
Treball Fi de Màster

*Integrating refugees in shrinking cities through adaptative reuse:
architectural principles for refugee housing projects*

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MASTER THESIS

**INTEGRATING REFUGEES IN
SHRINKING CITIES THROUGH
ADAPTIVE REUSE: architectural
principles for refugee housing
projects**

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Abstract

In the current European context, characterised by an already tight housing market, finding adequate affordable housing to ensure successful integration for a growing influx of refugees is a major challenge. Consequently, refugees often end up settling in excluded and deprived urban areas, thus hindering integration. While capitals and major European cities feature affordable housing shortages, there is a significant number of homes and buildings sitting empty across Europe, with a high proportion located in shrinking cities. Thanks to the high number of vacant buildings, this study argues that small and mid-sized cities facing population and economic decline represent a unique opportunity to successfully integrate refugees in well-rooted mixed-use neighbourhoods through the adaptive re-use of abandoned buildings. This paper critically examines the principles that the interventions for the inclusion of refugees in shrinking cities should follow at both, the urban and the architectural scale, in order to achieve a more cost-efficient integration while contributing to community and urban resilience.

Through the review of secondary sources and the analysis of four refugee housing examples, this research determines requirements that a shrinking city needs to fulfil in order to enable the physical, economic and social integration of refugees and asylum seekers. Secondly, it will introduce some of the architectural principles that could be applied for future projects of adaptive re-use to maximise its positive effects on urban refugee integration processes.

Keywords: Urban refugee integration, physical integration, refugee housing, adaptive re-use, vacant buildings, urban regeneration, shrinking city, city resilience.

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1. Introduction

Housing is one of the most fundamental factors shaping the process of refugee integration as it is necessary to ensure dignified living standards but also because it fundamentally affects access to other elements that build integration. However, in the context of the tight and expensive housing market and the increasing arrival of asylum seekers that Europe is experiencing in recent years, ensuring access to adequate affordable housing for all the refugees and applicants is a major challenge for local authorities, NGOs and other organisations.

At the same time, the process of globalization has led to the concentration of population in major urban hubs, while leaving many other “secondary” cities with a severe population decline that materializes, among other things, in excess of vacant housing and abandoned buildings.

This thesis argues that those two realities can be combined to find better solutions for refugee integration and city resilience. Refugees and asylum seekers, like any other migrants, provide social and economic betterment to the host community in the long term (Council of Europe, 2019), and so, integration in shrinking cities could be seen as a two-way process that benefits both parts. The focus will be on how these cities offer a differential factor - the vacant existing buildings located in mixed-use neighbourhoods in or close to the city centre - that poses specific advantages for the integration of refugees, facilitating their access to services, infrastructure and social support networks (Seethaler-Wari, 2018) while contributing to a more cost-efficient housing provision through adaptive reuse. With that purpose, the thesis will critically analyse four examples of refugee housing interventions in Europe, in order to understand the architectural principles that should guide the projects of adaptive re-use for refugees in shrinking cities.

1.1 Background

Globalization has brought a migration trend towards “global cities” that tend to concentrate population by attracting investment, talent and social capital. As a result of this process, a growing number of minor cities are facing the opposite phenomenon, experimenting a sudden population and economic decline (Guimarães, Nunes, Barreira, & Panagopoulos, 2016; Martinez-Fernandez, Audirac, Fol, & Cunningham-Sabot, 2012).

In the context of the current humanitarian crisis exacerbated by the conflicts and instabilities in countries like Syria or Venezuela that are forcing hundreds of thousands

of people every year to flee their homes and seek asylum in Europe, the resettlement of refugees is challenging.

While the biggest cities are usually more attractive for refugees (Gillotti & Kildee, 2009), the infrastructure needed for the successful integration of refugees and asylum seekers can be saturated because of the high pressure that these housing markets are already experiencing (Fozdar & Hartley, 2014; Pesce & Bagaini, 2019). On the other hand, smaller cities with less demand for housing, a larger number of available dwellings, and therefore, lower renting prices could be an option to host these forcibly displaced people that could, at the same time, improve city resilience.

Since the 2007-2008 financial crisis, there is a huge amount of empty homes in Europe (Bruni, 2016; Neate, 2014; Razavivand Fard & Mehan, 2018). In 2014, vacant housing could accommodate twice the EU homeless population (Neate, 2014). This fact suggests that adaptive reuse, rather than new developments, could be a better option for refugee housing and urban rehabilitation.

1.2 Research topic and problem

This thesis will address the topic of urban refugee integration, focusing on how declining mid-sized cities, can be an opportunity for integrating refugees through the adaptive reuse of abandoned buildings while improving city resilience. Due to the population loss, shrinking cities usually have many vacant or under-occupied, both private and public buildings that municipalities would be happy to see inhabited and functioning. In contrast with rural areas risking complete abandonment, declining cities usually maintain the infrastructures and services to accommodate a population replacement easily. At the same time, it has been proved that refugees and migrants contribute positively to the economy, culture and society of destination (Council of Europe, 2019).

There is a large body of research on the benefits of adaptive reuse, but little has been written about how these projects should materialise to improve integration. This research aims to prove that adaptive reuse for refugee housing can be a favourable option to implement in shrinking cities and aims to identify which key architectural principles should guide the projects of adaptive reuse to improve integration.

This thesis connects two issues that have been widely studied independently - the growing need of adequate housing for refugee integration and the population and economic decline in shrinking cities - and examines the possible advantages of

implementing strategies that target both issues at the same time, taking the adaptive reuse of buildings as the physical basis for these strategies.

For that, the research will first analyse the literature about urban refugee integration in order to set a framework of requirements that can be then applied to the particular case of shrinking cities for evaluating if, and how, these cities could represent a viable option for refugee integration and how, at the same time, the influx of refugees could benefit these cities. It will then identify the benefits of adaptive reuse, both for refugees and cities, found in the literature, that justifies its implementation in shrinking cities. Finally, the case study analysis aims to shed light on which architectural features are more desirable in projects of adaptive reuse for refugee integration.

Objectives:

1. Analyse the physical, social and economic requirements for achieving successful urban refugee integration, with a particular focus on housing, and evaluate whether shrinking cities meet those conditions.
2. Examine how refugees contribute to city development, growth, sustainability and resilience and how that could be particularly beneficial for shrinking cities.
3. Explore the potentialities of adaptive re-use of buildings both for refugee integration and urban regeneration.
4. Outline the key architectural principles that should guide future projects of adaptive re-use of abandoned buildings for refugee integration.

2. Theoretical Background

The theoretical background comes from a literature review of the following topics: the factors affecting the integration process of refugees and asylum seekers in urban areas; the importance of housing for integration and the requirements of adequate housing for refugees; the specific characteristics of shrinking cities that can make them a suitable option for refugee integration and the positive effects that refugees have on shrinking city resilience; and the benefits of adaptive reuse of abandoned buildings both for the newcomers and the host community. It seeks to demonstrate that adaptive reuse in shrinking cities can be a consistent strategy for refugee housing and city resilience. The background will be structured in four sub-chapters.

- Parameters for Successful Urban Integration of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Europe.
- Housing as a Basic Pillar for Refugee Integration.
- Shrinking Cities as an Opportunity for Refugee Integration and Urban Resilience.
- Potentialities of Adaptive Re-use for Refugee Housing in Shrinking Cities.

2.1 Parameters for successful Urban Integration of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Europe.

This first chapter will study the existing literature about refugee integration in urban areas in the European context and the factors that can facilitate or hinder this process. It will not only focus on the people who have been granted the refugee status in the receiving country but also on those who are going through the asylum application process, as integration starts from the moment of arrival to the place of destination (Ager & Strang, 2010).

The key components of integration have been conceptualized by Ager and Strang (2008) in the ten core domains of integration, classified in four categories:

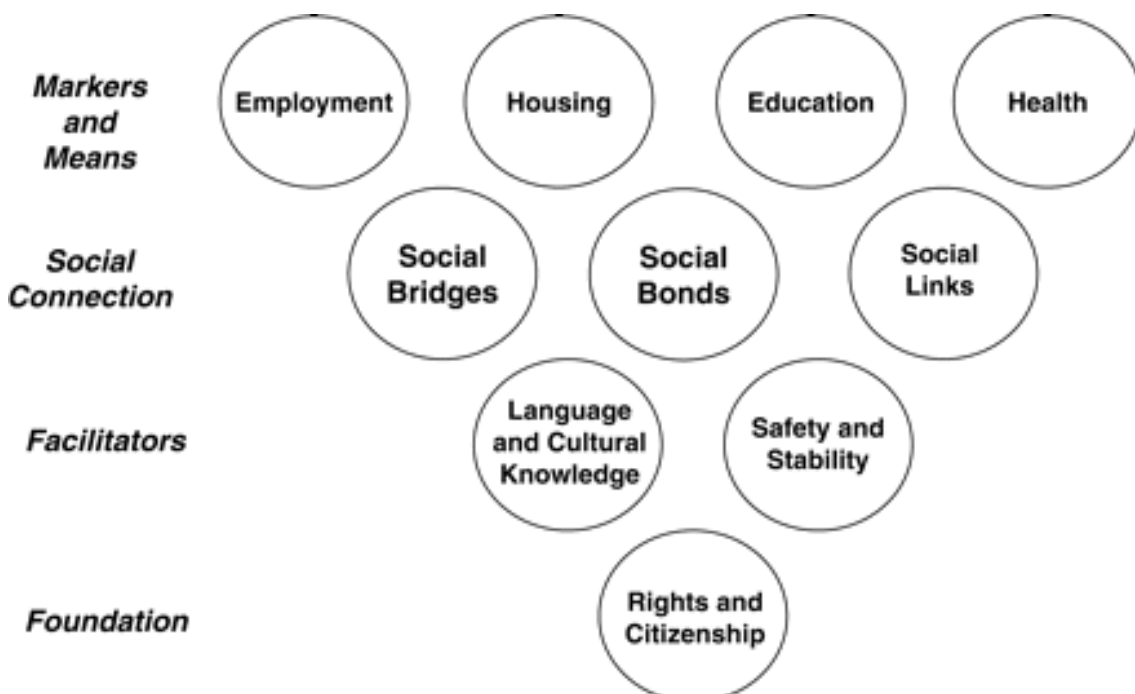


Figure 1 A Conceptual Framework Defining Core Domains of Integration.
Source: Ager & Strang, 2008

All these ten parameters are interconnected and need to be considered in holistic strategies for refugee integration, including projects for refugee housing.

Like any other migrant, refugees and asylum seekers are entitled to the fundamental human rights as well as those granted to all foreign legal residents including the right to adequate housing, health, education, employment rights and no discrimination (Council of Europe, 2019).

However, rights and citizenship are often limited when the asylum seeker has not yet achieved or has been denied legal status. The lack of legal status hinders integration as it prevents access to formal jobs and other fundamental domains for integration such as housing. It also enhances a tendency to criminalise refugees and migrants that affects negatively the public opinion (Ager & Strang, 2010).

Cultural and especially language knowledge are leading factors for social integration and access to means such as the labour market and housing (Ager & Strang, 2008). Thus to avoid language and cultural barriers, many local authorities, NGOs, and civil society organizations offer free training for newcomers. In order to ensure safety and stability for refugees and favour refugees' confidence to develop language and cultural skills, it is necessary to build friendly and welcoming host societies (Ager & Strang, 2010). For that, governments should implement intercultural education programs for the native residents along with migrants, and expose the positive contributions of migration (Blocher, 2017). This will also contribute to "addressing refugee integration in the context of social cohesion" (Ager & Strang, 2010, p. 602) involving the community as a whole instead of targeting programmes exclusively to refugees or migrants and thus, pointing at them as the problem (Blocher, 2017).

When having to settle in a new and unknown place, especially when that is not your choice, family can be fundamental for integration (Ager & Strang, 2010). In a similar way, co-ethnic integration is generally beneficial in terms of information, material, emotional and capacity building resources (Atfield *et al.* 2007; Griffiths *et al.* 2005; Spicer, 2008, in Strang & Ager, 2010). It is common to observe a more satisfactory integration in the cases where the host community had already members of the same ethnicity or religion and had developed support networks among them (Platts-Fowler & Robinson, 2015). However, sometimes integration in co-ethnic communities risks ethnic segregation and the formation of ghettos (Seethaler-Wari, 2018). Moreover, it has been proven that when refugees settle in a place, they eventually form bonds, even with no pre-existing co-ethnic networks in place (Ager & Strang, 2010). Civil society informal networks dedicated

to helping refugees can be very effective in fostering bonds between refugees and the local community (Ager & Strang, 2010). Additionally, bonds created between refugees and host community potentially foster further social links and bridges to other sectors of society and facilitate participation in economic and political life (Ager & Strang, 2010).

Among the tangible components of integration, access to housing and employment are the most problematic conditions. That is why, for the allocation of refugees, sovereign states should take into account the availability of affordable housing and match the refugees' skills to the existing job opportunities in the receiving city (Doomernik & Ardon, 2018). On the other hand, the right to education and healthcare are usually ensured in the receiving country; however, to facilitate integration, these services need to be easily accessible by the newcomers. Access to jobs, healthcare and education, as well as other services and facilities, is highly influenced by housing stability and location, which can bring services and job opportunities closer. For this reason, housing is considered a basic pillar for refugee integration (Contreras Conesa & Segura Lucas, 2002).

Integration is a two-way process which requires an effort to adapt from the refugees and asylum seekers but also the acceptance of the newcomers from the host community and action from the public authorities to guarantee them the access to accommodation, services, facilities and support (Threadgold & Court, 2005). The predisposition of the host community to include newcomers is critical for successful integration and can be improved through strategies that involve both the refugees and the long-term residents to improve social cohesion (Ager & Strang, 2010; Blocher, 2017; Çağlar & Glick Schiller, 2018). In this context, access to adequate housing is seen as fundamental, as it can either promote or hinder the fulfilment of other domains of integration, such as access to jobs and the development of social connections. At the same time, all these factors need to be considered in projects of housing for refugee integration. The next sub-chapter will approach the role of housing for refugee integration and the requisites that adequate housing for refugees must fulfil.

2.2 Housing as a basic pillar for refugee integration.

Housing is a fundamental human right included in the “right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being” and should be accessible for everyone as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 25.1 (United Nations General Assembly, 1948). Moreover, housing fundamentally affects the quality of life for asylum seekers and refugees (Carter, Polevychok, Friesen, & Osborne, 2008). Indeed, adequate housing is essential for the creation of a home, (Dutch Refugee Council, 1999) as it provides the feeling of safety and stability needed for starting building a new life in

the place of destination (Carter & Polevychok, 2004; Dutch Refugee Council, 1999; Fozdar & Hartley, 2014).

The OHCHR defines adequate housing as one that ensures the following minimum conditions: security in tenure; availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure; affordability; habitability; accessibility; location and cultural adequacy (UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2009; United Nations, 2017). Therefore, adequate housing is necessary in itself, in order to reach dignified living conditions, but also because the lack of it affects negatively the rest of the factors that build well-being (La Spina, 2009).

Adequate housing has a physical dimension, the spatial characteristics of the dwelling itself and its relation to its surroundings, but also a social dimension, as it can foster a sense of stability, security and belonging. (Ager & Strang, 2008; Fozdar & Hartley, 2014; Housing Associations' Charitable Trust, 2004).

Housing can provide safe shelter, "a safe place from which to leave and to return" (Fozdar & Hartley, 2014, p. 2), and directly affects access to other elements of the process of integration such as services, resources, job opportunities and social connections (Seethaler-Wari, 2018). From the physical point of view, several features influence the suitability of a dwelling for refugee and asylum seeker settlement:

- **Habitability; availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructures; and accessibility.** These are the most basic conditions that any kind of housing must provide regardless of who the occupants are. Habitability refers to the physical appropriateness of the dwelling in terms of stability, protection from the elements and provision of adequate livable space. Availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructures, involves access to safe water and sanitation, energy, food storage and disposal of refuse, while accessibility implies the adaptation of the architecture to the specific requirements of vulnerable groups, disabled or older adults (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2007; La Spina, 2009; UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2009).
- **Location.** The location of the housing unit within the urban structure can facilitate or hinder access to services and social integration. (Fozdar & Hartley, 2014; Netto, 2011; Seethaler-Wari, 2018; UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2009) That is why accommodating in mixed-use neighbourhoods,

generally in central areas of the city is beneficial for refugees and asylum seekers. There, they can easily access public administrations offices, NGOs offices, public facilities such as health or education centres, job opportunities, services and shops as well as social and religious associations. Having access to these services within walking distance, or being able to reach them through a good and affordable public transport system would help make their everyday life easier while allowing them to interact with the local population (100 Resilient Cities, 2016; Dutch Refugee Council, 1999; European Asylum Support Office, 2016; European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2007).

- **Cultural adequacy.** In order for it to become a home, housing needs to be culturally adequate, allowing for the expression of cultural identity and adapted in size and characteristics to the particular conditions of its occupants (La Spina, 2009; Pesce & Bagaini, 2019; UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2009). To achieve this, working with structures that allow spatial and functional flexibility and the customization of the dwelling to meet the personal needs and preferences of its inhabitants can be helpful. If this personalization is performed directly by the refugees or asylum seekers, it could provide a sense of investment and self-reliance that would increase the positive impact on the integration process (Pesce & Bagaini, 2019; UNHCR, 2015)

As mentioned, the concept of the home encompasses that of a house, the physical space, but also its social and psychological implications, the social and emotional connections that affect “peoples identities and psychological well-being” (Easthope, 2004, p. 128).

- **Psychological implications.** The concept of home is singularly important for asylum seekers and refugees who had to flee their countries and in many cases have been through traumatic experiences including the loss of their original homes (Ager, 1999; Fozdar & Hartley, 2014). Having a safe and adequate house means the possibility of building a home, thus, regaining self-identity and redeveloping a sense of ontological security, the feeling of well-being that arises from a sense of constancy in one's social and material surroundings giving a solid platform for self-actualization and identity development (Padgett, 2007).
- **Social implications.** The physical factors of location and cultural adequacy have a direct effect on the creation of a sense of belonging in the host community

(Carter & Polevychok, 2004; Carter et al., 2008; Fozdar & Hartley, 2014; Threadgold & Court, 2005). As already noted, local stores and services offer an opportunity to interact with the long term residents. For fostering the links between the newcomers and the host society, participation in civil society associations aimed at improving the social cohesion within the neighbourhood is crucial and can impact positively in the perception that the host community has of the refugees and vice-versa (Ager & Strang, 2004; Carter & Polevychok, 2004; European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2007; Fozdar & Hartley, 2014; Housing Associations' Charitable Trust, 2004; Wolffhardt, Conte, & Huddleston, 2019). Thus, living in a friendly and inclusive neighbourhood is critical for achieving successful integration (Carter et al., 2008). Likewise, settling in residential neighbourhoods located within the existing urban fabric rather than in new developments aimed at hosting refugees in the outskirts or deprived suburban districts helps avoid segregation and the creation of ghettos (Pesce & Bagaini, 2019; Seethaler-Wari, 2018).

Access to adequate housing can be difficult due to economic reasons and lack of legal status. As stated previously, housing adequacy also implies security of tenure and affordability. These two factors are vital in the case of refugee housing, as they affect the sense of stability and security needed to build successful integration (Fozdar & Hartley, 2014; Housing Associations' Charitable Trust, 2004). Moreover, the lack of affordable housing represents an obstacle to accessing employment (Carter & Polevychok, 2004), "Insecure and expensive housing undermine employment potential" (Housing Associations' Charitable Trust, 2004, p. 6). In this context, one of the most significant issues affecting housing for refugees is the general housing shortage in western countries and particularly in capitals and major cities (Carter & Polevychok, 2004; Eichner & Ivanova, 2018; Fozdar & Hartley, 2014; Goodson, Thomas, Phillimore, & Pemberton, 2017; Pesce & Bagaini, 2019). The lack of social and affordable housing in the main European cities forces migrants and refugees to settle in suburban districts or deprived urban areas with a considerable stock of vacant housing (Pesce & Bagaini, 2019; Phillimore & Goodson, 2006).

Housing plays a crucial role in asylum seeker and refugee integration. Secure affordable adequate housing facilitates the creation of a home and sets the basis for the construction of a new life. If culturally adequate and well located within the urban fabric, it also helps regain self-identity and develop a sense of belonging to the host community. However, good location and affordability are often incompatible or very rare in the major

European cities due to housing shortages. If the requisite for integration is the existence of a large stock of vacant housing units, could shrinking cities be a viable option for housing integration? And, what requisites should this kind of city accomplish to enable successful integration? The next chapter will analyse the features that characterize shrinking cities, their potential suitability to successfully integrate refugees, and how refugees can improve the city's resilience.

2.3 Shrinking Cities as an Opportunity for Refugee Integration and Urban Resilience

Shrinking cities are those that are experiencing population decline, mainly as a side effect of globalisation (Guimarães et al., 2016; Martinez-Fernandez et al., 2012) The usual symptoms of this shrinking cities are low natality rates, aged population and negative migration balance. Most of the times, this also carries a reduction of activity and employment, and abandonment of industrial and commercial areas (Sánchez Moral, Méndez, Prada Trigo, & Spanish Committee for the International Geographical Union, 2012).

The leading causes of urban shrinkage range from deindustrialization to suburbanization and migration to major global cities (Großmann, Bontje, Haase, & Mykhnenko, 2013; Hollander, Pallagst, Schwarz, & Popper, 2009; Radzimski, 2016). These processes increase the housing vacancy (Oswalt, 2005) in the core city. The excess of vacant properties is often seen as a problem, a sign of urban deterioration and abandonment (Mallach, 2012; Nelle et al., 2017), but it can also represent an opportunity for refugee integration and urban revitalization (LA CORTE, 2016).

Shrinking cities are taking action to cope with population decline in two main directions: Pro-growth policies and urban regeneration strategies (Guimarães et al., 2016; Pallagst, Fleschurz, & Said, 2017). Growth-oriented policies aim at attracting economic investment, revitalizing the industry and encouraging the settlement of new residents, ideally families and young skilled and entrepreneurial people (Martinez-Fernandez et al., 2012, 2015; Radzimski, 2016). On the other hand, some local authorities are developing policies for urban regeneration. These policies promote the demolition, reutilization or rehabilitation of vacant buildings and empty lots, and incentivize the settlement of residents in the core inner city (Glock & Häussermann, 2004; Guimarães et al., 2016; Martinez-Fernandez et al., 2015; Radzimski, 2016; Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012)

In this context, the integration of asylum seekers and refugees can be seen as a way of filling some of the gaps left by the out-migration and general population decline,

improving the cities resilience while providing refugees with adequate, affordable housing thanks to the high rate of housing availability.

Pro-migration strategies in the context of pro-growth policies (Pierre, 2011) are motivated by the problem of declining and ageing population (Berding, 2008). To compensate population decline, the migrant influx has sometimes been pointed out as the only possible solution. (Radzimski, 2016). Nevertheless, declining cities also face a shortage of skilled labour or, at least, a qualification mismatch between the available workers and the labour market needs, which could be potentially covered by newcomers (Brücker, 2013). In this sense, scholars recognize the need for a potential-focused perspective on migration rather than solely concentrating on the problems associated with integration (Nuisl & Schmiz, 2015; Pütz & Rodatz, 2013; Yildiz & Mattausch, 2009; cited in Kühn, 2018).

It is evident that “migrants and refugees contribute to the social, economic and cultural fabric of their host communities” (United Nations, 2015, p. 2). They positively impact urban regeneration in the place of destination, and particularly in shrinking cities, by reactivating underprivileged districts, occupying and rehabilitating vacant buildings, upgrading the standard of living by opening shops, increasing job opportunities through entrepreneurship and contributing to the economy as they pay taxes and elevate the demand of services and goods. (100 Resilient Cities, 2016; Bagchi-Sen, Franklin, Rogerson, & Seymour, 2020; D’Albis, Boubtane, & Coulibaly, 2018; Global Cleveland, n.d.; Global Detroit, 2010; Housel, Saxen, & Wahrab, 2016; Kühn, 2018; United Nations, 2015). Moreover, it has been observed that the percentage of skilled refugees is more significant than that of low-skilled ones. These qualified refugees could be an opportunity for local economies in communities characterized by low-skilled residents or ageing population (Phillimore & Goodson, 2006) if refugee allocation strategies aim to match refugees skills and labour market needs in each territory.

Furthermore, refugees are drivers of cultural and ethnic diversity (Global Cleveland, n.d.) which can attract new residents and businesses (Global Cleveland, n.d.; Kühn, 2018; Schiller & Çağlar, 2013). As stated in the New Urban Agenda, “cultural diversity contributes to the sustainable development of cities, human settlements and citizens” (United Nations, 2017, p. 4). Additionally, actions directed to successfully integrate newcomers can at the same time benefit the long-term residents, especially the most vulnerable, enhancing the social cohesion fundamental for urban resilience (100 Resilient Cities, 2016)

However, despite the clear positive impact that refugees and migrants make in the host community, they should not be seen as “fix-all” solutions to every urban problem. Social justice and refugees rights must be the guiding principles when dealing with the integration of resourceful yet vulnerable people (Pottie-Sherman, 2017). Therefore, cities need to be evaluated in relation to the parameters mentioned in section 2.1 to determine whether they are suitable for successful integration of refugees and adapt strategies for each city's particularities (Guimarães et al., 2016).

Mid-sized and small cities are less likely to attract migrants (Gillotti & Kildee, 2009). That is also the case of shrinking cities, but research has shown that population loss does not necessarily mean decay in the quality of life for their inhabitants (Hollander et al., 2009). On the other hand, more appealing major cities and capitals often have significant immigration rates with an already tight housing market leading to an overwhelmed housing infrastructure and high prices, especially in city centres (Fozdar & Hartley, 2014; Pesce & Bagaini, 2019). Shrinking cities featuring abundance in housing vacancy can make it easier for refugees to find adequate, affordable housing in convenient locations. As opposed to small villages, that may also offer cheap housing, shrinking cities still maintain the infrastructure, services and facilities to offer a good quality of life to the newcomers. Nevertheless, affordable housing availability is not enough to accomplish integration. Employment is also a vital factor, and the lack of it is actually one of the causes of population decline, so cities aiming to integrate refugees need to offer job opportunities fitting the refugees' skills and experience. The existence of training and work placement programmes as well as accrediting refugees' prior knowledge and qualifications are effective ways to facilitate labour integration (Phillimore & Goodson, 2006).

Regarding the social aspects, sense of belonging, happiness and residential satisfaction within the existing society are crucial for integration (Guimarães et al., 2016). Shrinking cities may lack the multicultural atmosphere that global cities enjoy. Little ethnic and cultural diversity might hinder integration, making these cities more prone to socio-ethnic conflicts (Platts-Fowler & Robinson, 2015). These potential issues can be tackled through anti-discrimination and awareness-raising programmes (Bagchi-Sen et al., 2020). In that sense, broader strategies addressing community resilience, regeneration strategies and social dynamics of shrinkage; and targeting other marginalised groups to promote social cohesion and reduce rejection from the local population can benefit integration processes (100 Resilient Cities, 2016; Pottie-Sherman, 2017).

Successful integration in shrinking cities needs a comprehensive approach that acknowledges refugee contribution to city development, growth, sustainability and resilience (United Nations, 2015). It must combine anti-racism and anti-discrimination strategies (Bagchi-Sen et al., 2020); tackle issues that affect the whole community such as affordable housing and employment, in order to engage the long-term residents and enhance social cohesion (100 Resilient Cities, 2016; Pottie-Sherman, 2017); and work towards inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities that promote equal rights for everyone (United Nations, 2017). If shrinking cities can supply satisfactory social and economic conditions, existing housing stock can represent an opportunity for refugee integration. More specifically, abandoned buildings in central residential neighbourhoods can be a good option for hosting refugees through rehabilitation and adaptive re-use, providing not only adequate accommodation but also urban regeneration and community cohesion.

2.4 Potentialities of Adaptive Re-use for Refugee Housing in Shrinking Cities.

High vacancy rates in Europe reveal reuse as a more sustainable way of addressing the housing problem (Bruni, 2016; Neate, 2014). This vacancy in major cities with high demand is often due to speculation, leading to high prices, while in rural areas and shrinking cities the simple lack of demand results in large stocks of vacant properties with more affordable prices. (Al Kailany, 2016; Neate, 2014; Pittini, 2019) In shrinking cities, empty housing and entire residential and industrial buildings can represent an opportunity for adaptive reuse and at the same time, a tool to enhance urban regeneration and counteract decline (Galdini, 2019)

Even in cases where there is no housing shortage in the private sector, the difficulty for renting properties due to owner reluctance to host refugees is present. It is often the case that homeowners do not trust refugees and fear breaches of the contract and property damages, even when organizations are in charge of covering the rent and responding for the refugees (Deprez & Labattut, 2016; Sprandel, 2018).

That is why, to facilitate the process of finding accommodation for refugees, buying or renting and transforming entire vacant buildings is becoming an interesting option for public actors and organizations dealing with refugee integration (Deprez & Labattut, 2016).

The concept of adaptive reuse alludes to the recuperation of a space or structure that can no longer host its original function by transforming it for a new use while maintaining and restoring its formal attributes (Galdini, 2019).

Adaptive reuse provides opportunities for better integration of the asylum seekers and refugees as well as for the local community and urban resilience (Bruni, 2016; Toma, 2017), especially in declining cities. This sub-chapter will examine the benefits of adaptive reuse for newcomers and city resilience:

Benefits of adaptive reuse for asylum-seekers and refugees

Adaptive reuse offers potential for both social and physical integration while facilitating affordability and access to adequate housing (Toma, 2017). Reusing existing buildings can offer time-efficiency and cost-efficiency, which are often significant challenges for housing refugees and asylum seekers while providing safe shelter (Dabaieh & Alwall, 2018; İdemem, Acar, & S. Mert, 2016). The characteristics and location of these buildings within the existing urban fabric fosters the creation of a new sense of place, enhances social interactions and accessibility to services and income.

The possibility to host refugees in well-rooted mixed-use central districts ensures adequate physical integration in the urban context, vital for refugee integration (Toma, 2017). As discussed in the previous sub-chapters, the location of the dwelling and proximity to urban amenities, services and jobs can radically shape the process of asylum seeker, and refugee integration (Deprez & Labattut, 2016; Fábos & Kibreab, 2007; Razavivand Fard & Mehan, 2018). Housing refugees in existing buildings connect newcomers with neighbourhoods that would be inaccessible for them if settled in new developments in suburban areas or city outskirts (Anguelovski, 2014). It can also facilitate access to spaces available for cultural and commercial activities, thus enabling their participation in economic activities and enhancing their entrepreneurial potential, ideally combining with systematic training (Dunham-Jones & Williamson, 2008; Razavivand Fard & Mehan, 2018; Saunders, 2011)

Furthermore, adequate physical integration often results in improved social integration, as establishing in a favourable neighbourhood can facilitate social connections and community participation (Razavivand Fard & Mehan, 2018), enhancing social cohesion and the creation of a sense of community (Galdini, 2019) while aiding the acceptance of newcomers by the local population (Toma, 2017). Adaptive reuse can also help prevent marginalisation and avoid ghettoization (Razavivand Fard & Mehan, 2018) These established urban places enable some kind of anonymity that makes it more difficult to become the target of hate and violence and redounds in enhanced safety (Fábos & Kibreab, 2007). Adaptive reuse can increase this effect as it implies homogeneity both at the architectural form and the urban landscape level (Toma, 2017).

However, a benign physical environment in itself does not ensure acceptance and inclusion. As some experiences of informal occupation of buildings for refugees have proved (like the case of the City Plaza Hotel in Athens, Greece), official recognition and support from public authorities are key for reducing social and spatial segregation (Razavivand Fard & Mehan, 2018). Moreover, to cultivate more inclusive communities, there is a need to diversify, mixing refugees not only with other marginalised groups but also enabling them to settle in middle-class and upper-class neighbourhoods (Al Kailany, 2016) a factor that can affect refugees' self-perception of their dignity and worthiness (Vandevoordt & Verschraegen, 2019).

Finally, all the factors mentioned above help create a new sense of place for the refugees, aiding them to both rebuild their sense of identity and develop a sense of attachment to the place of destination (Razavivand Fard & Mehan, 2018). After often forced and traumatic disconnection from their homes, connecting with their new places is beneficial for refugees psychological and overall well being (Gladkikh, Gould, & Coleman, 2019).

Benefits for city resilience

The process of adaptive reuse exploits the built object as an aesthetic, cultural and economic resource, providing environmental, social and economic benefits for urban regeneration and sustainable development (Ferretti & Degioanni, 2017; Ferretti & Grosso, 2019; Galdini, 2019) thus, enhancing urban resilience (Razavivand Fard & Mehan, 2018). The fact that it is dedicated to hosting refugees increases these social benefits as it assists in building up multiculturalism among the host community.

The reuse of existing built assets contributes to the city's compacity, thus improving cities' sustainability from the economic and environmental point of view (Razavivand Fard & Mehan, 2018). At the building level, adaptive reuse has proven to be better in terms of sustainability as it makes a lesser impact on the environment than new constructions, improves cost efficiency, contributes to a circular economy and reduces the consumption of new land and natural resources. (Chan, Bachmann, & Haas, 2020; Easthope & Löschke, 2017; Ferretti & Grosso, 2019; Foster, 2020; Galdini, 2019; Sanchez & Haas, 2018). In addition, abandoned properties are a burden on cities both from the economic and social point of view (Razavivand Fard & Mehan, 2018). However, time and cost-efficiency depend on the state of conservation and other factors like the ownership regime, as dealing with only one instead of multiple homeowners can ease the process (Catholic Relief Services, 2016).

Urban infill and adaptive reuse bring densification to cities, improving continuity and connectivity and strengthening bonds within existing neighbourhoods (EPA Office of Sustainable Communities, 2015). Reusing older and existing structures has proved to be a powerful strategy for reestablishing and reinforcing services and amenities and revitalising neighbourhoods, therefore, recovering economic and social potentials (Galdini, 2019; Pesce & Bagaini, 2019). This practice also allows for mixing and creating diverse neighbourhoods and economies (Al Kailany, 2016), avoiding ethnic segregation (Pesce & Bagaini, 2019). The negative side of this urban regeneration is that it comes with the inherent long-term risk of gentrification, as it renders neighbourhoods more attractive to higher-class residents and could eventually result in the rise of property prices and the displacement of more vulnerable long-term residents (Atkinson & Bridge, 2004).

Preserving heritage buildings and other existing urban elements is vital for maintaining urban memory (Orbasli & Woodward, 2012; in Toma, 2017) and transmitting the cultural identity of a place (Morant & Viñals, 2012; Razavivand Fard & Mehan, 2018). When those buildings have lost their original use, giving them a new function is the only way to safeguard their symbolism, relevance and meaning (Galdini, 2019; Misirlisoy & Günçe, 2016). Moreover, Adaptive reuse projects are powerful tools to engage the community in the city-making mechanism, “creating a synergy between past and future” and improving social cohesion and sense of identity (Galdini, 2019, p. 104).

In shrinking cities where population decline has left plenty of houses and buildings empty, adaptive reuse is a consistent strategy which offers diverse benefits for the refugees from the economic, physical and social point of view; and for the city’s resilience, as it aids improve economic and environmental sustainability, quality of life, recovers place identity and enhances social cohesion. However, when implementing this kind of initiatives, potentially negative side effects like gentrification should be carefully considered.

Given the potentialities of adaptive reuse, both for the refugees and city resilience, the following case study analysis seeks to identify the architectural principles that should guide future projects of adaptive reuse for refugee housing.

3. Methodology and Case Study Selection

The lack of affordable housing in major European cities suggest the need to explore other options for refugee integration. This thesis argues that the transformation of vacant buildings in shrinking cities into different forms of affordable housing for refugees could be a cost-effective and resilient solution if the architectonic parameters of the transformation respond to integration demands. The aim is to identify which key architectural principles should guide the projects of adaptive reuse to improve integration and ensure dignified living standards. The methodology used to achieve the objective consists of a revision of the existing guidelines on refugee housing and integration in Europe and an analysis of four examples of refugee housing interventions from the architectural point of view.

The critical analysis will start with a revision of the following European guidelines on refugee integration, paying special attention to the aspects related to housing and its physical adequacy to examine the current requirements regarding refugee housing in the European Union.

- G.1** Toolkit On The Use Of EU Funds For The Integration Of People With A Migrant Background. (European Comission, 2018).
- G.2** A New Beginning: Refugee Integration In Europe. (UNHCR, 2014).
- G.3** Working Together For Local Integration Of Migrants And Refugees. (OECD, 2018).
- G.4** A Place To Live, A Place To Stay: A Good Practice Guide For Housing In Refugee Resettlement. (ICMC Europe, The North West Gateway Resettlement Partnership, & SHARE, 2014).
- G.5** European Commission Directive Proposal On Standards For The Reception Of Applicants For International Protection. (European Commission, 2016).
- G.6** Settling In 2018. (OECD & European Commission, 2018, p. 110).
- G.7** Housing And Integration Of Migrants In Europe. (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2007).
- G.8** EASO Guidance On Reception Conditions: Operational Standards And Indicators. (European Asylum Support Office, 2016).

This analysis will serve to create a framework of minimum requirements to start evaluating the different case studies and find the gaps in the guidelines that need to be filled through further analysis in order to define the architectural principles that could ensure desirable living conditions and improve refugee integration.

After identifying the gaps in the guidelines, four practical examples of refugee housing interventions will be analysed to extract other architectonic recommendations that could complement the existing guidelines on refugee housing and are specific for adaptive re-use. The four cases analysed are: City Plaza, Athens, Greece. U Focularu, Badolato, Italy. Empty houses for the homeless project, Vitoria, Spain. Office building conversion into apartments for refugees, Munich, Germany.

The physical assessment has been carried out through the review of secondary sources including images, plans, drawings, videos, news, press articles and academic studies of the four cases. Additionally, two informal personal interviews were carried out, one with the people in charge of the project Empty Homes For The Homeless, and another with Sara Vargues, a former student of this course who had analysed the City Plaza initiative.

The background will summarise the characteristics of the context in which each adaptive re-use experience took place, as the architectonic response needs to be explained in relation to other aspects such as the location, the legal status of the project, and the urban and social connections, so the results and recommendations can be extrapolated.

The architectonic analysis will look at the following parameters extracted from the revision of the guidelines and the literature review on refugee housing and adaptive re-use:

- The original use of the building.
- Habitational typology (rooms/apartments/houses)
- Private spaces
- Availability and use of public spaces within the building
- Level of adequacy of the existing structure for the new use
- Level of flexibility offered by the structure
- Level of participation of the refugees (customisation)
- Level of Privacy
- Level of adaptation to Socio-Cultural Needs

Though the revision of the existing guidelines and the analysis of practical examples of refugee housing interventions, the purpose of this study is to define an initial set of key architectural principles that could guide future projects of adaptive re-use for refugee housing to reach, not only the minimum standards for habitability, but also the desirable living conditions and, at the same time, improve the process of integration of refugees and asylum seekers.

3.1 Case Study Selection

The case study selection responds to the intention of critically evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of different architectural solutions, highlighting the positive and negative aspects of each intervention, and extract lessons for future projects. Further analysis employing qualitative methods should be conducted to assess how these physical features affect refugee social integration.

The case studies differ not only in the architectural solutions but also in the urban characteristics of the place in which they have been applied, the level of intervention and adaptation, and even the stage of the project (see table 1 below). However, all of them feature interesting facets that will be valuable for this study.

Table 1. Classification of the four case studies analysed.

Name of the project	Location	Years	Stage
City Plaza	Athens, Greece	2016-2019	Dismantled
U Focularu	Badolato, Italy	1997-Ongoing	Functioning
Empty houses for the homeless.	Vitoria, Spain	2018-Ongoing	Functioning
Office building conversion into apartments for refugees.	Munich, Germany	Currently in planning	Planing level

This variety will allow for a broader analysis, as it will look at several different options for each parameter of the adaptive re-use, and thus, the results will lead to more comprehensive recommendations that could be applied in different contexts including shrinking cities.

3.2. Limitations

The primary limitations affecting this study are related to the current health crisis due to the pandemic of COVID-19. On the one hand, this situation and the subsequent lockdown has made it impossible to carry out any kind of direct observation or in-person interview. On the other hand, the crisis has altered the normal development of stakeholders work, daily life and priorities and presumably affected their psychological and mental health state thus hindering the possibility of having virtual interviews in most cases.

These conditions impeded the development of the original case study research, which had to be replaced by a type of research that could rely almost exclusively upon secondary sources. This change resulted in a reduction of the time available for planning and researching the new case studies, thus limiting the amount and variety of information accessible for the analysis.

4. Case Study Analysis

As presented in the methodology, this chapter examines existing European guidelines on the integration of refugees and migrants, in search of references to the architectonic characteristics that housing for refugees must comply, and aims to fill the gaps through the analysis of four practical examples of refugee housing interventions.

4.1 EU Integration guidelines Analysis.

The guidelines analysed, see table 2, tackle housing from the social, economic and physical perspective, including allocation, complementary social and economic measures to improve integration and access to affordable housing, and the physical aspects of the housing and its surroundings. Regarding The physical aspects, these guidelines introduce a clue about the recommended typologies and the minimum requirements regarding size, physical and material standards, quality of the environment, access to the basic amenities and services and minimum conditions for the common and private spaces. However, They make more emphasis on the social aspects of housing. While most of the guidelines focus on the need to avoid segregation and promote interaction and cohesion between migrants and locals (G.1, G.2, G.3, G.5, G.7, G.8), some also point out the special needs of refugee families in terms of housing size, that require innovative solutions to prevent overcrowding (G.3, G.4, G.6, G.7, G.8). In general, the references to the physical aspects are very vague. Only the EASO guidance (G.8) offers more specific parameters defining the characteristics of the bedrooms, the minimum requirements of the shared spaces and what is considered adequate access to sanitary infrastructure. These parameters are found to be insufficient for generating desirable living spaces for integration and not specific for projects of adaptive reuse for refugee housing. A more detailed summary of the main aspects of refugee housing mentioned in each guideline can be found in annex I.

Table 2. A framework of minimum requirements for Refugee Housing extracted from the Analysis of the EU Guidelines for Refugee Integration.

Guiding Principles for Refugee Housing Physical Adequacy	
Allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose a location that facilitates access to essential quality services. • Maintain family unity. • Consider age and gender-specific concerns, as well as other special conditions. • Reduce residence transfer to the minimum necessary.
Integration	<p>Implement complementary measures that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help avoid segregation and improve social inclusion, access to employment, health and education. • Engage landlords and social housing authorities to facilitate refugees access to housing. • Contemplate a demographic mix. • Involve the applicants in the management of material and non-material resources in the accommodation centres.
Typology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective accommodation: Hotels and accommodation centres for transitional shelter or especially vulnerable cases that demand daily support. • Independent housing: Residential blocks as well as dispersed houses or flats for longer-term use. Independent housing is generally recommended.
Ensure adequate size	<p>In relation to the number of residents to avoid overcrowding, considering that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size of the resettled households tends to be larger frequently leading to overcrowded dwellings. • In many cases, individuals arrive on their own.
Ensure housing meets minimum physical and material standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not too dark. • Is physically secure and does not risk collapse. • The estate of conservation is good or can be restored. • Provide sufficient and adequate equipment and furniture for all residents.

Ensure the quality of the housing environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of green areas nearby. • Acceptable noise level. • Acceptable air pollution level.
Ensure access to basic amenities and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water. • Electricity. • Adequate flush toilets that allow for intimacy. • Sink, baths or showers that allow for intimacy. • Sufficient heating. • Laundry regularly. • Communications: Phone calls and internet and charging personal communication devices. • Building sanitation and maintenance (refugees can be involved in this tasks)
Common spaces	<p>Provide common spaces inside or outside the building for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal support in a private setting. • Language and vocational training. • Community and leisure activities for the refugees and others that engage the local community. • Leisure activities and education for children. • Eating, in a room with sufficient and adequate space, tables and chair for all residents. <p>Special consideration for gender issues, ensuring women's safety, intimacy and well-being.</p>
Private spaces	<p>All bedrooms must have a door that can be closed and a window that can be opened.</p> <p>In collective housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bedrooms should be lockable • With a minimum of 4 m² per person • Enough space for a bed and a cupboard for each applicant • A maximum of six single applicants per bedroom • Males and females separated in different bedrooms. • Minimum passageway of 90 cm between beds.

4.2 Case Study Physical Analysis.

The second part of the critical analysis will look at four different case studies. After synthesizing the most important features of each of them, they will be evaluated according to some parameters extracted from the revision of the guidelines and the literature review on integration, refugee housing and adaptive reuse. This evaluation will show the advantages and disadvantages of the four different approaches and which conditions, not contemplated in the existing guidelines, are found to be necessary and could be recommendations and best practices for future projects. Due to the current situation caused by Covid19, access to information about the case studies has been very limited. Therefore, the author acknowledges that a second phase of research, including qualitative methods and direct observations, should be conducted in order to obtain more conclusive results and better understand how the physical aspects influence the process of integration. (See annex II).

4.2.1 Case Study: City Plaza Hotel

4.2.1.1 Context

City Plaza was a squat experience in the neighbourhood of Exarchia, in the centre of Athens aimed at hosting refugees arriving in Athens from different refugee camps who got stuck in Greece due to the closure of the Balkans Route. It started on April 22, 2016, with the occupation of a hotel that had been abandoned for seven years (Velegrakis, 2017).

The choice of City Plaza was not casual. Close to Victoria Square, its location in the centre of the city, and a socially accepting neighbourhood facilitated the integration of the refugees and asylum seekers. Victoria neighbourhood is home for a large number of migrants but also many far-right wing supporters who have made these migrants the target of their violence. It is also close to the neighbourhood of Exarcheia, characterised by an already existing “squat culture” and solidarity networks but also the centre of several violent protests, a fact that could affect the process of integration negatively (“City Plaza Hotel : a landmark of solidarity in Athens - MIGREUROP,” n.d.; “One year at City Plaza in Athens/Open Migration,” n.d.).



Figure 2. Plan showing the location of City Plaza in relation to other refugee facilities in the neighbourhoods of Victoria, Exarchia and Omonia.

Source: Elaborated by the author. Data from Migreurop (2017), *Atlas des Migrants en Europe. Approches critiques des politiques migratoires*, Paris, Armand Colin. Sarah Bachelier and Sophie Clair.

Despite the international solidarity, over time it became hard to procure all the material resources needed for such project and the continuous risk of eviction put in danger the residents of City Plaza, especially those lacking legal status (“39 MONTHS CITY PLAZA: THE END OF AN ERA, THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ONE,” 2019), so in 2019 City Plaza was finally brought to a close.

4.2.1.2 Physical Analysis

For the purpose of this project, a hotel was found to be the perfect typology, as it allowed for a collective living environment that combined private rooms for the families with shared spaces.



Figure 3. Exterior of the City Plaza Hotel in 2017. Source: <http://politicalcritique.org/world/eu/2017/camilli-city-plaza-athens-refugees/>

The philosophy was based on self-organisation, solidarity and participation. Both activists and refugees worked collectively in all the tasks such as cleaning, cooking, repairing and running the rest of the activities. This system helped the recently arrived asylum seekers overcome trauma and start a new life (S. Vargues, personal communication, May 4, 2020). Table 3 synthesises the physical analysis of the building.

Table 3. City Plaza Physical Analysis.

Original use of the building.	Hotel
Legal status of the asylum seekers	Diverse. Some were granted the refugee status, but most of them still waiting for the resolution.
Habitational typology	Private room with bathroom for each family plus common spaces.

Private spaces

- The hotel rooms: The refugees occupy the rooms from the second to the fifth floor (both inclusive). The sixth floor is reserved for the volunteers.
- The rooms are simple and not very big, usually with two single beds, and sometimes an additional bed.



Figure 4. Children playing in one of the rooms. Source: <https://youtu.be/bqsWqFGQiss>

- All the rooms had a private bathroom and a balcony which gave some extra space for relaxing and hanging out the washing.
- Each refugee family occupied a room. If the family was big, they were given two rooms.



Figure 5. Man reading in one of the balconies. Source: <http://politicalcritique.org/world/eu/2017/camilli-city-plaza-athens-refugees/>

- Refugees coming on their own shared the room with the resident who was more compatible with them.

Availability and use of common spaces within the building

- Located mostly in the ground and first floor.
- Used and run by all the residents, functioning as “public spaces” for the community.
- These places served to cover all the basic needs of the refugees while providing additional support available at all times.

Entrance with security: To protect residents from eviction and violence coming from the extreme right-wing.

Reception desk



*Figure 6. Reception Desk at City Plaza managed by a rotating staff of international volunteers
Source: Lynsey Addario—Getty Images Reportage for TIME.*

Storage and cleaning: All residents have to help in the cleaning and repairing of the spaces.

Kitchen: Industrial kitchen where refugees and volunteers cook around 1,000 meals a day.



Figure 7. Residents and volunteers working in the collective kitchen. Source: <https://youtu.be/bqsWqFGQiss>

Dining room: meals are distributed and residents can sit and eat.



Figure 8. Dinner served by the kitchen team.
Source: irinnews.org

Medical centre: room used by nurses and doctors, both refugees and volunteers, to treat the. They also coordinate with the public health care system.



Figure 9. Medical Center run by volunteers and refugees.
Source: <https://youtu.be/bqsWqFGQiss>

Hairdresser: Close to the reception.



Figure 10. Hairdresser in the reception floor. Source:
<https://youtu.be/bqsWqFGQiss>

Café/Bar: This facility helps finance the initiative.

Language classes: Teachers provide Greek, English and German lessons for adults and children.

Children areas: Children of different ages received lessons in their mother tongues, Greek and English and participated in different activities and games. Some activities took place outdoors. A space on the first floor is used as a kindergarten.



Figure 11. Collective activity in the children's space.
Source: europeanaffairs.media.

Women's room: because of cultural reasons many women used to stay in their rooms most of the time. Here they could attend courses, English lessons, and receive important information about gynaecological issues in a safe space.

Rooftop terrace: Safe outdoor space within the building for relaxing and hanging.

Level of adequacy of the existing structure for the new use.

- All installations already in place, like water, electricity and heating that the activists reconnected.
- All the furniture and other equipment already in place. Good state of conservation (rehabilitated in 2004).
- The transitional character of the accommodation and the hotel typology resulted in some residents behaving as guests and possibly hindering the process of becoming independent.

Level of flexibility offered by the structure

- The private rooms are rigid, because of the partitions and the position of the bathrooms.
- Collective spaces on the ground and first floor were quite flexible, admitting several different uses. Small physical interventions helped adapt the space for the new functions (e.g. hotel's dining room was divided, and one part was turned into a space for the refugee's youth to gather and receive language lessons).



Figure 12. Part of the hotel's dining room turned into as a space for the refugee's youth to gather, hang out and receive language lessons. Source: Lynsey Addario—Getty Images Reportage for TIME

<p>Level of participation of the refugees (customisation)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The customization from the refugees appeared to be limited to adding some decorations and hanging drawings and murals on the walls. • This low level of personalization could respond to the collective “ownership” of the common spaces and the transitional character of the accommodation.
<p>Level of Privacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privacy only in the rooms. • All members of the family had to share the same space, leading to a lack of individual privacy which could be a problem in the mid and long-term.
<p>Level of adaptation to Socio-Cultural Needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varies as the residents came from many different nations and backgrounds. • The creation of a private space only for women reflects an aim to address this issue.

The most interesting aspect of this refugee housing initiative is the adequacy of the hotel typology for the purpose of the project and how the shared spaces described in table 2 facilitate the provision of support programmes within the building. However, this concentration of refugees in a single building and the lack of legal recognition from the government made them prone to insecurity (see “Entrance with security” in table 3) and stigmatisation (S. Vargues, personal communication, May 4, 2020), aspects that could lead to a certain level of segregation. Furthermore, the assistance character of the typology could slow down the process of achieving autonomy in some cases, as this quote exemplifies “*People feel super comfortable there, they can stay for two years*” (S. Vargues, personal communication, May 4, 2020).

4.2.2 Case Study: U Focularu

4.2.2.1 Context

This project arose from the need of providing dignified accommodation to more than a thousand Kurds that arrived to the coasts of Calabria, in southern Italy in 1997. Badolato is a medieval village that has suffered a strong depopulation in the last century, reducing its inhabitants from seven thousand to only five hundred (World Habitat, 2006). The Mayor of Badolato asked the local population to collaborate by making available their vacant and abandoned houses to accommodate the asylum seekers and allow for family reunification. Immediately the pilot project was born, with the cooperation of the Italian Council for the Refugees (CIR) and the municipality of Badolato (Comune di Badolato, n.d.).

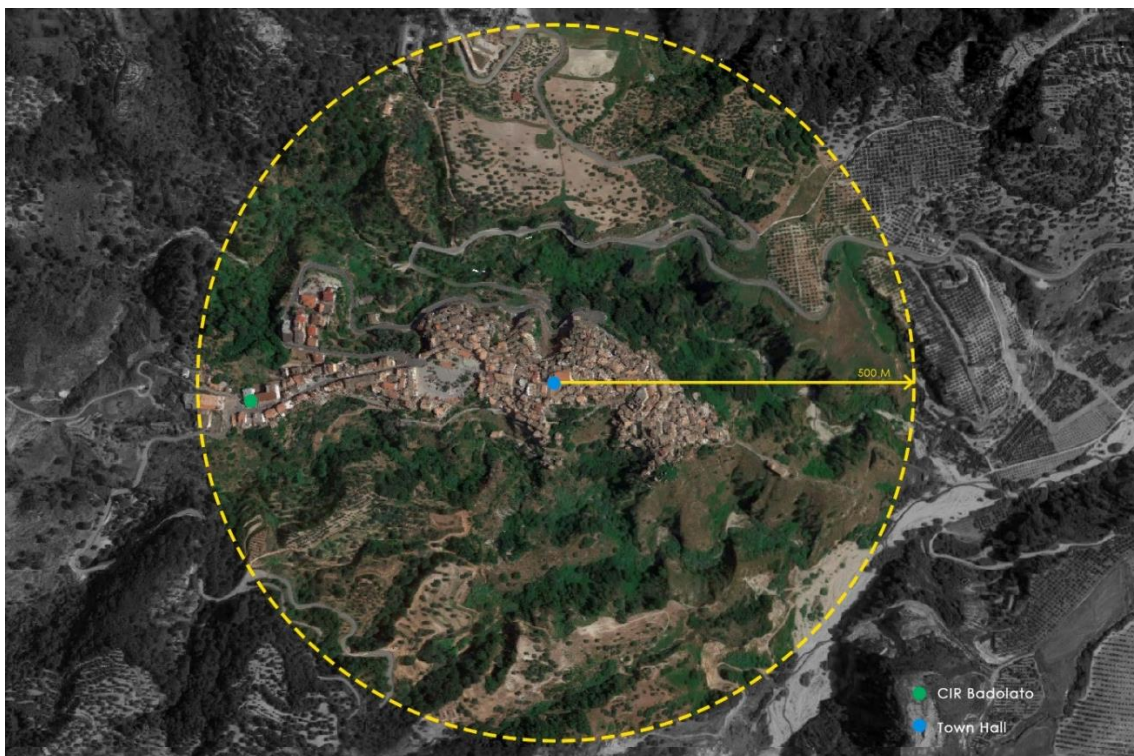



Figure 13. Medieval village of Badolato showing the CIR office and the Town Hall
Source: elaborated by the author.

Positive side effects emerged from the project, as it reactivated the economy, attracted tourism to the rehabilitated medieval village and some former inhabitants of Badolato re-established in their hometown (World Habitat, 2006). However, despite the local population highly contributed to the integration of the asylum seekers in Badolato, and some found jobs in the agriculture and services sectors within the village, the limited job opportunities resulted in many refugees leaving to other parts of Europe (Canelles, 2013; World Habitat, 2006).

4.2.2.2 Physical Analysis

The municipality bought eighteen houses at a very low price thanks to the solidarity of the owners and employed the most substantial part of the budget to buy basic items and restore the buildings, involving local builders and the asylum seekers in the process. The entire village acted as a reception centre, with the public spaces and facilities working as places for interaction between refugees and locals. Table 4 synthesises the physical analysis of the project.

Table 4. U Focularu Physical Analysis.

Original use of the building.	Independent houses.
Legal status of the asylum seekers	Mostly asylum seekers waiting for the resolution.
Habitational typology	<p>Private houses dispersed among the medieval centre of the village.</p>  <p><i>Figure 14. View of the medieval village of Badolato. Source: https://www.world-habitat.org/es/premios-mundiales-del-habitat/ganadores-y-finalistas/u-focularu-the-home-village/</i></p>
Private spaces	The whole house is private, occupied by one family each.
Availability and use of common spaces within the building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houses are independent and dispersed. • Public spaces and facilities in the village became common spaces for interaction between the refugees and the long-term residents (e.g. School). • The office of CIR provided support for the refugees.

<p>Level of adequacy of the existing structure for the new use.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use remains residential. • Required rehabilitation including repairing or reconnecting basic installations. (Traditional wood heating was retrofitted and maintained in all the properties). • Basic furniture and equipment were provided by the project.
<p>Level of flexibility offered by the structure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility limited by the historic structure. • The process of restoration allowed to make some spatial adjustments.
<p>Level of participation of the refugees (customisation)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In many cases, the asylum seekers participated actively, along with the owners and other volunteers in the restoration of the houses. <div data-bbox="703 757 1353 1099" data-label="Image"> </div> <p><i>Figure 15. Local builder and refugee working on the rehabilitation of a house.</i></p>
<p>Level of Privacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High, as the whole house was destined to a family and family members could find their own space.
<p>Level of adaptation to Socio-Cultural Needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houses in a southern Italy rural context with cultural similarities to some of their countries of origin.

This example shows the potential of abandoned houses to become safe and adequate housing for refugees which at the same time give them the opportunity to participate in the process of renovation and form bonds with the local builders and volunteers (See figure 15 in table 4). This participation could also provide refugees with a sense of investment and self-reliance that, along with the inclusive and culturally familiar context of this southern Italy village (Canelles, 2013), might have derived in the development of a sense of belonging to their new home.

4.2.3 Case Study: Empty Houses for the Homeless Project

4.2.3.1 Context

This project was created in Vitoria, a mid-sized Spanish city with a population of 251,774 inhabitants (as of 2019)(Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE), 2020). The responsible for this project is ArTeale, a collaborative and interdisciplinary social entity based in Vitoria, in collaboration with ACCEM and with the support of the local authorities. The project aims to help asylum seekers find adequate accommodation after the six months of first reception by pairing socially conscious landlords with refugee families. They accompany them in the process of building trust and confidence so that they can sign a conscious rental contract that takes into consideration the needs and red lines of both the tenants and the landlords. Moreover, ArTeale promotes initiatives for social inclusion of refugees in the local community (Anitua, 2019; M.J. Anitua and I. Vera, personal communication, April 29, 2020).



Figure 16. Location of the flats of the pilot project in relation to the city centre, the town hall and the two organisations involved.

Source: Elaborated by the author

4.2.3.2 Physical Analysis

This project allows asylum seekers to access adequate, affordable housing that was sitting empty in convenient areas of the city (Anitua, 2019; M.J. Anitua and I. Vera, personal communication, April 29, 2020). In terms of functionality, equipment and installations, the flats are already adequate for refugee housing, so the process of adaptation is very limited. Table 5 synthesises the physical analysis of the project.

Table 5. Empty homes for the Homeless Project Physical Analysis.

Original use of the building.	Flats.
Legal status of the asylum seekers	Diverse. Some were granted refugee status, but others are still waiting for the resolution.
Habitational typology	Private flats dispersed among the city centre.
Private spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The entire flat is private. • In one case, two small families shared the same flat, for which they adapted the space using furniture to create more privacy.
Availability and use of common spaces within the building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No common spaces as the flats are independent and dispersed in different buildings. • ArTeale, ACCEM and other entities in the city provide spaces for support and activities for the refugees. • ArTeale helps them join other non-refugee-specific activities where they can build social connections with the local community. • ArTeale promotes relationships between tenants and homeowners, and between tenants and neighbours.
Level of adequacy of the existing structure for the new use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use remains residential. • Good state of conservation except for two donated flats that had been unoccupied for 12 and 20 years respectively. • Flats have all basic installations. Two of them required repairing (Electricity, water, gas, etc.) <div data-bbox="711 1227 1286 1547" data-label="Image"> </div> <p data-bbox="711 1559 1257 1615"><i>Figure 17. Refugees preparing food in their new kitchen</i> Source: https://youtu.be/sYyqyOYFY14</p>

- Flats are usually furnished. ArTeale foundation arranges the flats adding extra furniture if needed.



Figure 18. Lunch in the table of the dining room inn one of the apartments.

Source: <https://youtu.be/sYyqyOYFY14>

Level of flexibility offered by the structure

- Flexibility is very limited, as the flats are rental and located in different buildings.
- The aim is not to transform or rehabilitate the space because they are already adequate.
- Some small interventions are made mainly using furniture to adapt the spaces for the specific need of the new tenants.



Figure 19. Bedroom in one of the apartments.

Source: <https://youtu.be/sYyqyOYFY14>



Level of participation of the refugees (customisation)

- Asylum seekers are not allowed to spend money on non-basic items, so their capacity for buying things to personalise their homes is reduced.



Figure 20. Living room in one of the apartments.

Source: <https://youtu.be/sYyqyOYFY14>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the residents use their creativity to arrange what they already have and make their homes cosier.
<p>Level of Privacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of privacy. In most cases, each flat was occupied only by one family, and each member could enjoy enough space for themselves to ensure privacy.  <p><i>Figure 21. Bedroom in one of the apartments.</i> Source: https://youtu.be/sYyqyOYFY14</p>
<p>Level of adaptation to Socio-Cultural Needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Afghan family coming from a remote rural area found it challenging to adapt to this typology and some home appliances, and have expressed that they would be happy to live in a village.  <p><i>Figure 22. Kitchen with washing machine in one of the apartments.</i> Source: https://youtu.be/sYyqyOYFY14</p>

The Empty Homes for the Homeless project provides ready use adequate, affordable housing for the refugees that allow for a high perception of normality as the flats are just like the ones where local families live and in dispersed locations within the city centre. This, together with Arteale’s social inclusion programmes, could enhance autonomy and prevent ghettoisation, as María José Anitua explains “we are avoiding ghettoisation because we are making the flats be in different places” (Arteale Fundazioa, 2019). The weakness of this pilot project is the lack of refugee participation and the low level of adaptation of these flats for the socio-cultural needs of some families (see “Level of adaptation to Socio-Cultural Needs” and figure 22 in table 5).

4.2.4 Case Study: Office Building Conversion Into Apartments For Refugees.

4.2.4.1 Context

This project is planned for the integration of refugee families in a mixed-use neighbourhood in Munich, a German city with a population of 1,539,298 (as of October 31, 2018) (“Munich Figures Statistics Population Size Area,” 2018). The idea of this project is to be flexible and allow for a continuously evolving residential use. The possibility to combine refugee housing with social and student housing will likely enhance the integration of refugees while permitting the transition to local resident housing when the number of refugees arriving in Germany declines (“Making Heimat. Germany, Arrival Country – OFFICE BUILDING CONVERSION INTO APARTMENTS FOR REFUGEES, Munich,” n.d.).

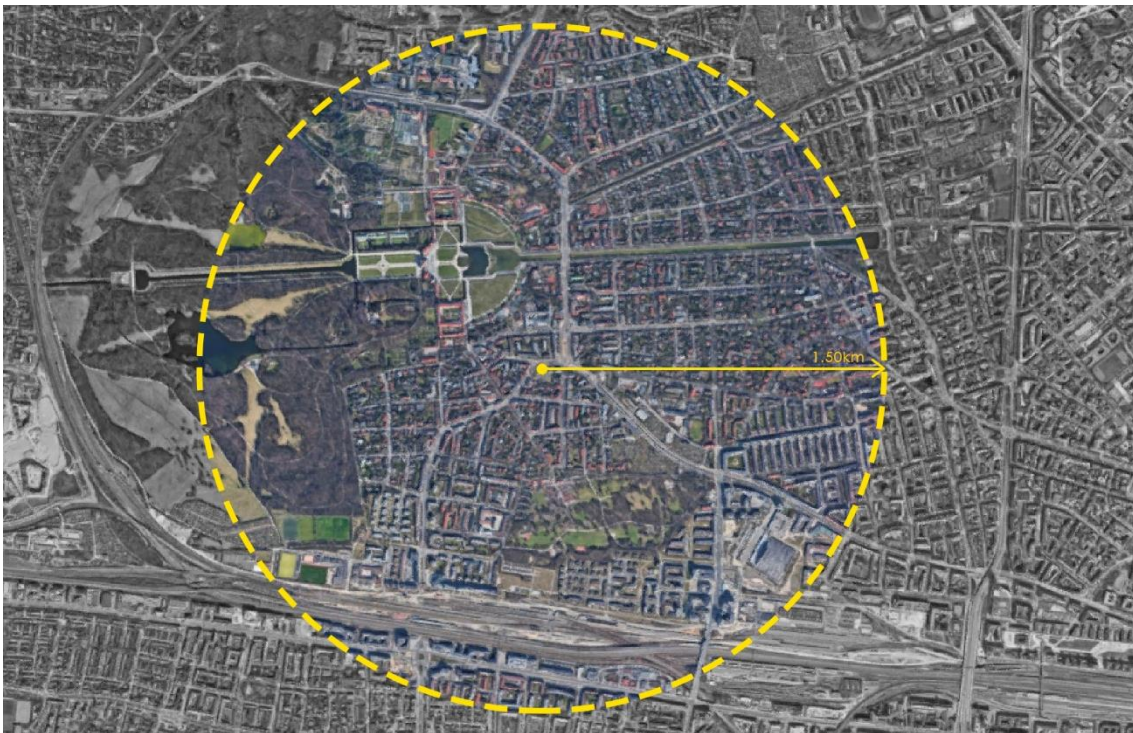


Figure 23. Location of the transformed office building in a mixed-use neighbourhood in Munich, surrounded by green spaces.

Source: Elaborated by the author.

4.2.4.2 Physical Analysis

A former office building will be converted into a residential building with 77 apartments and common areas on the ground floor to host a total of 245 residents, both refugees and locals in need of accommodation. The design is characterised by different typologies to meet the diverse needs of the residents, and the flexibility of the structure (“Making Heimat. Germany, Arrival Country – OFFICE BUILDING CONVERSION INTO APARTMENTS FOR REFUGEES, Munich,” n.d.). Table 6 synthesises the physical analysis of the building.



Figure 24. View of the building exterior.

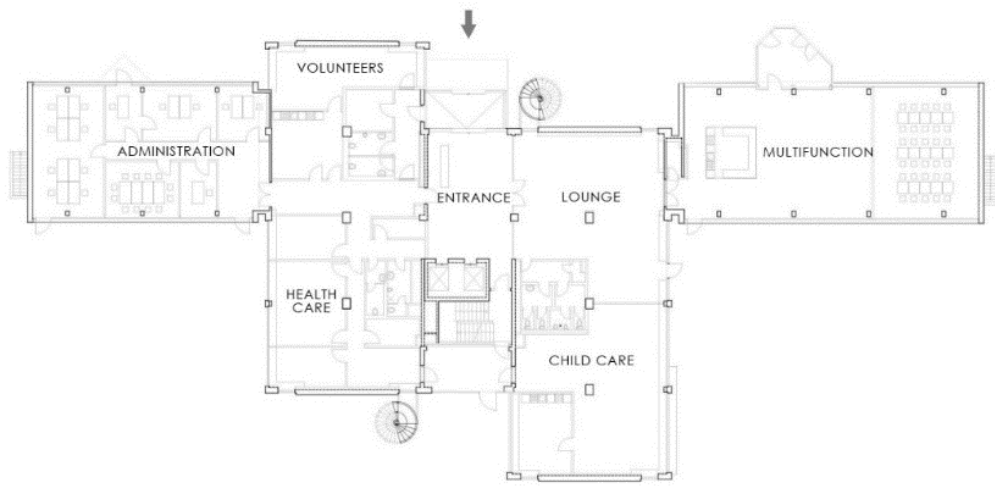
Source: <http://www.makingheimat.de/en/refugee-housing-projects/database/umbau-buerohaus-in-wohnungen-fr-fl-chtlinge-m-nchen>

Author: Johannes Talhof

Table 6. Office Building Conversion Into Apartments For Refugees Physical Analysis.

Original use of the building.	Empty eight-storey office building
Legal status of the asylum seekers	Refugees with recognized status.
Habitational typology	Private apartments in the same building.
Private spaces	All the apartments are private, each of them for an individual family. Depending on the number of members in the family, there are four apartment typologies: for a maximum of two, four, five and eight people each.

<p>Availability and use of common spaces within the building</p>	<p>There are different common spaces planned on the ground floor that can be used by all the residents, see figure 25.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrance with a small reception desk. • Lounge: where refugees and local residents can spend time together. • Multifunction area: with kitchen and dining room. • Childcare area: convenient for parents with young children that have to go to work. • Volunteers area: refugees can easily access support within the building. • Administration area • Health care area: there is a space where a doctor can give basic assistance to the refugees.
<p>Level of adequacy of the existing structure for the new use.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use has to be completely transformed, from offices to residential apartments. • Kitchens and bathrooms were added to each apartment in the design. • The ground floor was adapted to include common spaces for the residents. • The overall state of conservation seemed to be good.
<p>Level of flexibility offered by the structure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The structure allows for a high level of design flexibility, generating diverse apartment typologies, see figure 26. • The floorplan is open. • No limitations in terms of transformation, as it is not a heritage building.
<p>Level of participation of the refugees (customisation)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The design seems to be produced entirely by the architects. • All apartments present a homogenous design motivated by the principle of space efficiency.
<p>Level of Privacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of privacy: every family has its own lockable apartment. • The relatively reduced size of the apartments can result in restricted individual privacy.
<p>Level of adaptation to Socio-Cultural Needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The variety of typologies makes it more appropriate for the different refugee family sizes.



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Figure 25. Ground floor plan.

Source: <http://www.makingheimat.de/en/refugee-housing-projects/database/umbau-buerohaus-in-wohnungen-fr-fl-chtlinge-m-nchen> Modified by the author

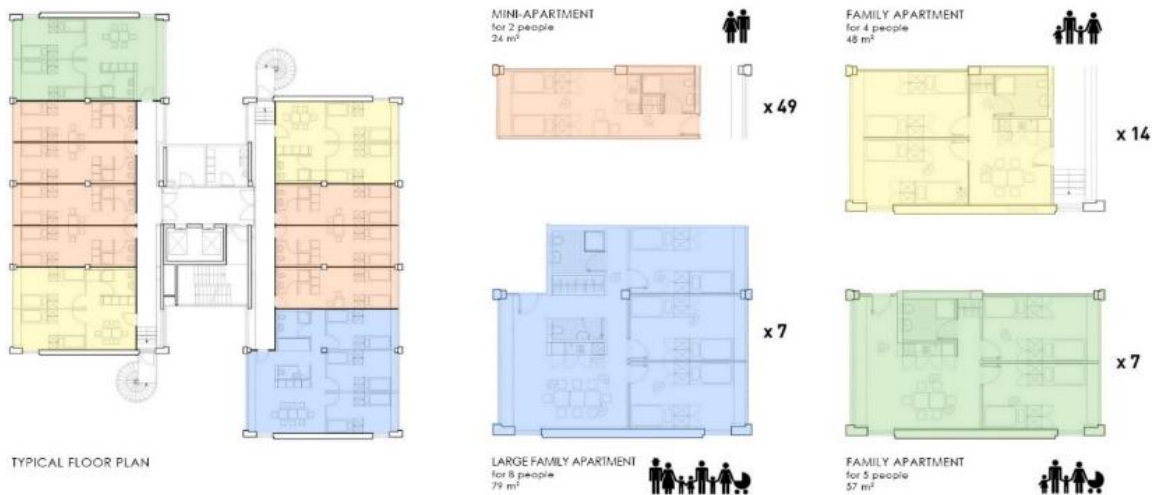


Figure 26. Typical floor plan and housing units.

Source: <http://www.makingheimat.de/en/refugee-housing-projects/database/umbau-buerohaus-in-wohnungen-fr-fl-chtlinge-m-nchen> Modified by the author

The conversion of an office building into apartments for refugees provides the opportunity for a flexible design that adapts to the spatial needs of different household sizes (See figure 26) and allows for easily making changes in the future according to new needs or residents. It combines the privacy and autonomy of dispersed typologies with the provision of support programs in the same building (see figures 25 and 26). It also considers mixing refugees with locals in need of affordable housing, a fact that could enhance community cohesion and avoid ghettoization. The negative side is the apparent lack of participation of the refugees that hinders the possibility to personalise their homes.

5. Analysis of the Results and Recommendations: Guiding Architectural Principles for Adaptive Reuse Projects for Refugee Housing

After revising the minimum requirements for habitability set by the European guidelines on integration, it has been noted that they do not respond to the desirable living conditions for the refugees in the long term, and there are no specific recommendations for adaptive reuse for refugee housing.

The analysis of the practice in the different case studies have shown that all of them meet, to a high extent, the minimum physical requirements for habitability outlined in the European guidelines, like a good state of conservation, access to basic amenities and services and the minimum square metres per person. However, their approaches were very different, and all of them presented advantages and disadvantages in relation to the different parameters analysed.

After studying the four examples from the architectural point of view, five direct parameters and two indirect parameters were considered more influential. The direct parameters are those that have been observed from the examples: Level of adequacy of the existing structure for the new use, level of flexibility offered by the structure, level of participation of the refugees, level of privacy, and level of adaptation to socio-cultural needs. The additional indirect aspects that emerged from the evaluation of the implications of all the categories analysed in the tables are the level of support and the level of independence. These seven aspects, all of them tightly related to the housing typology, will be compared between the four cases to highlight the beneficial procedures and elaborate recommendations and best practices for future projects of adaptive reuse for refugee housing.

Adequacy of the existing structure for the new use

The residential typologies facilitate the adaptation for refugee housing as they have the connections to basic installations already in place (City plaza, U Focularu, Empty homes for the homeless). On the other hand, the office building requires a more significant intervention, which at the same time, offers the opportunity to design almost from zero to better meet the specific needs of the refugees.

In the case of U Focularu, the houses had been abandoned for a long time, so they needed a more intense refurbishment process than the others, but at the same time could be acquired at a very low price, and the rehabilitation benefited the whole village. In Vitoria, the two flats featuring a bad state of conservation were donated.

Flexibility offered by the structure

The study of the four examples has found that entire buildings allow for a higher level of flexibility, as the owner has the right to intervene in all parts of the structure. Moreover, buildings that are not under heritage protection and those where the structure does not interfere with having an open plan, give the chance to develop more free layouts, where the design can be further tailored to meet the specific needs of the residents, as it is the case of the office building in Munich.

Participation

The participation in the construction process was only present in the project of U Focularu, where the independent houses and the rural context could facilitate the intervention of the refugees. This allowed them to learn from the builders and interact with them and the volunteers, thus enhancing social cohesion while allowing them to implement some ideas on how they wanted their home to be. The rest of the cases seemed to allow just a minimum level of customisation.

Privacy

In the case of City Plaza, the only private spaces for the families were the rooms, and even there, sometimes three or more members had to share a reduced space hindering individual privacy. The situation was worse in the cases where the rooms were shared with strangers. Only the examples where a family had sufficient space for each of the members and areas for all the basic daily activities within the private family domains were found to meet the level of privacy required for a dignified standard of living for the mid and long term.

Adaptation to Socio-Cultural Needs

The adaptation to socio-cultural needs seemed to be mostly overlooked in all four projects. However, the typology of village houses seemed to be more similar to what most refugees were used to in their home countries. In the case of City Plaza, women needed an extra room exclusive for them because, for cultural reasons, some did not feel comfortable or safe in the common areas. The flats in Vitoria, while being adequate for the Latin American families, were not adapted to the way of life of a family coming from rural Afghanistan who was not used to electric appliances and would have preferred to live in a village. Finally, the project of transformation of the office building depicts an intention to adapt, at least, to the diverse family sizes that could be placed there. However, no further cultural sensitivity was noted in the spatial design, as all units looked

alike. To achieve cultural adaptation, refugees should have been involved at some point in the process of design and decision-making.

Support programmes

As seen in the case of City Plaza, common spaces within the building were very useful in contributing to the creation of a support network among the refugees and with the activists and volunteers, which helped them overcome trauma and prepare for starting a new life in Europe. This positive effect will probably apply as well to the case of the office building in Munich.

In the other two cases of dispersed housing, the impact of places for interaction and support is less evident as, in being outside the building, it is more difficult to ensure that refugees participate. However, in the case of U Focularu, the context of a small village, with very little and very inclusive host population helped supply this support and interaction.

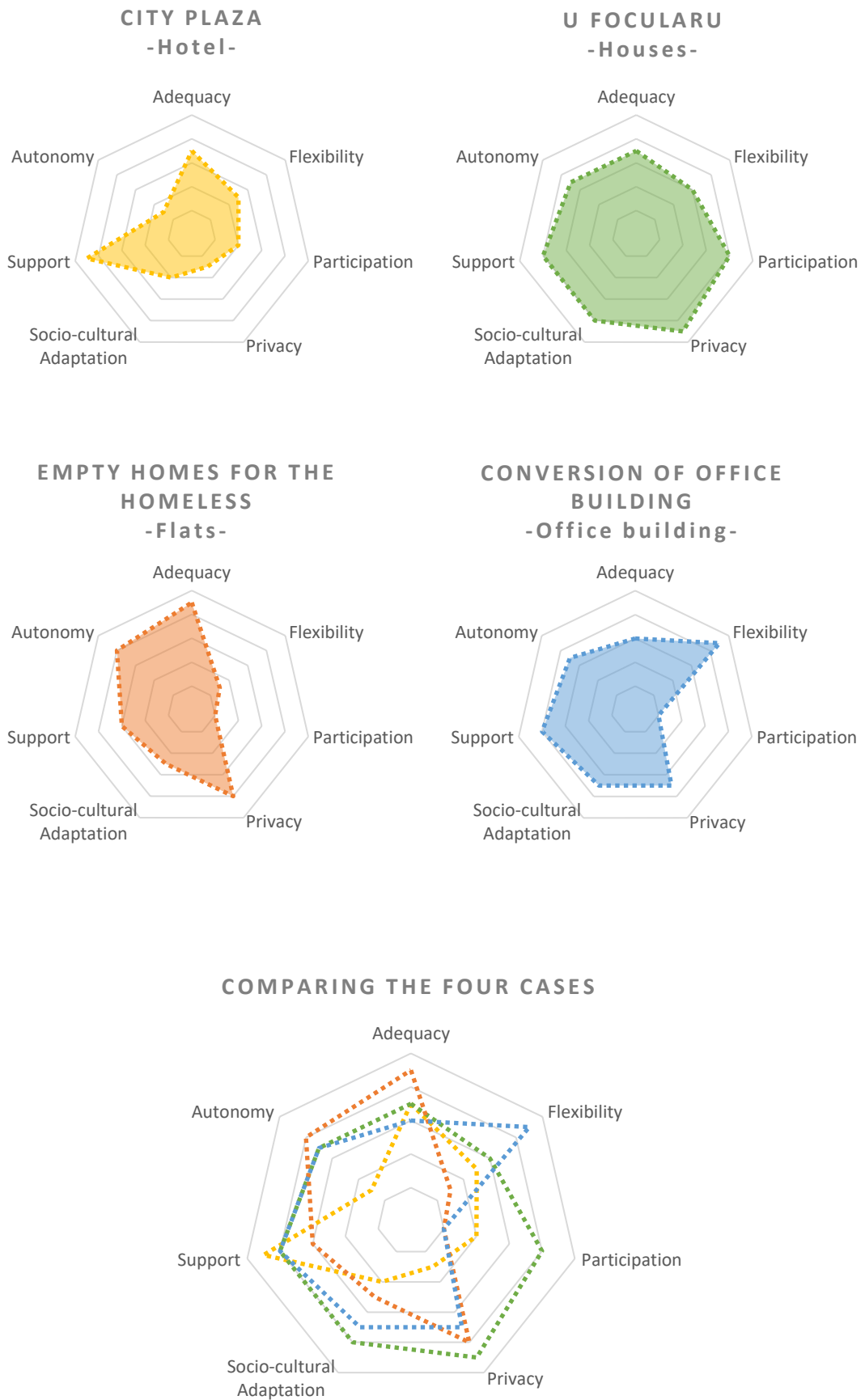
Autonomy

In the case of City Plaza, the assistance character of the hotel typology, along with the rotation system for carrying out the daily tasks, resulted in some residents accommodating to what should be a temporary solution, and showing a certain passivity towards finding long-term housing, thus delaying the process of acquiring autonomy. Another side effect of the concentration of refugees in a “self-sufficient” block is that it made them an easy target of hate and violence from some locals.

In the case of the office building in Munich, despite having common spaces for support and relation, the fact that every family will have their own private space to cover all basic needs and carry out daily household tasks by themselves increases the level of autonomy and self-reliance. Similarly, the other two cases offer a high level of autonomy, and the added value of anonymity, as the flats and houses look just like those occupied by locals and are dispersed, fostering a sense of normality.

These findings have been graphed in figure 27 to show the relationship between each typology and the different aspects evaluated in the four cases. It can be observed that while the hotel offers more support to the refugees, a similar level can be provided with other typologies, like the houses in Badolato and the office building, which allow for higher privacy and autonomy. The graphs also highlight that the rental flats are the most adequate structures; however, the participation that the houses allow for and the flexibility offered by the office building results in improved socio-cultural adaptation.

Figure 27. Graphs comparing the seven paramters in the four cases. Source: Elaborated by the author.



Guiding architectural Principles for Adaptive Reuse Projects for Refugee Housing.

1. Residential buildings offer the advantage of having most of the necessary installations already in place.
2. A good state of conservation can ease the process of adaptation in terms of time and money, whereas a bad state of conservation might make the property more affordable, and thus, compensate the investment for rehabilitation while allowing the refugees to participate. It also improves the built environment, which could incentivise the local authorities collaboration.
3. Entire buildings with no structural or heritage restrictions offer more flexibility in terms of design, allowing the architect to conceive the solution that best fits the needs of the refugees.
4. The refugees should be included in the process of adaptive reuse to the higher extent possible, as participation can bring empowerment, enhance social cohesion and allow them to personalise their living space, enhancing the feeling of being “at home”.
5. When developing the new project, considering an adaptable and reversible intervention should be seen as a good practice, in order to enable future adjustments or reverting the modifications when the needs or the residents change.
6. Adaptive reuse interventions for mid to long-term refugee housing must allow a level of privacy comparable to that offered by any mainstream single-family home. The size and interior organisation of the dwelling should provide every member of the family with sufficient space for individual privacy, to ensure a dignified standard of living.
7. The adaptive reuse project should consider the specific socio-cultural needs of the refugees to facilitate the process of adaptation.
8. Accommodation in collective housing, like hotels or accommodation centres, is only recommended for the first reception, in the cases where the refugees require daily support.
9. Long term solutions should consider typologies that allow for autonomy, having all the spaces needed to cover everyday needs within the private area of the accommodation (houses, flats or apartments, either dispersed or within the same building).
10. Projects that include the provision of spaces for support programmes and social interaction between refugees and locals, preferably within the same building or in an easily accessible location, should be considered a good practice.
11. In collective housing blocks, mixing refugees with other local collectives like students or older adults should be considered as a good practice as it can mitigate the effect of concentration and segregation, and promote the creation of social connections between refugees and locals.

6. Conclusions

The challenge of housing refugees in Europe is a huge concern considering that housing is one of the fundamental means required for integration and most European cities face a considerable shortage of affordable housing. In that sense, this research has shown that adaptive reuse for refugee housing is one of the strategies that should be taken into consideration, even more in the context of shrinking cities. Although many researchers have pointed out the benefits of adaptive reuse for refugee housing, little had been written about how applying these projects to shrinking cities can generate a two-way process that improves both refugee integration and city resilience. Moreover, this research detected a lack of material addressing the specific physical aspects that projects of adaptive reuse for refugee housing should comply, and tried to shed light on the definition of these aspects.

The case study analysis revealed that the minimum requirements of habitability defined by the EU guidelines on integration are insufficient for ensuring that projects of adaptive reuse meet the desirable conditions for refugee housing, and allowed for elaborating some recommendations regarding additional architectural principles that can guide future experiences.

The most important findings are related to the adequacy and flexibility offered by the existing structures, the level of participation, privacy and socio-cultural adaptation that each solution provides, the level of support granted and the autonomy promoted by the projects. Moreover, it was observed how those parameters are highly dependent on the housing typology and reinforced the importance of security of tenure for refugee stability. These principles are potentially applicable for future projects of adaptive reuse for refugee housing, but further research would be helpful to improve the understanding of this topic and outline more detailed architectural guidance.

The research showed that projects of adaptive reuse could be more cost-efficient in shrinking cities because the high rates of vacant housing derived from the lower housing demand result in reduced property prices if compared to capitals and other major cities in Europe. These global European hubs, characterised by tight housing markets, often force refugees and asylum seekers to settle in marginalised urban areas, exacerbating segregation and the creation of ghettos and hindering integration.

Conversely, the possibility to find affordable buildings in central locations of shrinking cities enable to maximise the positive outcomes of adaptive reuse for refugees, improving physical integration in well-rooted vital neighbourhoods, hence facilitating

access to quality services and interaction between newcomers and long-term residents helping regain self-identity, enhancing social cohesion and promoting the development of a sense of belonging to the host community.

It is necessary, however, to recognise that shrinking cities in general also present challenges, like a reduced or specific labour market and a lower level of multiculturalism, that might lead to socio-ethnic conflicts, when compared to global hubs, so each case needs to be evaluated to determine whether it can comply the parameters for integration. Strategies addressing these issues and highlighting the positive effects of refugees for the host community, are necessary along with projects of refugee integration and need to be adapted for each shrinking city's particularities.

Notwithstanding these challenges, the research showed that adaptive reuse for refugee housing in shrinking cities would offer a series of advantages that range from affordability to the improvement of physical integration, the promotion of social cohesion and enhanced autonomy of the refugees, while, at the same time, helps rehabilitate and revitalise declining urban landscapes.

Given these points, it can be concluded that adaptive reuse for refugee housing is a consistent strategy that could be implemented in the context of shrinking cities to help address the challenge of providing adequate affordable housing for the growing number of refugees and asylum seekers that arrive in Europe every year fleeing their home countries. In addition, these projects should follow specific architectural principles outlined in this research in order to maximise the potential of adaptive reuse to achieve successful integration.

This initial set of recommendations presented in the previous chapter should be completed after a second phase of research that provides more detailed outcomes. In a similar way, in order to apply these strategies to a specific case, and providing that every shrinking city is different, the city needs to be evaluated to determine whether it is suitable for the implementation of a project like this, and what challenges need to be considered and addressed in each case.

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ANNEXES

Annex I: Revision of the EU guidelines on Refugee Integration: A summary of the main aspects regarding refugee housing in each guideline.

Toolkit on the use of EU funds for the integration of people with a migrant background

The European Commission, in its 'Toolkit on the use of EU funds for the integration of people with a migrant background', highlights, concerning housing issues, the need to avoid segregation, the pertinence of complementing infrastructure investments with soft measures for integration and improve access to quality services, infrastructure and connections. The EU has several funds directed to the implementation of refugee and migrant integration policies. Some of these funds have a focus on housing and involve, apart from the construction or adequation of housing, other measures like the physical, economic and social regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods (ERDF, European Regional Development Fund). Others also include integration services oriented to improve access to employment, social inclusion, health, educational and other services; developing basic and professional skills by means of training and mentoring and income-generation activities (ERDF, European Regional Development Fund; ESF, European Social Fund; AMIF, Asylum Migration & Integration Fund) (European Commission, 2018). Likewise, these principles can be applied to the specific case of adaptive reuse when choosing the location, to avoid segregation and facilitate connections and access to services, and developing holistic strategies that link the provision of housing to other social and economic inclusion measures.

A New Beginning: Refugee Integration in Europe

According to UNHCR, refugees face far more challenges than other migrants when arriving at their places of destination, so for them, the process of integration requires specific support to overcome those difficulties. (UNHCR, 2014) These specific requirements also reflect in the physical layout of their dwellings, as they can be more or less adapted to their social, cultural and ethnic needs and some architectonic features may facilitate the provision of the support needed for the refugees and their participation in the civil society life. Due to difficulties accessing adequate, affordable housing and meeting landlord's requirements, refugees often draw upon social housing (UNHCR, 2014). This suggests that any process of adaptive reuse for housing refugees should contemplate the pertinence of delivering a housing typology that facilitates its use as a refugee specific or social housing. In fact, the UNHCR guidelines for refugee integration

call for the provision of support for refugees to find suitable and affordable housing and create measures which engage landlords and social housing authorities to facilitate refugees access to housing and suggests explicitly the implementation of a guarantor scheme that supports refugees until they can establish themselves.

Having facilities for refugee support outside the reception centres can have a positive impact on integration. Shared spaces that allow different uses such as language training, providing information about jobs and professional training, and community activities to promote interculturalism, anti-discrimination and community engagement are highly desirable (UNHCR, 2014), and could be combined with refugee housing.

Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees

In this report, the OECD also mentions these shared spaces that can be used for providing refugee support and organise diverse activities. Architectural interventions that consider this possibility could facilitate refugee interaction with volunteers and other members of the community and their participation in public life, enhance inclusiveness, trigger confidence, create a common sense of belonging and prevent segregation (OECD, 2018).

This public spaces must be attractive and accessible both for the refugees and the local community, involving local civil society organisations, NGOs and municipal support as well as local business allowing local entrepreneurs to set up their activities close to the refugees (OECD, 2018).

Adaptive reuse projects must ensure good housing conditions and adequate size for the number of residents to avoid overcrowded dwellings (OECD, 2018).

The OCDE suggests the inclusion of other migrant and non-migrant groups with comparable needs in the specific policies oriented to refugee and asylum seeker integration (OECD, 2018). Similarly, it can be argued that housing for refugees could benefit from hosting other demographic groups.

A Place to Live, A Place to Stay: A Good Practice Guide For Housing in Refugee Resettlement

In this Good practice guide, the authors point to several refugee specific aspects that should be acknowledged for future refugee housing projects. One characteristic that differentiates refugee housing from mainstream housing needs in Europe is the size of the resettled households. Refugee families tend to have more members, and so there is a mismatch between the housing offer in Europe, often designed for smaller families, and their household needs. At the same time, many refugees arrive on their own, facing challenges of affordability and availability due to the usually high demand and price of this type of accommodation. (ICMC Europe et al., 2014). These factors suggest that adaptive reuse needs to think of housing solutions that are not the “traditional ones” in terms of size and interior organisation.

Regarding typology, accommodation in individual independent housing is recommended, while collective accommodation facilities are only advised for especially vulnerable cases that demand daily support. This individual housing should be arranged with essential household equipment and furniture prior to refugees' arrival when they are directly resettled there (ICMC Europe et al., 2014). Individual independent housing, as opposed to collective accommodation facilities can provide more privacy and improve the sense of normality, thus facilitating integration.

European Commission directive proposal on standards for the reception of applicants for international protection.

In this document, the European Commission sets the standards that all member states should comply. The typologies that the document considers for the reception of refugees are accommodation centres, private houses or flats, hotels or other premises adapted for housing applicants. Regarding the characteristics of refugee accommodations, it highlights aspects like the importance of maintaining family unity and involving the applicants in the management of material and non-material resources in the accommodation centres. Moreover, relationships between local communities and accommodation centres should be promoted, leisure activities for children should be provided within the accommodation centre or in safe outdoor spaces nearby, and education for them may be given in the accommodation centre. Age and gender-specific concerns, as well as other special conditions, should be taken into consideration when accommodating applicants. Lastly, transfers from one accommodation to another should be reduced to the indispensable. (European Commission, 2016)

Settling in 2018

This report by the OECD presents the indicators of immigrant integration. In relation to the housing conditions they point out the need to avoid overcrowding:

“A dwelling is considered to be overcrowded if the number of rooms is less than the sum of one living room for the household, plus one room for the single person or the couple responsible for the dwelling (or two rooms if they do not form a couple), plus one room for every two additional adults, plus one room for every two children” (OECD & European Commission, 2018, p. 108)

This applies to ordinary housing and not collective accommodations.

It also indicates the minimum standards that housing should accomplish:

“Housing is considered substandard or deprived if it is too dark, does not provide exclusive access to a bathroom, or if the roof leaks.” (OECD & European Commission, 2018, p. 110)

Housing and integration of migrants in Europe

This report of the CLIP Network examines various aspects regarding housing for migrants. It indicates the negative effect of segregation on cultural and social integration and the combined importance of reducing spatial segregation and improving the physical conditions of housing targeted at the same time the social environment. The quality of housing also depends on the quality of relations with neighbours and the potential ethnicized conflicts. Moreover, adverse physical housing conditions contribute to neighbourhood stigmatisation and hinders the process of social integration. Concerning the physical aspects strictly, attention should be paid to the size of the dwelling in relation to the number of people. As immigrant households usually have more members, overcrowding is often an issue. Having adequate space for each member is fundamental as it affects, for example, the education of children and young students., The material quality of the building and the technical standard of the installations are also significant concerns. Having access to four basic amenities, namely running water, adequate (flus) toilet facilities, a bath or shower and sufficient heating are common indicators of housing standards in the EU Member States. It also refers to the quality of the housing environment regarding the existence of green areas, level of noise and air pollution; as well as the physical security of the building and the risk of collapse.(European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2007).

EASO guidance on reception conditions: operational standards and indicators.

Regarding allocation of applicants it highlights the importance of location as it influences accessibility of relevant services, the need to ensure family unity with a maximum of one family per bedroom is respected and that other special reception needs are taken into consideration. It states that the transfer of applicants to a different accommodation should only be considered when necessary. Regarding the physical aspects, it defines the characteristics of the bedroom, with a door that can be closed and a window that can be opened. In cases of collective housing bedrooms should be lockable, with a minimum of 4 m² per person, enough space for a bed and a cupboard for each applicant, a maximum of six single applicants per bedroom separating male and females in different bedrooms with a minimum passageway of 90 cm between beds to allow for privacy. Collective housing must include a private space for providing refugee support either inside or outside the building. In general, sufficient furniture must be provided, with one individual bed per person and one cupboard with adequate capacity per person or family, which has to be lockable for non-family members. In shared spaces, enough place to eat needs to be available, with tables and sufficient chairs for everyone, and enough space for leisure and group activities. All applicants must have access to "sufficient, adequate and functioning sanitary infrastructure in the housing" (European Asylum Support Office, 2016, p. 18) including access to a shower or bath, a sink with hot and cold water and a lockable functioning toilet, accessible at all times and ensuring intimacy and gender issues are respected and woman safety is ensured. Applicants must have access to doing their laundry or having it done on a regular basis. Access to phone calls, internet and charging their devices has to be ensured as well. Sanitation and maintenance of the building are to be ensured and can involve the applicants. (European Asylum Support Office, 2016)

Annex II: Suggestions for a second phase of the research.

To obtain more reliable and conclusive results, and better understand how the physical aspects influence the process of integration, further research, including qualitative methods and direct observations, should be conducted.

The following are some aspects that could be included in a second phase of the research:

1. Direct observations_ Visit the buildings and their surroundings to evaluate:
 - Size, in accordance to the number of residents.
 - Number of people per room and number of square metres per person.
 - Enough furniture for all occupants.
 - Availability of spaces to enjoy individual privacy.
 - Access and state of the basic installations and services.
 - Which specific installations are in place (Water, electricity, gas, heating, etc.)
 - Conditions of the basic installations.
 - Number of bathrooms in relation to the number of residents and conditions.
 - Overall state of conservation.
 - Quality of the spaces (natural light, ventilation, etc.)
 - Expression of ethno-cultural identity.
 - Quality of the surroundings:
 - Presence of green areas and public spaces and distance to the accommodation.
 - Pollution level.
 - Noise level.
 - Support networks and location:
 - Offices of public authorities.
 - NGOs
 - Civil society associations.
 - Availability and location of public facilities and basic services:
 - Schools
 - Health care centres.
 - Religious centres.
 - Supermarkets and grocery stores.

- Other basic services.
- Public transport.
 - Available connections.
 - Location of stops.
 - Price.

2. Interviews with stakeholders.

- Refugees and asylum seekers.
 - Questions about the reception process, which phase are they in, how long they have been in that accommodation, etc.
 - Questions about the accommodation: how they found that dwelling, what support did they receive to find that accommodation, physical description of the dwelling, level of satisfaction with the dwelling and what would they change, people sharing the dwelling, what they like and dislike about living there, etc.
 - Questions about the neighbourhood/surroundings: What type of services they normally use and if they are easy to reach, If there is any missing service, if they participate in neighbourhood associations, what level of acceptance from the host society and safety they experience, how are their relationships with their neighbours, etc.
 - Questions about mobility: Do you like the location of the accommodation, is it easy to move around the city/region, what other areas they usually visit and for what, etc.
 - Questions about support networks: What associations for refugee support they know in the city/village, what kind of support they are receiving and from who, what activities and events they participate in and how they knew about them, whether they have a job and if they are satisfied with it, if they would like to stay there for the long term, etc.
- Local authorities, NGOs and other organisations and associations involved: What is your level of involvement in the project, what are the positive and negative outcomes of the project, what other social and support measures are linked to the housing project (support to find jobs, vocational and language training, support for children education, health care assistance, activities for refugees and the host society, etc.)