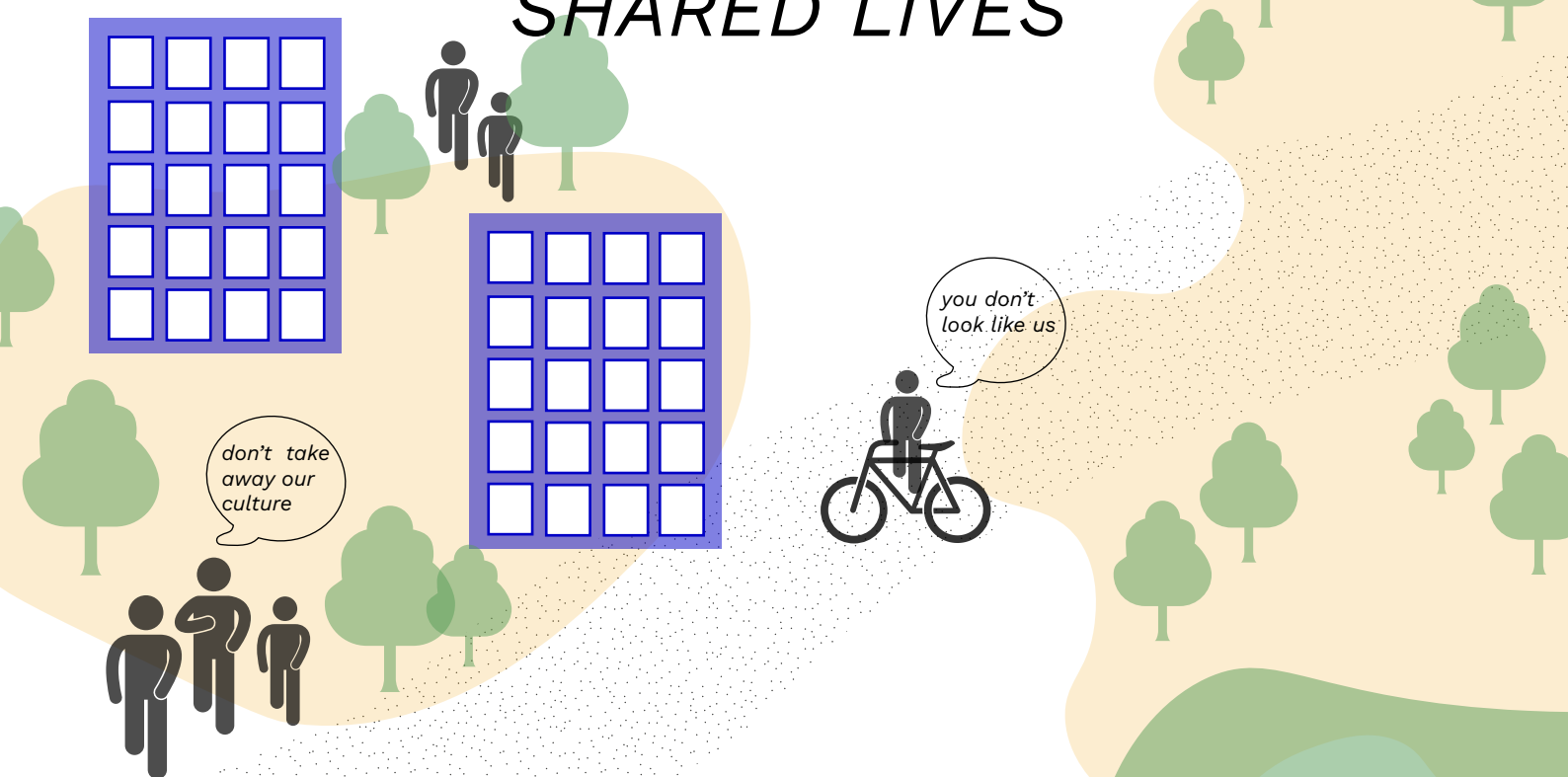


freedom

we just want to have a safe life

SHARED SPACES SHARED LIVES



Imagining the integration of natives with refugees living in isolated temporary asylum shelters through common spaces of interaction

Colophon

SHARED SPACES, SHARED LIVES
Imagining the integration of natives with refugees
living in isolated temporary asylum shelters through
common spaces of interaction

Masters Graduation Thesis 2023-2024
P5 Report

Author : Harini Sivakumar
Student number : 5726867

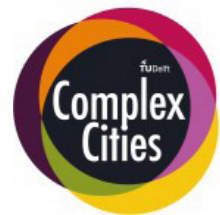
Research Studio: Planning Complex Cities
MSc3 Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences,
Department of Urbanism
Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment,
Delft University of Technology

First Mentor : Verena Elisabeth Balz
Second Mentor : Birgit Hausleitner
Delegate : HJM Vande Putte

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Delft, Netherlands

Cover illustration by the author

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Motivation

Growing up in India among communities with great differences, I was constantly exposed to the extreme hardships that they face in social and economic spheres of the society. This has instilled in me sensitivity and respect for vulnerable groups whose voices often go unheard. As a privileged migrant student, seeking to expand my knowledge, have better job opportunities and lifestyle, the Western world seemed like the perfect society that embraced diversity while providing a freedom of thought (Fig. 1)

However, Western societies in their pursuit for having the perfect life, often **externalize their problems** leading to severe consequences for other developing countries. This, in turn, has fuelled migration to these very nations, perpetuating a **complex cycle of global challenges**.

Reflecting on my experiences since moving to The Netherlands, I have come to recognize the intensity of the migration phenomenon, particularly among asylum seekers who flee for various reasons in search of a better life. These individuals are one of the most vulnerable, who have to navigate challenging paths to live a new life in a new society.

Personally, valuing empathy and support for vulnerable individuals as fundamental human values, I believe it is imperative for Western countries to address unspoken issues such as **discrimination, intolerance, and racism among these groups**. This in-

trospection is crucial for these nations to question their current asylum and integration systems in a fair and equitable manner, paving the way for **a stable future**.

As an urbanist, through this project I intend to contribute to this topic through research and proposals aimed at **creating just and inclusive environments for vulnerable population, focusing on refugees in the Dutch society**. My goal is to envision spaces where both the host society and refugees can come together despite the differences and instead appreciate them to create and share a new sense of belonging and identity.



(Fig. 1) source: Everydayorientalism, "How the West Wants you to See the World" image drawn by Maria Bacchus

Introduction

‘Migration in itself is not a dramatic event, but rather an ordinary one’ in the EU. It is caused due to the push factors driving people to leave a country, and pull factors attracting them to a specific destination. This encompasses social and political factors, demographic and economic causes, environmental and climate migration (European Parliament, 2023). However, minorities such as asylum-seekers and irregular immigrants receive a lot of attention due to their hardships and risks of life they face (Ukteam, 2023).

The countries in the EU faced an “unprecedented pressure” at their external borders in 2022, with the number of detected irregular border crossings reaching a level not seen since 2016 (Tidey, 2023). They are still facing the trouble to regulate the refugee movement in a fair way. However in recent years, the migration policy of the EU has focused on strict border controls and the externalisation of migration management through cooperation with third countries (Luyten, 2023). Moreover, discrimination, xenophobia, countries changing towards far-right political ideals has become a way of threatening the humanity. But at the same time the **decline of EU’s population suggests the need to approach this influx not as a problem but an opportunity.**

These situations questions the current EU and individual countries’ policies and attitude in accepting and providing necessary conditions for a new life for the refugees.

The project begins with the **problem field** to understand the overall consequences of migration in the EU and gradually focus towards refugees. It briefly describes the laws governing refugees, the stark differences of providing facilities for them between countries in the EU and the political shifts. This is followed by focusing on **how the Netherlands with the political shift, deals with the asylum seeking process.** This concludes with the issues in the country which is highlighted in the **problem statement.**

Then the **research** is formulated focusing on the **integration of refugees living at isolated temporary asylum shelters in cities.** It is supported with case studies and literature on the **spacial and non- spacial aspects** needed in Western societies to provide a sense of comfort and belonging for refugees in a new country.

With research, I derive **concepts required to facilitate spaces of interaction among refugees and native citizens.** It aims to change the formal regulated interactions and behaviours of the natives towards refugees and vice versa, by creating **informal learning environments in their everyday living.**

The targeted locations are proposed with **policies and strategies** to create opportunities for stronger connections within the city as well with major municipalities around them. This facilitates socio-cultural connections using both top-down and bottoms-up approaches. This is crucial for refugees to voice their perspectives and for the governing authorities to reform their decisions on integration and inclusion.

The outcomes of the project are **evaluated** to know its impact to the new forming society.



(Fig. 2) Refugee boat in the Mediterranean source: Massimo Sestini / eyevine

Glossary

The terms mentioned will be used throughout the report

- **Migrants (includes work and climate migrants)** are someone who has chosen to leave their home to start a new life in another country. A migrant can return home without risking their life or freedom. The movement is understood to be voluntary.

- **Asylum seeker:** is individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualized procedures, an asylum seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every recognized refugee is initially an asylum seeker.

- **Refugees:** are people who have fled their countries to escape conflict, violence, or persecution and have sought safety in another country (UNHCR). (In the Netherlands, asylum seekers who receive their temporary resident permit are termed as Status holders/refugee/newcomers/outgroups).

- **Natives/host society/host community** are people of the host country. This includes people who are of Dutch origin

- **Temporary asylum shelter/ AZC:** are locations where asylum seekers with a residence permit, also called status holders are allowed to live in a reception centre until they are allocated accommodation in a municipality (COA).

- **Asylum resident permit:** if the IND establishes that an asylum seeker needs protection, they will be given an asylum residence permit.

- **Permanent Resident Permit:** after asylum seekers have been in the Netherlands for 5 years, the IND considers whether they still need protection here. They must also have passed the civic integration exam. If they meet these criteria, they are given a permanent residence permit which allows them to stay in the Netherlands (Government of the Netherlands).

- **Country of origin/home country:** a country of nationality or of former habitual residence of a person or group of persons who have migrated abroad, irrespective of whether they migrate regularly or irregularly

- **Country of destination/ Host country:** country that is the destination for a person or a group of persons, irrespective of whether they migrate regularly or irregularly.

- **Xenophobia** can be described as “attitudes, prejudices and behaviour that reject, exclude and often vilify persons, based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society or national identity” (World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, 2001)

1.

Context/ European Union



1.1 Migration in the E.U.

1.2 Consequences of refugee influx in European countries

1.1 Migration in the E.U.

Introduction:

Between January and June 2023, around 89,100 refugees and migrants arrived in Europe via the Mediterranean and North-west African maritime routes (UNHR,2023). Spain, Italy, and Greece were the major EU countries that grappled with this mass influx,by sea. Additionally, there has been a notable influx of refugees by land into countries such as Greece, Poland, and Hungary. During these journeys, thousands of people lost their lives in pursuit of a better life in Europe. With these challenges, the war in Ukraine has triggered a major increase in humanitarian needs due to mass refugee outflows (UNHCR,2023).

According to the established laws, EU is obliged to protect people fleeing persecution or serious harm in their country of origin. An area of open borders and freedom of movement, the member countries share fundamental values and responsibility to welcome and protect refugees (Migration and Home Affairs,n.d.). However, the escalating influx of refugees, coupled with stringent laws, has resulted in an uneven distribution of this vulnerable population. This imbalance has placed immense pressure on border countries, forcing them into challenging political decisions that run counter to existing laws.

Though ‘migration’ has shaped and helped develop cities from the beginning of time, apart from its positive effects on European cities, **migration has also led to political, cultural and social polarization.** Since the refugee crisis in 2015, refugees from the Middle East and Africa were considered a completely different group than other types of migrants in Europe, due to their specific needs. However, one can see that these people are not so different from the migrants who have been arriving in European cities for centuries. Factors such as high population density, less space, diminishing resources, more competition etc. has

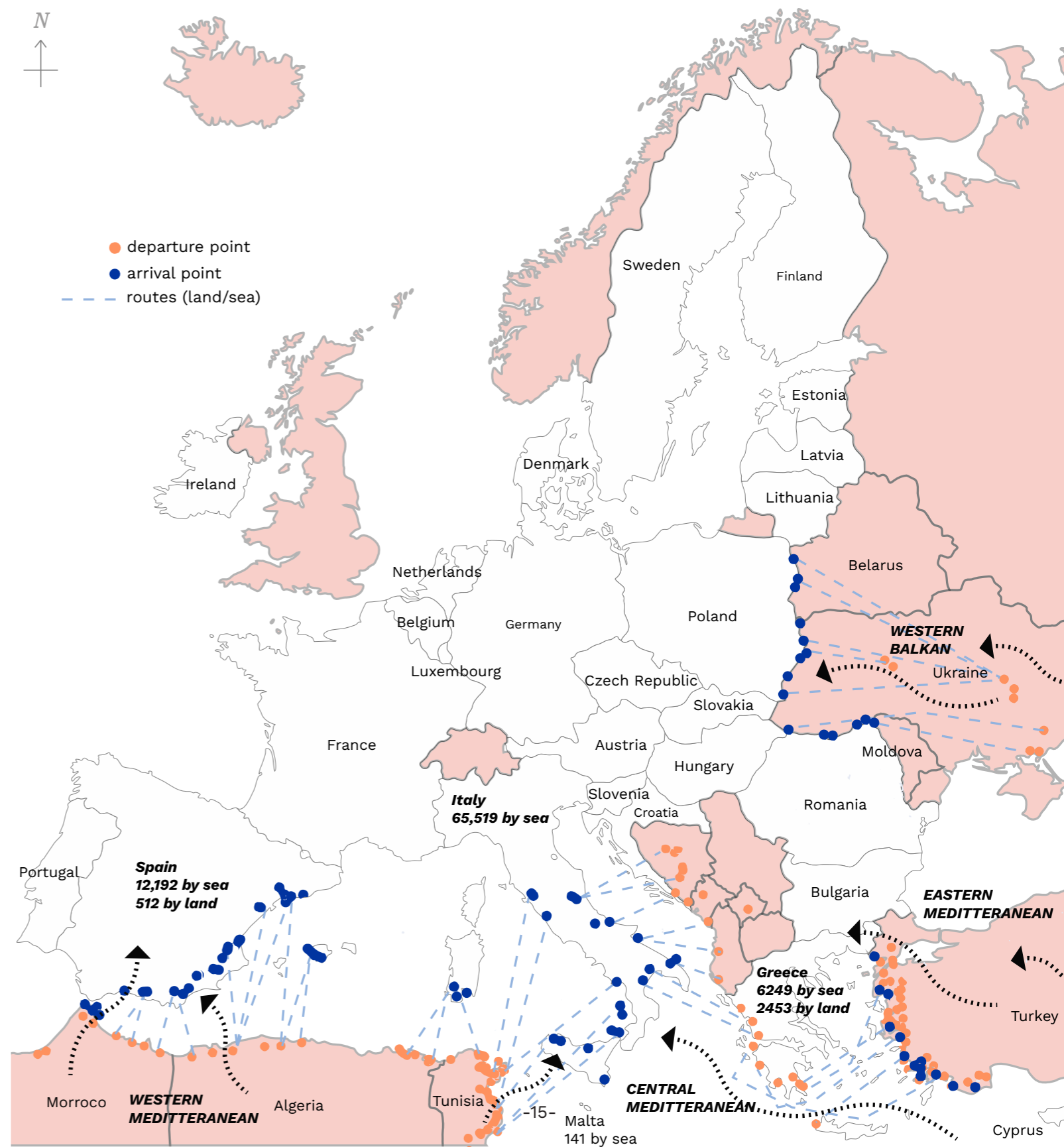
also led to the situation of migrants in a new country. But according to (Pronkhorst, Provoost, & Vanstiphout, 2019) it is simply the way we try to accept them in the society. This includes the acceptance of skilled and labour migrants, since they contribute instantly to the economy.

We can see that the migration in Western Europe has opposing positions. One is that we need to open our borders to migrants, or the current economy would collapse without them. On the other hand, there is **stress placed on the loss of cultural values, fear of ‘safety’, legal systems etc.**

This questions the contribution of West European countries having increasing resistance in accepting the refugees with their **political shifts, policies, intolerant behaviours etc.** It is also apparent that these countries have become less equipped to absorb refugees without societal tension. It has now become a ‘conflict’ that migrants and existing communities experience in their everyday lives, (Pronkhorst, Provoost, & Vanstiphout, 2019) especially in cities.

Examining the complexities of the migration issue reveals that a comprehensive understanding requires consideration of **various dimensions, such as the political, environmental, economic, and cultural aspects.** Notably, arguments against migrants often manifest at a local level, that appears to scale up to the regional level through the influence of political institutions and media portrayal.

This issue necessitates a **nuanced approach,** addressing not only the immediate concerns at the local level but also recognizing the broader factors that contribute to perceptions and attitudes towards refugees.



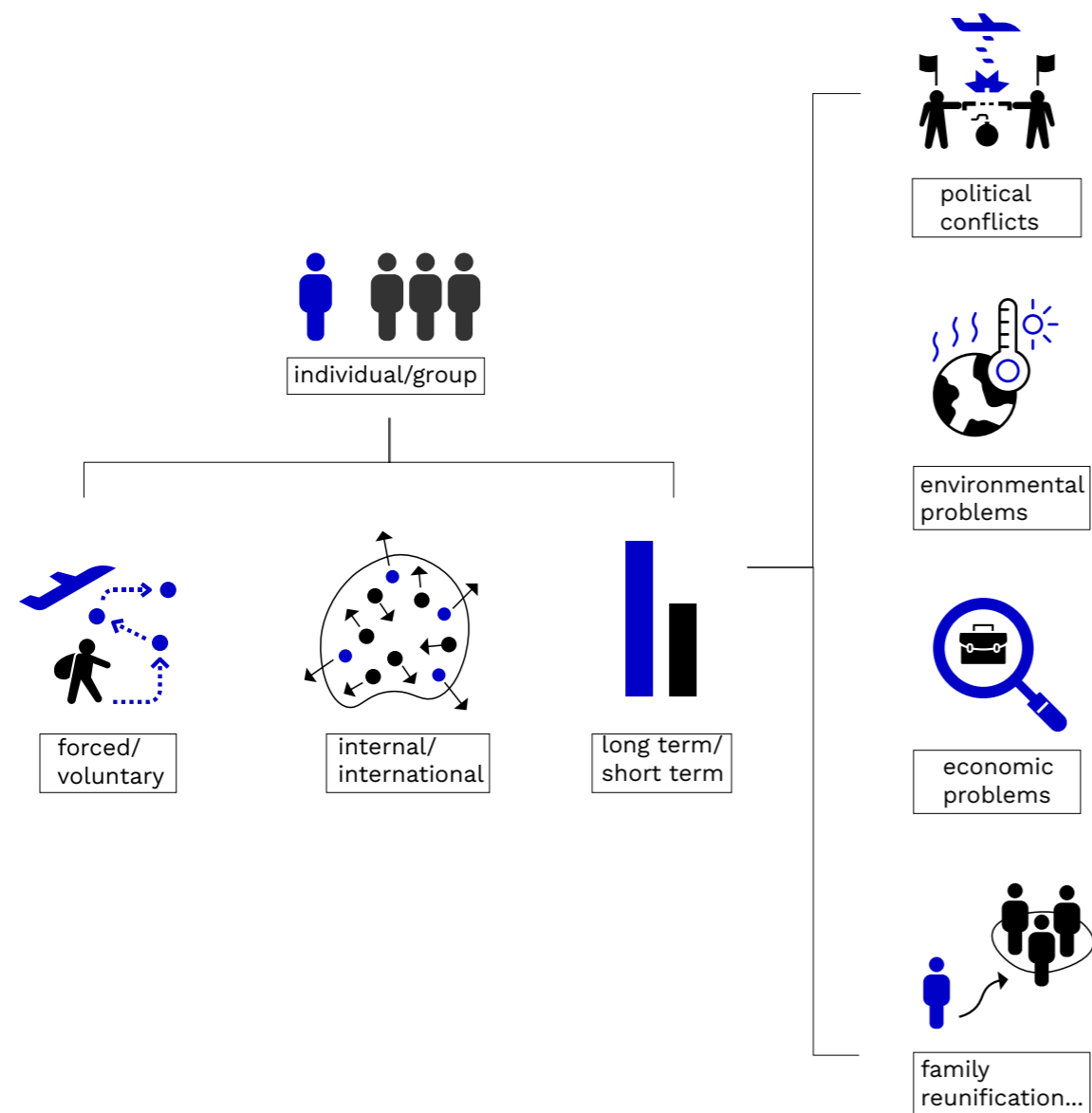
(Fig. 3) Main migration routes into European Union. source: adapted from Europe — Mixed Migration Flows to Europe, reliefweb

Causes of migration to the European Union

The below (Fig.4) shows the common reasons why people migrate. It can be for many reasons, ranging from security, demography and human rights to poverty and climate change (Ajdin Kamber et al., 2024).

In the European Union, there has been a notable increase in migration, primarily driven by factors such as conflict and climate change in migrants' countries of origin (Fig.5, Fig.6). This highlights the urgency for

European countries to address the refugee crisis and develop effective strategies for managing and responding to the influx of refugees.



Note: The term migrants, immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees are portrayed similarly in the media. The terms have different internationally accepted definitions. However, they are overlapped meanings which questions the actual meaning and usage of the terms when discussing about 'crises.'

(Fig. 4) made by author
source: Ajdin Kamber, European Parliament



(Fig. 5) A man carries a propane gas cylinder on his back while walking through debris and destruction littering a street in the Jabalia camp, Gaza City (Image: AFP via Getty Images)



(Fig. 6) Reality and Rhetorics Behind The Threat Perception From Climate Migration

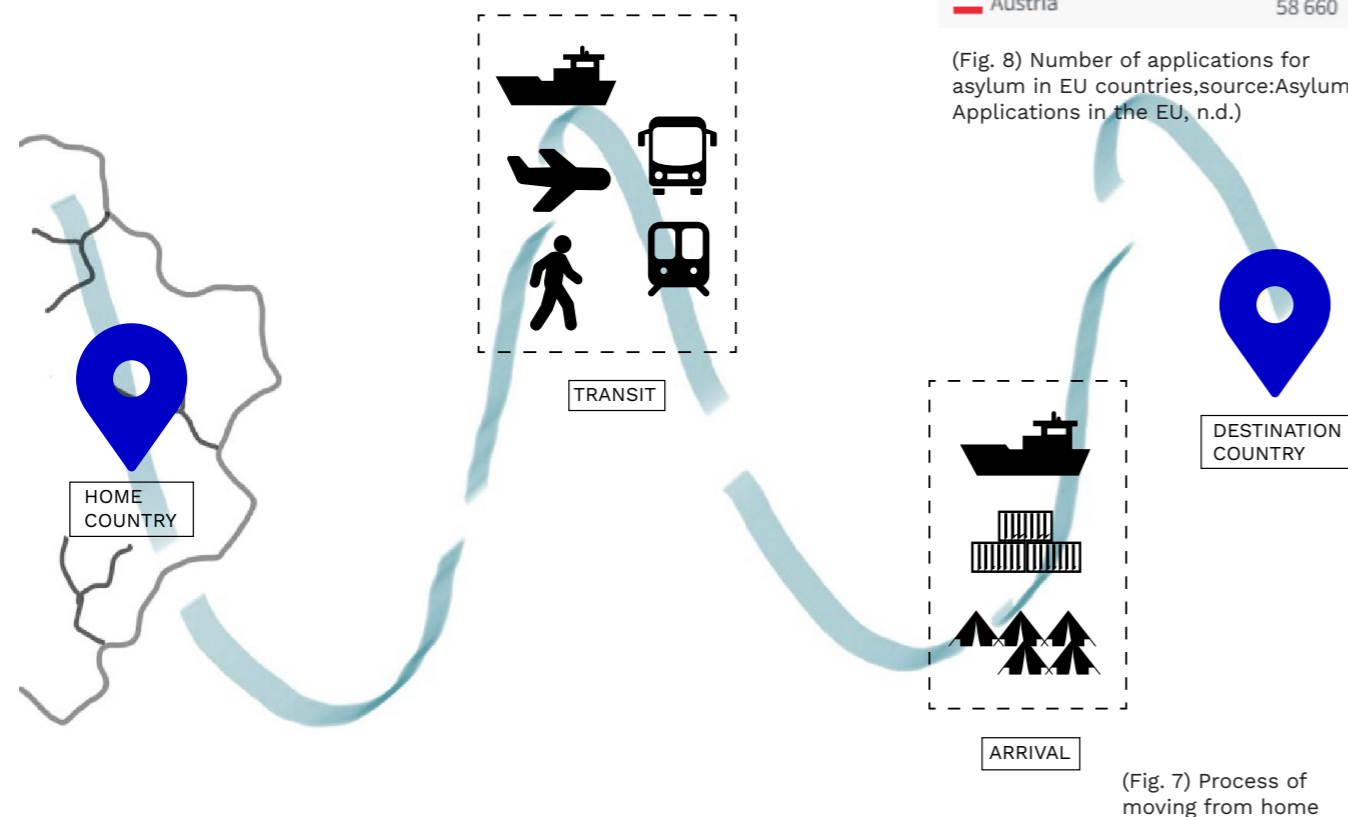
The journey of migrants:

After leaving the country of origin, refugees travel through several established migration routes. They hardly ever choose a destination country based on their understanding of the asylum system or migration policies there, or how much financial support they would get. Instead, family, friends and people smugglers, plus a fair amount of chance, are what determine a migrant's destination (MacGregor,2019).

Research conducted in countries along the transit routes has indicated that **'life on the road' is particularly dangerous due to the risk of kidnapping, detention, and torture by smugglers, sexual and labour exploitation, human trafficking, and physi-**

cal abuse by the government officials. The excessive use of force by government and the collective expulsion of refugees have increased in recent years, as well as accompanying stressful and traumatic experiences. Moreover, discrimination and segregation from the local population, are often present among refugees on the move (Vukčević Marković, Bobić & Živanović,2023) which also affects their overall well-being.

The project focuses on the country of destination of asylum seekers. It is their new home where they aspire to restart their life by **trying to adapt and establish their culture, community among many things.**



Major E.U. Laws that govern the entry and distribution of asylum seekers

With the increasing number of refugees in Europe the laws below have several shortcomings that need to be addressed by the EU. Since the individual countries have their own regulations on choosing and providing asylum to refugees, the law hits severely for some countries more than the others, which leads to inequitable practices.

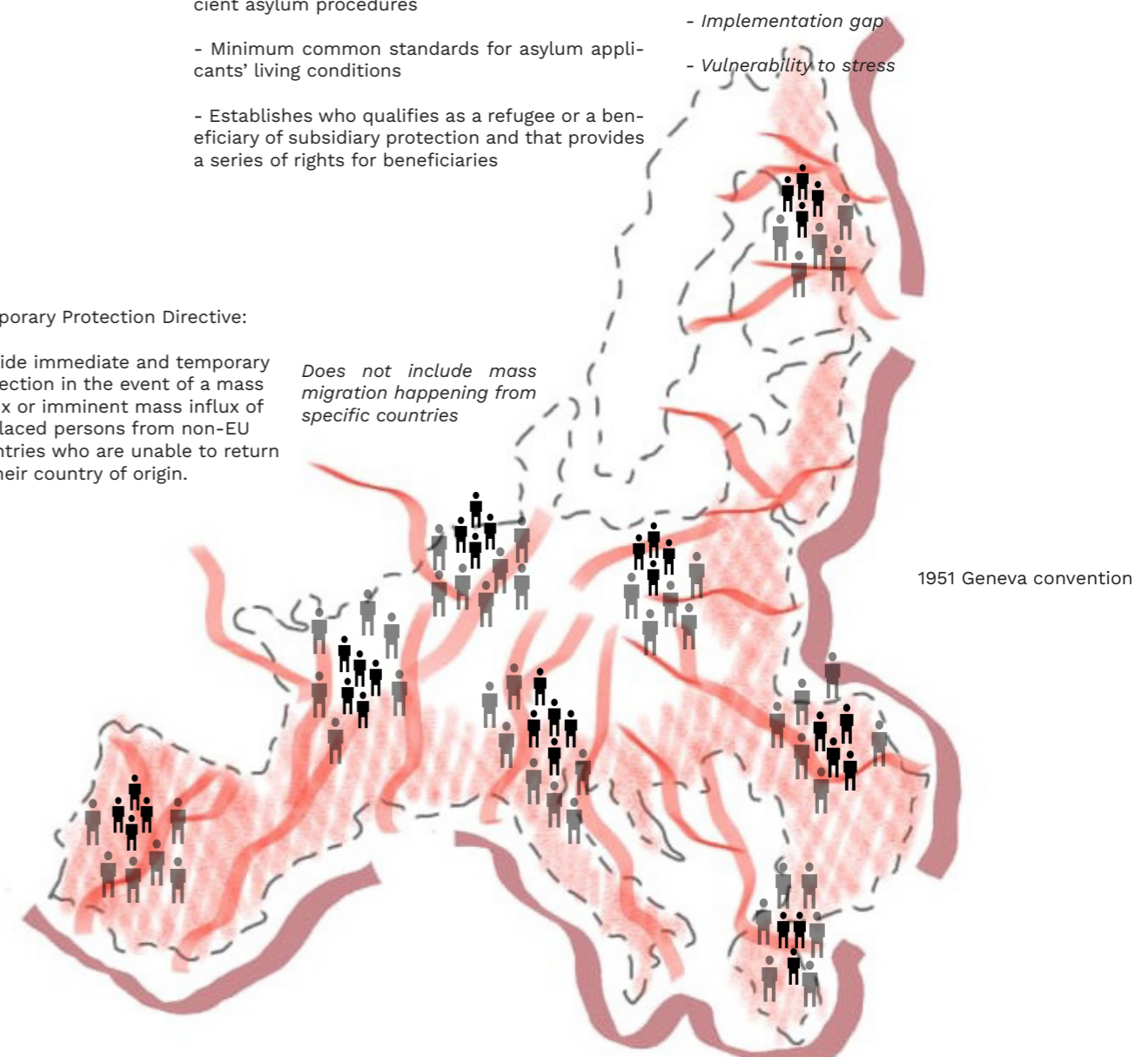
Common European Asylum System:

- Determines which Member State is responsible for examining an asylum application
- Establishes common standards for fair and efficient asylum procedures
- Minimum common standards for asylum applicants' living conditions
- Establishes who qualifies as a refugee or a beneficiary of subsidiary protection and that provides a series of rights for beneficiaries
- Limits to harmonisation
- Unequal distribution of Refugees (Dublin regulation)
- Implementation gap
- Vulnerability to stress

Temporary Protection Directive:

Provide immediate and temporary protection in the event of a mass influx or imminent mass influx of displaced persons from non-EU countries who are unable to return to their country of origin.

Does not include mass migration happening from specific countries



New Pact on Migration and Asylum:

- People would be obliged to apply for asylum or other forms of legal stay in the Member State of first entry and remain there
- Asylum seekers who come from a country where less than 20% of people who apply for asylum in the EU have their claims approved would be automatically referred to the border procedure
- States to transfer responsibility for asylum seeker in a so-called "safe third country"

- Keeps people at the border in the first country
- Poor reception standards in strained border countries
- Racial profiling
- Delay access to the asylum procedure
- Prolong detention at the borders

(Fig. 9) made by author

1.2 Consequences of refugee influx in European countries

Political situation

As of 2023, the European Union is struggling with the challenge of welcoming refugees. Instead of accommodating them, they are opting for stricter laws and fortified borders, which goes against humanitarian laws.

Besides, a shift towards far-right political ideologies has not only led to several individuals losing their lives but has also caused severe distress throughout the process of seeking asylum. These political institutions, by spreading false accusations about refugees and migrants, have instilled fear in the minds of the natives. This misinformation has contributed to the formation of misguided opinions among natives, fostering a rude attitude towards refugees. On analysis it was found that on average in EU, only 19% of people know the proportion of non-European immigrants in their country and a third of Europeans never interact with a migrant (or less than once a year) (Burtin, 2023). This also reflects that these overarching decisions by the EU is influencing and intensifying the actions within individual countries and societies.

“the migration issue continues to be tirelessly exploited by politicians in search of votes, even at the cost of fuelling misinformation and a poisonous public mood”

“Sacrificing the rights of migrants and refugees for short-term political gain is not only an immoral choice but also part of a chain reaction that risks having a disastrous impact on the Union and its founding values”,

Quoted by Claudio Francavilla, Human Rights Watch(NGO)

Despite the considerable influence of political power in Europe, especially in implementing rules and regulations, the handling of this issue has been marked by either making pacts to shift the problems to countries outside the EU or leaving people to their fate on the high seas (Burtin, 2023). Unfortunately, this approach has not resolved the problem but has, in fact, exacerbated it.

By recognizing the need for a more effective and humane approach, the EU must promote collective ideals among its citizens to foster a better society. This includes re-evaluating current policies, eliminating misinformation, and embracing solutions that prioritize the well-being and integration of refugees rather than creating tensions within the society.

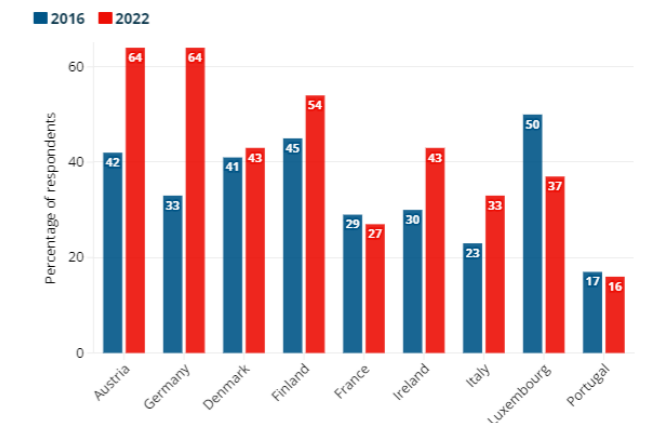


(Fig. 10) Deal With Tunisia: The European Union's Latest Attempt To Externalize Its Refugee Problems. source: theowp.org, Euronews



(Fig. 11) Countries supporting right wing politics source: The Economist

Change in experience of racism between 2016 to 2022



(Fig. 12) Some of the worst results were recorded in Austria and Germany, where far-right parties are surging in the polls, though racism was “pervasive and relentless” source: Euronews

Land and Sea borders

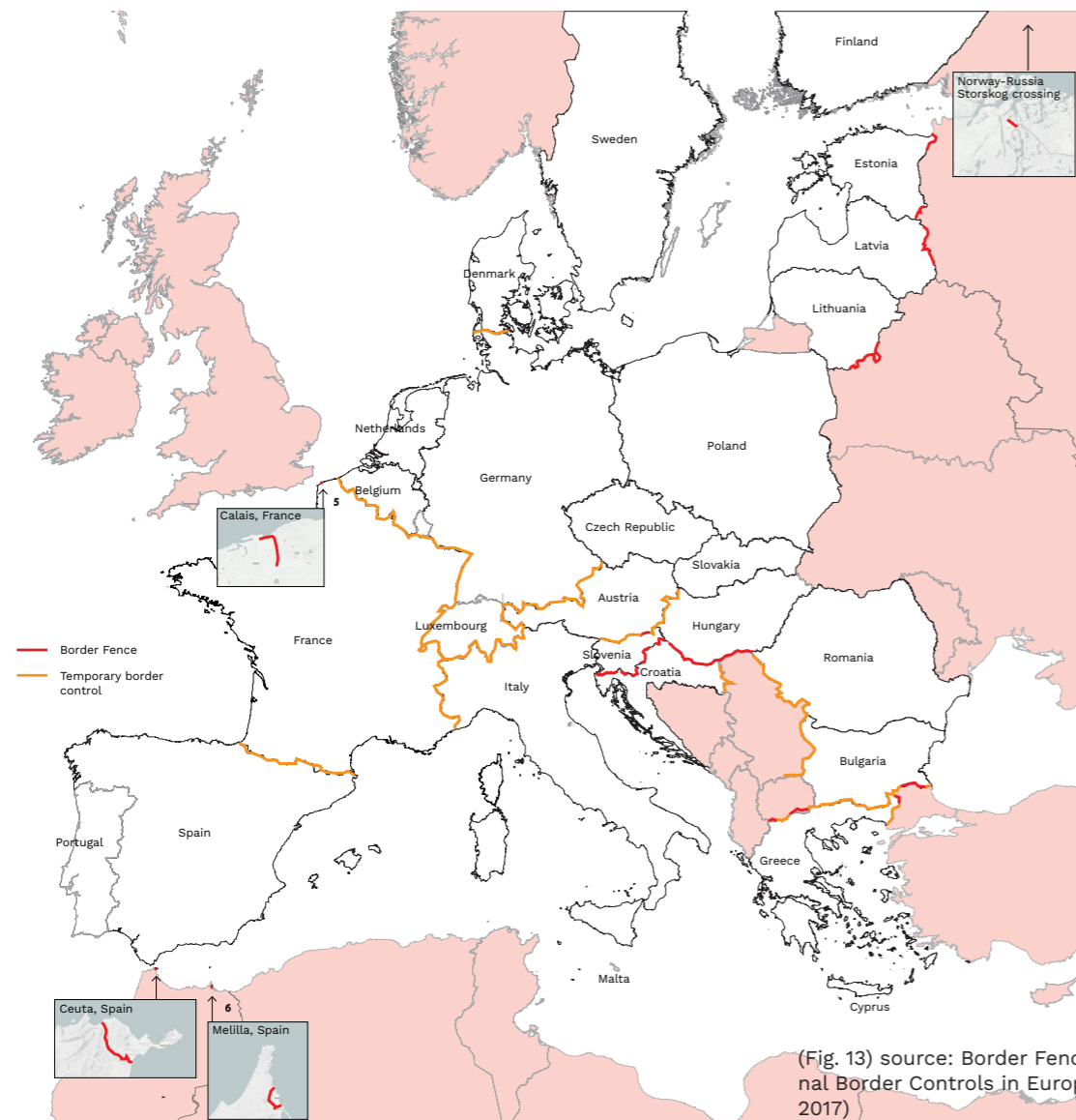
The asylum crisis in 2015 saw the EU become a walled fortress, which initially saw arrivals dropping, but proportionally, resulted in more people dying. Since 2014, the total length of border fences at the EU's external borders and within the EU/Schengen area grew from 315 km to 2,048 km (The Brussels Times, n.d.-b)

Though construction of borders are not forbidden under EU laws, they must still abide by the right to seek international protection of people under any circumstances. But it has instead led people take dangerous routes, posing a threat to their life.

These so called political borders lead to scenarios that are against humanity, where people are helpless with their family behind the walls and security. It also questions the

reason for this desperate protection when population of Europe has been steadily declining (Bello, 2024). It also expresses how the border countries suffer the most and ultimately resort to building strong borders and demand financial support from EU funds, when the support they receive from other European countries is minimal or nil.

The border conditions show the complexity of the crisis, where one could see it as mere phenomenon and be at their own leisure at the Mediterranean Sea (Fig.16) or question the system and be prepared to accept and adapt to the political and cultural changes that are bound to happen.



(Fig. 13) source: Border Fences and Internal Border Controls in Europe - World, 2017)



(Fig. 14) Migrants stand on the beach as Spanish soldiers cordon off the area at the border of Morocco and Spain, at the Spanish enclave of Ceuta. Most of the migrants to cross are from Morocco, but some come from sub-Saharan Africa



(Fig. 15) Hungary's border fence with Serbia, Rebecca Harms / Flickr



(Fig. 16) Tourist photographs tents of refugees on the beach promenade. In the background a ferry that has been converted to a rescue ship exclusively for Syrian refugees. August 2015, Kos, Greece, Europe © Jörg Brüggemann

Spatial outcomes of their arrival in the destination countries

Once refugees reach their destination country, they are typically accommodated in camps or asylum shelters, depending on the conditions and facilities provided in the host countries. EU member states vary considerably in asylum seeker reception conditions (Zill et al., 2019).

These camps/shelters may be situated within cities/suburbs/rural areas and people living here are termed as asylum seekers/refugees/illegal migrants etc. Such accommodations are increasingly becoming common in European countries. But these shelters are generalized with term 'campization'¹ which mask variation in asylum seeker and refugee reception, as these are all sites of territorial struggle between different individuals, groups and collectives (Zill et al., 2019).

Refugees in these shelters are often perceived as a challenge to native culture, and they may spend significant portions of their lives in these temporary conditions.

Aiming to make these temporary shelters quick with formal regulations is inevitable. But most of the time it is isolated with is often supplied with bare minimum facilities. While it is necessary to establish regulations for these shelters, it is crucial to involve the community in the decision-making process, as they are the primary users of these spaces. This can be observed in some cases, where the civil society produce housing alternatives for refugees.

Transitioning from their lifestyle and habits in their home countries to adapting highly formal and regulated society takes time and adjustment (vice versa). During this process, refugees may seek to recreate familiar aspects of their previous life such wearing traditional clothes, gathering in groups on streets, public spaces, or establishing their own small shops etc. If they are denied the freedom to do so, the places they inhabit become segregated and may be negatively portrayed in the media as centres of crime.

These highlight the importance of providing adequate infrastructure and resources for refugee shelters. Strategically planning these shelters can significantly improve the quality of life for residents and facilitate their integration into society. An infrastructure such as a good road connectivity during the planning could improve their lives exponentially.



(Fig. 17) This aerial picture shows migrants' tents at a camp on the outskirts of the city of Calais, northern France on September 16, 2023. © Sameer al-Doumy, AFP



(Fig. 18) Gyms, schools and municipal buildings are being used as temporary reception facilities in Germany to house additional asylum seekers | Photo Felix Kästle / picture alliance

Campization is the transformation of asylum shelters into large, camp-like structures with lowered living standards and a closed character (Kreichauf, 2018)

2.

Problem field / The Netherlands



2.1 How is the Netherlands dealing with migration?

2.2 Consequences of refugee influx in the Netherlands

2.1 How is the Netherlands dealing with migration?

Context:

In 2022, the Netherlands received approximately 50,000 asylum seekers, subjecting them to a rigorous asylum procedure as a prerequisite for potential citizenship. However, an examination of the facilities provided for refugees and asylum seekers, reveals a system that falls short of addressing their needs.

Through an exploration of Dutch politics, conversations with past asylum seekers, and interactions with the local population, it became apparent that the current approach lacks future-oriented development strategies to effectively accommodate newcomers (spatial/non-spatial) and considers only the host society's perspective.

Despite the country's acceptance of asylum seekers and providing them with equal rights as a Dutch citizen once accepted, issues such as discrimination, intolerance from the natives persist.

Temporary accommodation facilities remain isolated, contributing to the challenges in integration. Lack of employment opportunities limits those looking to contribute to the society they now call home. Additionally, the inadequate housing intensifies the challenges faced by asylum seekers, hindering their ability to establish stable lives within the Dutch community.

This project focuses on aspects related to the topic within the Netherlands. The decision to focus on this region stems from a

familiarity with the area and the advantage to access asylum centres and engaging in conversations with asylum seekers and refugees providing a nuanced understanding of the specific challenges and dynamics present in this context.



(Fig. 19) Map showing the Provinces of the Netherlands

History of 'migrants' in the Netherlands

Refugees started arriving in the Netherlands starting from World War 1. and II. The first were the Belgians, followed by Germans. They were accommodated in storage depots, factory buildings, churches, boarding houses and hotels due to the shortage of housing.



Camp of tents at Amersfoort at the end of 1914



This period was the starting point of the formation of multicultural society in the Netherlands. Apart from temporary guest housing, there were temporary collective accommodations in former canteens, school buildings near their workplace, far from the city and amenities.



De Glijphoeve apartments in Bijlmer Photo: Hans Peters / Nationaal Archief.

The Surinamese occupied apartments in cities and took initiatives to informally use the garages to express their culture and habits. This created intolerance among natives and to counter this the government decided to restrict their presence. It could be seen that the government tried to practice humane policies, but succumbed to the pressure of its people who were intolerant to foreigners.



Surinamese people strike to protest overcrowded boarding houses. Photo: National Organization of Surinamese in the Netherlands (LOSON)

World War I
1914 - 1918
Belgian refugees

World War II
1930 - 1945
German refugees

Migrant workers
1950 - 1980
Italians, Spanish, Greeks,
Cape Verdians, Filipino,
Turkish, Moroccons

'Surinamese Migrants'
1970 - 1975
Independence of Dutch
colony Suriname, Antillean,
Ghanese, illegal
migrants

Since the early 2000s, there has been a noticeable shift towards right-wing politics and increased animosity towards foreigners, particularly Muslims, in the Netherlands. Even in traditionally tolerant cities like Amsterdam, there is a growing hostility towards outsiders. The focus has shifted from accommodating refugees and migrant workers to competing with global cities for highly skilled individuals. Consequently, the country has become less receptive to the arrival of refugees. Instances of racial profiling in refugee selection processes have also been observed.

Efforts have been made to integrate refugees with natives through initiatives like co-living spaces and support networks in major cities. However, the reality on the ground often falls short, with inadequate resources and unjust treatment of newcomers, exacerbated by the large number of arrivals.

present
2024
expats, international
students, EU workers,
asylum seekers and refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Somalia, Eritrea, illegal migrants,
tourists

1980 - 2000
young people, immigrants,
knowledge workers, creative
people, Balkan refugees

These accommodation methods reflect the Dutch approach of providing the bare minimum to refugees, driven by the need for their skills while avoiding deeper engagement and adaptation.



(Fig. 20) History of migration by the author, source: City of Comings and Goings, Crimson Architects

Current demographic situation of asylum seekers

(Fig. 21) shows the number of asylum seekers and the family members steadily increasing in from 2021 in the Netherlands. This situation is likely to increase in the coming years with extreme changes in political, economical and environmental situations in other countries. The graph also reflects that it is one of countries that people prefer coming to, which can be attributed to its better economic situation among other European countries.

Syrians are the most common among asylum seekers in Europe (Euronews,2023) and in the Netherlands(Fig.22 and Fig.23). They represented 2/3 of all those granted temporary protection in the Netherlands between 2014 and 2016 and are still considered the majority to be granted resident permits among refugees in the country. (Syrians in the Netherlands, 2024). However, it still seems to be the case that they have low participation in education, labour market and are highly dependant on social assistance benefits. They also highly feel Dutch even with less years of staying in the country. This can be attributed to the safety they feel here and majority of them have contact with the native Dutch citizens and friends from own community within the country atleast once a week(ibid). These can greatly vary between age groups, gender, previous educational qualification among refugees.

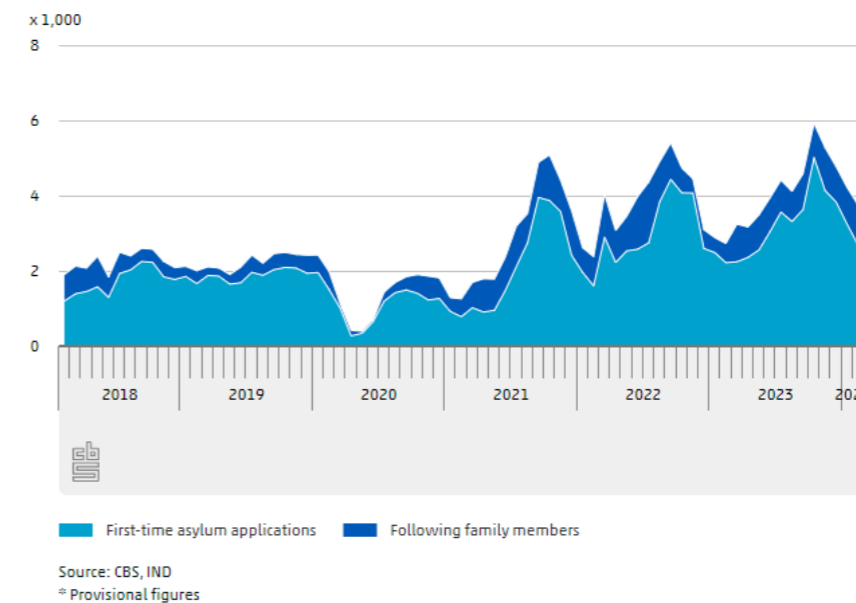
It is understood that refugees highly depend on the social benefits from the government in general. The difference in culture and habits plays a major role in the distance between refugees and the native community. Worries about situation of family at home, difficulty in learning a new language, feeling lack of patience, understanding and guidance from the natives(Eritrean Status Holders in the Netherlands, 2008) often makes it slow for them to integrate with the native society.

(Fig. 24) shows that the majority of asylum seekers are men. In most of the countries, men are seen as the main breadwinner and are engaged in more public-facing activities including being expected to join the army. These make them also more likely to be a target in a situation of political and social turmoil (Euronews, 2023b). Therefore they are the first ones to flee, get a job and income and then have family reunification. Boys and girls (including minors) are the next majority (Fig.25). This could be as a result of making family reunification stricter.

In the Netherlands, it is alarming that minors are disappearing from refugee centres, particularly from Ter Apel. It is assumed that some are known to travel to join family elsewhere in Europe but a majority end up in the hands of criminals or in the sex trade. Besides, research showed that 75% of the young asylum seekers who vanished in Dutch refugee centres were aged 15 to 17 and 88% were male. 50% vanish within a year of registration(Pascoe, 2023b).

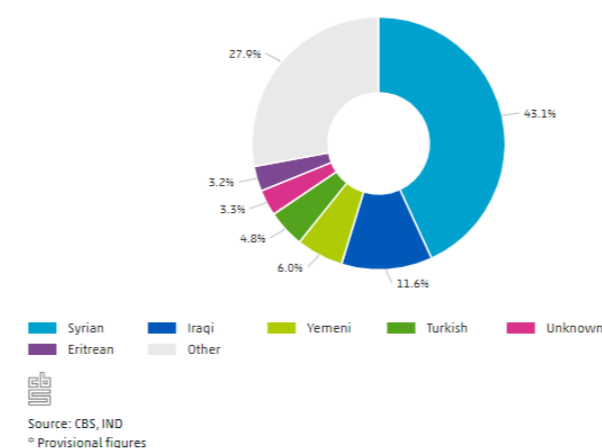
The government and the society follows superficial ways to protect, uplift and provide opportunities for refugees to become part of the own community. The disappearance of minors which often does not make the news, questions the quality and unsecuredness for any refugee living in Ter Apel and other asylum shelters elsewhere in the country. This gives the project a relevance by taking the temporary shelters as spaces that instigate acts of empathy, care, support, empowerment between refugees and native community.

Asylum seekers and following family members



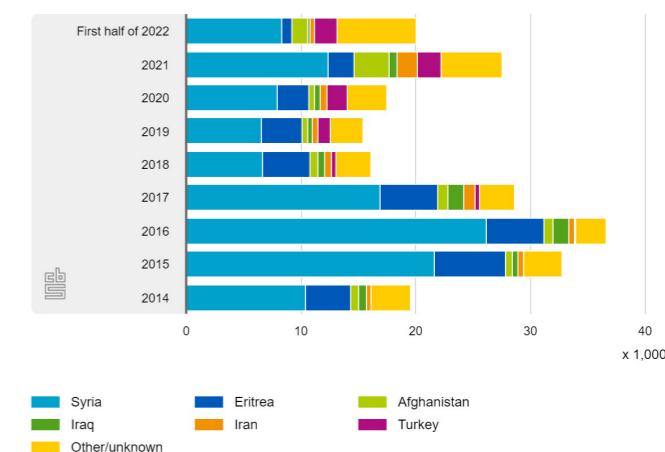
(Fig. 21)

Nationalities of asylum seekers and following family members, February 2024*



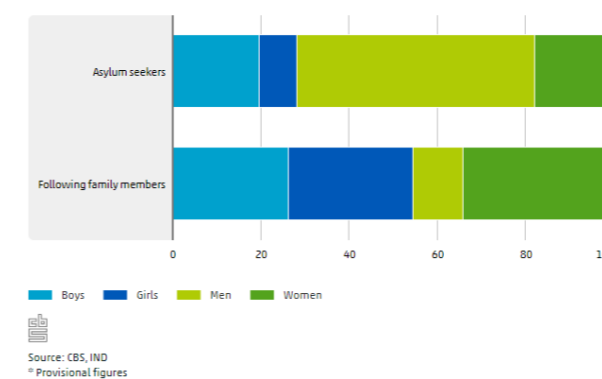
(Fig. 22)

Granted residence permits by nationality



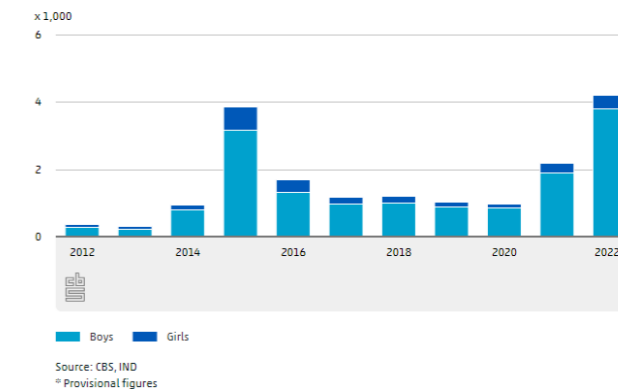
(Fig. 23)

Asylum seekers and following family members, February 2024*



(Fig. 24)

Unaccompanied minor aliens



(Fig. 25)

2.2 Consequences of refugee influx in the Netherlands:

Political situation

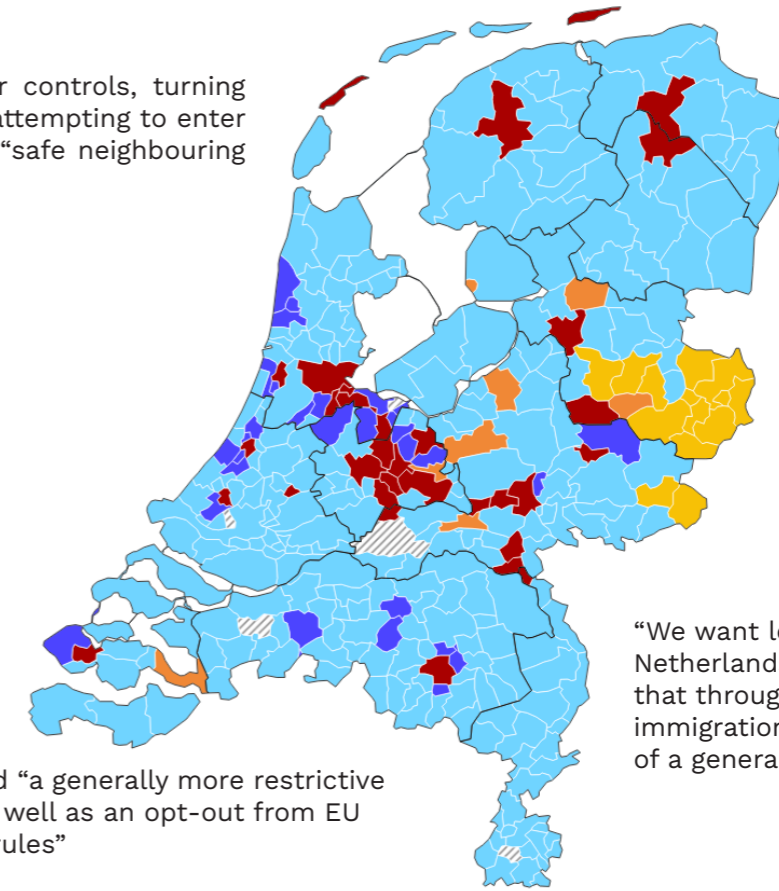
As one of the EU countries, Netherlands grapples with the challenges of accommodating refugees amidst a political landscape (Fig.27) that wants to establish borders, and stop taking asylum seekers.

This strain on the system manifests in the treatment of refugees within the country, with prolonged waiting periods in the asylum seekers shelters due to inadequate 'housing'. Instances of racial profiling at the borders shows the long standing discriminatory practices ingrained in the culture, reflecting a reluctance to embrace diversity.

Furthermore, the selection process for asylum seekers appears to favour those from certain nationalities or with established communities in the country, raising questions about the fairness of the system.

These issues not only affect arriving asylum seekers but also impact natives, as overcrowded reception centres struggle to cope with the sudden influx. Overall, the situation shows the country's unpreparedness to effectively host refugees.

"Restore Dutch border controls, turning away asylum-seekers attempting to enter the Netherlands from "safe neighbouring countries."



"Freeze on asylum" and "a generally more restrictive immigration policy", as well as an opt-out from EU asylum and migration rules"

"We want less Islam in the Netherlands and we will achieve that through: less non-Western immigration and the introduction of a general halt to asylum"

PVV GLP/DA SGP VVD
NSC OVERIG

(Fig. 27) The election in cards: PVV also popular in the Bible Belt, NSC in the northeast, Jessurun & Kersten, 2023, NOS



(Fig. 26) source: Situation at the Central Reception location at Ter apel, Photo: Picture-alliance

(Fig. 28) source: Ukrainian refugees in the Netherlands: If you're all white you're all right, The Amsterdam Confessions of a Shallow Man, Simon Woolcot (2022, March 23)

The Distribution Law

Currently, it has been reported that not all municipalities have made the effort to accommodate asylum seekers over a long period of time due to various reasons (Fig. 29 and Fig.30). Particularly, it has been noted that there are more gaps in the Randstad (Boer, 2024) where almost half of the country's population lives.

But in contrast, almost all municipalities that do not receive refugees, have a room for Ukrainians (ibid). Though Ukrainians were meant to stay in the country for a short period of time, it is not the case anymore. To start with, they were not treated similar to 'refugees' and it **displays the double standards that municipalities have in selecting who they want to host, irrespective of the period of stay.**

Though the national government is accelerating the housing of status holders, the contribution of all the municipalities in providing temporary solutions has become vital to relieve the pressure from Ter Apel, which has been suffering from increasing 'nuisance' of refugees for years (Boer, 2024).

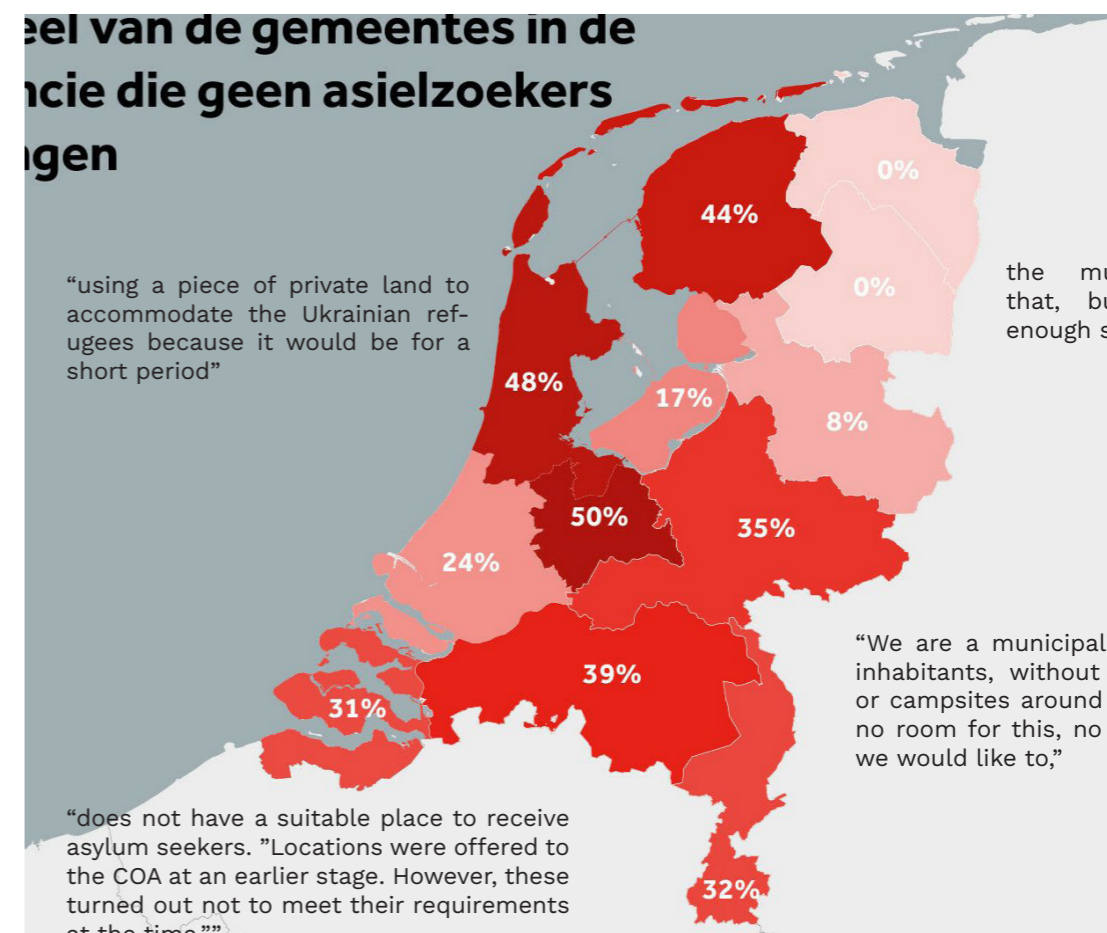
The influence of political parties in the recent 2024 elections and its relation to the rebellious behaviour from residents of potential locations also plays an important role in working of this law (ibid).

Under this law, the municipalities can be forced to take in asylum seekers. There is also a reward for municipalities who decide to continue or expand the accommodation

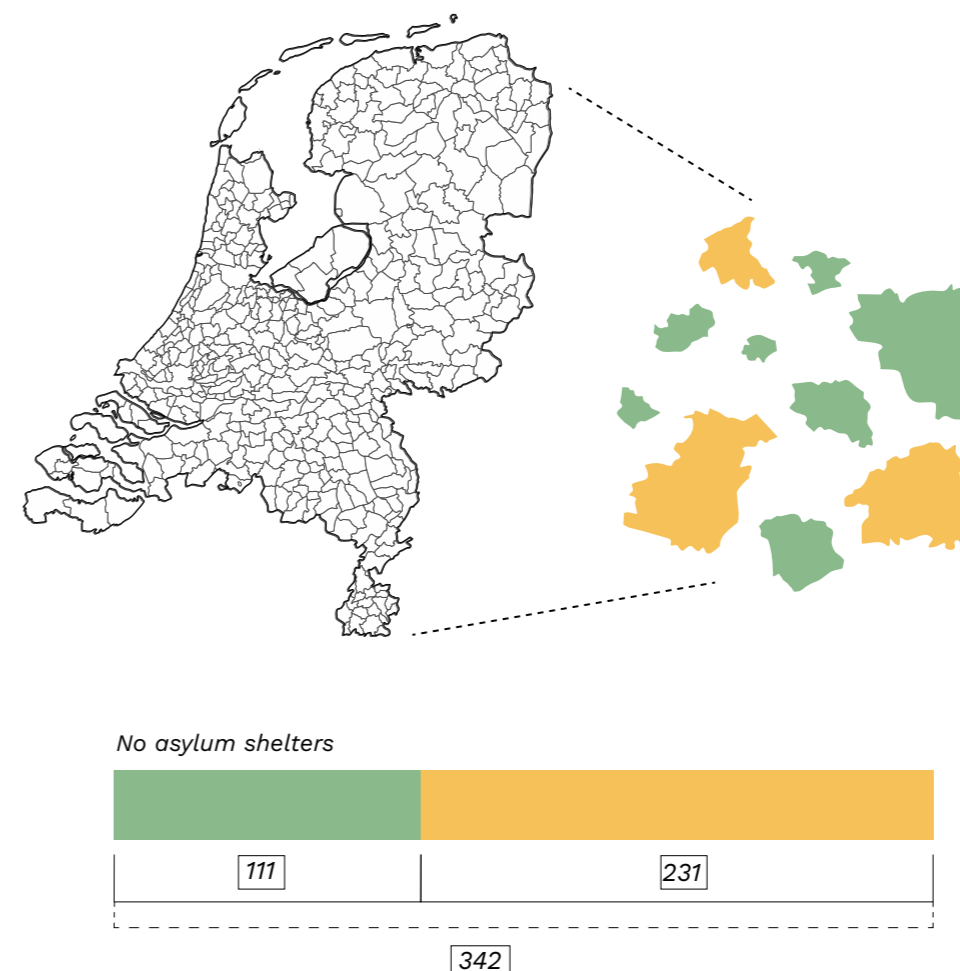
of refugees. There still seems to be a lack of strictness in the law, such as they will be distributed among all municipalities, with population and social status playing a role in the choice, only if it is urgently necessary. This still gives the municipalities in the Netherlands the freedom to make their decisions, which can lead to failure of the law.

The project sees the law as an opportunity for the municipality to step up their actions in creating changes in the city to absorb refugees, and provide equitable spaces and places for interaction with native community. Over a period, this can change the natives attitude towards refugees, thereby stirring a bigger political and cultural change.

Besides, by serving as an example for other municipalities, there are also chances for cooperation among municipalities, which can also lead towards a systemic change in the country.



(Fig. 29) The share of municipalities in the province that do not receive asylum seekers.



(Fig. 30) Unequal distribution of asylum seekers among municipalities

source: Spreidingswet Heeft Vooral Invloed Op Opvang Asielzoekers in Utrecht En Noord-Holland, 2024, NOS

Housing Crisis or Refugee Crisis?

Netherlands has also been facing a housing crisis since many years. With the increase in asylum requests and the number of refugees, there has been a demand for social housing. Dutch nationals are also competing with them for social housing due to lack of options (Euronews, 2023).

The COA website says that the refugees have to wait only a few months until they get a housing, but the reality is different. There are people waiting for more than a year to even get their asylum request to be assessed.

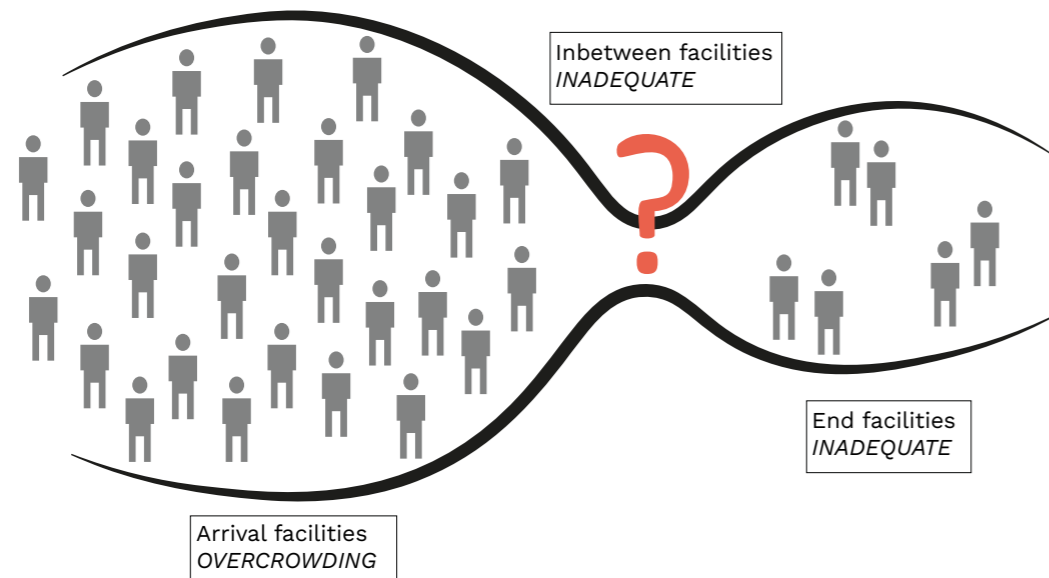
Though the temporary or emergency asylum shelters provide instant relief for the government to mitigate the crisis, it does not contain it. Moreover, the quality of life while living in the shelters are questionable. Most of them spend their days in the shelters recreation room. Once they get the status, the wait is still not over. The shortage of housing makes them to be on the waiting list, thereby overcrowding the shelter locations (ibid).

To control the situation, the Dutch government also tried to avoid granting the im-

mediate right to family reunification, as a result of which the government collapsed in 2023 due to difference in opinions. This led to confusion among the public regarding their political belief and support, which led to the winning of the far right party in the re-election, thereby strengthening the anti-refugee ideals.

The government often attributes the slow progress in building new homes to factors such as inflation and environmental concerns. However, this explanation contradicts a deeper issue, the persistent failure to address the long-standing housing crisis facing the country.

Housing is indeed a critical part of the crisis, which concerns feelings of trauma, displacement, and uncertainty etc. among refugees. Yet, my project aims to explore spaces beyond the confines of home. These spaces offer opportunities for natives and refugees to come together, learn from each others differences, create bonds, freely voice their opinions etc. in common spaces, developing mutual respect through open conversations.



(Fig.31) Bottle neck effect



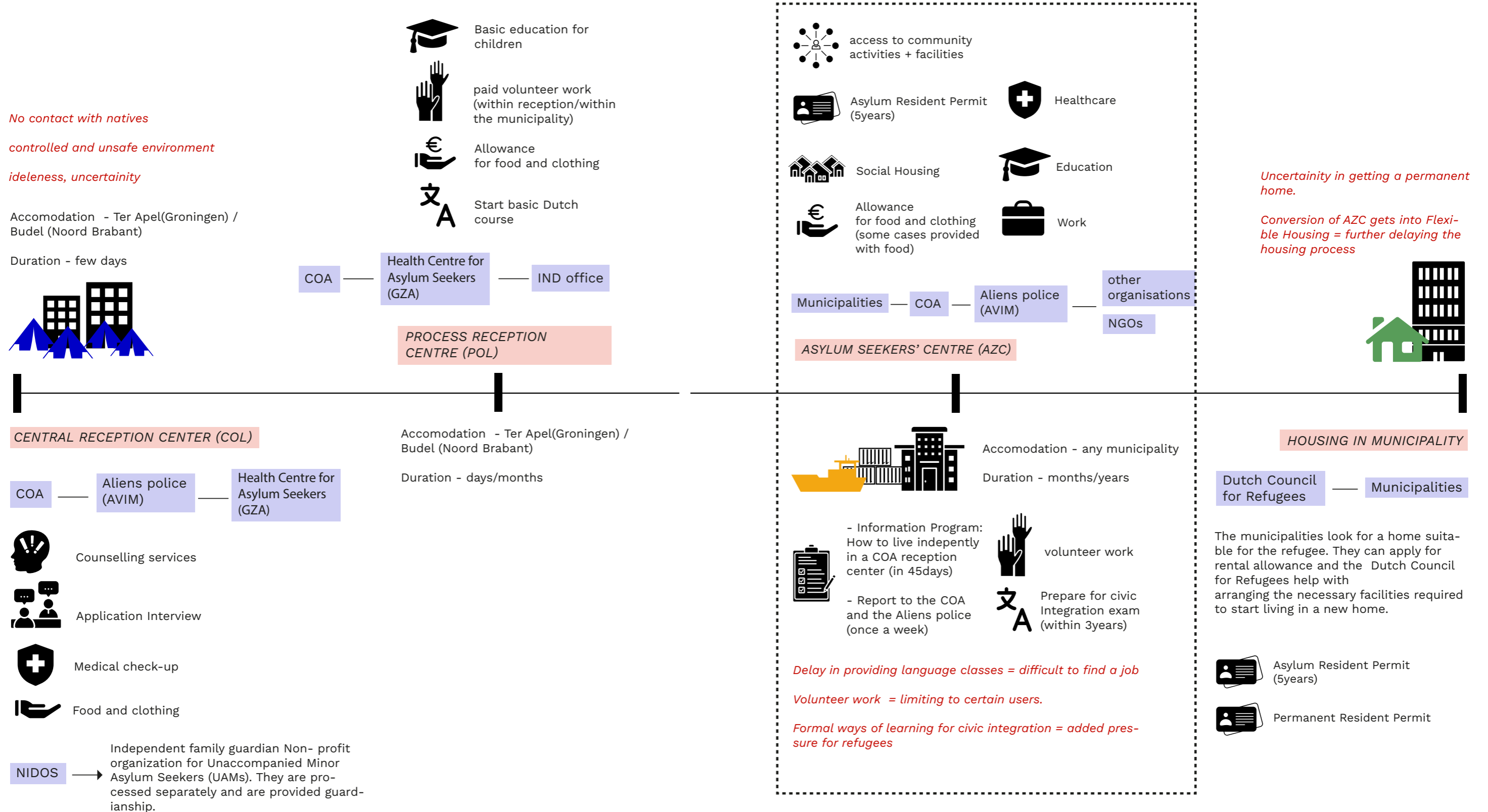
(Fig. 32) Asylum seekers on hunger strike at the crisis emergency shelter in Purmerend ask for attention to the slow procedure at the IND. Image Remko de Waal / ANP



(Fig. 33) Dutch citizens gather around Utrecht town hall for a demonstration held in solidarity with migrants against the policy of Geert Wilders, who won the Dutch legislative elections last year | Photo: Farouk Batiche / Anadolu

Asylum seeking procedure

The diagram shows the rights of asylum seekers throughout the procedure to acquire refugee status. It highlights the negative effects of the rules set by the COA- during the temporary asylum shelter phase, making it a crucial phase for intervention to facilitate refugee integration.



(Fig.34) made by author source: COA website

Spatial outcomes of the asylum process:

However, to nudge these institutions, it is essential to initiate action at the local level, where refugees and native society come together. Understanding the spatial conditions of the asylum seeking process is crucial in this regard.

Asylum seekers arriving in the Netherlands undergo a series of regulated stages to receive a permanent resident permit. Beginning at the central reception location, refugees start their asylum process, which can span months or even years before they are granted acceptance and provided with permanent housing. Throughout the process, it is observed that refugees experience psychological distress from the frequent changes in their accommodation locations, as well as the highly uncertainty of their circumstances.

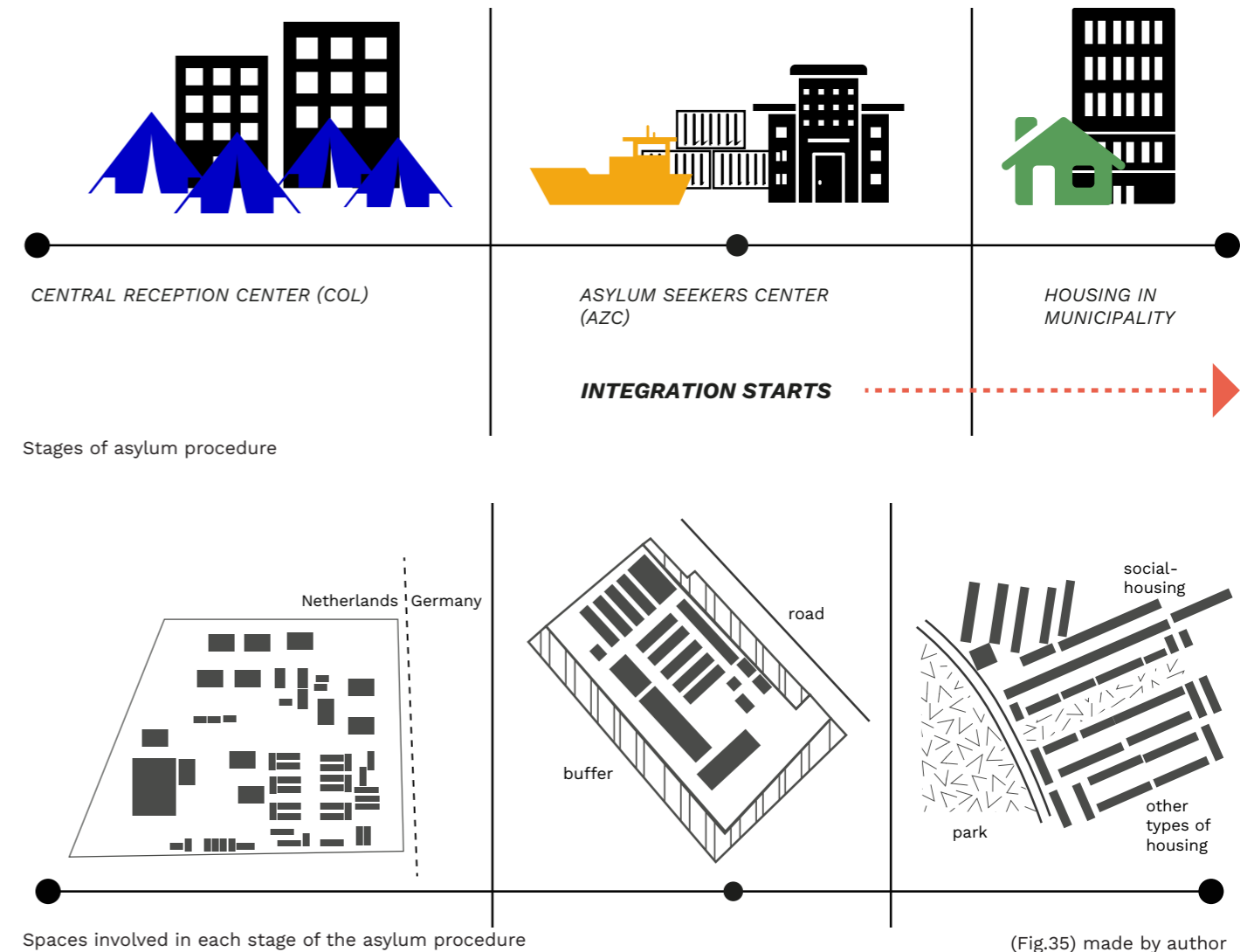
During the distribution to municipalities, it is observed that refugees often prefer to go to big cities due to better employment opportunities and diversity. Urban areas thus play a crucial part in facilitating inclusion and integration of refugees with native citizens. Therefore the asylum seekers centre (AZC) are a significant starting point for the integration process.

Receiving a permanent housing makes them become a 'complete' part of the society. The spacial territories of each stage shows the conditions of the accommodations and its closeness to the native society.

Depending on the location of their accommodation, the existing demographics of the municipality and the activities they are exposed to, the degree of engagement with the natives varies among refugees.

From the (Fig. 35) shows that the in-between temporary asylum centres often appear secluded from the native society, despite being situated within cities/towns/villages.

In (Fig.36) we can see for example ships that were used for luxury cruises now acting as AZC. This necessitates an in-depth analysis of the spatial impact in the integration of refugees in the host society.



(Fig.35) made by author source: Google Earth

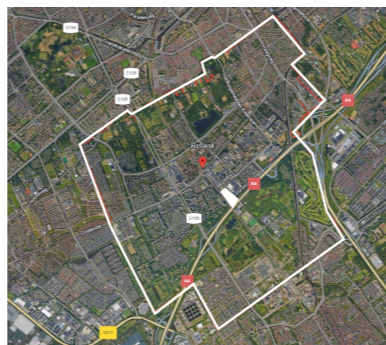
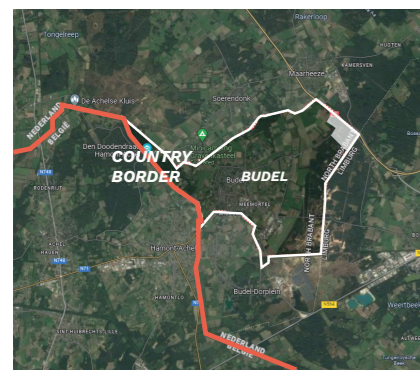


(Fig.36) Pictures of the stages source: Google photos

SPACES



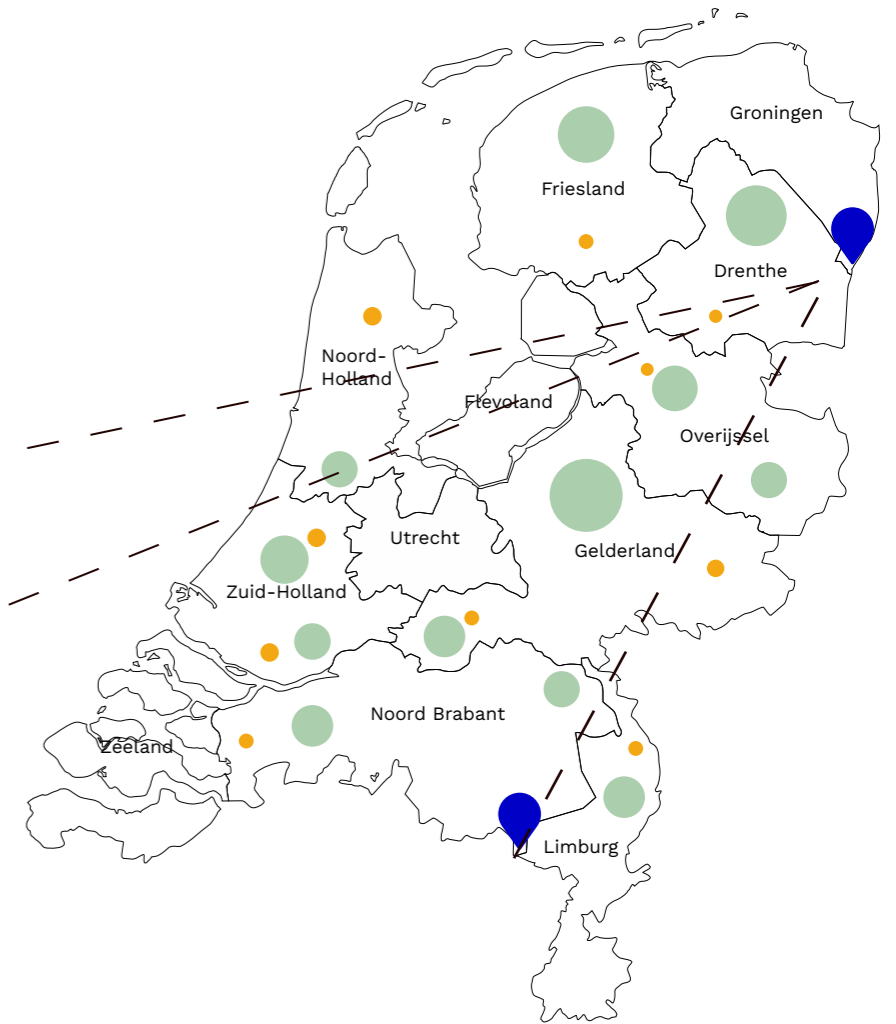
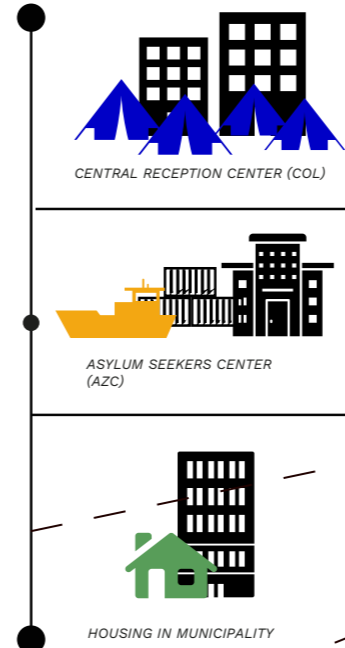
- Located near the country border
- Temporary accomodation
- Inhumane living conditions



- Located on peripheries of the city/town or near industrial area or green houses
- Temporary accomodation
- Living conditions vary



- Located in cities/towns/villages
- Permanent accomodation
- Living conditions vary



CENTRAL & PROCESS CENTER

RECEPTION CENTER (AZC)

RECEPTION CENTER (AZC)

PERMANENT HOUSING & ESTABLISHING CULTURE

(Fig.37) made by author source: Google Earth

3.

Problem Statement

By gaining insight into the problem field across scales, it is evident that migration and demographic trends are leading to an increased presence of ethnic minorities in Western countries (de la Rica, Glitz, and Ortega, 2015; Hanson and McIntosh, 2016). Yet ethnic minorities encounter discrimination, which not only brings about unequal opportunities, but also economic inefficiencies (Becker, 1957). The EU, including the Netherlands, receives a substantial share of refugees, posing challenges with these sudden differences in their communities.

In the Netherlands, asylum seekers undergo stages, beginning with reception centres located at the country's borders to temporary shelter locations managed by COA, awaiting permanent resident permits. The surge in asylum requests in 2022 prompted emergency reception centre openings, but housing shortages lead to waiting lists and overcrowded facilities.

Therefore it is urgent to think about the local temporary asylum shelters which is the first immediate response to a refugee 'crisis' in the Netherlands. The project investigates the significance of the in-between temporary asylum shelters that the municipalities, COA are responsible for. These shelters are seen as opportunities for refugees to establish and share their culture among the majority population from their earlier stages of living in the country,

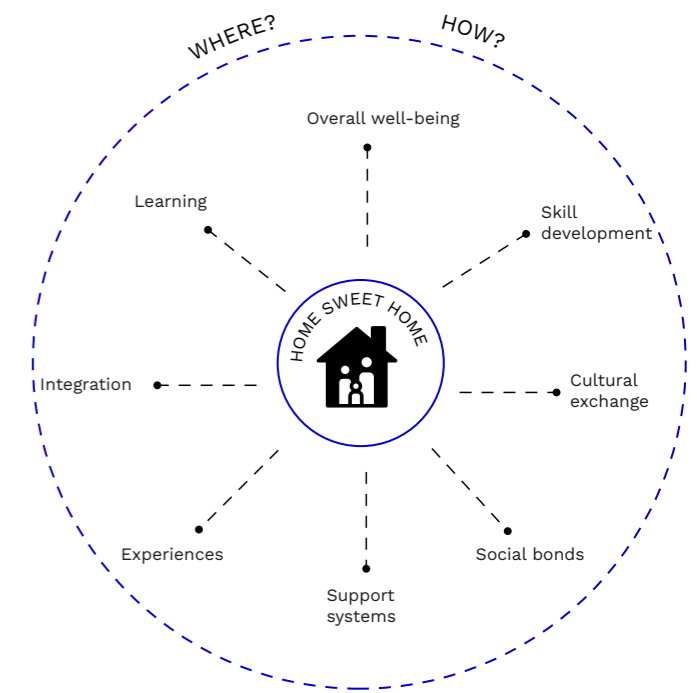


(Fig. 38) The picture shows natives outside Ter Apel and asylum seekers walking past them. source: Photo Vincent Jannink / ANP

Research Aim

While European states grapple with controlling borders and managing immigration flows, the real challenge faced on the ground is, in fact, the challenge of migrant integration (Hanhörster, H., & Wessendorf, S., 2020). Social mixing and dispersion of refugees has become important to facilitate their local integration and also to prevent 'ethnic concentrations' in specific cities and neighbourhoods and thereby 'distribute the burden' (Adam et al., 2020; ESPON, 2019; Robinson, Andersson, & Musterd, 2003).

The research therefore aims to study the common spaces and places where the refugees living in temporary asylum shelters interact with the host community in their daily lives. It studies the influence of the shelter location, the accessibility to 'common spaces' and the influence of local policies. It emphasizes on how these open common spaces can become permanent platforms for building communities with differences, by sharing their resources through everyday interactions.



(Fig. 39) made by author



(Fig. 40) A Dutch volunteer teaches an Afghan refugee how to ride a bicycle, MUHAMMED MUHEISEN / AP

4.

Research Questions

The research questions are formulated to understand the non-spatial (literature on refugee needs, common spaces etc.) and spatial (isolated temporary asylum shelters) aspects to imagine design and policy recommendations for Dutch municipalities.

Main question

How can common spaces provide settings for interaction between asylum seekers living in temporary asylum shelters and native citizens in the Netherlands?

Q1. Conceptualising: What characteristics of common spaces influence interaction between native citizens and refugees?

Q2. Contextualising: What is the asylum procedure in the Netherlands and what is the spatial translation?

Q3. Analysing: What are the locations and spatial characteristics of isolated temporary asylum shelters in the Netherlands? How do these locations and characteristics influence interaction between refugees living in these shelters and native citizens?

Q4. Projecting: What are the needs for interaction of refugees living in isolated temporary shelters? What kind of spatial qualities of common spaces support meeting these needs?

Q5. Strategy-building: How can spaces facilitating interaction between native citizens and refugees living in isolated temporary shelters be implemented?

Methodology

Interviews and reflections on news articles, research papers, case studies were the 2 main methods used in the project. Importantly, interviews with refugees living in isolated temporary asylum shelters along with interviews from native volunteers and municipality representatives, forms the backbone of the project. All the interviews were semi-structured with consent from the participants.

Research question 1:

Conceptualising:

What characteristics of common spaces influence the interaction between refugees and native citizens?

Description of the methods:

1. **Literature review** on the factors affecting the well-being of immigrants in a new society. It includes research on solidarity, sense of belonging, social isolation, integration etc.
2. **Semi-structured interviews** with refugees on how they feel while using the common spaces in the new society.
3. **Case studies** on types of public/common spaces of interaction, community led activities between refugees and native citizens, in other European countries.

Intended outcomes:

1. Literature helps in formulating characteristics that common spaces should have to create a foundation for further spatial explorations.
2. Along with literature, interviews helps in understanding the emotions that refugees face in the context of the municipality they are living in.
3. Examples from other European countries helps in studying the positive and negative aspects of common spaces which can help in **spatial design exploration**, impact of participation and engagement of both the refugee and native communities.

Research question 2:

Contextualising:

What is the asylum procedure in the Netherlands and what is the spatial translation?

Description of the methods:

1. Analysis of the legal and organisational aspects at the temporary asylum shelter phase using **open data, policy documents and informal conversations with past refugees.**
2. Analysis of the spatial implications of the temporary asylum shelter phase through **observations from site visits, pictures from google earth, street views, and news articles.**
3. **Mapping** of the existing temporary asylum shelters, population density of municipalities using open data and QGIS respectively and focusing on the region of South Holland.

Intended outcomes:

1. A **systematic understanding** of the freedom and restrictions in the during the temporary asylum shelter phase.
2. A **systematic understanding** of the **spatial implications** in the temporary asylum shelters
3. Maps to understand the current locations and types of temporary asylum shelters, and selection of shelters based on the focus location

Research question 3:

Analysing:

What are the locations and spatial characteristics of temporary asylum shelters in the Netherlands? How do these influence interaction between refugees and native citizens?

Description of the methods:

1. **Analysis** of the selected isolated temporary asylum shelters using open data and Google Earth based on,
 - Location and type of shelters
 - Number of refugees and user groups
 - Surroundings of the shelter
 - Degree of accessibility to basic services such as public transport, public spaces etc.
2. **Analysis** of the identified common characteristics such as,
 - Isolation from the city centre,
 - Difficulty in accessibility to public spaces, services

- Engagement with the immediate surroundings

Intended outcomes:

1. Tabulated data about the general characteristics of temporary AZCs to understand the factors that contribute to their lack of integration and inclusion.
2. Diagrams showing the common spatial characteristics of the shelters to understand the factors that limit the interaction between refugees and natives.

Research question 4:

Projecting:

What are the needs and future ideas of refugees living in isolated temporary shelters, the municipality, NGO and natives? What kind of spatial qualities of common spaces support meeting these needs?

Description of the methods:

1. **Semi- Structured interviews** with refugees at the case study location. The interviews will investigate with questions on their,
 - Current spaces of interaction
 - Cultural needs
 - Interaction with native citizens
 - Ideas for the Future
2. **Semi- Structured interviews** with government and non-government bodies dealing with accommodation and integration of refugees.

Intended outcomes:

1. Sketches showing the spatial qualities and kinds of interaction between refugees and natives to understand the potential for design exploration.
2. Sketches showing the activities of municipalities and NGOs and their freedom and power in collaborating and taking decisions in bringing changes to the integration process.

Research question 5:

Strategy-building:

How can spaces facilitating interaction between native citizens and refugees living in isolated temporary shelters be implemented?

Description of the methods:

1. **Strategic Vision** for the selected municipality using interviews and concepts from literature.
2. **Analysis** of the public and semi-public spaces in the municipality using land use map from QGIS.
3. **Analysis** of the selected routes based on,
 - Land and building use
 - Degree of pedestrian activity
 - Spatial qualities
4. **Examples** of spaces with qualities that relates to the needs of refugees and natives.

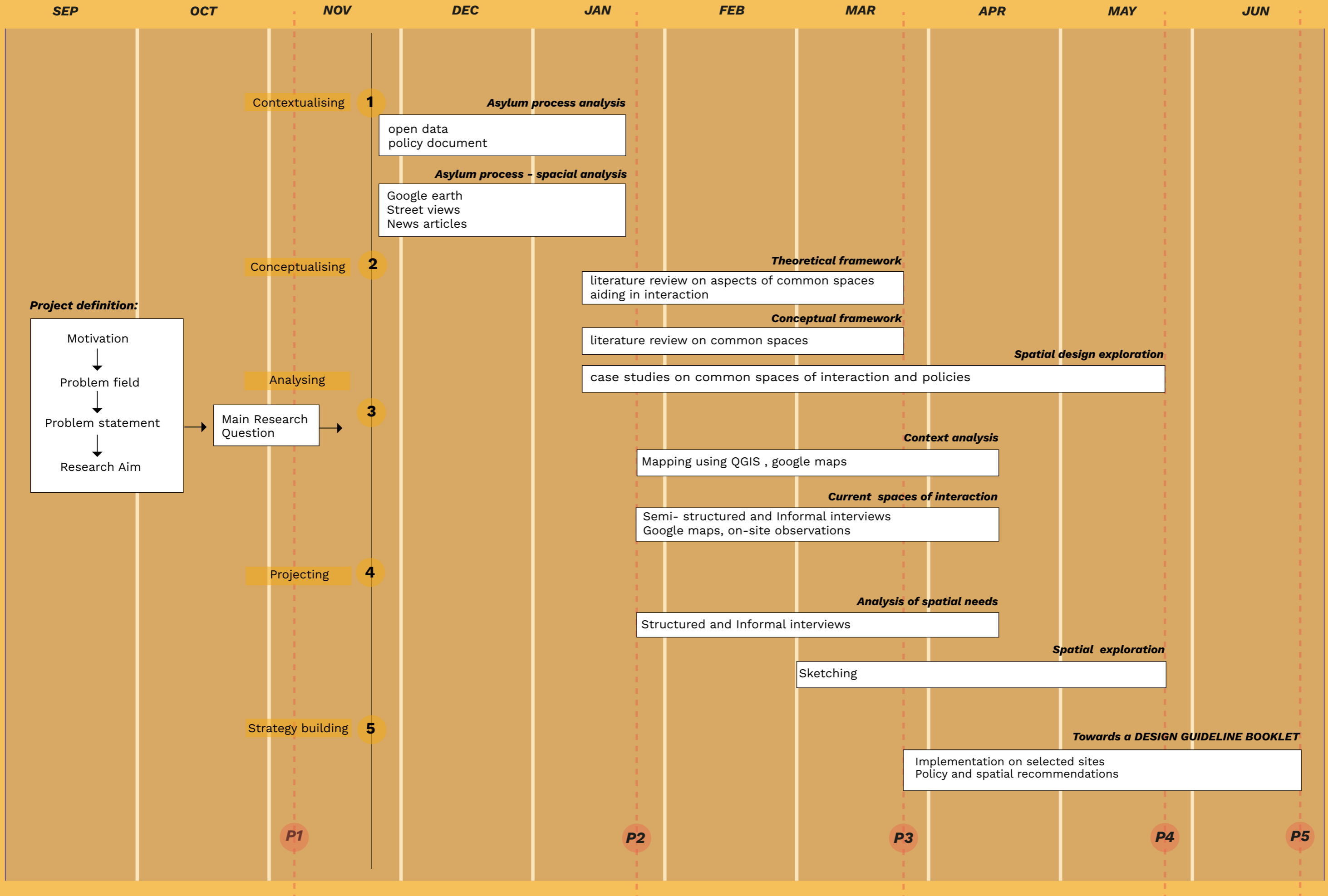
Intended outcomes:

1. Map showing the frequently used routes and the kinds of interactions to form the future vision for interaction in common spaces of the municipality.
2. Maps showing the existing public and semi-public spaces to identify the possible locations in the routes for interventions.
3. Maps and sketches that helps in understanding the possible spaces for implementing the interventions.
4. Design and policy recommendations that helps in forming future common spaces for the integration between refugees and natives.

“Integration is ‘a generations lasting process of inclusion and acceptance of migrants in the core institutions, relations and statuses of the receiving society’”

Quoted by Rinus Penninx, Academician

Phasing of the Research



5.

Theories

This chapter discusses literature and case studies on the spatial qualities necessary in common spaces to facilitate integration between refugees and natives.

Theories (Literature)

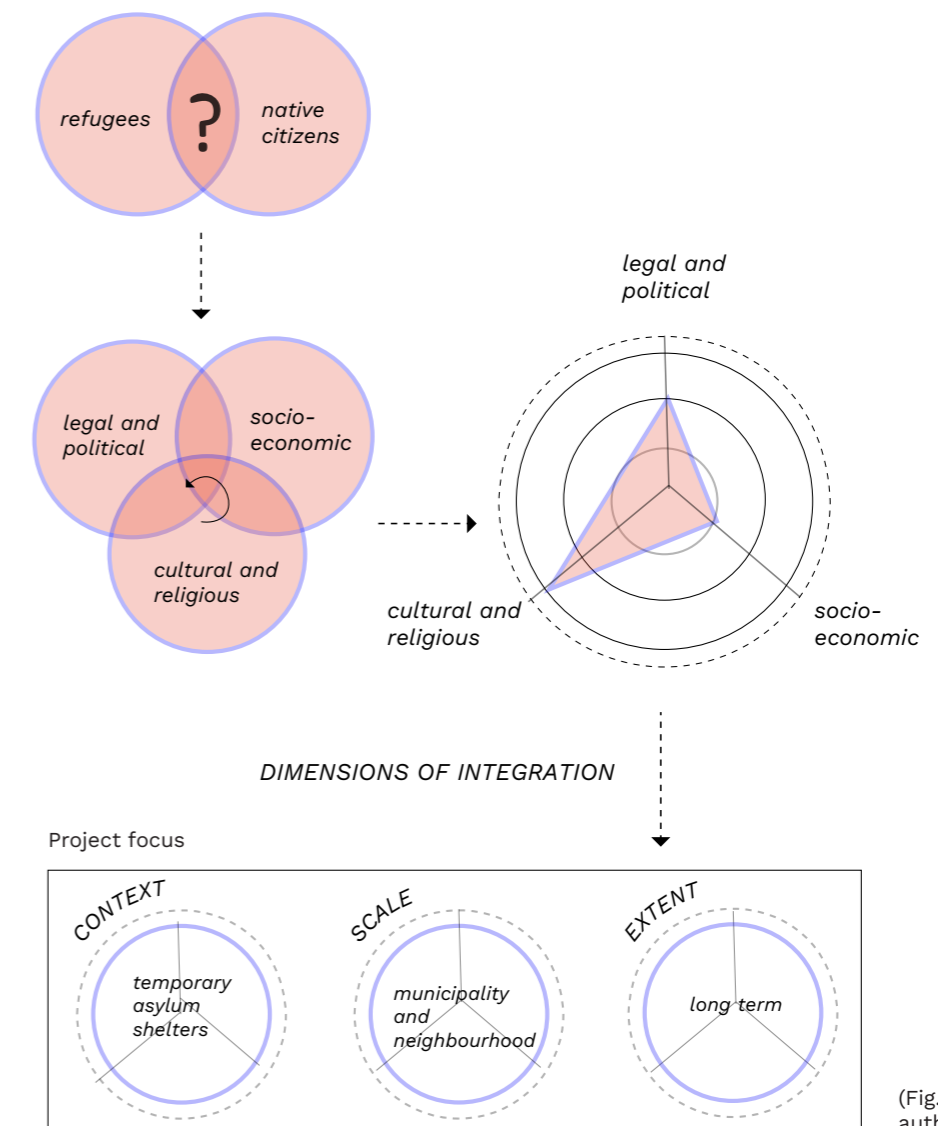
Dimensions of Integration

According to Penninx, the integration process of newcomers into an established society occurs in 3 interrelated dimensions that work together to achieve integration to varying extents depending on the context, scale, users etc. (Garcés-Mascareñas & Penninx, 2016)

Integration can be measured at individual, organisational and institutional levels across different spatial scales. First, creating environments that encourages the natives to participate in integration is essential. This involvement can change the attitudes and behaviour towards refugees while instilling confidence, sense of belonging, identity, etc. among the refugees. Second, these changes can help form new communities and encourage existing ones, such as NGOs, volunteer groups etc. to

engage more in integration practices, providing platforms for assistance and mutual learning. Third, the combined effort of these efforts can nudge municipalities and the national government to implement 'inclusionary' practices in the labour market, housing etc. offering equal opportunities for all communities to participate in civil society.

The project focuses on envisioning interventions in common spaces at the city and neighbourhood scales where different groups of people in society with varied habits and traditions come together. These spaces are crucial to create for nurturing positive feelings among refugees and natives, helping in their long-term integration.



(Fig.41) made by author

Common spaces

Common spaces are properties that are fundamental to a community's existence, and is therefore distinct from what we call public space. (Kusumawijaya,2014). (Stavrides, 2015) also agrees that public spaces are primarily created by a specific authority (local, regional or state), which controls them and establishes the rules under which people may use them. In common space people exist as more complete, if not complex, individuals. They become cultural in concrete ways. More are revealed and expressed. More are visible as manifesting certain common values (Kusumawijaya,2014).

Common spaces are those spaces produced by people in their effort to establish a common world that houses, supports and expresses the community they participate in. However, these spaces can become closed gradually becoming only for one community or porous, allowing itself to constantly change from the dominant forms of culture.

Here, public spaces can become common but not the other way round. The importance of common spaces comes from the

fact that they provide grounds for questioning and changing the authoritative power of the public spaces. For instance, a public square in the city can become a place to voice opinions which is possible when the refugees and natives become a community that understands each others struggle.

(Stavrides, 2015) also mentions that people who have lacked social identity(in my case refugees) linger in these threshold spaces, (which I consider as common spaces), where there might be differences but there is still a potential to form equality through mutual trust and respect.

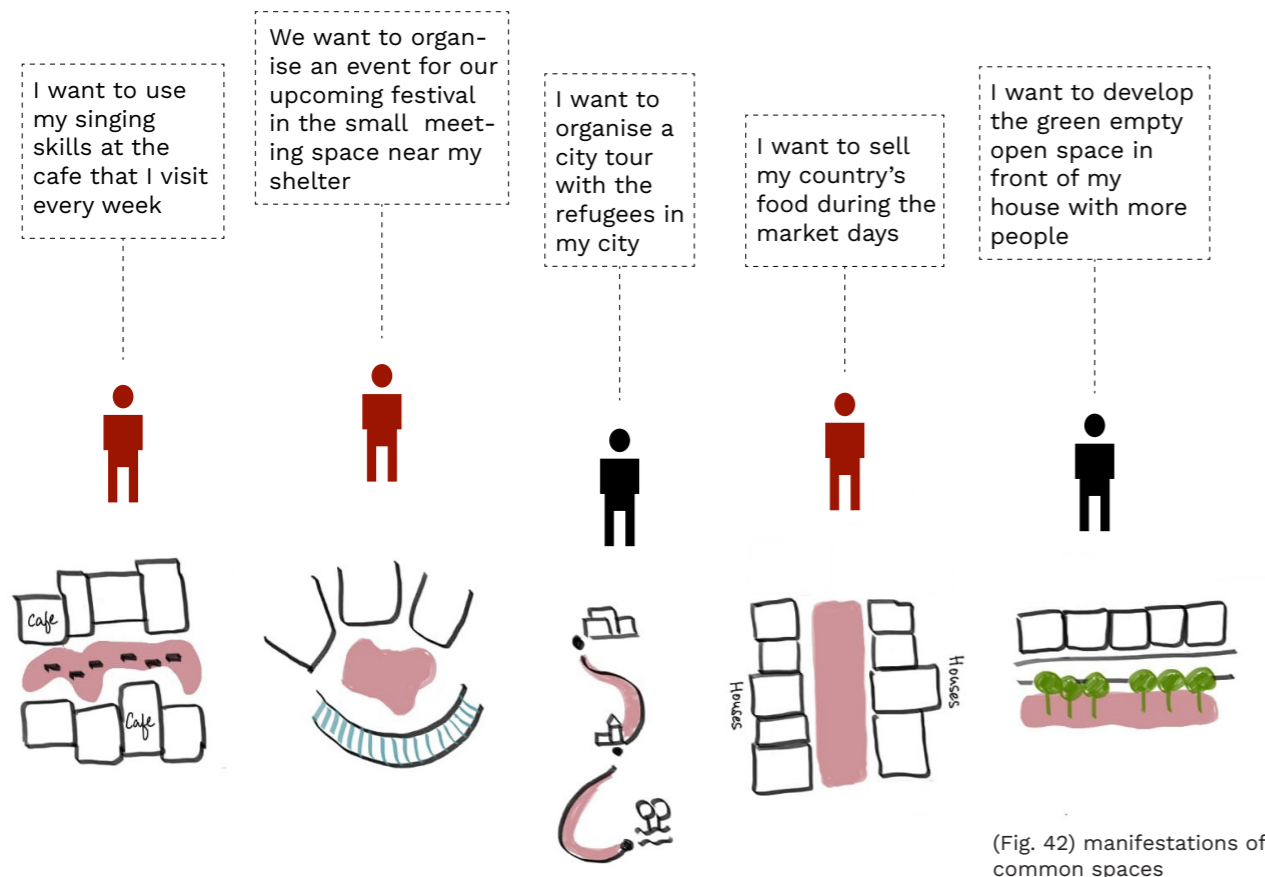
The main research of the project expresses how these common spaces can take various forms in the urban fabric to provide environments outside 'home' where refugees and native citizens have possibilities of interactions. It gives importance to the practices of collective forms of living to create constantly changing tolerant communities.

Considering Netherlands as an emancipated society, there is an urgent need for spaces that support different human experiences. In this case, spaces have constantly changing social organisations through time and become common spaces that belongs to anyone, for forming human relations.

Common spaces in urban contexts emerge either as public spaces appropriated by those who are excluded from it, or a collectively managed spaces that is meant to support a urban life that creates new human relations (Stavrides, 2020) such as in (Fig.43,44,45). Therefore common spaces are always in a process of formation where communities need to actively create it by introducing different activities and rules in the process of inhabiting them. It can also be understood that common spaces is not a defined area. It can be any space that is flexible to accommodate various activities and is relative to its surroundings.

Common spaces are something that are always associated to be formed during a cri-

sis as protests in squares, streets which are still relevant. However, in this project, I see the potentiality in existing and non-existent public, semi public spaces in Dutch cities as ways of bringing refugees and natives together not only as places to collectively raise their voice, but also see the potential in engaging in shared activities to collectively realise common ideas and discontent to create awareness among communities. But shared spaces can also become highly controlled/be closed to a specific community. Therefore a common space with shared activities should be a testing ground of possibilities that brings people together.



(Fig. 42) manifestations of common spaces



(Fig. 43) People taking part in a demonstration, Rotterdam, AP



(Fig.44) Empty parking lots as neighbourhood parks, Greece



(Fig.45) Empty spaces as gathering spaces, Madrid plataformaarquitectura.cl

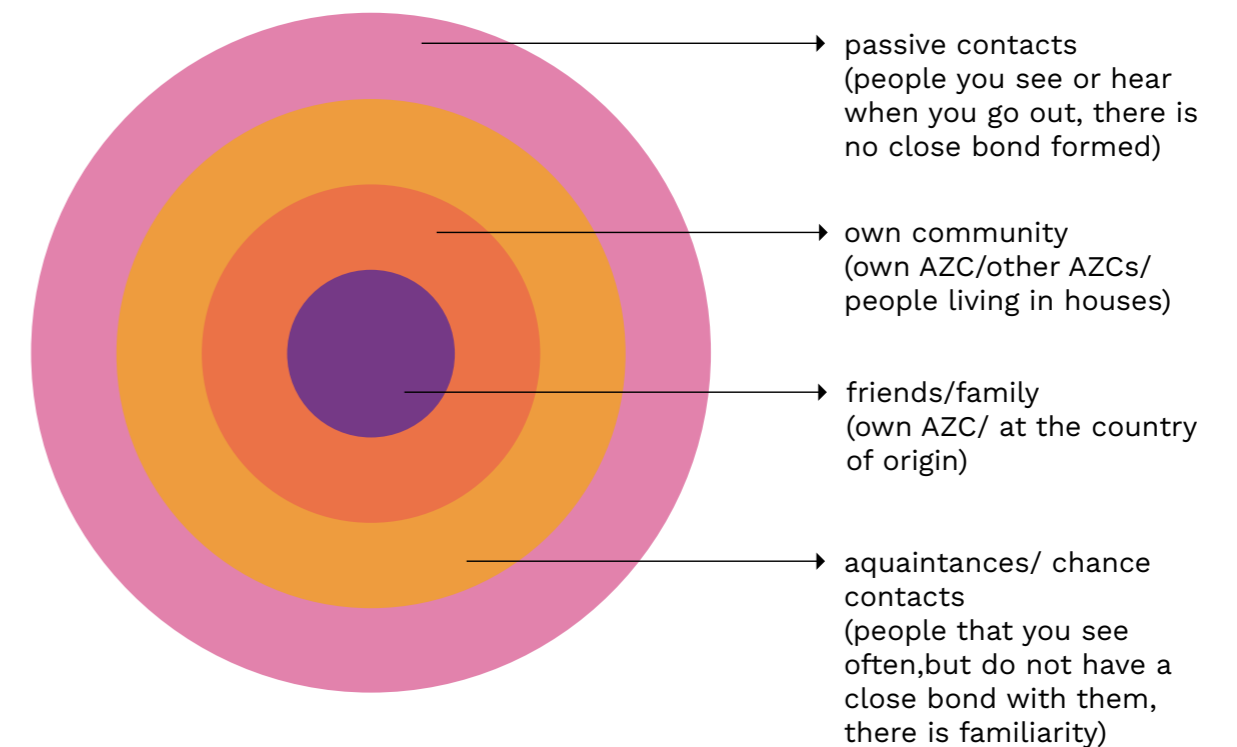
Interaction

Interaction is fundamental to forming human connections. In cities, interactions between diverse communities occur in various ways, and sometimes they may not occur at all. Although virtual interactions have become predominant in recent years, in-person interactions remain crucial for building bonds that allow people to accept each other's differences despite their ethnic backgrounds. These interactions can also break negative stereotypes and help people create new meanings for their cultures and environments.

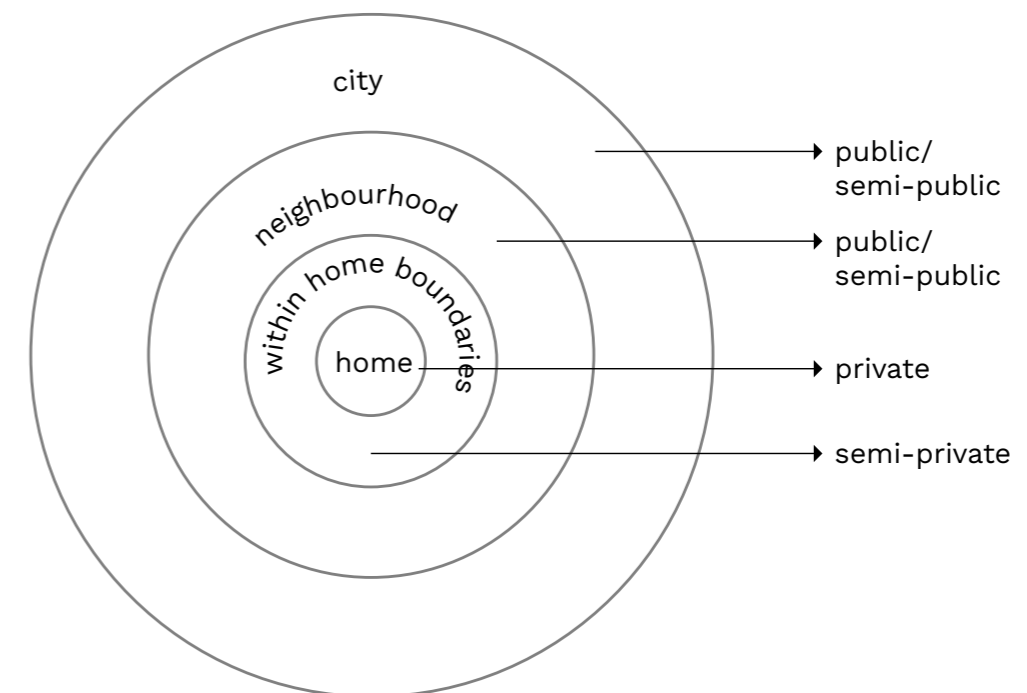
In the context of the project, (Fig. 46) illustrates the different spheres of interactions that can occur between refugees and natives. The community sphere is included because forming their own community networks helps refugees navigate barriers in the new society. According to (Hoogland, 2000), the actual meeting, merely being present, is the seed for other, more comprehensive forms of social activities. Refugees are highly exposed to this sphere on an everyday basis. However, the intermediate spheres are important for forming social cohesion, where refugees and natives find instances to pause and interact more deeply than just exchanging glances, when they are outdoors. (Oosterlynck et al., 2015)

reinforces the idea, stating that while many interactions across different cultures provide, at worst, opportunities for fleeting exchanges which harden stereotypes and, at best, create incidental encounters which comply with norms of civility, engaging in joint leisure activities can still be the beginning of a learning process that can disrupt stereotypes and initiate new attachments among strangers.

To understand the spaces where interactions can happen, (Fig.47) shows the zones of interaction as described by (Hoogland, 2000). Here, ownership comes into play to describe the permeability of the zone and the type of activities it can accommodate. The project emphasises public and semi-public zones since they form the thresholds for various extents of interaction. These zones are the common spaces where communities have more chances to meet. Additionally, semi-private zones are important for refugees to develop a sense of ownership and belonging while also becoming spaces where natives frequently pass by and engage with refugees.



(Fig. 46) made by author, adapted from the diagram by (Hoogland, 2000)



(Fig.47) made by author, zones of interaction (Hoogland, 2000)

Solidarity

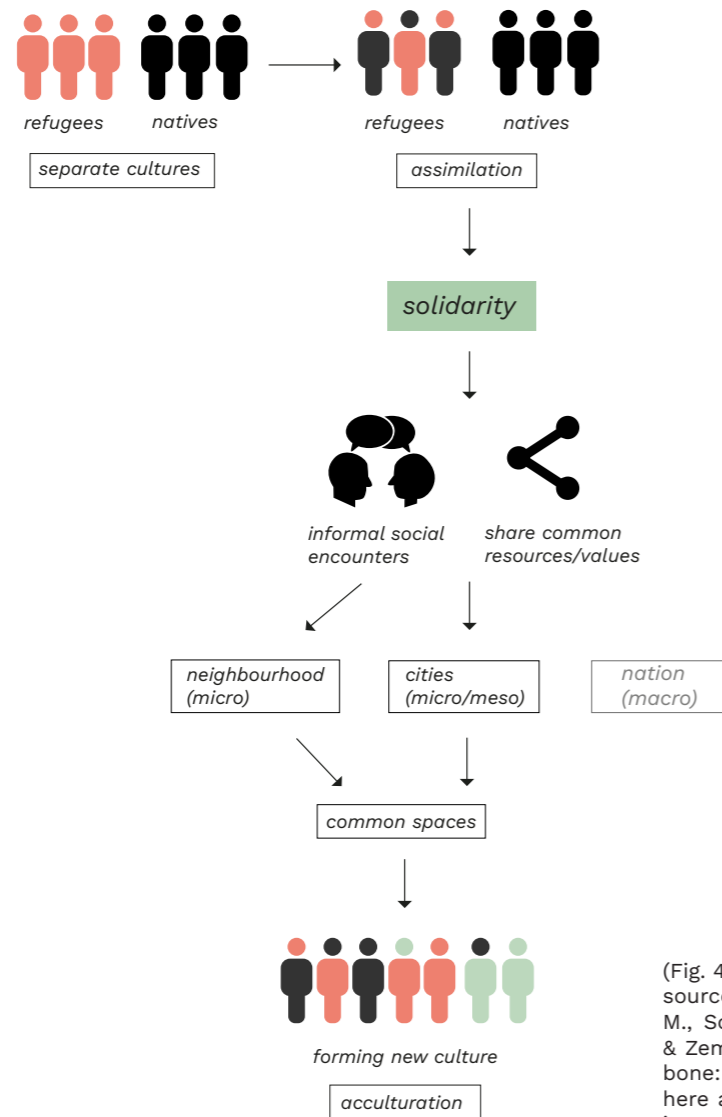
Solidarity is the willingness of people to share and redistribute their resources with others. Sharing is done to belong together or have something in common. There are 4 main sources of solidarity namely, interdependence among different social classes, shared norms and values, having a shared struggle, informal social interactions with strangers (Oosterlynck et al., 2015).

Though both refugees and natives have individual interests and different cultural habits and history, there has to be an awareness of interdependencies and collective consciousness in beliefs, ideas and moral attitudes towards refugees and vice versa.

The most important one for the project is informal interactions and everyday encounters that creates solidarity at micro level unlike the other ones. (Oosterlynck et al.,

2015) quotes that it is the real life encounters with differences that determines there needs to be alternative forms of solidarity. People do not share the same history or culture, but most importantly they share a common space at this very moment, where they do things together (Oosterlynck, Centre for the Just City podcast)

Therefore, imposing a majority cultural assimilation in a city which comprises of minorities is exclusionary. The project aims to form spaces and places that can transform repetitively by being exposed to otherness and question the stereotypes as a community. Here place based communities can be formed where refugees and natives can engage, form new attachments and coexist with constant process of learning and un-learning.



Multi sensory experiences

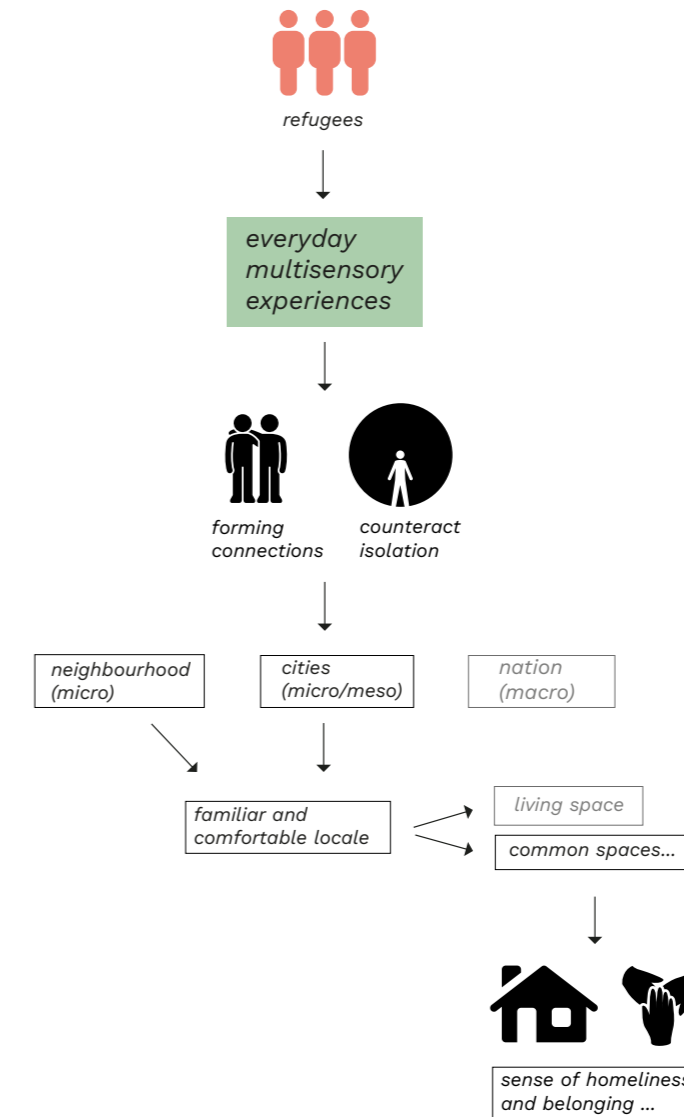
Studies show that everyday multi sensory stimuli are significant in shaping individual feelings towards different places, and evoking memories (positive and negative) which further shaped unique place-based experiences. These multi layered connections are proved to enable individuals to (re)construct cultural identities in their new city, which enhances a sense of homeliness and belonging (Kale et al., 2019). Here, the context, facilities, communication of the natives play an important role to know the extent to which the sense of home can be formed.

Deep down the past memories can surface up with frequent stimuli of negative media representations, stereotypes etc. Refugees cannot simply forget or discard their former identity as many host societies expect them to (Kale et al., 2019), as they cannot sepa-

rate themselves from the embodied experiences which make them who they are.

Though refugees are in constant movement and uncertainty when they are in temporary shelters, it is essential to already provide them with spaces that evoke feelings of attachment and ownership, since that could be a way to make them resettle, confident to be a part of the new society and make them feel home in the unfamiliarity.

With such complexity of multi sensory experiences and its effects on refugees in temporary shelters in the form of as social isolation, I agree to what (Kale et al., 2019) says that it is important to increase interaction in public spaces, participation in social events, and access to social support.



Well-being

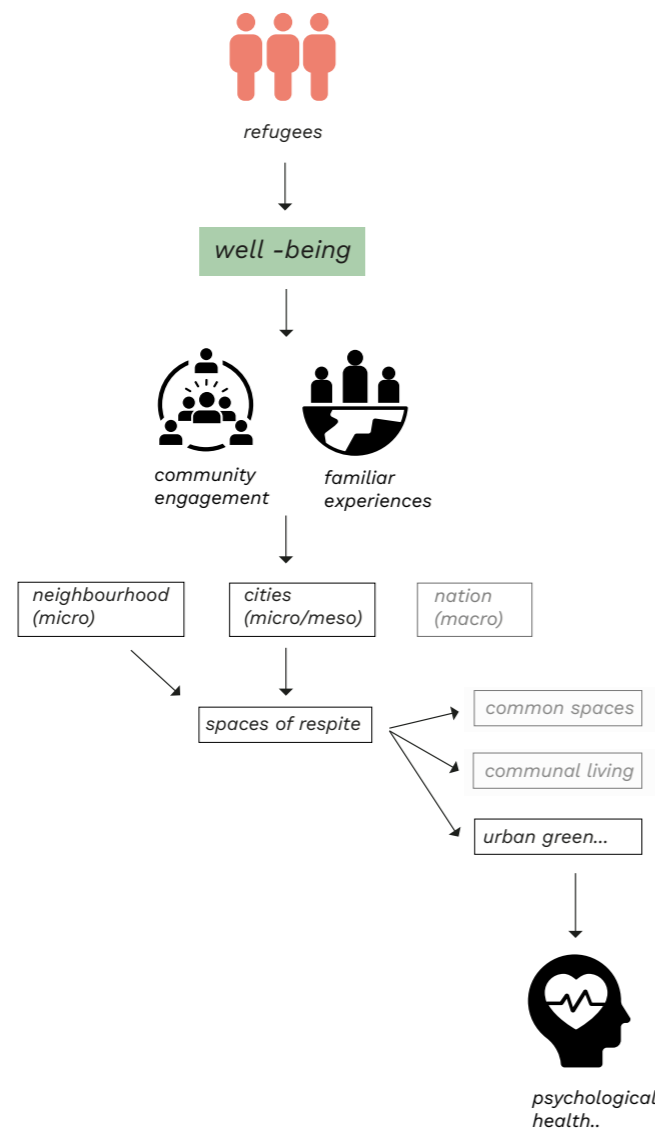
Firstly, loss of resources in the home country and the need to re-build can cause stress and mental health problems among refugees. Loneliness and isolation are said to be key stressors affecting well-being (Ubels et al., 2023).

With this, it is important to understand the spaces that the refugees resort to for their physical and mental well-being. Research shows that urban public spaces have been argued to play a key role in both foregrounding the political claims of refugees, and in offering space for survival in the midst of repressive citizenship regimes (Rishbeth et al., 2019). Again, spaces outside home are highlighted in studies, since they form spaces for recreation and building social connections.

Particularly, urban green spaces in Euro-

pean cities such as parks, riversides, sport fields, community gardens can be seen as places for well-being where informal socialising and opportunities for physical activities can occur. These spaces have been critiqued as places of limited diversity due to fear of discrimination etc. (Rishbeth et al., 2019) says that the act of curating sociability in such places is a purposeful sharing of passion, inviting engagement between natives and newcomers.

These spaces can form positive and negative experiences to both communities. But the potential of these places to offer well-being for an individual should be explored by offering opportunities to fit in through shared activities between natives and refugees. This way they can feel equal in the society.



(Fig.50) made by author source: Rishbeth, C., Blachnicka-Ciacek, D., & Darling, J. (2019). Participation and wellbeing in urban greenspace: 'curating sociability' for refugees and asylum seekers

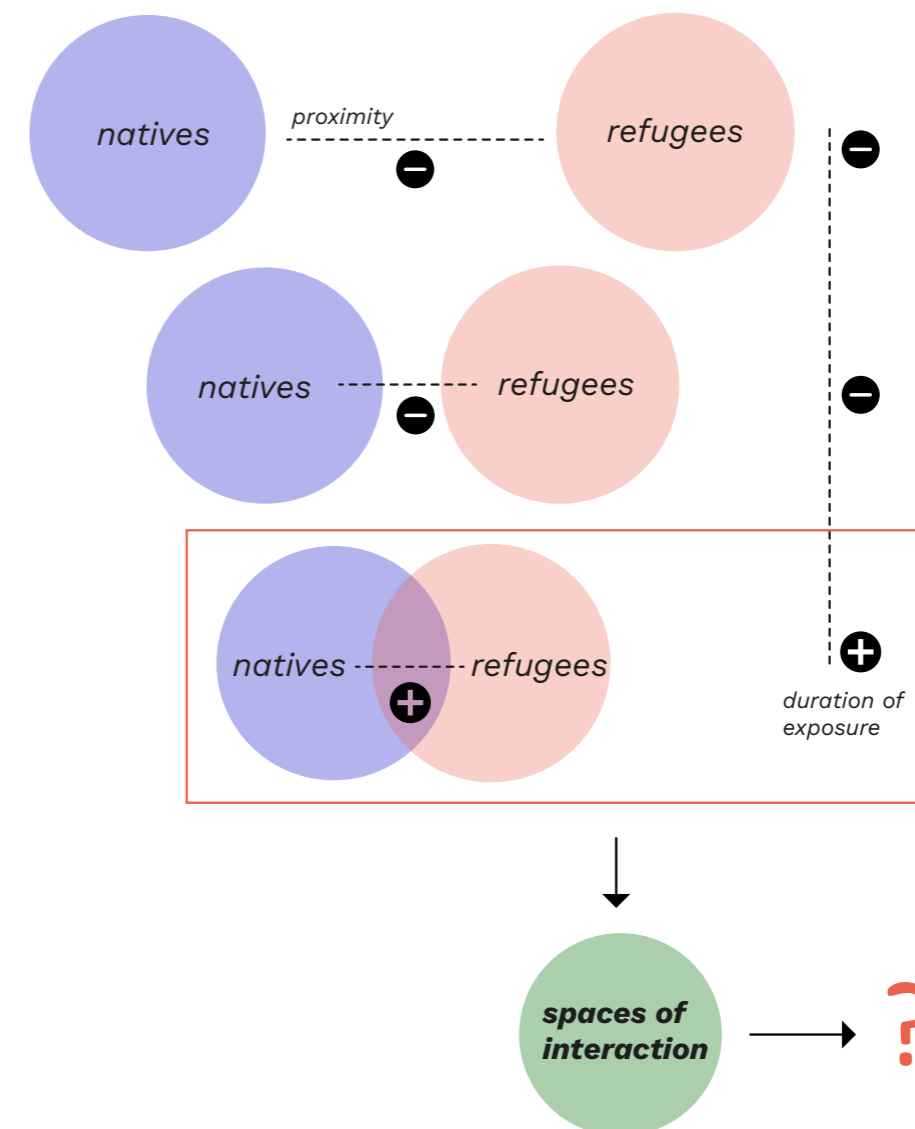
Proximity

Studies show that the presence of refugees outside one's direct neighbourhood has essentially no effect on attitudes toward ethnic diversity. But, close proximity along with sufficiently long exposure are crucial in obtaining a positive effect, and both factors are associated with an increased likelihood of contact with ethnic minorities, either in the form of casual encounters or longer-lasting personal interaction (ibid). It is clear that the proximity and more specifically the duration of exposure is critical for facilitating connections between refugees and natives. This can mean placing the asylum shelters closer to natives. But it can be seen as sudden intrusion of otherness or provides more chances of forced assimilation into the native societies culture.

However, proximity through spaces shared by each other offers more and frequent

chances of encounters, change in natives attitudes and behaviour and shifts in far left political preferences (Achard et al., 2022).

The negative experiences of natives on refugees predominantly came from negative media coverage and general social discontent (Achard et al., 2022). This shows that the quality of neighbourhoods play an important role in facilitating localised positive relations. Though this affects mostly the natives living in close vicinity to the asylum shelters, there can be places that invites people to have frequent contacts. Here, the past experiences, age group compatibility play a major role in the extent of quality of exposures.



(Fig.51) made by author Achard, P., Albrecht, S., Ghidoni, R., Cettolin, E., & Suetens, S. (2022, May 1). The effect of exposure to ethnic minorities on ethnic preferences.

Theories (Interviews)

Social Integration

Integration is a two-way process involving changes of values, norms, and behaviours for both migrants and locals. Social integration particularly focuses on a sense of belonging, social relationships, and neighbourhood social cohesion. Studies show that community participation in formal or informal activities, such as decision-making processes, recreational activities, and interactions with neighbours significantly impacts social integration, especially among marginalised groups (Zhang et al., 2023).

Research also indicates that migrants' participation and appropriation in public areas, practicing their rights in the city, explicitly altering the traditional usage of urban space and their own lifestyle can enable them to be recognised, as active users of the public space, thereby changing natives

perceptions (Zhang et al., 2023)

However, social integration through community participation varies among different age groups and can change depending on the individual interests and spatial or emotional barriers in the process of integration.

In developed societies like the Netherlands, cities often lack to offer meaningful contacts beyond mere tolerance for 'others', which shows a potential failure in achieving 'social inclusion'. In my interviews, refugees mentioned difficulties in forming long lasting bonds with the natives, though they appreciated their kind gestures. They also expressed that language barriers limits their ability to initiate and approach the natives.

Arrival Infrastructures

Arrival infrastructures have been defined as "those parts of the urban fabric within which newcomers become entangled on arrival, and where their future local or trans local social mobilities are produced as much as negotiated" (Meeus et al., 2019, p. 1).

Public institutions and social infrastructures such as advice centres or language courses within walking distance, plays a decisive role in the arrival process and further integration of residents (Saunders, 2011, p. 58). Additionally, a certain housing density and public spaces close to their homes can offer migrants opportunities to meet others and are thus important contexts for building social contacts and potentially social capital (Farwick, Hanhörster, Ramos Lobato, & Striemer, 2019, p. 13). Arrival infrastructures also include, migrant-run businesses as information hubs, hairdressers, mosques, associations or language classes, often established by people who themselves have

a migration background (Schmiz & Kitzmann, 2017).

When refugees arrive in a new city, they encounter new places, services, institutions and people. Early arrival infrastructures such as the temporary asylum shelter itself, community centres, libraries, religious spaces and municipality offices, form important nodes where refugees can interact with the natives. Interviews reveal that refugees, feel a sense of belonging, comfort and motivation in these places. Although language barriers, negative perceptions and trust issues limit the formation of social networks, these early arrival infrastructures fosters initial steps towards integration when living in temporary conditions. Gradually, integration can expand through public infrastructures like parks, sports centres, etc., improving their attachment to the new society.



(Fig.52) Iraqi migrants at the square, London, Diaspora from the Middle East and North Africa- Communities, Architecture, Neighborhoods, Ahmed and Rashid Bin Shabib



(Fig.53) Arab shops, Farah Supermarket, London, Diaspora from the Middle East and North Africa- Communities, Architecture, Neighborhoods

Well being

Studies show that the health status of newly arrived refugees is generally poorer, particularly their mental health, compared to the receiving population in Western societies. Their health condition often deteriorates further during the period when they are awaiting responses to asylum applications and dealing with past traumatic experiences.

Western societies often have the tendency in promoting health to refugees only through the existing sports programs and leisure activities without really understanding their cultural perspective on physical activities (Ryom, K., Simonsen, C. B., Rau, S. R., Maindal, H. T., & Agergaard, S.). In my interviews, the male participants viewed walking, playing sports as sources of escaping boredom and avoid thinking about their past. These activities also served as means to engage socially with natives. Female participants, on the other hand, preferred walking and biking in nearby parks and en-

gaging in learning activities at the shelter to stay active. However, many expressed that they often lack the time due to household responsibilities or are not accustomed to such activities. Therefore, the degree of well-being varies based on age, gender, personal motivation, and other factors.

Overall, all participants expressed a willingness to stay active. Despite cultural differences between natives and refugees, it is important to find common ground and provide facilities and activities, such as access to local walking, jogging, and sports groups, as well as public spaces, to facilitate gradual interaction and integration.

Empowerment

Empowerment among refugees is one of the primary goals that is essential for their successful navigation in a new society. However, studies shows that restrictive asylum policies, along with insecure futures, negatively affect asylum seekers' participation in the provided activities and in some cases even increased feelings of powerlessness (Zill et al., 2019). Besides, the Dutch policy interventions often do not correspond to their needs and integration goals, to which refugees, nonetheless, are required to conform because of the lack of power and 'voice' in the process of integration (Pozzo & Evers, 2015).

Interviews confirmed that the fear of judgment and misunderstanding from natives often reduces refugees' engagement with them, making them feel less empowered to pursue their interests. For instance, one women participant, expressed her desire to open a sweet shop, inspired by a family

member in the country with a similar business. This highlights the importance of social networks in starting a new life.

Generally, young men and women found it easier to start jobs, if they knew someone or showed enthusiasm in activities that natives perform. In contrast, older refugees struggled to navigate the system. In such cases, municipalities develop programs that provide incentives for refugees to establishing their own businesses, and connect refugees with natives based on their skills and interest as an approach would offer mutual benefits and foster integration.



(Fig.54) Assyrians spending their time fishing, Sweden, Diaspora from the Middle East and North Africa- Communities, Architecture, Neighborhoods



(Fig.55) Arabic book shops run by Yemenis, Singapore, Diaspora from the Middle East and North Africa- Communities, Architecture, Neighborhoods

Feel of Familiarity and Belonging

'Familiarity' can be defined as having close relations with someone or something. The concept of unfamiliarity is relational, as feelings of closeness or distance produced through interactions between people (Zill et al., 2019). Studies show that familiarity is influenced by experience, knowledge and social distance and that an individual can have positive and negative experiences, affecting their encounters with others.

In my interviews it became evident that the previous educational experiences and cultural backgrounds of refugees influenced their level of interaction with natives. This could contribute to the distance between them, thereby increasing unfamiliarity.

Feel of belonging is closely related to familiarity, since in order to belong, one has to feel familiar with their spatial and social environment. Many participants expressed that being in nature reminded them of home and the mosque where they prayed was a

place where they felt a sense of belonging. However, these were individual experiences or collective experiences with their own community. But as someone new to the society, distance and lack of encounters with natives also formed a sense of unfamiliarity, leading to chances for intolerant spaces.

To overcome these unfamiliarities, it is essential to create spaces such as streets that are flexible to convert during festivals, vibrant public spaces around religious spaces etc. where natives and refugees are bound to experience each others culture. Over time, these spaces can become familiar to the region, fostering a collective sense of belonging for both individuals and the wider society.

Social Isolation

Studies show that asylum seekers are often dispersed to deprived and 'difficult to let' areas, with poor housing quality, where they face high degrees of hostility and resentment creating feelings of social isolation (Zill et al., 2019).

Asylum accommodation is one among many spatial tactics of control. It is described as a 'porous institution' or a 'half-open camp', therefore it is neither absolutely closed nor impenetrable. These variations in asylum accommodation affects the everyday experiences and social interaction of asylum seekers and the local population (Oliver et al., 2020). These boundaries are a tool for establishing control in order to limit accessibility, as well as a way to communicate both who belongs and who does not, which separates the society.

During my field visits to Dutch cities, I observed varying degrees of movement in and out of asylum seeker centres (AZCs). One

AZC was fenced with security cameras and guards while the other only had security guards. Both had some sort of spatial and institutional boundaries which creates the feelings of isolation. Studies also show that the size, appearance and surroundings of AZCs contribute to their spatial exclusion from natives, furthering isolation.

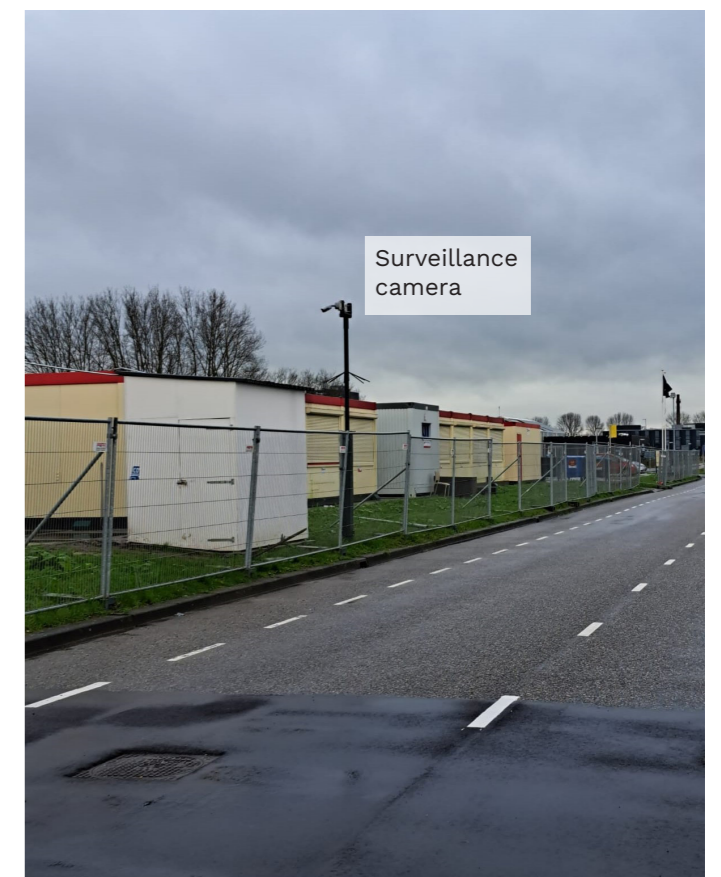
In these cases, it is important to create and develop spaces around temporary shelters, such as walking and biking routes, outdoor public spaces, that can facilitate frequent contact between asylum seekers and natives.



(Fig.56) Festival decorations in the street for Eid, Singapore, Diaspora from the Middle East and North Africa- Communities, Architecture, Neighborhoods



(Fig.57) Secured Temporary Asylum Shelter, Delft, pictures by author



(Fig.58)

Case studies

The case studies in (Fig.59) illustrate various ways the previously mentioned theories manifest as common spaces. These examples are spatial outcomes of ethnic minorities living in Europe.

However, aspects regarding the qualities of these spaces, such as the type of encounters they generate, the effect of the surrounding environment, their location etc. can be incorporated and modified for refugees and natives living together in other urban contexts.

The common spaces mentioned here also are predominantly public/semi-public where there is an apparent mix of many cultures. These spatial manifestations are essential for bringing a change.

These examples provide inputs for forming design recommendations aimed at enhancing the common spaces where natives and refugees can interact. The objective is to transcend beyond boundaries of authoritarianism and counteract negative societal influences, fostering a more human-to-human approach focused on individual connections.



Public park called 'Thai Park' that accommodates street food festival by Thai community, Preussenpark, Berlin- **Sense of Belonging**



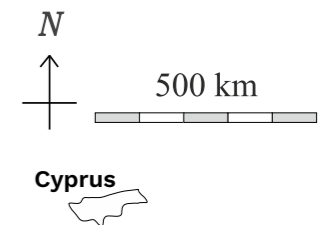
Privately owned public market spaces for ethnic minorities, Bazaar Vest trade centre, Denmark - **Empowerment through employment opportunists**



Art piece by the Moroccan community on a public market square - **Sense of Identity**



Public space in a former supermarket parking area in an immigrant neighbourhood, Piazza dell'Immaginario, Italy - **Coexistence and Social Inclusion**



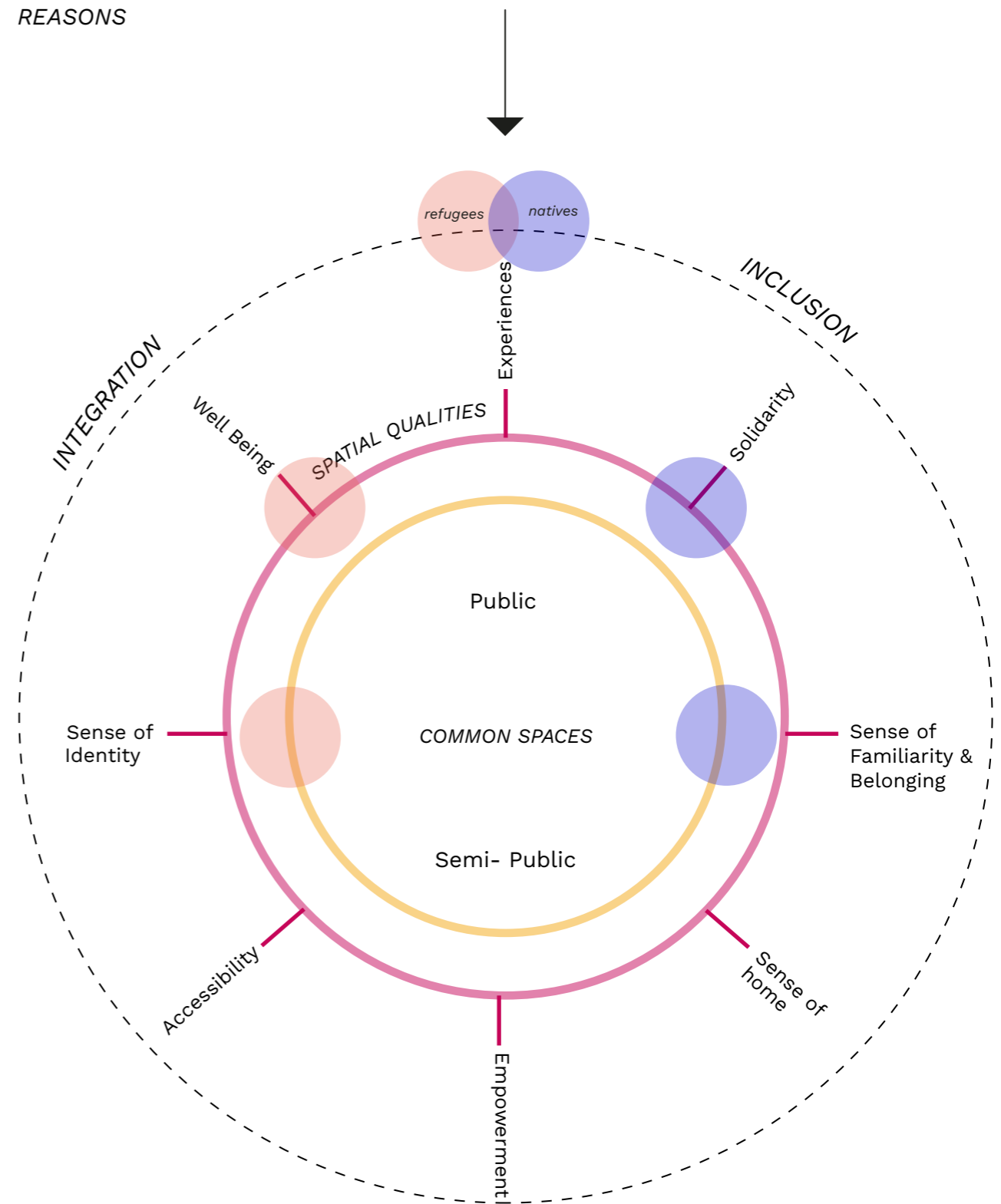
(Fig. 59) made by the author source: City of Coming and Goings

Conceptual Framework

The Conceptual Framework shows the relationship between theories and concepts, guiding the research and outcomes of the project



REASONS



(Fig. 60) made by author

6.

Analysis

6.1 Asylum shelters in the Netherlands

6.2 Case study selection

6.3 Interviews

6.1 Asylum shelters in the Netherlands

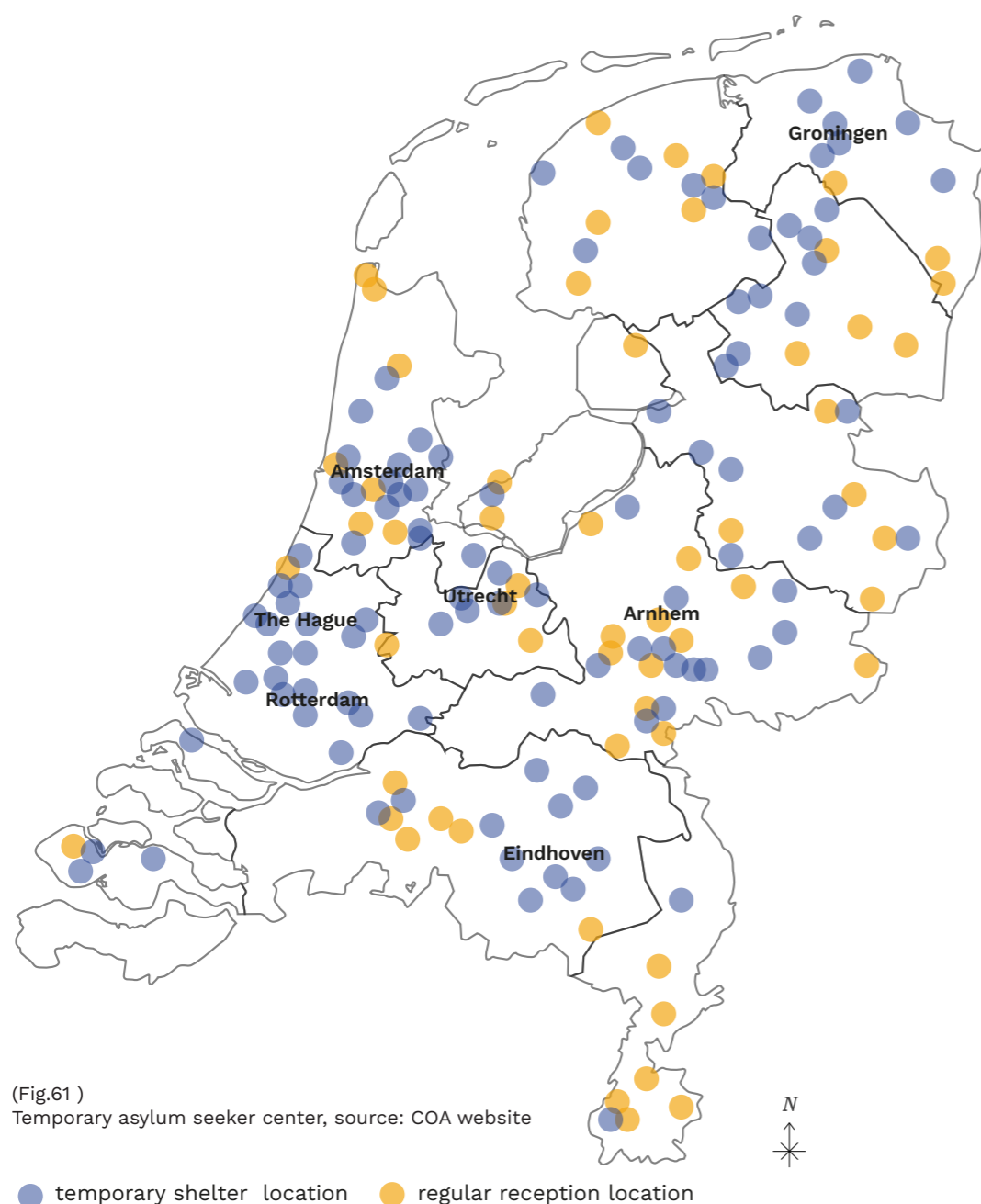
Location of shelters in the Netherlands:

During the asylum procedure, the asylum seekers stay in different reception centres of the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers. Sometimes there is not enough space in normal reception centres, so they may have to stay in a temporary reception centre. Overall, as per COA, there are around 200 reception centres all across the country. (Reception Centres During the Asylum Procedure, n.d.)

It can be understood briefly that, each shelter location accommodates people who are at different stages of the asylum process. COA also shows the ambiguity in revealing

detailed information of the locations, its surroundings, facilities, activities etc. and the involvement of the municipality and other organisations. This necessitates the significance of dealing with this topic at a municipality scale to understand the context and type of asylum shelters and about the status of the people accommodated.

(Fig.61) shows the concentration of asylum shelters in major cities and temporary asylum shelters seem to be more as a response by the country to accommodate asylum seekers.



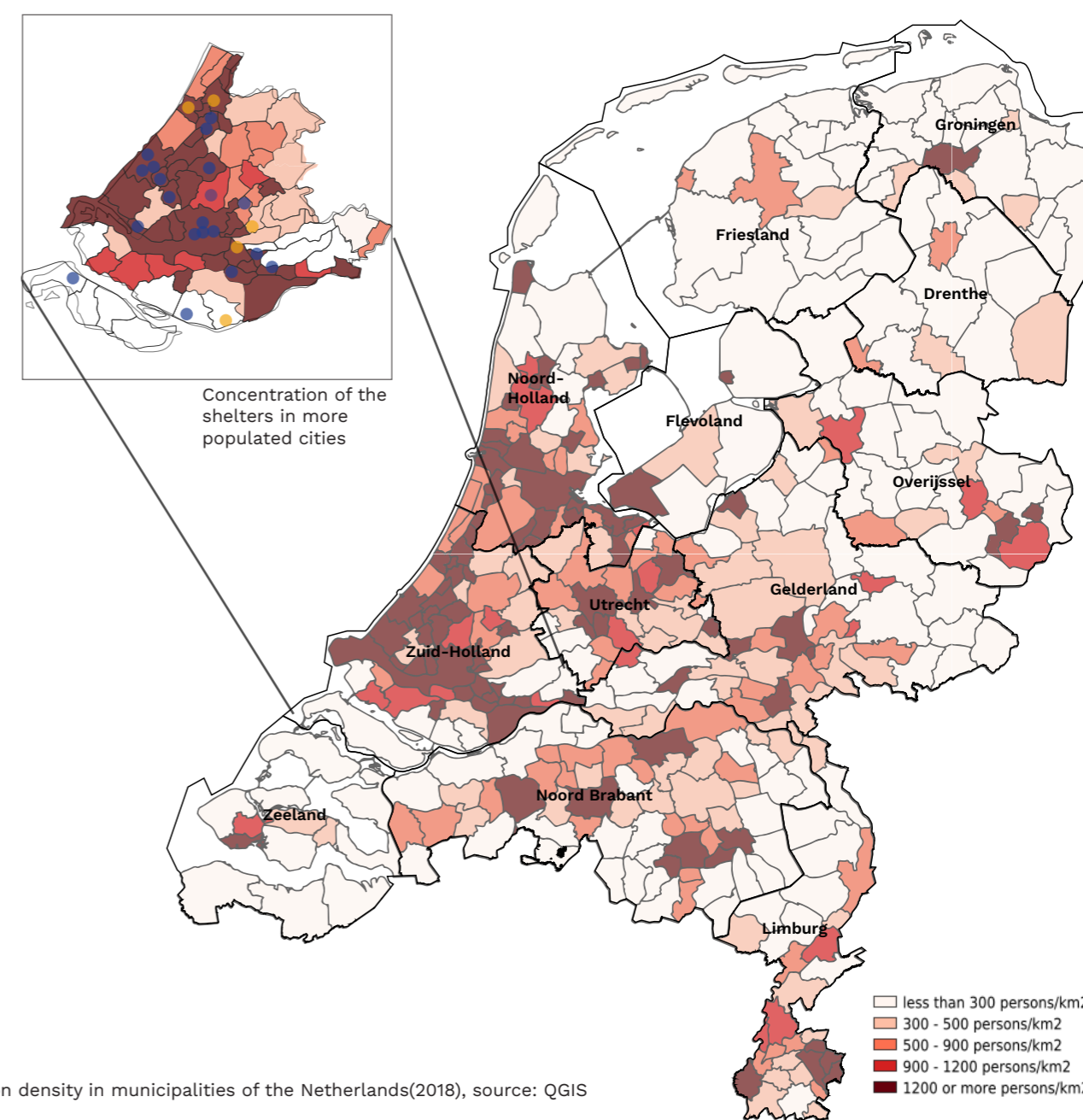
(Fig.62) shows the concentration of the population in the Netherlands. Previously it was studied that higher the population of municipality, the more the asylum seekers have to be accommodated. Therefore, Randstad should accommodate more refugees.

But this is bound to change due to the distribution law mentioned before that distributes asylum seekers equally. However, not all municipalities have enough space, financial support and future ideas to accommodate the newcomers.

The most populous province of South Holland is focused in this project. It is part of the Randstad and has cities that is believed

to host diverse population. This gives the perfect setting to evaluate the facilities and quality of spaces to accommodate diversity. Besides, it also gives a leverage to produce better urban changes since there is already an existing diverse population.

The presence of diversity helps to envision social support networks for better transition to a new life where the natives and refugees feel safe, comfortable and empowered to live together in shared environments.



Existing characteristics of isolated temporary asylum shelters in South Holland

The below table shows the general characteristics of a few isolated temporary asylum shelters in South Holland. Evidently, there is stark difference between every shelter in almost all aspects. Instantly, it can be noticed that, the configuration of the shelter limits the freedom, comfort and privacy of refugees and prevents them from place-making and feeling “home”.(Seethaler-Wari, 2018).

Studies show some shelters may offer higher levels of freedom, comfort and privacy, but still lack normality, an important need

(Seethaler-Wari, 2018). These can differ in qualities between different locations. (Seethaler-Wari, 2018) also says many asylum Shelters Where refugees may spend their first months or years—offer limited possibility for inside or outside activities.

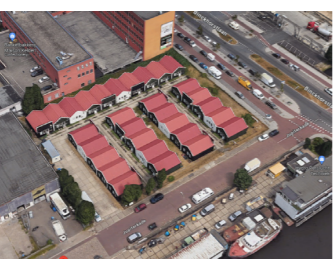
Clearly, this can be noticed in Netherlands. Here as (Seethaler-Wari, 2018) says , the refugees living in the shelters are isolated from local people majority of the time in some sort of ghettos and are confronted with security personnel and cameras.

In the shelters mentioned below, there are similarities that can be noticed. Additionally, some are fenced, with a flag that marks the organisation that controls.

Besides, the spatial layouts decide the level of comfort and hence; the time spent in the accommodation, in which activities to participate—in and outside of the accommodation (Seethaler-Wari, 2018). Here the isolation factor plays in their unwillingness to go outside their home. Moreover providing access to basic transportation is not sufficient, since refugees might not have the financial means to use or have any social networks to visit to.

Therefore walking/biking becomes the common way to reach the city centre where they encounter the natives.

It is clear that with sudden influx, the temporary asylum shelters seem to be only quick solution. But the way they are positioned in a city for refugees to access the spaces that aid in interaction with natives is completely ignored during planning of these shelters.

LOCATION	NO. OF INHABITANTS	VIEW	TYPE	USER GROUP	TYPE OF SHELTER	POPULATION DENSITY (CITY)	SURROUNDING FUNCTIONS	ACCESSIBILITY	CONCLUSIONS
Bergschenhoek, Tobias Asserlaan	50		shipping containers	families with children	Temporary shelter location Surveillance: Low to Medium	18,750		Transport: Appx. 250m away from bus stop. Nearest communal space: Semi-private play area within the shelter	- Isolated from residential area by empty open lands, infrastructure lines - No nearby access to shopping for basic needs
Maassluis, Govert van Wijnkade	70		hotel boat	22-26 years = 6 people 26+ years = 64 people staus holders	Temporary shelter location Surveillance: Low to Medium	32,768	 industrial areas, warehouses	Transport: Appx. 500m away from bus and train stop Nearest communal space: Appx. 300m away from a park	- Isolated from residential area by infrastructure lines, warehouses - No nearby access to shopping for basic needs
Zoetermeer, Rokkeveenseweg	630		former prison	315 (status holders) 315 (chance of obtaining a residence permit)	Temporary shelter location Surveillance: Medium to High	126.998	 Commercial /Educational area Agriculture land, empty open green Main road/rail infrastructure	Transport: Appx. 1km away from the bus stop Nearest communal space: Semi-private play area within the shelter	- Isolated from residential area by industrial buildings, infrastructure lines - No nearby access to shopping for basic needs
Delft, Manderspark	220		shipping containers	50 unaccompanied minors (AMV) 170 families, individual men and women)	Temporary shelter location Surveillance: Medium to High	101,030	 Residential Temporary Asylum Shelter (AZC)	Transport: Appx. 100m away from bus stop. Nearest communal space: Appx. 800m away from a park.	- Isolated from residential area by commercial buildings, empty open land - No nearby access to shopping for basic needs
The Hague, Jupiterkade (there are 3 more locations in The Hague)	54		individual houses	unaccompanied minors (AMV)	Temporary shelter location Surveillance: Low to Medium	514,861		Transport: Appx. 500m away from bus stop. Nearest communal space: Appx. 250m away from a park.	- Isolated from residential area by industrial buildings, warehouses - No nearby access to shopping for basic needs

(Fig.63) made by author

General Spatial characteristics of temporary asylum shelters

Most of the temporary asylum shelters have the characteristics mentioned in (Fig.64). One or more of these factors were observed in the locations described before. These factors play a significant role in the integration process of refugees living in AZCs, one of which is participation and interaction with social and urban life (Seethaler-Wari, 2018).

Most of these characteristics are noticed in small-medium sized towns, therefore the refugees prefer to move to bigger cities where they can have better job opportunities and form social networks with past migrant population. This seems valid from the refugees point of view, since it helps with their integration. However, the location of these temporary asylum shelters are decided by the municipalities in collaboration with COA based on the number of inhabitants in the municipality. Aspects such as number of refugees, availability of land ownership and specifically access to urban services, social networks etc. are never considered (Seethaler-Wari, 2018) The municipalities are highly selective in this process and the reasons could be based on the opinions of the natives and political influence.

Studies show that refugees with short commute duration to city centre are likely to go to the cities public spaces, parks and enjoy leisure activities. The location also interferes with the participation of volunteers in helping the refugees (Seethaler-Wari, 2018) But this does not guarantee interaction between refugees and the host community.

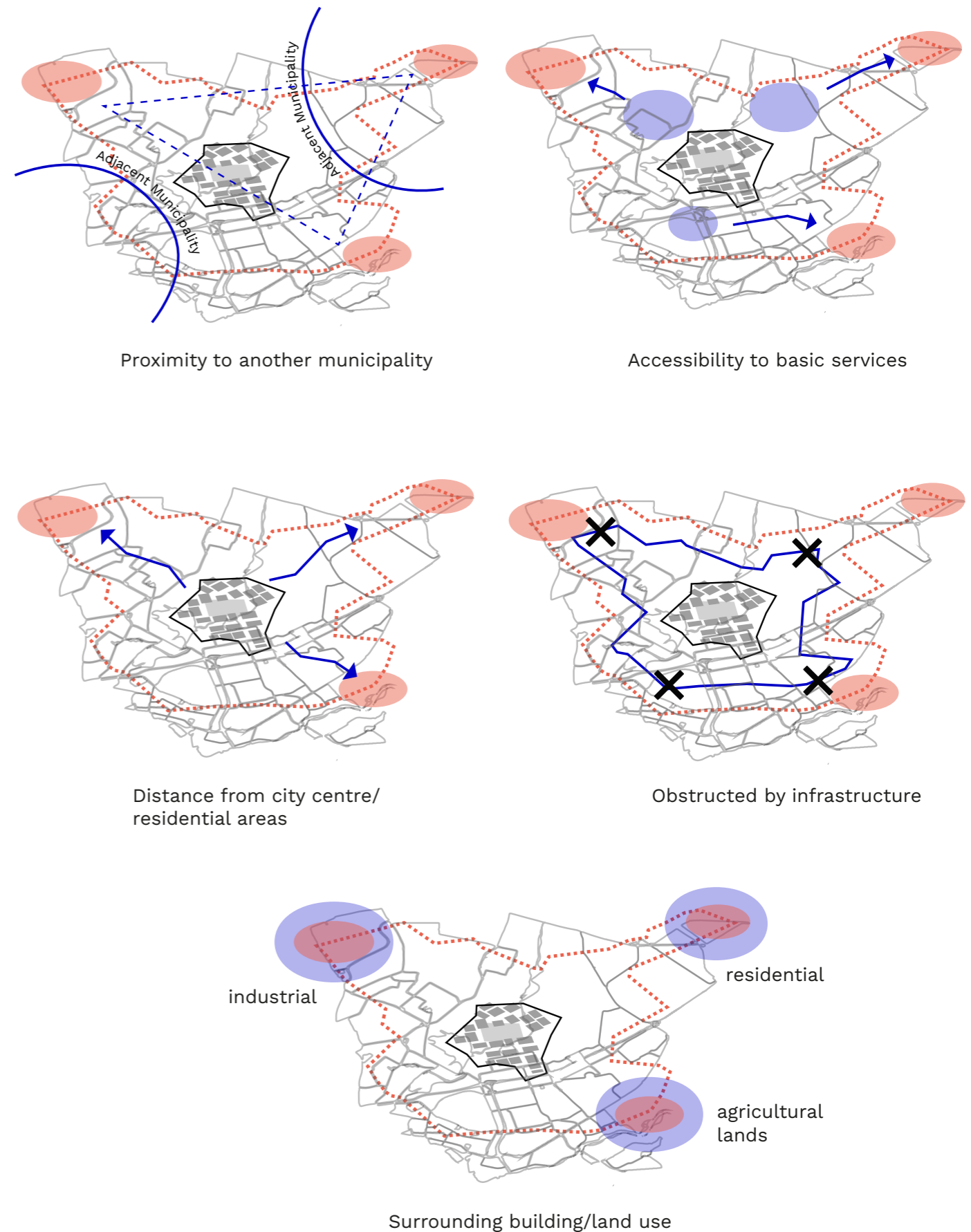
Here, the quality of surroundings come into play. It is important to have residential surrounding around the shelters, since it could facilitate frequent interactions. However, this depends on the socio-economic status of the neighbours and their willingness to take part in such interaction. The previously mentioned locations differ in every characteristics mentioned here, therefore it is crucial to plan integration after understanding the local spatial conditions and resource availability.

The importance of local strategies in around the temporary asylum shelters highly influence the way refugees feel about the institutions that control them, the attitude of the natives in general and their feelings towards wanting to interact and integrate. Therefore, it becomes crucial to understand the strengths and weakness of every city with respect to understanding the demographics, political support, spatial conditions that support various activities etc.

This is essential because (Seethaler-Wari, 2018) says that the experiences the refugees face as soon as they arrive in these neighbourhoods have an impact in their behaviour, the way their aspirations develop. Therefore the qualities of the shelters as mentioned in (Fig. 51) can be detrimental to interact with the host community living there.

This does not imply that the shelters need to be located for instance in the city centre, which is practically not possible due to security reasons. But it means that they should be located in a way that they are able to start living a 'normal' life outside their homes with the local host community. They should not feel lost due to segregation, inaccessible to spaces and places to perform communal activities due to financial, infrastructure or distance constraints.

The local changes can be for a short or long term, but the spaces around the isolated temporary shelters should give the flexibility to make the changes possible by active community participation from the host and refugees in the decision making process.



(Fig.64) made by author

6.2 Case study selection

Participant selection

The participants were selected mainly based on their age and gender. This was necessary to understand the challenges and wishes of different age groups who are living in the isolated temporary asylum shelters. The interview questions were asked in English and translated by individuals who are also refugees themselves living in the shelters, to the participants. They all had a common first language Arabic.

Interviews were conducted with the consent of the participants and their identities are kept anonymous. Interviews with unaccompanied minors (AMV) was refrained due to restrictions by the COA for safety concerns. Interviews with families and couples

was also not possible due to inaccessibility to such groups.

I was able to access the shelter in Maassluis during an event conducted in the shelter and in Delft with the help of a volunteer group based out of Delft. In both instances, I was able to strike informal conversations with refugees living in the shelter who knew to communicate in English, who later held me with talking to other refugees. In general, it was difficult to get a response from the municipalities regarding conducting interviews assuming that it is due to safety concerns.

AGE	
< 18	unaccompanied minors (AMV)
18 - 24	young adults
25 - 34	
35 - 44	middle-aged adults
45 - 54	
55+	old-aged adults

PARTICIPANTS			
	Young adults -men	Middle aged adults - men	Old- aged adults - men
SET 1	2	1	1
	Young adults -women	Middle aged adults - women	Old- aged adults - women
SET 2	2	-	-

(Fig.65) made by author

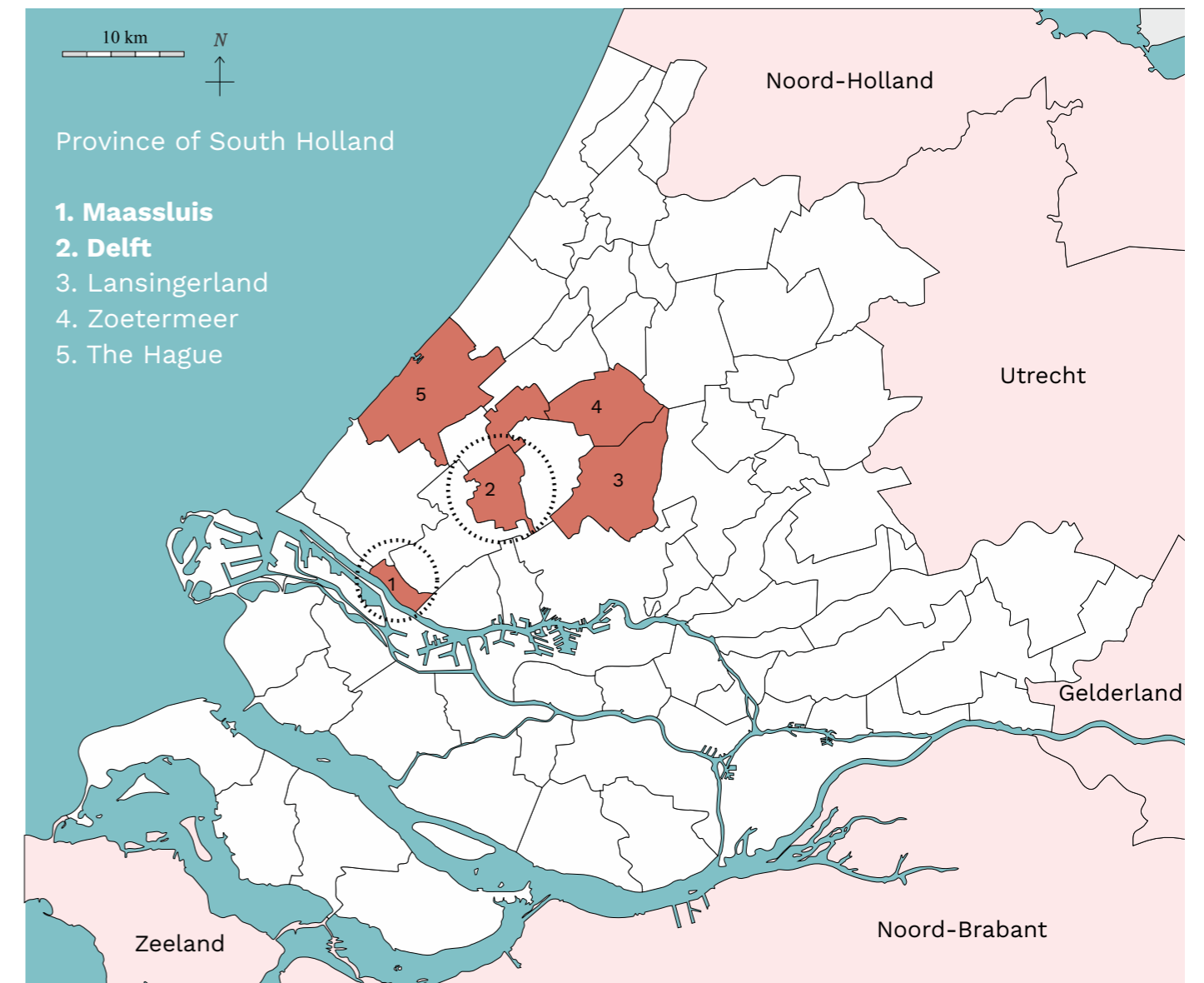
Location selection

The region of South Holland was selected because of better accessibility to the temporary asylum shelters (AZC). I selected a few municipalities among isolated temporary shelters, for the purpose of understanding their common characteristics and general information on the municipalities.

Among them I chose to conduct interviews in Maassluis and Delft due to the contacts that I had formed as mentioned before. A few more municipalities were planned to be visited, but the municipalities did not reply back for the same.

During this process, I realised that the AZCs in each municipality is different. Though there might be some commonalities with

the locations, it was impossible to have a comprehensive idea about the characteristics of the shelters and the location until my visit to the cities and inside the AZCs.



(Fig.66) made by author

Case study 1: Maassluis

Maassluis is a city in the province of south Holland. The municipality has a population of 33,567 in 2021. The city used to be a fishing settlement. And it is located in the sea barrier between North Sea and Rotterdam, which makes it a strategic location for shipping industries. The city is said to be mainly a 'commuter town to Rotterdam'.

The city has a typical city centre with the church and shops around as most of the Dutch cities. It predominantly has residential areas with a strip of industrial warehouses along the river. The city has the presence of multiple sport grounds at the borders

which also relates to the high percentage of population between the ages 25-65+ years. The city blends into the warehouses in the West and agricultural lands on the other sides, making it a quiet and secluded city.

The city has 3 subway stations which connects to main city Rotterdam nearby. It also has multiple bus stops that connect different cities and towns nearby including Delft.

The AZC is located at the bay from the river. There are other ships that are moored along. Hotels and warehouses surround the immediate vicinity of the ship .



(Fig.67) Municipality of Maassluis

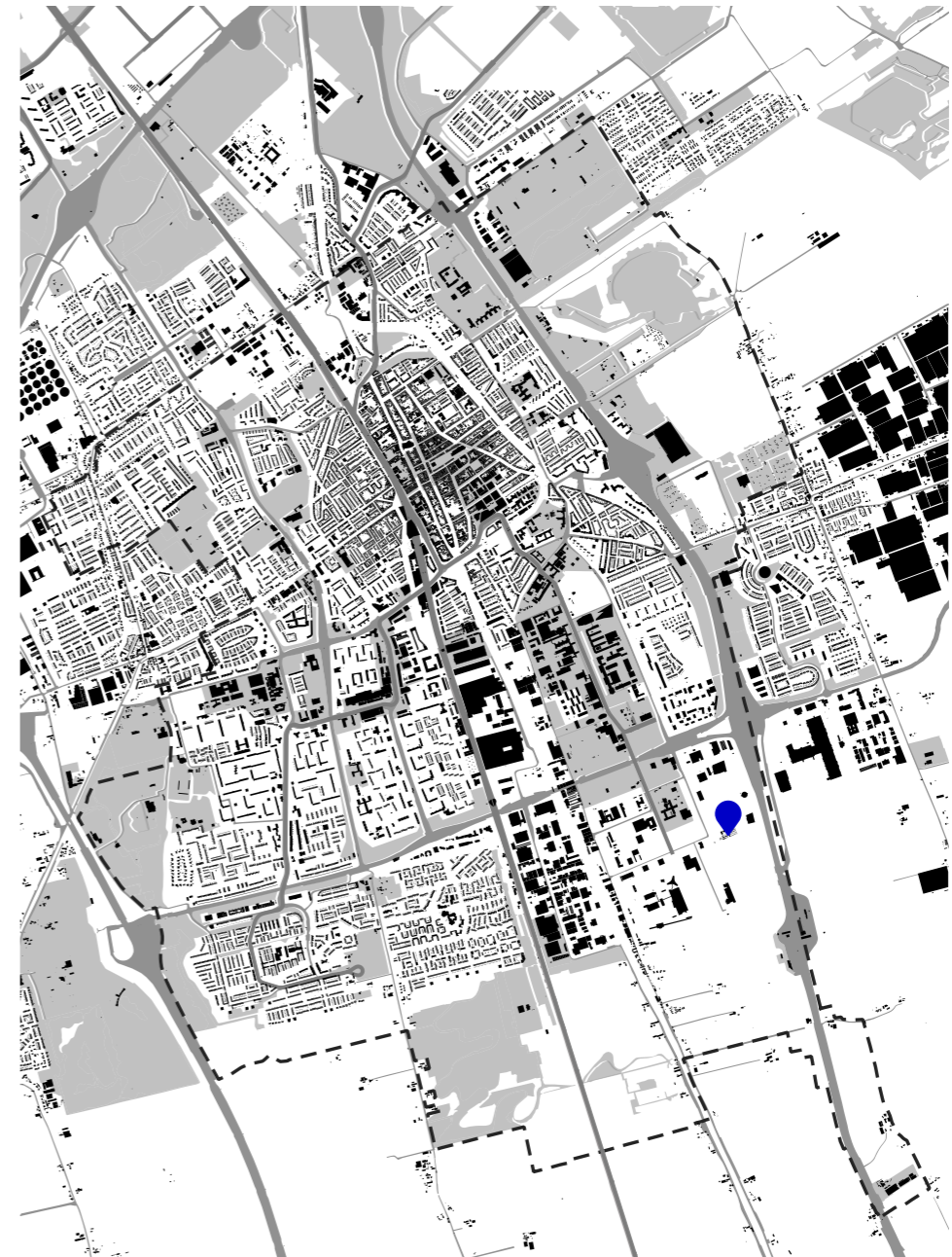
Case study 2: Delft

Delft is a also a popular historic city in the province of Sout Holland. It has a population of 109,573 as of 2024. Delft is a tourist location and a student city located between Rotterdam and the Hague.

Delft is a predominantly residential area with warehouses, natural parks and sport grounds at the borders. The city has high percentage of population between 25-45years.

It has 2 train stations and multiple bus connectivity points to various cities around.

The AZC in Delft is located at the South end of the TUDelft campus. It has a single bus stop nearby and is surrounded by empty lands in the immediate vicinity.



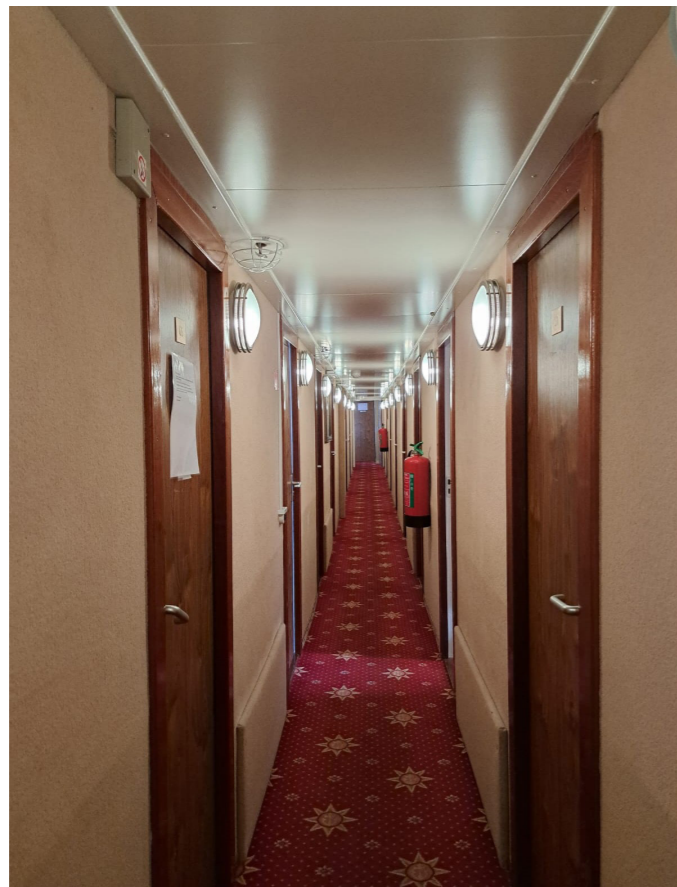
(Fig.68) Municipality of Delft



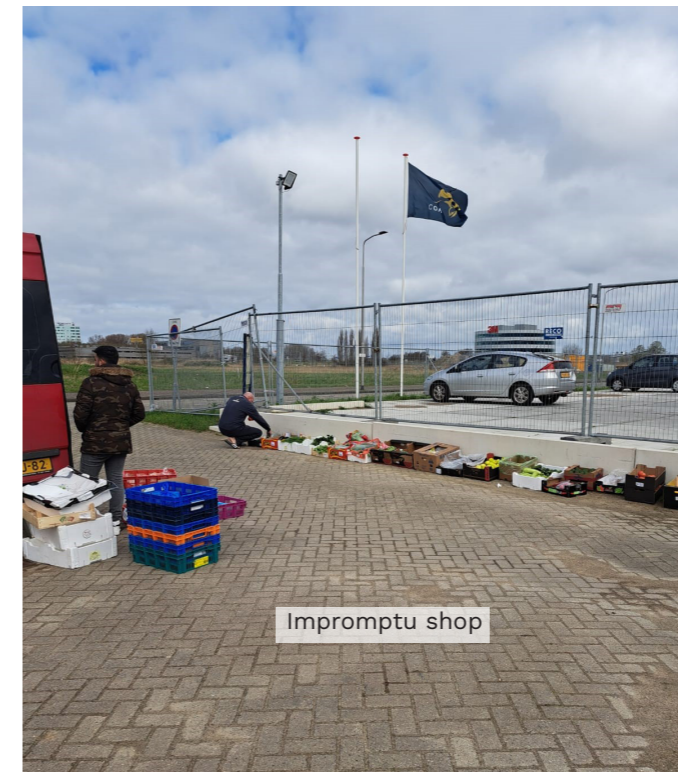
(Fig.69) Surroundings of AZC at Maassluis, picture by author



(Fig.71) Surroundings of AZC at Delft, Google Photos



(Fig.70) Inside the AZC at Maassluis, picture by author



(Fig.72) Impromptu grocery shop at AZC Delft, picture by author



(Fig.73) Advertisements for construction near the AZC at Delft, picture by author

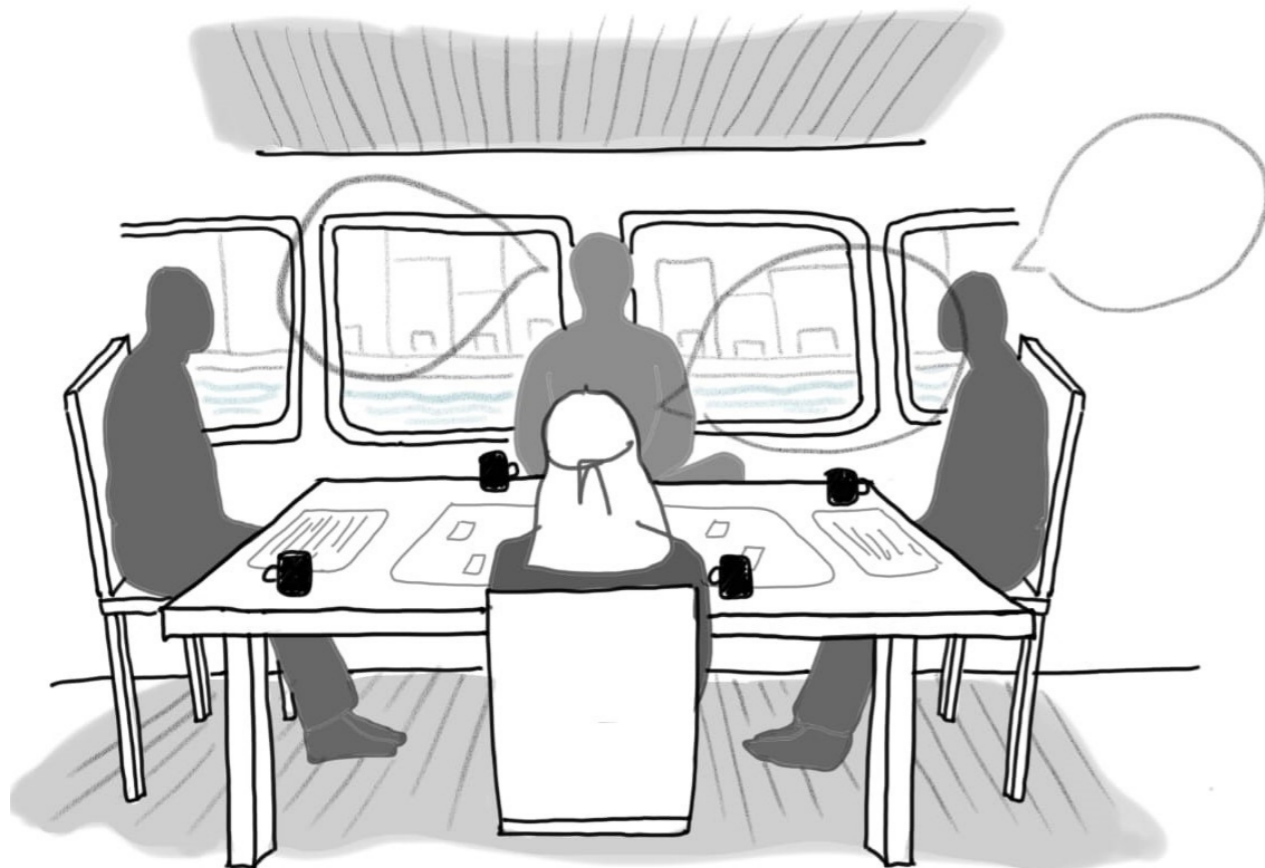
Introduction to the participants

The selection of participants for the interview was conducted according to the criteria mentioned in (Fig. 65). During observations, it was noted that the men interviewed in Maassluis appeared calmer and had more time to participate, as fewer activities were generally performed by them each day.


In contrast, the women interviewed in Delft had various responsibilities, catching up with their family back home, taking care of children, and preparing food for themselves and their families to break their fast for Ramadan. This resulted in hurriedness and interruptions during their responses. Nervousness was observed and attributed to their conservative cultural backgrounds. However, instances of women from the same community helping each other with kitchen chores and engaging in casual conversations were also noticed. Additionally,

the diverse population accommodated in the AZC at Delft (families, children, single men, women, and unaccompanied minors) required stricter surveillance compared to the AZC at Maassluis. This might have contributed to the participants' hesitance and rush in answering questions.

The young men and women interviewed showed ambition and a keen interest in exploring their surroundings. In contrast, the older men required more assistance and support. This was attributed to factors such as age and educational qualifications, which likely influenced the need for forming social connections in the society more quickly.



made by author



GENERAL


Age: late 40s

Past occupation: Teacher and researcher

Length of stay in AZC: 5months

Did you know anyone living in Netherlands already: No

Overall experience: A lot of challenges since moving here such as, not being able to work and just waiting to get a house.



GENERAL

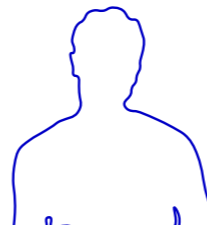
Age: 58 years old

Past occupation: Farmer

Length of stay in AZC: 10months

Did you know anyone living in Netherlands already: Family friends in Netherlands and daughter in Belgium

Overall experience: Feels okay living on the boat. 'There is nothing much to do here'



GENERAL

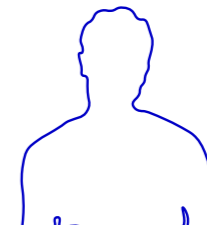
Age: 21years

Past occupation: High school

Length of stay in AZC: 1 year

Did you know anyone living in Netherlands already: No, but I came here along with my friends

Overall experience: Boring



GENERAL


Age: 21years

Past occupation: High school

Length of stay in AZC: 1 year

Did you know anyone living in Netherlands already: No, but I came here along with my friends

Overall experience: Boring



GENERAL

Age: 27 years

Past occupation: Teacher for kids

Length of stay in AZC: 2months

Did you know anyone living in Netherlands already: Yes, my siblings are here

Overall experience: its difficult and there is lack of privacy



GENERAL

Age: 28 years

Past occupation: Bachelors in university

Length of stay in AZC: 4months

Did you know anyone living in Netherlands already: No

Overall experience: Its depressing and feels lonely

Observation at home: Maassluis

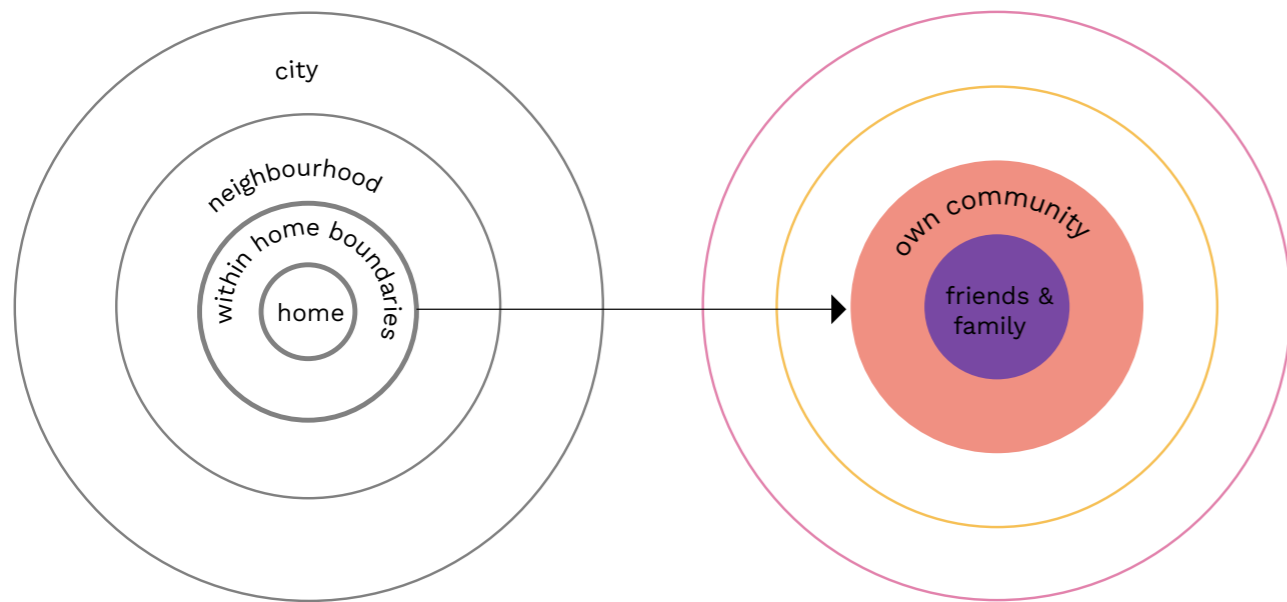
The Lady Anne is an emergency reception ship by the COA. The boat is moored in the municipality of Maassluis and offers space for 70 asylum seekers and refugees who are men. This is a temporary location(COA, Maassluis - Govert Van Wijnkade, n.d.)

To understand their behavior and daily activities, the spatial and social characteristics of their 'home' environment were briefly examined. During a visit to the boat, it was observed that it consists of individual rooms, common spaces for socializing, a kitchen, a dining area, and a washing area, as shown in (Fig.74)

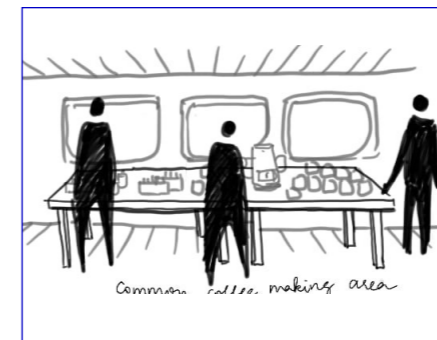
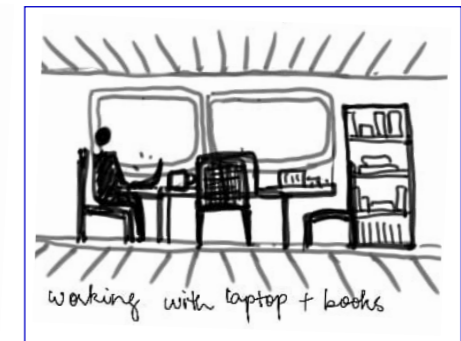
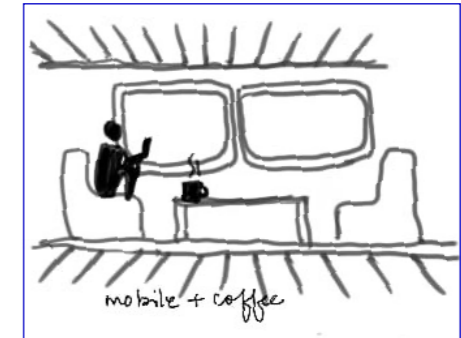
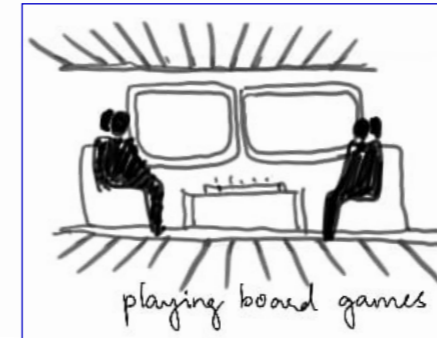
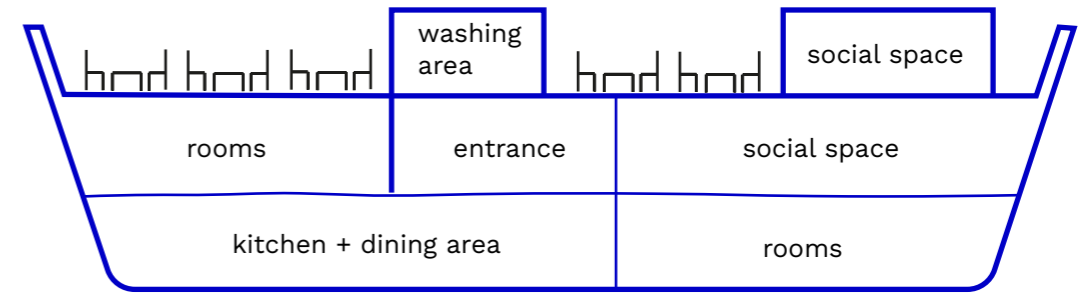
The predominant interactions included sitting and staring through the window, lounging on the sofa, watching TV, listening to music, talking on the phone, hanging out with fellow refugees over coffee, and playing board games in groups after lunch. It was noted that a few chairs outside the ship indicated a preference for spending time outside the confines of the boat. Additionally, the top tier had chairs where people

gathered in groups to smoke or have casual conversations, while the bottom tier housed the dining area where meals were cooked and served by the COA three times a day.

During a one-day event conducted by the municipality, increased interactions on the ship were observed. A small food stall tent was set up outside, opposite the ship, serving delicacies from the refugees' home countries, prepared by women refugees already housed in Maassluis. This event attracted natives who were interested in tasting food from different cultures and engaging in conversations about it. However, only a few refugees participated in this event.



Diagrams highlight the spaces and the type of interaction in them. This applies to both the case studies. Refer (Fig.46,47) for detailed description of the diagrams



ACTIVITIES IN THE SOCIAL SPACE AT HOME

(Fig.74) made by author

Observation at home: Delft

The AZC in Delft at Manderspark is a temporary reception location that accommodates 220 asylum seekers in which 50 are unaccompanied minor refugees (Delft - Manderspark, n.d.)

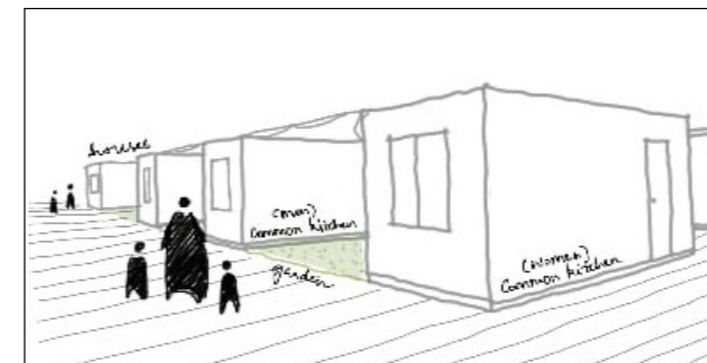
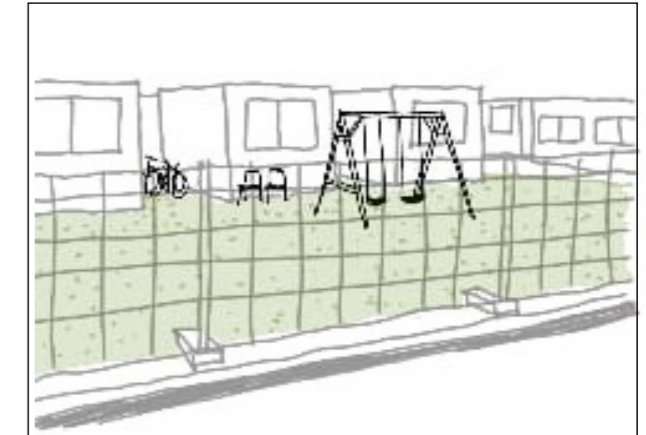
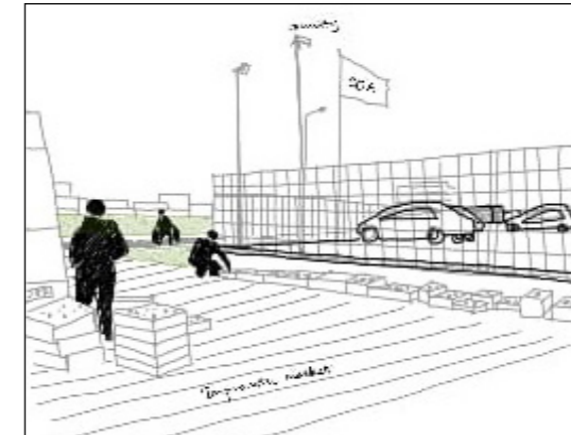
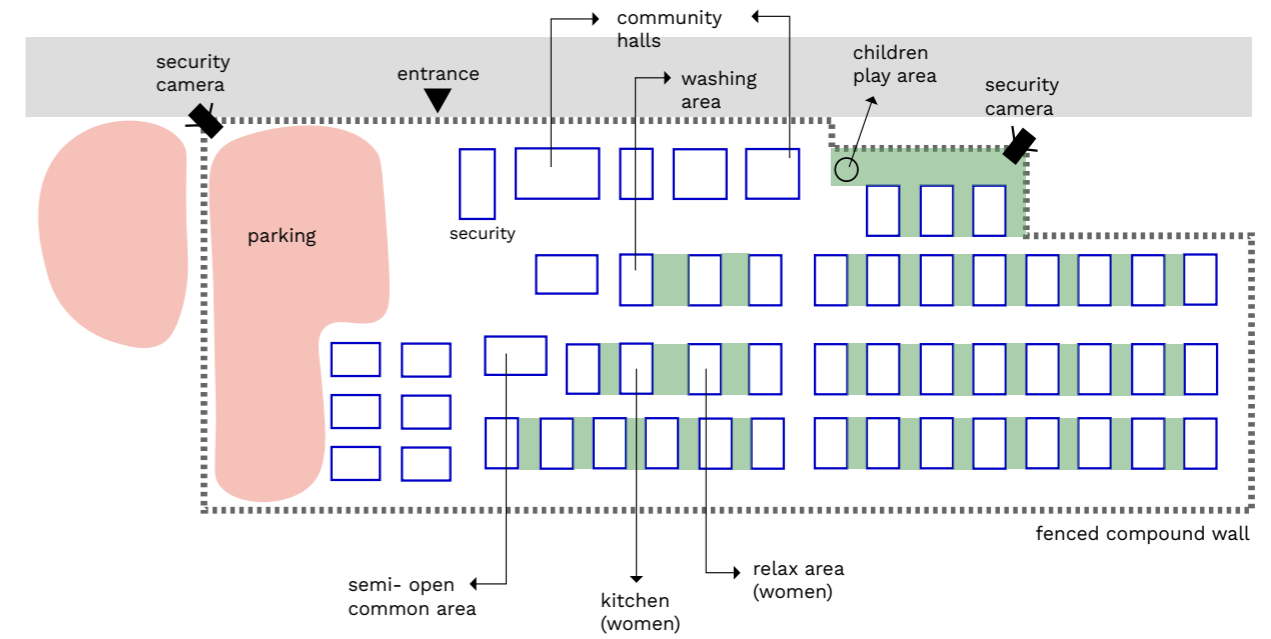
In this shelter, as depicted in (Fig.75), each container box is either occupied by only women (3 members), only men (3 members), or a single family (5-6 members). Common enclosed or open gathering areas, kitchens (separate for men and women), washing areas, containers designated for women to hang out and eat together, and containers for activities such as sewing and crochet classes are also included.

Interactions within the shelter were predominantly observed among individuals of the same gender. Conversations among women were more frequent, while limited interactions between men and women were noted in the common gathering areas. Cultural differences and language barriers were identified as limitations to frequent interactions among refugees. However, stronger bonds tended to be formed among refugees from the same country inside the shelter.

During a three-hour second-hand clothes event organized by the NGO, in which par-

ticipation was observed, more interactions among all refugees were noted. Children were seen playing in groups, women conversing while looking for suitable clothes, and men exchanging conversations. Three to four native volunteers were present, providing assistance to refugees in selecting clothes and helping children find toys. Coffee was made by the refugees to serve everyone attending the event. It was apparent that the refugees were eager for more frequent conversations, but these events were the only opportunities for them to come together.

These events seem to be only by volunteers, so the interactions with natives were minimal and not frequent.



(Fig.75) made by author

6.3 Interviews

Conversation with Refugees

Current use of space

- Users and activities: The men refugees between the ages of 21 -58 alternated between going to a community centre, city library and the municipality alone or with fellow refugees to take language classes. The older refugees frequented the mosque alone or in groups. One of the older refugee mentioned that he does fast walking in the nearby park or the city centre. Unlike the older refugees, the young refugees went out to explore other cities like Rotterdam, Amsterdam. One of the young refugees mentioned he goes to the municipality to work and to the mall for shopping.

The women of ages 27-28 years mostly stayed in the AZCs, they visit the city centre for shopping, got to cinema, explore farmers market. They also like going to the nearby park. One of them mentioned that she visits her siblings staying in other part of the country. She also volunteers at a nearby restaurant.

- Mode of transportation: They all mostly walk to these places, except for when they have to go to Rotterdam by train.

The women mostly walk/ bike to the city centre and take the train to other cities, occasionally by bus.

- Duration: 2-3 times a week for language classes. 1-2 times a week to the mosque, once every week to the gym, everyday to the park for 1-2 hours (covering 7km). A few times in a month to other cities.

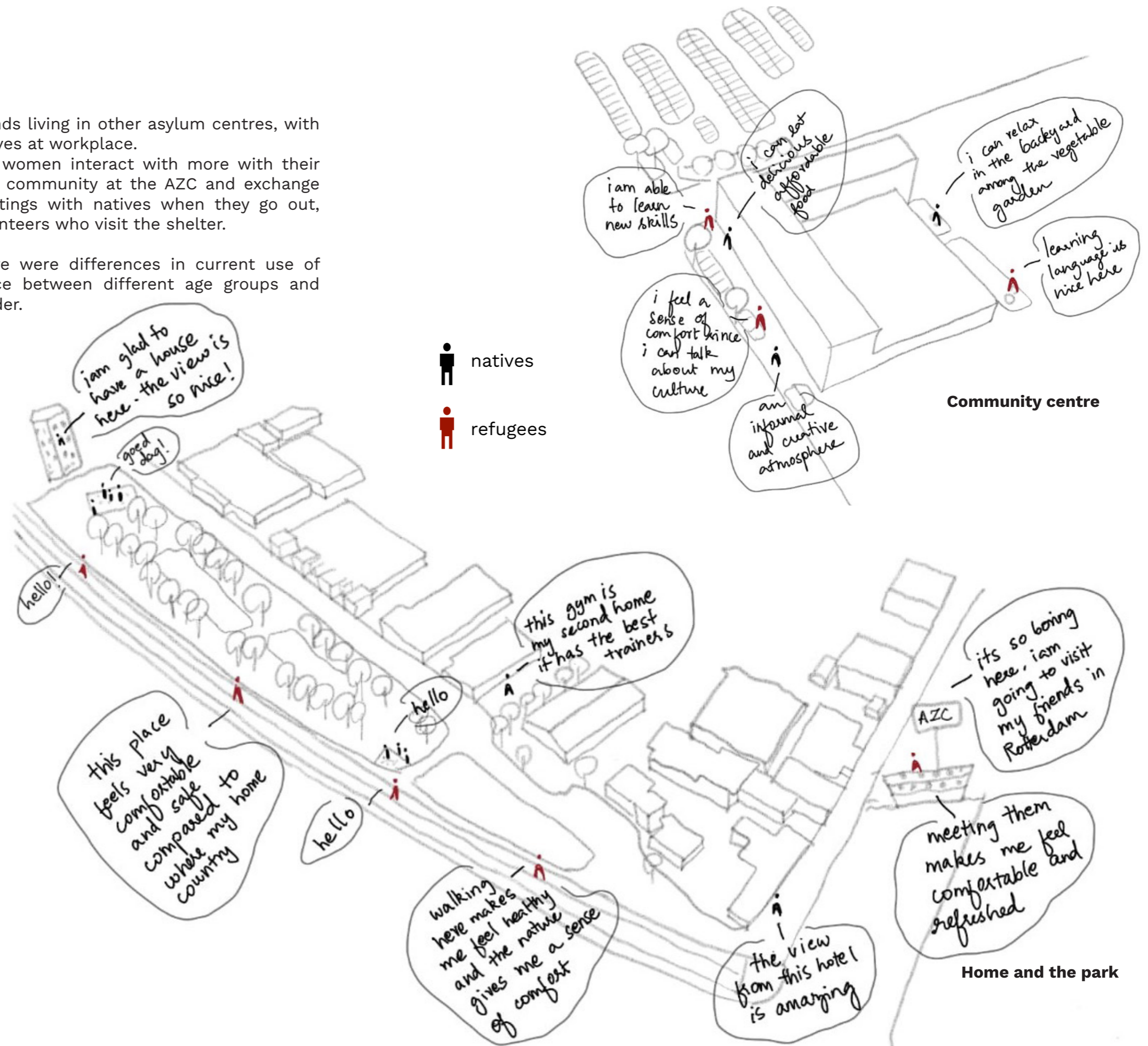
One of the women goes out everyday. The other women only 1-3 times a month.

- Interaction: The older refugees interact with the fellow refugees and native volunteers at the language classes and sometimes at the AZC. They mostly exchange greetings with the natives while doing their outdoor activities. However the young refugees engage with their own community

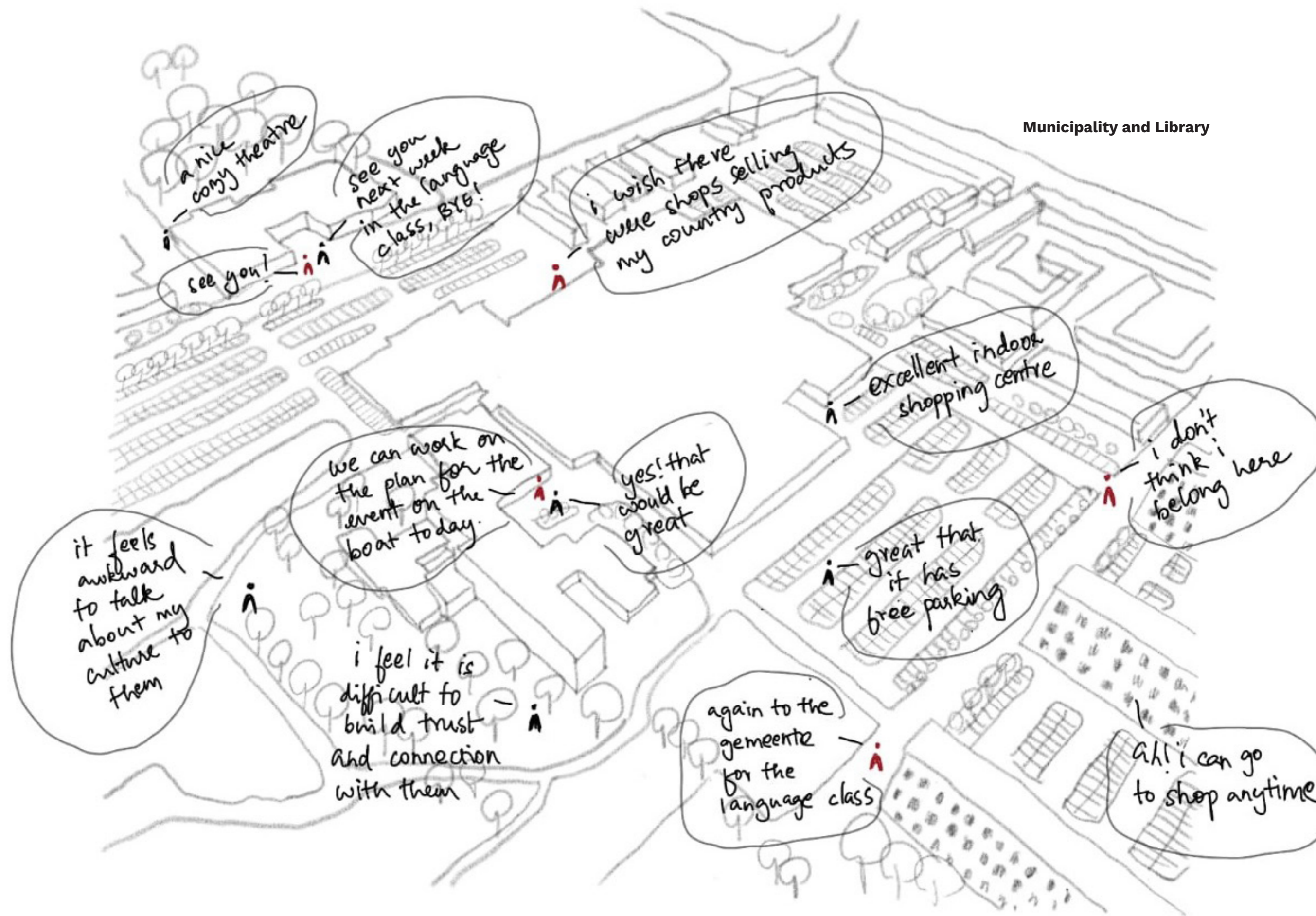
friends living in other asylum centres, with natives at workplace.

The women interact with more with their own community at the AZC and exchange greetings with natives when they go out, volunteers who visit the shelter.

There were differences in current use of space between different age groups and gender.



(Fig.76) Illustration showing current use of space by refugees



(Fig.77) Illustration showing current use of space by refugees

Cultural needs

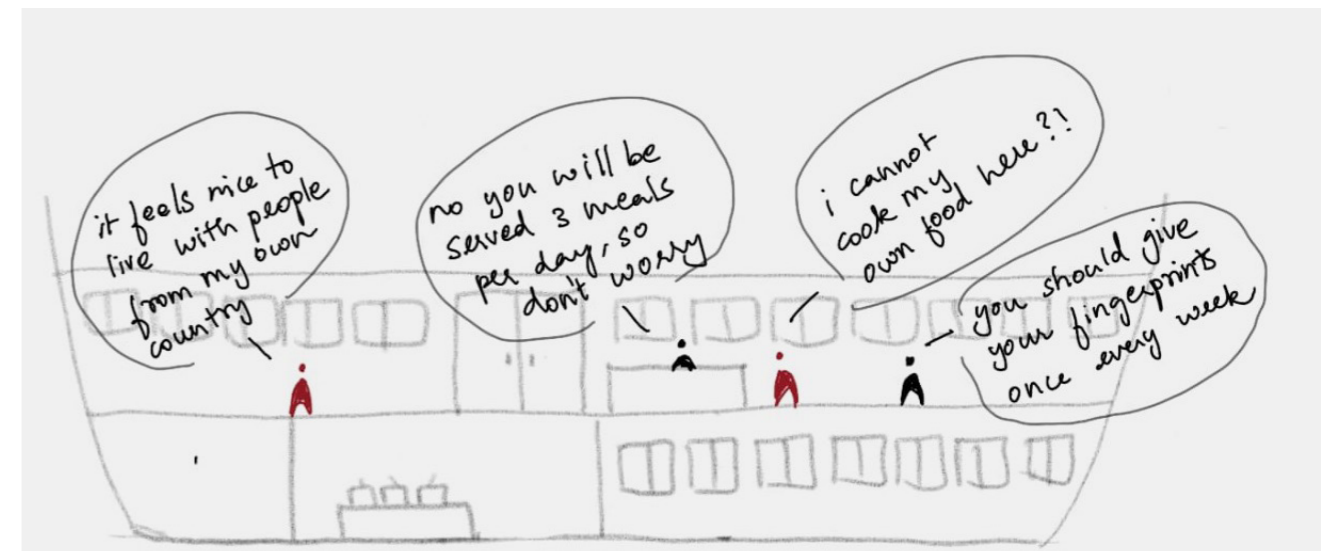
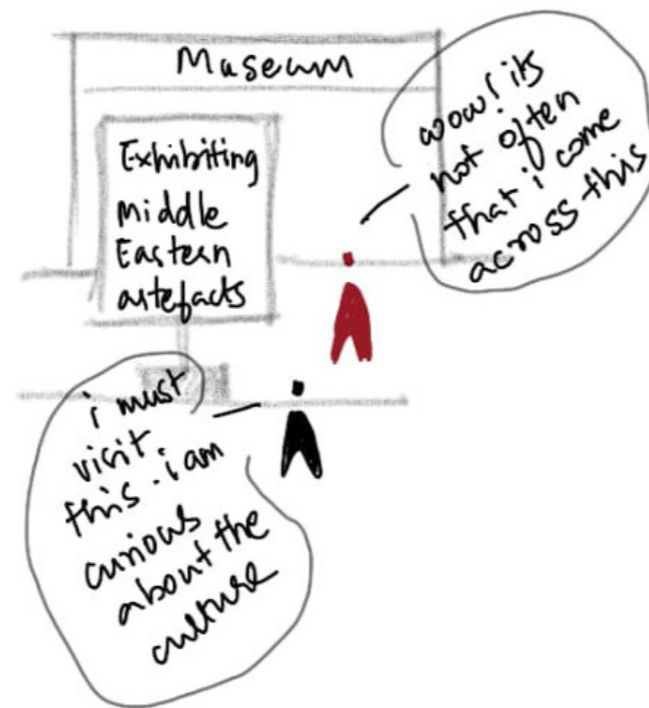
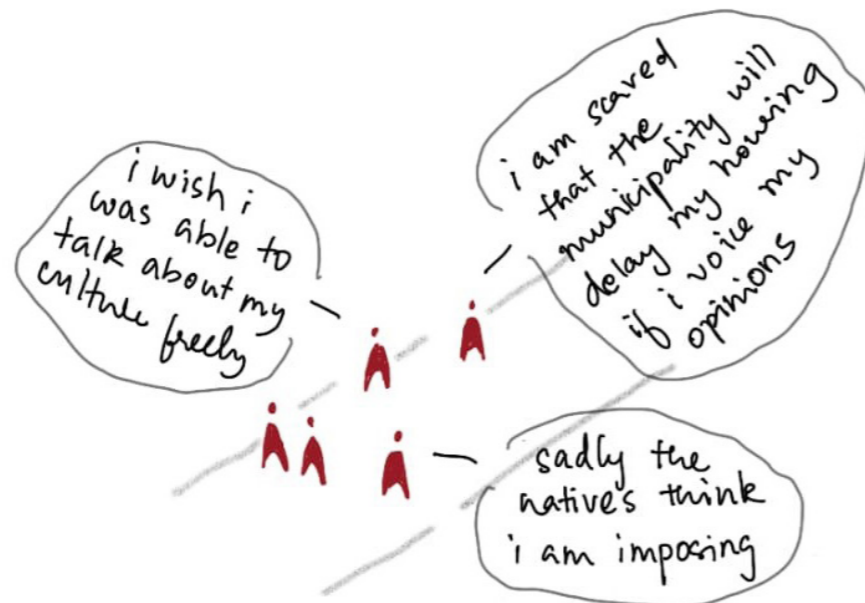
- Men(40, 58): They mentioned that only visiting mosques reminded them of home and their culture. One of them expressed that he is not able to voice his opinions about his home country and personal beliefs with the natives. And the other man feels homesick often since he is separated from his family.

- Men(21, 24): They missed playing football and have casual community gatherings with friends or family. They liked taking part in events that showcase their culture, for instance one of them told he went to a museum in Rotterdam that exhibited Middle Eastern culture. They also expressed interest in wanting to organise such events that show their culture. They also miss wearing traditional clothes like in their country.

- Women(27, 28): They missed the familiarity of being surrounded by their own community like at home. One of them finds visiting the mosque as a way to reunite with her community. She also misses attending informal music concerts and public gatherings.

The other women expressed that she does not find shops that sell specific ingredients used for cooking nearby.

Overall, having community gatherings, having familiarity around the spaces they use were the predominant cultural needs that all of them expressed.



(Fig.78) Illustration showing cultural needs of refugees

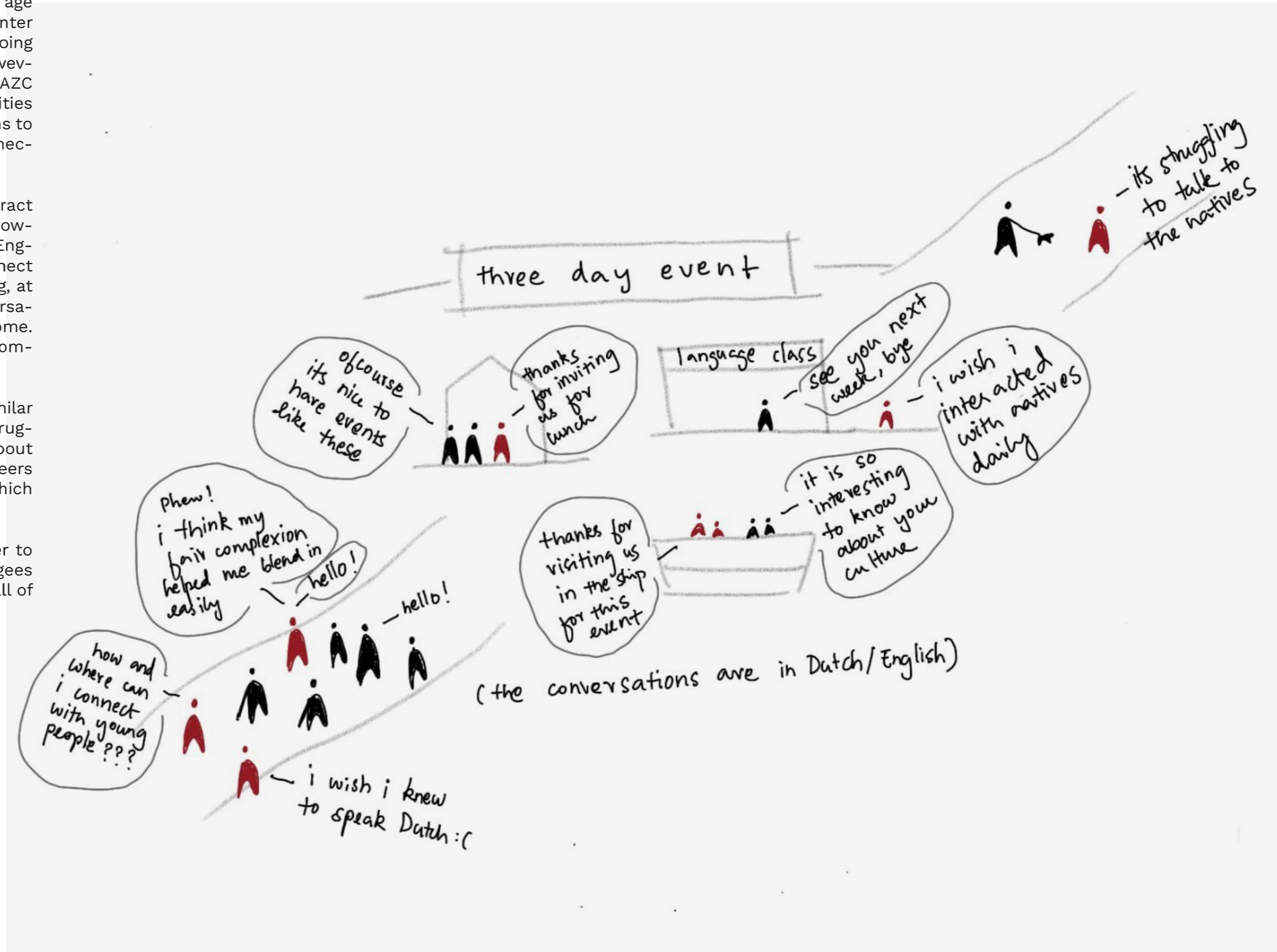
Experiences with native community

- Men(40, 58): They found it difficult to interact with native people mainly due to age and language barrier. They did encounter with natives outside the shelter while going for walks, but it was just greetings. However, during the events organised in the AZC they felt that they have more possibilities to interact with them. For them, it seems to be the only possible way to form connections beyond small conversations.

- Men(21, 24): They it difficult to interact with natives due to language barrier. However, since both the participants knew English, they were able to find ways to connect with natives easier through volunteering, at workplace etc. Otherwise, the conversations are limited to greetings outside home. They also felt that they did not have common interests with the native youth.

- Women(27, 28): They also find similar challenges of language barrier and struggle to find common interests to talk about with natives. They engage with volunteers only during activities in the shelter which happen infrequently.

All of them find language as the barrier to initiate conversations. The young refugees were able to manage socialising since all of them knew English.



(Fig.79) Illustration showing refugees experience with native community

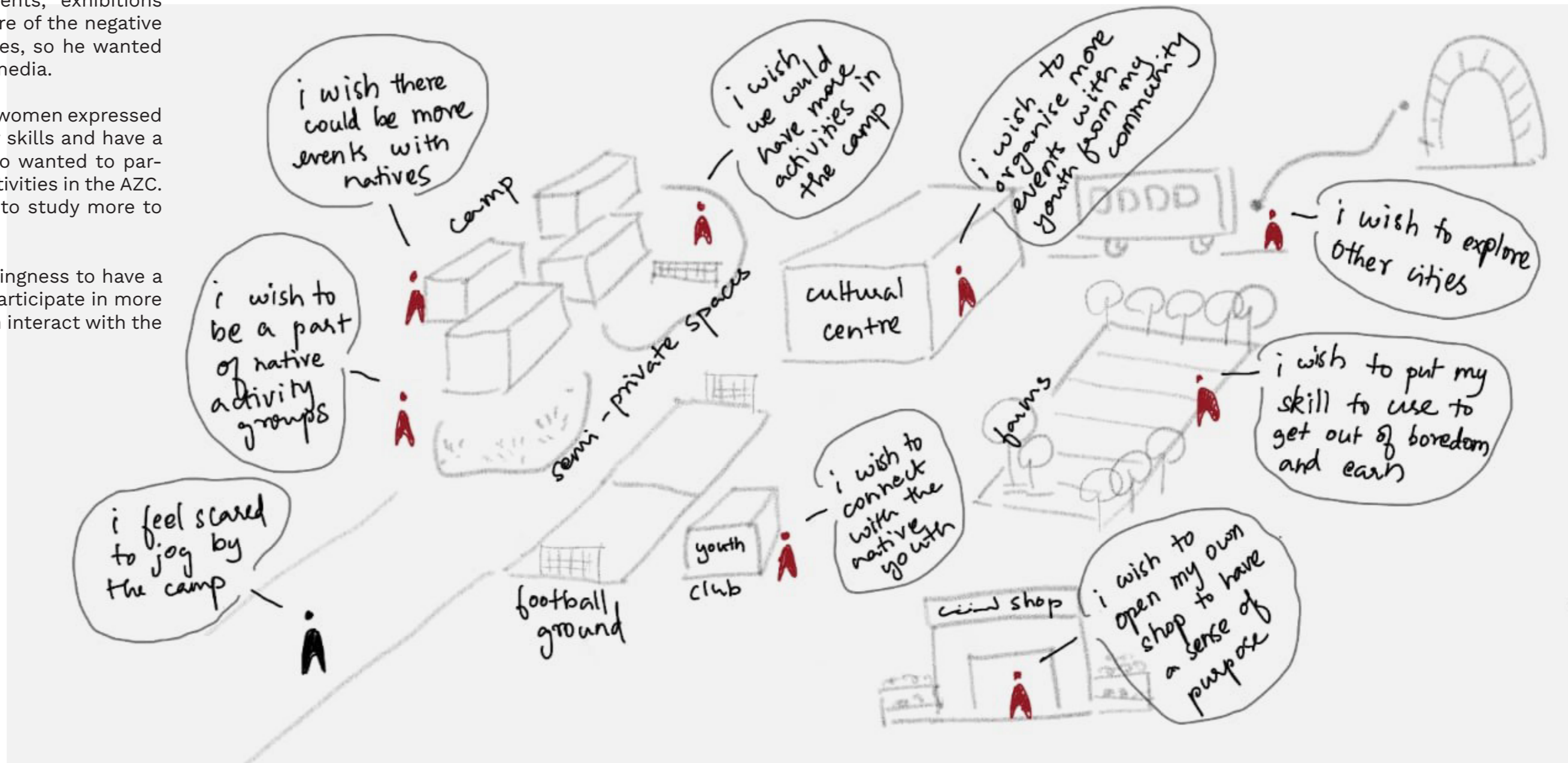
Ideas for the future

- Men(40, 58): They wish to have more cultural exchange, develop and use their skills. Having a job was crucial for them, since they had to send money to their family back home.

- Men(21, 24): They wish to engage more in sporting activities. Both of them expressed the willingness to showcase more of their culture by organising events, exhibitions etc. One of them was aware of the negative media portrayal on refugees, so he wanted to debunk them through media.

- Women(27, 28): Both the women expressed their interest to learn new skills and have an independent job. They also wanted to participate in more regular activities in the AZC. One of them also wished to study more to secure a job.

- All of them have the willingness to have a job, learn new skills and participate in more activities that makes them interact with the natives.



(Fig.80) Illustration showing refugees ideas for the future

Frequent routes and destinations at Maassluis and Delft



(Fig.81) Map showing different routes taken by the participants to involve in activities at Maassluis



(Fig.82) Map showing different routes taken by the participants to involve in activities at Delft

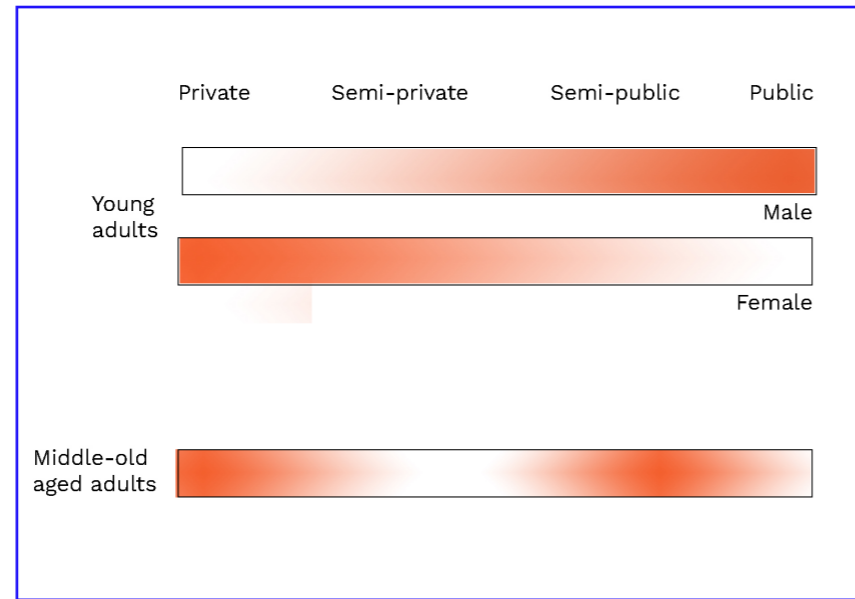
Conclusions:

1. Spaces of Interaction:

It was observed that semi-public and public spaces were frequently used by younger adult male refugees when going to work or meeting friends.

However, most of the women stayed indoors, which can be attributed to their cultural habits and responsibilities in taking care of their families, as well as the lack of suitable opportunities to participate in any activities. The older male refugees alternated between going out and staying in, which can be attributed to their energy levels.

Overall, fewer opportunities for going out were available to female and older refugees.



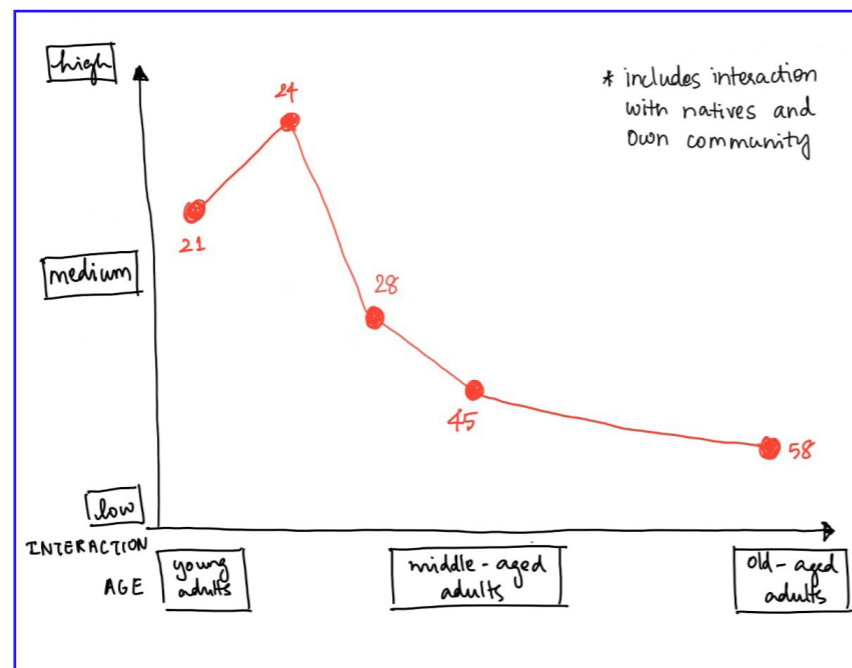
(Fig.83)

2. Levels of Interaction:

More interaction tended to occur among younger adult male refugees, as most of them knew how to speak English.

However, difficulties in interaction were experienced by women and older refugees due to language barriers. These barriers can be attributed to cultural habits and the challenges associated with learning a new language, respectively.

Specifically, interactions with natives were significantly hindered by language barriers.

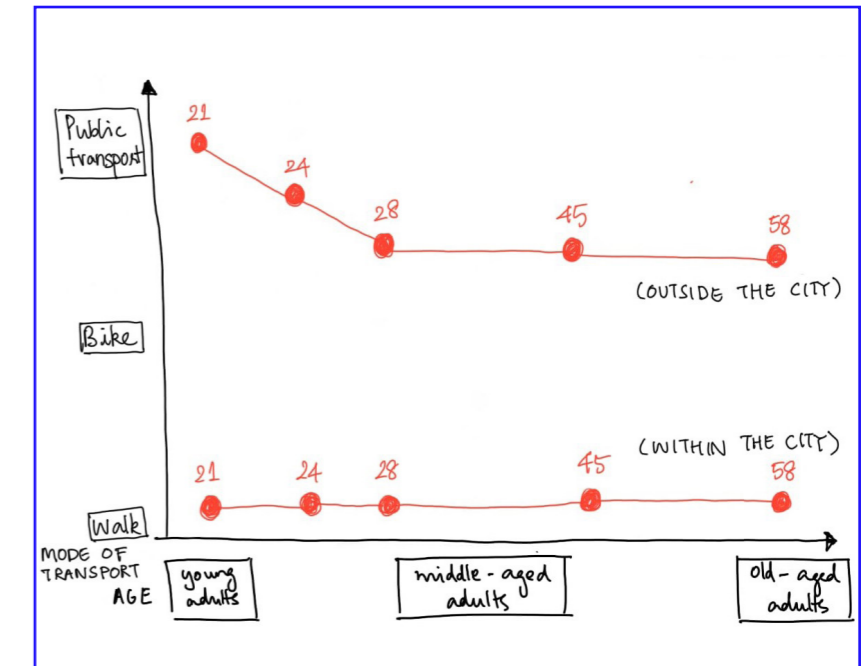


(Fig.84)

3. Mode of Transportation

Walking within the city was the frequent mode of transportation for all refugees. However, public transport was more commonly used by younger adult refugees to access locations outside the city.

In contrast, female and older refugees preferred to stay within the city. A lack of social networks, such as family or friends, and financial means to visit locations outside the city were observed.



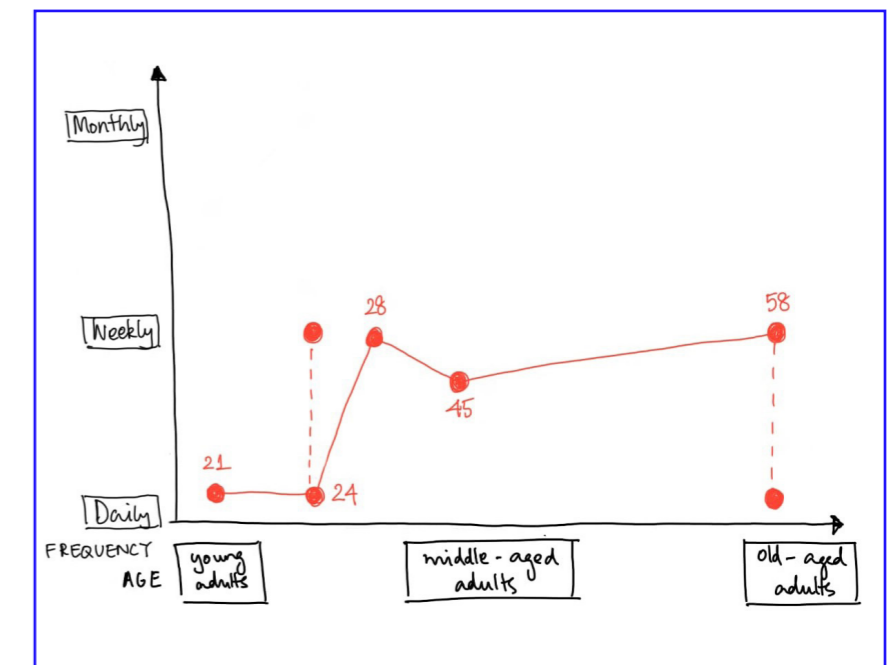
(Fig.85)

4. Frequency of Going Out

Younger adult men went out almost every day of the week. Women mostly went out weekly for shopping, walking, and similar activities.

Older male refugees, depending on their motivation, either went for daily walks or only went out to attend language classes.

Fewer opportunities and chances to participate in activities outside their living spaces were observed.



(Fig.86)

Conversation with a volunteer from an NGO

Volunteer group (or individual) organisations form a major part among other governmental organisations in helping refugees throughout their asylum process. Particularly some of them help with the integration process right from when they are dispersed to temporary asylum shelters in municipalities throughout the country. In my interviews with refugees, multiple volunteer organisations were mentioned. Some of them were organisations which distribute second hand clothing, teach Dutch language, conduct activities in AZCs such as crochet classes, zumba, sewing. Most of them work in close contact with the municipality and COA, to assure legitimacy and safety for the refugees who are going to take part in the activities.

Among them I had the opportunity to have a conversation with a volunteer from Delfts-ebuur, a non-profit organisation started by a group of volunteers in 2015 in Delft when there was a refugee crisis in Europe. They organize various activities throughout the year, one of which I attended was KoffieNL. Dutch language lessons are taught in a building in the city city centre with around 50 people of different cultural backgrounds, by retired native people living in Delft. The space is owned by the church, and they frequently the volunteers organize various activities here.

Through the conversations it was understood that in general, native volunteers can only facilitate up to a certain extent to help refugees navigate their new lives. They are one of the first individuals in the host society that refugees come in contact and interact with. Learning the language from volunteers is the foremost activity that refugees

are engaged in. Though this helps in building confidence in a positive way, it also happens to be the only major activity that they can start with once they start living in the AZCs. This coupled with feelings of uncertainty, lack of means to earn to send money to their families back home, strips away their ability to perform or even think about day to day normal socialising activities with the natives. Some volunteer groups help in different stages of the asylum procedure. They can become the pillars of support in the beginning.

Finally to mention, it was also expressed that the natives hesitate and find it difficult in trusting and forming closer bonds with the refugees and sometimes the refugees take advantage of them (For instance when I was having the conversation , a refugee approached the volunteer asking for help since he was asked to shift to another AZC far away. And he requested whether he can stay at the volunteers place for some days until the issue is solved with his transfer. In moments like these, the volunteer politely navigated the conversation in a such a way that he can seek for help at the right place.

Reflection: It becomes evident that person-to-person social interactions at the local level are crucial in understanding what the refugees feel, need and want in their everyday lives. And the involvement and suggestion from volunteers form an important role

‘The higher authorities are not aware of what is happening on the ground. There are rules and policies on where and how the centres have to look, websites talking about how to get help, jobs as refugees/asylum seekers etc. However, the shelter locations do not consider the **existing contexts**, the websites **cannot be translated** into their languages, and they **cannot choose to locate near their family or friends** who are already in the Netherlands.’

It is difficult to reach out to people in AZCs since the people **do not know about the activities we do, our location and have a fear to approach us**

We try to reach out personally in their living space to **create a safe bond with them**

People come here to **not feel lonely and meet other people from similar origin/ cultural backgrounds**. It is as a way of forming **social networks**

We also **guide them to the sources to find jobs** or any to any problems they face

We receive most of our funding through **private organisations and word of mouth**

As volunteers we give **temporary support** to the refugees by giving **language lessons** and **organising activities** throughout the year



They need to be understood as individuals and not as a group that just needs to integrate by putting in all their effort.

Local NGO in Delft



Language classes



Community gathering

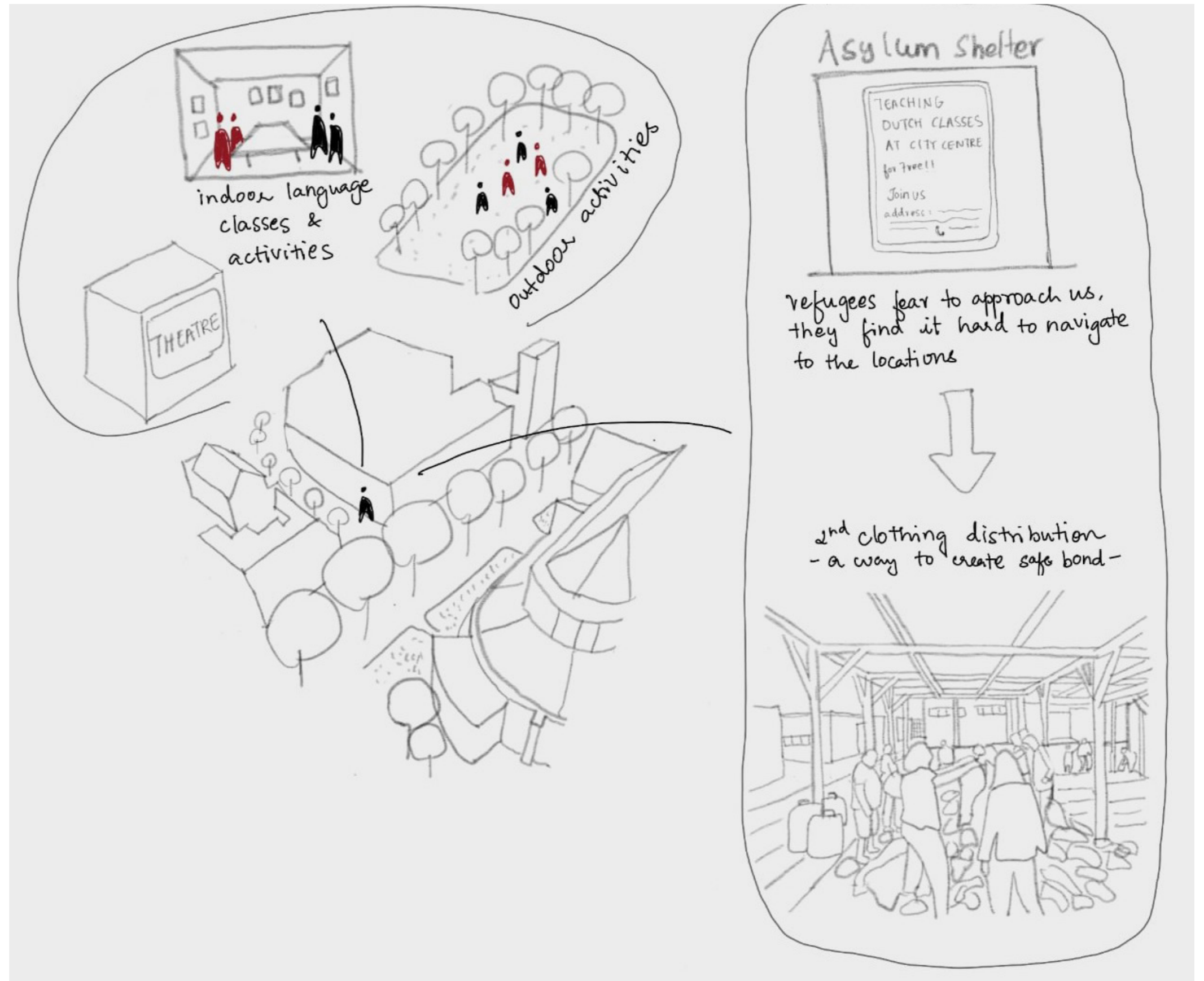


Community events



Skill sharing activities

Images of the activities,
source: Delftsebuur NGO, Delft



(Fig.87) Illustration showing the works of volunteers from local NGOs

Conversation with a Municipality representative

Dutch municipalities have the autonomy to decide how to accommodate and provide integration opportunities for refugees staying in temporary asylum shelters (AZCs). They collaborate closely with volunteers, journalists, local NGOs, and churches to conduct activities for refugees. However, these services vary between municipalities depending on the interest of the staff involved.

During an interview with the coordinator of the asylum shelter in Maasluis, it was evident that the municipalities focus primarily on language learning as the foremost tool for integration. They conduct several activities with city natives every month to support this process. Psychological support and encouragement to form social networks for securing jobs are also offered by the municipality. However, motivating refugees proves challenging due to language barriers and cultural differences.

The coordinator mentioned difficulties with the rules set by the COA, as these regulations do not support long-term thinking and leave little room for experimentation. However, they conduct events and activities on their own with the help of young people in the shelter, whom they can communicate with effectively. They find that these young individuals act as mediators, helping to connect the older generation to participate and interact with the new society.

Municipalities have a clear understanding of native attitudes toward refugees, recog-

nizing that natives are influenced by media narratives, have assumptions, judgements and often blame refugees for problems in the city. The municipality, however, refuses to accept this blaming and seeks to gain natives' trust through the various activities they conduct.

Reflection: Although municipalities take steps to combat inequality and aid integration, refugees find it challenging to connect with the small nudges provided by the municipality. More assistance and support are needed for long-term integration. While the activities conducted can have momentary benefits for refugees who can socialize, communicate, and are aware of their new environment, there should also be opportunities for refugees, regardless of age and gender, to access common spaces where they can engage daily. These spaces would allow them to feel comfortable, observe, develop a sense of belonging, and learn from each other. This would empower them, and combining these spaces with the activities conducted could foster long-term connections.



Municipality official

Church community and natives (mostly older) are open to helping in conducting activities. We have conducted cooking workshops, exhibitions, football matches. We see this **as a nudge to provide them form long term connections with natives. We aim to create opportunities for communication to occur naturally.**

We realised that natives have **assumptions and judgments**. They come with complaints that they get harassed by asylum seekers in the AZC. But we know that it is not true.

People in the Netherlands have the right to talk what they want, but when it comes to their country problems they **find it easier to blame the refugees**. They do not think deeply about the situation.

We notice that people with the permit are confident and easy going, however **COA and IND are too busy to fasten the process** and this affects people who do not receive the permit negatively.

We are planning to have **psychologists** visit the AZC **every week to connect and talk their heart out**

The older refugees here primarily want to **work and earn, have family reunion**. Therefore, we want to introduce them with natives to mutually share their skills and **form long term connections**

We support them to visit the gym, swimming pool, football, painting activities,. However, **the older age group are lazy, demotivated, and have more impact of their past traumas**

Every 2 weeks we interview people in the AZC and **publish in the local newspaper**. We also have a **podcast** where refugees talk and **conduct events in the boat frequently**

People have to become open-minded and the COA should provide more support for municipalities to experiment with different ideas



PODCAST
Van alle kanten, vluchtelingen in Maassluis
 Vluchtelingen in Maassluis

Een serie over vluchtelingen in Maassluis.

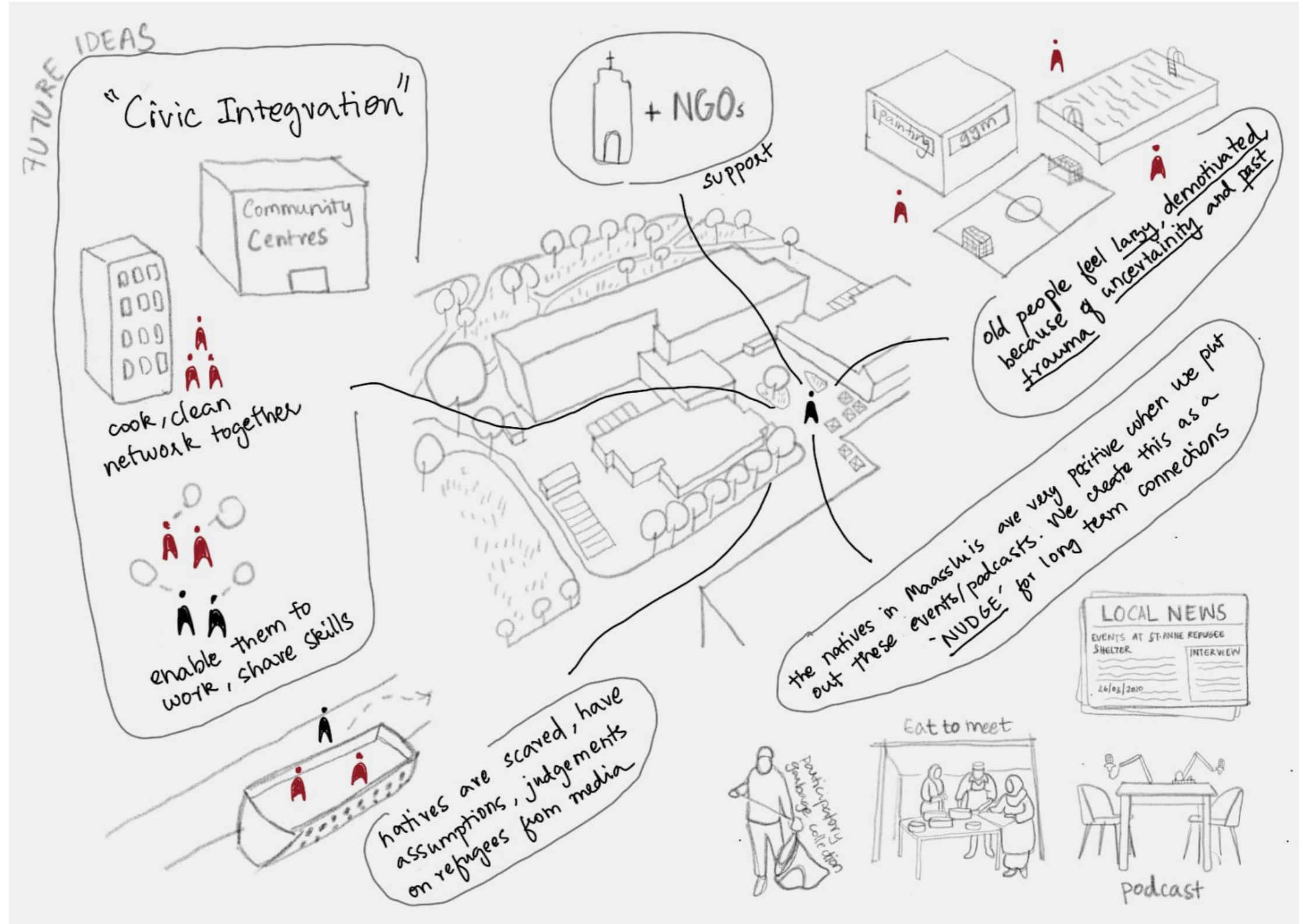
Podcasts with refugees

OVER VAN ALLE KANTEN, VLUCHTELINGEN IN MAASSLUIS
 Dit is een podcast over vluchtelingen in Maassluis. Vluchtelingen en vrijwilligers praten over het leven in Maassluis.

AFLEVERINGEN

S01 / E06 - 27 november 2023
Van alle kanten, vluchtelingen in Maassluis
 In deze episode en laatste aflevering vertellen vluchtelingenstatushouders over hun dromen van de toekomst in hun nieuwe thuisland. Zo hoor je bijvoorbeeld Rami die inmiddels statushouder is. En je hoort wat een vertegenwoordiger van een wereldwijd opererende onderneming met het onderwerp van deze...

K01 / E06 - 27 november 2023



Images of the activities by Municipality of Maassluis

(Fig.88) Illustrations showing the activities supported by the municipality

Natives perspective

Research shows that historically, the Netherlands has been known as a tolerant, welcoming country for minorities. In the 17th century, the country was a popular asylum for religious refugees due to its relatively high religious tolerance (Albada et al., 2021). But contrastingly, in the same period, due to the increasing number of migrant workers from Turkey, Morocco, Suriname deciding to settle in the country, lead to vast cultural changes and the Dutch had major challenges with it.

Netherlands has also been known for its multicultural migration policies, but currently, it has become one of a few European countries to have cut back on its established multicultural policy in favour of a stronger focus on assimilation (Albada et al., 2021). Recent surveys show that majority of Dutch citizens believe that refugees should be granted asylum, but a majority is also concerned about the consequences of such a step (Albada et al., 2021). (MIPEX 2020, n.d.) also reveals that Netherlands provides immigrants with basic rights and equal opportunities, but not a secure future in the country. Policies encourage the public to see immigrants as their equals and neighbours, but also as foreigners rather than as potential citizens.

For instance, the host-society may view refugees as competing for resources such as welfare and employment opportunities, thereby affecting their attitudes towards these groups negatively (Albada et al., 2021). Studies show that factors such as lower education levels, far-right political attitudes, feeling a sense of deprivation compared to others among the natives were found to be associated with more prejudice, xenophobia, and negative attitudes towards migration (Albada et al., 2021).

The above paragraphs show the political, social and socio-economic struggles that the Dutch have been facing since the 17th century. In my interviews with refugees, though they did not express any form of discrimination till now from the natives, they still are exposed to assimilate into the society

by formal ways of integration to start their new life. Their minds are filled with learning the language and pass the civic integration exam that they set aside their feelings of trauma, losing their culture, support networks to catch up with the Dutch society. This rises the question of how the natives feel about the fear of losing their culture

Cultural differences

When cultures with significant differences converge, initially, there's a notable distance, making it challenging to find common ground. Research shows that when refugees differ considerably from the host-society, it can lead to fears that they threaten and undermine the existing culture (Albada et al., 2021). Specifically, if host-society members perceive migrants as undermining social values such as how to behave and to treat others in a society to a lesser extent than the host-society, they become less supportive of migrant policies, less tolerant, and more negative toward migrants. This was consistent across migrant groups (Syrian, Moroccan, and Polish), including those from Muslim-majority countries (ibid). Consequently, perceptions of social values play an important role in acceptance of refugees in the host society. However, in my interviews, refugees expressed that in their culture, having informal community gatherings, going to mosque for prayers, making time to help each other etc. as a strong part of their culture. Therefore it is challenging for refugees as well. This questions the extent to which cultures have to change or adapt.

Religion as a threat

Another major challenge that has been in conversation is religion. Islamophobia, a particular form of prejudice and racism against Muslims and Islam, has grown in Europe (Albada et al., 2021). As per statistics, in the Netherlands, majority of refugees came from countries with a Muslim majority. As per statistics, in the Netherlands, majority of refugees came from countries with a Muslim majority. It is also true that majority of Dutch citizens are opposed to Muslim practices (Adelman & Verkuyten, 2020).

They think that all refugees who enter the country are Muslim. This is also leading to rising hate crimes among the community in the country.

Contact experiences

Studies show that contact experience can enhance knowledge about outgroups and increase empathy and perspective thereby improving attitudes towards outgroups. The contacts should be meaningful and positive, such as friendships, which is likely to improve outgroup attitudes (Albada et al., 2021). Here we can draw parallels to ingroup as the native community and the outgroups as refugees. Through my interviews, it can be understood that though contacts are made once in a while with natives, and there is curiosity to know about different culture by the Dutch, it does not mean that it can develop into friendships. For instance, a refugee who can converse in Dutch or English, who meets the natives regularly at workplace, gym etc. can receive different attitudes than a refugee who is not able to participate in activities. The Dutch attitudes are also influenced by media and politics which shows their interest or not bothered in getting to know about the refugee individuals in person.

Though people in European countries report high levels of well-being, they may at the same time endorse pessimistic outlooks on society (Albada et al., 2021). Research shows that the Netherlands has indeed linked societal discontent to concerns about migration policies and the Dutch society already feel pressure to choose sides in their support for anti/pro refugee rhetoric. Therefore, it is imperative to spread just practices in the society, so that each individual get inspired to have contact experiences with refugees and not blame everything going wrong in the country to the refugee crisis.

Research also shows trends in Western societies where people avoid interacting with those having opposing opinions on the refugee crisis, opting instead to associate with like-minded individuals. This tendency fosters a sense of confidence in their beliefs and stereotypes of outgroups (in this case

refugees) and stimulates norms to engage in discrimination (Albada et al., 2021). One interviewee told the same, expressing reluctance to voice his opinions due to fear of societal backlash and potential repercussions from authorities.

The influence of media is a crucial factor to consider when examining how refugees are perceived by natives. In today's interconnected world, incidents from around the globe are widely consumed through media channels, often without a critical evaluation of the information's legitimacy. The refugee crisis, in particular, receives significant attention in the media, shaping public perceptions and attitudes towards refugees. It is essential to approach information about refugees with a critical mindset and refrain from forming generalized notions based solely on media portrayals.

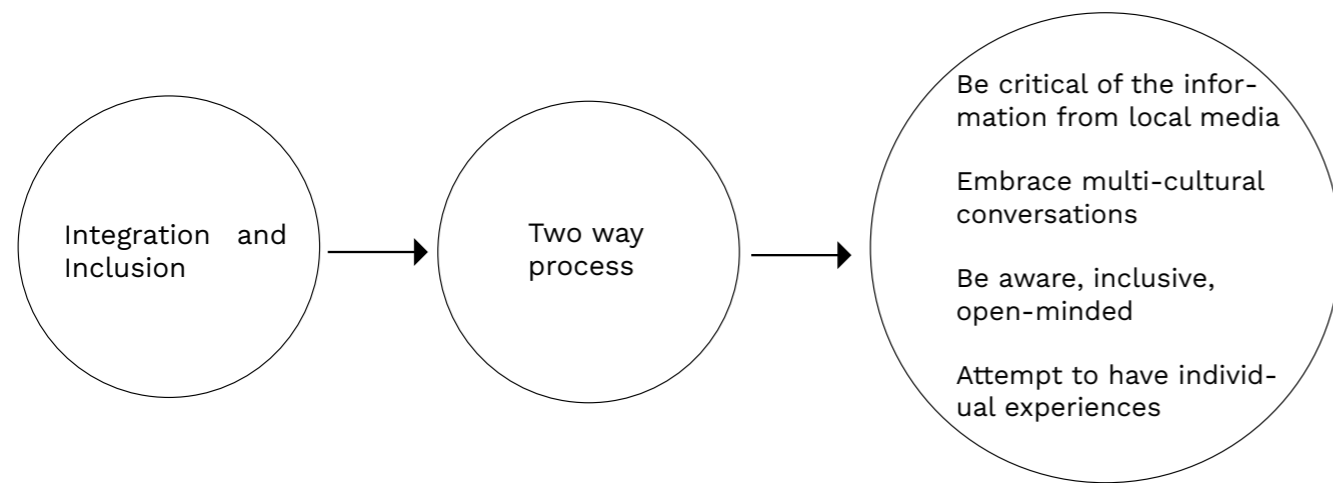
Certainly, a majority of the Dutch people are concerned about the changes in their cultural identity. However, it's essential to critically consider the mental strain refugees endure as they immediately begin the process of assimilation upon arrival, often at the expense of their own cultural identity. Despite research indicating the economic benefits of migration for host countries and minimal negative effects caused by asylum seekers, many individuals perceive refugees as a societal challenge (Albada et al., 2021).

This project is seen as an opportunity to establish spaces and places for natives to recognize their potential in reshaping the narrative surrounding the reception of refugees in the Netherlands. By identifying instances in their daily lives to engage in conversations and exchange similarities and differences, this can be embraced as a chance for both personal and communal growth. It is crucial for them to understand that the land they inhabit and the resources they utilize are not solely 'theirs', but belong to all of 'us' irrespective of nationality, race, etc.

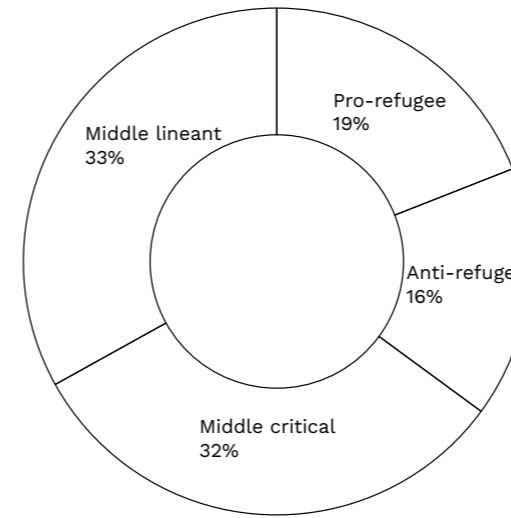
Studies and articles in (Fig.90) and (Fig.91) indicate that polarizing attitudes towards accepting and living with refugees are observed among natives. The system's drawbacks are addressed by several protest and support groups in larger cities in the Netherlands, but many people find it difficult to take a definitive position. This uncertainty is attributed to the influence of strong nationalistic political propaganda in the country.

To initiate a shift in attitudes, it is essential for natives to understand that integration is a two-way process that necessitates effort to include and adapt to differences they have not previously encountered. Unfortunately, the younger generation is often negatively influenced by the media, perpetuating a cycle of intolerant behaviours in the country.

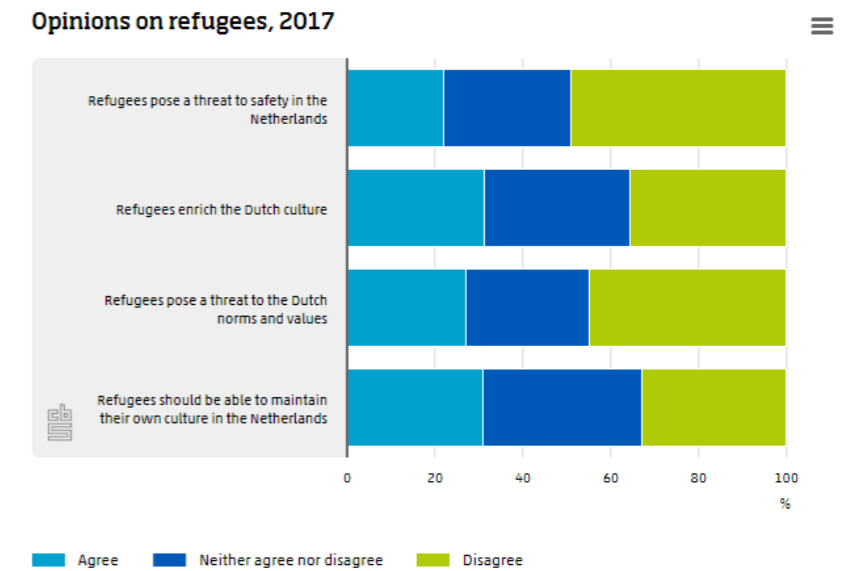
To have shift in attitudes, the surrounding spaces must also evolve. These spaces should function as learning environments for both natives and refugees, where tolerance can be practiced and mutual learning can take place.



(Fig.89) made by author



(Fig.90) source: Polarization in attitudes towards refugees and migrants in the Netherlands, Albada, K., Hansen, N., & Otten, S. (2021).



(Fig.91) source: CBS



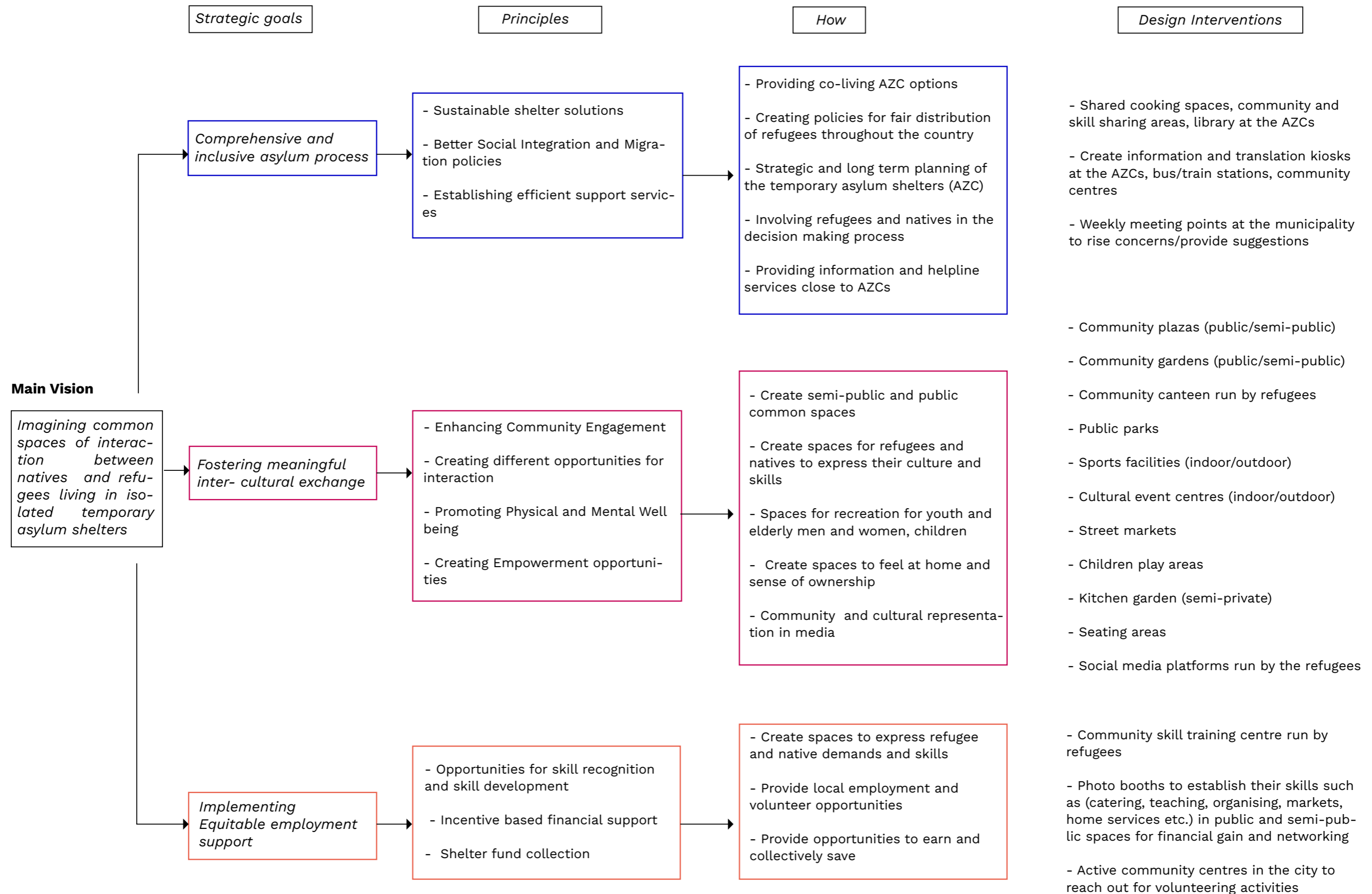
(Fig.92) source: How Geert Wilders turned all corners of Dutch society into far right voters. POLITICO, Cokelaere, H., & Hartog, E. (2024, May 16).



(Fig.93) (Europe's Double Standards Cause Rise in Islamophobia, n.d.)

Logic Structure

The base for the design interventions was formed from the below structure, which incorporates research from literature, news articles, case studies, and most importantly, interviews with refugees, volunteer and municipality.



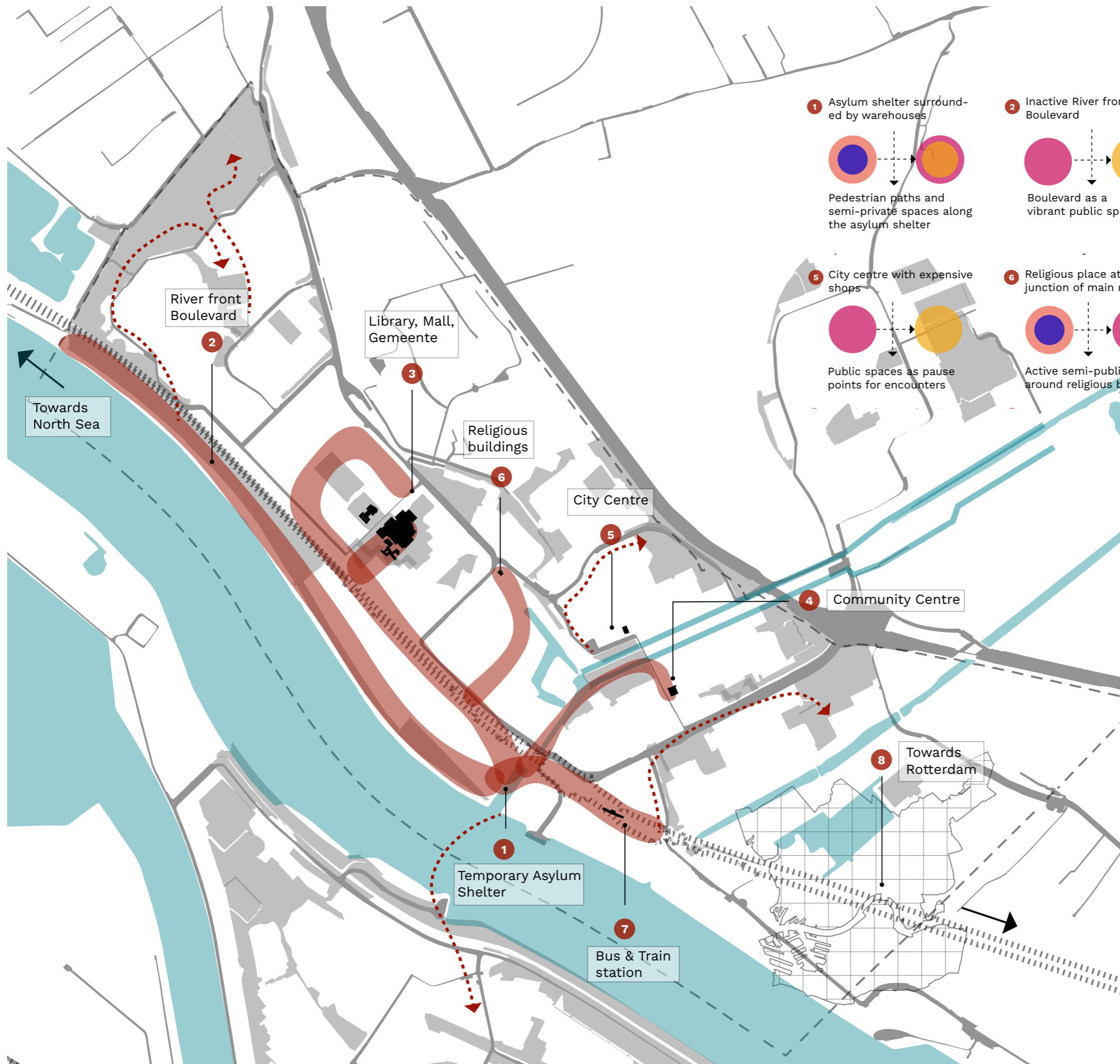
(Fig.94) made by author

Strategic Plan

In this chapter, Maassluis has been chosen as the location where the formulated design principles are applied to create design and policy recommendations for improving common spaces around isolated temporary asylum shelters in the Netherlands.

The strategic plan in (Fig.99) depicts the routes and destinations that will be intervened. Current and future types of interaction along these routes are also illustrated. These provide refugees with opportunities to engage in various activities in their daily lives.

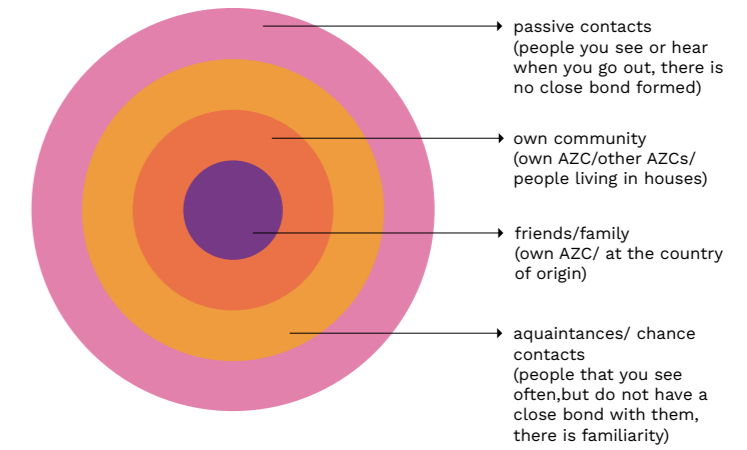
The plan is utilized to select test locations where design recommendations for quality common spaces are proposed, aiming to foster better interaction, promote empowerment, enhance mental and physical well-being, and cultivate mutual trust and respect between natives and refugees. Consequently, steps are formulated to achieve the inclusion and integration of communities.



- 1 Asylum shelter surrounded by warehouses
Pedestrian paths and semi-private spaces along the asylum shelter
- 2 Inactive River front Boulevard
Boulevard as a vibrant public space
- 3 Library, shops, neighbourhoods surrounded with parking spaces
Active neighbourhood parks & semi-public spaces
- 4 Small enclosed Community centre
Public & semi-public spaces around the Community centre
- 5 City centre with expensive shops
Public spaces as pause points for encounters
- 6 Religious place at the junction of main roads
Active semi-public spaces around religious buildings
- 7 Inactive bus and train station
Gathering spaces as new meeting points
- 8 Difficult to connect with AZCs in nearby cities
Collaborate with AZCs in nearby cities to form social networks

Introducing different interaction along the routes

- Early arrival infrastructures
- Possible Public & Semi-Public spaces of intervention
- Routes of intervention
- ⋯ Future development of the routes



(Fig. 95) Strategic Vision for the city

7.

Design recommendation

7.1 Identifying the test locations

7.2 Design Guideline Booklet

7.3 Policy recommendation

7.1 Identifying the test locations

Socio-cultural fixities

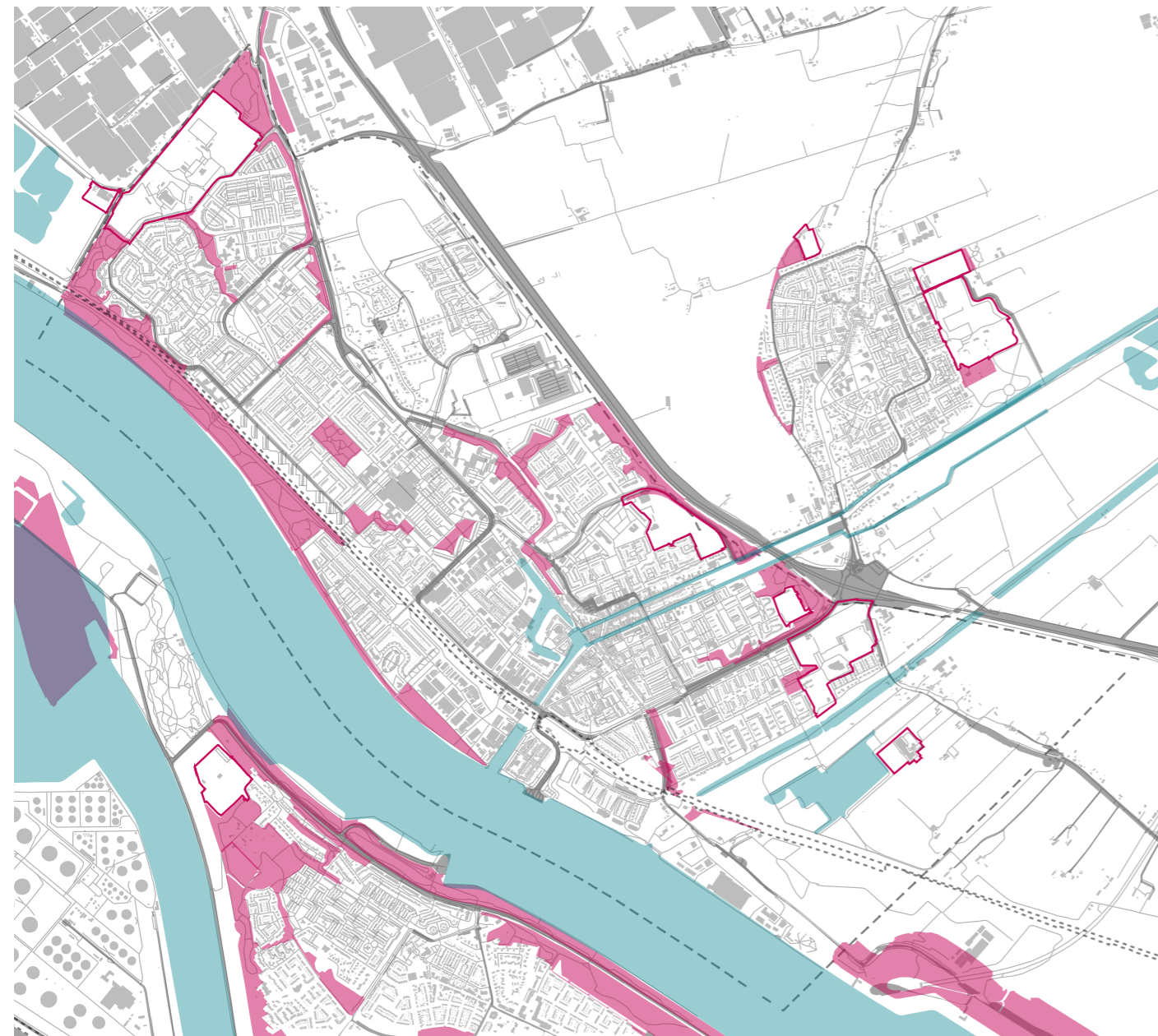
The following analysis of the city helps in choosing the test locations to implement the interventions.

(Fig.100 and Fig.101) shows the public and semi-public spaces in Maassluis which form the layers for finding the test locations for the design interventions. UNHCRs standards for Communal Open Spaces for refugee settlement layouts are used here.

Public spaces: Below are the aspects of public spaces as per UNHCRs communal open spaces(COS) principles:

1. Users - all
2. Accessibility - easy
3. Enclosure - no
4. Usage - throughout the day
5. Location - highly active places
6. Size - large

The public spaces below include park and sports grounds with various levels of usage, ownership, size, proximity etc. to the AZC. This forms one of the layers to take into consideration for intervention.



- parks
- sports ground

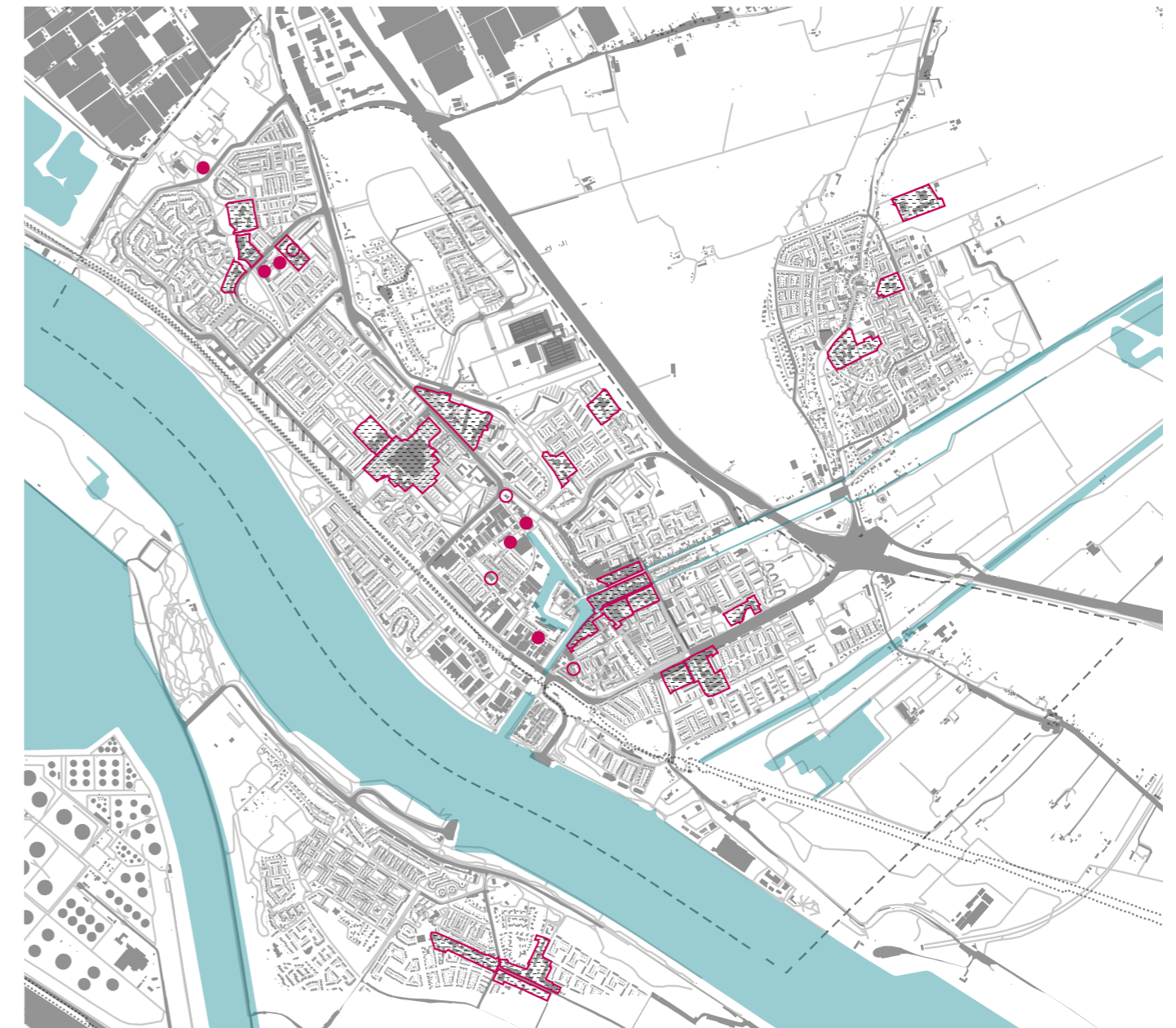
(Fig. 96)

Semi-public spaces: Below are the aspects of semi- public spaces as per UNHCRs communal open spaces(COS) principles:

1. Users - all
2. Accessibility - easy
3. Enclosure - no
4. Usage - throughout the day
5. Location - highly active places
6. Size - large

The semi-public spaces below include, religious buildings, gyms, library, community centres, restaurants, cafés, retail etc. The spaces also vary in ownership, usage,

size, proximity etc. However, these spaces may be used by a specific set of community who share the same interest ore belief. Semi-public spaces can give rise to cross-cultural interactions if intervened in ways that can benefit the refugees as well.



- religious places
- gyms
- socio-cultural facilities(library, community centres etc.) , retail, restaurants

(Fig. 97)

Social Interactions

(Fig.98) shows the social connections that the refugees have formed while living in the AZC. The diagram was concluded from the interviews.

- Family networks are mostly long distance are connected via mobile communication. Family connections may also be in the same country, but far apart from the refugees.

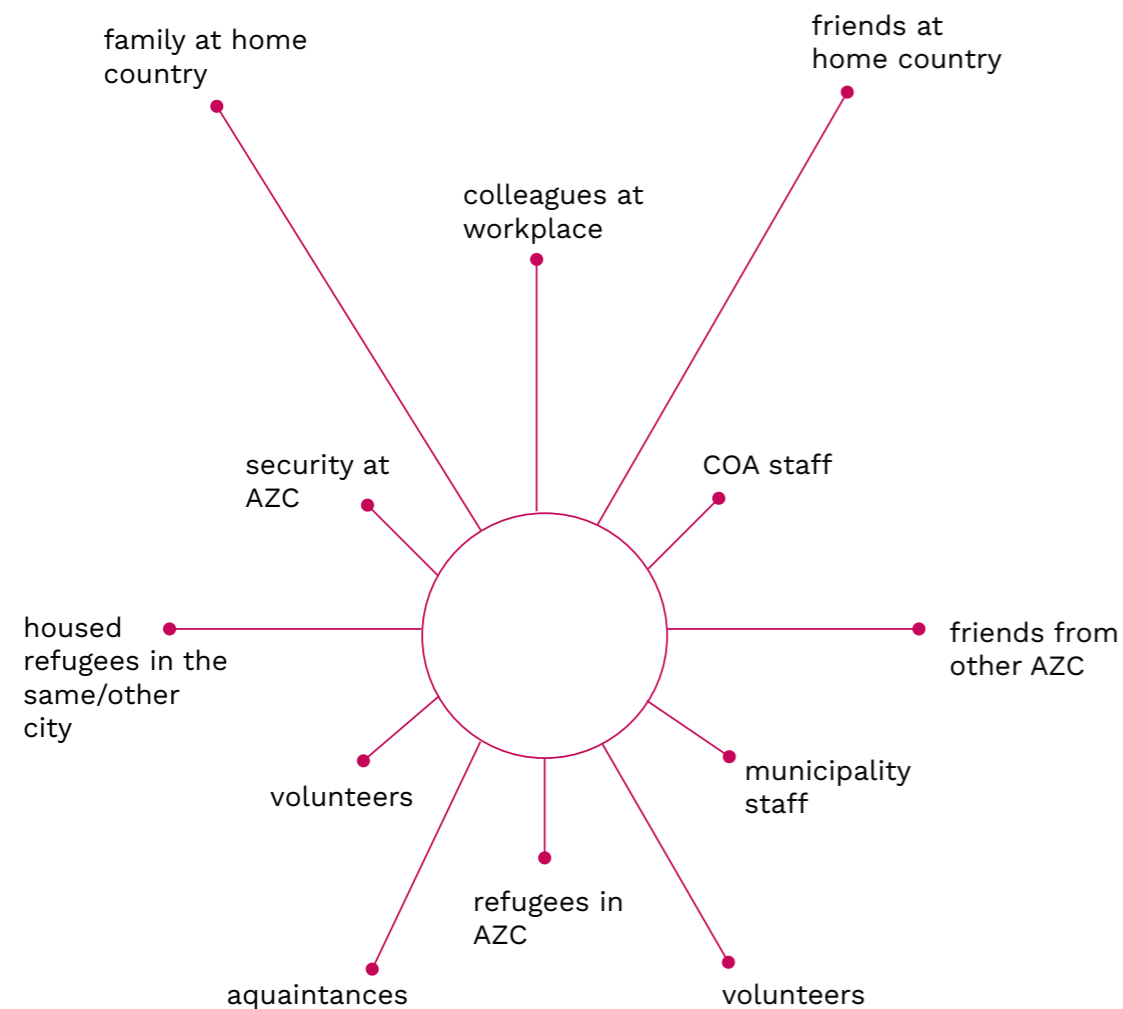
- Friend networks at home country and other AZCs are connected in person or communicated via mobile.

- Volunteers are present at different stages for various purposes since their arrival in the host country. For example, they help with learning the language, find job opportunities, conduct events in the AZCs, help with translating documents, connect with family and friends in home country, assist in housing, integration etc.

- The COA, security staff and other institutional organisations are connected right from when they enter the country till they get a social housing. They become the important people that refugees connect to (willingly or unwillingly) while living at the AZCs.

- Refugees who are already given housing also form a major social support system in helping the refugees in navigating a new context. They make them feel safe and at home.

- Acquaintances can be natives who refugees meet frequently at shops, natives and volunteers who they form bonds with during events or anytime along their asylum process. They are connections that can further grow into close friendships.



(Fig. 98)

Social Spaces

(Fig.99) shows some of the social spaces where interactions takes place through observation and analysis.

The space itself can be temporary or permanent but offers flexible options for interactions. They form a part of the daily/weekly activities such as the markers market, informal food carts. They form the social layer on the streets in the city.

Spaces such as bus stops, neighbourhood parks, sports fields etc., though fixed as a space, also offer flexible interactions.

These spaces form the base layer for social encounters in a city. And they should be taken as anchors for developing common spaces for interaction that provide social cohesion between refugees and natives.



(Fig.99)

Identifying the test locations

These test locations are chosen based on their inherent quality of publicness, which offers opportunities for multiple activities and enhances the quality of spaces.

They form the early arrival locations where refugees begin visiting upon their reaching the shelters(AZCs). Therefore, these places can serve as destinations where natives and refugees encounter each other, communicate, engage in activities together, and learn from each other. In doing so, the locations can facilitate feelings of home and familiarity, improve self-esteem, and motivate and encourage refugees who may otherwise feel homesick, uncertain, or unsupported.



(Fig. 100) Plan showing the identified test locations

7.2

Design Guideline Booklet

Strategic Urban Solutions For Dutch Municipalities with Isolated Temporary Asylum Shelters (AZC)

Guidelines for creating quality common spaces between refugees living in isolated temporary asylum shelters and natives



Implementation

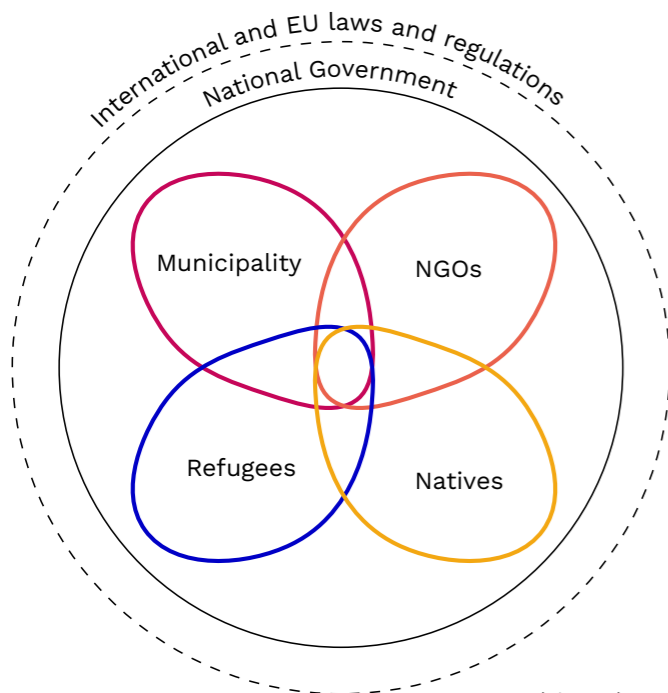
The proposed booklet is created for collaboration between the stakeholders mentioned in (Fig.105). All the stakeholders should work towards the integration and inclusion opportunities between refugees and natives in the city through stakeholder engagement workshops

All design interventions must adhere to regulations set by international non-profit organizations like UNHCR. This ensures that the project aligns with global standards for refugee care and integration. It should also adhere to the spatial visions of the Municipality and the Province in cooperation with COA (Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers).

Local NGOs should be identified encouraged by municipalities to support integration through activities, events, workshops, skill training etc., which are important in providing support and community engagement.

Collaboration with educational and research institutions, urbanists, architects, landscapers is also vital in creating quality spatial interventions

Moreover, resources to implement the interventions should be planned simultaneously in cooperation with the Dutch government, COA and private organisations.



(Fig. 101)

- Natives include everyone with Dutch nationality
- Refugees include people in temporary asylum shelters
- NGOs include international and national organisations, educational institutions

Phasing

The interventions proposed in the project can be implemented efficiently through phasing. All the phases should be worked simultaneously by the responsible stakeholders in an iterative process and discussed periodically. The phasing can be applied to other municipalities with isolated temporary asylum shelters and modified based on needs and demands of all the stakeholders.

This project focuses on analysis and interventions at the micro scale. Importantly, participatory planning is recommended to the municipality at this scale, since it proves to be beneficial in hearing the personal stories and voices of the refugees and natives. This can facilitate better interventions and ensure the relevance of fostering integration and inclusion.

Mega scale	Meso scale	Micro scale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish better accessibility and connectivity to arrival infrastructures such as public, semi-public spaces, services, education, employment etc. - Change and create land use, zoning plans based on the population growth, age groups in the particular city, location etc.in such a way that it creates economic opportunities for refugees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish design principles for neighbourhoods that create spatial changes and encourages activities that support community interaction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify suitable locations as starting points for developing the quality of public and semi-public spaces in the city. - Create visions for these locations aiming at different types of interaction between refugees and natives. - Propose and implement suitable programmatic and spatial interventions.

Evaluation

An evaluation framework should be established with the help of the results from the participatory approach, observations on site, case studies and literature to help with tracking the progress and impact of the project as per the vision. These evaluations can help identify areas for improvement and

feedback from refugees and natives should be incorporated while developing the project.

Location 1: Home and the Boulevard

The boulevard is located 7-10km along river Scheur in Maassluis. It is one of the largest green open public spaces in the city. It is surrounded by fields, buildings and rail infrastructure and faces towards a park across the river. It is in close proximity to the temporary asylum shelter and is one of the frequent routes used by the refugees.

- At Regional scale: The boulevard can form a network of public river-front developments in nearby cities along the river, thereby forming

- At City scale: The boulevard has opportunities to become an active public zone for the entire city and provide a sense of pride.

- At Neighbourhood scale: The boulevard can become a place where refugees can access easily to escape the confines of the asylum shelter, have a sense of comfort and privacy, feel healthy etc. It can provide a social environment where more than mere eye contacts take place between refugees and native communities.



(Fig. 102) Map showing the Boulevard and its surroundings

Principles

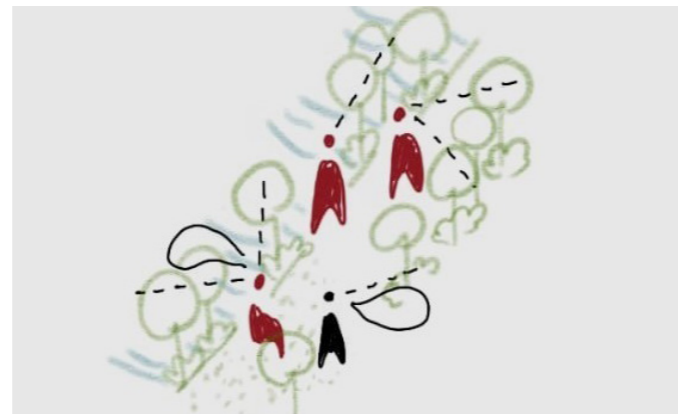
1. Enhancing Community Engagement

Spaces with activities (formal/informal) where refugees and natives participate together is crucial to get acquainted and appreciate each others differences.



2. Promoting Physical and Mental Wellbeing

Spaces which facilitate functions that helps with well-being is crucial for inhabitants of any city. Especially for refugees it can become a space to break away from the long fearful waiting period in the shelters.



3. Creating Empowerment opportunities

Supporting refugees with opportunities to have small financial benefits and providing spaces to voice their struggles and opinions, share their culture, can motivate them and create attachment to the new place.



4. Creating a sense of home, belonging

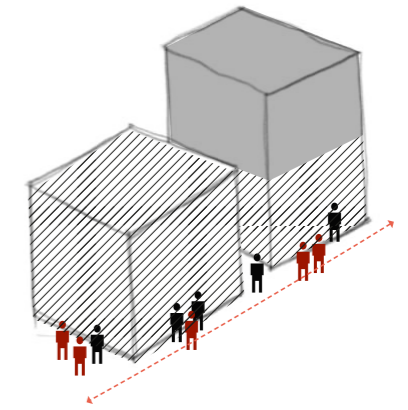
Providing spaces which can be created, maintained and be called their own for refugees can make them be involved and feel safe and accepted in the new society.



Design Guidelines

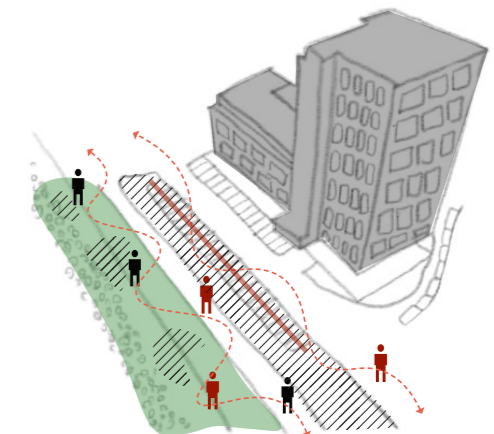
Change in building use

Spaces with functions where refugees and natives can come together to have conversations.



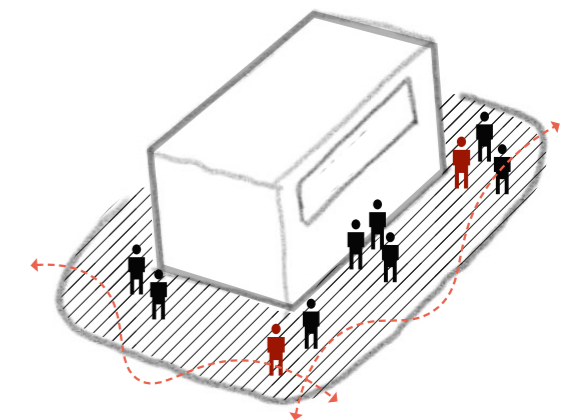
Activate public space

Spaces accommodating refugees to engage in leisure activities amidst nature, express their culture through public events etc.



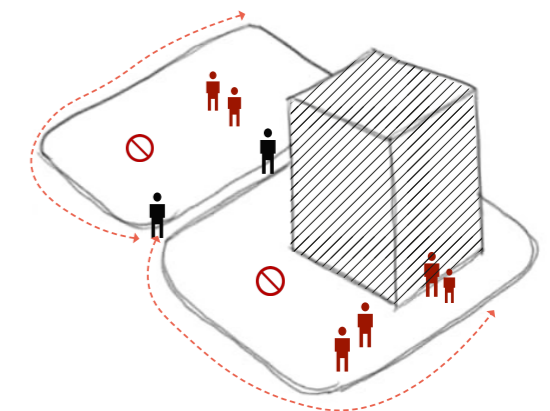
Activate semi- public space

Spaces which are privately owned, yet accessible to refugees, where they can share common activities with natives



Create and activate semi-private spaces

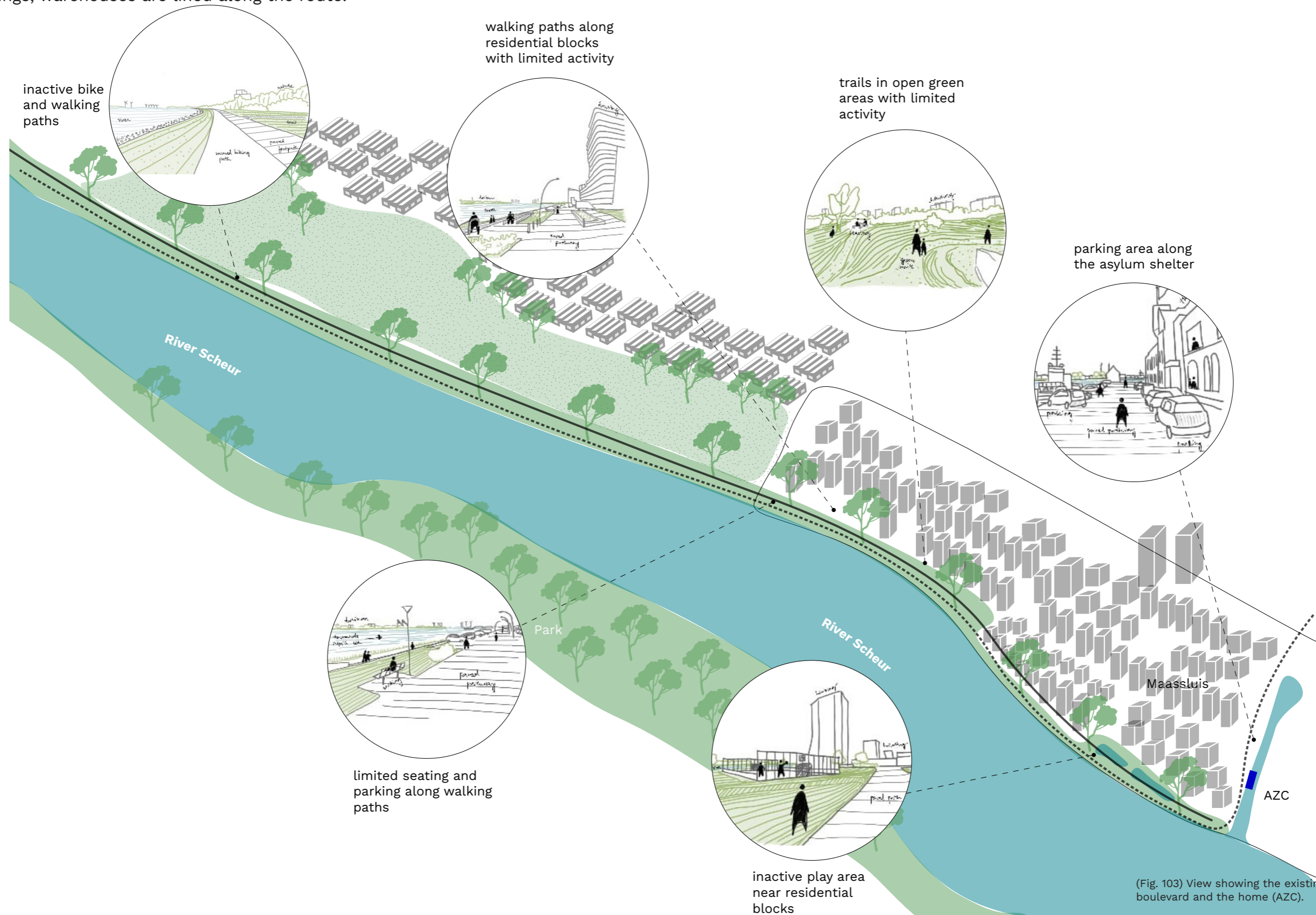
Spaces that belong to refugees to create, practice and share skills. It is a way to shift their media representation in a positive way.



Location Analysis

It can be observed that the intensity of human activity closer to the shelter is limited due to the presence of industrial and office buildings in its vicinity. Along the existing boulevard, there are seating, walking and biking paths, an outdoor gym, a basketball court, and trails leading into green spaces. Tall apartments, individual, river facing, houses, hotels, office buildings, warehouses are lined along the route.

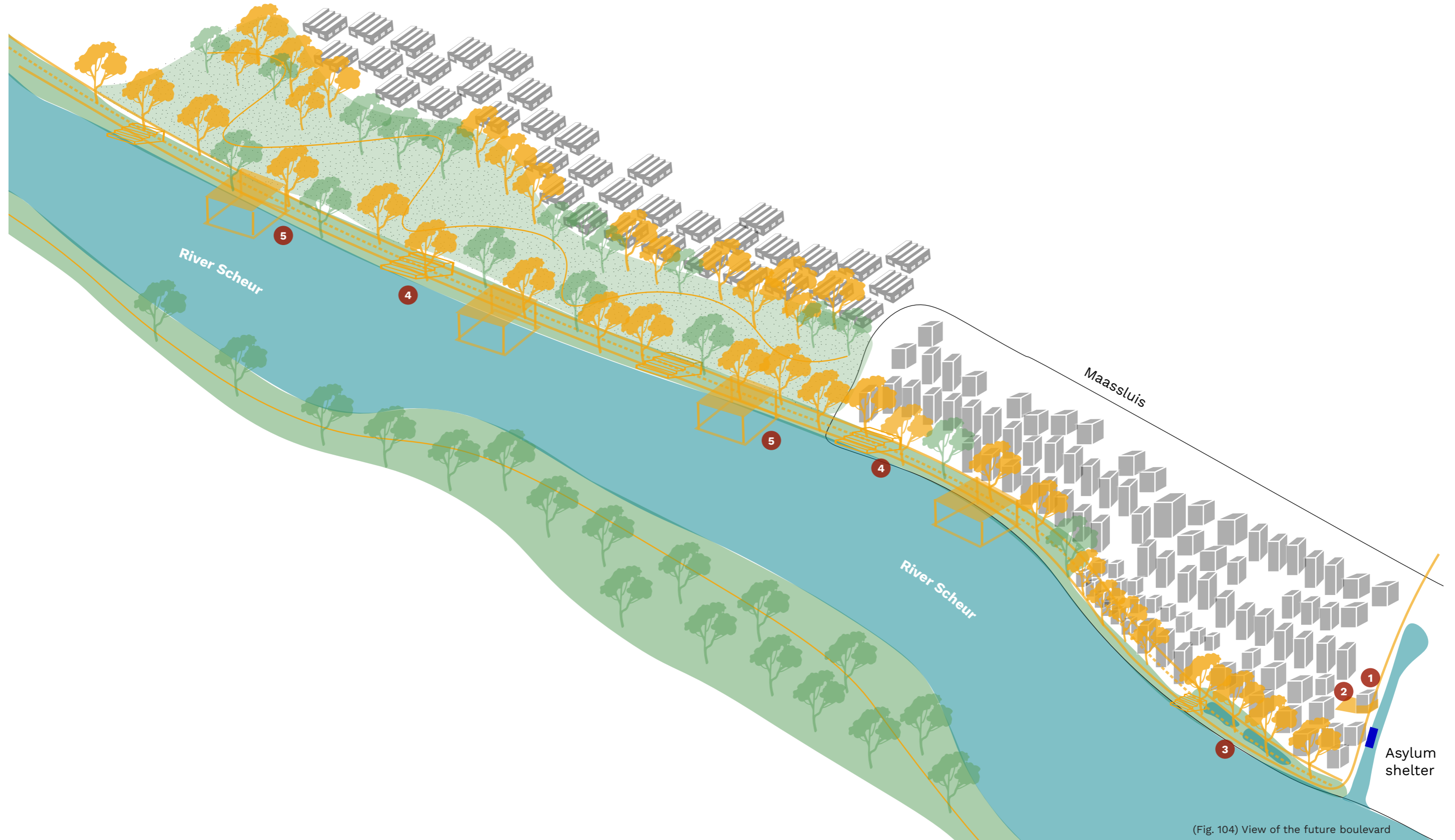
Despite the presence of pedestrian paths, the location is characterized by extensive car parking, which reduces its attractiveness. As a result, the potential of the green open areas are lost in this process, rendering the location an inactive river-front.



(Fig. 103) View showing the existing conditions of the boulevard and the home (AZC).

Vision

A public river front boulevard as a place for facilitating different types of interaction and activities between refugees living in isolated temporary asylum shelters and the natives. This place can have 'common spaces' that enhance inclusion and integration, allowing both communities to adapt to the cultural differences by getting accustomed to each others values through everyday interactions. And at the same time, it can become a public platform for voicing opinions.



(Fig. 104) View of the future boulevard

Future Plan

The plan shows the changes in building and land use by introducing programmatic activities and design interventions.

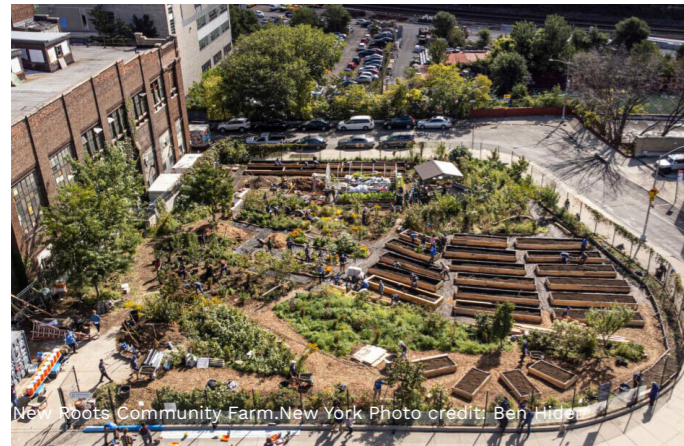


(Fig. 105) Plan showing the future changes

Interventions



1. Community semi-private plots should be provided for the refugees living in the temporary asylum shelter. The plots can be of different sizes to accommodate various activities. Sufficient guidance should be given to convert the plots for different types of gardening, farming, workshop, play area, gathering spaces etc. For this, the refugees in the shelter should be consulted to assist in developing their plots based on individual/group interests. The area can have a boundary, but be visible to the public with an entrance.



(Fig.106) Different types of urban farming activities

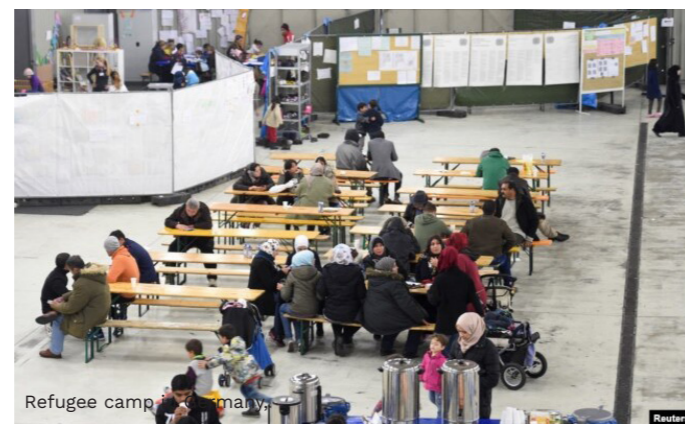


(Fig.107) Flexible structures forming play area for children

2. Spaces for refugees to sell products/services should be provided as a means to have temporary employment and share their culture through food, conducting traditional skill building workshops etc. The spaces should be adequate to accommodate large groups of people. It is important to make the space visible through signages and ensure that the work they do are promoted in media, newspapers etc. to attract natives in the city to participate.



(Fig.108) Refugees providing services/products through smart structures



(Fig.109) A canteen in a refugee camp



(Fig.110) Skill building activities



(Fig.111)

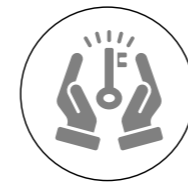
Benefits



Built semi-public spaces to practice and share skills can make the refugees get out of their boredom and feel motivated to initiate and do multiple activities. This can also help them gain small financial success which can make them feel empowered.



Open community spaces can push the refugees create environments to perform activities such as gardening, fabricate structures, create gathering spaces etc. Specifically for women who tend to stay inside the shelters longer, this can be a way to make them feel at home.



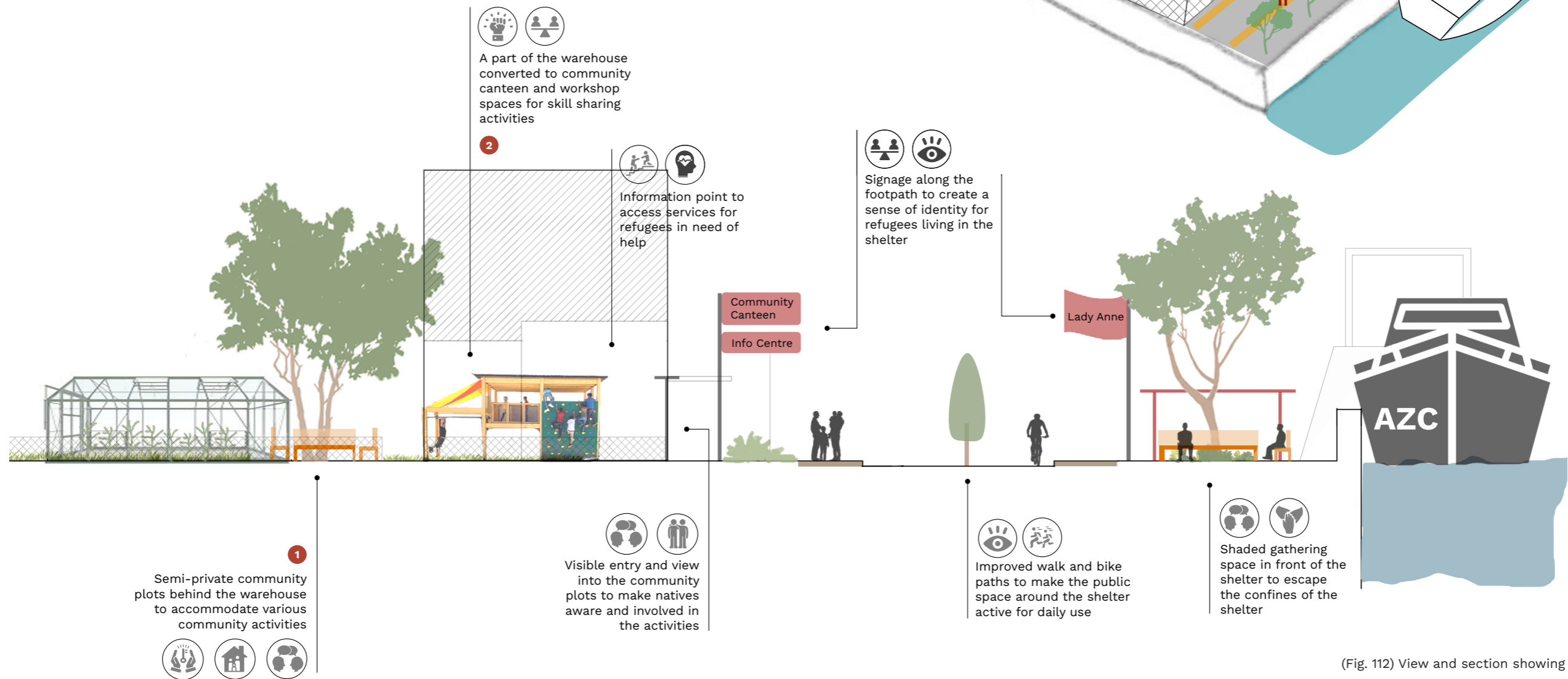
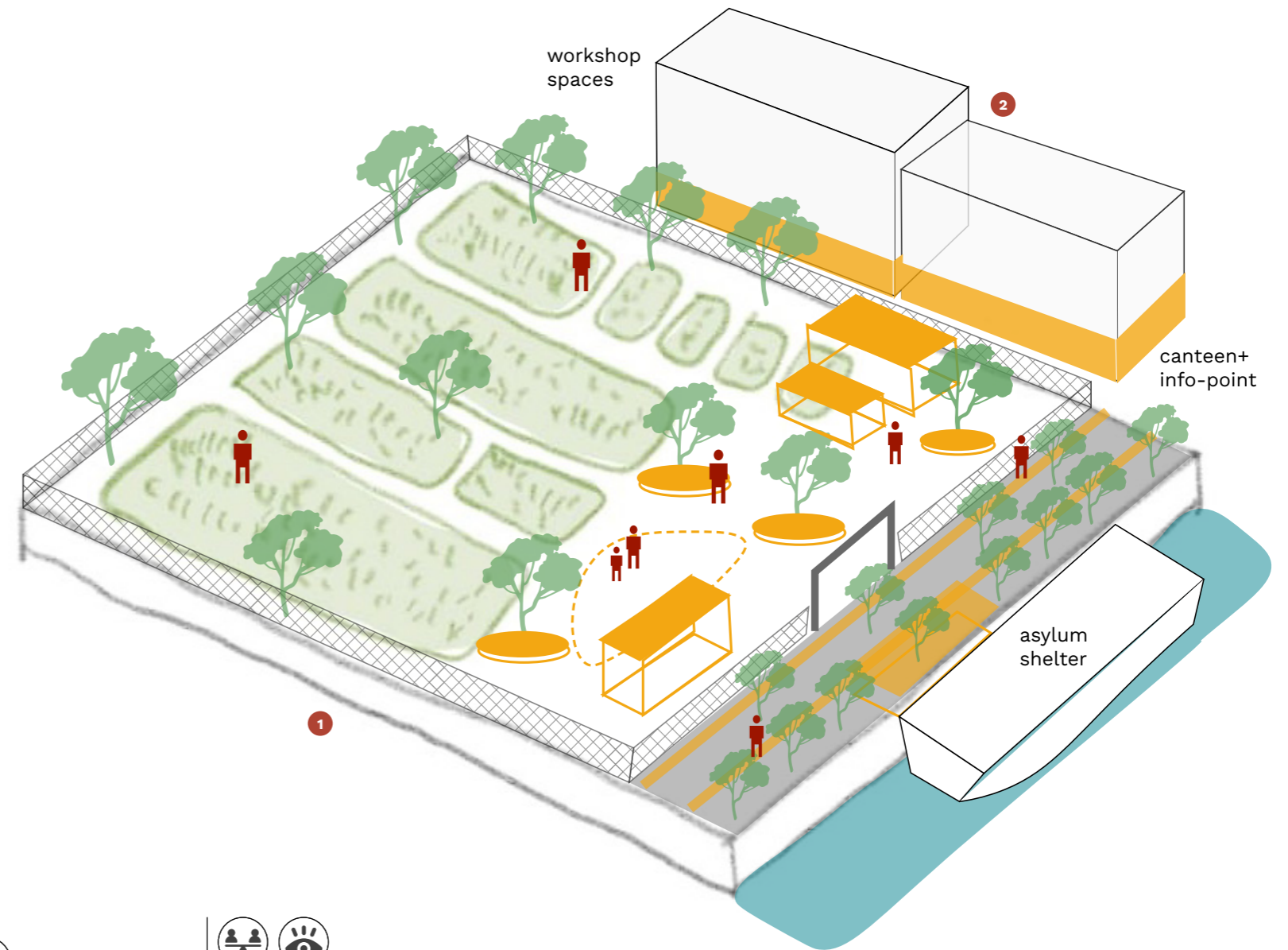
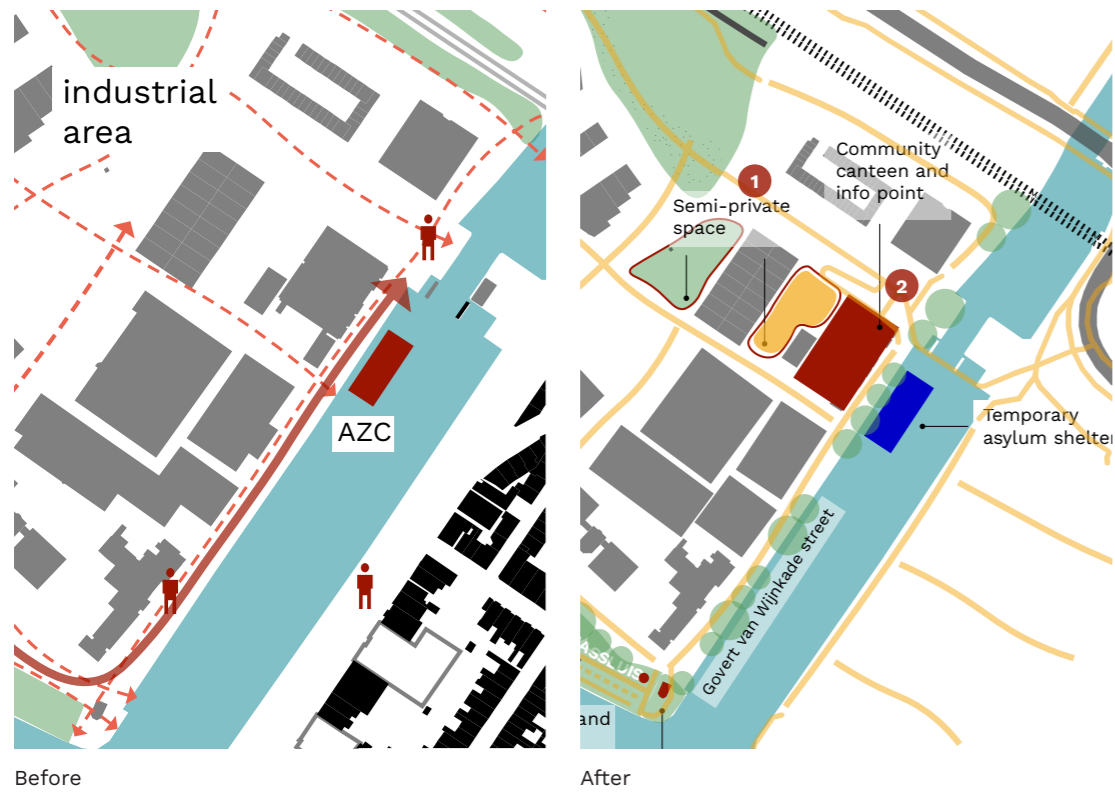
Built and un built semi-private and semi-public spaces used and maintained by refugees can provide them a sense of ownership. These spaces are where they can have control over, some ability to be creative, and a space to just be in (Schulze, 2018). This is critical, since it can help them feel included in the native society right from the beginning of living in temporary asylum shelters



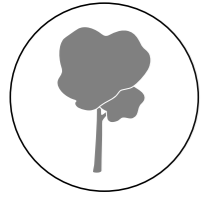
The spaces and activities are supported by the municipalities, NGOs and natives through smart technologies, collaborations with other institutions etc. which can help them establish the activities and feel equal in the society.



Spaces can help in countering the tendency toward social isolation and loneliness as well as reinforcing the cultural and social capital of the beneficiaries (Davies et al. 2017). By providing collective spaces and meeting opportunities to create interactions there can be mutual cultural exchange, formation of trust etc. among natives and refugees.



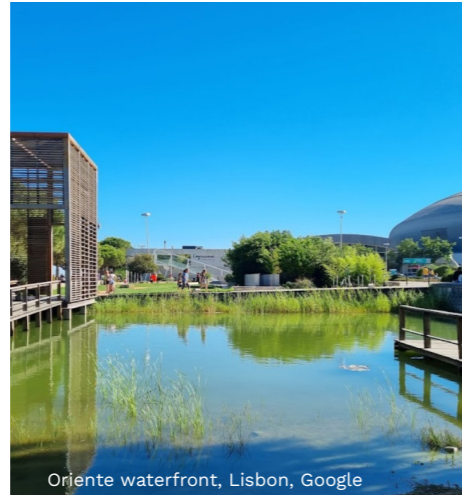
(Fig. 112) View and section showing the design interventions



3. Incorporating nature along water and open public spaces can attract and improve overall well-being of the users. There should be different types of natural settings with trails, walking and biking paths, for people to enjoy the surroundings. These spaces can be maintained by the inhabitants creating instances for interaction. Nature can also be used to enhance the function of the buildings nearby, but can also act as a buffer to provide privacy and calmness. Accessibility to these locations should be considered while designing.



(Fig.113) Seating and walking paths along water and shaded by trees



(Fig.114) Nature as a quiet buffer space

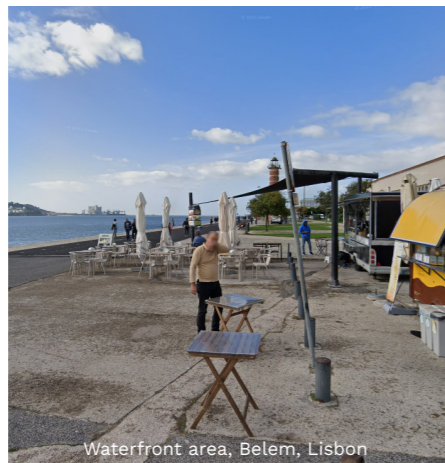


(Fig.115) Nature for solitude

4. Active zones in open public spaces is crucial in helping refugees seek movement outside their shelter. This can be in the form of outdoor gyms, play area, paths to jog, spaces do group activities etc. They can be provided in different sizes taking into account different age groups and gender. Materiality, location, shading, and lighting should be considered to add vibrancy to the place.



(Fig.116) Play grounds along the waterfront



(Fig.117) Informal food carts along the water front



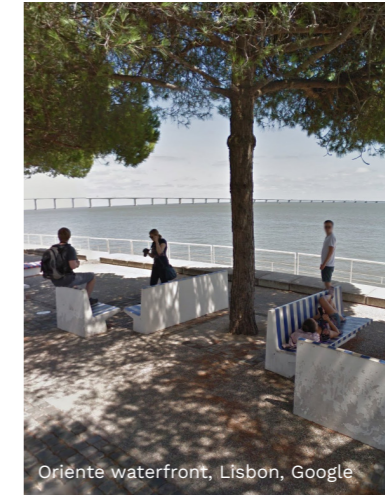
(Fig.118) Amphitheatre for events



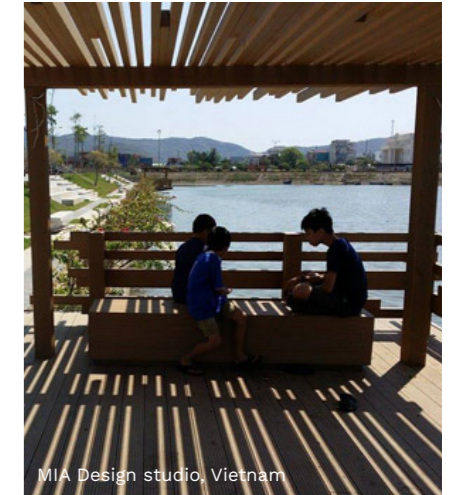
5. Public spaces should offer different types of elements such as seating, city signs, viewpoints to pause and enjoy the existing quality of space. It can be a space for respite, relaxation etc. These elements make the space attractive to use and eventually can lead to interactions. Materiality, location, placement and lighting should be considered to make the spaces safe and be used frequently.



(Fig. 119) Waterfront seating



(Fig.120) Public furniture seating



(Fig.121) Viewpoints

Benefits



Public spaces with nature and active zones can provide comfort and opportunities to get out of the confines of the shelter. It can help the refugees actively engage with outdoor environments that can improve their physical and mental well-being.



With refugees being isolated from natives, public spaces can lead to socialisation and also provide a sense of privacy and relaxation. It can be a temporary relief from their feelings of uncertainty and let them enjoy their own company while having options to interact.



Calm buffer space with seating and walk trails to give a sense of privacy and relaxation

3

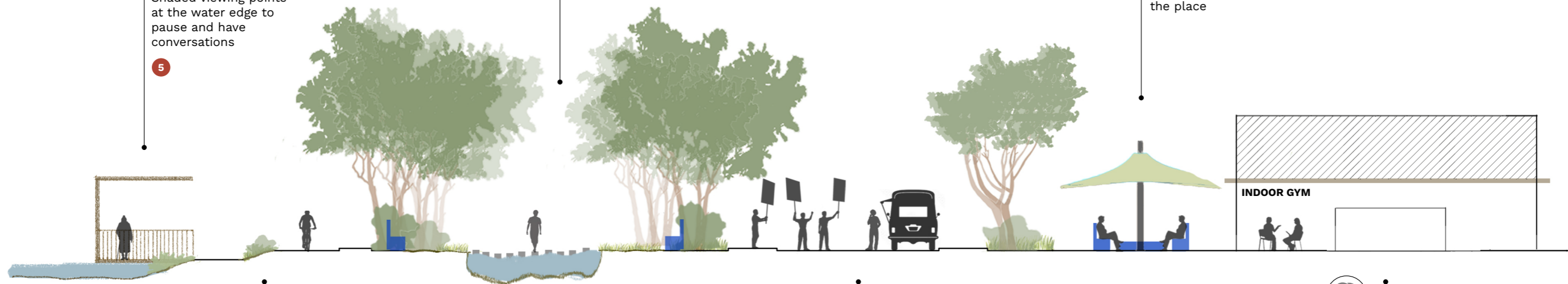


Semi-public shaded seating are provided along the street to be inviting to use and give identity to the place



Shaded viewing points at the water edge to pause and have conversations

5



Walk and bike paths at levels for different activities



Pedestrian paths that are flexible to transform into spaces for informal public activities



Functions in ground floor of the buildings along the street are accentuated to make the spaces around more active

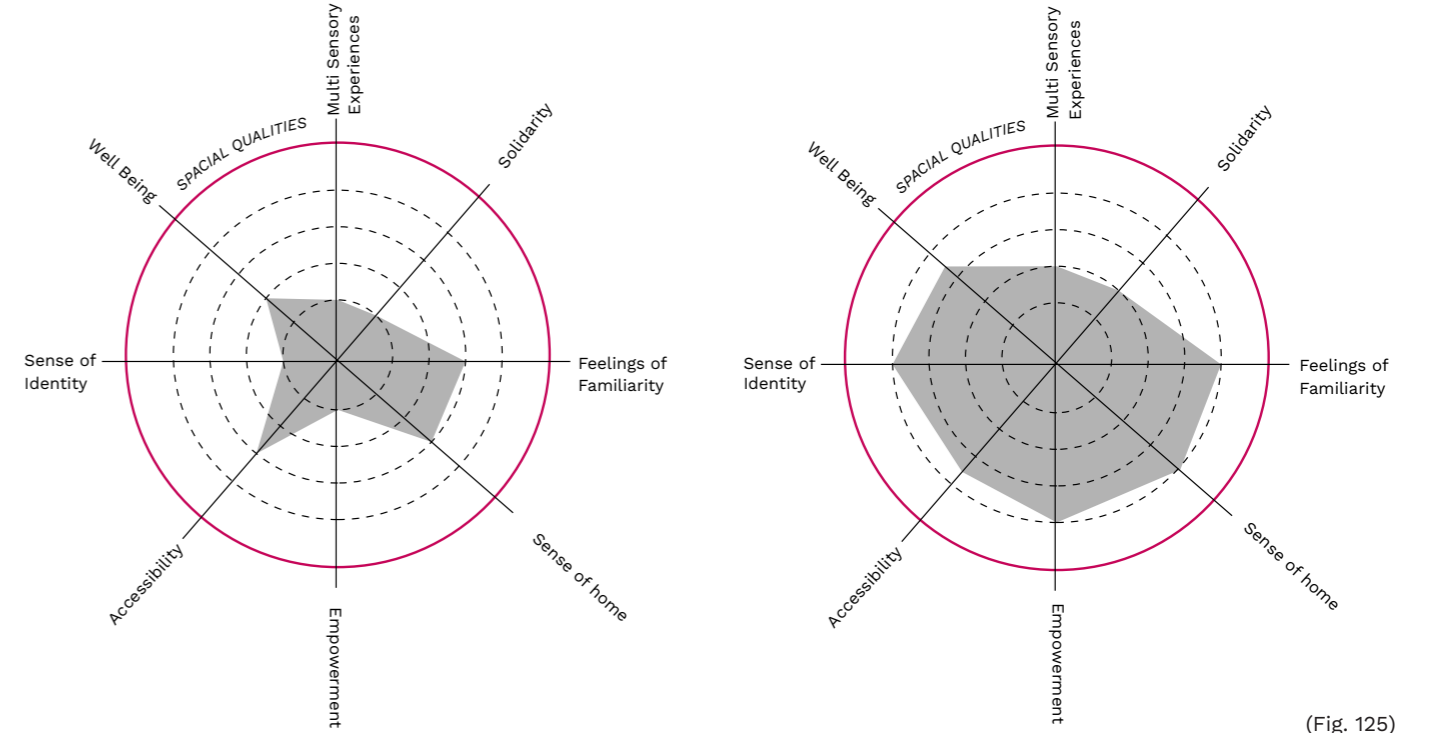
(Fig. 122) View and section showing the design interventions



(Fig. 123) Future Asylum Centre at Maassluis

Evaluation

The above interventions are evaluated with theories, literature, case studies described in the Chapter 5.

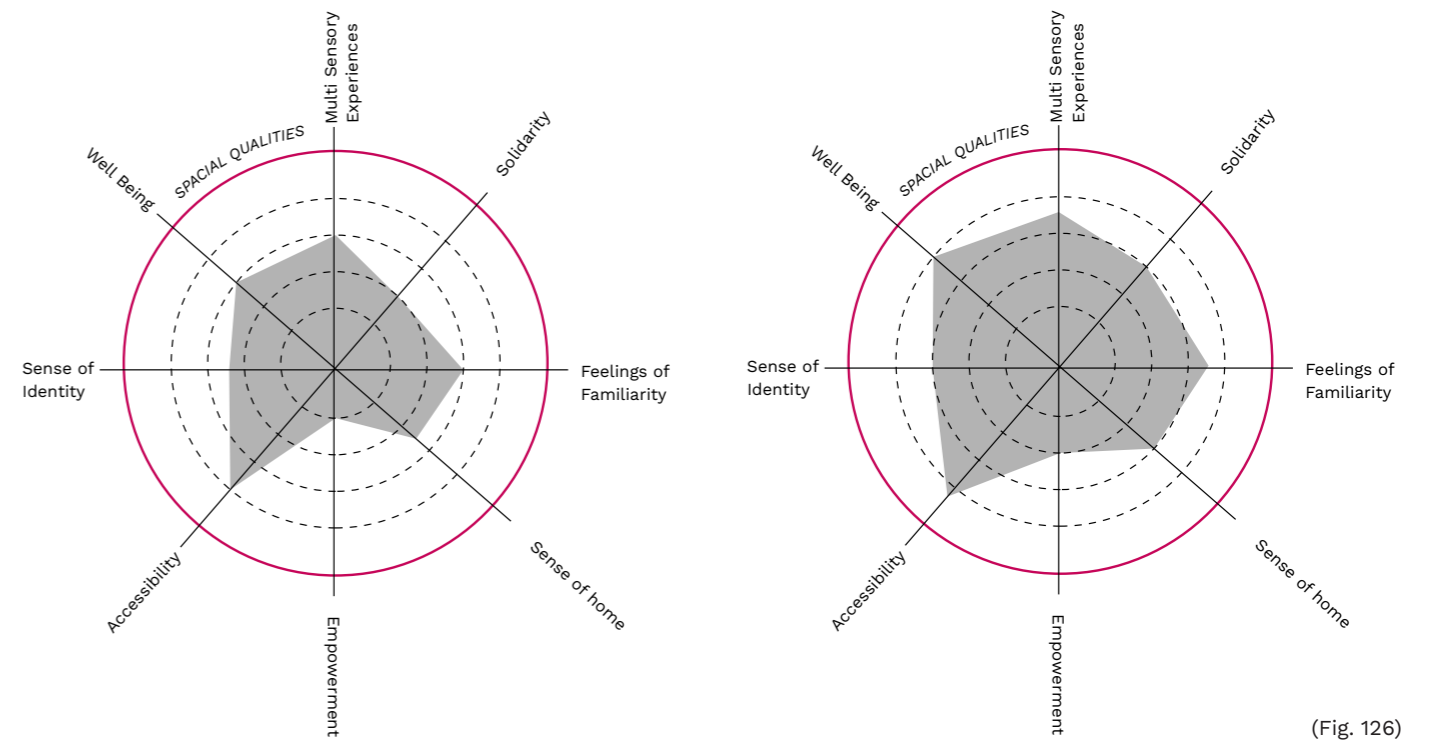


(Fig. 125)

Users: All age groups and gender can use the spaces
 Mode of transportation: walk/bike
 Interaction: passive contacts to acquaintances



(Fig. 124) Future Boulevard at Maassluis



(Fig. 126)

Users: All age groups and gender can use the spaces
 Mode of transportation: walk/bike
 Interaction: from own community to passive contacts/acquaintances

Location 2: Community Centre

The community center building in Maassluis is located in the city center. It is frequently visited by many natives who come to chat, drink coffee, have meals together at an affordable price, play indoor games, and engage in creative activities. Many elderly residents of the city visit this place.

Refugees mentioned that they visit the community center to attend language lessons. The center is approximately 1.5 kilometers from the temporary asylum shelter, and they walk to reach it.

Most community centers in cities are small spaces within a building where people of different ages, social statuses, and genders gather. Therefore, this location has the potential to host more activities that can facilitate interactions between natives and refugees.

At Regional scale: The boulevard can form a network of public riverfront developments in nearby cities along the river, thereby forming

At City scale: The boulevard has opportunities to become an active public zone for the entire city and provide a sense of pride.

At Neighbourhood scale: The boulevard can become a place where refugees can access easily to escape the confines of the asylum shelter, have a sense of comfort and privacy, feel healthy etc. It can provide a social environment where more than mere eye contacts take place between refugees and native communities.

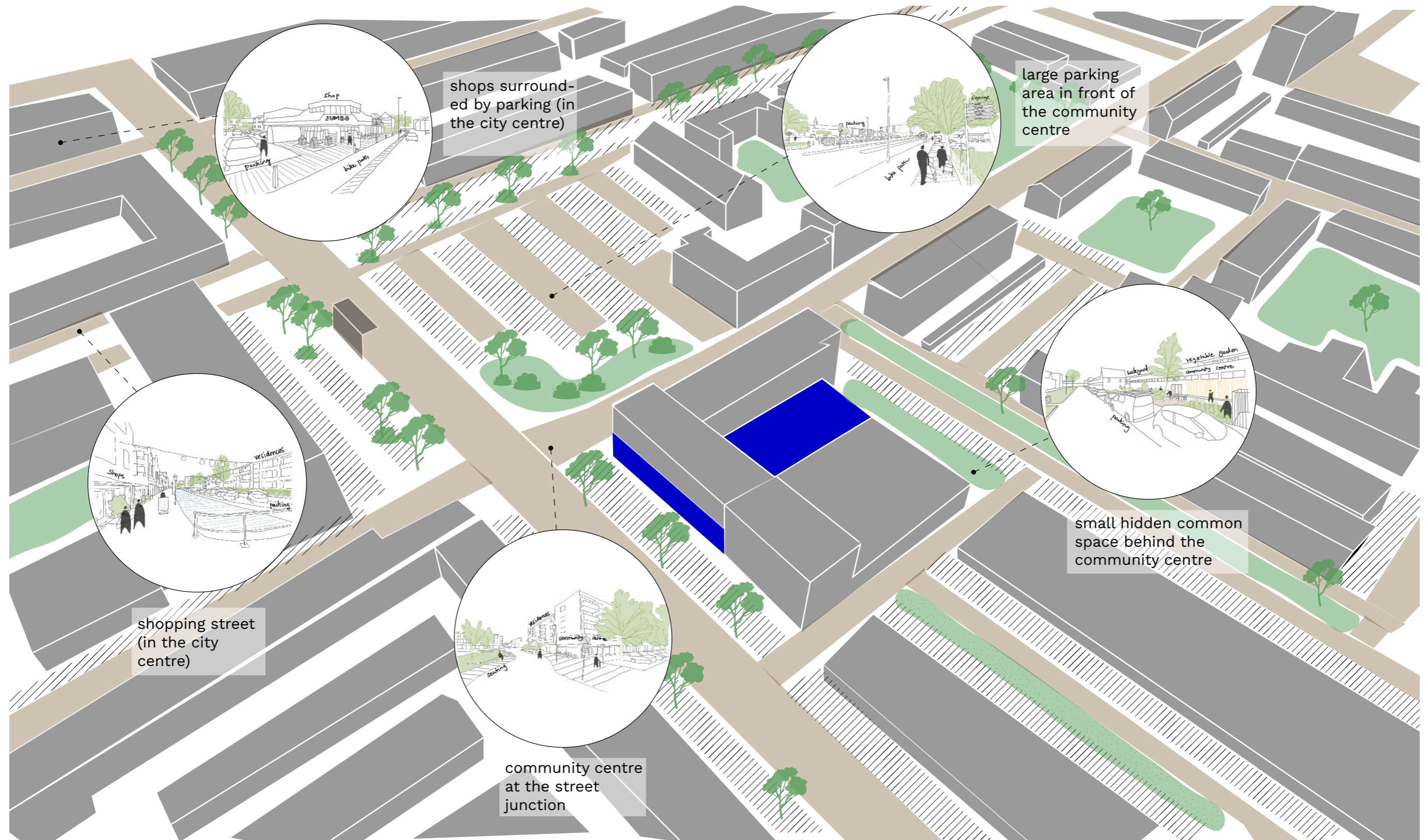


(Fig. 127) Map showing the Community Centre and its surroundings

Location Analysis

The community centre is located adjacent to a commercial shop and surrounded by residential buildings and a large parking area. A bus stop is situated right in front of the centre, providing an opportunity for increased visitor to the location. The centre has a backyard with a vegetable garden that faces the residences and is located with good pedestrian, bike and bus accessibility.

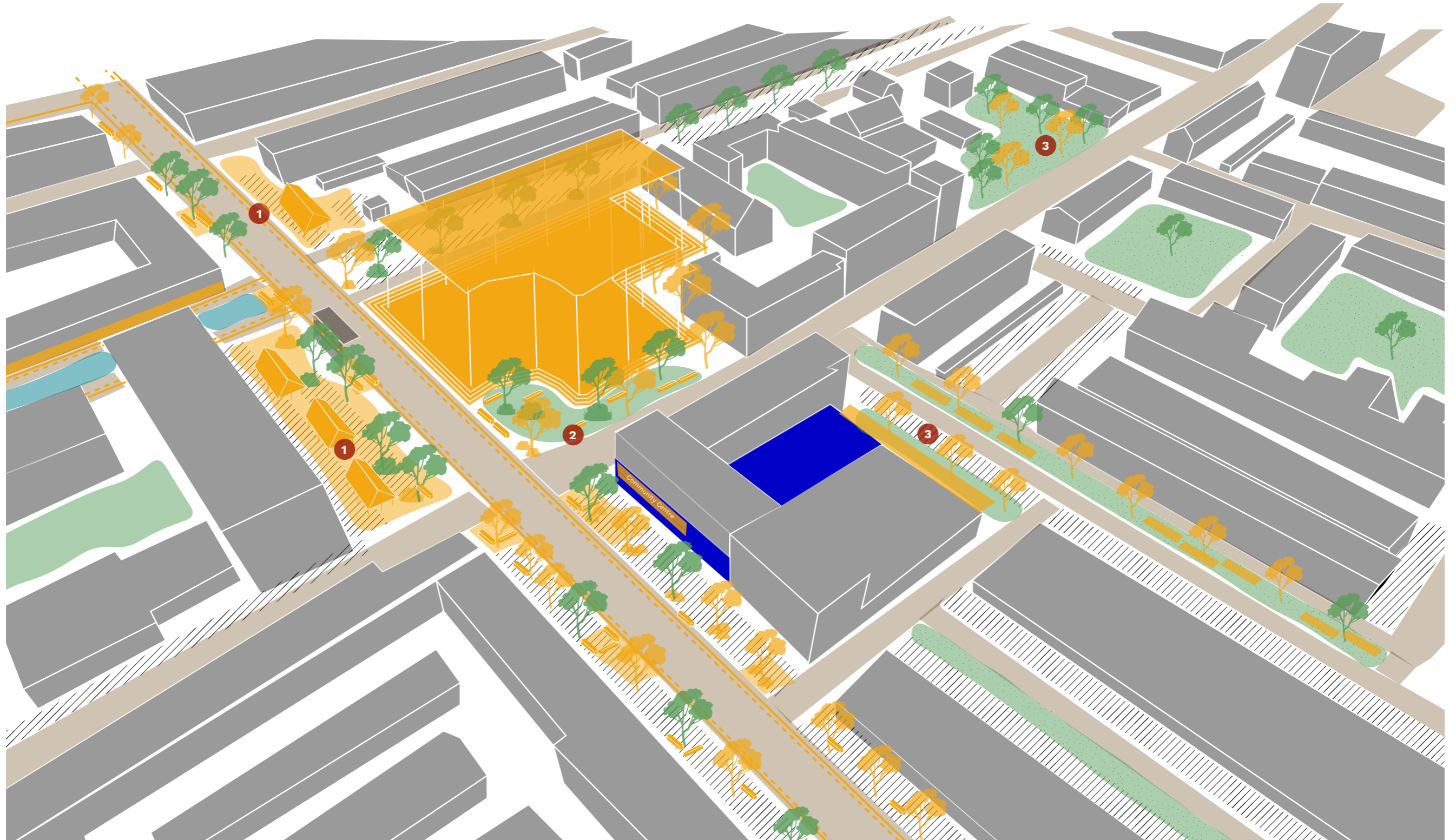
Moreover, the main road along the community centre forms an important part connecting to the city which also makes it a prime location for creating community engagement.



(Fig. 128) View showing the existing conditions around the community centre

Vision

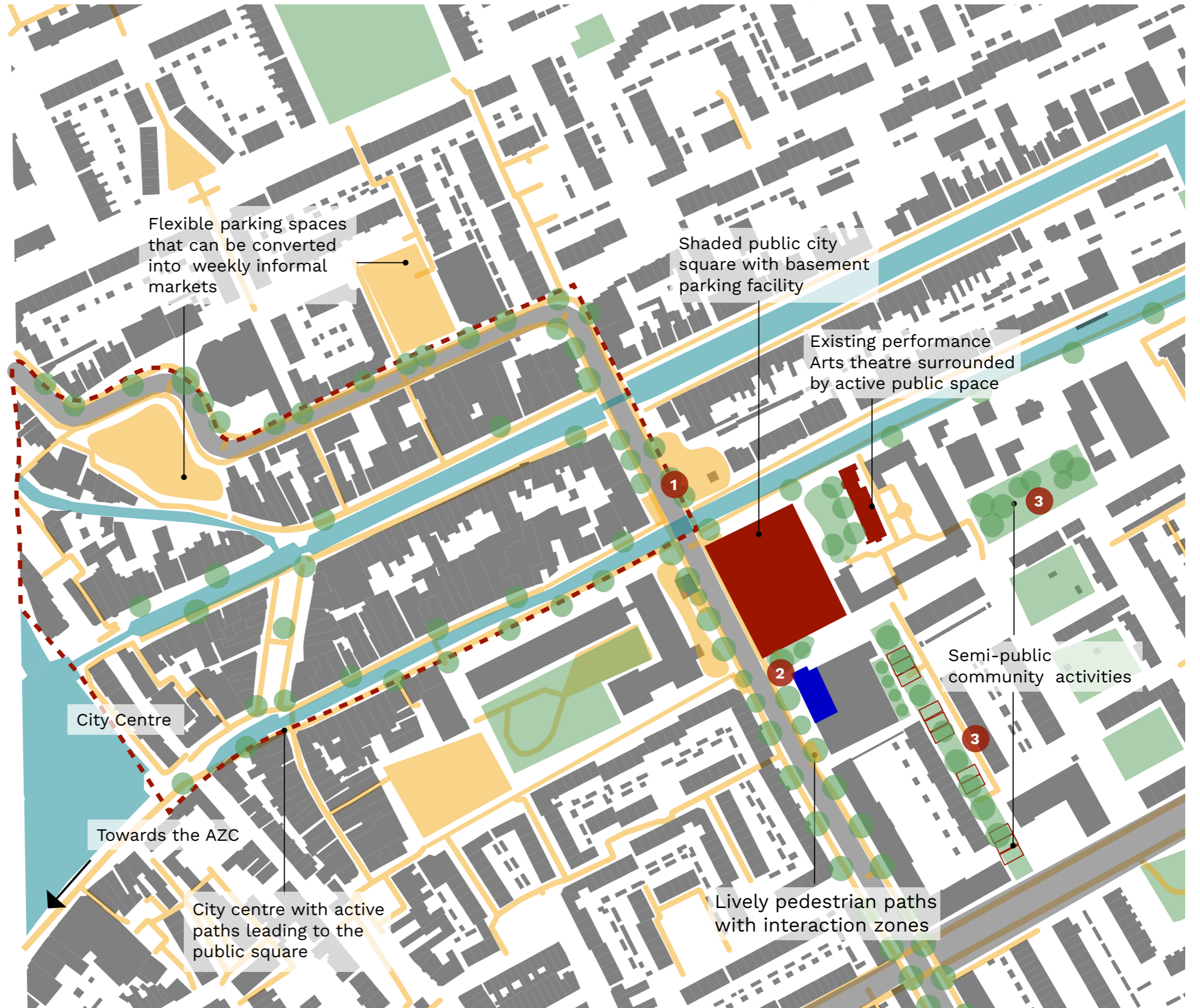
The community centre is envisioned as a common space that becomes the meeting point for people living of the city. It is a place that acts as an anchor point for refugees , enabling their participation in the activities of the city, while visiting the community centre. The integration between refugees and the natives in the neighbourhood can serve as a pilot project for the development of community centres in other cities.



(Fig. 129) View of the future spaces around the community centre

Future Plan

The plan shows the changes in building and land use by introducing programmatic activities and design interventions.



(Fig. 130) Plan showing the changes

Interventions

1.

Activating public and semi public areas in the city centre is essential for natives and refugees to have chances to meet. The streets in the city centre should accommodate points where people can sit and talk. Parking lots should be identified based on the quality of publicness around and made as flexible spaces by changing materiality, introducing movable furniture, sufficient lighting etc. where impromptu events, markets etc. can happen. These spaces should provide opportunity for active community participation and be promoted as spaces where people see and learn from each others differences.



(Fig131) Pause points along the streets

(Fig132) Prominent square with movable furniture

2.

A common gathering square in locations where people socialise, access services etc. is important, since it can form a prominent landmark for the city. This can attract people to spend time in a public space without having to spend money, but at the same time have experiences just by observing a number of small activities happening in the square. The space should be designed to accommodate small to large activities, accessible, porous and safe.



(Fig133) Square as a space for weekly markets and play areas

(Fig134)

3.

Spaces such as community centres should be identified and developed to promote community engagement. Depending on the size, location and context around the centres, it can accommodate various services and activities for refugees and natives. Facilities to express and expose the skill set, community gardening, workshops etc. can help both the communities to benefit from each other. The space leading to the community centre should be welcoming, where people can feel comfort and socially grow beyond the confines of a shelter.



(Fig135) Residents of an asylum seekers' centre work in the vegetable garden



(Fig136) Residents of an asylum seekers' centre work in the vegetable garden

Benefits



The community centre can be a location to look for employment opportunities for refugees and natives by exposing their skills to each other thereby generating mutual benefits. This can generate micro economies in the neighbourhood which changes peoples attitude and the willingness to communicate with one another.



Creating zones to sit, observe or engage in public streets which are used everyday, can make the refugees feel equal in the society. It can become spaces where they come to without having to feel the pressure to socialise, but at the same time enjoy the happening of the city.



A Prominent open square in the city can raise curiosity and create opportunities for diverse societies, age groups, gender to gather. This space can change in its functions based on community festivals, markets etc. thereby giving identity to the city and its users. Refugees can see this as an opportunity to form social networks, conduct or take part in the activities.

7.3 Policy recommendation

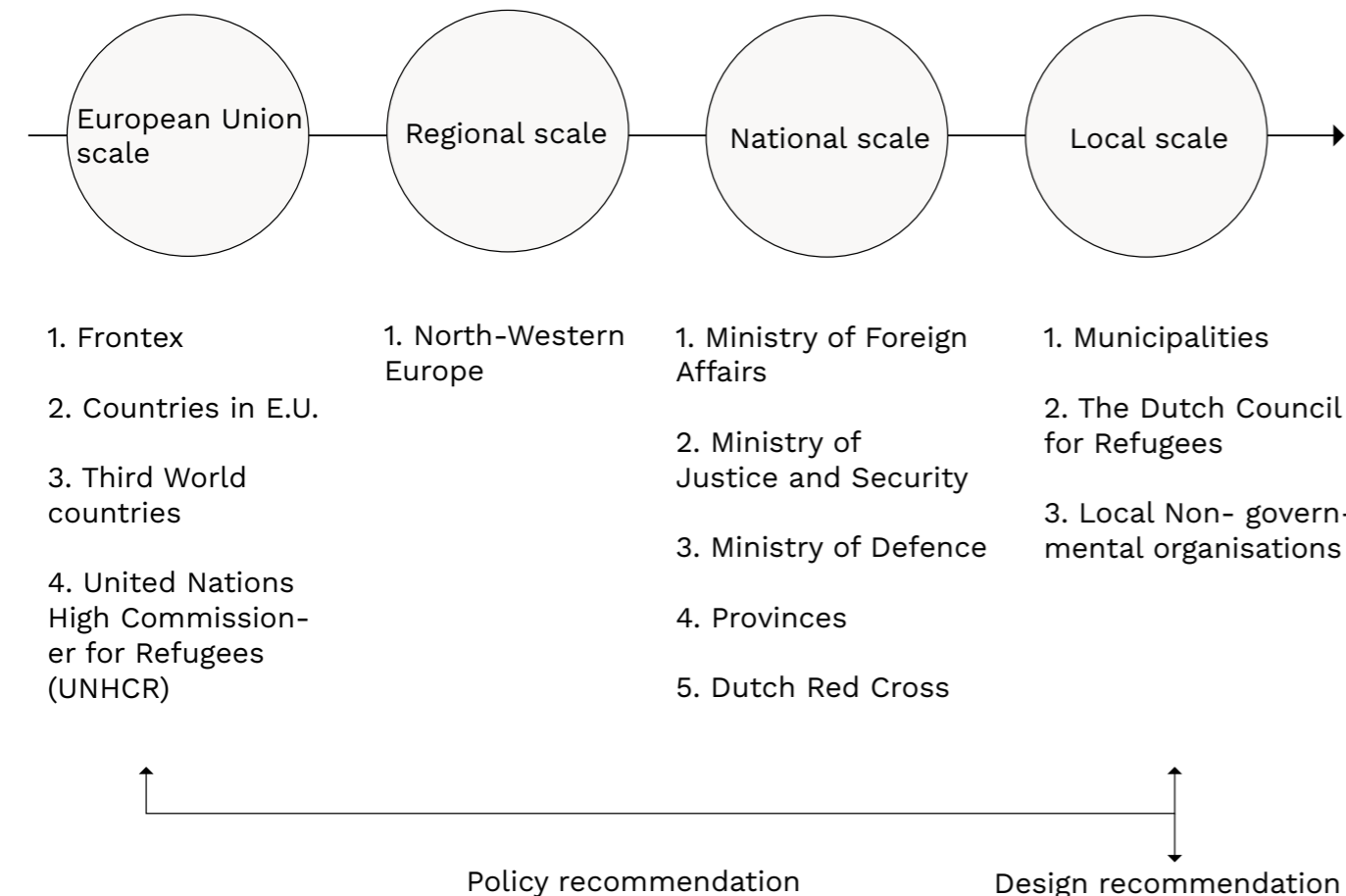
The diagram below shows the institutions that govern and assist refugees from when they enter the EU until they obtain social housing in a European country (in this case the Netherlands).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, EU, inter-European policies, and individual country policies need to be extensively reformed to ensure equal distribution of refugees and to regulate their entry and living conditions in a safe and equitable manner. This change must occur to stop the inhumane and life-threatening suffering faced by asylum seekers and refugees.

In this project, the policy and design recommendations are formed at the local scale, focusing on the common spaces of interac-

tion between natives and refugees living in isolated temporary asylum shelters.

As a result, these recommendations can be applied in other municipalities which have similar conditions and can be altered depending on the context, inhabitants, land availability, basic infrastructure facilities etc.



(Fig.137)

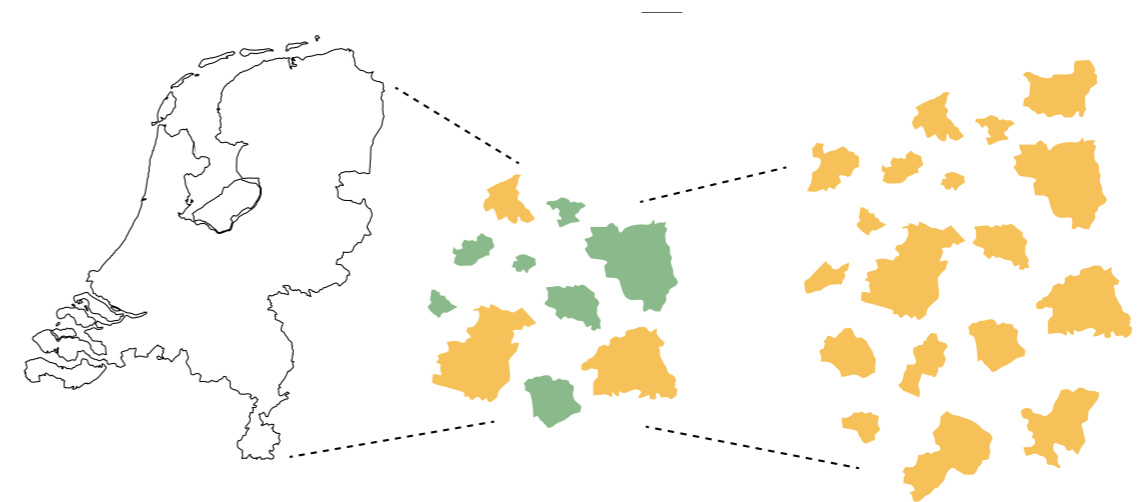
Local scale

Distribution law

- Every municipality should be obliged to receive asylum seekers
- If municipalities cannot come to an agreement, the new law will allow the State to designate suitable reception locations.
- The municipalities can propose smaller-scale locations if it does not have enough resources, land area, inhabitants.. However

they are obliged to plan together with the nearby municipalities to arrange for other alternative solutions

- The law should consider refugees to choose to locate at AZCs closer to their family/friends (if present) in the country



(Fig.138)

At the Asylum shelter:

- Each AZC should make sure that it can accommodate refugees who can communicate with the municipality, since they can be the mediator between the middle-aged refugees and the natives. This is crucial, since the bond between them can help convey their problems and wishes better to the volunteers, municipality etc.
- The refugees living in the AZC should have access to information and help points. There should be ways of translation and job searching services readily available from day one.
- There should be spaces provided to cook their own food depending on the type of shelter and space available.

Semi private spaces in AZCs

Every isolated temporary asylum shelter should provide spaces for refugees to have their own semi-private spaces in or around the asylum shelter. These spaces are essential to establish a sense of home, ownership and empower them.

Public-semi-public spaces

It is essential to make sure that majority of the public and semi-public spaces in the city are accessible to refugees. They should provide points for different kinds of interaction such as spaces of solitude as well as spaces to have casual conversations if one craves human connection. These spaces should be accessible and vibrant to invite people to use it.

Arrival Infrastructures

It is crucial for arrival infrastructures, such as city libraries, municipality offices, the immediate surroundings of AZCs, and community centres, to be made places where refugees can feel at home, motivated, ask for help, and establish social networks, from the early stages of staying in the AZC. These locations should be planned with quality facilities when accommodating asylum seekers, to strengthen local communities and foster a sense of empathy among individuals.



(Fig. 139)Locals gathered at
A small street shop in Lisbon,
Portugal. source: author

Conclusion:

The research conducted for this project was predominantly guided by interviews and literature research.

Firstly, literature on common spaces of interaction and integration was studied. Further, the psychological feelings of refugees, such as trauma, uncertainty etc., was studied. However, most sources failed to suggest spatial applications. Case studies around the world helped gain insights into the possibilities of programmatic and spatial interventions between the refugees and natives.

This project aimed to explore how the literature could be applied in cities, at a local scale, to achieve integration and inclusion. The goal was to create spaces within the urban fabric that encourage refugees and natives to explore spaces outside their homes, allowing them to adapt and learn from each other's differences.

Each context in the Netherlands presents different requirements based on its population, area, local politics, and involvement of the natives. Therefore, the design recommendations suggested must be mod-

ified. Participatory planning methods can be used to generate best possible localised outcome for the city.

This project also acknowledges the potential conflicts that might arise regarding the rights of the refugees and the spaces they can access. Here, the municipality must consider the long term mutual benefits for both communities given the increasing number of refugees.

Though temporary shelters are provided as the first solution for the refugee crisis in the Netherlands, there remains a necessity to acknowledge individual experiences of refugees and natives and how it can be effectively made better in urban spaces.

Reflection:

Interviews:

Through prior on ground extensive fieldworks in projects back home, I was confident in applying the same method. The strength of the research was a combination of fieldwork and interviews.

With Municipality and NGOs:

As an International student from India, I found it hard to connect with municipalities, NGOs and COA and I assume they felt hesitant because the project involved refugees and they are considered one of the most vulnerable in the Dutch society. However, I was able to contact and connect with a municipality representative and a volunteer from an NGO. With mentioning my purposes for the interview and my identity, they provided me with as much information as possible and helped me connect with the refugees in their location.

With refugees living in temporary asylum shelters:

With the help contacts made while attending an open event in one of the shelters I was able to interact, form bonds and observe the activities in the shelter. I felt welcomed and a part of them, and I was mistaken as a refugee myself because of my skin colour and found them comfortable during my interviews as well. The interviews gave me a sense of satisfaction in knowing about the sensitivity of the project. However, there were youth living in the shelter who were the interpreters helping with translation. This was a barrier and limited my in depth conversations and dynamics with the participants.

It was difficult to connect with women and families for interviews due to reasons of difficulty in accessing the shelters accommodating them. However, I was able to connect to 2 women with the help of an NGO. The women were comfortable to help and share in the beginning but with multiple visits they seemed hesitant to open up further. I assumed that it could be because of fear of revealing their identity, cultural or communication barriers. Asylum shelters

accommodating minors were not allowed stating that my research could have an effect on their safety and remembrance of their traumas.

Ethical considerations:

A copy of the consent form and an information about my project was provided to the participants. They were allowed to withdraw from the interview at any moment. However, looking back I felt the interview setup might have kindled their memories of giving multiple interviews during the asylum process. And it could have also impacted in the way they could have responded. I felt I could have had casual conversations, without them having to sign consent forms.

Reflection on Thesis' Research Methodologies:

Apart from the interviews as mentioned before, fieldwork, case studies, literature studies were used as methods for conducting my research. Case studies helped in understanding existing projects around Europe that are developed for refugee integration and inclusion. Fieldwork helped understand the hostile and inactive environments of public and semi-public spaces in cities which formed one of the barriers to refugee and native integration.

To mention, it was also important to have conversations with European nationals. The conversations revealed that the loss of their existing culture, streets filled with shops by immigrants, feel of unsafely, negative personal experiences can make them intolerant and distant in forming bonds with refugees/migrants. Here media plays a very important role in forming and reinforcing their prejudices and creating negative perceptions. Lack of personal effort to understand 'others' culture, habits etc. overtime can reveal itself in the form of microaggressions when a refugee/migrant and a native come together. The above view also comes from my personal experience in the Netherlands.

Though the vulnerable individuals are resilient and resist these in many ways, this can sometimes lead to unhealthy competition and negative mental effects.

Societal Relevance:

Observing the living conditions of refugees in the Netherlands, I could not help but compare their experiences with those of the natives. There were high disparities in living quality and opportunities among them. While I realised that these differences are inevitable when the majority and minority in a country co-exist, I also sensed a degree of non-awareness and ignorance among the natives that I am surrounded with, to take steps to know about this vulnerable group, the real situation they are living in to integrate. I see this topic increasingly becoming relevant to be explored especially in European countries where currently there are huge political shifts and fear to receive and accommodate refugees.

Scientific Relevance:

Researching the topic presented various challenges due to its multifaceted nature, offering several pathways to explore. My initial focus was on understanding the dynamics of common spaces and how refugees and natives interact within them. Throughout the research process, I consistently observed a correlation between physical spaces and the emotions experienced by the refugees. Thus it became imperative to conduct interviews in person to get the first-hand insight into their experiences outside their living space.

Since most of the existing research was conducted in different countries and contexts, I recognised the importance of specifically conducting my interviews based on context, individuals experiences. Additionally, I realised the significance of engaging with NGOs and municipality representatives, as they play an equally crucial role in shaping the lives of refugees. By incorporating a mix of qualitative engagement with stakeholders, I aimed to ensure a more holistic and scientifically relevant understanding of the topic.

Relation between the thesis' topic and the topic of the studio Planning Complex Cities:

The thesis topic aligns with the studio which focuses on research-based approaches, particularly addressing social issues on multiple scales. Given the social nature of my project, it was crucial to start with research to have an understanding of the topic on a global scale. Moreover, the topic also involves the understanding between institutions and its manifestations in physical spaces, which aligns with the studio's strength in bringing these aspects together. Besides, the primary user group being a vulnerable community experiencing injustice and inequality, also made it relevant to choose the studio.

Research in relation to design:

Throughout the thesis, I encountered a number of challenges in forming a strong opinion on the project, particularly in forming spatial strategies. Discussions with colleagues, often centred around the need for an institutional change within the E.U. and the country as the primary requirement for changing the asylum process. Though I acknowledge the significance of such systemic changes, I was interested in exploring the everyday interactions, spaces, and struggles experienced by refugees once they become part of the system.

This 'crisis' needs an institutional change. However, through my interviews, as an 'urbanist' I also believe that focusing on local spatial interventions has more potential be a part another person's life. They can give rise to increased community involvement as well, instead of waiting for a heavily controlled institutional change. I was interested in exploring how small-scale urban changes can contribute to enhancing the daily experiences of refugees, and these changes have the power to break the institutional barriers.

Scope of the project:

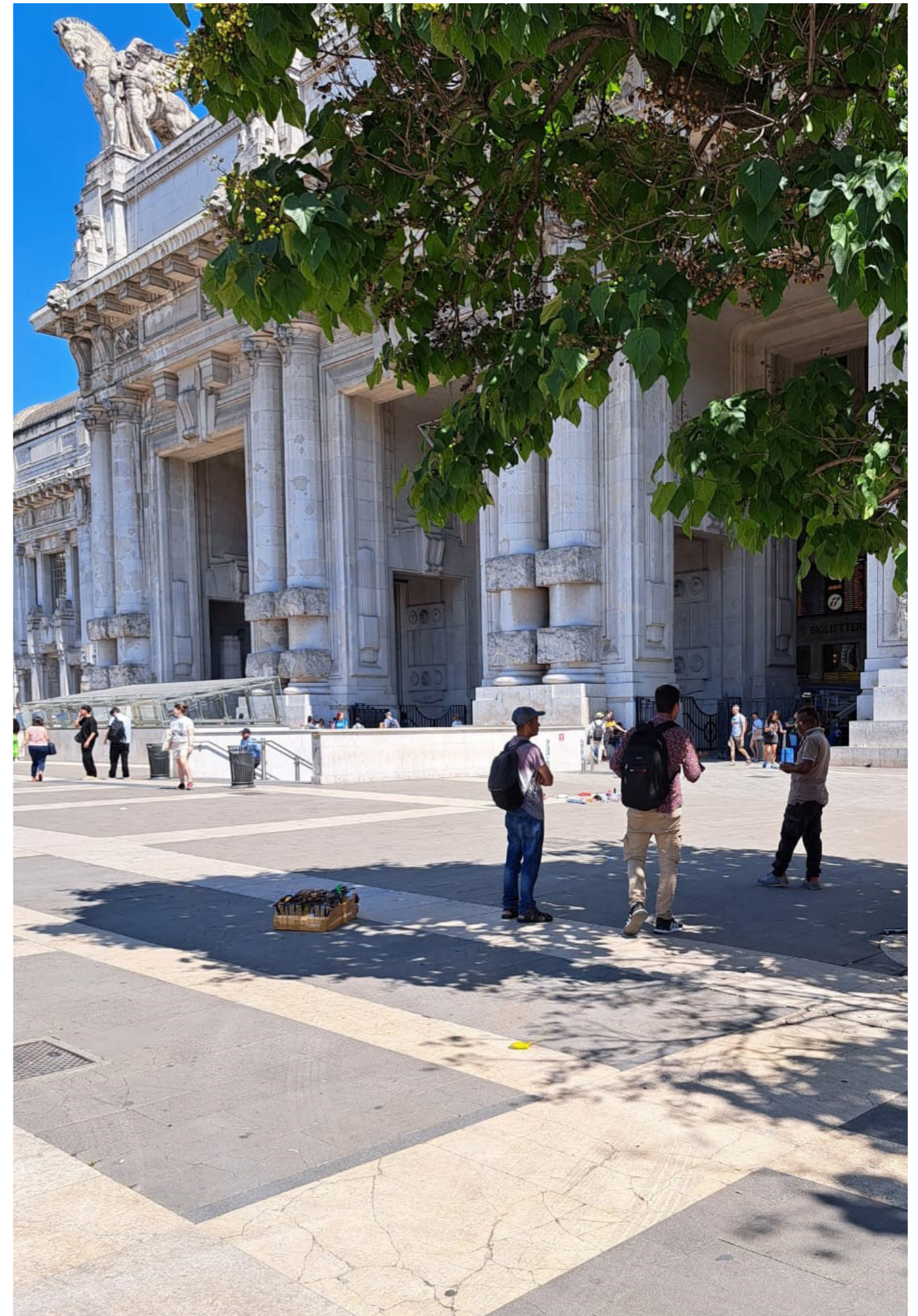
Since there were large variations noticed among refugees, the results of the project can be translated to other settings and refugee groups, considering the differences. This can give many possibilities of focus in the project, which can be worked in multiple scales.

The project can also be translated to research topic on different 'migrants', since it has several overlapping theories such as exclusion, inequality, diversity, discrimination etc.

Personal experience:

As a 'migrant' in this country trying to 'fit in' in every way was and is still is challenging. I started this project from being conscious about the fact that I am different because of my skin colour, I get stereotyped of my culture, habits, abilities and values. And it is hard to be acknowledged and seen and treated as the 'same', in a country where I am the minority. These factors not only influenced my motivation and confidence, but also in the way I interact and move through my everyday life.

With the experience in this project, I touched upon these differences theoretically especially for a more vulnerable migrant community



(Fig.141) Vendors selling small items along the pavement outside Milan Central Station.

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Appendix:

A copy of the following documents were given to the participants and a copy of the consent form was signed and received with consent before the beginning of the interview

Informed Consent Procedure

Informed consent is sought for all activities involving human research. The procedure entails asking potential participants to read the project information sheet and sign a written consent form.

The written project information sheet provides details about the project's activities, data collected, protocols, participants' rights, and contact details. The consent form must be "given by a competent individual who has received the necessary information (who has adequately understood the information) and who, after considering the information, has arrived at a decision without having been subjected to coercion, undue influence or inducement or intimidation". All obtained consents will be freely given; no pressure will be put on participants to participate in the project. All participants will be given the opportunity to ask questions and receive clear answers before making decisions about their participation.

Opening statement

Dear participant,

You are invited to participate in the **Masters Graduation project**. But before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important that you understand why the research is being undertaken and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and ask if anything is unclear or if you would like more information.

Description of the project:

The project is a **1-year student Masters Graduation project** (started in September 2023) that aims to develop design strategies and policies that help with the integration and inclusion of asylum seekers living in temporary asylum seekers shelters(AZCs) in the Netherlands. For this, I would like to have the participation of asylum seekers, refugees, native citizens, and experts from municipalities, NGOs and other governmental bodies to understand their roles in the process of integration and decision-making.

The project particularly focuses on studying the **everyday activities outside the home of the asylum seekers living in isolated asylum seeker centres(AZCs), to understand their spaces of interaction and experiences with the native community**. The selected isolated temporary asylum seeker centres (AZCs) for study are located in various municipalities such as Maassluis, Arnhem, Delft etc.

Kind of Data Collected

The participants will be asked about their daily activities outside their shelter (living space), the spaces of interaction with the native community, the bond with their own community, spaces where they feel a sense of identity/belonging, familiar feelings of home etc. They will also be asked about their negative individual experiences such as racial discrimination, inequality, and exclusion in a new country.

Usage of collected data in the project

The data collected will be used for analysis of the city/neighbourhood of the selected area of study, to formulate spatial strategies and policy recommendations through multiple scales (neighbourhood, city, country, the European Union). **The outcomes of the project are intended to imagine and create a just and equitable future for asylum seekers through the lens of an urban planner.**

To the best of my ability, your answers in this study such as your **name, country of origin, and relation status** will be **completely anonymous**. Age and gender will be collected to understand the user groups involved in the study and their specific needs, experiences and feelings.

Any **sensitive information** expressed during the conversation such as physical/emotional/mental abuse or political opinions **is completely not necessary for the project**. Your data will not be shared with third parties. The sole purpose of storing your data is for project activities and research.

Processing of collected data and results

The data collected will be stored on my personal computer and personal external storage devices. It will be used for further research purposes. This includes publications, creating a professional network, and disseminating information and events. **The data collected will never be implemented in reality by me or any authority in the future. It is collected only for the purpose of my graduation project and further research.**

Data Breach

In case of a data breach, I will immediately inform my supervisor and the university. Together we will undertake all necessary steps to minimize any possible negative consequences. You will receive a notification as soon as possible about the nature of the data breach, the information lost, and the actions that are being taken to prevent or minimize any possible harm.

Your rights

If you decide to participate in my project, I would like to thank you in advance. However, you are perfectly free to decline my invitation to take part in the project. **If required, the participants will be asked to help with additional data and review the outcomes, towards the end of the project (April/May 2024)**

The interview will take approximately 15-30 minutes per person. Your participation in this study is entirely **voluntary and you can withdraw at any time**. You are free to omit any questions.

The study and interview are being done by Harini Sivakumar, a Masters student from the Technical University of Delft (TU Delft), Faculty of Architecture and Built Environment, Julianalaan.

Adult Consent Form – English Version

Please complete this form after you have read the Opening Statement Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

Project Title: Shared spaces, shared lives – Imagining the integration of refugees living in temporary asylum shelters, through common spaces of interaction ***the project title is subject to change**

Thank you for your interest in participating in my Masters graduation project. If you have any questions arising from the Opening Statement or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

Participant’s statement

I declare that: *Please initiate all boxes*

I have read the notes written above and the Opening statement and understand what the study involves. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason immediately without consequences.

I have been given the information about the expected duration of my participation and that personal data collected will be used only for further research purposes.

I consent to the processing of the personal information to help with the study and outcomes for the Masters Graduation project.

I agree that the project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in this study.

I understand that the information I have submitted will be published, as a report, scientific publication or other dissemination and communication outputs. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained, and it will not be possible to identify me from any publications.

I agree that my non-personal research data may be used by others for future research. I am assured that the confidentiality of my personal data will be upheld through the removal of identifiers.

I am aware that the outcomes of the project will never be implemented in reality by any authority or the researcher in the future. It will be used only for study and research purposes.

Signature:

Date:

Topic: General Enquiry

Introducing the project: The project focuses on studying the everyday activities outside the home of the asylum seekers living in isolated asylum seeker centres(AZCs), to understand their spaces of interaction, and the feeling of belonging and culture with the native community. The results of the interview will be used to analyse and propose design/planning strategies for the city's future and recommend any policies.

1. Name, age, country of origin
2. How long have you been living in this asylum centre?
3. Do you know anyone already living here before you moved to the Netherlands?
4. How often do you meet/contact them?
5. How would you describe your overall experience in the place you are living now?

Topic: Current use of space

I would like to introduce you to my project which investigates the influence of common/public spaces that you use to interact with the natives outside your home (current living space). Through this, I will understand how the location and accessibility of the shelters affect the degree of integration with the natives.

1. How often do you go out?
2. What kind of spaces do you use outside your home/living space? (For example, for sports, shopping)
3. Do you bike/walk/take public transport to reach the place?
4. Who do you interact with when you go out? (For example, with the natives/their own friends/family)
5. How do you feel in these spaces? (For example, comfort, having a sense of belonging etc.)
6. What are the aspects of these spaces that make you feel that way? (For example, the no.of people, quietness, meeting your community etc.)

Next, I would like to understand your cultural needs as an individual and with your community, since it is important for feeling included in a new society

7. What makes you miss home? (For example, food, culture, any activities etc.)
8. Do any of the spaces you use remind you of good familiar experiences from home?
9. Do you feel your culture is visible and accepted in the spaces that you visit?
10. If yes, are there any other examples of spaces where you can express your own culture? (For example: shopping areas)

(If no, where do you feel that way and why?)

Topic: Interaction with native community

The following questions are regarding your interaction with the natives which is one of the crucial parts of inclusion and integration.

1. How do you feel being in the same space with the natives?
2. Do you interact with them in any spaces outside the home? If yes, could you explain which spaces and how you interact? (For example: talk/go together/just see, a conversation)

*(If no, why do you not interact?)
3. Who are they, are they of the same age, and (young people, older, same age)
4. Have you experienced any form of discrimination or exclusion in these spaces? If yes, could you explain? (For example: strange looks, rudeness when talking, avoid)

Topic: Ideas for the future

We have been talking about your culture and your experience interacting with the native community. This section is about the design of future spaces for interaction based on your needs and wants.

1. If you could improve something in the public spaces you use or even create new spaces: what would you change or add?
2. Would you like to interact more often with the native community? If yes, what kind of interaction would you like to have and what would be the good spaces for this? (For example: parks, sports fields, religious spaces etc.)

(If no, why do you not want to interact with them?)

Interview with an expert from the Municipality

Topic: General

The project focuses on studying the everyday activities outside the home of the asylum seekers living in isolated asylum seeker centres(AZCs), to understand their spaces of interaction, and the feeling of belonging and culture with the native community. The results of the interview will be used to analyse and propose design/planning strategies for the city's future and recommend any policies.

-Introducing themselves

Topic: Overview of the current approach to asylum seekers

Firstly, I would like to know the functioning of the municipality in making decisions for the asylum seekers in AZCs. This is to understand the freedom of a municipality in the asylum-seeking process.

1. What are the criteria for selecting the location for an AZC in your municipality? (location, ownership) And the type of AZC? (For example: boats, container houses, unused buildings etc.)
2. What kind of role does the municipality have in selecting the asylum seekers? (For example: based on nationality, age, gender etc.)
3. Who are the user groups (For example: men, women, couples etc.) and how are they selected?

4. What are the ways the municipality supports in providing them with any outdoor activities or activities outside the AZC (For example: conducting events, creating any spaces, parks etc.)
5. How do the asylum seekers feel about these? Do they like it? And do they want more such activities? (If they dislike it, why?)
6. Does the municipality evaluate/ check how the asylum seekers like living in the shelter? If they like, what are the aspects? (If they dislike, what are the challenges that they face?)

Topic: Collaboration between the municipality and the natives

In this section, I would like to first understand the efforts taken by the municipality to connect the natives with the asylum seekers.

1. What support does the municipality offer to assist asylum seekers in their integration process with natives?
2. How does the municipality engage with the local community to foster understanding and support for asylum seekers?
3. Are there any demands arising from the natives concerning asylum seekers in their municipality? What are they and why?
4. Who are the age groups who want to volunteer/ help with the integration of refugees? Are there more natives who are willing to do it?
5. (I heard from the previous conversations with the asylum seekers) that there is no long-term interaction/bonding between the natives and asylum seekers, why is that so?

Topic: Collaboration between the municipality and other organisations

In this section, I would like to understand the functioning of municipality with other organisations (For example: COA, NGOs, and other private bodies)

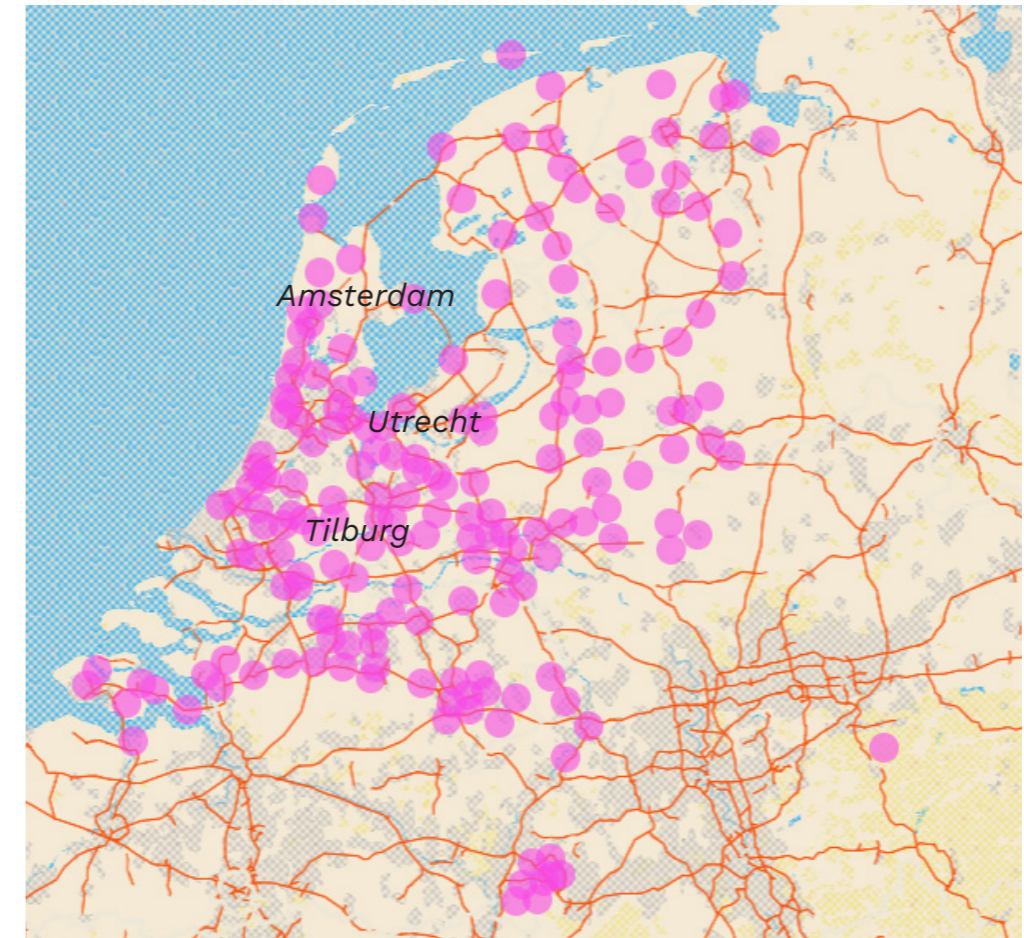
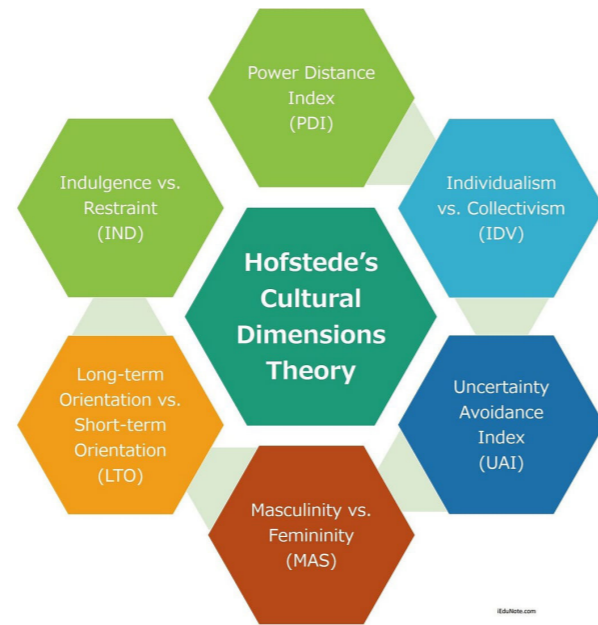
1. Does the municipality partner with any organisations? If so, who are they and how do they work together? Are there any projects for outdoor activities/ projects fostering interaction between natives and refugees/ initiatives for asylum seekers that you work on currently? (for example: designing community areas, co-living facilities etc.)
2. Did you face any challenges when collaborating with other organisations? If so, how does the municipality address these challenges? Are there some successful examples of the collaborations? (For example: any strategies/ projects etc.)

Topic: Ideas for the future

1. How do you envision the future of asylum seekers in your municipality?
2. What are the municipality's long-term plans for integration of asylum seekers?
3. Are there specific cultural or community preferences that should be considered in your municipality?
4. What role do you see the municipality playing in advocating for broader systemic changes to improve the asylum process and support mechanisms at the national level?

Human Needs Matrix After Manfred Max-Neef

	Being	Having	Doing	Interacting
Subsistence	Health, adaptability Sense of humour	Food, shelter, work	Feed, procreate, rest, work	Social setting, environment
Protection	Care, equilibrium, solidarity	Rights, social security, family	Cooperate, plan, help	Living space, dwelling
Affection	Self-esteem, respect, passion	Friendships, family, relation with nature	Make love, share, cultivate, appreciate	Privacy, intimacy, home, togetherness
Understanding	Critical conscience, curiosity, discipline	Literature, education teachers	Investigate, meditate, experiment	Groups, community, schools, family
Participation	Dedication, respect, receptiveness	Rights, responsibility duties, work	Cooperate, dissent, agree on, interact	Associations, churches, family
Idleness	Curiosity, tranquility, imagination	Peace of mind, games, parties	Day-dream, relax, remember, brood	Privacy, intimacy, free time, landscape
Creation	Passion, intuition, imagination	Abilities, skills, method, work	Work, invent, build, compose, design	Productive settings, workshops, time
Identity	Sense of belonging, self-esteem	Language, symbols, religion, values	Commit oneself, grow, recognise	Social rhythms, maturation stages
Freedom	Autonomy, boldness, passion	Equal rights	Dissent, choose, disobey, run risks	Temporal/ spatial plasticity



Above are some of the major cities that are trying to change the regressive policies of the nation state and the EU and working towards solidarity-based migration policy.

Their aim is to improve the capacity of individual municipalities to act locally with the help of civil society, as well as to amplify the voices of cities and city-networks as political actors in the European debate on migration.



" It is because they come from places that resemble hell on Earth and make Europe or America seem like relative heavens "

source : own images from Portugal & Italy, news articles

Amsterdam

The City of Amsterdam Administration's Culture of Welcome – refugee perspectives on policy implementation and design

- Housing
- For undocumented migrants
- Counselling and guidance
- Residence status and security
- Political Participation

What is inspiring?

In 2016, Amsterdam was one of the first Dutch municipalities to support the creation of a Refugee advisory taskforce (in Dutch, a *Refugee Sounding Board Group*). This advisory group issues solicited and unsolicited recommendations on policy design, implementation and communication. Some of its members include residents of Amsterdam who arrived as refugees decades ago, and who can contribute long-term perspectives.

Utrecht

The rise of "bed, bath & bread" shelters and support during the pandemic

- Housing
- For undocumented migrants
- Counselling and guidance
- Residence status and security

What is inspiring?

The municipality of Utrecht is known for its longstanding commitment to finding durable solutions to the specific problems faced by undocumented migrants. While it is not the only Dutch municipality to do so, Utrecht was the first to develop what later became known as "*Bed, Bath and Bread*" shelters. The city's approach stands out because of its focus on durable solutions, especially improved prospects for settlement through professional legal support. Its other areas of focus include human rights, advocacy and strategic litigation and collaborations with local NGOs.

Tilburg

Regional solidarity in the "Heart of Brabant" – pragmatism and dispersal

- Advocacy & Networking

What is inspiring?

Tilburg's commitment to a joint regional approach and solidarity with smaller municipalities contributes to a fairer, more consistent and uniform process for refugees in the region. Tilburg's municipal officials and policy advisors stress that the development of this regional approach was largely driven by pragmatic considerations. It has nevertheless improved the situation for migrants and refugees significantly.

Pattern language Intensive course

(1) Everyday experiences

Hypothesis Creating spaces and networks where people can identify, locate, feel seen in the society with their own familiar community

Theoretical back-up It is important to note that these events are often strategically facilitated and restricted to particular times and places. Individuals also need the opportunity to engage in everyday interactions outside of these structured environments to strengthen cross-cultural relationships.

Practical implication Providing spaces for different communities to come together through activities or spaces can help an individual have the sense of belonging and home in a new society that is unfamiliar. It also helps the host community to experience different cultures.

Relation with other patterns

(2) Food as a catalyst

Hypothesis Creating spaces with food as the initial breaking point with the host community can help familiarize and respect each others culture

Theoretical back-up In past decades, across the West, the number of such initiatives increased, specifically in urban areas (Davies 2019). They were clustered under the rubric of urban food sharing. These mostly grassroots initiatives were developed to counter some of the most recurrent social problems linked with modern urbanization, which is the depauperation of individual and collective sociality and solidarity (Gernert et al. 2018). All these initiatives place food at their centre in an attempt to provide collective spaces and meeting opportunities for specific, generally fragile, segments of the urban population (e.g., migrants, old people, people with disabilities). In so doing, they aim at countering the tendency toward social isolation and loneliness as well as reinforcing the cultural and social capital of the beneficiaries (Davies et al. 2017)

Practical implication Cooking and sharing food can make communities be proud of their culture, increases opportunities to interact in a new country. It also helps in creating a sense of comfort with their community

Relation with other patterns

(5) Strengthen the foundation

Hypothesis having policies that help refugees to overcome their initial needs can alleviate the initial stress after migration to a new country

Theoretical back-up many refugee individuals and families do not identify obtaining mental health services as a primary need. Rather, managing the resettlement stressors, such as ensuring adequate food and housing for the family and securing employment, is prioritized [89]. These foundational needs generally need be met or at least partially stabilized before most refugees have the practical and psychological resources available to focus on mental health treatment [86].

Practical implication providing access to the basic needs of refugees is important for them have a sense of dignity, safety and gradually provide space and means to talk about their trauma to overcome their past experiences.

Relation with other patterns

(6) Voice your opinions

Hypothesis having platforms to voice or protest about their opinions is important to know the invisible struggles they are facing

Theoretical back-up At a time when migration raises many debates and significant public anxiety often connected to a negative political discourse, opportunities for different cultures to meet, interact and inspire each other should be created. Creating multi stakeholder engagement can propose ideas for transforming spaces to be more inclusive - (Migrationlab , A City of Comings and Goings)

Practical implication by inviting and giving platforms for people to express their struggles in the host society can generate awareness among general public and have a policy level change through grassroots development

Relation with other patterns

(3) Experience our home

Hypothesis Creating opportunities for refugees to open their 'self made memories of home' to the host community creates a sense of belonging

Theoretical back-up Thus, unavoidable memories, which may be sparked through encounters with familiar sensory stimuli, mean that former refugees cannot simply forget or discard their former identity (as many host societies expect them to [Blunt and Dowling, 2006; McNeill, 1994]), as they cannot separate themselves from the embodied experiences which make them who they are.

Practical implication By opening up their 'homes', the refugees form trust and feel safe with the host community by having personal conversations. They can expose themselves to their habits and practices in their space which is crucial to feel included in the society.

Relation with other patterns

(4) Teach them young

Hypothesis having a change in the education system can help in forming inclusive learning environments

Theoretical back-up Research shows that culturally responsive pedagogy raises student achievement for all cultural groups[5], ensuring that all students are given the encouragement and support to realise their educational potential regardless of their social, economic, or cultural background, or their individual needs. Teachers need to move from cultural blindness to cultural responsiveness.

Practical implication including other cultural histories in the education system from early on, can help children to learn, accept and respect cultural differences. It is important to include parents in this process to educate themselves and their children understand the differences.

Relation with other patterns

More power to the youth

Hypothesis creating prominent centers for new skill development or developing existing skills for the youth can boost their confidence

Theoretical back-up Despite the challenges around their circumstances, the majority of youth expressed feelings of hope for the future including for the conflict to end. This hope, in combination with being a refugee with temporary protections and support, also contributes to a sense of uncertainty. Youth feel they cannot plan for the future, which is a strain on their mental health and wellbeing

Practical implication It is essential to recognize their skills, offer them spaces to learn and give them the authority to exhibit their work/skill. It can also become a means to look for job opportunities for their future and meet other individuals.

Relation with other patterns

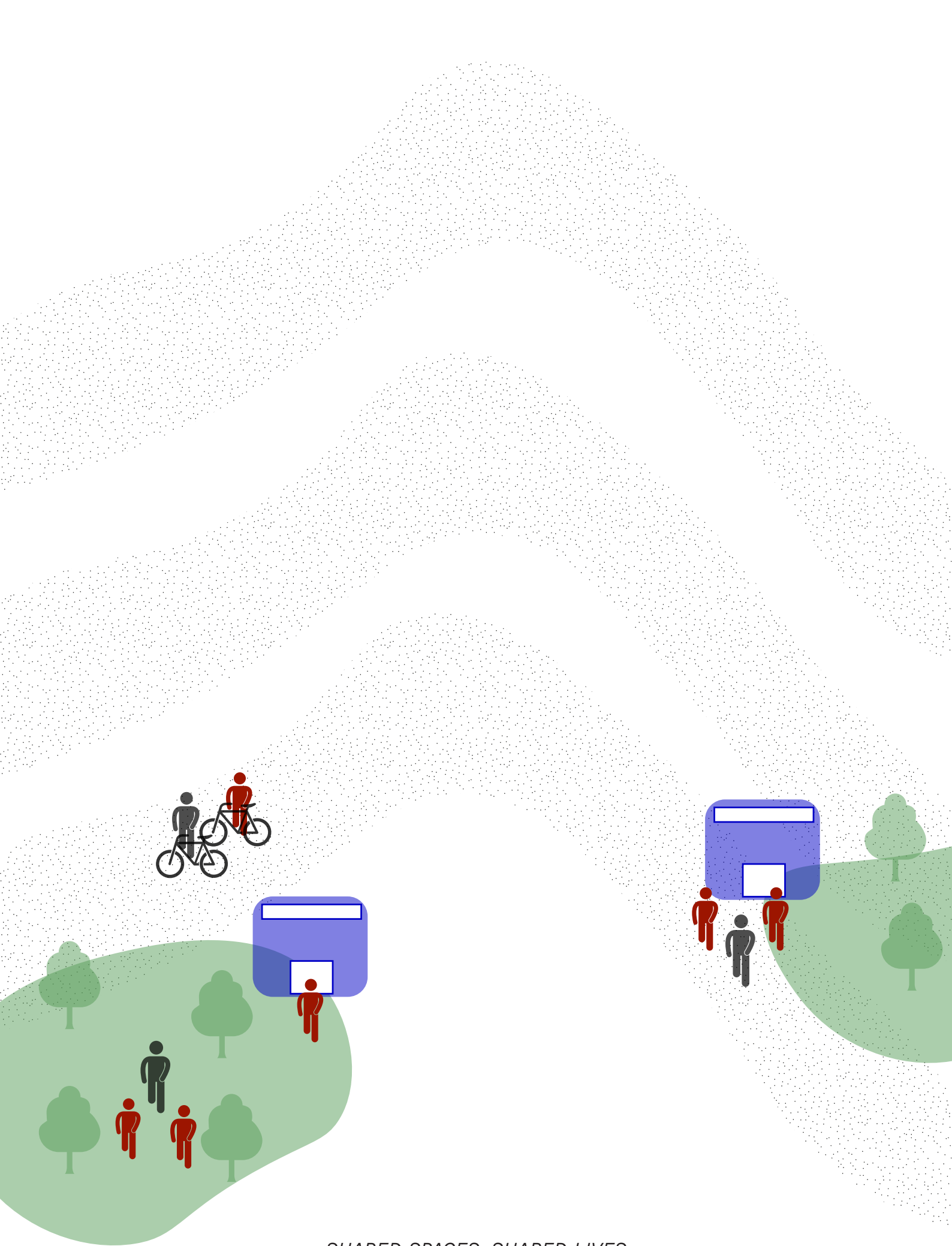
Let 'all' children play

Hypothesis creating accessibility and spaces for children to play is necessary for their mental wellbeing in a new community

Theoretical back-up Although children's play is not a pillar of humanitarian aid, in some (post)disaster contexts play is implied to be part of a bigger picture of child protection, especially within refugee camps where children can be subject to violence and sexual assault. [5] help children deal with the traumas they experience, helping them to understand and deal with their own experiences [26].

Practical implication With large number of refugee children, spaces for play are an important consideration to express themselves. Proximity and accessibility of these spaces can be a means for host community to integrate.

Relation with other patterns



SHARED SPACES, SHARED LIVES

Harini Sivakumar
5726867