older people who are no longer able to learn the language and work are capable of integrating and being part of the German society:

RC11: “And that's why I ask myself whether language is really so important, because that's what you meant with the example of the elderly people, who are perhaps no longer able to learn the language, and yet they can still be part of society, because they are so well integrated in the ... Yes, they can't hurt anybody, that's alright.” [Leipzig, pos. 99]

5.7. Power, cultural, social and geographical struggles and rapprochements

The codes under this theme represent different societal and institutionalized organizing principles that operate on different levels in the integration process in a defined locality. They relate to power dynamics and their manifestation in negotiating hegemony, e.g. over local cultural and/or religious practices and symbols. The underlying question is who has the upper hand to define who is “integrated” and what are the criteria to qualify as such.

5.7.1. Racism and discrimination

Racism and discrimination appeared in experience reports, perception of others and directly in the discussion between participants. Hesitation to openly address racism and discrimination were identified among both the receiving and arriving communities. This implies that the negative influence and the extent of racism and discrimination go far beyond what could be captured in the contributions of the participants.

On a structural level, racism and discrimination became evident in institutional processes, interactions with institutional officers and in relation to the question on how social resources should be distributed. In almost all realms of everyday life, members of the arriving community reported experiences of racism. This has been depicted in detail in previous sections (see category “Individual, social and economic resources”).

When reflecting upon racism in their own community, there was a general tendency among members of the receiving community to point fingers at others and distance oneself from any racist thoughts, impulses or behaviours, demonstrating a firm conviction that they themselves are immune against any kind of racism. This form of plausible deniability was clearly demonstrated in the firm rejection to perceive anxiety felt towards the “other” as a form of racism:

RC8: “I also noticed that especially the older generation has a lot of problems with people from other countries, people from South Europe and so on. So I believe that before my time/ also many in my family are still very Nazi and I think you have to open their eyes […]” [Hamburg, Pos. 79]

RC1: “[…] I say it and I am also a bit afraid that something will HAPPEN! And that I open my mouth and practically say so much, and practically provoke them. So I'm not racist, but it's already an uneasiness and for me it really feels like they have become more. When you come into this Schlesisches Tor station, four people are inside the station, it stinks, it always stinks of cannabis anyway. […] ” [Berlin, Pos. 209]

Members of the receiving community without migratory background seemed to be oblivious to how racism and discrimination could impair the integration process. Though those with migratory background seemed to be more conscious of its existence and implication, especially in the realm of housing, racism was not addressed by the majority as a structural barrier:

RC10: “So they have a normal life, but sometimes of course they encounter racist problems or expressions of people ...” [Leipzig, pos.7]

Everyday racism in the perception of some members of the receiving community seemed even to hardly exist and if it did, then it didn't affect refugees deeply or constitute a tangible obstacle, as expressed in the own words of one of the receiving community members:

RC4: "they were always just upset that the authorities could not continue their integration. And other things, in Berlin nobody ever told me that they somehow got in contact with Nazis or racist things, they didn't get upset about that. There were only restrictions, that was the only thing." [Berlin, pos. 299]

Racism and discrimination were manifested in the sense of supremacy inherent in the language and attitudes of some members of the receiving community. Derogatory terms like "*people down there" [RC3, Berlin, Pos. 95]* reflected this contempt. Being subject to this type of subtle racism has been addressed within the FGD among members of the arriving community. In some moments of the discussion among the receiving community, the flow of thoughts and specific interactions suggested pre-reflective racist and discriminatory attitudes that are not part of the individual conscious experience and intentions. For instance, negative generalizations seemed to evoke feelings of shame in front of another participant with migratory background as depicted in the following dialogue:

RC3: "If you follow some of the news now, the problem is that Syrian and Afghan refugees are now forming clans and are fighting over things. And see there the/ So you also come/ So where do you come from/ May I ask you?" [turns to P2]

RC2: "I come from Turkey originally."

RC3: "Ok, but in the end also clan members came in the 70s, 80s, partly also in the 60s […]." [Berlin, Pos. 39-41]

In public space, nonverbal behaviour, symbols, short utterances and gestures can be loaded with racism and rejection as revealed in this report about a day trip with a group of Syrian teenagers:

RC10: "And the guy looked like ... I was afraid and then we were in Dresden main station to change trains and had such intense looks from the police, but thank God there were no controls and ... Then we went to Sächsische Schweiz and they wanted to get ice cream at an ice cream shop and one of them said, she led the group 'We can get ice cream here after the round' and then we heard people saying loudly 'No, better not! Oh my God' and so on, comments like 'they shouldn't come in' and then she said for the people 'Well then you stay outside and whoever wants ice cream can go with [female name]' and then um ... nobody went with [female name] […]' [Leipzig, Pos. 74]

Several experiences of open rejection, verbal and physical attacks were described by participants from the arriving community, especially by women wearing Hijab:

AC7: "She had to take off the hijab because it is a small town, Berlin is a big city. She had to take her hijab off because she was harassed. When she gets in the bus, there was harassment, when she takes any mean of transportation, there was harassment, on the street too. That was abnormal. Extreme harassment. It goes so far that someone may just take off your scarf from your head. So she was forced to take off the scarf to get rid of those harassments. […]" [Berlin, Pos. 170].

There was a debate on whether the population of Leipzig is more racist than other parts of the German population (see also category "Locality").

Participants from the arriving community relativized and contested their own accounts of experienced racism in Germany by referring to the racism within their own Syrian society, pleading others to try to understand and take perspective of the so-called "racists".

AC9: "Look how it works then! It means it is just racism what they did to him first."

AC14: "I think the word racism is not nice!"

AC9: "No it is nice, why not. There are really racist people. The difficulties they show against the refugees come from the old Russians who hate the refugees. I pray to god that we will not become like them in the future." [Hamburg, Pos. 241-243]

5.7.2. Culture

Both participants from the receiving and arriving community made claims of cultural difference that remained rather unspecific by stating that different “ideas”, “opinions”, “expectations”, “customs”, “traditions” and “work ethics” would exist. From this perspective, participants compared the different “cultures” and argued for mutual respect and understanding:

RC4: “That is to say, the Syrians come here into a completely new culture and must come to grips with it, with the fact that things are allowed which were forbidden before.” [Berlin, Pos. 89]

AC18: "Concerning the traditions and customs topic, for sure the Germans have their own customs and traditions. But when it comes to hospitality and this issue, you cannot compare that to our traditions and customs!” [Leipzig, Pos. 133]

The participants from the arriving community expressed pride in ‘Syrian culture’ which entailed the claim to be more hospitable than the German culture. Participants argued that one should strive to preserve the ancient and refined Syrian customs, which were perceived as enrichment to Germany (see also category “Future effects”):

AC1: “[…] First of all, introducing a new culture. The culture of our countries is 6000 years old. As we came to Germany, we brought our culture which is 6000 years old. This culture was built over long periods of time and will be reflected through our social behaviour with Germans. And the Germans will be influenced by our way of thinking and how we treat them.” [Berlin, Pos. 498]

Members of the receiving community referred to polygamous marriages as an area with not only potential for transcultural conflicts, but also a threat in terms of overriding German law. The fact that cultural practices and believes are not inscribed into law stirred fear among participants, who wished an active role by the state to protect their culture. On a similar note, receiving community participants highlighted German everyday culture and proposed tandems to educate members of the arriving community about these practices and everyday behaviour:

RC10: “[…] and comes with you when shopping with your back bag and deposit bottles [laughing], those little things that define everyday life in Germany. So that would be cool, someone to say: "No, you don't do things like that in the tram!" Or something like that.” [Leipzig, Pos. 108]

Members of the arriving community, on the other hand, were concerned about the role of law in undermining and limiting their cultural practices, especially in terms of family norms.

Both communities referred to the essential role of food as central cultural practice and means of transcultural encounter and exchange:

AC6: “[…] They started to know our Syrian dishes, the Syrian culture and they started to know who we are […]” [Berlin, Pos. 527]

In contrast to the rather static concept of culture prevalent in the discussions, a reference to the dynamic nature of culture was also made:

AC1: “[…] This culture is not a fingerprint. Thus, this culture changes. And Social relationships change and your opinions that you have today, we do not know how they change tomorrow, or after one week or after 16 years, how much it changes. And so is society. There is no society fossilized culturally. It is always going forward, otherwise it goes extinct. It accommodates to cultural changes and pushes

culture forward. You heard this today from your father, I am afraid, after two years, we will find you swimming in Bikini." [Berlin, Pos. 410]

5.7.3. Religion

Religion and especially the experience of religious discrimination were prominent themes among members of the arriving community in the Berlin FGD, whereas participants from the receiving community hardly made any reference to this topic.

Hijab or women's clothing emerged as a central field of conflict and aggressive negotiations. Female Muslim participants shared their recurrent experiences of rejection and discrimination due to wearing Hijab in public space, especially in the field of labour market. This has been already discussed in previous sections (see code "Work").

The need to respect other's religion as a central part of integration was challenged by the view that Muslim faith is exclusive to other religions and thus fostering segregation. A contrary position emphasized how faith belongs to the private sphere without any greater social significance. The contradiction between the need to respect individual faith and accept common social rules is reflected in the following quote from the receiving community discussion:

RC8: "[…] that many Germans have something against them saying that if you cover yourself here, then it seems a bit strange to us and also yes, that one feels attacked by it and I think, one must also accept this religion and that everyone lives his own religion and even if I am now in another foreign country, where it is duty to wear this headscarf, I think, it should also be my duty to adapt to this country. […]" [Hamburg, Pos. 26]

5.7.4. Language

The theme of language and language acquisition was central in all discussions. Participants shared their understanding of the role of language in the integration process and the resulting implications in defining and assigning the responsibility for integration. It was also discussed how legal regulations make language a barrier for integration. This is mainly why language is represented in a distinct code.

Across all cites, the receiving community agreed on the clear demand to learn the German language. Those who doubted the motivation of arriving community members to meet this demand expressed discontent and lack of understanding. Only a few participants challenged this view:

RC3: "First of all - I think - they should learn the German language and they can't speak it yet, the German language." [Berlin, Pos. 10]

AC7: "Integration is first of all your ability to speak the language of the society you live in." [Berlin, Pos. 16]

Both communities understood the lack of intergroup contact as cause and effect of poor language skills:

RC12: "[…] So even if you say "It's up to them whether they learn German or not", they can do that, but then it's going to be a bit difficult for me to take a step towards them. I mean, they can also exist next to me, I have nothing against that, integration is only possible with language, I think. So even if you're just of good will, as I would assess myself now, it's still difficult for me […]" [Leipzig, Pos. 97]

This implies that the responsibility for integration is mainly assigned to members of the arriving community and to a lesser extent to the government, which could establish programs for intergroup contact and provide good quality language courses (see also category "Responsible actors).

Participants from the Berlin receiving community debated whether only minimal efforts from the government should be applied as an incentive for the arriving community to learn German. A counterargument was that this would foster misunderstandings and exclusion:

RC1: “The question I ask myself is, with multilingual forms: Do you help people by making them multilingual […] Do you help them or do they say: ‘Everything is in my language anyway, so I don’t have to make the effort to learn this new language”? […] I am also still completely at odds with myself on that. I would perhaps do the basic things, but KEEP IT AT A MINIMUM, I would say […] but rather we can call in interpreters […] rather than we make these forms in all the languages of the world.”

RC3: “But the question is, if you don't do it in the language, then it comes to misunderstandings between parents and teachers and then you have a potential for conflict again and that might transfer to the children and then to the class, then you have social problems, if you just don't translate it.” [Berlin, Pos. 54-55]

There was agreement in all discussions that elder members from the arriving community face stronger barriers in language acquisition (see code “Age”). Particularly with regards to this population, the question was raised if it is mandatory to master the German language to qualify as ‘integrated’. This view was opposed by the position that Germans not willing to speak English exclude themselves in a globalized world:

RC10: “[…] For example, there are many elderly people who come from Syria. So I find it difficult to teach German to a sixty year old person […] I think this should be a choice for the person and not say: ‘To live here, you have to learn our language!’ So the person should be able to exist in society, as long as the person doesn't break any law or break any important social norm. So he should also be here without knowing the language […] as long as the older person is here, his children go to work, they can speak German, but the person can't speak German and he hangs around with the two other pensioners from Syria and they all speak only Arabic and they don't harm anybody in the society.” [Leipzig, Pos. 19]

The rationale of the requirement to learn the language prior to accessing the job market was questioned by the arriving community. Especially for vulnerable groups among the arriving community, e.g. illiterate or elderly persons, this combination seemed very hard to overcome. Even highly qualified members of the arriving community reported this challenge as a major barrier. Instead of accomplishing B1 level of language skills, participants demanded specialized language courses in their professional field and/or learning the language of the job:

AC16: “I was learning at the course with illiterate young people. This is not their fault. They did not learn at all in Syria. They find it very difficult to learn here. They were very committed and they were always attending the course despite their weak capabilities and they could not learn much. I was talking with a person from Cham. He told me that a main barrier for him is to find a language-unconditional job opportunity, a job that he can get regardless of having B1 or not. He told me I am working in farming or any field that does not need reading and writing. In such a big city like Leipzig, he may work at the farms. Going back to the barriers topic, one barriers then is to find the work that does not require a language. […] Therefore, this restricts the integration process and makes it difficult with strong fears.” [Leipzig2, Pos. 282]

AC19: “For the certificates, I am looking for an ‘Ausbildung’ [apprenticeship]. I went to an exhibition for ‘Ausbildung’ opportunities. I told him I only have A2 and not the B1. He told me: ‘I am sorry! We cannot accept you!’ He did not tell me that directly, but he wrote that on the group of the company that the ‘Ausbildung’ requires B1. Later on, I was talking with him on the group. Immediately after he listened to my language and tested me he said: ‘You can start the ‘Ausbildung’! We do not need anything from you!’ Therefore, certificates play no role!” [Leipzig, Pos. 330]

AC11: “[…] we have suggested a proposal for the job centre and the Ministry of health. […] Firstly, the teacher is not a doctor. The teacher is a normal teacher. A normal teacher cannot teach us. At least the teacher should be a nurse, so that he can explain to us the topics in our field. The other solution is that we have B2, and we are doctors since a long time ago, we will not be harmful to the German patients. We suggested that we go to the praxes to learn the language there […]” [Hamburg, Pos. 163]

5.7.5. Locality

A specific image of each study site has emerged throughout the FGDs and the decisive question in relation to this topic seemed to revolve around whom these cities belong to: Does Leipzig as a typical German city belong to the Germans and does Berlin as a cosmopolitan city belong to everyone? The idea of Berlin exceptionalism was relatively dominant among members of the arriving community at all locations. Within this context, Berlin was portrayed as Germany’s most international city, a capital with a relatively tolerant population that is “acquainted” with “foreigners” and accepting of other religious practices, which makes arrival and integration far easier than in other cities or regions of Germany.

AC8: “Now, I say it that I consider Berlin better than other states because it has a lot of "Ausländer" [foreigners], International people. It has many Turkish people, that is a good thing. I was once in another state to visit my sister. Honestly, you feel that it is a German region, you really feel that you are foreign there but here no. You get in the U-Bahn [subway], you feel comfortable, you take the Bus, you feel comfortable, you walk on the street, and you feel comfortable. In other regions, no, there you feel yourself really a foreigner in a way. That thing, that thing is the good thing in Berlin.” [Berlin, pos. 284]

AC7: “Berlin is not a German city. Berlin is an international city. It has got 170 nationalities. you can simply talk to anyone in English without asking if they speak German or not. But try going to another city. I did go to another city and lived there, try to speak in English there. If you talk in English to them, they would tell you that they do not speak English. What do you do in this case?” [Berlin, pos. 61]

AC18: “What I say that they are there familiar with the foreigners. When you go to Berlin...”

AC17: "That is right. They are familiar with foreigners." [Leipzig, pos. 165-165]

Though there was a general tendency to romanticize Berlin in comparison to other German cities, the discourse on the city was not void of accounts on structural racism. The city was after all not entirely a “safe bubble” for members of the arriving community, especially for women with hijab as outlined in this statement:

AC7: “but I saw this in Berlin. I heard or read about some incidents in Berlin, incidents of beating and aggression towards women in hijab which took place on trains.” [Berlin, pos. 173]

In contrary to the tolerance and openness associated with Berlin, terms such as “Nazi”, “intolerance”, “slaves” and “arrogance” were used within the discussion about integration in Leipzig to describe the overall dynamic.

AC18: “Although the German people travel much, but they are still introvert people."

AC15: "Why? You know why? Because the Germans still have this "germanische" [Germanic]”

AC18: " That we are better than the others!"

AC15: "Exactly! Especially in Leipzig, this may not be the case in Berlin.” [Leipzig, Pos. 154-157]

AC15: “You are a Sklave [slave], you know! They treat you here in Leipzig as a slave, you know! I know people who moved out from Leipzig for this reason!” [Leipzig, pos.153]

The idea that Leipzig is not as multicultural and tolerant as other German cities was addressed within the discussion among the receiving community. Not all members of the arriving community approved

of this portrayed image of Leipzig and challenged it by bringing up their own positive encounters with Germans in Leipzig:

RC11: "[…] especially here I find that shocking, that they don't know at all that people from other cultures are coming here. Well, I don't come from Leipzig myself, but from [city in Germany], between Düsseldorf and Cologne, and I grew up with it. So half of my primary school class consisted of ... uh children from/ who had their roots in Turkey or Morocco or somewhere else, and for me it was nothing special. For me it was rather special to come here to Leipzig and to see that it's not like that here at all." [Leipzig, pos.3]

In the case of Hamburg, tensions seemed to be less explicit in comparison to Leipzig. The arriving community members perceived its population as very reserved and hard to get into contact with. Moreover, there was a thorough discussion on whether the recognition of certificates, the support by the receiving government and the access to the labour market is more difficult than in other German states and cities. As a subtle reference to segregation, the settlement of arriving community members in less central neighbourhoods was addressed by both communities.

AC11: "Plus, Hamburg society in specific does not like to communicate with the foreigners. This statement has been told to me by the Germans themselves." [Hamburg, Pos. 4]

RC5: "And also, regarding apartment search for example, there it is often the case that many end up in Hamm or Harburg." [Hamburg, Pos. 191]

AC11: "When I was doing the preparation course for the specialization exam, there were doctors from regions around Hamburg, because this course is available only few times. We were 6 in this course. The participant doctors were 2 from Hamburg and the rest were from outside of Hamburg. Therefore, I realized that the terms and conditions of the certificate equalization for the dentists are easier than in other regions, but I have no idea if it is the same with the general medicine or other medical specializations." [Hamburg, Pos. 51]

AC9: "[I]n Niedersachsen, they are really wonderful. Imagine for instance, all my friends who live there, they give them money to learn and get the driving license and to work. After they worked, and I know them personally, they gave them a money to buy a car as well." [Hamburg, Pos. 203]

Interestingly, despite these vague hopes of a better life in Berlin, arriving community members across all sites did not explicitly address the diversity in legal and institutional regulation and their enforcement in the different German states that shape power relations and resource allocation among the two communities. The receiving community members expressed their overall dissatisfaction with the federal system when it comes to asylum and integration procedures.

5.8. Perspectives on integration – conceptualizations and outlook

The is the second half of theme "Perspectives on integration" and in contrary to the first part which is related to personal experience of integration, this part contains more abstract thoughts on integration as well attributions of responsibilities and an outlook into the future effects of integration.

5.8.1. Understandings of ideal integration

When analysing the transcripts, different ways of understanding integration emerged out of the discussion across the three sites. Participants defined their subjective understanding along different aspects and questions when asked about their ideal view on integration and when describing barriers and facilitators to integration. The differentiation did not reach the level of characterizing a typology. Often, participants showed a tendency to highlight one aspect or characteristic feeding into a certain way of conceptualizing integration, which were not always a clear-cut as they reflected ambivalence

and contradiction. This may be interpreted as a need for a further reflection on one's subjective way of understanding integration.

To begin with, it is worthy to mention that both arriving and receiving community participants expressed their confusion or discontent towards the term integration, which seemed for many to be an ambiguous term:

RC2: "Yes, that is indeed the problem, the term integration. What is integrated? That is the term that doesn't work." [Berlin, Pos. 48]

RC11: "[…] there is always talk about integration, but it is also a huge term, it sounds quite good and it sounds like "When we have achieved integration, then everything is great". But what is integration?" [Leipzig, Pos. 6]

AC20: "But the integration is the opposite of democracy. Here they are trying integration and not trying democracy!" [Leipzig, pos. 249]

The different forms of understanding integration empathize various core ideas, assign different level of responsibilities to the actors (see also category "Responsible actors") and define the needed criteria for "feeling integrated" (see also category "Feeling integrated"). Moreover, the role of language, culture and religious practices varies depending on the different form of understanding integration.

Across all cites and in both groups, participants tried to define integration as a process of socio-economic integration. Mastering the German language and paying taxes were presented as the core components. Accordingly, integration equals labour market integration and independence from state support. This understanding holds mainly the arriving community accountable for the integration efforts.

Members of the receiving community with migratory background stressed that a guarantee of mental and physical safety against racists' attacks is a very basic element of integration. This understanding raised the question on whether certain groups within the receiving community might be considered as not integrated as well. Furthermore, participants argued that integration goes beyond this socio-economic rational, for instance:

AC19: "Integration from my point of view implies that a person should interact with the Germans, go with them, deal with the language. Integration is to pay taxes for the city, to find a job, for instance. I know people who have been here five or six years ago and they just understand the 'Bahnhof' [pidgin] language. They stay at home and raise their legs and take financial support from the job centre, for instance. This money is not coming from the state. It comes from all people in Germany. A German man or woman are working to give money to the 'Ausländer' [foreigners]!"

AC20: "Why you are talking about the Germans? I know German young people who get 'Arbeitslosengeld' [unemployment benefit]!"

AC19: "The Germans do not get 'Arbeitslosengeld', this is the first point."

AC20: "At the end they are unemployed! At the end it is unemployment [Arbeitslosigkeit]!"

AC19: "The homeless are taking financial support as well!" […]

AC20: "Anyone who works in Germany pays taxes, not just the Germans!" [Leipzig, Pos. 78-86]

RC7: "[…] i think it's important to note that we don't really know what integration is. Because somehow there are no fixed parameters, what is integration? Well, you can somehow relate it to the economic aspect. But are you integrated if you have German C1, an education or a profession and a permanent

residence? Plus, your status is clarified, whether you are allowed to stay here or not? Maybe it's this minimal, neat package, but that's not all." [Leipzig, Pos. 12]

An understanding that considers integration as a state administered process was particularly prevalent in the Berlin receiving community focus group. This process was imagined to be an ideally universal, linear process with a clear time frame and seemed to be equivalent to the asylum and immigration process. Responsibility for integration according to this understanding leans towards governments and arriving community members who should follow the process, fulfil the requirements and abide by the German law. A consistent application of this understanding to the receiving community would imply that repeated incidences of law violations would render any individual as disintegrated. But as a matter of fact, German criminal citizens cannot be stripped of their citizenship and right of residency. Performing deportation of criminal arriving community members, on the other hand, was argued as a state responsibility. It was requested that research should investigate the efficacy and effectiveness of state administered efforts, e.g. the frequency and timing of language and integration courses as well as potential opportunities for further education. By attaining German citizenship, the hope is legitimate that the integration process has come to its final stage:

AC19: "[…] To be as a German. For me after 7 years when I get the German nationality, no one will open his mouth with me." [Leipzig, Pos. 101]

Repatriation when the legitimization for residency in Germany has ceased was considered a goal of the governments controlled integration process. In a similar rational manner, this view was challenged based on two lines of reasoning: one rested on the premises of a cost-benefit argumentation that considers the loss of capital already invested in the integration process and the second is based on an affective reasoning as it foregrounds empathy with refugees who have built a life in Germany at this stage.

Another way of understanding integration highlights adaptation or assimilation to so-called German or European values. Freedom of thought and expression were claimed to be central to these values. Ideally, a 'moral fit' should be examined prior to immigration. Introduction to German or European culture or values was seen as a core component of integration.

RC2: "Yes, Education is not so important for me, school education! There are people who are much more European than we are here, perhaps, without schooling, and there are people who have the best school education, but as human beings they do not have this freedom of thought/"

RC1: "In any case also the Basic Law and what it says in the Basic Law. It does not say: 'How does our society deal with homosexuals? How do we in our society deal with the consumption of alcohol? With the rights of women?' None of this is stated in there, though a bit encoded, but none of this is stated and it is important as well." [Berlin, Pos. 99]

The arriving community has to make the adaption efforts and sharing these values defines who belong to the German society. This view on integration was implied among the arriving community participants in their quantifications of their integration status as well (see category "Feeling integrated"). Arriving community members expressed their objection to "total integration" which points to the pressure they seem to feel to assimilate. As a fundamental critique against the assimilation pressure in integration, it was emphasized that this idea is contradictory to basic democratic principles:

AC20: "It means that you want to plug something into other thing that the first thing will take the characteristics of the second thing that contains. When you insert something into something, you feed it. So it takes the features of the surrounding. This is called integration. Democracy is the acceptance of the other side. […] Democracy is to accept the other opinion. This is the democracy that exists in the European society. This is not applied in the real world. This is my personal experience here in Leipzig. I

know personal experiences are different and Germans may be different in other cities but I am talking about the Germans here in Leipzig." [Leipzig, Pos. 168-170]

In line with the conceptualization of integration as a dynamic or a two-way process, participants from both groups emphasized the need for mutual acceptance and engagement as the foundation for integration. Diverse religious and cultural practices as well as different ways of life ought to be respected, so that individuals can keep their social identity in the process of integration. State authorities hold responsibility to facilitate this process. Importantly, only participants with migratory background themselves suggested to introduce quotas in housing and job opportunities as well language classes in the mother tongue in school education.

AC12: "I think integration means that the one feels himself in the society, to feel that the person is a part of this society, to feel that the person is accepted and desired by this society. The perfect integration happens when the other side accepts us as well and considers us as a part of the social system. Integration in this case is relations exchange, this is what I think about integration, the main things." [Hamburg2, Pos. 4]

RC5: "[…] the motivation to make the integration a success should come from both sides. That means not only that Germans should approach the refugees or Germans with a migratory background but that the refugees should also approach the Germans. That you just try to bring about more interpersonal contacts. And that doesn't mean, figuratively speaking, as a German you should always just hold the door open and the refugee just passes you without saying anything but that there is also such a willingness on both sides […]" [Hamburg, Pos. 164]

The question of who is considered integrated most likely depend on individual engagement or (self-) exclusion respectively, while it remains unclear if this fully applies to receiving community members.

Only receiving community participants without migratory background status advocated a liberal and humanistic approach to integration in which members from both groups were thought to interact based on their shared humanity. From this perspective, governments and extreme right groups were portrayed as the main responsible actors for hindering the process of integration through their exclusive practices and policies. Accordingly, the role of government should be to provide the facilities and resources but remain in a laissez-faire position with only minimal interventions. Refugees can use upon their needs on a voluntary basis, as reflected in the following quote referring to language acquisition.

RC4: "Well I think integration happens the easiest and best if you don't start to distinguish. Instead you just let the people mix and don't start with 'Where are you from', 'Who are you?' And so, I think integration is a natural flow so where you let the people live, work, shop normally without stopping and say: 'NO, you are in another group, you are someone else, we HAVE to distinguish you'. [Berlin, Pos. 346]

RC9: "[…] not everybody has to learn the language, but there should be the possibility that it is possible and then every refugee can decide for himself if he wants to accept it or not. And of course, some people just can't accept it and that's perfectly ok." [Leipzig, Pos. 22]

This understanding seems to operate in a sphere without struggles over power and limited resources.

5.8.2. Responsible actors

RC1: „[...] that is somehow difficult […] are we to blame? Who was to blame, so [...]" [Berlin, Pos. 297]

This code subsumes all mentioned attributions of responsibility to different actors, which entail receiving community, arriving community, governments and media.[15]

Receiving community

The question of who is responsible for integration was raised on several occasions in all discussions. Contributions from participants of the receiving community remained vague, as reflected in expressions like 'one should' [German, "man sollte").

Participants who understood integration as a two-way process directly called themselves into account and requested individual engagement in everyday contacts. Some participants asked other receiving community members to inform and involve themselves, e.g. as volunteers or proactive neighbours.

RC2: "So, you could take the initiative […]. But not everything has to come from top to down. We could also do something ourselves, these associations, these young people, they are tandem partners. Three, four, five of them got together and founded this association and now they are bringing people together. Theoretically we can do that, too. This willingness in the population, to somehow increase, motivate, offer support, also financial support for these people [arriving community members], who want to get involved, but somehow do not succeed." [Berlin, Pos. 338]

RC5: "Well, I think you can do a lot of things yourself as a person and integration starts at the front door. When you see your Syrian neighbour, instead of just looking away, you say "Hello", "How are you?", it doesn't have to develop into a friendship. But maybe it happens after a year or so, you talk about sports or what do I know, if you are parents, then about children and so on and for me that is integration. If you just approach people and don't just close the door and say "Okay, maybe I'll pay my social security contributions here, I'll make a donation from time to time", but that's just, there has to be more." [Hamburg, Pos. 157]

The establishment of refugee councils in Leipzig and the "Willkommenskultur" [German, welcoming culture] in general were named as examples of engagement from the receiving community. Participants assigned the younger generations with more responsibility. Whereas the potential of individuals to change structural barriers was controversially debated among participants of the receiving community, the arriving community members referred to a protest against the deportation of an asylum seeker family in Leipzig as a noteworthy and effective moment of solidarity.

Participants from the arriving community rarely and very reluctantly expressed requests for involvement of the receiving community. The following discussion sequence reflects, on the one hand, very broad and general wishes, on the other hand a tendency to relativize this demand immediately:

AC9: "There is one point I forgot about integration that Germans should know for instance about our culture in Cham and we should be acquainted with their culture as well. This is a type of integration."

AC16: It is a personal issue. It depends on the person.

AC17: "It depends on every one's interests because every person has his own interests in life or in his country, in general, a person is interested in farming, other person is interested in politics. They even can learn some Arabic vocabularies." [Leipzig, Pos. 117-120]

Arriving community

Arriving community participants across all sites put more stress on the obligations of refugees to integrate. In the Hamburg discussion, participants shared their observation that this burden of

15 The subcodes „NGOs/INGOs" as well as „Public sector" were omitted. Even though mentioned the information from the participants was not saturated.

demanded integration efforts is often shifted to the younger arriving community. In the Berlin receiving community focus group, a participant expressed this demand very clearly. A receiving community participant with migratory background reflected on this burden.

RC1: "[…] I have to do a little bit more as a refugee and for me this is working on integration, which a refugee perhaps has to do, while a German born here does not have to do. That is why he must do a little bit more […]" [Berlin, Pos. 47]

RC10: "So, you have to fight yourself. And if you can't fight [laughs], then you just stand there." [Hamburg, Pos. 163]

Participants from the arriving community seemed to overtly agree with this demand and voiced their intentions to integrate and prove themselves. The following dialogue reflects how a strong identification with the notion of refugees being guests in a host country leads to feelings of obligation to adapt:

AC8: "Yes, for sure, it's necessary that they [referring to refugees] integrate because we are guests at the end."

AC1: "No, we are not guests."

AC8: "You want to be a good guest. Like imagine that you have a guest and he does not behave [WAS INTERRUPTED]"

AC4: "As if you were very angry but you want to show that you're in a good mood."

AC8: "Yes, I am a guest at the end. I want to show the best of me." [Berlin, Pos. 290-294]

In the Leipzig discussion, participants emphasized that arriving community members should fill in "gaps", e.g. in the job market, as part of their obligations as guests. Moreover, the above mentioned observation that parents project their integration aspirations onto their children was rather confirmed, as illustrated by the following quote:

AC8: "I tell my children, I tell them, that Germany offered. Honestly, I tell them not to betray it. A country that offered, and invested, and is educating. In the end, I wish that all my children study. My daughter had the chance to study but I shortened the way for her. My son and my younger son and my daughter, I wish that they study in university. I tell them, a country that gave you, do not betray it. […] I tell them that Germany is like the father and the mother. You let your son live with you for a certain period. When he becomes 18 years old, he serves in the army, yes, you made him get married, you made a lot of efforts for him, and he studied. At the end, will you bear with your son? No! At the end you tell him "Leave, May Allah be with you, you got married, now build yourself". And Germany is analogous to that." [Berlin, Pos. 284]

There was a generation gap in how members of the arriving community coped with the growing responsibility on them. While the older generation underlined the burden and difficulty of meeting the expectations placed on the them, some young arriving community members dismissed these concerns, advocating that one has to be optimistic and make efforts for the integration process to proceed smoothly and according to one's wishes and needs.

Governments

The receiving community held strong critique against the German government and the cooperation among the EU member states. Disillusion and critique were expressed about chancellor Angela Merkel as the main representative of the German government:

RC2: “For example, the big sentence of Merkel: "We can do it" [“Wir schaffen das”]. Well, that's fine. But nothing COMES from nothing! "We can do it" does not do the job of course. Nothing happened, she didn't create any new programs, she didn't hire enough people in the authorities, she didn't make the work paths in the authorities more efficient, so nothing happened, just this wishful thinking "We can do it". [Berlin, Pos. 38]

Participants even stated that the German government, associated authorities and processes, e.g. the asylum procedure and refugee housing constitute a barrier to integration that undermines the efforts of both the receiving and arriving community (see also theme “Avenues for negotiating integration”).

The actions of the government and respective institutions were perceived as uncoordinated, short-sighted, laissez-faire and non-transparent. The decentralized migration and integration policy in Germany was perceived as part of the problem and the need for a centralized and rapid approach in managing the asylum and integration process including deportation was proposed as part of the solution by participants in the Berlin FGD. In Hamburg and Leipzig, participants wanted local governments to foster intergroup contact, e.g. by financing neighbourhood events.

Critique was also raised against the lack of solidarity among EU member states as participants felt as if EU countries *“are passing the buck” [RC12, Leipzig, Pos. 75]* to certain states, mostly Italy, Spain or Greece but recently also Germany.

The arriving community participants only very vaguely addressed the role of the German government in their integration process. Very vague allusions to a dismissive stance from the government against refugees represented by government employees, were voiced:

AC8: “8: At the same time, I say that the employee has a country, I always say that employees have a country (Many participants: Exactly]. Whenever you have an employee, there is a country ruling him.” [Berlin, Pos. 663]

Media

Media as an important actor in the overarching integration process was exclusively mentioned by members of the receiving community, who were critical towards its positioning during the ‘refugee crisis’, as it contributed to societal polarization and strengthening negative stereotypes and resentments:

RC2: “What newspaper was that in? I mean [Inc.] We really must be careful about that because there are so many things in some newspapers, especially in some newspapers. I would say, you just said, that the Syrian refugees have more difficulties with the authorities, with the population, there are of course also certain resentments in the population and in my opinion these resentments come first and foremost from the media, from certain parts of the media. [Berlin, Pos. 80]

RC5: “Yes, I think a certain newspaper called Bild, which likes to emphasize only certain aspects. Back then when the so-called wave of refugees started,the Bild reported accordingly negative things only.” [Hamburg, Pos. 13]

As an assertion of this position, only dramatic media reports about refuges were brought up in the group discussion: masses of people arriving, chaotic processes, villages with more arriving than recipient inhabitants, financing polyamorous marriages, sexual harassment, group rapes, clan formation and fights and starving children at the Greek border. The accuracy of the information was often questioned. Participants demanded that media should rather inform the population to foster integration:

RC1: “And above all I need, I have said several times already, that I want much more information, that I want much more, that is going on in the media. At the moment I don't even know how many refugees

still live here, how many refugees have already started their return, who/ it is not even [Inc.] in the media, therefore I miss this information." [Berlin, Pos. 160]

The media did not emerge as a theme in the FGDs among the arriving community members. It may be argued, that the lack of references to media by the arriving community reflects besides of language limitations lack of access and representation of their views and interests.

5.8.3. Future effects

Different visions of a future in Germany were described. The arriving community focused on aspects such as economic independence (as tax payers), the compensation of a perceived debt, participation in society and their influence on the receiving community. Participants expressed optimistic and hopeful views:

AC11: "If I integrate and I will be allowed to work, all this money I am taking from the German taxpayers will reduce. Moreover, I will contribute in paying taxes. I believe this is the impact". [Hamburg, Pos.113]

In contrast, the receiving community took a rather pessimistic attitude. Mainly fears and anticipated threat are mentioned in relation to politics and marginalization of refugees in the urban space. Nevertheless, there were also voices in the receiving community that expressed a (not very tangible) vision of growing together.

RC1: "I think it will take a few decades until this, this group structure dissolves, of the refugees. A long time." [Hamburg, Pos. 74]

RC12: "I have to say, politically I'm not quite optimistic, I have to admit [laugh], but I haven't thought that way yet." [Leipzig, Pos. 159-161]

RC8: "[...] it can also lead to a crisis. For example, World War III or something like that, because if we don't find harmony together, I think it will also become a problem for Germany. If we don't support each other properly if we don't have the same background or something like that. So far, I don't think integration has been so successful, it can be intensified, and I also think it's important, especially now, or in the near future, that everything grows together a bit more." [Hamburg, Pos.75]

Individual receiving community participants also voiced slight hope for structural change in reaction to conservative political parties, acknowledging the institutional barriers in current asylum and integration procedures and policies:

RC11: "[…] if nothing changes politically, that people will continue to be treated like this: 'Oh, we don't know exactly where to put them, so we'll put them on the sides and put a fence around them'. But I have the feeling and the hope that something will change politically. Even in more conservative big People's parties, which at the moment still determine where the rabbit runs in Germany. But it takes, it takes a very long time. […]" [Leipzig, Pos. 159]

5.9. Conclusion

The qualitative research in Germany was based on 6 FGDs with a total 31 participants from the arriving and receiving communities in Hamburg, Leipzig and Germany. The dense data emerging out of these discussions covered four main themes, which included "Perspectives on integration", "On intergroup relations", "Avenues for negotiating integration" and "Power, cultural, social and geographical struggles and rapprochements".

The qualitative research has clearly demonstrated that there was a tendency among the receiving community to homogenize and essentialize members of the arriving community. Apart of the very limited and concrete references to Syrian refugees, the discussion on integration was predominantly framed in relation to refugees and other migrants. All of these groups were lumped into one category and occasionally attributed essentialized traits. Despite the strong emphasis of the moderators on the focus of the research on refugees from Syria, the interviewees did not manage to discuss based on these premises.

"All of these groups were lumped into one category and occasionally attributed essentialized traits"

There was strong critique of the term "integration" and its ambiguous meaning, which was reflected in its manifold subjective definitions emerging throughout the FGDs. Within the most prominent narrative, the onus of integration was placed on the arriving community by both the arriving and receiving communities. Learning the language, gaining a foot in the labour market and paying takes were defined as the core components of integration. Despite the critique of this conceptual understanding of integration by some members and the emphasis on the importance of defining integration as a two-way process, a thorough and critical examination of the arguments of the interviewees allude to inconsistency and contradiction in their line of reasoning. Both communities seemed to have internalized an understanding of integration that is rather equivalent to the paradigm of adaptation and assimilation. This is manifested in the passiveness of large parts of the receiving community to interact with other members of the arriving community or even obtain information about their situation in the country.

"the onus of integration was placed on the arriving community"

Furthermore, the erroneous understanding of what racism means and how it functions as a structural barrier to the integration of refugees underlines this unidimensional understanding of the term "integration". Within this scope, language, cultural as well as religious practices and symbols were identified as moments for the receiving community to (re-)claim hegemony and the prerogative of interpretation of who is integrated or not. German culture for instance had to be shielded from exterior influence by enforcing stronger laws to protect it and implementing more measures that aim at introducing members of the arriving community to German and European values and cultural practices. The reservation and rejection of Islam became evident based on the racism women with hijab reported to experience.

"The reservation and rejection of Islam became evident based on the racism women with hijab reported to experience"

The relationship between the receiving and arriving communities has been extensively explored as a separate theme. The most striking observation was the lack of contact between both communities, especially on behalf of the receiving community. Negative stereotypes stemming from pre-reflexive racism or narratives that depict refugees as helpless victims determine the receiving community's perceptions. Arriving community members highlighted work place, housing, language courses as well as public institutions and authorities as the main avenues for contact. Housing situation was perceived to be particularly problematic, reinforcing segregation and stirring fear and dramatic images of future effects of migration/integration.

Participants elaborated quite extensively on the individual, legal and socio-economic avenues for integration. Young age, work and German language acquisition were overtly stated to be the most relevant factors. Though there was no consensus about the role of language in determining the integration status on an individual level, there was a strong argument in favour of language being a facilitator for integration. Young members of the arriving community were perceived to have an advantage over elderly, in terms of engaging in educational or recreational activities like school or sport

clubs, a higher capacity to learn the language and general higher potential to take up educational opportunities in the post-migration context.

Work was identified as a vital individual, social and economic resource and laid the cornerstone for integration. Further to this, the research results underlined the salience of legal and institutional barriers. Work regulations and certificate recognition interact negatively with fixed requirements of language proficiency. Despite antidiscrimination laws, racism and religious discrimination constitute a further barrier to socio-economic integration. Easing the recognition process of certificates, providing tailored language courses that include exposure to the professional fields as well as programs that address the needs of the most vulnerable groups like analphabets or elderly people may be means to reduce barriers in socio-economic and socio-psychological integration.

"Work regulations and certificate recognition interact negatively with fixed requirements of language proficiency"

Arriving community members, especially older members, expressed strong frustration over the legal and institutional regulations, which limited their access to the labour market. Many referred to the adverse impact of their unemployment, not only in terms of their well-being and health, but also in terms of destabilizing their social identity. It seems not surprising that those participants who faced overt racial and religious discrimination in the realm of work, housing or public space struggled in how to cope with these experiences and proceed to invest efforts in their psycho-social and socio-economic integration. In contrast to the receiving community, participants hardly referred to potential traumatization as a major health burden but rather to family separation.

"Many [arriving community members] referred to the adverse impact of their unemployment, not only in terms of their well-being and health, but also in terms of destabilizing their social identity"

As another consequence of the lack of contact and in-depth knowledge about the integration process, the receiving community's assessments of the current status of the socio-economic integration and the future impact of refugee migration remained very vague and tended to be polarized. Some participants voiced strong concerns and fears that the right-wing extremist parties and racial tensions will develop to dominate the political and societal climate. Participants requested decisive and cohesive political efforts on behalf of the German government and the EU to cooperate among the states, enforce the law and reduce structural barriers as well as to address prevalent racism. The German government and the EU have been perceived as reluctant to take the responsibility assigned to them by the participants. Media in this context plays a crucial role in shaping the receiving communities view on refugees, the debate on integration and its current state.

"Participants requested decisive and cohesive political efforts on behalf of the German government and the EU"

Moreover, it was argued that due to the prevalent institutional barriers, politics have missed to take advantage of the economic benefits that came along the influx of a young work force to the aging German and European communities. From the perspective of some parts of the receiving community, the acceptance and integration of arriving members seems to depend on the positive economic impact they may bring, provided they do not jeopardize the social benefits and other privileges of the major population.

"the acceptance and integration of arriving members seems to depend on the positive economic impact they may bring"

6. Jordanian qualitative field study

In the following section, the sampling of the Jordanian field study is presented and the limitations of the research are discussed. Subsequently, the results are outlined and a conclusion is drawn as a final step.

It is important to note at this stage, that Jordan as a non-EU state does not operate within the same framework of objectives and responsibilities for migration. From a legal policy perspective, Jordan's official policy guiding the conditions of migrants residing in Jordan is defined by its government as an 'empowerment' approach as detailed in D3.1 Research design and methodology. However, in this research 'integration' is used as a term which is both relevant and understandable in the Jordanian context. In the focus groups, participants actively engaged with discussions about 'integration' and, as the data gathered in the discussions shows, a high-level of comparability with themes which emerged in the FGDs held in the three EU countries.

6.1. Sample

As outlined and explained in D3.1 Research design and methodology, six FGDs were conducted in Amman, Zarqa and Irbid – the same locations included in the quantitative surveys. The study locations were chosen based on the number of resettled refugees from Syria in the areas.

Twenty-six members of the *receiving community* participated in the study, of which fourteen were female and twelve were male (9 from Amman, 9 Zarqa and 8 Irbid). Ages ranged from twenty to fifty-eight years old. None of the participants had a migratory background, three were active stakeholders of the integration process. Three participants had no formal education, and three achieved primary education. Three participants had completed lower and seven upper secondary education. Seven were Bachelor degree holders and one had a Master's degree. Two participants completed short cycle tertiary education. Concerning the current employment status, five were employed, seven self-employed, seven unemployed, two fulfilling domestic tasks, three pupils/ students or trainees and two provided no answers.

Regarding the *arriving community*, twenty-two members participated in the FGDs, of which fourteen were female and eight were male (7 from Amman, 8 Zarqa and 7 Irbid), with an age range of twenty-one to sixty-one years old. The participants arrived in Jordan between 2011 and 2015. One participant had no formal education, nine completed primary education, six lower and two upper secondary education, and four Bachelor university education. Nine of the participants were unemployed, two employed, three self-employed, five fulfilling domestic tasks, and one involved in marginal or irregular employment. Two provided no answers with regard to their employment status.

Table 4: Participants' sociodemographics Jordan

Community		Receiving	Arriving
Participants	Total	26	22
	Male	12	8
	Female	14	14
	Diverse	0	0
Age range (years)	Range	20-58	21-61
	18-29	11	6
	30-49	12	14
	50-67	3	2

Residential duration (years)	Range	20-58	5-9
Migratory background		7	-
Place of residence	Amman	9	7
	Irbid	8	8
	Zarqa	9	7
Marital status	Single	7	2
	Married	18	16
	Divorced	1	1
	Widowed	0	3
Education	No formal education	3	1
	Primary education	3	9
	Lower secondary	3	6
	Upper/ post-secondary	7	2
	Short cycle tertiary education	2	0
	Bachelor's or equivalent level	7	4
	Master's/ doctoral or Equivalent level	1	0
Labour status	Employed full time	3	1
	Employed part time	2	1
	Unemployed	7	9
	Pupil, student, further training, unpaid work experience	3	0
	Self-employed	7	3
	Fulfilling domestic tasks	2	5
	In marginal or irregular employment	0	1
	No Answer	2	2

Both receiving and arriving community samples can be considered heterogeneous with regard to age, and less so for education; as the arriving community is skewed towards the less educated end, but not for socio-economic background. However, females outnumbered the males in both samples possible because males are more likely to be unavailable during working hours/days.

6.2. Limitations

The cultural and social constraints, particularly among the arriving community groups, caused minor limitations and lengthened the recruitment process of participants. Most female participants contacted refused to participate in the FGD without the escort of a male relative, or had no one to care for the children for a few hours while they attend the FGD. Therefore, the search for participants consumed considerable amount of time and networking. Yet, females outnumbered males in both groups because the FGDs were held during working hours/days.

The arriving community discussions required a more active role by the moderator. The discussions were initially very basic; thus probing and follow-up questions were crucial to take the discussion to a more abstract level and engage the participants. This might have been due to the lower educational background of arriving community group participants. In addition, participants frequently interrupted each other, therefore, the moderator had to maintain an orderly course of discussion. Furthermore, gratitude towards the moderator as a representative of the Jordanian majority might have been a potential obstacle for open expression.

Lastly, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which requires physical distancing and wearing masks, it was more difficult for the moderator to break the ice during the sessions; as participants were asked to sit further apart, wearing their masks the entire time. Not being able to see each other's faces rendered the discussion more challenging. To compensate for this, the moderator increased the duration of the introduction and the optional break, and assumed a slightly more active role in leading the conversation.

6.3. Coding results

In the following sections, the content of the four major themes which emerged from the Jordanian focus groups are presented and interpreted.

The following quotations from the arriving and receiving communities summarize the perceived intergroup relations and the rooting of integration among the Jordanian society:

RC7: "[…] They entered our lives significantly… frequent visits… they registered their children in Jordanian schools, so the children got used to each other… Jordanians got used to the Syrians… the relationship developed from the children, teachers, parents, up to the family relations. [Amman, Pos. 30]

AC21: "[…] They showed nothing but kindness towards us. When we first entered Jordan, the Jordanian police called me "Mother". All of them used to call me "Mother" when we came!" [Zarqa, Pos. 291]

AC3: "[…] Many people expressed solidarity when we first arrived at Jordan… However, as time went by this faded away. Jordanians came to view Syrians as a burden! […]" [Irbid, Pos. 14]

Four themes consisting of several categories and codes elaborate and contrast this perception on integration from different angles and positions between and within the arriving and receiving communities.

6.4. Perspectives on integration – the status quo

The first theme subsumes perceptions and reflections on the term and process of integration in general. It was split into two parts of which the first half contains accounts on the current status of the integration process or "How integration has evolved so far" also represented as the affective state of "Feeling integrated".

6.4.1. How integration has evolved so far

At the beginning of the Syrian crisis in 2011, the arriving community in Jordan felt alienated to a considerable extent. Gradually, this first impression nuanced into social quandary, with more acceptance, support, attachment and belonging interchanging within the two communities. Regardless of the economic challenges that exist in Jordan and affect both the arriving and host communities, most Syrians today feel at ease for ending up in Jordan, and appreciate Jordanians' eagerness to accommodate them, share their possessions and offer their country as a second home to Syrians.

RC3: "[…] when they first came we never socialized, we did not deal with them at all. But with time, the situation changed, to the extent that we had cases of marriages with Syrians! […]" [Amman, Pos. 17]

AC13: "[…] There is no discrimination nowadays, as was the case during the first year or two! […] Today we are better integrated because of the years we spent with each other, the longer you stay the more integration you feel! […]" [Irbid, Pos. 102]

AC21: “When we first came to Jordan we would feel alienated. But then we felt they were like our family. They took us in, […] they gave us furniture for our homes, […] and did more than they had to!” [Zarqa, Pos. 16]

AC19: “Although they don’t have much themselves, they give away part of their own possessions. They are poor people, yet they help others! […]” [Zarqa, Pos. 17]

As time passed, both communities familiarized themselves with each other’s traditions, lifestyles and personal stories. This interaction developed into special bonds between neighbours, teachers, students and parents, in the marketplace and societal sphere in no time. It has even led to marriages and familial connections for some, especially that Syrians showed effort to learn Jordanians’ traditions and customs.

AC5: “[…] When we first arrived we suffered from people’s reactions. Some accept us, other don’t. Luckily though, after some time things got better. […] Now we are like a family, with our neighbours and friends! […]” [Amman, Pos. 10]

RC7: “[…] they mixed up in our schools, they entered our lives significantly! Frequent visits, children seeing each other a lot, […] the Jordanians got used to the Syrians! So the relation developed from the children, to the teachers, then parents and up to the family!” [Amman, Pos. 30]

RC13: “[…] We developed social cohesion as well as new customs and traditions. The two communities have integrated; they [the arriving community] introduced us to many things. God willing, they will return home, and their situation will be better, but Jordan is considered their second country!” [Irbid, Pos. 9]

The training courses targeted at Syrians, as well as the psychological support and other types of aid provided throughout the crisis, helped relieve some of the arriving community’s anxiety towards arriving at a new place to live; which is justifiable in the opinion of receiving community participants.

RC1: “If you were in the place of any refugee, you would be scared of how they would treat you! […] Maybe when they came to Jordan for the time they were afraid, it is true, but with training courses and other things that we provided, including the psychological support, they are no longer scared! They became closer to us, to the extent that they became integrated with us and they share us our traditions and customs!” [Amman, Pos. 20]

Some even argued that barely any differences existed between the two communities as they already shared a common culture, tradition and even family pedigree prior to the Syrian crisis.

RC10: “Integration was quick, as there is no difference between us [Jordanians) and Syrians; neither in our traditions and customs, nor there are any limitations! […]” [Irbid, Pos. 75]

AC10: “[…] People from Damascus to Daraa to Zarqa belong to the same families and share the same culture and traditions; therefore, there was no need for us to undergo integration! We were already part of this land and its people!” [Irbid, Pos. 93]

Even though the majority felt interconnected with Syrians and welcomed their stay in Jordan, some expressed concern regarding continuing sharing the country’s limited resources with Syrians; who, according to some receiving community participants, do not essentially appreciate the kindness of Jordanians towards the arriving community. These adverse remarks came from the receiving community groups of Zarqa and Irbid, but not Amman. Some AR participants voiced their concern regarding the deterioration of integration within the receiving community in Jordan as well.

RC12: “[…] Initially we welcomed them with open arms and treated them better than family! […] But now I won’t even care about any Syrian whatsoever!” [Irbid, Pos. 79]

RC22: “When they first arrived, they dealt with us with simplicity, they were simple! However, after the organizations provided them with aid for 1-2 year, […] they developed over us!” [Zarqa Pos. 89-91]

RC11: “The gap has now widened between Jordanians and Syrians, before that it used to be better! [Irbid, Pos. 81]

To sum up, the dynamic of integration development in Jordan was found to be rather complicated and contested. The receiving community voiced more contrasting views regarding the course of integration development; whether the gap between the two communities was growing larger or smaller. Whereas the common judgment of the arriving community was that integration was headed in a positive stream.

6.4.2. Feeling integrated

The receiving and arriving groups approve that integration in Jordan is complicated. However, regardless of the participants’ understanding of integration, most testified about the progressive inclusion of the arriving community in Jordan, especially compared to the receiving communities in Lebanon and Turkey.

AC4: “[…] Honestly, Syrians in Jordan are in better shape than Syrians in Lebanon or Turkey. I have relatives in Lebanon, and in my opinion, we here did not suffer as much as they did in Lebanon or Turkey!” [Amman, Pos. 235]

AC8: “The truth is that Jordan is the only country where Syrians are happy. When you hear about what happens in Turkey or Lebanon, you will feel that Syrians have integrated well in Jordan!” [Irbid, Pos. 88]

RC14: “[…] I respect all Syrians as we are one nation. We Jordanians accommodated them by all means because they left a calamity. We contained them, and now became one nation - we do not differentiate between us. […] we are working hand in hand; there is no difference between us!” [Irbid, Pos. 7]

RC23: “We are like a family together, like relatives with a sense of intimacy, so no differences exist between us, we are united together!” [Zarqa, Pos. 7]

Some arriving community participants even expressed that they are generally better-off in Jordan than back in their hometowns in Syria.

AC4: “I think some people were able to live here and blend in better than they had been in Syria. I know people who are living a better life in Jordan than they used to do in Syria as they suffered great pressures in Syria. For some people, changing where they lived was in their own benefit. I know people living here and saying they wouldn’t go back even if they could. […]” [Amman, Pos. 219]

From a social and a cultural perspective, both groups agree that integration within the two communities developed commendably over the course of years. However, the following counterarguments by the receiving groups to the notion of ‘feeling integrated’ are also identified: 1) no matter what, barriers will remain between the two communities, due to the higher educational, socio-economic and living status of Jordanians, as well as their ancestral connection to the land, which creates sort of feelings of inferiority and/or foreignness among the arriving community, 2) some the arriving community members express a competitive behaviour, a sense of forced entitlement and/or misconceptions regarding the transparency of foreign aid expenditure mechanism aimed towards Syrians; which leads to division and lack of interest to provide help and accept them by the receiving community, and 3) due to the exclusivity of foreign aid to the arriving community, even in the most marginalized areas of Jordan, some of the receiving community members feel neglected and suffer worse living conditions than their fellow neighbours from the arriving community, which makes it harder to integrate with them without holding feelings of unjustified injustice.

RC11: "[…] Integration does not exist today because of the misconceptions they have towards the hospitable Jordanian people [referring to suspicions/rumours that the Jordanian government withholds aid money from being expended in support to Syrians, whereas the reality of the matter is that international funding to support Syrians in Jordan decreased over the years]!" [Irbid, Pos. 73]

RC15: "Barriers will remain between us. For example, Jordanians keep saying that they are educated and belong to big tribes, they belong to this place and work in a certain place! All of this has a psychological impact [on the arriving community] […]. This is our country, and they had the same mind-set in their country. I am sure they used to do the same thing. When you move from a place to another forcibly, it is not a picnic, they are forced to accept the lowest conditions." [Irbid, Pos. 97]

RC22: "Through my interaction with them, I feel that we treat them better than they treat us. I've dealt with many Syrians, they think they are better than us by staying in Jordan, although we love them and we help them more. […] but we don't feel that they would do for us as we do for them!" [Zarqa, Pos. 10]

RC21: "They are separated from us and we are from them" [Zarqa, Pos. 17]

RC19: "They don't engage [with us], they are living a better life than we are [due to the aid they receive]!" [Zarqa, Pos. 19]

On the other hand, many AR participants shed light on the legal aspects that widen the gap between the two communities; hindering the arriving community's aptitude for feeling integrated; such as being able to obtain a driving license, or receiving a bank loan, or owning property, or even working in certain fields and having their certificates recognized.

AC2: "[…] One would not be fully integrated if they could not have legal rights! […]" [Amman, Pos. 76]

AC12: "[…] Where is the justice here? What integration are we discussing and we have these problems in the labour market? We are not talking about education, because our integration in education is excellent; Syrian students are treated as Jordanian students!" [Irbid, Pos. 31]

AC13: "[…] from the beginning they treated us the same as Jordanians, but there is a difference in other things. Like in the labour market there is a big difference, housing, everything, even the banks treat us differently! As a Syrian I can't take a loan or even open a bank account! Even with regard to ownership, you can't own anything nor register any property under your name, unless you are an investor. No driving license, no health insurance! You can't have these because you are not a Jordanian citizen. Even the governmental support for bread is only for Jordanians." [Irbid, Pos. 202-203]

6.5. On intergroup relations

A considerable number of years have passed since the arrival of the arriving community members in Jordan, during which innumerable encounters have taken place between the receiving and arriving communities. This theme portrays the descriptions, lived experiences and attitudes on intergroup relations.

6.5.1. Attitudes and perceptions of the outgroup

Certain consistencies regarding perception of the 'other' group were prominent, among a larger set of more diverse opinions.

The receiving community groups predominantly held a negative perception of the arriving community. Even though some participants described that not all Syrians were the same, and that some were skilled workers, smart and had potential to excel in life, the majority ascertained quite the opposite of this, including that they were arrogant, ungrateful, excessively open, backstabbing, introverted, and ill-

mannered. The perception that stood out the most was that Syrians were replacing Jordanians in the labour market.

RC24: "[…] They are not all the same, some are good and close to us!" [Zarqa, Pos. 304]

RC12: "[…] Syrians believe that they are better than Jordanians, whether in terms of profession or all other aspects. They perceive themselves to be better even though we, the Jordanians, hosted them! […]" [Irbid, Pos. 56]

RC8: "[…] Syrians occupied our jobs. I know some friends who used to work for high salaries, but the Syrians came and accepted to take the same job for an average of only 180 Dinars, and they are more skilful, so the employers prefer to employ 3 Syrians in the place of one Jordanian, they like the Syrians." [Amman, Pos. 226]

RC12: "[…] Sometimes they just stab you in the back. We do not feel that they have good intentions towards us like we have towards them. […]" [Irbid, Pos. 13]

On the other hand, the majority of perceptions towards the receiving community were positive. The arriving community participants stressed that Jordanians were kind, caring, supportive, protective, generous, well-mannered, God-fearing, embracing and honourable. A few, however, held contrasting views; such as Jordanians lacking commitment in the work environment, being deceptive, and not all being good-natured people.

AC12: "The word 'Nashmi' [roughly translated to protective] says everything. They are the people of 'Fazaa' [support] and people of generosity!" [Irbid, Pos. 148]

AC3: "[…] Jordanians don't show commitment. When their work starts at 8:00 they show up at 8:30 considering it to be early! […]" [Amman, Pos. 44]

AC16: "[…] From a humane perspective, I told you they are better than we are. However, in other aspects, there is fraud. I've been a victim of fraud many times, so many time. […]" [Zarqa, Pos. 641]

Overall, these findings seem to be consistent with the participants' views of "How integration has evolved so far" (see above). The receiving community's initial warm welcome might have largely influenced the perception of the arriving community, however, the increasing hardships (due to the country's limited resources) and the perceived lack of gratitude of Syrians might have prejudiced the perception of the receiving community towards the other group.

6.5.2. Perception of threat

Most of the perceptions of threat were expressed almost exclusively by the receiving community. With the sudden influx of Syrians, the receiving community participants were worried about the social identities and characteristics of the people entering their county in large groups; wondering whether those now sharing their neighbourhoods were criminals or lawbreakers, or if it was going to jeopardize the internal security and safety that Jordanians have long praised. The uncertainties conveyed in the first years (1-2) of the Syrian crisis was a source of their concern.

RC3: "[…] We were afraid because there was a civil war among them. We were afraid to communicate with them, but with socializing, and becoming neighbours and relatives, […] we explored some of their nature, but still there are other aspects that we don't know. […]" [Amman, Pos. 35]

Although the two communities had come a long way, some receiving community participants still questioned the arriving community's morality.

RC12: "[…] Sometimes, they just stab you in the back. However, you do not feel that they have good intentions towards us just like we have towards them. […]" [Irbid, Pos. 13]

However, the most important fear that overwhelmed the receiving community participants, particularly the groups of Irbid and Zarqa, was the expanding conquest of the arriving community over the limited prospects of the Jordanian labour market; which directly threatened the sustenance of their livelihoods and dignified quality of life. On top of that, the aid that Jordanian families used to get, were cut with the arrival of Syrians; which adds to their poverty.

RC17: "My brothers are holders of university degrees but they cannot find a job. Now the Syrians who are here are looking for jobs just like us. I mean to say that Syrians want to have equal rights with my brother, but my brother didn't take the support they have received in the first place when they came here! […]" [Irbid, Pos. 77]

RC19: "You even feel that the Jordanian is marginalized in favour of the Syrian. Our rights are lost!" [Zarqa, Pos. 30]

RC24: "Jordanians wouldn't make enough [living] if they accepted what Syrians accept [low wages] because they [the arriving community] receive aid as well, while we [the RC) only depend on daily earnings or salaries so it isn't enough! This created pressure!" [Zarqa, Pos. 369]

The arriving community on the other hand thought that this latter perception of threat is disappearing over time.

AC1: "This also was the case when we first came. Now this phenomenon has almost disappeared; to see you as a Syrian who's trying to take over their jobs or income. You can say that this is no longer the case in 75% of the times."

The only threat concern expressed by the arriving community, was from a participant who is living in impoverished neighbourhoods where crime rates are higher. Since the person cannot afford to rent a house in safer areas, the only option is to adapt to the current environment.

AC22: "I honestly feel scared. I told you I fear for my children's safety"! [Zarqa, Pos. 154]

6.5.3. Self-perception of one's own group

Over the past few decades, Jordanians have opened their country to many waves of neighbouring people fleeing armed conflicts and humanitarian crises. For this, the receiving community groups perceived themselves as a mixture of people from various nationalities and backgrounds, "open-hearted" [RC11, Irbid, Pos. 73], hospitable, kind, benevolent, non-discriminatory, respectful and able to integrate with non-Jordanians.

RC13: "[…] Jordan hosts any refugee from any Arab country that might encounter any external or internal pressures. Jordan is a country of hospitality, […]. Jordan hosted Syrians, Iraqis and Palestinians. […] It opened the doors for them to work and study, and has extended all of its resources. […]" [Irbid, Pos. 9]

RC11: "[…] Kindness is a good thing, and it is the morals and the ethics of Jordanians. We are proud to host refugees, we have been hosting refugees for a long time now and we will continue to do so! […]" [Irbid, Pos. 73]

At the same time, Jordanians perceived themselves as a highly educated group of people; most of whom are university degree holders. They described themselves as skilled, passionate workers, and their youth as pioneers. However, due the economic strains they are undergoing, they expressed that they cannot be doing intensive labour or vocational work in return for low wages [like the arriving community accepts to do so).

RC23: "[…] Jordanians work with passion and consciousness because they are working for their fellow countrymen. […]" [Zarqa, Pos. 393]

Many receiving community participants also perceived Jordanians as a moderately religious people, with no fanaticism.

RC4: “From a religious point of view, we do not have racism in Jordan, we do not have racism in doctrines as well. If a Christian, Shiite, or Yazidi comes to our mosque, they can pray with us no problem [..]” [Amman, Pos. 168]

Likewise, in the work and education aspects the arriving community participants perceived themselves as highly skilled workers, dedicated and educated. Socially, they considered themselves as fun and entertaining individuals, who are willing to integrate with the local community of any country they go to. However, while reflecting on the reasons for war in Syria, members of the arriving community blamed Syrians for it, framing themselves as morally inferior in relation to Jordanians.

AC19: “You here are good people. Although Jordan isn’t like Syria economically and not self-reliant, we have self-reliance but the people aren’t good. They don’t care about one another. Who destroyed Syria are the Syrian people. What else displaced people to different countries and forced them to travel by sea and travel by [UNCLEAR). Here people are good although they don’t have much unlike in Syria. [Zarqa, Pos. 20]

The participants were not directly asked to describe how they perceive their own groups. However, the receiving community participants appraised their positive traits as a group far more than the arriving community participants, and voiced that ‘being alike’ is integral for any other community to straightforwardly integrate with them; thus echoing somewhat superiority to the arriving community.

6.5.4. Intergroup contact

Throughout their interaction with each other over the years, the two communities expansively infiltrated each other in every aspect. In their own words:

RC24: “[…] We are here Jordanians, Palestinians, and Syrians. We complete each other! […]” [Zarqa, Pos. 51]

AC6: “Several times when we rented homes, the owners felt sad when we left." [Amman, Pos. 38]

AC8: “I didn’t have strong relationships back in Syria; but to be honest here the situation is different. For example, I needed some money once, and many of my neighbours were Syrians but I did not call any of them. I knew a Jordanian guy not from long ago, I called him immediately and he came at 3:00 in the morning. I really felt that I belong to this society. […]” [Irbid, Pos. 164]

Both groups saw that a lot of these interactions were essential for the mutual benefit of both communities, regardless of the underlying intentions. This view was largely popular among all FGDs in Jordan, particularly among the arriving community, adding to the complexity of understanding integration in Jordan.

6.5.5. Partnerships

Interestingly, the receiving community participants observed a rise in the number of single Jordanian females after the influx of the arriving community in Jordan. In two FGDs, Amman and Irbid, participants repeated the same argument; that is ‘Jordanian men preferred to take Syrian women as first, second or even third wives because they do not request high dowry’, making Jordanian women seem like an ‘expensive wife to get’. To the receiving community, this was a serious issue impeding on integration, since it provided an additional reason for the spinsterhood rate to rise among Jordanian females; attributing to their quasi-cultural outcast.

On another note, this behaviour or phenomena may be further manifestation of the receiving community's perceived superiority and power domination; by males' using the impoverished position of the arriving community for fulfilling self-aspirations, and females' refusal to lower their marital requirements.

RC3: "There is another thing which is marriage. Men are seeking to marry Syrian women, they say that a Syrian woman accepts anything while a Jordanian girl demands this and that and so on, this has caused differences." [Amman, Pos. 80]

RC8: Once the Syrians came, Jordanian men wanted to marry Syrian women, a win-win situation for both. Every man wanted to marry a Syrian woman. […] I know a man who went to Al Zaatari camp, sponsored a family and took them out of the camp only to marry their daughter for free, only for taking them out of the camp!" [Amman, Pos. 84-86]

RC14: "Even already married Jordanians had remarried Syrian women as second marriages and some even third marriages, so it was not restricted to unmarried young men. The reasons for this is the low dowry and expenses that a Syrian woman accepts and which Jordanian women do not accept, as I said previously, 'you just take her [the Syrian woman] and go home'!" [Irbid, Pos. 96]

6.5.6. Intergroup feelings

Participants were asked to describe emotions held towards the outgroup. The receiving community participants from Irbid and Zarqa held contrasting outlooks towards the arriving community, such as love, welcoming and supporting (at the beginning of the discussion), then racism/ discrimination, jealousy, half-heartedness and anger (later in the discussion).

On the other hand, the arriving community groups emphasized not holding any negative feelings towards the Jordanians; except for one participant who expressed fear. Otherwise, they expressed feelings of love, gratitude, connectedness, and respect towards the receiving community participants. They repeatedly stressed that the "the Jordanians deserve respect" [AC16, Zarqa, Pos. 135] for not only opening their borders when they needed to flee, but also for treating Syrians like "members of their family" [AC8, Irbid, Pos. 145].

AC21: There are no negative feelings, I swear I love them more than Syrians. I'm not saying this only in front of you, but because this is how I truly feel! [Zarqa, Pos. 151]

The FGD dynamics allowed the receiving community to open up and shift from socially desirable expressions to the more profound insights and sharing. Whereas the arriving community did not have the advantage of admitting the negative feelings and being critical of the receiving community given the power relations overall and the Jordanian background of the moderator.

In addition to intergroup feelings, they also described feelings prompted by the presence of the arriving community in Jordan; such as confusion, frustration/ stress, sadness, inequality/ injustice, depression, suffocation and financial insecurity. Whereas the receiving community participants from Amman held entirely positive feelings, including respect, friendship and equality.

The reason why participants of the receiving community in Irbid and Zarqa felt this way might be attributed to the fact that the development indices in these governorates are lower than the capital Amman. As much as they wanted to show warmth and endearment towards the arriving community, they were so severely impacted that the livelihood of their families depended on the worsening economic situation; due to the exponential growth of the total population count in Jordan - a country of limited resources. However, people in Amman are usually disengaged and enjoy a more secure living standard, which is probably why they object less to the magnitude of financial strain on the country as caused by the refugee crisis.

6.5.7. Intragroup relations

Only few instances of intragroup relations were raised throughout the FGDs. Receiving community participants disclosed a need to protect the females of the ingroup should any harm come near them.

RC5: "Maybe I as a Jordanian, feel the need to protect the girls of my country. If there is a gathering and so on, and Syrians are there, I don't allow anyone to harass a Jordanian girl or abuse her verbally! [Amman, Pos. 216]

This might suggest that the perception of threat towards the outgroup is not only relative to the job market, but also about the safety (of females), as well as a reflection of symbolic threat to the RC's patriarchal protective role of Jordanian masculinity.

Whereas the AC admitted feelings of ingroup resentment and envy; caused by unequal reception of aid by international organizations.

AC7: "Yesterday, my husband got into a trouble with another Syrian man. Two Syrians against each other, and a Jordanian calmed the situation. […]" [Amman, Pos. 41]

AC15: "[…] People think that because my husband is away working in another country, our living situation is one of the best. I wish that my husband is with me and my children. I wish that he plays with them and carries some of the burden to raise them. We don't have the money and I don't have a husband and my kids don't have a father. […]" [Irbid, Pos. 264]

However, it is not possible to build in-depth hypothesis regarding intergroup relation dynamics.

6.5.8. Behaviour and behavioural intentions

Within the intergroup relations, different behaviours and behavioural intentions were recognized, which will be described in the following.

The receiving community participants in Zarqa demonstrated nothing but rejection towards the arriving community, whereas the other receiving community groups (Amman and Irbid) illustrated a mixture of behaviours, mostly acceptance and empathy at the beginning of the discussions, followed by more negative behavioural intentions of rejection and self-exclusion. Interestingly, participants of the Zarqa arriving community in particular made no reference to any behavioural intentions of 'rejection' towards them.

Acceptance

Within the discussions, some receiving community participants stated that they accepted Syrians ever since the beginning of the crisis, and continue to accept them until today, regardless of the partially negative socio-economic impact associated with their presence in large numbers in Jordan.

RC1: "[…] One day I decided that I will get to know a girl from them, she truly told me about the stories and things they witnessed, so from that day I knew that their strange behaviours were the result of the events they witnessed. […] empathy overwhelms most of us. […]" [Amman, Pos. 48]

RC14: "[…] We must prove to them [to the Syrians] that the Jordanian people are kind and generous, and we are still accepting them with all our positive energies!" [Irbid, Pos. 160]

Participants of the arriving community groups likewise testified that Jordanians accepted them and showed solidarity when they most needed. Some said this behaviour developed over time, others said it was there from the beginning. In the opinion of one arriving community participant, this acceptance might be largely attributed to belonging to the same ethnicity and religion.

AC5: "[…] When we first arrived we suffered from people's reactions. Some were accepting us living among them but others weren't. But luckily after some time, things got better. We also used to feel lonely but now we're like a family with our neighbours and friends. […]" [Amman, Pos. 10]

AC13: "[…] Today when you tell a Jordanian person I am from Syria, he will say we are all Arab Muslims and there is no difference. […]" [Irbid, Pos. 102]

Strikingly, receiving community participants from Zarqa stated nothing about acceptance, and they were in fact the least accepting group of the AC (see code "Rejection, reservation and (self-) exclusion"). Again, this might be attributed to the mass-scale poverty, marginalization and economic hardship which the local population endures relative to the other governorates.

Empathy & taking perspective

The receiving community participants from Amman and Irbid made an effort to take the arriving community's perspective and to put in thorough words the horror of having to seek refuge. This was evident in the following quotes:

RC6: "Perhaps they do not feel themselves at ease. I mean at the end they have departed their homeland, they are living in a refuge, they will face some difficulties in dealing with people, they will still feel themselves strangers, and that they are not able to say anything because they are not in their country and so on, so they feel that they are insecure, they are not feeling that they are with us, to mix up with us. Perhaps they feel like 'I don't want to deal with them and get used to them and then I may go to another country or leave the people I know'. Perhaps they just want to stay away from problems." [Amman, Pos. 224]

RC13: "The nature of circumstances they have suffered from, forced them to become introverts [withdrawn]. I mean, they are not living in their country and not with their people or their families, nor they are living in circumstances that are similar to the way of living back in their country. Many people among them were rich and lived a better life than here in Jordan. Now they are forced to work, and to receive aid and subsidies, all of these things affected them and affected their psychological wellbeing, so surely they will be biased [to each other]. It is true that they are in another country and Jordan provided everything to help them, but it is not like their country. Because of this, a person feels like a stranger, even if I offered him everything, he will still feel that he is not in his country, not in his own house, not with his relatives or brothers and sisters, definitely he will not feel satisfied. I mean, if you meet anyone from your country, you will feel compassion towards him; your feelings will be different from any other feelings. Even if the others helped you, your feelings towards a person from your country will remain different." [Irbid, Pos. 52]

Correspondingly, the arriving community members acknowledged and highly valued the empathy that most Jordanians have shown them. Some even tried to take the perspective of the receiving community, instead of blaming or disagreeing with the few Jordanians who reject welcoming Syrians into their country.

AC8: "[…] The percentage of people who have empathy is huge. They have great feelings of empathy and they are very helpful!" [Irbid, Pos. 190]

AC16: "My landlord didn't ask for the rent in one month, God bless him. But he can't do more as he's a university student. His father told him that this building belonged to him and his brothers. He's a university student and in responsible for his sisters. How much would the building make him? A million JODs?! It would make him 1500 or 2000 JODs as it has 9 apartments. He uses this money to study honestly. He needs to buy books, pay for transportation, food, and drinks. Just like we have a life we want to live, he does as well." [Zarqa, Pos. 553]

AC12: “[…] We don’t know who is around us… for them Syria is in war. There could be people who are terrorists coming from Syria, or people with criminal records. So having 2-3 % who do not accept the idea of having Syrians in their country is not an issue, as long as there is no discrimination if you go to schools, hospitals or anywhere; you will be treated with respect. So we will not be angry with those who have issues. […]” [Irbid, Pos. 120]

Help

Like empathy, all arriving community participants mentioned examples of how the receiving community helped and continued to help them; whether in coping with their new environment, providing monetary support, or getting them out of trouble with the police and intragroup fights. The examples raised referred to help provided by NGOs/INGOs, neighbours, friends and random persons.

AC8: “[…] When my son got lost, not only my husband went out searching for him but all the men and youth in the neighbourhood went on searching for him. All of them were Jordanians. One young man did not go home until we found my son; it was almost 3:00 a.m. […] He was not really lost, he is 14 years old, it was during corona lockdown and he went out with his friend, they went far from the house and were sitting together not paying attention to the time and did not know that we were worried and searching for them. All the neighbours went on looking for them.” [Irbid, Pos. 160-162]

Receiving community participants from Irbid emphasized their role in providing assistance to the Syrians. This could most likely be because most participants from Irbid were active members of the society and their occupations involved community work.

RC14: “Through our dealings with Syrians at the Women Empowerment Unit in Irbid Municipality, we have contained all or most Syrian women here. […] Although we [Jordanians] included them in everything and we are giving them jobs, to the extent that projects allocated to Syrian are more than those allocated to Jordanians, they still feel that this is not a favour from us!” [Irbid, Pos. 84]

Instances of seeking to provide help beyond the receiving community’s capacity or resources were made evident, and the AC expressed appreciation.

Rejection, reservation and (self-) exclusion

As the receiving community discussions developed, the initial empathy and acceptance expressed towards the arriving community transformed into profound statements of rejection and reservation, perplexing the researcher’s understanding of their behavioural intentions in this regard. In their references, participants of the receiving community indicated two main reasons for refusing to integrate with the Syrians: 1) failure of the arriving community to meet Jordanians’ reception and support with adequate appreciation and mutual kindness, and 2) the lack of sufficient work opportunities for the two communities; where Jordanians ‘need to be’ prioritized.

Some receiving community participants expressed their disagreement with notions such as ‘we are all Arabs’, ‘Syrians are all good people’, or ‘Syrians know better’. Some also advocated for their confinement to refugee camps or deportation.

RC12: "On the contrary, initially we welcomed them with open arms and took them like our brothers and more, to the extent that I liked them more than I liked my brother, but now, I do not have the will to inquire about any Syrian whatsoever they do." [Irbid, Pos. 79]

RC8: "Some Jordanians do not like to mix up with Syrians, in the sense that each one should mind his business, but not all Jordanians think like that. Some people refuse to mix up with them because they believe that the Syrians occupied our jobs [...]" [Amman, Pos. 226]

RC8: "I would feel annoyed and perhaps I would beat him because he took my job!" [Amman, Pos. 230]

RC12: "[...] I see that the state must transfer Syrians to camps so that every person will know their limits. [...]" [Irbid, Pos. 158]

RC20: "Syrians must be deported!" [Zarqa, Pos. 157]

In contrast, the arriving community participants thought the opposite of Jordanians. In their experience, the receiving community participants initially showed rejection and reservation, which was hurtful for them, but over time most of Jordanians opened up to Syrians.

RC3: "[...] When we first came there was rejection, even from the people around us. There was no intimacy or exchange of visits at all. [...] When we first came for about a year or two there was some suffering! [Amman, Pos. 8]

AC6: "[...] Even children, Syrian children used to be beaten and shamed. Now kids play together in the street and have accepted each other. Even shopkeepers used to show an unwelcoming behaviour towards Syrians, asking them to buy quickly and leave, but now they would welcome them and ask "how's your father? [about the wellbeing of their families]" [Amman, Pos. 25]

AC11: "Until now there are some Jordanians who don't want Syrians to be among them in the community. There are some. It was there before and it still is!" [Irbid, Pos. 107]

AC9: "[...] On the contrary when you say 'I am Syrian' you find a lot of sympathy!" [Irbid, Pos. 111]

It could be argued that the receiving community was initially reluctant to express their rejecting or discriminatory tendencies to the moderator to save their social identities from damage, however, after trust was built in the discussion, they were able to express less socially desired views. Therefore, the latter negative testimonies may be less biased by social desirability.

6.6. Avenues for negotiating integration

This theme focuses mostly on the socio-economic indicators of integration, as seen by the participants of receiving and arriving focus groups. It includes the following broad categories: "barriers to integration", "facilitators of integration", "legal/structural barriers" and "individual, social and economic resources". Category "individual, social and economic resources" includes well-known socio-economic aspects of integration as well as additional resources which are necessary for integration, mainly individual and social resources. Despite this distinction, it is important to note that all of these indicators exist on an individual level as well. A strict line between individual, social and economic resources cannot be drawn.

Overall, this section offers a deeper insight into the issues perceived by both communities as barriers or facilitators to the overall integration process. It begins with a general and abstract overview on the results of the discussion and proceeds to tackle separately each avenue, in which integration is negotiated.

6.6.1. Barriers to integration

Participants of both groups extensively discussed the barriers to integration, yet their reasoning remained somewhat superficial relative to the depth of the problem.

The most important barrier in view of the receiving community participants was attributed to the macroeconomic status of the country. Coexistance with the arriving community was causing unbearable strain on the Jordanian labour market and employment opportunities, particularly for the youth.

RC5: “[…] The Jordanian economy is so weak; I think this is the most important obstacle!” [Amman, Pos. 216]

RC16: “The increase in wage gap, the increase in unemployment rates and availability of job opportunities, and how expensive rents have become!” [Irbid, Pos. 144]

RC23: “When a Syrian citizen accepts a lower price than the Jordanian does [in return for a service], it creates difficulty for the Jordanian citizen!” [Zarqa, Pos. 428]

Another significant barrier brought up by the receiving community was the accusation, refuted by members of the arriving community, which claimed that the Jordanian government takes the grants allocated by the international community to develop its own projects, instead of distributing them to Syrian families. According to the participants, this was causing significant alienation among the two communities.

RC4: “Regarding the aid that comes to Jordan for the Syrian people, they frequently say through social media outlets that Jordan is begging on our account and so on, they say that the Bus Rapid Transit Project is being implemented on the account of Syrians, these are the Syrians' comments, and this is a main reason that the Jordanians started to hate the Syrians, because they claim that they are doing us a favour by living in our country!” [Amman, Pos. 245]

RC11: “[…] Some Syrians kept telling me that ‘you have already received money for hosting us, and you take half of that aid for yourself’. So about 90% of them believe that we have taken what belongs to them, and we do not give them what they deserve. […] Consequently, the issue of love and hatred among us and them is a misunderstanding… a misinterpretation! […]” [Irbid, Pos. 73]

RC15: In the beginning of the Syrian crisis, Syrians gained more rights, opportunities and support than us, but with time, that support began to decrease and these gaps began to widen between them and the Jordanians. They thought that the Jordanians have a kind of control over their support. [Irbid, Pos. 122]

Further obstacles mentioned by the receiving community participants included: NGOs prioritizing and providing help only to the arriving community; lack of professional psychological support; some undesirable traits of the arriving community (rudeness, excessive boldness/ freedom); the scale of the AC; fear/distrust of the outgroup; some variances in cultural and religious practices; racist/ discriminatory behaviour of RC (amplification of class divisions).

Although the receiving community participants admitted treating the arriving community with superiority, most of the blame was directed towards the undesirable behaviours and characteristics of the arriving community. And in the end, the main source for hindering integration in the opinion of the receiving community participants were the members of the arriving community themselves; either for ‘taking over the job market’ or ‘not fitting in’ one way or another.

RC14: “[…] In the beginning, we dealt with them with emotions and we felt that they did not feel the same way about us. We were spontaneous […]” [Irbid, Pos. 99]

RC10: “I think that the main 3 obstacles are the “I” [which implies selfishness], class divisions and traditions and customs!” [Irbid, Pos. 137]

RC13: “To me the most important obstacle is how the Syrians act; whether it is the fact that they don’t like to help Jordanians, or that they are rude and they like to cause problems.” [Irbid, Pos. 142]

RC19: “Lack of equality. […] Everyone is voicing objection against the equality status of Jordanians. Our rights are lost to favour Syrians. […] We are facing injustice in the labour market, aid distribution, and livelihoods. We are experiencing pressures!” [Zarqa, Pos. 461-465]

On the other hand, the arriving community participants saw that the main barrier to their integration was “their continually expanding number in Jordan” [AC9, Irbid, Pos. 35]. Also, drawing on their personal experiences, the majority highlighted the significance of legal barriers in hindering their inclusion; referring to work, ownership, financial services and travel restrictions in the first place. The role and meaning of each category will be examined separately in sections (see code “Work”, “Financial services”, “Legal status of residence”).

AC13: "[...] From the beginning they treated us the same as Jordanians [the participant meant in the eyes of the law], but there are differences in other things like in the labour market there is a big difference… Housing… everything… even the banks treat you differently. As a Syrian you can’t take a loan or even open have a bank account. [...]” [Irbid, Pos. 202]

AC10: “I volunteered with the UNICEF for about 6 years here in Jordan. […] There were Jordanian co-workers in the same department as me, doing the same job for 1200 JODs/ month, but mine was 400 JODs. There was no difference in the work that we did. They had social security and I didn’t not. They had health insurance and I didn’t!” [Irbid, Pos. 230]

Even though some arriving community participants reasserted that discrimination against them was an additional barrier, they were mainly concerned with the roles of the government and NGOs/INGOs in setting up structural and legal obstacles; which were fundamentally impacting the arriving community’s human rights.

AC12: “Justice here is not being achieved, assistance/aids should be distributed equally.” [Irbid, Pos. 268]

6.6.2. Facilitators of integration

Participants of both groups put forward some feasible advice and practical suggestions, as well as some images of wishful thinking.

In the viewpoint of the receiving community participants, the most important facilitators to integration would be: 1) providing a source of living (jobs) for the Jordanians to be able to sustain their livelihoods, and 2) putting an end to the continued accusations by the arriving community regarding the ‘incomplete aid’ that reaches them through utilization of media outlets to make official statements regarding the matter.

RC8: “[…] When everyone has a job, no one would be envying the other, and everyone would be minding his/her own business […]. But if an unemployed person sees the Syrian enjoying a job, they will hate the Syrians, because before that they used to work there but now there is a Syrian person working in their place for a lower wage, so for sure he/she will not like Syrians.” [Amman, Pos. 228]

RC15: “In my opinion, things should be clarified by the Jordanian government itself. How much support they received for the Syrians and how much was given to them. This information should not be vague so that Syrians will not feel that they have not received all of their entitlements. Everything must be clear in relation to international organizations and the situation within Jordan. [Irbid, Pos. 157]

Further facilitators suggested by the RC include: knowing one’s rights and duties (whether Jordanian or Syrian); allowing children to integrate and intermix in schools; providing psychological support as well as training courses/ workshops to the AC; holding debates among the two communities; learning each other’s customs/ traditions; showing empathy towards the outgroup; respecting the privacy of the outgroup; receiving equal treatment by NGOs/INGOs; and enabling a safe environment for the AC.

As for the arriving community discussions, an important point was raised which significantly impacts their integration. Jordan identifies members of the Syrian arriving community as ‘asylum seekers’ rather

than 'refugees'. This implies that they are not entitled to the full rights of refugees as in accordance with international law.

AC14: "[…] If they give me my rights as a refugee, this will be the top and ideal situation in the integration process. I don't want to have all the rights that Jordanians have, but I want to have my rights as a refugee rather than an asylum seeker." [Irbid, Pos. 210]

Other solutions that the arriving community participants proposed based on personal experiences included: merging children in schools (to which the receiving community participants agreed); teaching youngsters the history of the receiving country in order to be able to develop a feeling of connection and belonging; having equal access to work, financial services and travel; developing a fairer aid distribution mechanism by NGOs/ INGOs; and having patience.

AC8: "[…] Why don't they put the kids together in schools?! They will know each other more, love each other more! […]" [Irbid, Pos. 55]

AC12: "[…] They belong to Jordan more than Syria because they know the history of this country and everything about it! […]" [Irbid, Pos. 168]

Overall, some of the propositions gathered are applicable and can be utilized to advance policy-recommendations, whereas others hold overoptimistic views of the present.

6.6.3. Legal and institutional barriers[16]

This theme covers the barriers inherent in the legal and institutional bodies. They incorporate laws, policies and practices implemented by public agents.

Recognition of certificates

The discussion on the recognition of certificates was extensive among the arriving community participants. The main concern was not whether the certificates of the arriving community were being recognized by the ministry of higher education, but whether they were given any value in the work permit issuance process in the corresponding fields.

Work permits in Jordan are limited to the service industry, therefore teachers, doctors, nurses, engineers, lawyers, and even sign language interpreters are not allowed to practice their careers. In many ways, this is equivalent of the state and responsible actors dismissing their university degrees and certifications.

As expected, the arriving community participants expressed their despair regarding the status quo. Some regretted the years and efforts spent on education, others looked for alternate ways to practice their careers; such as working secretly, under somebody else's name, and/or without a formal contract.

AC2: "[…] I who have a college degree can't work in my field of knowledge like a Jordanian or anyone living in Jordan can. I am obligated to work in one of the jobs for which I can receive a work permit; which is only issued for service jobs, mostly like in construction. […]" [Amman, Pos. 93]

AC4: "[…] I also agree with him on the legal challenges. For example, my husband is a teacher. […] He can only work based on an oral/informal contract between him and the employer [the school]. So if he ever needs to demand any rights, nothing will prove his claim in the eyes of the Ministry of Education. […]" [Amman, Pos. 95]

16 The codes "Integration courses" as well as "Family separation" was omitted due to lack of saturation. Instead training courses by NGOs and INGOs were addressed in the relevant codes.

AC9: “My daughters embarrassed me yesterday saying: why are you making us study and put a lot of effort, and eventually we will stay home unemployed?” [Irbid, Pos. 35]

Members of the arriving community consider themselves capable, driven and most importantly experts in what they do. Therefore, not allowing them to practice their professions leaves them feeling devastated and helpless; largely influencing their feeling of integration within the society.

Legal status of residence

Members of the arriving community who escaped Syria without their passports did not face any difficulties for ‘illegally’ crossing the border, although issuing a new passport was and continues to be impossible; because the Embassy of Syria in Jordan will not grant them that right.

Under the umbrella of the Jordanian government, the UNHCR could only issue identification cards, to facilitate their integration of the arriving community within the Jordanian society; such as enrolment in schools, seeking healthcare and using a work permit. However, if an individual aspired to leave the country, they cannot return unless five years have passed; restraining their right to movement outside the country.

Nevertheless, the following quote is evidence of how simply holding an identification card can go a long way for the integration process.

AC6: “when we first came here we didn’t have legal identification cards and therefore used to feel scared. Then when we had a legal status and identification cards we were able to integrate better. We were empowered and interacted better! […]” [Amman, Pos. 78]

In addition, perceiving the empathy of the Jordanian governance reassured the arriving community members; no one reported to be afraid of being caught by the police without holding some sort of an identification card. Simply, no one was going to put them in jail or deporting them back to Syria for merely not having an ID.

AC21: “[…] There is no fear at all! Haven’t they issued legal ID cards for us?! And we went to the police and told them that we came from Zaatari camp?! [Zarqa, Pos. 306]

Yet, having the legal status of residence of a ‘refugee’ rather than an ‘asylum seeker’, might still be of considerable advantage to members of the arriving community who do not hold passports (see category “Barriers to integration”).

Governmental and NGO services

According to the FGDs, services provided by the NGOs and INGOs had far greater impact on the overall success of the integration process, compared to government measures.

The receiving community groups flagged the ‘unilateral fund distribution by INGOs’ as the most detrimental factor to the integration of both communities. Furthermore, some participants criticized the government’s role in this entire process; stating that they need to do more to protect the receiving community better.

RC5: "[...] As a government, they receive billions of dollars in the form of aids to [support] Al Zaatari camp, so they should provide them with facilities that they can benefit from, tailor shops, factories, etc.. The government should let them have their own businesses and to prevent them from getting involved in the Jordanian society, the government must keep them in the camps!" [Amman, Pos. 243]

Whereas participants of the arriving community evaluated the services of the NGOs/INGOs in the context of facilitating or hindering integration more extensively than the receiving community

participants, but did not speak of the government of Jordan critically at all. Possibly, they might have been anxious to express their true outlooks in front of the research team.

The most important criticisms levelled by arriving community participants were: 1) NGOs/INGOs not having a clear/fair set of criteria to base aid distributions on, and 2) cutting off health insurance coverage from the arriving community.

AC22: "They come to you asking whether you ate potatoes! Imagine potatoes! [...] 'Do you buy water?' such questions! Do they want us to die? [...] [These are questions asked frequently by UNHCR when they do home visits; upon which they determine the eligibility of the arriving community family to receive aid. The AC feels that these questions are degrading, unfair and somewhat rhetorical]" [Zarqa, Pos. 438-440]

AC10: "Before, we used to go to a particular hospital, there was an employee from UNHCR, he would do the paperwork and UNHCR would pay for everything." [Irbid, Pos. 136]

Nevertheless, the arriving community participants attributed their survival thanks to the continued, although fluctuating, help they received from NGOs/INGOs and the safety and security provided by the Jordanian government.

AC21: "We both don't have husbands. They give me an eye print and coupons. I wouldn't make if it wasn't for them!" [Zarqa, Pos. 452]

Rule of law, rights and entitlements

The arriving community participants showed great respect and appreciation for the enforcement strategies of the law in Jordan. They were aware that if they have not committed anything punishable by law, the police would not unlawfully hold them accountable. In contrast, if they were found to be guilty of a robbery or other major crime, they would be sent to a special refugee camp called 'the 5th camp'; which resembles a prison with its barbed wires and lack of communication with the outside world.

AC16: "If you haven't done anything no one will come near you!" [Zarqa, Pos. 735]

AC19: "Yes. In this camp nobody can visit you, you can't visit anybody! [...]" [Zarqa, Pos. 731]

Even though most of the arriving community participants engaged in dialogs relating to their knowledge of rights, the entire group of Zarqa stated that no official entity had taken the initiative to explain the legal rights of refugees to them until the time of conducting the FGD; and if they had not done this over the course of almost ten years, it is unlikely that they were planning to do it in the foreseeable future.

AC16: "[...] Ask any Syrian and they'll tell you that they don't know their rights at the UNHCR. Where are my rights? [...]" [Zarqa, Pos. 418]

In the words of the arriving community, their 'rights' are unmatched with the rights of Jordanian citizens. To them, this constitutes a generational problem of hindering integration, as the partition caused by laws might lead the younger generations to develop discriminatory views.

AC2: "There will be no integration as long as there is separation between Jordanians and non-Jordanians in terms of procedures at governmental agencies because now we pay higher fees as non-Jordanians." [Amman, Pos. 201]

The arriving community in Jordan is neither allowed to drive, nor rent a shop, own a business/house, work in most occupations, or obtain health insurance and social security. But most importantly, they

are not given the legal rights of 'refugees', and rather treated as 'asylum seekers' in the eyes of the Jordanian and international governments.

AC15: "Except that we integrate with the community as asylum seekers, we are not refugees [officially], so we don't have refugee rights. We don't have a passport to travel, if I want a passport, I need to go to the Syrian embassy which originally, I am fleeing from. I need a document to travel, if you give me my rights as a refugee, this will be the top and ideal situation in the integration process! [...]" [Irbid, Pos. 210]

6.6.4. Individual, social and economic resources

This theme focuses on individual characteristics, social as well as socio-economic factors that have been identified as relevant resources in facilitating or blocking integration.

Education

The education of hundreds of thousands of children and adolescents was interrupted upon the start of the Syrian crisis. However, in conjunction with UNICEF, the Jordanian government prioritized access of all arriving community students to schools, regardless of their status of residence and legality of entry into the country. This required reducing the number of scholastic hours to both communities in select public schools in order to make room for two teaching shifts per day.

Even though many members of the arriving community felt that they integrated very well in the education system, some highlighted the challenges that this system brought upon Syrian families form their own experience, namely: 1) allocating the same teachers to both shifts reduces the quality of education that the students of the second shift receive; whom are mostly Syrian, 2) not being able to register at any public school, which are widely distributed across the kingdom, forces Syrian students to travel longer each day to arrive at the nearest school in which they are allowed to be registered. This combination of factors contributed to making the arriving community participants feel like outcasts.

AC2: "I emphasize on this point. My friend entered illegally but was able to register in collage and graduated normally without any challenges!" [Amman, Pos. 115]

AC12: "[…] Our integration in education is excellent; Syrian students are treated as Jordanian students; there is no difference!" [Irbid, Pos. 31]

AC4: "[…] We also hold the UNICEF responsible. Since there are schools for Syrians, they could have hired Syrian teachers to teach there because our children aren't receiving the quality education they deserve as their teachers get to work in the early morning and teach both the morning and afternoon shifts. So when the afternoon shift begins at 12:15 PM, the teacher would already be tired of the morning shift as they have about 20-30 students in class. […] Besides all that, there's the law that disables us from registering our children at nearby schools. When you have a school nearby but you can't register your children there, you have to look for a Syrian's education centre. So you have to look for areas where there are centres for teaching Syrians and try to live close by. My husband for example works in Jubaiha, but we have to live in Swaileh or Dahiet Al-Rasheed so my children could go to class. […]" [Amman, Pos. 95]

In addition, some parents requested Syrian teachers be allowed to teach children of the arriving community, arguing that it would potentially result in higher education quality for them. Others, on the other hand, identified the positive effect of being taught by Jordanian teachers on the integration of children; by acquiring the local dialect.

AC16: "[…] If here in schools, Syrian teachers were assigned to teach Syrians, education might get better. […]" [Zarqa, Pos. 270]

AC17: “Even at school, my eldest son is in school in the 1st grade. He says to me “Yes” and “What do you want” [in the Jordanian accent]. I wonder how fast he learned it! He says it’s because his teacher speaks this way.” [Zarqa, Pos. 221]

On the other hand, members of the receiving community split between those who favoured the mixing of both communities in schools, and those who did not; claiming that the ‘special treatment’ of Syrian students (by NGOs/INGOs) would cause further separation and envy amongst the children.

RC22: "[...] When a Syrian student gets a meal, attention, and support; like once they gave an iPad to a Syrian student for Online education, so why not do the same for the Jordanian student, right? This makes them question why they don’t get the same, we study and struggle. When it should be equal." [Zarqa, Pos. 67]

As for university education, the state of Jordan does not have the capacity to provide free access for all; whether a citizen or not. However, Jordanian public and private universities do not discriminate against any particular nationality. As long as applicants meet the requirements for acceptance and are able to afford the fees, any student can and will be admitted.

Members of the arriving community were aware of these criteria, but some preferred if it was made more affordable for them to be able to continue their learning and feel better integrated within the society.

AC9: “[…] The integration in education is great for the schools but when you talk about universities it is a big burden, I cannot pay this amount of money!” [Irbid, Pos. 34]

In sum, the arriving community participants felt integrated within the educational system in Jordan but still faced some worth-mentioning challenges. Whereas participants of the receiving community were not certain whether they preferred the mixing of children in schools over the status quo.

Housing

After the arrival of Syrians in Jordan, the country experienced inflation, including in the rental values of homes. The receiving community members in Zarqa emphasized this as a major cause for why they are not able to fully accept their new reality; which is having the arriving community live amongst them. Especially because the arriving community are entitled to receive monthly aid from NGOs/INGOs whilst they are not.

RC26: "The main problem is home rents. It became extremely expensive." [Zarqa, Pos. 469]

On the other hand, the arriving community groups stated the challenges they needed to overcome to ensure adequate accommodation for them and their families. The arriving community in refugee camps continues to live in unequipped caravans and suffers poor housing conditions. Whereas those living outside the camps find it difficult to secure the rent every month, and have to endure the discrimination of some landlords and neighbours around them.

AC20: “I wish I could leave the camp because it’s difficult there.” [Zarqa, Pos. 333]

AC7: “Our landlord’s sons keep saying to us ‘You Syrians, why did you come here?’, until now they still say that! […]” [Amman, Pos. 31]

Eventually, even though the arriving community members found shelter in Jordan, they criticized not being able to own houses to be standing in the way of their integration, which was criticized by some participants.

AC13: “[…] Even with regard to ownership, you can’t own anything nor register any property under your name unless you are an investor!” [Irbid, Pos. 203]

Work

The receiving community participants made two opposing arguments regarding the integration of the arriving community in the Jordanian labour market. The first one was that the arriving community saturated the market, taking over Jordanians' jobs by accepting lower wages and working conditions; such as long hours and lack of health insurance and social security. And that Jordanian employers took advantage of this and hired 2-3 Syrian employees in the place of one Jordanian; leading to generating feelings of "hate" [RC4, Amman, Pos. 73] and "jealousy" [RC8, Amman, Pos. 228] against the arriving community.

RC3: "I believe that Syrians are the main reason that employers dismiss the [Jordanian] employees who worked for them for a very long time. […] While the Syrians accept anything [low wages] because their situations are different." [Amman, Pos. 238]

RC16: "They've found work opportunities as they have the skills and professions. In return, the Jordanian citizen was affected – the per diem workers and the contractors. […] So, this means that we are excluded." [Irbid, Pos. 29]

RC21: "A girl used to work for 20 JODs, now a Syrian woman does the job for 5 JODs and competes against the Jordanian. They ruined it for all of our young men and women. This happens frequently." [Zarqa, Pos. 35]

In light of this, the receiving community participants suggested that the Jordanian government should take strict measures by specifying the Jordanian to Syrian employee ratio allowed in each workplace (not being aware that the law already specifies a 4:1 Jordanian to non-Jordanian employee ratio), to prevent them from working since they receive aid from NGOs/INGOs, or more extremely, that the government restricts Syrians to camps so they cannot enter the job market.

RC8: "We have to be like the foreign countries, I mean every two Jordanians should work with one Syrian in any given shop or business. […]" [Amman, Pos. 301]

The second argument was that the arriving community entering into the Jordanian labour market revived the market and mobilized the youth; the two communities started working "hand in hand" [RC14, Irbid, Pos. 7] introducing many professions and skills to the Jordanian market; especially in the fields of construction, clothing and food.

RC7: "Certainly, Syrians will not remain dormant in our country, they will develop, they will work, and they will have their own projects! [Amman, Pos. 284]

RC14: We suffer from the culture of shame. Educated people usually say that they will not do these jobs whereas Syrians came and revived the youth to work. They have motivated the youth to change their perspectives regarding the things they could do or not do; as the ratio of unemployment has risen. So just like the Syrian asylum had negatives, there are also positives reflected on our youth! […] Syrians have managed to restructure the lives of Jordanian women and youth to be further dedicated to the nation of Jordan." [Irbid, Pos. 45]

During the discussions with the arriving community groups, participants confirmed that prejudice in the workplace was evident in the first years, after that it considerably declined as time passed. But members of the arriving community participants reported not having any real choice; they had to accept 'anything', incl. several forms of abuse, in return for the livelihood of their families, especially the uneducated.

AC1: "This also was the case when we first came. Now this phenomenon has almost disappeared; to see you as a Syrian who's trying to take over their jobs or income. You can say that this is no longer the case in 75% of the times!" [Amman, Pos. 18]

AC8: "[…] I am saying as Syrians, there is no other option for us, we need to stay in Jordan. Not like any other expatriate [nationality], who have an option. For the Syrians who are uneducated, they are obliged to do any other job to support their families. […]" [Irbid, Pos. 21]

AC12: "[…] Syrian citizens are depending on the crafts more than education. Nowadays more than 95% of the craft-requiring jobs are closed in Jordan, so they have to work in an illegal way which affects both the workers and labour market. There are some places in the tourism industry who are registering the worker as a cleaner but he is actually working in a different craft." [Irbid, Pos. 12]

In many instances, the arriving community's households' financial responsibility was shared by the parents and children, who typically worked after school hours, or dropped out of school to be able to support their families. All of this made them more prone to exploitation.

AC8: "Is it fair that my son who is 14 years old works from 11 a.m. to 2 a.m. for 7 JD/day? He used to take 5 JDs/day and now he is taking 7 JDs/day. He comes back home feeling very tired and unable to even take a shower. He is assisting my husband in paying the rent. This is the reality, now I will have to ask him to leave his school. As I said he arrives home and lays on the floor, I tell him to take a shower and he says, 'I am so tired to stand up'. He works at a restaurant [Shawerma place] and only leaves when he cleans the place entirely. He is the last person to leave. He is only 14 years old. I feel sorry for him. If UNICEF pays for his education just like they are paying for the children whose fathers are in Kuwait or other countries, I will let him continue his studying!" [Irbid, Pos. 255]

According to participants, employees (including NGOs/ INGOs) found loopholes to escape their legal obligations towards Syrian staff, in the same way some of the arriving community participants reported to work under the table bypassing the regulations.

AC12: "Because if they do this [make you pay taxes], this means they should give you a full salary with all the benefits. This is the difference between being a Jordanian or anyone who has a residency as an employee who will be paid 1200 JODs, from being a volunteer who receives [travel] compensations. You do the same work but for slightly less working hours. Instead of 22 days of work, you do 21 days so you will not be allowed to register at the social security cooperation [and tax department]." [Irbid, Pos. 234]

AC14: "For example I am working in mosaic, but I can't work in public, I have to find a mediator. I am obliged to sell my work for the mediator with the price he wants not what I want, so he in turn sells it in the price he wants. It is true that both of us are working, but I feel exploited by both ends; the mediator and the end buyer!" [Irbid, Pos. 15]

The current status does not seem to be beneficial for either community. Tensions in the work sphere were found to be most obstructive of the integration process.

Health and psychological wellbeing

The receiving community members from Amman sympathized with the difficulties the arriving community have had to put up with for having to move to a completely new place, leaving behind their homes, lives, loved ones and pasts. As such, they encouraged that psychological support is provided to them to ease their integration and move past what they have seen during the war. Some also pointed at the positive role some training courses and psychological support provision have had on the reassurance of the arriving community, and consequently their overall integration.

RC1: "[…] Maybe when they came to Jordan for the time they were afraid, it is true, but with training courses and other things that we provided, including the psychological support, they are no longer scared! They became closer to us, to the extent that they became integrated with us and they share our traditions and customs!" [Amman, Pos. 20]

The Zarqa receiving community group, on the other hand, provided an insight on how the arriving community influx indirectly endangered the receiving community's psychological wellbeing. By burdening the receiving community households with higher financial commitments and having to share their bit of the market income with the arriving community, the family atmospheres have been disturbed, sometimes leading to instances of domestic violence.

RC22: "There is another crucial point, that it creates domestic problems; it's different when the husband used to come back home with enough money than having not worked all day. So on whom do they take it out? Their wives and children. This created domestic problems." [Zarqa, Pos. 146]

RC18: "My husband has a bakery store, he used to make 100 JODs daily. For a while now he's been making 20 or 25 JODs only. A Syrian store has opened close to him and a Syrian pastries shop. Now he comes back home and takes out his anger on us!" [Zarqa, Pos. 152]

The psychological wellbeing of individuals and families being troubled by the high living costs and reduced sources of income were highly stressed among the arriving community groups as well.

AC4: "The economic factor has of course a great effect on one's psychological wellbeing. When I'm doing well financially I don't worry when I get sick, or when I fall behind on rent!" [Amman, Pos. 145]

AC8: "[…] I get frustrated about continuing education for my children. My daughter is one of the good students she got frustrated when she learnt that I could not afford her university tuition. She is depressed." [Irbid, Pos. 60]

Some arriving community participants stated examples of receiving child psychological support at Jordanian schools.

AC12: "[...] They were putting a lot of effort on child physiological and scientific rehabilitation. Let's not deny that there is a great concern and care regarding elementary education!" [Irbid, Pos. 52]

Whether it was to pay the house rent, provide food, buy gifts or afford their children's education, both arriving community as well as the majority of the receiving community participants report financial problem impacting their psychological wellbeing.

Age

Old age can be a double-edged sword. On one hand, it was argued that elder persons were more likely to be retired/uninvolved in the labour market, thus had lesser rivals; which was a facilitator to integration since the majority of clashes arose in the work sphere. And on the other hand, it was more difficult for those who still needed to provide for their families to find low intensity jobs; in which case it became a structural barrier.

AC3: "I've become 60 years old and I used to work as a builder, but I can't anymore because it's an exhausting profession. Now I'm unemployed, but I have a small wish that we would be allowed to drive. One who is 60 years old could work as a driver since it would be less tiring! […]" [Amman, Pos. 23]

AC13: "For me, I am an old guy, there are no obstacles really! On the contrary, I only go from my house to the mosque and from home to mosque. People at the mosque like and respect me! […]" [Irbid, Pos. 194]

The RC groups made no reference to the age element.

Health system

At the beginning of the Syrian crisis, all refugees registered with the UNHCR had free-of-charge access to a number of government hospitals across Jordan. Soon after, this support was lifted leaving the arriving community with an alternate scheme.

Today, all registered members of the arriving community have access to primary, secondary and some tertiary health care services at the non-insured Jordanian rate at Public Health Centres and Government Hospitals.

The public and private health care facilities in Jordan treat Jordanians and non-Jordanians equally. This means that as long as a patient shows an ID card and can afford the treatment, they are able to receive any service at any centre or hospital.

However, the arriving community participants stated examples of Jordanian doctors and nurses continuing to sympathise with them from a personal humanitarian standpoint.

AC8: "During the coronavirus lockdown, I took my mother to the hospital and she was admitted. They treated us in a good way. When she passed away, we took her for the burial and nobody demanded that we pay anything until we finished the procedures." [Irbid, Pos. 131]

AC15: "[...] Once the senior doctor knew that I am Syrian and I don't have the UNHCR certificate, he authorized doing all the scans, tests and medication and he did not let me pay anything at all. I did not have the UNHCR certificate and I was in a very bad condition. I swear, I have arrived in only 3 months before the incident, from that moment I felt that I belong here! [...]" [Irbid, Pos. 138]

Although the arriving community members favoured having health insurance coverage, and clarified its positive role in the integration process, they did not feel discriminated against under the current status quo, and sympathized with the comparable difficulties inflicted upon the receiving community.

AC16: "May God be with them. We don't try to inquire about things that aren't our business [how much Jordanians pay at hospitals/ health centres]. We know that the situation in general is difficult in this country!" [Zarqa, Pos. 409]

Financial services

According to the law, non-Jordanians who do not hold a Jordanian residency are not allowed to open bank accounts or request loans. Issuing a residency card requires certain conditions that might be impossible for the overwhelming majority of the arriving community to meet, such as depositing a large amount of money in the bank or owning a property, as well as passing an extensive background check, and not holding an 'asylum seeker' status.

Therefore, to the few Syrian families who have managed to escape the war with their passports and money, this was reported impossible barrier to overcome.

AC3: "There are many challenges. Like if someone wanted to start their own business or open a store, they would have to make an investment. And an investment requires an amount of money to be deposited at a bank. Syrians, most of them, about 90%-95% of them, don't have the required money as they have to deposit a minimum of 50 thousand JODs to make an investment and open an establishment! […]" [Amman, Pos. 94]

AC13: "[…] The banks treat you differently; as a Syrian you can't take a loan or even open have a bank account! […]" [Irbid, Pos. 202]

Macroeconomic situation

The most prevailing viewpoint of the receiving community members was that the Jordanian economy dropped and the prices spiked with the arrival of Syrians in Jordan. Overnight, there were additional 1.5 million individuals to provide services to, without having the sufficient resources nor the necessary infrastructure facilities. And Jordanians, especially day labourers, were left with intolerable living stresses.

RC5: "[…] The Jordanian economy is so weak. I think that this is the most important obstacle." [Amman, Pos. 216]

RC12: "[…] Placing them among us has destroyed us, in terms of the rental values, water, vegetables, supplies, all of this changed. I used to buy vegetables for quarter or a half a dinar, but now I buy vegetables for a dinar and more. This is one of the effects." [Irbid, Pos. 65]

RC19: "Yes, we're now under pressure. Bread prices went up after Syrians arrived, same goes for food supplies. Everything became more expensive. We used to live in acceptable conditions. We were getting by. But now it isn't the same and everything is more difficult." [Zarqa, Pos. 467]

Only a few believed the opposite was true. The contrasting views might be attributed to the varying socio-economic and educational backgrounds of participants; the higher their background, the more indifferent the receiving community participants were.

RC15: "[…] Economically speaking, they have revived the country's economy. They did not stay still but they've worked and worked and hired Jordanian labourers as well. I mean, the projects that the Syrians have established here hired Jordanians and Syrians." [Irbid, Pos. 5]

Similarly, the arriving community members expressed their concern regarding the country's challenging economic situation. Mostly, their contributions to the discussions contained sympathy towards the receiving community who had to put up with life's struggles, just as the arriving community and sometimes even worse.

AC3: "It's the same [the economic situation], and there are even families in worse conditions. We've been here for 7 years and met many people. There are Jordanian families who don't have enough to feed themselves, living in rent, and don't have electricity and water as they can't afford it. And they are Jordanians." [Amman, Pos. 160]

Since work abundance in Jordan and the macroeconomic situation of the country are largely interdependent, the latter constitutes a major obstacle to the process of integration as well.

6.7. Power, cultural, social and geographical struggles and rapprochements

The codes under this theme represent different societal and institutionalized organizing principles that operate on different levels in the integration process in a defined locality. They relate to power dynamics and their manifestation in negotiating hegemony, e.g. over local cultural and/or religious practices and symbols. The underlying question is who has the upper hand to define who is "integrated" and what are the criteria to qualify as such.

6.7.1. Racism and discrimination

The subjects of discrimination and xenophobia against the arriving community were addressed openly throughout most of the FGDs. Despite the academic limitations with regard to appropriateness of using "racism" to label the discrimination based on their nationality receiving community participants themselves used the term racism.

Participants from the Amman receiving community group in particular, felt at ease with conveying the superior and extremist behaviour of some Jordanians towards the arriving community. In their own words, they stated that *"racism is dividing them"* [RC1, Amman, Pos. 150], and 'arrogance' is stopping in the way of forming new relations with them, because they claim Jordan to be their country in which they own better entitlements and an overall higher social, financial and living status.

RC7: "[…] We have a superior attitude towards the Syrians, and the Syrians look at the local citizens from a financial perspective; because we are in our country, in our homes, our houses are not leasehold, so they feel that the financial situations of Jordanians are better than theirs. In general, we look at Syrians as people who came from war! […]" [Amman, Pos. 154]

RC4: "I think arrogance, some people say you are a Syrian, you cannot be my friend, I mean you came to my country as a refugee. I know many people who think like this!" [Amman, Pos. 159]

Some of the causes aggravating discrimination against the arriving community as told by the receiving community participants were: 1) the arriving community taking over Jordanians' work opportunities, 2) the arriving community accusing Jordan of steering aid money away from them, 3) and the international organizations providing breakfast/ other forms of support to Syrian students only.

RC22: "There's something here that some children told me, why is it that in Syrians schools, they give out breakfast meals and they take extra care of them but this does not happen in Jordanians schools, although we have children in need, and we have a high poverty rate. […] This makes them question why they don't get the same, we study and struggle, when it should be equal. [Zarqa, Pos. 67]

The arriving community groups confirmed that discrimination against them prevailed in Jordan, and are an obstacle to integration, however not everyone acted this way.

AC7: "[…] Our landlord's sons keep saying to us "You Syrians, why did you come here?" Until now they still say that. Ever since we came here we've lived in about 5 or 6 homes. Not all of them were the same; it was different every time. […]" [Amman, Pos. 31]

AC6: "Jordanians always say to us that one who's a foreigner must be respectful. They always remind you of that! The expression "You are a Syrian" is said in a way that makes you feel like what is wrong with being a Syrian?! I'm proud to be a Syrian. Why do you say it like that? […] I feel offended by this word." [Amman, Pos. 226-228]

AC10: "[…] Isn't discrimination an obstacle for integration?" [Irbid, Pos. 271]

AC22: ""The Syrian, the Syrian, you're Syrian"; my son isn't called by his name. "The Syrian has come, the Syrian has left, beat the Syrian" that's what happens honestly. I'm saying what my children experience. "The Syrian has come; beat him he's Syrian" but why?!" [Zarqa, Pos. 158]

The arriving community participants confirmed, at least implicitly, that institutional discrimination existed in schools as the quality of schooling is compromised in the afternoon shift (teachers are tired), and AC students are allocated certain schools (distance to schools), but not so much in hospitals or any other official organizations.

AC12: "[…] For them Syria is in war; there could be people who are terrorists coming from Syria, or people with criminal records. So having 2-3 % who do not accept the idea of having Syrians in their country is not an issue, as long as there is no discrimination if you go to schools, hospitals or anywhere; you will be treated with respect. So we will not be angry with those who have issues! [Irbid, Pos. 120]

In the end, discrimination remains a core obstacle to integration in any society, regardless of its prevalence ratio. In the case of Jordan, discrimination seem to be linked to economic resources, and worsened by selective international aid.

6.7.2. Culture

The phrase 'customs and traditions' was frequently brought up throughout all FGDs. Both the arriving community and receiving community groups were quick to mention the significance of cultural norms' proximity in accepting one another. It was stated that one chose to stay in an Arab country because of

their daughters; implying that a non-Arab country may be culturally inadequate to raise 'girls' conservatively.

Examples of customs and traditions specified by the participants included: values and manners; ways of raising children; social interactions with family and friends; traditional and common dishes; the habit of seasonal food storage; religion; language/ dialect; and more specifically means of honouring a deceased person.

AC18: "Integration means to become one people with the same habits and traditions!" [Zarqa, Pos. 224]

RC1: "[…] They became closer to us, to the extent that they became integrated with us and they share us our customs and traditions. […]" [Amman, Pos. 20]

AC9: "[…] I am settled here in an Arab country and I have daughters, if I leave it will be a risk! […]" [Irbid, Pos. 34]

However, the views of both groups split between those who believed the two communities: 1) already shared the same customs and traditions (prior to the Syrian crisis), 2) developed proximity in customs over the years in which they lived together, or 3) have always had/ still have different customs and traditions.

The majority of receiving community participants stated that members of arriving community do not have the same customs and traditions as them. Some of those who rather concentrated on the differences criticized the excessive 'openness' of the arriving community. Only a few respected those differences.

RC15: "[…] There are no social controls or anything that binds them. […] There is no control over their upbringing! […]" [Irbid, Pos. 131]

RC2: "The Syrians have customs and traditions, and we have customs and traditions. It is impossible to make them live according to our customs and traditions! […]" [Amman, Pos. 123]

Whereas the majority of the arriving community reflected that their customs and traditions were already similar to Jordanians or that they had learned a lot from each other through their interaction in the recent years. A few who disagreed, thought that having to 'adjust' their customs to fit in with the receiving community was degrading to their own culture.

AC4: "[…] When we came to Jordan we did learn new beautiful things. And there are things we taught them, for instance my neighbours! Us Syrians have habits regarding storing foods that any girl should learn to do for her family, and how to be a housewife and manage her family affairs well. To back her husband up. This is something we grew up to. […] I have a lovely Jordanian neighbour who always comes to me asking how to do so and so, such as making and storing pickles and 'Makdous' [aubergine], as they buy it from the market. Now we're alike! […]" [Amman, Pos. 235]

AC12: "It is not integration if I have to speak your language or you speak mine. If this was the case, it means that you have let go of your culture." [Irbid, Pos. 81]

Overall, the arriving community participants seemed to be more accepting of the cultural norms of the receiving community, and willing to share their customs with them, whereas the receiving community participants felt more detached from the arriving community in this regard.

6.7.3. Religion

In general, participants considered Jordanians and Syrians as one harmonious community when it comes to religious beliefs and practices. Although both groups seldom mentioned the influence of

religion, whenever it was brought up they mostly viewed it as a positive factor that facilitates the integration process and helps in perceiving both communities as one.

AC3: "[…] there were no problems, and we are all a single community, with the same language and religion" [Amman, Pos. 23]

RC11: "[…] integration is beautiful, and they are an Arab and a Muslim nation, so we have similar traditions and customs! We are all Muslims! […]" [Irbid, Pos. 23]

However, the difference between Shiite and Sunni religious practices was mentioned. One participants described their fear meeting a Shiite Muslim because "they beat themselves and harm themselves until they bleed" [RC3, Amman, Pos. 187] as part of their religious duties. The participant went on to clarify how there is an overall religious coexistence and tolerance in Jordan, even between Christians, Yazidis and Muslims (*Sunnis*), but this was different - an exception to the notion of 'acceptance of other religions'. The way Shiites prayed and fulfilled their religious obligations was not acceptable to them and their family, and surrounded by so many suspicions and question marks. They even went further and explained how they have different 'religions', therefore they could not simply bypass this 'reality' and integrate with the Shiite Syrians.

RC3: "We see how Shiites beat themselves on TV. This makes us feel that there is a barrier, that their religion is different from ours. They are not like us! … Which is why we are afraid of them! […]" [Amman, Pos. 187]

However, it is not clear to what extent this distinction upon religious practices is made among a larger group of the receiving community.

In conclusion, not much emphasis was put on religious differences between the two communities, because they were viewed as Muslim nations alike.

AC13: "[…] Today when I tell a Jordanian person I am from Syria, they would welcome you saying we are all Arab Muslims and there is no difference between us […]" [Irbid, Pos. 102]

6.7.4. Language

Although each region in Jordan and Syria has its slightly identifiable dialect, the two communities speak the same language (Arabic). One region near the border in particular; in the southwest of Syria (Daraa) and the northwest of Jordan (Ramtha), even shares a common dialect.

Therefore, the majority of participants from both FGD groups do not view language or dialect as a barrier to integration in Jordan.

RC11: "I noticed that there are some areas in Syria, such as Daraa in the south; who are similar to us, […]. Even their dialect, it cannot be distinguished from ours; you feel that they are the sons of these villages in terms of customs and traditions, they are the same. […]" [Irbid, Pos. 132]

AC3: "[…] We're all a single community, with the same language and religion! […]" [Amman, Pos. 23]

AC14: "If it was from Arabic to English it would have been an obstacle, but here [in Jordan] that is not the case!" [Irbid, Pos. 84]

Nonetheless, many arriving community participants considered speaking the Jordanian dialect an evidence of integration, which emphasizes the role of language/ dialect in developing a sense of belonging or connectedness to the receiving community.

AC9: "Thank God my children are in the morning shift in school [with Jordanian students]. When we walk together, they don't talk to me because they speak the Jordanian dialect and I speak the Syrian dialect; I see great integration from their side!" [Irbid, Pos. 76]

AC16: "[…] I feel I am Jordanian now. We even speak the Jordanian accent! […]" [Zarqa, Pos. 216]

Furthermore, many in the receiving community groups admire the Syrian dialect. On occasion, participants considered this an additional factor to socialize with each other.

RC1: "[…] I even learned their accent!" [Amman, Pos. 259]

AC9: "On the contrary, my neighbours like my dialect because it is Damascus' dialect. They like me because of my dialect!" [Irbid, Pos. 78]

All in all, not much attention was brought to the role of language/ dialect throughout the discussions.

6.7.5. Locality

A number of setbacks that are confined to Jordan were mentioned by the arriving community participants; one way or another obstructing their integration within the society.

Inherently, Jordan does not naturalize non-Jordanians for merely residing in the country. In the context of the Syrian crisis, this means that members of the arriving community in Jordan do/will not receive Jordanian citizenship after spending a certain number of years in Jordan.

The only exceptions are: 1) when a female marries a Jordanian male, she can receive the nationality within a period of up to three years (like any other Arab nationality), 2) when an individual deposits one million Jordanian Dinars (equivalent to 1.41 million USD) in a Jordanian bank for five years without accruing interest, or 3) when an investor hires 20 Jordanian employees for three consecutive years.

The latter two criteria are extremely hard to meet by the average member of the arriving community, therefore, this translates into a life-time of resident-status for most of the arriving community and their subsequent generations.

AC9: "[…] Just give us our rights like they do in Europe, they give nationalities and you can travel and go out freely." [Irbid, Pos. 213]

In addition, Jordan recognizes the Syrians who entered its borders as 'asylum seekers' rather than 'refugees' due to pro-Arab and pro-Syrian political reasons. This existing state of affairs, upon which further local impediments follow, inhibits the full integration of the arriving community.

AC14: "[…] We integrate with the community as asylum seekers, we are not refugees [officially], so we don't have refugee rights. We don't have a passport to travel, if I want a passport, I need to go to the Syrian embassy which originally, I am fleeing from. I need a document to travel, if you give me my rights as a refugee, this will be the top and ideal situation in the integration process. I don't want to have all the rights of Jordanians, but I want to have my rights as a refugee rather than an asylum seeker!" [Irbid, Pos. 210]

AC4: "You talk about integration. I'm not sure if this is still the case now or not, but how am I supposed to feel integrated when I wish to see Aqaba but I am not allowed to go there?" [Amman, Pos. 177]

However, Jordan was described as an overall safer, more secure and a more comfortable destination country for the arriving community, especially compared to Lebanon and Turkey, as well as the Gulf countries amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

AC8: "The truth is that Jordan is the only country where Syrians are happy. When you hear about what happens in Turkey or Lebanon, you will feel that Syrians have integrated in Jordan." [Irbid, Pos. 88]

AC14: "The aftermath of the corona crisis is the main proof that integration exists in Jordan; because in the Gulf countries they demanded the deportation of expatriates/ non-citizens at once. It was critical and overwhelming for them, even though they have oil and everything [resources). Whereas Jordan is

a poor country, but this idea did not even cross their mind at all. They did not say that the Syrians should leave." [Irbid, Pos. 121]

6.8. Perspectives on integration – conceptualizations and outlook

The is the second half of theme "Perspectives on integration" and in contrary to the first part which is related to personal experience of integration, this part contains more abstract thoughts on integration as well attributions of responsibilities and an outlook into the future effects of integration.

6.8.1. Understandings of ideal integration

Throughout the FGDs, participants of both groups identified three broad aspects to the term 'integration', according to their understanding.

Firstly, integration is to voluntarily acquire the culture, tradition, habits and dialect of the other group, to belong to the same ethnic group, and have the same religion. In other words, it is integration understood as the state of social homogeneity of the arriving and receiving communities that are living together. Given that race, religion and culture play an essential part in defining one's identity, particularly in this part of the world, participants acknowledged this element as an integral part for both; defining and achieving integration.

RC11: "[…] Integration is beautiful! They are an Arab and Muslim nation and we have similar tradition and costumes! […]" [Irbid, Pos. 23]

AC1: "I see integration as, us Syrians coming here, should learn the locals' customs and lifestyle and blend in accordingly! […]" [Amman, Pos. 79]

AC13: "[…] For example, my son's haircut! My son speaks the Jordanian dialect. We learned how to dress, the dialect, so on. […] All of this is helpful for integration." [Irbid, Pos. 106]

AC16: "Integration is having similar opinion with no differences. […]" [Zarqa, Pos. 216]

AC18: "Integration means becoming one people with the same habits and traditions!" [Zarqa, Pos. 224]

Secondly, integration is the exchange of relations; whether positive or negative. This dynamic generates feelings, relationships, reactions and associations with one another. In the opinion of participants, this is how boundaries are overcome and normalization takes effect. Some of the examples of intergroup relations mentioned were: visiting each other, sharing happiness and grievances, attending school together, marriage, eagerness to help and provide support, developing sense of belonging, mutual respect of opinions, acceptance and trust.

RC1: "Integration exists a 100%, because we have either negative or positive feeling towards them, regardless, […], what is important is that we feel something; so integration is there!" [Amman, Pos. 94]

RC7: "Genuine trust plays a key role between any two persons, whether Jordanians or Syrians." [Amman, Pos. 144]

AC13: "For me, belonging is very important for integrations; if you do not have a sense of belonging to the society, you will never be able to integrate with them!" [Irbid, Pos. 188]

AC19: "To not feel that they are different, to be able to go out with them, have coffee together, and consider them as our own people, and to even mourn the loss of family members together!" [Zarqa, Pos. 226]

Lastly, integration was stated to include being recognized and treated equally from the viewpoint of the legal system. It is crucial that the governing laws create a sense of equal citizenship in terms of work, health, education, housing, movement and even aid distribution. The receiving community groups

expressed their frustration with the increased financial burdens, less job opportunities, and the redirection of aids towards the arriving community exclusively following the Syrian crisis. Whereas the arriving community participants repeatedly stressed that as long as they are not receiving equal rights and opportunities, differences will remain among them and the receiving community; thus integration will not be feasible.

RC25: "Jordanians should be prioritized, and then come the Syrians. They are in our country and now it seems to be the other way around!" [Zarqa, Pos. 169]

AC13: "It is like becoming a Jordanian, […], 100% by law, health, living and all other aspects! [Irbid, Pos. 200]

AC4: "Full integration occurs when I receive my full rights as if I was home. Do I have the right to travel? […] Do I have the right to work anywhere I find suitable for me? […] Not to feel like a stranger? […]" [Amman, Pos. 136]

In conclusion, legal inequality was the most conflict-laden aspect of discussing the conceptualization of integration. However, integration was also the understood as the commonality of the two communities and the two-way intergroup dynamics.

6.8.2. Responsible actors

The roles and responsibilities of various actors in facilitating the integration of the arriving community were touched upon throughout the FGDs. The most important actors identified were the governments and NGOs/INGOs.

Receiving community

Given the circumstances the arriving community has been through, as well as the good-natured relations between Jordanians and Syrians prior to the start of the Syrian crisis, some receiving community participants thought that part of the responsibility for achieving integration falls on them; by initiating relations with the arriving community, and approaching them in an open, welcoming manner.

RC1: "[…] Something inside me told me that I have to be her friend!" [Amman, Pos. 48]

RC5: "[…] I thought that I have to treat them the same way they treated me; with generosity and warm welcoming! They treated us nicely, so this cultivated the seeds of love and brotherhood between us. After all, we are all Arabs!" [Amman, Pos. 52]

However, this role was considered rather insignificant relative to the other actors, and the arriving community groups did not hold any of the receiving community members responsible.

Arriving community

According to the arriving community groups, there are things that they collectively can do in order to integrate better with their receiving community; namely: 1) developing a sense of belonging to the society, 2) teaching children the value of loyalty to their current place of residence, and 3) being more transparent with INGOs (in terms of financial status and quality of life) to allow a fairer allocation of aids to the more disadvantaged segment of the arriving community to avoid their total marginalization.

AC6: "[…] We are supposed to tell them [our children] that Jordan is beautiful just as Syria was! […]" [Amman, Pos. 218]

AC13: "For me belonging is very important for integration, if you do not have a sense of belonging to the society, you will never be able to integrate with them!" [Irbid, Pos. 188]

AC16: “[…] I blame Syrians; because if they told me to get aid, I would refuse as others are in greater need and I can take you [the INGOs] to them. […]” [Zarqa, Pos. 420]

Some receiving community participants also thought the arriving community must try and integrate with them, as it will be beneficial for both communities.

RC3: “They should integrate with us, we will learn new things and they will learn new things! […]” [Amman, Pos. 299]

In conclusion, both groups thought that the arriving community has a greater role in achieving integration than the receiving community.

Governments

Given the limited resources of Jordan and the considerable burden on national and local systems and infrastructure caused by the large influx of refugees over the decades, both the arriving community and receiving community groups expressed dissatisfaction with regard to the present living conditions in Jordan.

Both groups supposed that it is mainly the responsibility of the Jordanian government to support its residents and citizens equally in terms of providing better living prospects; which for them is the key factor for realising long-lasting integration.

The arriving community participants were mainly concerned with the legal obstacles that prevent them from practicing certain professions, getting loans and driving. Nonetheless, they also explained how such variance in laws creates further segregation between the new generations of the two communities.

AC16: “A driving license to me is more important than anything.” [Zarqa, Pos. 611]

AC4: “If not for these differences in procedures, the new generation wouldn’t have this idea planted in their heads that this is Syrian, Jordanian, or Palestinian. […]” [Amman, Pos. 213]

Whereas the receiving community participants were worried about the regulations that allow the saturation of the labour market with non-Jordanians on their own expense.

RC4: “[…] We have to blame the government which should have given priority to Jordanians; the Ministry of Labour is useless because it should have done so already!” [Amman, Pos. 240]

RC15: “[…] The State itself must help them with their projects and take care of them. The state must facilitate their work so that such barriers are abolished! […]” [Irbid, Pos. 157]

Media

Some of the receiving community participants, particularly from Irbid, voiced their opinion regarding the role of media in approximating between the two communities through dissemination of certain facts regarding the arriving community’s presence in Jordan, the mechanism/amount of aid expenditure, as well as the tolerant behavioural intentions of the receiving country towards Syrians.

RC11: “[…] The media must give facts about the numbers of Syrian refugees inside Jordan, inside the camps, and inside governorates. The media must also show Jordanians’ views with the aim of approximation of opinions between the Syrians and the Jordanians. If we apply these two points, in my opinion there will be integration. It may reach an ideal situation in this manner.” [Irbid, Pos. 156]

RC15: “Such issues must be broadcasted on television by an official person who is specialized in economy!” [Irbid, Pos. 157]

Overall, not much emphasis was placed on the role of media among Jordan’s FGDs.

Private Sector

As the main concern for the receiving community groups was the macroeconomic situation as well as the scarce job opportunities in Jordan, some receiving community participants placed emphasis on the pivotal role which the private sector can have on realizing equality with regard to employment.

The receiving community groups stated that Syrians, or any other migrant groups in Jordan, accept lower wages and working terms relative to Jordanians. Since the government does not dictate the contractual details of private sector employees, a large responsibility falls on business leaders to provide equal opportunities and employment terms to Jordanians and non-Jordanians alike.

RC18: "[…] Business owners, restaurant owners, or building owners, should coordinate equally among Jordanians, Syrians, and Egyptians so that no hard feelings could arise!" [Zarqa, Pos. 372]

NGOs and INGOs

As a developing country, Jordan largely depended on foreign aid before and after the Syrian humanitarian crisis. However, most of the international aid directed towards Jordanian families were cut off with the arrival of Syrians, leaving many in worse living conditions compared to the arriving community.

Therefore, the receiving community participants stressed that the INGOs have a responsibility to reactivate assistance to them, and provide equal support to both communities.

RC19: "Equality. There should be equality between us!" [Zarqa, Pos. 228]

In addition, the arriving community participants believed that the INGOs were creating further inequalities within the arriving community members themselves. For this, they suggested reducing institutional bureaucracy, adopting fairer aid distribution criteria, as well as opening job vacancies to the arriving community, instead of constantly looking for volunteers.

AC8: "[…] If UNICEF pays for his education just like they are paying for the children whose fathers are in Kuwait or other countries, I will let him continue his study. […] Just because my husband is physically with us does not mean we do not need the assistance!" [Irbid, Pos. 255]

AC12: "Another matter is working for the non-profit organizations in general. About 90 -95% of the organizations here say that Syrians should be working as volunteers [for no wages]. Why should they do that instead of working for return of money?" [Irbid, Pos. 27]

6.8.3. Future effects

The conceptualization of a fully integrated community seemed implausible to many, and the future remained unclear for both groups.

The receiving community participants were relatively pessimistic, especially from outside the capital Amman. Essentially worries about the employment, housing and infrastructure capacities of the country were raised. Although a few foresaw a flourishing national economy with the further integration of the arriving community, many longed their safe return to Syria.

RC5: "[…] If within 5 years the number of hospitals is not increased, they will be overcrowded, the schools will be overcrowded, the universities also will be overcrowded, jobs and everything!" [Amman, Pos. 276]

RC16: "Integration is not easy because it has several negative consequences for the Jordanian people!" [Irbid, Pos. 31]

RC11: "We are with their repatriation out of love towards them and to their homeland, as the old saying provides 'when you are in your country, you are like a king no matter what is the situation in your country, it will embrace you.' […] It is not out of hate towards them." [Irbid, Pos. 166]

RC20: “It affects the Jordanian child because when there is a Syrian child, they pay more attention to the Syrian in the same class.” [Zarqa, Pos. 211]

Whereas the arriving community participants had a more optimistic outlook of the future living circumstances in Jordan, under the condition that certain legal barriers are resolved.

AC2: “[…] The new generation would be more adapted and integrated!” [Amman, Pos. 214]

AC13: “There will be a very big difference honestly, a very positive difference. It would be different in all aspects, the living circumstances, labour market, health care, law! […]” [Irbid, Pos. 202]

AC3: “[…] Integration occurs when you can practice all your rights anywhere in your country of residence within your legal rights! […]” [Amman, Pos. 137]

6.9. Conclusion

A total of 46 participants discussed their opinions and experiences in six FGDs held in Amman, Zarqa and Irbid with members of the receiving and arriving communities. Over the course of thematic analysis, the following four themes emerged: “Perspectives on integration”, “On intergroup relations”, “Avenues for negotiating integration” and “Power, cultural, social and geographical struggles and rapprochements”.

The qualitative research has shown signs of complex rapprochement between the two communities. The arriving community expressed content for living in Jordan irrespective of the economic and legal limitations that are yet to be resolved. They also recognized the good deeds of the Jordanian people who readily provided shelter and safety to hundreds of thousands, prior to founding a plan to manage the crisis, prioritizing the lives of arriving community over the livelihoods of the receiving community. Whereas relations have clearly deteriorated in the view of the receiving community, while the arriving community were more reluctant to openly admit this, but there were a number of quotes that testify to this.

First and foremost, the hindering of integration comes down to the scarcity of resources and severe economic hardships that Jordan has been struggling with since before the Syrian crisis has started. Wearied by the recurrent financial obligations, the socio-economic statuses of both communities made way to misunderstandings and ostracism.

“the hindering of integration comes down to the scarcity of resources and severe economic hardships that Jordan has been struggling with since before the Syrian crisis has started”

For instance, negative intergroup feelings and perceptions of threat might have been particularly evident in the receiving community groups of Irbid and Zarqa due to the lower development indices in these governorates, relative to the capital Amman. People in Amman are usually disengaged and enjoy a more secure living standard, which is probably why they object less to the magnitude of financial strain on the country as caused by the refugee crisis.

“perceptions of threat might have been particularly evident in […] Irbid and Zarqa due to the lower development indices”

The receiving country’s economic exhaustion is causing a great deal of variability in the future effects of integration. According to the outcomes of the report, the INGOs and private sector employers have a substantial influence on facilitating the process of integration, achieving financial

“INGOs and private sector employers have a substantial influence on facilitating the process of integration”

equality and alleviating some of the psychological burdens, be it by standardizing the aid distribution criteria, or by paying equal/ higher wages for employees of both communities.

Second, the legal aspects constitute a considerable obstacle to integration. Given that Jordan shares a 362-kilometre border with Syria, a large number of Syrians fled to Jordan to seek refuge. However, the arriving community has not been granted equal rights as the receiving community, especially in terms of financial services, ownership and movement (in and out of the country). In terms of future relations, the arriving community expressed optimism and steering of ways in the right direction on the conditions that some legal obstacles, unequal aid distribution and financial strains are resolved.

According to the findings of this research, a certain proportion of the receiving community in Jordan seems not yet adjusted completely to the presence of Syrians amongst them, nor the slight differences in their lifestyles, customs and traditions, dialect or certain religious practices. Given the perception that both communities are more similar than different, the intolerant behaviour of a certain percentage of the receiving community has an adverse ripple effect on the self-esteem and social identity of the arriving community and their overall integration for continuing to live in Jordan.

"a certain proportion of the receiving community in Jordan seems not yet adjusted completely to the presence of Syrians amongst them"

7. Swedish qualitative field study

In the following section, the sampling of the Swedish field study is presented and the limitations of the research are discussed. Subsequently, the results are outlined and a conclusion is drawn as a final step.

7.1. Sample

As outlined and explained in D3.1 Research design and methodology, the FGDs were conducted in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö, which are the same locations included in the surveys. The study locations were chosen based on the number of resettled refugees from Syria in the areas.

Recruitment was done through a snowball sampling technique. The researchers shared information about the research with their network, both private and professional, though social media. Information on informed consent, the purpose of the project, the nature of the research and how to contact the researchers if interested was made available online on the FOCUS website. For those who did not participate their contact information was deleted. Participants who had pre-existing personal or professional researcher were not included in the FGDs. As diversity was sought participants were selected based on their diversity in the categories set out in Table 5.

The change from face-to-face FGDs to those conducted online (as discussed below in the Limitations section) restricted the amount of demographic-data that could be collected from the participants, as compared to those conducted in person. This was a result of ethical-legal restrictions related to the collecting and sharing of personal data online between the researchers and the participants. As such, only limited demographic data could be collected from the participants, that being the data they freely volunteered during the focus group. This lack of data was most notable for the receiving community. However, recruiting for the FGDs was guided by the need to ensure diversity of participants and secure a heterogeneous sample with regards to the parameters on gender, age and education. As such, there is more information on these areas.

Twelve members of the *receiving community* participated in the study, of which seven identified themselves as female and five as male. Their age ranged from twenty-two to fifty-five years. Six participants had a migratory background. Of the limited information available one participant had an upper secondary education and one held a university degree at a Batchelor's level. Concerning the current employment status, two were employed, one was on parental leave and one was in full-time education.

Regarding the *arriving community*, twelve members participated in the FGDs. Seven identified themselves as male and five as female with an age range from thirty-two to sixty-two years old. One participant was educated to a lower secondary level and one to an upper and post-secondary level. Five had an education at a Batchelor's or Master's level. Three participants were employed full-time, one part-time, two were unemployed and one was doing an apprenticeship.

Table 5: Participants' sociodemographics Sweden

Community		**Receiving**	**Arriving**
Participants	Total	12	12
	Male	5	7
	Female	7	5
	Diverse	0	0
Age range (years)	Range	22 -55	32-62
	18-29	2	1
	30-49	1	5

	50-67	1	1
Residential duration (years)	Range	10-life	
Migratory background		6	-
Place of residence	Stockholm	4	5
	Gothenburg	4	3
	Malmö	4	4
Marital status	single	3	4
	Married	1	3
Education	Lower Secondary		1
	Upper/ post-secondary	1	1
	Short cycle tertiary education		
	Bachelor's or equivalent level	1	3
	Master's/ doctoral or Equivalent level		2
Labour status	Employed full-time	2	3
	Employed part-time		1
	Parental leave	1	
	Unemployed		2
	Pupil, student, further training, unpaid work experience	1	1
	Apprenticeship		
	Fulfilling domestic tasks		
	In retirement or early retirement		

7.2. Limitations

In April 2020 it was decided by MAU (in consultation with all relevant FOCUS Consortium partners) that all FGDs in Sweden would be shifted from a face-to-face format to an online format. This was based on a risk assessment of the feasibility and potential harm of conducting face-to-face FGDs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This shift to an online format could have impacted the sample negatively. There was a risk that only those with a certain level of technical literacy could participate. This was seen as less of an issue for the receiving community, or those in the arriving community who had been in Sweden for some time. This is because there is a very high level of computer literacy and dependency on technology in daily life in Swedish society. For example, many public and private services are only available online and through Apps. Further to this, by the time the FGDs were conducted, many people in Sweden had been exposed to online forums (due to having to work and/or study online as a result of restrictions and guidelines put in place due to COVID-19. As such, everyone contacted (including those who did not wish to participate) said they felt comfortable using a digital platform. Despite this, the researchers also made it clear that they would assist the participants using the software if needed, including undertaking “test runs”.

On the other hand, the online nature of the FGDs meant that it could actually have increased accessible for some people who may not have otherwise participated. For example, without the need to travel to the FGDs in person, this reduced the time commitment for participants, or the unease at travelling to parts of the city or certain buildings that they may not have been to before.

In terms of the impact of the online form on the FGDs in practice, they did at times feel stilled or disjointed. The FGDs, initially at least, did not flow in a similar manner as is normally the case with face-to-face FGDs. Tactics that encourage open and frank engagement of ideas (such as placement of chairs) were not possible on a digital platform. Thus, the role of the moderator was heavily focused on creating a space where the participants understood the purpose of the exercise and felt that the space was safe and open for them to contribute to the discussion. This was undertaken in a reflective manner by the researchers in FOCUS group Consortium as well as with other peers at Malmö University who had more experience using this method.

With regard to the impact of sampling and social desirability on the findings, this was perceived to be most impactful in the case of the receiving community. The sample included those with 'an interest' in asylum migration. This was because, without such an interest there would be little incentive for participation, as well as the findings not being focused enough to answer the research questions. This interest varied, and while for some this meant they had a migratory background or work(ed) with migrants/integration, for others it was more of a general interest. However, none of the participants voiced opinions that asylum migration to Sweden should be restricted or that any of those who had been granted a status may not have been deserving of this. There is also a strong tendency towards social desirability in discussions in Sweden in general.

For the arriving community the sample varied more so than for the receiving community, in that all refugees from Syria were seen as being possible participation. This meant that a much broader sample could be reached out to and participation in the FGDs was not narrowed to those who had an interest in integration. As such the responses were more varied and participants held opposing opinions or challenged each other's claims much more often than in the receiving community FGDs.

7.3. Coding results

In the following sections, the content of the four major themes which emerged from the Swedish focus groups are presented and interpreted. Four themes consisting of several (sub-)codes elaborate on the current and future integration process between receiving and arriving community from different angles and positions.

7.4. Perspectives on integration – the status quo

The first theme subsumes perceptions and reflections on the term and process of integration in general. It was split into two parts of which the first half contains accounts on the current status of the integration process or "How integration has evolved so far" also represented as the affective state of "Feeling integrated".

7.4.1. How integration has evolved so far

When reflecting upon how integration has evolved so far between the two communities, segregation and increasing polarization were terms that often arose for most FGDs. The receiving community in particular reflected on this, doing so at a structural level. FGDs for the receiving community in all cities included discussions about how segregation and polarization does not only impact refugees from Syria, but migrants/those with a migrant background in general (see category "Intergroup contact" for further discussion on the impact of segregation on the integration process).

For both communities' integration was seen, by and large, as going 'ok' (neither positive nor negative) or poorly and required improvement. The receiving community thought integration was very likely to get worse due to the changing political landscape and the rise of support for parties that hold anti-immigrant/immigration positions (see category "Self-perception on one's own group").

RC5: “I think the integration has been a bit so-so.” [Gothenburg 00:07:55].

RC9: “I think that we can see a political landscape with a lingo that has changed to something rougher and a much harder society which is more polarized between refugees and Swedes.” [Malmö 00:06:29].

AC9: “To be honest I don’t have a solution for better integration, but what I can see is this form of integration is not enough, all the efforts put into integration are not working properly, the result is having segregated communities.” [Malmö 00:30:12].

RC9: “I think that people in general feel strongly ‘we and them’. As you’ve mentioned there are so incredibly few points of contact. Even if you live in the same city or country or street or whatever it might be, there are still oceans in between. It doesn’t feel like you have something to do with each other. That one lives are parallel to one another.” [Malmö 00:32:28].

7.4.2. Feeling integrated

For the code ‘feeling integrated’ the arriving communities’ responses can be summarised as one whereby they are all in different phases of adaption to life in Sweden. This was highly individual, but most participants noted that they were going through a transformation or evolution as part of the integration experience. This evolution was often presented as a tension between their past social context and their new one in Sweden: between ‘Syrian-ness’ and ‘Swedish/Swede-ness’, with an unclear goal or destination. Those who claimed to be experiencing no or only minimal tension between these positions were also those who claimed they felt more integrated.

AC12: “I also benefited a lot coming to Sweden. My husband [laughs] how am I going to explain this to you? Ok, I used to live in a village, not a city, and there are certain things I liked, but were not allowed in my village. For example, when we came here so many things changed. When I was in my village I wasn’t allowed to drive. When we came here, my husband wants me to get my driver’s license. He started buying me flowers and gifts [laughs]. There are some people who came here and had more complications. As for me, I benefited a lot coming here, my husband became better. I am not against integration, but we can just take what we need from this society, and keep things we need from our culture.” [Malmö 00:45:27].

Even though many in the receiving community said integration was a two-way process, only one referred to feeling integrated with the arriving community, or other migrant populations more generally (this participant had a migrant background). The receiving community did take perspective on how integrated the arriving community may feel, and why they may form a social network with those who they have similarities with. Developing a social network was said to be very important for members of the arriving community in how integrated they felt (see category “Intragroup relations”).

RC3: “And as you said, RC2, it is hard that one has the soul in one country and the body in another. And by that, maybe one finds it easier to spend time with people who are similar to oneself.” [Stockholm 00:12:30].

7.5. On intergroup relations[17]

This theme subsumes descriptions, lived experiences and attitudes towards the intergroup relation between receiving and arriving community.

17 The code Intergroup Feelings was not included as there was a complete overlap with the Attitudes and Perceptions of the Outgroup.

7.5.1. Attitudes and perceptions of the outgroup

The discussions revealed various images, prejudices and stereotypes about the respective outgroup, i.e. the arriving and receiving communities, which appeared to be generalised and quite polarized in their quality. The receiving community were not able to distinguish between the arriving community and other forced migrants, but instead referred to refugees in general. Similarly, the arriving community often referred to 'Swedes' as the receiving community, though this can be broadly understood as those in Sweden who do not have a migrant background (it should be noted that this was not synonymous with the definition of the receiving community in this research).

Surprisingly, the arriving community's right to seek asylum in Sweden was never questioned in any FGD, neither was any other migrants right to travel to Sweden (see "Limitations"). There was also a general narrative that the arriving community were pro-actively trying to integrate. Some receiving community participants stated that the arriving community had a higher level of education as compared to other recent refugee flows. Others referred to the perceived vulnerability of the arriving community as a result of the trauma they experienced before arriving in Sweden, as well as while waiting for a decision on their asylum application.

The only negative attitudes that arose were in relation to the perception of the arriving community's views on women's rights. Feminism was noted on several occasions as the only non-negotiable part of being accepted in Sweden, something that was seen as to be in tension with some in the arriving community' views.

RC5: "[We] help them with those values we find obvious, such as when young Swedish girls wears short pants this doesn't mean that they are whores, which I actually have encountered in some discussions with young Syrian refugees". [Gothenburg 01:06:09].

RC3: "On the other hand, there are those traditions and cultures that people bring with them when they come to Sweden. Sometimes it collides with democracy in Sweden, with laws in Sweden. For example, this view on women. [S]ome societies have a tradition, a culture, of how one views women. And they HAVE this view, both men and women, and it becomes a problem when they come here[.]" [Stockholm 00:13:55].

The arriving community noted having much more contact with the receiving community than vice versa. Their narratives of the receiving community were much more homogenous. They saw them as polite but individualistic, reserved and unspontaneous.

AC10: "[I]n terms of dealing with them directly, they are nice people. For example, they don't bother you their words, actions and reactions etc." [Malmö 00:22:30].

AC9: "It is an individualistic society, people don't have a lot of relationships with each other, they only meet up on weekends, you rarely find people who get together during the week". [Malmö 00:16:54].

AC3: "Swedes, even amongst themselves, are not very social". [Stockholm 00:12:14].

AC2: "You feel there is a limit where the friendship stops, you can't get in. It is not difficult to talk to them because they really are nice. They are not mean, but there is something that is stopping the relationship from developing so we can become friends, like normal[.]" [Stockholm 00:23:19].

In addition, the arriving community noted that socialising was based around rigid and unwavering traditions, habits or routines, such as 'fika' (coffee breaks) and watching sporting events. These which were regularly criticised as being restrictive, forced or boring by the arriving community.

AC8: “The Swedes respect their traditions a lot. Even the Marxists among them take part in many activities that are related to religion because they think of them as tradition that must live on.” [Gothenburg 00:18:36].

7.5.2. Perception of threat

Perception of threat was only really prominent in the FGDs with the receiving community in Malmö. This was not surprising given the highly politicized nature of integration in the city, with gang violence often being attributed to lack of integration in the political and media discourse. This media and political discourse of migrants, or areas of the city with a large number of persons with a migrant background, as being a threat or dangerous was contested by the receiving community in Malmö.

RC10: “[T]oday one often connects integration with questions about legal offences and crime and so on, gang crime and all of that. Somehow this has become one and the same debate, which can feel undifferentiated and pretty sad”. [Malmö 00:07:07].

RC9: “[F]or instance if you take a look at Gothenburg, with its suburbs, or Stockholm, who have a similar crime rate happening, still Malmö is being pointed out in this way. And I think that it is actually about the fact that Malmö IS quite integrated [laughs]. [Malmö 00:38:43].

The perception of threat however went beyond crime, and was reflected upon by a member of the receiving community as a more substantial threat to ‘Swedish’ culture and/or ethnicity.

RC12: “I feel that, even if we think about 10-15 years back, people very seldom talked about the fear that people from a different ethnicity would become a majority, and this is something that I feel is talked about much more today. That people are afraid that people from a white Swedish ethnicity are going to be a minority. And this includes the fear that the ‘Swedish’, with quotation marks, the ‘Swedish’ race is going to be extinct…. So this is a different kind of rhetoric which is also influencing the relation between these different groups in society.” [Malmö 00:18:52].

While the arriving community made minimal references to the perception of threat, when they did so it was in relation to the expectations this placed upon them.

7.5.3. Self-perception of one’s own group

A significant shared narrative for most of the receiving community in all three cities was one of either the wider community’s solidarity with the arriving community or their increasing resistance to the arrival of ‘asylum seekers/illegal migrants’. The receiving community’s self-perception strongly indicated that they saw their community as deeply polarised on the issue of migration, especially asylum migration.

People were seen as either pro-or anti-immigrant, or, as it was referred to by several participants, racist or anti-racist. It was understood that one could shift between these groups (with one participant reflecting on their journey from ‘neo-Nazi’ to ‘anti-racist’). This was seen to be possible for those with anti-immigrant views if they learnt, or were taught, to be critical of the sources of information they received (no participant specified what these sources were).

Being anti-racist was seen as being logical (logical reasoning being framed as a fundamental part of ‘Swedish-ness’ by the participants), as compared to holding racist views which was claimed to be illogical. Some FGD participants from the receiving community believed that the anti-racists had an obligation to inform society at large about the dangers of racism/anti-immigrant sentiments.

This was interesting as the participants generally saw that the ‘average’ Swede was anti-immigrant, or did not show overt solidarity with migrants, and was thus to be considered as being illogical and un-Swedish. Further to this, when referring to people they knew who held racist views, this behaviour was

often separated from other personal traits which were seen as positive. People could therefore be 'nice', 'kind' or 'smart' despite holding these views which was seen as illogical and deeply immoral to many of the participants (see category "Racism and discrimination" for further discussion).

RC5: "I was dating a guy who became a neo-Nazi, and some of the people I grew up with got stuck in this, on the wrong side of source criticism so to say… I try to acknowledge that the person behind these [racist] thoughts actually is a rather smart and nice person. They have just had bad luck when they are thinking[.]". [Gothenburg 00:44:43].

RC4: "[T]here are very different groups within Swedish society who have pretty differing opinions around refugees. Both positive and negative." [Stockholm 00:29:55].

RC9: "I don't see this kind of solidarity from the Swedish average man who sees [people's] need for seeking asylum…, instead it's more about [seeing them as] someone who depletes." [Malmö 00:23:22].

RC1: "[T]here is quite a lot of negative feelings regarding refugees generally in society." [Stockholm 00:02:32].

A noteworthy point where the receiving community indicated a noticeable shift away from solidarity towards anti-immigrant sentiments in society was the arrival of large numbers of migrants in 2015-2016 (the same time when the Syrian arriving community arrived in Sweden). This was initially linked with the receiving community becoming less willing to help the arriving community. The participants noted that the changing political landscape, with a significant growth in support for political parties with anti-immigrant positions in the 2018 national election, was a consequence of this change in societal attitude to asylum migrants in 2015-2016. However, in line with the perceived polarisation in the receiving community, some participants compared this with the large-scale welcoming and positive response from the public and civil society to the arrival of asylum seekers in 2015-2016.

RC7: "[I]n 2015, when the big refugee wave came there was A LOT of people everywhere who were doing Refugees Welcome things and so on. And this was amazing, but it's like it has gotten a bit cold in our society regarding this question the past few years. There is no focus on it any longer in my surroundings." [Gothenburg 00:18:30].

This political landscape was seen as further hindering the debate on migration/integration, which, as mentioned earlier, many participants from the receiving community claimed was essential to challenge the racist/anti-immigrant discourse. This inability to talk about certain integration issues was explained to be a result of pressure from those who were at opposites side of the political spectrum on immigration.

RC11: "But I feel anyway that the climate is really difficult and that if we talk about immigration we have to talk with the other side as well. And they [those with anti-immigrant views] don't make this easy." [Malmö 00:08:54].

RC9: "But instead it feels like there is some kind of taboo when it comes to the question of [integration in] school, since one is afraid of being marked as anti-immigrant in a way[.]". [Malmö 00:14:02].

There was a tendency for the receiving community to see themselves as socially reserved, though not to the same extent as the arriving community perceived them to be (see category "Attitudes and perceptions of the outgroup"). This was discussed as a barrier to integration that the receiving community must try and overcome. However, it was seen as so engrained in their behaviour that as a society this may not be possible. Interestingly, the arriving community saw themselves as the opposite, highly social, open, as well as being loud (as compared to the quietness of the Swedes).

RC3: "Or something I have been thinking about myself is […] how little Swedes tend to interact… with others generally [laughter]. And particularly those who do not speak the language very well or are

slightly different. One easily distances oneself. And I am pretty shy myself, and feel that it […] kind of, when the language fails, it just becomes harder. Something I personally find hard generally. So that's really something I can see as a problem. … Swedes often need A REASON to talk. Or always. To speak without a reason is kind of weird [laughter] So… I believe that is a pretty big problem from the side of the Swedes." [Stockholm 00:18:54].

AC3: "I mean, if this thing [being social with strangers] existed naturally like it does in the Middle East, if someone in Syria sits next to you in the bus after five minutes they will start asking you about how much money you make or how much money they deducted from your salary last month! You know!"

AC2: "You might grab a cup of coffee!" [Stockholm 01:08:27].

The arriving community also reflected upon how integration meant both gains and losses for the community. They noted the tension that people face in what 'traditions' to maintain and which ones to adopt from Sweden. Only the receiving communities 'traditions' which were incompatible with their own, or were perceived as negative, were raised. For example, how other members of the arriving community had adopted smoking, or were losing touch with their 'home culture', notably certain religious practices. Age played a factor here with the discussions focusing on how culture attributes which were perceived as being positive could be maintained and passed on to children and youth in the community (see category "Culture").

Examples of 'extreme' integration, or integration that was seen to have 'gone too far' were used in several instances to reflect the dangers of becoming 'too' Swedish. This was seen as less likely to happen for those who were older or who had a family in Sweden.

AC8: "I mean, if someone has integrated here in Sweden, can they go back and live a normal life in Syria? Impossible, no. Because there are major differences, and they won't be able to adjust to these differences unless they were forced to, but if it was up to them, they would return here [to Sweden]." [Gothenburg 00:28:44]

AC7: "[W]e did integrate in the Swedish society, but we didn't dissolve in it." [Gothenburg 00:49:09].

AC8: "On the other hand, many of us reject many of their traditions and want to completely wipe them out! But of course, this depends on each individuals character and opinion". [Gothenburg 00:18:36].

Some participants in the receiving community noted the impact of being labelled by the receiving community as refugees. This was always seen as negative, as losing status or being lowered. As a consequence, this led to them seeing themselves having to work to regain status and self-worth as compared to the 'Swedes'.

AC5: "You have lost either your house or your position and many things back there, and you are here to seek refuge in a new place. So you are coming from down here, you are looking at the society from below. This has a psychological impact on most people who come here because they are looking at Sweden and the Swedes upwards as in 'OH THE SWEDISH SOCIETY [hands up pointing upwards and looking upwards]… THE SWEDES'." [Stockholm].

7.5.4. Intergroup contact

For the arriving community the points of intergroup contact that were highlighted were work, meeting neighbours, school/university, language courses and organisations such as choirs or gardening clubs. In line with the discussions around the receiving community being reserved, the arriving community almost always recalled that they made the first move in establishing contact, especially with neighbours. Those who had children also had contact with the receiving community when taking their children to social events or clubs.

However, as discussed earlier, nearly all these interactions with the 'Swedes' were seen as limited to that time and space, as well as lacking in lacking depth or having the potential to develop further. For the arriving community this was a barrier to what they saw as the purpose of sustained social interaction, to develop 'friendships'. This perceived lack of scope to develop meaningful social relations was closely tied with the *Barriers to Integration*. This was affirmed in the receiving community FGDs, where there was a general understanding that contact was easier in certain spaces and at certain times.

AC10: "[I]t is somewhat difficult, you can build relations with your neighbours, someone close by that you met, but to build a proper relation and get to what you want, that's really difficult!" [Malmö 00:35:55].

Interestingly, none of the arriving community noted daily intergroup contact, such as in shops, public transport or in their local community. Contact was seen to take place in specific spaces, such as work, their apartment blocks or at educational facilities. On a larger geographical scale, the arriving community saw that locality in terms of which part of the city one lived, or which town or city one lived in, impacted the amount and quality of intergroup contact.

AC6: "To be honest, I think what helped me when I first arrived is that I didn't live in a camp in my initial stage, I was able to live in a house. You know, because I had my uncle here. This was an opportunity for me to live in a city and get to know Swedish people, to interact with them and to go to Swedish schools. This was very helpful. We saw other people, when we later moved to a camp, that knew nothing about Sweden because they have been living in a camp where they would only go out to get some food or drinks and come back. You know, there are these barriers, when you live in the city it is totally different compared to living in the camp for a long time." [Gothenburg 00:59:30].

Only a few of the receiving community reported that they had any form of intergroup contact with the Syrian arriving community specifically (though several mentioned contact with other refugees). Intergroup contact was seen as positive, both for the integration of the arriving community and also, though rarely, in terms of the positive impact of diversity for the receiving community. Where the receiving community recalled contact with the arriving community, these interactions were seen as positive.

RC3: "What I meant was that […] my […] I think about integration as a social issue, to a large extent. That one should spend time with each other. And that is maybe the most important part of being a part of society." [Stockholm 00:22:00].

Several receiving community participants who grew up in smaller cities or rural areas reflected on their lack of contact with migrants/those with a migrant background when they were younger. This was compared to the high level (of potential) contact in the cities where they live today. The participants in all cities also drew on locality to explain the lack of intergroup contact. This was at a city, neighbourhood and even individual housing level.

RC9: "I think this is really about who we are building [homes] for and how we are building and mixing this within the city[.]" [Malmö 00:17:13].

RC1: "…I feel pretty segregated. I live in a neighbourhood with a lot of detached houses and where it is not so mixed, which I grieve because I think it should be more mixed." [Stockholm 00:03:37].

RC12: "One has to relate to them [migrants] when they appear in one's everyday life. But if one lives is in an area where one doesn't bump into them, there is no falafel place in the area, there are no neighbours who are from Syria, then one doesn't have to. One is very far away from that world and the possibilities and problems that come with it." [Malmö 00:30:23].

7.5.5. Intragroup relations

The arriving community often referred to their social network in Sweden, and the development of this, as crucial for their integration. This social network was almost always with those described as similar to themselves, those who were 'Arab' or those with a migrant background. A clear distinction was drawn between 'Arab' or migrant social networks (which may include those who would be classified as being in the receiving community in this research) and the wider receiving community referred to as 'Swedes'. Several felt integrated in their social network, but contrasted this to their lack of connection or contact they had with the 'Swedes'.

AC2: "First of all, I would like to say that I am one of the people who are having difficulties in forming friendships in this country, honestly. And most of the people I know are Syrians or other nationalities but not Swedes!" [Stockholm 00:09:40].

AC9: "[M]y fun Arab friends, we hang out together. These people made me feel that this country is a comfortable place. Having friends here, regardless of the number, few or many, but people who you can call whether something good or bad has happened to you. We share our problems together, we go out together. This helped me a lot in feeling more comfortable in this country." [Malmö 00:56:10].

AC3: "The Swedes that we have relations with currently are people who we are in touch with for specific reasons, not because we are friends. For example, the people who we are in a choir with, we have relations with them because of the choir. People at work, because we work together. We might have an activity because we work together, not because we are friends". [Stockholm 00:10:50].

7.5.6. Behaviour and behavioural intentions[18]

Within the intergroup relations different behaviours and behavioural intentions were distinguished, which will be described in the following.

Acceptance

Overall, acceptance arose only on a few occasions in the FGDs for both the receiving and arriving communities (with it not arising at all in the Malmö receiving community FGD). For the arriving community, acceptance of certain aspects of Swedish society or norms played a prominent role in the FGDs. This was closely tied with negotiating how to 'preserve' their culture while also accepting positive aspects of 'Swedish' culture (see categories "Self-perception on one's own group "and "Culture").

AC5: "…I love that I have the freedom to do whatever you want without someone interfering in your life or looking at [it]. So I can look at it, the society, as a concept or notion, existing by itself, that I will accept or not accept." [Stockholm 00:20:34].

Further to this, while also noting that acceptance was a result of contact between the two communities, the arriving community also reflected upon problems with acceptance.

AC7: "Humans have this issue and especially us that lived in authoritarian countries, in societies where freedom doesn't exist. We are unable to accept the other as well. We have a problem, we always/ each one of us feels that we are right, our principles are correct, our background and beliefs are correct." [Gothenburg 00:31:18].

For some in the receiving community acceptance was seen as a two-way process between the two communities. Age played a role here, with participants' noting that children had an easier time

18 The child code Other, Undefined was not included as all references within this have been covered sufficiently by others in this code.

accepting those from different backgrounds than adults. Similarly, those who were younger were seen as less likely to reject or self-exclude, as is discussed below.

RC7: "I also think that children, or I mean when I talk to my daughter for instance, children don't think about skin colour a lot, or about how you look. That's not what it's about, it's about if you want to play. Like, that's what it is all about. We have several kids in her class, some from Syria. I think we had a discussion this week where she had reflected on that because someone said that they are from a different country: 'What? Are they really?' [mimics her daughter and laughs]." [Gothenburg 00:13:51].

Help

For the receiving community, help was something that should be provided for the arriving community. It was sometimes framed as an obligation on society. In general, there was a view that help should be given by the state to those who seek refuge in Sweden. The receiving community also reflected on times when they had helped the arriving community (here understood as forced migrants to Sweden in general). This included letting relative strangers stay in their homes or volunteering at civil society language or cultural exchange classes. These were seen as positive experiences. However, they also claimed that there has been a reduction in the receiving community's willingness to help forced migrants (linked to the growth anti-immigrant sentiments discussed in category "Self-perception on One's Own Group).

A few participants in the receiving community reflected upon the problem of helping people in the short term, when the capacity of to do so in the long term was not necessarily available. Further to this a few expressed they personally would not start helping the arriving community as it would open the flood gates, and demand too much of them. Several also shamed the same reflection, but at a state level.

RC6: "I would say that society is getting better in some ways because we are getting multicultural. We are having more perspectives, more experiences, people get richer. But of course, it costs money for the state, which I think is worth it… [I]f someone needs help, you help. Otherwise you are not a nice person. That's what I think. If you can help, you help. I think we have to do that." [Gothenburg 00:54:43].

RC3: "In 2015, when people in big need poured in… one opened one's arms and said that everyone was welcome. But then one didn't really have a plan for how they would live here. There is no housing, no jobs […] well it is nice – I think one should let many people in – but one also needs a program for how that should work." [Stockholm 00:34:43].

RC5: "I have been to the language café at the library sometimes to speak to newcomers and to get some perspectives from their life and to be able to help them with tasks and bureaucracy and things like that. Since I am, among other things, a trained Swedish teacher, I feel that this is at least something I can do while being on sick leave. So, I can contribute with something. But I feel that the percentage of Swedish people at those meetings has been decreasing." [Gothenburg 00:17:20].

For the arriving community help was raised in reference to assistance they received from individuals, state agencies and to a much lesser extent civil society organisations. These were largely reflected upon as positive experiences. At an individual level this included the receiving community helping the participants in the communal laundry room, allowing them to stay in their apartment, assisting them navigate the complicated bureaucracy of state agencies or teaching them Swedish. The receiving of help was also an intragroup experience between the participants and other members of the arriving community.

AC9: "I assume that this country will give me all means possible for me to integrate so I can become part of it. In regards to the state, I think all of that is secured. We all went to SFI [Swedish for Immigrants classes], we all got opportunities to take different courses and study, and do whatever we wanted. They

helped us a lot. We all found places to live. But I feel that the civil society initiatives specifically are not beneficial in this regard". [Malmö 00:28:53].

AC6: "[W]hen I first came to Sweden AC 1's family was a big support. We knew each other in Syria and they were very helpful for me here, they encouraged and supported me." [Gothenburg 00:45:04].

Empathy & take perspective

Empathizing and taking perspective was a code which was only used for the receiving community's FGDs in Gothenburg and Stockholm. Participants' took perspective or empathized with the arriving community with regard to the impact of the temporary residence permits, or having to wait a long time for a decision on whether they could stay in Sweden.[19] Others took perspective with regard to the arriving community's reason for fleeing and the forced nature of their migration to Sweden.

RC8: "A lot of, well, I mean THOSE FEW I have been hanging with, who have fled from, well it's not a lot of Syrians, but also other countries in the region, they are often worried, or were anxious up to the point where they got a decision on whether or not they were allowed to stay in Sweden. This puts one in a very difficult situation, like, should I really bet on [staying] here?" [Gothenburg 00:13:20].

RC6: "Because we are different in some ways, but we are just the same basically. We all want our family to be safe, we all want a safe home and we all want food and things like that. So, if we just realise that we are all very much the same everything would be so much easier." [Gothenburg 01:13:46].

RC2: "Well yes, I would say that when people come here, it's because of that they are FORCED to come here". [Stockholm 00:36:40].

Others took perspective on the perceived problems the arriving community may face in integrating. This was linked to the difficulties in securing their rights, finding housing and coping with trauma (that experienced in Sweden as well as before they arrived) and being displaced in general.

RC3: "Because I think many go through hell with the authorities [sighs] to get what they have the right to, and how will we be able to find housing for someone from Syria when there isn't enough for those who are born here?" [Stockholm 00:34:43].

RC3: "So I believe that it can be a lot – both believe and know – that there is a lot of mental illness from [laughter] the bad treatment that one receives in Sweden and the trauma one brought in one's baggage." [Stockholm 00:34:43].

Rejection, reservation and (self-) exclusion

Rejection, reservation or (self-)exclusion was the most common behaviour or behavioural intentions coded. Both communities FGDs showed similar perspectives that rejection and self-exclusion were traits more commonly associated with the arriving community, while the receiving community were seen as being reserved.

For the arriving community this involved rejection/self-exclusion from aspects of the receiving community's culture, social normal or traditions (i.e. certain food), or most notably from contact with the receiving community, or more accurately, those labelled as 'Swedes'. This was based on a perceived

19 See Work Package 2.3 Part 1 (pp.86) for more details on this. "Sweden differs from the other states in that permanent residence permits are still issued for some categories of refugees from Syria. Before the Temporary Asylum Law of 2015, permanent residence was granted to all categories of refugees included in this research. However, after the law came into effect, only those granted Refugee Status or Resettled Refugees were to be granted permanent residence (Regeringskansliet, 2010; Regeringskansliet, 2019). Those granted Temporary Protection as Refugees, receive a three-year residence permit, which is renewable for another 2 year (Migrationsverket, 2019c). Family Reunion Migrants receive the same status as their sponsor."

unequal burden on the arriving community to conform to the norms of social interaction, or the perception that the closed and reserved nature of the receiving community made developing friendships (seen as the goal of sustained contact) impossible.

This was often contrasted with how easy the arriving community perceived the forming of friendships with 'non-Swedes' (other migrants or those with a migrant background). Others self-excluded due to a perceived language barrier or because they were not able to relate to the topics of conversation.

AC6: "Groups of three or four [Swedes] sit together and have lunch [at my workplace], and it's very easy for anyone to grab their plate and join a group. I tried it more than once, and I didn't feel comfortable doing it because the topics that were discussed do not mean anything to me, nor do they interest me, like on what street they studied primary school etc [.]". [Gothenburg 00:13:12].

RC2: "In school [where I teach] I have noticed that all immigrants, or no, those who are not blonde, they sit separately at the tables in school, or in the breaks. They are very grouped; one sees very clearly their groups." [Stockholm 00:07:56].

With regard to the receiving community FGDs, some participants noted that certain members of the arriving community rejected integration and self-excluded. However, this was always supplemented or nuanced with the claim that others do the opposite and are very active in trying to integrate. There was also a recognition that the arriving community have to take on the majority of the burden in overcoming the reserved nature of the receiving community (see categories "Attitudes and perceptions of the outgroup" and "Self-perception on one's own group").

RC1: "[I]t is always hard to tar everyone with the same brush. But I would guess that some don't WANT to integrate and some want VERY very badly to be integrated." [Stockholm 00:13:24].

Interestingly, several members of the arriving community (who had previously lived in the smaller Swedish cities of Gävle and Kalmar) reflected upon how the reserved nature of the receiving community was more noticeable in larger cities. Age also played a role, with members of both communities noting that young people are less reserved and that reservation increases with age.

AC5: "When someone is getting older they start being picky in choosing their friends, you choose them more meticulously compared to a teenager for example at school who plays with whomever even though they might be very different, but they don't see that for some reason." [Stockholm 00:25:45].

7.6. Avenues for negotiating integration[20]

This theme focuses mostly on the socio-economic indicators of integration, as seen by the participants of receiving and arriving focus groups. It offers a deeper insight into the issues perceived by both communities as "Barriers to integration" and "Facilitators of integration" to the overall integration process.

7.6.1. Barriers to integration

The main barrier to integration identified by the receiving community was the impact of granting temporary residence permits (as compared to the permanent permits issues previously) to the arriving community. Related to this, the time it took for decisions on the issuance of these permits by the Swedish Migration Agency (*Migrationsverket*) was also highlighted as a very prominent barrier. The receiving community reflected on how the temporariness stemming from these permits creates

20 The codes on Individual, Social and Economic Resources and Legal and Institutional Barriers have been merged with the Barriers and Facilitators codes. Detaching them would have been artificial, and not allowed such nuanced discussion about how those with different resources relate to certain barriers or facilitators to integration.

challenges for integration. These were seen to arise from the lack of certainty and stability for the arriving community in knowing if they will be allowed to stay in Sweden. This was seen as reducing the incentives for the arriving community to more actively integrate, or as exacerbating mental health issues amongst the community due to increased stress.

RC2: "[T]heir worries and mental illness is mostly related to that they cannot get a clear decision from Migrationsverket. [RC1 and RC3 make affirmative sounds]… [These] peoples' lives are in uncertainty. If they know [the decision] they will get… there is plan, as soon as they get a decision from Migrationsverket, they start to study, they get an education, and societal instruction classes…". [Stockholm 00:36:40].

RC11: "It is also difficult with [new] asylum laws that make it more difficult to be a part of society". [Malmö 00:09:39].

RC10: "We didn't give them [the arriving community] the right support, and many have had to wait for an extremely long time for decisions and support, which is cruel in itself." [Gothenburg 00:09:13].

Other barrier that was raised by the receiving community, though to a lesser extent than the issuance of temporary residence permits and waiting times, was the negative attitudes of society towards immigrants and those with migrant backgrounds in general. This was closely tied with racism and discrimination and a perceived shift in the mainstream political discourse to the right. This was also linked with increasing polarization and segregation in society at large (specific issues were highlighted as flashpoints, such as socio-economic disparities and lack of housing). Further to this, the lack of communication, language skills or willingness/space for the two communities to be in contact with one another were also seen as barriers.

RC11: "I think this is a society where racism is getting more apparent, which makes it difficult to integrate." [Malmö 00:09:39].

The temporary residence permits were also seen as a significant barrier for the arriving community. The participants reflected on how this has caused metal health problems as well as impacting other areas of their integration, such as access to the labour market.

AC6: "There are, for example, some laws that make integration more difficult, like giving temporary residency permits instead of permanent ones, this makes a lot of things more difficult." [Gothenburg 00:37:26]

In addition, labour market integration was also seen as problematic due to the need to have personal contacts to secure work, as well as due to a lack of language skills. The lack of language skills was also seen as hindering integration as it limited the contact, or quality of contact, with 'Swedes'. For those with more advanced language skills, they noted that barriers remained (see category "Language").

AC9: "I didn't learn the language which was a mistake, therefore I have a problem connecting with Swedes who don't like to use another language. This hindered the process of integration to a certain extent. For example, yesterday I went out with my friend and another Swedish person. Both spoke Swedish together and I couldn't participate, this [language] creates a barrier to totally integrate." [Malmö 00:16:54]

AC2: "Even when you learn the language it doesn't mean you have integrated! Until now I am unable to have relations and friendships with this society!" [Stockholm 00:42:02].

7.6.2. Facilitators of integration

For the arriving community having a family with you in Sweden (and especially having young children) was seen the significant factor in facilitating integration. This not only provided a support network at

home, but also encouraged/facilitated contact with the wider community, such as attending children parties or sports clubs where they would interact with other parents. There was also a general perception that the state provides more opportunities and assistance for those with families in the arriving community, most notably those with young children.

Contact with the receiving community was only mentioned a few times as facilitating integration. Instead, there was a focus on the role of contact with other members of the arriving community, or "Arabs", which could also include those in the receiving community.

AC8: "[T]he relations with other Arabs here, where you might find many similarities between each other, are of a great help and support. For example, when I first came to Sweden RC1's family was a big support. We knew each other in Syria and they were very helpful for me here, they encouraged and supported me[.]" [Gothenburg 00:45:04].

AC12: "My children helped me integrate a lot, we go to birthday parties, we talk to other parents, we are forced to [laughs]. Integration requires language and children [laughs]." [Malmö 00:45: 27].

AC6: "When it comes to the family, I agree with what everyone said, having the family around is very helpful. For me personally having the family helped me a lot". [Gothenburg 00:49:09].

The receiving community saw contact as crucial for facilitating integration. This was contact between the arriving and receiving community. Interestingly, it was framed as something that should have a formal structure. For example, many referred to facilitating contact through organisation that match people with similar interests, or those who are of similar age. The facilitatory role of this was largely explained as being a place where the receiving community could explain how society works and help the arriving community in various ways. There was also some limited reflection on this being a two-way process, whereby the receiving community gets to know the arriving community.

RC10: "I believe that we need to match people together with people their age to hang out together. This is how I think, so we can learn from each other. Integration cannot work one-way. It can't just be about everyone coming here to think and feel exactly as we have the past hundreds of years. Or maybe just the past 20. Instead we have to learn from each other, it has to be a dialogue, an exchange of culture and life." [Malmö]

7.7. Power, cultural, social, geographical struggles and rapprochements

The codes under this theme represent different societal and institutionalized organizing principles that operate on different levels in the integration process in a defined locality. They relate to power dynamics and their manifestation in negotiating hegemony, e.g. over local cultural and/or religious practices and symbols. The underlying question is who has the upper hand to define who is "integrated" and what are the criteria to qualify as such.

7.7.1. Racism and discrimination

Racism and discrimination was a theme that was very prominent in all the FGDs for both communities. However, this was especially so in case of the FGDs with the receiving community in Gothenburg and the arriving community in Malmö. Both communities, in all three cities, noted that racism and discrimination were a barrier to integration. For the receiving community it was also a means of measuring the success of integration (with the existence of racism in the receiving community reflecting a failure of integration).

There was a disparity in understanding the role and impact of racism and discrimination in society between the arriving and receiving communities (the exceptions being those in the receiving community who had a migrant background). The receiving community acknowledged that racism was a problem that has deep societal roots. They often distinguished between overt and covert racism. Overt racism, being explained by many as 'explicit' racism, was seen to be rare or non-existent. This was despite some of the participants discussing how they dealt with people (often family members) who were openly racist or how they tried to address those who held such 'illogical views'(see category "Self-perception on one's own group *").*

Covert racism, that which was described a structural or implicit, was seen as more pervasive in society. The acknowledgement of racism in society also drove some members of the receiving community to take action, join demonstrations, provide assistance to refugees or engage in dialogue with people who were seen as being racist or discriminating against migrants.

RC10: "I don't encounter that much racism in my everyday life. I do encounter a lot of structural problems when I am out in the schools around Malmö substituting [as a teacher]. You can see that people are systematically discriminated against in a lot of ways. But I seldom get in contact with this outright racism. I don't see this often. I meet people who are kind and good for the most part." [Malmö 00:26:57].

RC9: "I don't think this OUTRIGHT racism exists on the streets in that way. It's exactly as you said, that it is the structural racism that can be everything from just when you are looking for an apartment to when you send in an application for a job with your name on for instance. I absolutely do not think that, or I hope it's not so explicit… I think first and foremost that it's incredibly structural". [Malmö 00:27:48].

For the arriving community most references to racism and discrimination were in the Malmö and Stockholm FGDs. The arriving community did not make the distinction between racism as overt or covert. Racism was noted to have been experienced mostly at work, in trying to secure employment or in the SFI language courses which are part of the Introduction Programme. Several participants noted how they had experienced no racism in Sweden, or said the situation was much better as compared to places they had lived before. Unlike the receiving community, for the arriving community, racism and discrimination was seen as permanent, a part society that could not be overcome or changed.

AC8 "Like there are little things and little issue that people experience and it frustrates young people always, like when you apply for a job. Because you have an Arabic name you don't hear back from them. This creates a sense of inferiority and they feel that they are being excluded… this is one of the biggest challenges when it comes to integration." [Gothenburg 00:54:18].

AC4 "I feel, or I know... or let's say from my own personal point of view I know for sure that I will keep feeling like a stranger, and the reason is clear, it's my skin colour in the first place. I won't become white in ten years [everyone laughs]". [Stockholm 00:47:00].

AC10: "When I first came to Sweden, compared to where I lived before, people are great here, I never felt any racism, people are really nice." [Malmö 00:14:34].

7.7.2. Culture

The arriving community raised culture during the FGDs much more frequently than the receiving community. The receiving community, by and large, saw a distinction between their culture (referred to as Swedish culture in many cases) and the culture of immigrants. No distinction between the culture of the arriving community and that of other migrant groups was made. Similarly, Swedish culture was generally framed as homogenous by the receiving community. Only on a few occasions did they reflect upon Swedish culture as being something fluid that changes as a result of the two-way integration

process. When they did so, they saw this change for the positive as a result of increased diversity in society.

The culture of migrants (the arriving community included) was almost always framed as in tension with, or significantly different from, Swedish culture. The intergenerational nature of this tension, and the ability for children and youth to more readily adopt aspects of Swedish culture, as compared to older persons, was noted.

RC9: “It’s often a huge crash of cultures” [Malmö 00:33:54].

RC2: “On the other hand, when they [migrant children, or those with a migratory background] are in society, they have a completely different culture than their parents, and follow society’s culture and identity and they feel mostly Swedish. Again, it is this problem between families and children that occurs sometime, that I have seen.” [Stockholm 00:26:52].

The arriving community, similar to the receiving community, categorised the receiving community’s culture, and their own, as different, though not necessarily incompatible. Whereas, for the receiving community this was an abstract discussion, for the arriving community it was much more grounded in their lived experience of negotiating these cultural differences. These negotiations involved adopting what was good, acceptable or required from Swedish culture, while trying to preserve or protect aspects of ‘their’ culture. Many participants noted how the burden to adapt to the receiving communities’ culture was on them: cultural adaption was seen as a one-way street.

For some in the arriving community they made the link between language and culture. Learning the culture (though not necessarily adopting certain traditions) was seen as a crucial aspect in integration beyond language skills, or as essential to master the language (see category “Language”). This was often framed as a burden which was too much to ask of them.

AC8: “I wanted to say integration is an issue that requires a lot of hard work where one must work a lot on him/herself to be able to accept new culture… One must master the language and must be willing and open to accept the other and interact with them, accept their traditions and the other way around as well. That’s when one can be integrated in a better way and feel that they belong to this country, to this language and these traditions regardless if they want to abandon their own traditions or not.” [Gothenburg 00:18:36].

AC5: “The language! Really, when you have grown up in a society that has a certain culture you will share things with people that can speak that language, you share with them all the codes that are related to jokes, pranks, the smiles… Instead of waiting outside of the door all these things will get you right in to the kitchen of the house and you open the fridge and start eating”. [Stockholm 00:25:45].

Being sociable was seen as a core component of the arriving community’s culture. This was often contrasted to the perception that the receiving community are reserved and unsociable (see categories “Attitudes and perceptions of the outgroup” and “Self-perception on one’s own group ”). Being sociable and community oriented was seen as a part of their culture that they were not willing to compromise on. Indeed, this part of the arriving community’s culture was suggested as a potential means to facilitate integration, if it were to be adopted by the individualistic and reserved receiving community.

AC2: “Like, we are Middle Easterners and they are Scandinavians, we are different ok! We are very different, but at least if we try to bring people closer together so that when they are sitting in front of each other they don’t feel like strangers, or like very strange” [Stockholm 01:05:31].

Several members of the arriving community recalled examples when the negotiated between adopting aspects of Swedish culture, while preserving aspects of their own, was seen as problematic. For example, teachers in the SFI classes, questioning certain religious traditions/practices of the

participants (notably, fasting or wearing a hijab). In these situations, it was not the questioning of these practices themselves that was problematic, it was the participants' lack of ability to engage with these questions given their limited Swedish language skills (or confidence in these skills).

7.7.3. Religion

Religion only arose on very few occasions, mostly in the Malmö arriving community FGD and once in the Stockholm FGD. For the receiving community it was only raised once in the Gothenburg FGD. Where it was raised it has been discussed within the context of other themes and codes (see categories "How integration has evolved so far", "Attitudes and perceptions of the outgroup", "Self-perception of one's own group", "Perception of threat", "Racism and discrimination" and "Culture").

7.7.4. Language

The arriving community in all three cities discussed language far more often than the receiving community in the FGDs. The arriving community had a range of Swedish language skills, with some having completed advanced courses and others still having very limited Swedish language knowledge.

Language was seen as one of the key milestones of integration, or an indicator of it, for both communities. Yet, the role of language in integration varied. For the receiving community there was the perception that migrants not speaking Swedish was seen as reflecting a failure of integration. This was linked to discourses in the wider community that migrants are a burden or are not integrating into Swedish society sufficiently. For the arriving community learning the language was a key step in the integration process, though was not seen as a means by which integration could be measured or assessed.

There was also discussion about the level of language acquisition with some participants, in both communities, stating that to avoid the label of migrant one had to 'master' the language, including having a local accent. For both communities, mastering the language was seen as reflecting the completion of the integration process. However, for the arriving community this level of language skills was seen as something that only their children, or younger members of the community could achieve. The receiving community also noted how children were able to integrate without language, as well as noting that they are able to very quickly learn and master the language.

RC9: "I think in general Swedish people feel that people who don't speak Swedish and who live in the Swedish society are a burden... You don't see a person as Swedish, or what it could be, someone who is going to be part of the Swedish society." [Malmö 00:21:55].

AC9: "[L]anguage is definitely a barrier for integration in my opinion. But what I am saying is that the problem is not in the language. I think integration is a two-way street, you can't ask a Syrian refugee to integrate, and the host community does not know how to help him in the integration process." [Malmö 00:28:53].

RC7: "[I]t's pretty cool to see how a pupil who has been going to a Swedish school for 1 ½ month, suddenly masters the language so incredibly well. Because they continuously are getting invited [to things] and hear so much Swedish all the time. And in this way one can also become integrated, that's what I think. Then it's not difficult." [Gothenburg 00:14:41].

AC12: "For me, my biggest obstacle is the language. My children go to a Swedish school, and they got integrated fairly quickly, it took them about 7 to 8 months [laughs]. For example, they started going to birthday parties." [Malmö 00:45: 27].

The arriving community also reflected upon how the societal and state exception for them to learn Swedish was in contrast to integration being seen as a two-way process. While recognizing the

importance of learning Swedish, several noted how the considerable burden of learning a new language was only on them. Services such as SFI classes (a core part of the Integration Programme) were seen as very positive. Those in the arriving community who were proficient in English questioned the need to invest so much to become highly proficient, or master, Swedish the most.

7.7.5. Locality

Locality was raised on numerous occasions during all FGDs for both the receiving and arriving communities. The role of locality, most notability segregation of various communities, was significant in terms of being seen as a barrier to intergroup contact and integration more generally. The impact was reflected upon both within the three cities as well as between the cities and other areas in Sweden (see categories "How integration has evolved so far", "Attitudes and perceptions of the outgroup" and Self-perception on one's own group" and "Barriers to integration").

7.8. Perspectives on integration - conceptualizations & outlook

The is the second half of theme "Perspectives on integration" and in contrary to the first part which is related to personal experience of integration, this part contains more abstract thoughts on integration as well attributions of responsibilities and an outlook into the future effects of integration.

7.8.1. Understandings of ideal integration

Both the receiving and arriving communities referred to integration as a two-way process between themselves and the other group. Adaption, respect and coexistence, rather than assimilation, were common descriptions when discussing how this two-way process does or should happen in practice. The following summarises the position of the majority of the participants on what integration entails:

RC9: "[I]f I think about integration I think about adaptation and that it's mutual somewhere and not assimilation, like, one adapts to each other. Which also means that one doesn't adapt, but there is a mutual respect, that it goes both ways." [Malmö 00:37:25].

AC8 "I think people should work on themselves if they are planning to stay here for a long time. There are certain traditions from your country that you can keep, but you should also accept the others' traditions and live by them." [Gothenburg 00:54:18].

For the arriving community, one aspect of integration that often arose was addressing loss and their need to rebuild their lives. This was the loss of their social relations, stability or security which they previously had in Syria.

AC11: "You will feel safer [if you are integrated] and have a sense of stability, because now you feel 'emptiness' you try to grab on to something but you don't know how or where it is, and how to reach it." [Malmö 00:40:57].

Overall, the receiving community could not distinguish between refugees from Syria and other migrant populations in Sweden in terms of specific integration issues. For most of the receiving community integration was largely measured similarly with the formal state goal or benchmark, notably labour market integration (see *Work Package 2.3 Part 1* for more details). Other indicators of integration included the arriving community being able to secure housing, as well as learning the language (something the arriving community also noted was important).

For the arriving community, key aspects of integration revolved around concepts such as safety, security, comfort, feeling relaxed, having space for personal development and maintaining friendships. These notions of integration where often contrasted to integration as a formal state managed process

of labour market integration. This was seen as a narrow understanding integration, an understanding from above, though only being a part of their experiences of integration.

AC2: "The integration policy/ I don't know maybe it is the reason why we were able to find a job, or we could get into universities etc. But, I wish this policy wasn't focused on how we can make this human being work so they can become productive, not focus on that alone. Of course, it is essential, but I wish the focus wasn't only on that. I mean I hope that/ in my opinion if TRUE integration was applied, I would have been more comfortable in the society". [Stockholm 01:04:54].

7.8.2. Responsible actors

Both communities indicated that the two communities collectively were the most responsible actors in the integration process (followed by the government). However, the arriving community noted that the burden of integration was, in practice, overwhelming on them.

AC9: "I cannot ask the Swedish society to accept me, I cannot force them to accept me. I cannot say, 'You have to accept migrants!'. At the same time, it is very unfair to always tell a migrant, 'Please show the Swedes how good you are so that they can be nice to you and integrate you within their society!'… [We] are always in a position where we have to prove ourselves." [Malmö 00:32:48].

RC12: "I think [integration] is a bit of a one-way street. I mean, I think those who fled, if we take Syrian refugees in this case, who've fled to Sweden, [they] always have to relate to Swedish people or those who've been living here for a long time. While those who've always been living here do not necessarily have to relate to the Syrian refugees." [Malmö 00:30:23].

7.8.3. Future effects

In terms of future relations there was a general perception by both communities that integration will become more challenging in the future due to the worsening macroeconomic situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The receiving community also highlighted that the changing political landscape, with its shift to the right and growth in anti-immigrant parties, or anti-immigrant political agendas, will make integration even more problematic (see category "Self-perception on one's own group"). Interestingly the rise of anti-immigrant parties or political agendas was not raised by the arriving community during the FGDs.

RC9: "It is going to be really interesting to see what is going to happen now that we have are going into a rather heavy recession and unbelievably, I mean many, many more unemployed people. We are coming from an incredibly strong boom and still we've seen this problem develop. I think it has become much, much harder now with the relations between the Swedes and them [migrants]." [Malmö 00:20:20].

AC11: "Now they are planning on firing a lot of people at work because of the Corona Virus. Who are they going to let go of first? Definitely not the Swedes, first they choose the foreigner[.]" [Malmö 00:36:47].

7.9. Conclusion

The qualitative research in Sweden was based on six virtual FGDs, which involved a total of 24 members of the arriving and receiving communities in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. These groups provided data which related to the following themes: "Perspectives on integration", "On intergroup relations", "Avenues for negotiating integration" and "Power, cultural, social and geographical struggles and rapprochements".

In summary, while both the receiving and arriving communities claimed that integration was a two-way process, this was discussed as not the reality of integration. The arriving community noted that there was an unequal burden upon them in many aspects of the integration process i.e. learning the language, not being perceived as a threat or establishing and maintaining intergroup contact.

"The arriving community noted that there was an unequal burden upon them in many aspects"

The receiving community by contrast only talked about this process in abstract terms, but when discussing specific issues placed the burden on the arriving community. The receiving community was not able to differentiate between refugees from Syria with other forced migrants, or sometimes migrants more generally. Unlike the arriving community the receiving community (except for those with a migrant background) did not discuss how integrated they felt with the arriving community (or migrants in general). Integration was not something the receiving community saw as impacting them or something that required adaption from their side, as they were already Swedish and this was the goal for migrants to try and work towards. Interestingly, Swedish-ness was portrayed as a fixed and homogenous culture by both communities. As such, the integration as a two-way process was shown to be problematic beyond an abstract understanding.

"The receiving community was not able to differentiate between refugees from Syria with other forced migrants, or sometimes migrants more generally."

There were also diverging views on how the receiving and arriving communities perceived the purpose of integration. For the receiving community it was mainly about the arriving community accessing the labour market. This was in line with the Swedish integration model, which is driven by the idea of facilitating labour market integration. For the arriving community however the goal of integration was to feel safe, stable and feel as though they were able to develop in Sweden, in addition to securing work.

Both communities shared the perception that integration was going poorly in Sweden, or that it could be significantly improved. For the receiving community this was the result of structural issues, increasing racism and the rise in popularity of anti-immigrant political parties. There was also a perception that there has been a decrease in solidarity with refugees and migrants, which was seen as being problematic for the future of integration. The receiving community reflected upon Swedish society as being deeply polarised between those who were anti-immigrant/racist, and those who showed solidarity with refugees and other migrants. Several noted that 2015 (when a large number of asylum seekers arrived in Sweden) was a turning point, where anti-immigrant sentiments in the receiving community began to gain more traction and increase considerably. There was a perception amongst the receiving community that this rise in anti-immigrant sentiments will worsen still due to the economic decline resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Both groups, but most notably the receiving community, saw the issuance of temporary residence permits to refugees as highly problematic for integration now and in the future.

"this [poor integration] was the result of structural issues, increasing racism and the rise in popularity of anti-immigrant political parties"

The receiving community often claimed that providing help to the arriving community (including letting them enter the country, as well as helping them when they were in Sweden) was an obligation. However, it was generally held by the community that this help should be extended at a state level and to a lesser extent on an individual level. For both groups the arriving community were seen as

"help should be extended at a state level and to a lesser extent on an individual level"

the recipients of help. However, for the arriving community there were several examples of intragroup help being very important.

"the arriving community made the distinction between 'Swedes' and 'non-Swedes'. […] Similarly, the receiving community made a distinction between 'Swedes' and 'migrants'"

The arriving community often did not feel integrated with 'Swedes'. Many members of the arriving community made the distinction between 'Swedes' and 'non-Swedes'. While 'Swedes' were not defined, 'Non-Swedes' were so; this includes those who were referred to a 'Arabs', 'internationals', migrants or those with migrant background, some of who were in the receiving community. Similarly, the receiving community made a distinction between 'Swedes' and 'migrants' (with these labels often being blurred or indistinct for 'Swedes' with a migrant background), though did not specify who was included under the 'Swede' label.

In terms of their attitudes, the arriving community saw the 'Swedes' as polite, but reserved and individualistic. The last of which was seen as being negative, while being reserved was seen as less negative, but very problematic for intergroup contact. This was contrasted with their self-perception as being very sociable and open. The receiving community's self-perception also revealed a strong tendency to think of themselves as reserved. For both communities this reserved nature was seen as something that could not be changed, despite both seeing it as problematic for integration. While this led to the arriving community sometimes reacting through withdrawal and, in some cases, rejecting certain intergroup contact, the receiving community repeatedly put forward the suggestion that organisations designed to facilitate this could be a suitable response. Organisations already working to increase intergroup contact were seen as having a significant impact in terms of being a facilitator of integration for the receiving community. However, for the arriving community, having a family or social network was seen as much more significant, with intergroup contact with 'Swedes', and organisations designed to encourage it, being seen as playing only a minimal role.

"that members of the arriving community held views on women's rights that were deeply incompatible with Swedish norms and laws"

The receiving community held largely positive attitudes about the arriving community (it should be noted the sample of FGD participants from the receiving (and arriving) community is not representative of the Swedish society but those with a higher interest and, most likely, more positive attitudes towards migration and integration). The only exception was the perception amongst some of the receiving community that members of the arriving community held views on women's rights that were deeply incompatible with Swedish norms and laws. This was something that was perceived to be a significant tension between those in the arriving community who held such views, and navigating life in Sweden. This was not a tension that was raised during the arriving community FGDs.

Both the communities saw their own and the others' culture as homogenous and distinct. Despite the receiving community stating that integration was a two-way process, they rarely reflected on how 'Swedish' culture would change as a result of integration. Swedish culture, for both groups, was seen as clear and fixed. As such, the arriving community had to take on the responsibility of negotiating what to adopt from Swedish culture, what to reject and what to maintain from 'their' cultural background (though there were not discussions from the arriving community about their contribution to Swedish culture, and only a few references of the benefits of multiculturalism from the receiving community). For the arriving community that was seen as an ongoing struggle, one that was also intergenerational.

By and large the receiving community saw the acquisition of the Swedish language as a way to measure integration, alongside several of other measurements, notably labour market integration and securing housing. The receiving community saw the mastering of the language, to the point where people thought migrants were Swedish, as a sign of complete integration (despite also highlighting that the segregation between 'Swedes' and those with a migrant background). The arriving community saw mastering the language to this extent as a demand from the receiving community that was impossible (except for young people) and claimed that racism, discrimination and cultural differences would remain even if the language were to be mastered.

"The receiving community saw the mastering of the language, to the point where people thought migrants were Swedish, as a sign of complete integration"

Both the arriving and receiving communities, in all cities, stated that racism and discrimination is a barrier to integration. For the receiving community it was seen as something structural that could, and should, be eradicated. The receiving community often framed those who held racists views as being irrational. This was interesting because rationality is posited as being a central part of 'Swedish-ness'. As such a tension arose for some of the receiving community participants as they tried to navigate how a large number of people in society could hold views that they perceived as irrational, while still also holding a view of Swedish society as being centred around rationality. There was a perception that others' attitudes on racism could be changed if only they were more critical of the sources of information they received. For the arriving community however, racism was largely seen as unchangeable, being an engrained part of Swedish culture.

8. Final Summary & Next Steps

Based on research questions developed through an extensive review of previous research, a series of focus group discussions were implemented in the four study countries. While certain adaptations were required due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, a common approach was followed in each country.

Following the conclusion of the focus group discussions, transcripts were produced and translated from the four languages into English. A shared coding framework for the transcripts was developed in cooperation between researchers in the four countries. This underpinned the writing of the four separate country reports produced here utilising a common structure.

The next steps for this work involved the development of a detailed cross-site analysis which will bring together the results from the four countries and involve detailed conclusions.

In advance of the detailed review of the cross-site analysis, there are points of note which can be made at this stage:

- While the notion of *integration as a two-way process* was echoed amongst all FGDs in the four countries, there seemed to be a clear disjuncture between theory and the actual reality across most of the sites. The line of reasoning and the discussion on roles and responsibilities reflected the subtle understanding and internalization of integration as a one-way process that necessitated adaptation and to a certain extent assimilation on behalf of the arriving community which was assigned the main burden of integration in the respective country. The onus was put on the arriving community to tick-off the checklist of socio-economic integration, consisting of setting foot in the labour market, paying taxes, finding accommodation and mastering the host country's language (with the exception of Jordan) as well as adapting to the cultural values of the host countries and challenging institutional and everyday acts of racism and discrimination. This does not exclude the recognition – to a certain degree – of the responsibility of other actors.
- In terms of *intergroup contact*, all receiving community members in European countries reported to have either no or limited contact to members of the arriving community. Further to this, the research illustrated that all four countries face issues with *conflictual relations between both communities*. These conflicts vary between the countries, and exploring the motivations and impacts involved will be an important part of the next stage of analysis.
- The findings pointed to the complex interplay between the *macroeconomic situation* of a country and the *perception of economic threat* on an individual level. The perception of economic threat also varied significantly between the countries and was expressed with different levels of strength.
- The discussion on the *barriers and facilitators* to integration alludes to comparable factors across the four sites, which can be divided into institutional and legal barriers on the one hand and individual, social and economic resources on the other. Work evolved as a central theme across all sites and was perceived as one of the most fundamental aspects for a smoother integration process. The legal and institutional framework in Jordan varies greatly from that of the other countries and can be considered the most restrictive among the four study sites. The differences and similarities across the four sites will be discussed in depth in the upcoming cross site analysis.

» Institutional and structural *racism and discrimination* proved to be a salient barrier to integration in all countries. The questions of how racism and discrimination manifest at each site and along which themes will be explored in the upcoming analysis.

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