

**SPECIAL ISSUE ARTICLE**

# Meeting Places and Integration: Participatory Mapping of Cross-Cultural Interactions in Norwegian Cities

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Increased immigration into Scandinavia warrants the need for knowledge about differential uses of urban spaces by populations with various cultural backgrounds and the conditions that support cross-cultural interactions in these spaces. Immigrants and native Norwegians in Tromsø and Bodø were encouraged to log information about locations where they spend time on online participatory maps, along with their basic demographic information. We ask (1) if the city spaces people use tend to differ based on region of origin, age and gender and (2) in which places cross-cultural interactions occur most. Main findings showed immigrants logged fewer locations related to sports and the outdoors than Norwegians, and immigrants logged more private business locations than Norwegians. Males, young participants, immigrants and participants from Tromsø indicated they engaged in cross-cultural interactions at logged locations more than females, older participants, Norwegians, and participants from Bodø.

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**Keywords:** Immigration; Participatory mapping; Integration; City spaces; Meeting places; Gender

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## Introduction

Increased immigration into Scandinavia in 2015–2016 raised the profile of integration issues in Norway. The Norwegian government's 2019–2022 integration strategy (Kunnskapsdepartementet 2018) aims to foster migrants' participation in the labour market and society through involvement in communities and activities (Kunnskapsdepartementet 2018: 4). An overarching goal is that migrants should experience increased sense of belonging and participation in society (p. 43). The three main strategies are to (1) promote common meeting places, (2) work against segregation and (3) improve understanding of basic values and norms in Norwegian society. Voluntary organisations, sports and cultural activities should play a central role in these integration efforts (p. 5), as they organise arenas for meetings between people. There is also increased focus in the European Union (European Commission 2020) on the roles of urban spaces in social integration and cohesion, and their implications for the accessibility and democratic dimensions of urban spaces (Bergsli & Hanssen 2017).

Further, Buhr (2018) describes migrant spatial integration as predicated on knowing how a city works to gain accessibility and practical use of it. This article addresses issues of urban spaces, as (public) meeting places may be key avenues for integration (Amin 2002; Aure, Førde & Magnussen 2018; Fincher et al. 2019; Jacobs 1961; Mayblin, Valentine & Winiarska 2016).

Small cities are numerous in Scandinavia; experiences in these cities have characteristics resembling both cities and small towns. This article studies roles that diverse urban spaces play in integration in two small northern Norwegian cities (Tromsø and Bodø), and how people with different backgrounds utilise these spaces. Tromsø and Bodø (the capitals of Troms and Nordland counties) are small cities on a global scale, though medium-sized cities by Norwegian standards, both coastal cities located above the Arctic Circle, with 2019 populations of 76,326 and 52,044, respectively (Statistics Norway 2020).

We developed a participatory online mapping system for this study (described in Section 2.2), where participants logged locations online that they frequent in these two cities. We used this system to research differential uses of urban meeting spaces by age, gender, and region of origin, and to understand where cross-cultural interactions occur.

This study asks (1) if the city spaces people use tend to differ based on the region of origin, age and gender with regard to whether the space was (a) private, public or utilised under the auspices of a voluntary organisation and (b) used for sport, or outdoors versus indoors; and (2) which spaces were reported as places for interaction between people from different backgrounds. Based on our findings and the literature, we consider possible hypotheses about these findings and how this information could be useful for facilitating meetings and interactions in these cities.

### **Research Context: Immigrant Integration and Urban Spaces in Scandinavia**

The presence of, access to and diversified use of public spaces in cities by distinct populations are vital for the life and diversity of cities (Jacobs 1961). According to Jørgensen (2012), differences between local and national policy frames often lead to differing local- and national-level migration policies in Scandinavia, suggesting unique and important roles for local-level policies. A literature synthesis by Karlsdóttir et al. (2017) recommends municipalities in Scandinavia work together with civil society organisations to engage immigrants in activities to achieve better immigrant employment outcomes. Studying spaces where everyday encounters are encouraged between immigrants and native communities provides insight into interactions across differences between these diverse groups, as suggested by Amin (2002).

Bodnar (2015) writes that heterogeneity of cities and gatherings of strangers (Simmel 1903 [2002]) are what form cities and are integral to places where people meet and become social. Although mass media and virtual meeting places are important, physical public spaces are still vital (Bergsli & Hanssen 2017). To understand how gathering and interactions occur in specific cities, and how city spaces invite meetings among people with different backgrounds, we need knowledge about how diverse groups use these public and semi-public urban places, because it is in public places that cities are formed (Jacobs 1961). Jacobs (1961) showed how growth of cities influences people's use of urban spaces; public spaces (such as sidewalks) invite public life, and a diversity of building structures (age, height, function, etc.) also invite a variety of uses by diverse groups and with varied interactions. Gehl's (1971) detailed notes of people's activities and use of urban spaces led to similar findings. The 'life' and use of public space thus have a long cross-disciplinary history where diversity and indifference to distinctions among people, according to Simmel (1903 [2002]), are central to urban life but also include anxiety and tension (Bodnar 2015). Back's (1996) work on new ethnicities and urban cultures was followed by a tradition of studies on interethnic relations, parallel lives, the development of everyday encounters, and so on, providing interesting concepts such as

micropublics (Amin 2002), conviviality (Gilroy 2006), super-diversity (Vertovec 2007), everyday multiculturalism (Noble 2009), commonplace diversity and ethos of mixing (Wessendorf 2013), everyday equalities (Fincher et al. 2019) and concerns about community cohesion and about how increased stereotypes may also result from public interethnic contact (Valentine 2008). Even programs designed in part to connect diverse groups in local communities may result in reinforcing inequalities (Blokland 2008). However, social segregation, increased commercialisation, intensification of global connectivity, withdrawal to private spaces, hostile urban design, securitisation and policing of public spaces tend to discourage meetings of diverse populations in public spaces (Bodnar 2015). This research attempts to understand which categories of public and semi-public spaces are more often used by various populations and which promote cross-cultural interactions.

In Norway, 'place analyses' originally focused primarily on improving aesthetic qualities and functionality of Norwegian towns and places, and did not include sociocultural factors (Røe 2014). However, by the 1990s, these approaches to places were challenged by sociocultural place analysis (Luccarelli & Røe 1992; Skogheim & Røe 2013), which highlights people's everyday use of and practices in places as social arenas, accommodating a variety of activities. It includes competing discourses on place identities, focusing on a 'sense of place', seeing places as social relational constructions (Massey 1993). Later, several studies (Brattbakk et al. 2017; Hagen et al. 2016a, 2016b) mapped and described diverse populations' (youths', immigrants') relational sociocultural use of city spaces in so-called deprived areas in Oslo. Hagen et al. (2016b) described six different outdoor spaces found to be important for migrant youth: green areas, infrastructure (e.g., subways), streets, unused spaces, central spaces (e.g., squares) and areas connected to living quarters (hallways, garages). In addition, youth clubs, libraries, sports halls, swimming pools, shopping malls, and underground hallways were found to be important (Alghasi, Eide & og Eriksen 2012; Andersen 2014; Rosten 2015).

The Norwegian white paper on outdoor activities, 'Nature as a Source of Health and Quality of Life' (Meld. St. 18 2015–2016: 7), presents the outdoors as central to Norwegian national identity and an important source of quality of life and health for all. Increased outdoor activities for migrants are also a political goal (Meld. St. 18 2015–2016). Norwegian survey respondents claimed far more often than in other Scandinavian countries that nature and outdoor recreations are used in integration activities in their country (Pitkänen et al. 2017). However, this also represents a normative expectation of migrants for outdoor activities in Norway (Broch 2020a). Gurholt (2008: 55) asserted that *friluftsliv*, a Norwegian concept related to enjoying nature, must be understood 'as a complex social phenomenon and an example of long-standing Western discourse linking ideas of nature, gender and education', whereas Bjerkli et al. (2017) maintained that migrants' lower levels of outdoor activity compared to the majority population is a health-related challenge. Several studies show that migrants do use the outdoors, but explain how, for instance, immigrant women from Asia and the Middle East in an Oslo suburb preferred to walk the *neighbouring* landscapes (Figari, Haaland & Krange 2009), whereas Bjerke et al.'s (2006) Nordic study revealed that some migrants focus on social activities outdoors, rather than seeking peace and quiet (Gullestad 1990). Broch (2020a), in a study on youth from diverse backgrounds, also saw the outdoors in terms of whiteness and part of a (racialised) hierarchy. The outdoors and *friluftsliv*, as well as urban spaces, are hence inscribed with sociocultural value systems.

### **Participatory Mapping for Immigrant Integration**

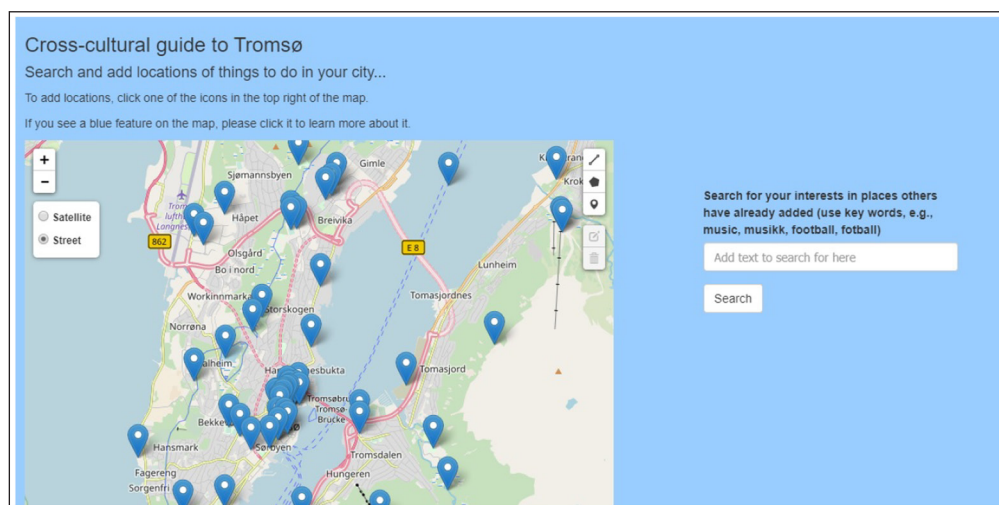
Participatory digital mapping allows people to represent their own knowledge of the local environment on maps to support community empowerment, decision-making and advocacy (Brown & Kyttä 2018). Urban and regional mapping have been the primary applications of

participatory mapping (Brown & Kyttä 2018). Related participatory methods were developed in Norway, called *barnetråkk*, or 'children's paths' (Vegdirektoratet 2000), *ungdomstråkk*, or 'youths' paths' (Hagen et al. 2016a; Tolstad, Hagen & Andersen 2017), and *folketråkk*, or 'people's paths' (Haug 2014), based originally on 'go-along' methods consisting of qualitative interviews with people on a walk through their neighbourhood or another familiar environment, as introduced by Kusenbach (2003). In these participatory mapping methods, first developed for children to participate in planning activities, inhabitants draw their routes on a map and describe activities and points of interest. Hanzl (2007) described how elements from games, 3D technology, participatory planning and geographic information systems (GIS) can help map people's use of urban spaces. This approach combines physical and virtual data to help expand the images of urban spaces (Hagen et al. 2016a). The present study uses elements of these art- and game-based mapping methods in a public participation GIS (PPGIS) where participants log city locations where they spend time on online maps. PPGIS was originally defined as 'a variety of approaches to make GIS and other spatial decision-making tools available and accessible to all those with a stake in official decisions' (Schroeder 1996). PPGIS can promote the goals of grassroots groups and community-based organisations (Sieber 2006), and focus on public participation through mapping (MacEachren 2000). These methods have also received critique. Hagen et al. (2016a) suggest these methods are based on abstract forms of communication, terminology and technology, and that cultural differences regarding familiarity with (and ability to read and use) maps influence their use.

This study is located at the intersection of these traditions, using a participatory approach to map and understand meeting places in the context of integration.

### ***Development and Description of the Mapping Tool***

The authors developed two participatory mapping websites titled 'Cross-cultural guide to Tromsø' and 'Cross-cultural guide to Bodø' (**Figures 1** and **2** show screenshots of both, displaying the first and second halves of the survey questions asked when logging locations). The mapping tool has several objectives: first, participants can share information by adding locations on the city map and describing activities at these locations; people can also



**Figure 1:** Screenshot of the 'Cross-cultural guide to Tromsø' website (<http://52.25.253.125:3838/pgis/>).

learn about locations others have logged. Second, the research team could utilise the logged data about where and how participants use places and connect this to the participants' basic demographic information. This allowed assessments of differences in participants' use of space, stratified by country of origin (aggregated to region of origin), age group and gender. Third, interactions on the mapping websites and group events used to recruit participants may foster engagement, increase sense of belonging, and spur positive interactions between residents with different backgrounds.

The websites were designed by the research team and implemented by web developers. User testing was carried out by the research team and immigrant community members; these tests were done iteratively along with website modifications until most new test users could successfully use the website without oversight. The website was created in English because the researchers estimated that more recent immigrants were more comfortable with English than Norwegian. When logging information about locations, as discussed below, participants could add text in either language. The websites are still active.

When opening either website, a browsable city map appears. A subtitle states 'Search and add locations of things to do in your city', followed by simple instructions showing how to either (1) add a new location marker on the map and add information about that location or (2) view locations and information about locations previously logged by others. The maps are browsable and zoomable.

Participants can add a new marker at a point (building or football field), line (walking path or ski trail) or polygon/area (a park). For each new location, participants are first asked for information about themselves: (1) gender, (2) age category and (3) country of origin. Note that a few locations were logged by participants before these three 'fields' became required. We ask participants for their age category (not exact age) to maintain data privacy: pre-workforce (<20), workforce (20–65), or post-workforce (>65). They are then asked for information about the locations (all these fields are optional): a description of the location; the name of any organisation the participant uses the place in connection with; the organisation's website and contact information; a description of event(s) held there, including weekly meetings or event dates; and we ask the question 'Do you interact with people from different cultural backgrounds here' with possible answers of 'yes', 'sometimes' or 'no'; and any location photographs the participant wants to upload.

The screenshot shows two side-by-side views of the 'Cross-cultural guide to Bodo' website. Both views feature a map of Bodo with a blue location marker. The left view shows the initial form with sections for 'Information about You' (Gender: Female, Male, Other; Age: under 20, 20-65, over 65; Country of origin: Select Country) and 'Information about this location' (Description of place). The right view shows a more detailed form with a question 'Do you interact with people with different cultural backgrounds here?' (Yes, No, Sometimes), 'Do you use this place connected with an organization/event?' (Organization name, website, contact person), 'Event:' (Date, weekly pick), and a 'Submit' button.

**Figure 2:** Screenshot of the 'Cross-cultural guide to Bodo' website (<http://52.25.253.125:3838/bodo/>), showing questions asked of participants when logging new locations (on Bodo map).

Users of the website can click locations on the map previously logged by others and view information logged about those locations, including the logging participant's age, gender and country of origin; participants can also add comments to previously posted locations. There is a search option for locations previously logged containing keywords such as 'museum' or 'football'. Unlike supervised go-alongs where urban spaces were described *in situ* and then logged (Kusenbach 2003), this PPGIS allows users to log places of their choice from anywhere in the city.

## Methods

Ethical considerations for this research and processes for informed consent of participants were approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data Participation through the project 'Sustainable diverse, cities: Innovation in integration' (2017–2022), funded by the Research Council Norway. Participation in the mapping was and still is open to the public, and the mapping tool is published both on the Facebook page and website of the Cit-egration research project. Participants were recruited individually and in group events to log locations on the PPGIS websites. The websites did not 'go viral' within the communities, as was hoped, so most participants participated during one of the group events. In these events, organised in partnership with other organisations (listed below), a research team member or assistant presented the online map and overall project; then, participants could log locations while the presenter remained available to help. Participants were also invited to log locations later from home. The events and partnering organisations were the Research Days ('Forskningsdagene') at the University of Tromsø in September 2018 (approximately 15 participants, mostly native Norwegians); two meetings of 'Borrow a Bodo Buddy' at Bodo Library, supported by the Bodo Red Cross, in November 2018 (approximately 15 participants each, with a total of 30 people, mostly immigrants); a mapping workshop at Bodo Library led by immigrants hired by the research team in 2019 (15–20 participants, mostly immigrants); a mapping workshop held at the asylum centre in Tverlandet near Bodo, led by an immigrant hired by the research team in 2019 (an unknown number of participants, mostly immigrants); a mapping discussion and workshop in two state-run adult education classes (Bodo voksenoppl ring) in November 2019 (approximately 15 participants each, all immigrants); three mapping workshops held at Troms  Red Cross for immigrants taking Norwegian language classes in December 2018 (approximately 10 participants each, for a total of 30, all immigrants).

No personally identifying information was collected, and no data were gathered on the number of locations logged by participants that were recruited individually (versus at events or later from people's homes, versus by others via word-of-mouth). It was made clear at the events and on the website that all locations logged are visible to the public. At all events, it was explained that this was part of a research project, and that by participating, they agreed to be part of the research.

All data logged by participants were downloaded from the administrator's websites for both cities in May 2020 and merged into one dataset, although city-specific analyses were also run. The authors categorised locations logged by participants based on text added to the description field and on the location itself. The categories used were as follows: the activity/place is outdoors; the activity/place is for sports, including walking/hiking; the space is publicly maintained; the space is maintained by a non-governmental organisation (NGO); and the space is operated by a for-profit business. Activities sometimes fell into multiple categories. If participants clicked 'yes' or 'sometimes' to 'interact with people from different backgrounds' at the location, the response was coded as 'yes' for these analyses; if the respondents wrote 'no', the response was coded as 'no'.

We categorised country of origin into three categories: (1) Norwegian, (2) North American (Canada and the USA) and European (referred to hereafter as the 'North and West region') and (3) Asia, Africa and South America (referred to hereafter as the 'South and East region'). Turkey and Russia were considered as Asia for these analyses.

A total of 158 locations were logged on the two sites (72 in Tromsø and 86 in Bodø) when the data were downloaded; as no personally identifying information was logged, it is not known how many individuals the 158 logged locations came from. Five of the 72 entries in Tromsø were logged in an early version of the website with no information on age or country of origin. Based on the writing style in English and Norwegian, as well as the content, the authors were convinced these were logged by one or more Norwegians, and therefore decided to identify these as 'Norwegian' entries, though no age or gender was added.

We note some limitations about the study: the research team recruited participants yielding 158 logged locations, which is a modest amount of data. Most participants were targeted and therefore do not represent a random sample. Once a particular location was logged, others rarely logged the same location, so the attribution of a location was nearly always to the person who logged it first. In addition, we cannot identify when more than one point was logged by the same participant. Although we tried to reach people of all backgrounds and ages, those with more experience with computers were more likely to participate.

This analysis is based on data from locations logged by participants in both cities in 2018 and 2019. In addition to recruiting participants through the events described previously, the research team reached out to their personal and professional networks to recruit any participants that were willing to engage with the project. Therefore, the sample has selection bias, and logged locations are not all independent of each other. Consequently, data analyses here summarise trends among these particular participants. The numbers are thus not representative of these cities' populations, and statistical tests were therefore not run, as they would not be valid. However, the data do show relevant trends among the participants, which suggest hypotheses for future research about how populations use city spaces, and how this may apply to integration initiatives in these cities. Qualitative observations from the 'logging events' were too scarce to add systematically to the quantitative data presented here but gave some impressions worth mentioning as background. The authors recruited one male migrant assistant (in his 30s) in Tromsø and two in Bodø (one under 20 and one in his 20s) to help organise events. These assistants used their male-dominated networks to recruit participants, resulting in relatively more male migrant participants from the South and East region (67%) than male participants from Norway (56%) and the North and East region (53%).

Qualitative observations from the migrant assistants and members of the research team attending logging events revealed that some participants found using the map difficult and lacked the English skills necessary to read and understand the instructions. However, during events, participants shared computers, and many spent time surfing the map, animatedly discussing locations already logged. Many found the concept interesting, and some noted missing such sociocultural information related to urban spaces and were enthusiastic.

This research addresses these limitations by not making general conclusions beyond the sample. The findings are viewed as interesting for the sample, whereas the implications may be useful as hypotheses to explore in future studies.

### **Data Analyses**

Univariate data summaries were used to understand the general characteristics of these locations, including numbers of participants from each region of origin and how many locations were logged from each category mentioned previously. Cross-tabs (without statistical

analyses) were performed to compare the percentages of locations logged in the various categories compared with participants' region of origin, age group and gender.

### Participants and Their Use of Space in Tromsø and Bodø

#### *Who Were the Participants, and What Types of Places Were Logged?*

**Table 1** shows how participants were distributed in terms of city of residence, gender, age and region of origin.

The total numbers of locations in each possible category, as logged by the participants, are listed in **Table 2**. Some locations fall into more than one of these categories.

In addition, participants wrote that they interacted with people from other cultural backgrounds at 104 of the logged locations (66%), whereas 22 locations (14%) were logged as places where participants did not interact with people from different cultural backgrounds; this question was left blank for 32 responses (20%).

**Table 1:** Distribution of participants: City of residence, gender, age and region of origin.

| City of residence       | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Tromsø                  | 72        | 46      |
| Bodø                    | 86        | 54      |
| <b>Gender</b>           |           |         |
| Male                    | 60        | 38      |
| Female                  | 96        | 61      |
| Unknown                 | 2         | 1       |
| <b>Age</b>              |           |         |
| <20                     | 37        | 23      |
| 20–65                   | 115       | 73      |
| >65                     | 1         | 1       |
| Unknown                 | 5         | 3       |
| <b>Region of origin</b> |           |         |
| Norway                  | 45        | 29      |
| North and West region   | 34        | 22      |
| South and East region   | 79        | 50      |

**Table 2:** Total number of places in each category logged by the participants.

|  | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| The place/activity is outdoors           | 58        | 37      |
| The place/activity is related to sports  | 63        | 40      |
| The place is a publicly maintained space | 58        | 37      |
| The place is run/maintained by an NGO    | 18        | 11      |
| The place is a private business          | 57        | 36      |



### ***Cross-tabulation Results: Meeting Places and Differential Use of City Space***

This section presents findings from data where substantial differences were found between categories (e.g., if percentages of logged locations that were outdoors were substantially different for different age groups). We start with differences based on region of origin and sport-related locations, then, we consider outdoor and private business locations. Finally, we consider age and gender. Although we cannot extrapolate findings beyond the sample, we analyse these results and draw on related studies for insights into differences, and suggest areas for future research and some tentative implications for government, NGOs, and private businesses in designing activities to help new migrants participate in these cities.

### ***North and West Country Participants Logged Fewest Sport-Related Locations***

In locations logged by Norwegian participants and South and East country (migrant) participants, sport-related locations were identified (49% and 42% of posts, respectively) substantially more than by North and West country (migrant) participants (24%).

Although Ødegård et al. (2014) and Eimhjellen and Arnesen (2018) described how people with migrant backgrounds in Norway are less active in sport activities than Norwegians, our small-scale study only finds substantially less engagement in sport activities for North and West country participants. Further qualitative research may provide insight into reasons for these differences, but category of residency may be a factor, because in a qualitative study, labour migrants reported spending restricted time on sports, prioritising work instead (Aure, Førde & Magnussen 2018). Øian, Krangle and Christensen (2017) found that a neighbourhood improvement programme (Grorud Valley Programme in Oslo) increased the immigrants' use of local parks and participation in local sports (such as skiing and skating) by improving public spaces (especially with spatial planning input from local immigrant groups) and introducing immigrants to local recreation areas. Cartridge (2016) observed that immigrant women in Norway found social aspects of outdoor exercise (walking, in particular) to be a critical motivation to take part in these activities, which suggests that focusing on social components of sport-based integration activities may be important, especially for immigrant women. In a study from the same area, Figari, Haaland and Krangle (2009) found that walking in the neighbourhood was an important mode of exercise for immigrant women, both as a social activity and alone. Aquino et al. (2020) found that playing sports in public areas helps migrants generate a sense of belonging in Singapore, though the social exclusion migrants experience in the city extends to some extent to the sports in these public areas.

### ***Migrant Participants Logged Fewer Outdoor Locations than Native Norwegians***

North and West country participant and South and East country participant posts identified outdoor locations less often (29% and 23%, respectively) than Norwegian participant posts (67%).

This finding is similar to previous studies and interpretations (Bjerke et al. 2006; Skår, Rybråten & Øian 2018) and may relate to strong cultural ties in Norway to nature (Gurholt 2008). Nature is of special importance for Norwegians to find 'peace and quiet' and to become a 'full' person (Broch 2020a; Gullestad 1984, 1990; Longva 2003). Knowledge about how to enjoy Norwegian nature safely during winter, a cultural normative idea about the importance of spending time outdoors or having more access to nature (e.g., with cars and skis) also contribute to why migrants might spend less time outdoors than Norwegians. Bjerke et al. (2006) found that migrants in cities were more accustomed to engaging in social activities outdoors than nature-oriented activities, but only 27% of Norwegian respondents in their study stated that they (rather or very highly) valued social activities along the nearby Alna River; 72% of Norwegians (rather or very highly) valued these areas as places to enjoy calm and silence.

Other studies had similar findings with some nuances (Figari, Haaland & Krange 2009; Øian, Krange & Christensen 2017). Immigrants also saw areas with social interactions as safer, whereas Norwegians did not (Bjerke et al. 2006). Bjerke et al. (2006) found that immigrants were less knowledgeable about places in 'nature', whereas they knew more about organised places for outdoor activities such as football grounds. Bjerke and Krange (2011) found that class interacted strongly with ethnicity regarding lower participation of immigrant youth in outdoor activities. This may be related to class more than ethnicity, as the outdoors seem embedded in the Norwegian middle-class ethos (Broch 2020b; Gurholt 2008).

Ali and Czapka (2016) found differences in migrants' use of the outdoors between country of origin, age, and family form but discovered that time of stay in Norway did not relate to their view of outdoor activities or knowledge about organisations for outdoor activities. Most knew little or nothing about such activities. At one of the mapping events in the present study, an informant mentioned the need for such information in different languages. A survey by Pitkänen et al. (2017) revealed that one of the most important issues of nature-based integration in Nordic countries is increasing immigrants' knowledge of recreational opportunities in nature. The finding in the present study that migrants logged fewer outdoor locations than Norwegians may support the need for such information if aims are for migrants to have opportunities to enjoy the outdoors as (middle-class) Norwegians tend to do. Ongoing initiatives in Norway build knowledge about enjoying nature safely (e.g., Norwegian Tourist Association 2020). Researchers could study whether initiatives that focus on social activities outdoors are able to attract more immigrants (see Broch 2020a) and if they could motivate native Norwegians to try new outdoor activities and interact more with immigrants during such activities, creating an exchange and two-way learning and integrating process, rather than only teaching migrants the 'Norwegian way'.

### ***Migrants Posted More Private Business Locations than Native Norwegians***

Posts from South and East country participants listed private business locations most often (44% of posts), followed by posts from North and East country participants (35%), and posts from Norwegian participants (22%). Private businesses (such as restaurants, bars, gyms, and stores) are often located in central places with their doors open many hours per week. Immigrants may be more familiar with these places because they are easy to access for newcomers, whereas native locals may be more familiar with the public and NGO landscape, including activities they offer.

Lundberg and Danielsen (2010), in their study on Norwegian local community and place myths in cities, noted that in Norwegian culture, shopping malls are considered 'not a good place to be'. Although people use them, Norwegian adults may not attribute as much importance to these spaces as others. However, youths might not relate to such cultural norms in the same way as adults and clearly use such places, as found in research in certain contexts in Norway (Brattbakk et al. 2017; Hagen et al. 2016a, 2016b; Tolstad, Hagen & Andersen 2017). Therefore, it may be important for local NGOs and public entities to be sensitive to various cultural ascriptions to urban spaces. This research shows that private business spaces may be important for immigrants, although they might not align with Norwegian values of the outdoors.

### ***South and East Country Participants Logged Most Cross-cultural Interactions***

The online mapping tool asks participants if they interact with people from different cultural backgrounds at the locations they log. South and East country participants logged the highest rate of cross-cultural interactions at their locations (93%) compared with locations logged by Norwegian and North and West country participants (at 70% and 72%, respectively). This

may be partly because there are few people from their country in Norway to interact with. However, more research may be useful to study the hypothesis that immigrants in these cities from South and East countries make more effort to interact with people from different backgrounds.

Mayblin, Valentine and Winiarska (2016) found that Poles in Poland showed very little interest in interacting with migrants. This finding also relates to Amin (2002), who explained that the discourse on integration tends to describe migrants as holding together, forming ghettos, though studies show that migrants are far more involved with people of other ethnicities, whereas people of British background in Britain tend to keep to themselves, and mostly live in and use white-only neighbourhoods. Bjerke et al. (2006) detected relatively few interactions among ethnic groups during outdoor activities. Migrants primarily met with other migrants in their study. Research would be useful to examine whether integration initiatives could be more successful if they focused more on helping Norwegians integrate and get to know their fellow inhabitants.

### ***Men Logged Higher Rates of Cross-cultural Interactions than Women***

Gender, race, age and class are concepts involving spatial characteristics that interact in everyday life (McDowell 1999); this was also found in the present research. A higher proportion of men (91%) versus women (70%) logged locations where they claimed to interact with people from different backgrounds. The difference was larger between Norwegian men (100%) and women (44%). The differences were not as great between men and women from the other regions. The interaction of space with various social categories (e.g., gender, age and country of origin) may be important when planning integration initiatives. As Norwegian women logged cross-cultural interactions the least, activities targeting Norwegian women may be particularly useful.

### ***Younger Participants Logged Highest Rates of Cross-Cultural Interactions***

In all locations (100%) logged by participants under age 20, interaction with people from different backgrounds was identified. The differences between age groups were particularly notable for locations logged by Norwegian participants: 100% of those under age 20 claimed to have cross-cultural interactions, compared with 53% of locations logged by Norwegians between 20 and 65. This shows a hopeful trend for the integration of young people but may also reflect an effect of more opportunities, as compulsory public school and associated sport and arts activities offer organic opportunities for youths to interact with youths from other cultural backgrounds, especially in neighbourhoods with diverse populations. In addition, younger people may be more open to meeting new friends given the stage of life they are in. Youth are a great focal point for energising integration; however, these findings suggest that it may also be useful to focus some integration activities specifically on adults.

### ***Higher Rates of Cross-Cultural Interactions Were Logged in Tromsø Than Bodø***

There is a substantial difference between Tromsø (94%) and Bodø (43%) in the percentage of Norwegians who logged places where they claimed to interact with people from different backgrounds. Tromsø is a larger city and with a higher percentage of international residents: an estimated 15.8% of the residents are immigrants or Norwegians born to immigrant parents, compared to the same figure of an estimated 10.8% in Bodø in 2020 (Statistics Norway 2020). Also, Tromsø has a longer history of immigration. There may be fewer structures in place in Bodø for multicultural activities because of the shorter history of interactions among people of different backgrounds. If this is valid beyond the participants of the study, the implications may be particularly useful for Bodø. The monitoring levels of cross-cultural interactions in both cities would shed more light on this.

### **Norwegian Women Logged Fewer Publicly Owned Locations Than Immigrant Women**

Among locations logged by women, a higher percentage of North and West country participants (44%) and South and East country participants (42%) logged locations that were publicly owned/maintained compared to Norwegian women (17%).

Danielsen (2006) found that native Norwegians in Bergen, Norway, had ambivalent views on public parks; although some considered public parks to be good places for children, others were concerned about park cleanliness and drug use in parks. Places are gendered, and public places are not always safe for women (McDowell 1999) or for ethnic minorities or 'people of colour', as this is also a racialised issue (Broch 2020b; Fincher et al. 2019). Studies show that non-Western migrants tend to use urban parks and near-neighbourhood nature rather than wild nature areas (Figari, Haaland & Krange 2009; Øian, Krange & Christensen 2017); moreover, gender, ethnicity and the cultural inscription of the outdoors and *friluftsliv* influence the use of urban, publicly maintained spaces. Our findings support the claim that intersections of gender, ethnicity and class (Bjerke & Krange 2011), as discussed above, are critical when considering places and planning integration initiatives.

### **Participants Logged Publicly Owned Spaces Less Often in Bodø Than Tromsø**

A lower percentage of locations from Norwegian Bodø participants (27%) compared to Norwegian Tromsø participants (43%) logged publicly owned/maintained spaces. A similar trend was observed for locations logged by participants from South and East countries (29% for Bodø versus 57% for Tromsø), although near equal percentages were found for North and West country participants (33% and 37%, respectively). As publicly maintained spaces were logged by immigrant women at substantially higher rates than Norwegian women (above), further research may show these to be important places for immigrant women to feel connected to their new home cities. Research could be useful in Bodø in particular to see if an increase in public spaces, or in amenities in public spaces, may support integration, especially for women.

## **Conclusions**

This study created a participatory GIS system and recruited participants to log and describe locations where they spend time in the city. The logged data were categorised and analysed, and cross-tabulations were conducted. Results showed substantial differences between how various groups in our sample use city spaces, suggesting differences in 'sense of place' (Massey 1993), and interest in and access to different spaces, showing the relationality of places. The differences were put into context of the literature and discussed to support planning in these cities from an intersectional perspective. Planning for diverse use and interaction (Bodnar 2015; Jacobs 1961) may support encounters, help prevent stereotyping and prevent reinforcing inequalities but do not guarantee increased understanding (Amin 2002; Blokland 2008; Valentine 2008).

Although this PPGIS tool may provide less focused information than, for example researcher-led go-alongs (Kusenbach 2003), and some participants found this digital map difficult to connect with, there was excitement and positive anecdotal feedback from participants about this PPGIS.

Our findings suggest further research may be useful to better understand the cultural embeddedness of using different spaces (Gullestad 1990), including how some immigrants may wish to learn to safely enjoy local nature, and how inhabitants with diverse backgrounds are best served with different activities (including sport, non-sport, indoor, and outdoor). This suggests the planners of integration initiatives could consider reimagining how the concepts of *friluftsliv* best apply (or do not apply) to immigrant groups (Broch 2020a; Gurholt 2008).

These findings suggest it may be useful to evaluate how specific targeting, tailoring and communication of initiatives may facilitate urban meeting places and promote meaningful cross-cultural interactions. For instance, more targeting of initiatives for cross-cultural encounters (Amin 2002; Gilroy 2006) attractive to (and feasible for) adults may be useful. In addition to improved outreach to immigrants about existing services and initiatives to support acclimation and interactions, this study found it may be useful to develop programmes that help native Scandinavian populations connect with immigrants, for a majority-inclusive approach encouraging cross-cultural meetings.

These findings suggest gendered—but also intersectional—approaches considering ethnicity and class may be important to consider in creating more inclusive meeting places. For instance, activity-based initiatives and publicly maintained spaces may be particularly useful arenas to reach women. These findings support participatory approaches including targeted groups in planning meeting places and maintaining relations of use and knowledge about urban spaces among migrants (Buhr 2018).

### Data Accessibility Statement

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### Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

### Author Contributions

Gregory Taff and Marit Aure co-designed the study. Gregory Taff conducted quantitative data analyses. Gregory Taff and Marit Aure co-wrote the manuscript.

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