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## Housing and Identity

The meaning of housing in communicating identity  
and its influence on self-perception

Thesis for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor

Trondheim, May 2009

Norwegian University of Science and Technology  
Faculty of Architecture and Fine Art  
Department of Architectural Design and Management



**NTNU**

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- Article 2**      Hauge, Å. L. & Kolstad, A. (2007). Dwelling as an expression of identity: A comparative study among residents in high-priced and low-priced neighbourhoods in Norway. *Housing, Theory & Society*, 24, 272-292.
- Article 3**      Hauge, Å. L & Støa, E. (2009). “Here you get a little extra push”: The meaning of architectural quality in housing for the formerly homeless – a case study of Veiskillet in Trondheim, Norway. *Nordisk Arkitekturforskning / Nordic Journal of Architectural Research*. In press.

# **APPENDIX**

## **Questionnaire**

- Questionnaire for the case studies for Article 2, Norwegian version.
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## **Case studies**

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- Case study for Article 3: Information, maps and photos.



# **PART I**

## **Foreword and acknowledgements**

This thesis is not a psychological research project conducted by a PhD candidate in psychology at the Faculty of Architecture; rather, it is an interdisciplinary research work. It aims to integrate perspectives and approaches from different disciplines, and the outcome is probably different than it would have been if the research had been conducted as a project that was purely based on psychological or architectural research. My environmental psychology background and attachment to the Faculty of Architecture have made my professional identity more “interdisciplinary” than “psychological”, and has allowed me to discover the difficulties and pleasures of interdisciplinary research work. I have had three supervisors, two architects and one social psychologist. They have often had very different comments on my work, but the diversity in comments has also been enriching. They have contributed in different ways. Thank you, Sven Erik Svendsen, for believing in me, supporting me, and giving me the position as a PhD candidate and housing researcher in the BoStrat project at the Department of Architectural Design and Management. Thank you, Arnulf Kolstad, for valuable criticism and always speaking your mind. In an unusual way you have always made me feel competent and made me believe that the final results would be good. Thank you, Eli Støa, for your brilliant way of asking questions about the most obvious facts. You always make me think twice.

Many PhD students are placed into set research programmes, where the tasks are already formulated. I consider myself lucky to have been given the opportunity to develop my own research project, following my own research interests. The process was difficult in the beginning, but the research project gradually became clearer. Many people have influenced my work along the way.

I had a one-semester research stay in the autumn of 2004 at the University of Surrey in England, at the Department of Environmental Psychology. This semester had a special impact on my theoretical development and literature studies, as I followed Gerda Speller's class in environmental psychology. She paid a great deal of attention to place theories and place identity due to her research interests in these subjects (Speller, 2000, 2002), and I am thankful for what she taught me. Submitting articles to journals and presenting papers at conferences have also influenced my theoretical development. International mentors and reviewers have often made me look at my findings differently.

I started out this research project with a case study on housing satisfaction in a high-priced and a low-priced neighbourhood in Trondheim. Kyrre Svarva and Mona Berthelsen gave valuable help with the questionnaire and the survey data. Thanks to my friends for helping distributing questionnaires. My colleague and friend, Hilja Aalbrecht, conducted the 19 interviews together with me, and has been an inspiring discussion partner on the interpretation of findings. Thanks also, to all my informants at Kolstadflata and selected areas of Nedre Elvehavn in Trondheim.

The last period of my PhD studies has had a different focus than I originally planned. After analysing data and writing Article 2 on the case studies of Kolstadflata and Nedre Elvehavn (Hauge & Kolstad, 2007), I became more and more interested in how knowledge on the connection between housing and identity may be applied. Together with my supervisor Eli Støa and researcher Karine Denizou (SINTEF), an application for funding for a research project on housing for the homeless was sent to Husbanken (the Norwegian State Housing Bank). The project was named "Environmental qualities



for homeless people – aspects in a strategy for place development”. In this research project, planners’ and social workers’ experiences with nine selected Norwegian housing projects for homeless were collected and presented in a publication called *Endelig hjemme – utforming av boliger for vanskeligstilte* (Finally at home – designing housing for vulnerable groups of people) (Støa, Denizou & Hauge, 2007). Thank you, Eli and Karine, for inspiring teamwork. One of the housing projects evaluated in this research project was especially interesting - Veiskillet. Together with colleagues at the Department of Psychology, a small case study was done on Veiskillet, a housing project for former criminals and drug abusers. I planned to conduct this research in addition to my PhD research, but found it so interesting that I included the topic in my thesis. In collaboration with Oddfrid Skorpe Tennfjord, I supervised four psychology students who interviewed the residents in this housing project. I am thankful to the residents, planners and employees at Veiskillet for giving me valuable insight in their life world.

I have very much enjoyed working among architects. Thanks to my colleagues at the Department and the Faculty, especially Birgit Cold, who has been an inspiration for me in “environmental aesthetics” since I was a master’s student. I am also very thankful for time spent with the other PhD students on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor; it was a working relationship that I looked forward to every day. Special thanks to Judith Thomsen and Christiane Johannsen for their friendship and support. Thanks also to colleagues at NIBR for their working partnership and for offering me office space during the last months of my PhD.

Thank you, Jonathan Millar and Nancy Bazilchuk for correcting and improving my English along the way.

I also want to thank my family and family-in-law for support. Thank you, Håvard, for being so wonderful to me.

This thesis is for Johanna, my daughter. All the years working on this thesis have been about her; I longed for her and dreamed about her. She was born December 7, 2007, and has been my motivation and inspiration both before and after that day.



## Summary

The main aim of this PhD project has been to *develop knowledge about the relationship between housing and people's identity*. The findings are presented in three journal articles:

Article 1 is theoretical, and aims at finding analytical tools for the subject of housing and identity. It evaluates the "Place Identity" theory (Proshansky, et al., 1978, 1983, 1987) as diffuse, but the "place identity" term as relevant. The Social Identity theory (Tajfel, 1981, 1982) and the Identity Process theory (Breakwell, 1983, 1986, Twigger-Ross et al., 2003) are better tools for research on the physical environment's effect on identity. Place identity can be seen as one of many identity manifestations, and represents identity manifested through physical environments and objects. A schematic model is presented that treats place identity as one of many levels at which a social identity category (such as social class) may manifest itself. The model aims to integrate the place identity concept into Social Identity theory.

Article 2 explores associations and attitudes people have to the subject of housing and identity. The results are based on case studies of a high-priced and a low-priced neighbourhood in Trondheim, including a questionnaire and 18 qualitative interviews. The survey showed that 40% of the respondents were aware of their dwelling reflecting who they are. Respondents in the high-priced neighbourhood had a greater awareness of this association. Only 19% thought it was important. Qualitative interviews showed that people may be divided into three groups when it comes to different interest and awareness of the dwelling as communicating identity: 1) People who have not thought much about it; 2) people who have thought little about the issue, but are very interested in the subject when asked about it; and 3) people who discuss the issue spontaneously and are concerned about the matter. Younger people found the subject more natural and obvious than older people. The interviews showed that dwelling is experienced as information about personality and taste, interests, life phase, social status, and relationships. Cohort, attitudes towards self-presentation, and the sensitivity of the subject affect people's attitudes towards the dwelling as identity communication.

Article 3 explores the meaning of architectural qualities for the identity of formerly homeless criminals and drug abusers. It describes a case study of a social housing project where the architecture was intended to positively affect this group of residents. Interviews with initiator, employees and residents were conducted, as well as studies of statements by the jury of the Norwegian State Award for Building Tradition 2007, and presentations of the housing project in the media. The residents and employees were in general satisfied with the housing situation. The residents appreciated and took care of architectural qualities, and the environment inspired them to protect it. They were proud of their apartments, and had more contact with their families and children as a result. The social network expressed hope and pride in them because of an attractive housing situation. Some residents saw architectural details as symbols of a crime- and drug-free life and identity. This may have significance for consolidating a new identity as non-drug-abuser, and may further have significance in motivating change. The study also gives an example of how positive associations with the building may change according to life situation. The symbolic content of objects and environments is under constant influence of situational changes and social interaction.

Overall conclusions: Based on the empirical research presented, it appears that housing influences personal and social identity in two ways: through the associations that residents make with location, exterior and interior, and through physical solutions that facilitate behaviour and social interaction. These relations are not dependent on the physical environment alone, but are also influenced by context, process and situation. Breakwell's Identity Process theory illustrates these mechanisms through the principles she sees as central for people's identity in western culture (self-esteem, distinctiveness, self-efficacy, and continuity), and the way housing contributes to these (Breakwell, 1983, 1986, Twigger-Ross et al., 2003). Methodological experience shows that the topic requires sensitivity in the formulation of questions, and that qualitative methods give the informants opportunities to moderate and explain their answers. Interdisciplinary, longitudinal studies and context awareness are important for further research on the topic. Housing may be used as a strategy or a tool to positively affect identity, motivation, and future hope among people in vulnerable life situations. Location and

architectural solutions must be considered together with context and process to strengthen housing quality as a contribution to a resident's positive self-perceptions.

## Norwegian translation of the summary

### Sammendrag

Hovedmålet for dette PhD-prosjektet har vært å *utvikle kunnskap om forholdet mellom bolig<sup>1</sup> og menneskers identitet*. Resultatene er presentert i tre tidsskriftsartikler:

Artikkel 1 er teoretisk, og har som formål å finne analytiske redskap for temaet bolig og identitet. Den evaluerer “stedsidentitetsteorien” (Proshansky, et al., 1978, 1983, 1987) som uklar, men begrepet ”stedsidentitet” som relevant. Sosial identitetsteori (Tajfel, 1981, 1982) og identitetsprosessteorien (Breakwell, 1983, 1986, Twigger-Ross et al, 2003) er bedre egnet for forskning på de fysiske omgivers påvirkning på identitet. Stedsidentitet kan bli sett på som en av mange identitetsmanifestasjoner; identitet manifestert gjennom fysiske omgivelser og objekter. En skjematisk modell presenterer stedsidentitet som et av mange nivå en sosial identitetskategori (f. eks sosial klasse) kan manifesteres på. Modellen har til hensikt å innlemme stedsidentitetskonseptet i sosial identitetsteori.

Artikkel 2 utforsker assosiasjoner og holdninger mennesker har til temaet bolig og identitet. Resultatene er basert på to case studier av et høyt og et lavt priset boligområde i Trondheim; en spørreundersøkelse og 18 kvalitative intervju. Spørreundersøkelsen viste at 40 % av respondentene var oppmerksomme på hvordan boligen deres reflekterte hvem de var. Respondentene i det dyre nabolaget var mest oppmerksomme på dette. Bare 19 % syntes det var viktig. Kvalitative intervju viste at mennesker kan deles i tre grupper når det gjelder forskjellig interesse og bevissthet i forhold til bolig som identitetskommunikasjon: 1) Mennesker som ikke har tenkt mye på det, 2) mennesker som har tenkt lite på det, men er interessert i temaet når de blir spurt om det, 3) mennesker som snakker spontant om det og er opptatt av det. Yngre mennesker finner temaet mer naturlig og selvfølgelig enn eldre. Intervjuene viste at en bolig oppleves som informasjon om personlighet og smak, interesser, livsfase, sosial status og relasjoner.

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<sup>1</sup> The English term “housing” is not easily translated into Norwegian. In lack of a better alternative, the Norwegian concept “bolig” is chosen.

Kohort, holdninger til selvpresentasjon og temaets sensitivitet påvirker menneskers holdninger til boligen som identitetskommunikasjon.

Artikkel 3 utforsker betydningen av arkitektoniske kvaliteter for identiteten til tidligere hjemløse kriminelle og rusmisbrukere. Den beskriver en case studie av et sosialboligprosjekt hvor hensikten med de arkitektoniske løsningene var å påvirke denne gruppen beboere positivt. Det er utført intervju med initiativtaker, ansatte og beboere, studier av uttalelsen til juryen av den norske byggeskikksprisen 2007, og studier av presentasjoner av boligprosjektet i media. Beboerne og ansatte var generelt fornøyde med boligsituasjonen. Beboerne verdsatte og tok vare på arkitektoniske kvaliteter, og omgivelsene inspirerte til å tas vare på. De var stolte av leiligheten sin, og hadde mer kontakt med familie og barn. Det sosiale nettverket uttrykte håp og stolthet på grunn av en attraktiv boligsituasjon. Arkitektoniske detaljer ble av noen beboere sett på som symboler på en rusfri og kriminalitetsfri identitet. Dette kan ha betydning for konsolideringen av en ny identitet som ikke-rusmisbruker, og kan videre ha betydning for motivasjon og endring. Studiet gir også et eksempel på at de positive assosiasjonene til bygningen kan endre seg etter livssituasjon. Det symbolske innholdet til objekter og omgivelser er under konstant påvirkning av situasjonelle forandringer og sosial interaksjon.

Samlede konklusjoner: På bakgrunn av den empiriske forskningen som er presentert, er det foreslått teoretiske implikasjoner. Bolig påvirker personlig og sosial identitet på to forskjellige måter: Gjennom de assosiasjoner som beliggenhet, eksteriør og interiør skaper i en beboer, og gjennom fysiske løsninger som influerer adferd og sosial interaksjon. Disse sammenhengene er ikke avhengige av det fysiske miljøet alene, men også kontekst, prosess og situasjon spiller inn. Breakwell's identitetsprosessteori illustrerer disse mekanismene gjennom de prinsippene hun ser som sentrale for menneskers identitetsprosess i den vestlige kultur (selvtillit, distinktivitet, tro på egen mestring, og kontinuitet) og hvordan bolig og nabolag bidrar til disse (Breakwell, 1983, 1986, Twigger-Ross et al, 2003). Metodiske erfaringer viser at temaet krever sensitivitet i formuleringen av spørsmål, og at kvalitative metoder gir informantene muligheter for å moderere og forklare svarene. Tverrfaglighet, longitudinelle studier og bevissthet i

forhold til kontekst er viktig for videre forskning på temaet. En bolig kan brukes som en strategi eller et verktøy for å positivt påvirke identitet, motivasjon og framtidshåp hos mennesker i vanskelige livssituasjoner. Beliggenhet og arkitektoniske løsninger må ses i sammenheng med kontekst og prosess for å styrke boligkvalitet som bidrag til en beboers positive selvpersepsjon.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

It's a quality of life issue, isn't it? It's easy to think; if this place had been a rundown dump, your quality of life would have just gone to hell, quite simply. So here you get a little extra push.

“Here you get a little extra push”, is what one of my informants, a former criminal and drug addict, says about living in Veiskillet, a housing project where special attention was paid to how to use architecture to improve the life of a vulnerable group of people. What the building looked like mattered and inspired residents. There have even been TV shows on the subject, including a home decoration TV show about improving the homes of families that are experiencing difficult times. The family's reactions to the design team's improvements are often overwhelming and emotional. The participant family seems to be moved the most by design and objects that represent their culture and interests, things that reflect that the design team from the TV company has understood a bit of who they are. Architecture and design can be “read” as identity statements. I remember a woman looking at her stunning new bedroom, shouting, “I'm a queen!”. These TV shows give many examples of how people read physical environments as non-verbal statements about themselves. The environment makes them look at themselves differently, at least for a while. I have often wondered; what happens to these families when the TV show is over? Does the “magic” of a new home last? Does it change the way they see themselves on a deeper level? Do the implications of an appealing home improve their life on other levels and over longer periods? I have never seen any report on how participants in these home TV shows do in the long run, but there are many other interesting cases that may answer the same type of questions. How do home and neighbourhood affect how we see ourselves? How aware are people of how they present themselves through their personal environment? How may housing be used to positively affect vulnerable groups of people? Musings of this type have inspired me to do a research project on the relationship between housing and identity.

### *The interaction between people and environment*

People often associate beautiful environments with important people, and furthermore read environments as statements about the significance or value of people, institutions

and organizations (Gifford, 2002; Sadalla & Sheets, 1993). Research has shown that residents of higher-status neighbourhoods are seen as having more favourable traits (Cherulnik & Bayless, 1986). However, the physical environment is only one of many factors that influence how we see ourselves and others. The meaning and impact of the physical environment will be different dependent on the context and the strength of other contributing factors and elements. This is what Küller (1986, 1991) wanted to show through his model of the physical environment’s influence:

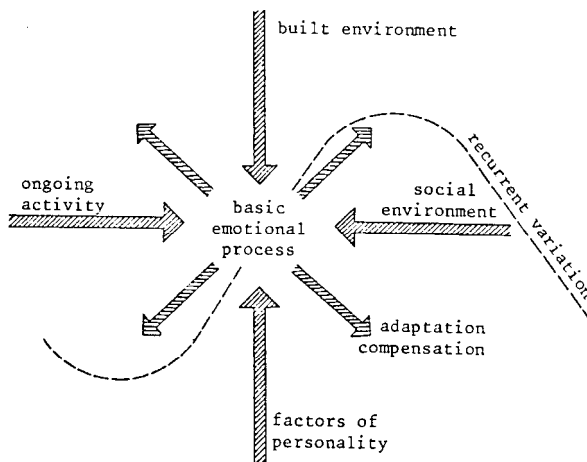


Figure 1: The physical environment’s role in the basic emotional process (Küller, 1986, 1991).

The model shows how the physical environment is one of four main components affecting our basic emotional process. Individual resources or factors of personality, social environment and ongoing activity are other “inputs” in the dynamic emotional process. The “outputs” will be the control, adaptation and compensation we turn to in order to achieve balance and well-being. The contributions from the four groups of components affecting us will always vary. In many situations, social and personal factors will be more influential than environmental factors, but all activities happen in a physical environment. The built environment may affect social life and psychological reactions through function and spatial solutions, and also through aesthetic or visual impressions. The physical environment influences social relations through room size,

the way chairs are arranged, and through beauty. For example, people may prefer to sit down more often and to meet and talk to people where they find the environment appealing and comfortable.

However, Küller's model (1986, 1991) does not illustrate how the different main groups of factors (environmental, social, personal and situational factors) affect each other. There is a complex, dynamic interaction between these factors depending on the concrete situation. For example, social and environmental factors affect each other. If someone significant tells us that our home is beautiful, the environment might affect us more positively than if someone significant tells us the opposite. Factors of personality and situation may further affect to what degree we are influenced by others' opinions of our home environment. The associations that physical environments and objects give us are created in interaction with other people. Considering these complex interactions, Gifford (2002) defines environmental psychology as "the study of transactions between individuals and their physical settings", thereby emphasizing the interactive and dynamic relationship between man and place. A "transactional view of settings" (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981) can be seen as a view emphasizing the interdependent relationship between people and the environment. This view of settings is holistic, and describes people and place as a unit, highlighting the reciprocal influence between people and places. Person and environment are part of one inclusive entity.

Accordingly, the connection between housing and identity goes both ways. To a certain degree we are able to create and change our physical environment, at the same time we are also influenced by the surroundings (Gifford, 2002). People seek and create environments that support and strengthen their perception of themselves. They may buy houses in particular neighbourhoods to become members of special social groups, and they may decorate home environments to communicate who they are or would like to be. But housing also affects the way people perceive themselves, through architectural solutions, and not at least the associations the architecture and neighbourhood create. This thesis does not focus so much on how people actively seek and change their physical environment in accordance with who they are, but mainly on how housing may be read as identity signals, and how housing influences identity and self perception.

Although the thesis focuses on housing and identity on an individual level, the focus on the individual is important to bear in mind for a better understanding and planning of housing on a broader community level.

*Why investigate the connection between housing and identity?*

Knowledge about housing and identity should have importance on both a societal and an individual level. The first associations some readers might get from the title of this thesis, “Housing and Identity”, probably relate to the way housing is presented as an expression of identity and lifestyle in TV programs and trendy magazines about interior design and furniture. The topic is popular. People are taught that interior decoration can underline their personality and affect their well-being. The mass media’s emphasis on design and layout probably makes people more interested and aware of housing as identity communication (Leonard et al., 2004). Increasing consumption due to shifting trends and society’s emphasis on design and layout has negative implications related to conservation of the environment from a global perspective. On an individual level, people may be depressed by the difference between their housing situation and how they would like people to perceive them. Our hopes and dreams about housing are produced and articulated through relations of power (Blunt & Dowling, 2006). Societal standards about the right housing and residence type may be difficult, and for some, impossible to live up to. To deal with negative implications, both on a large and small scale, we have to better understand people’s thoughts and attitudes on this matter.

Knowledge about housing and identity may be applied to improve people’s everyday lives. Housing research has for many years focused on how quality housing and well functioning neighbourhoods improve an individual’s health and everyday life (see reviews by Lawrence, 1987, 2002; Halpern, 1995). Urban planning and housing design can be carried out with a perspective on how to include groups of people that are excluded from society. At a larger scale, improving the housing quality of a neighbourhood *may* affect the social identity of the residents, and make a part of the city more attractive to live in, thereby making the group see themselves in a more positive light. At a smaller scale, architecture *may* affect a former drug addict’s identity as a father and his relationship to his children, when he for the first time has a safe place

where there is room to spend time with his children. I emphasize “may” in the examples above because, as this thesis will show, the connection between architecture and identity is dependent on a complex mix of factors of process, context and situation.

## **Aims and outline of the thesis**

### *Aims*

The main aim of this PhD project is to *develop knowledge about the relationship between housing and how people see themselves*. This is explored through people’s experience of their home environment and neighbourhood, and how surroundings in their everyday life have impact on their perception of who they are. The secondary aims have been formulated in the following way (see the detailed research questions in the overview of the articles):

1. Find and develop analytical tools, concepts and theories for the subject of housing and identity.

Questions on this matter are mainly treated in Article 1 and in the introduction. The introduction to the article collection will present an evaluation of the analytical tools, concepts and theories in the elucidation of the empirical findings.

2. Explore the attitudes and associations that people in a high-priced and a low-priced neighbourhood have to the subject housing and identity.

(Article 2)

3. Explore the meaning of quality housing for the identity of a group of vulnerable people.

(Article 3)

### *Target group*

As the aims reflect, the target groups for the thesis are both environmental psychologists and academics in related disciplines who work with the meaning of the physical environment on a theoretical level, as well as practitioners, such as architects and planners, who try to use this knowledge. It is possible to translate the findings into architecture, but there are many types of design that might answer the needs outlined in this thesis. The awareness of the effect that architecture and the physical environment in general might have on people's view of themselves is an excellent basis. Social workers and local governments working with housing for people that are unable to compete in the open housing market are also target groups. They are in a position to make use of housing as one of many strategies to improve the lives of vulnerable groups of people.

### *Outline of the thesis*

The thesis is based on three articles. The common thread in the thesis is the relationship between housing and identity. The first article presents definitions, concepts and theories related to the subject. The second article is an empirical study of people's experiences of and attitudes towards dwellings as identity communication. The last article analyses what might be regarded as a test of this knowledge in practice: Is it possible to document a positive effect from architectural qualities on the identity of a vulnerable group of people? All of the articles have been published in refereed journals. Two of the articles were submitted with my supervisors as second authors. The drafts of these articles were written by me alone, and the contribution of the second authors was mainly in revising content, structure and interpretation of results.

An article-based thesis tells a story about a "journey" in acquiring knowledge. The articles that are written along the way do not necessarily represent a "final endpoint" at the time of submission of the thesis. It is difficult to fully avoid repetitions and even contradictions in an article-based thesis. Method and theory sections in the articles have similar sections due to the use of the same theories and methods. There might be contradictions related to theoretical and conceptual views of identity and place, because the empirical data have changed and deepened my understanding of these matters throughout this period.

The introduction to the article collection outlines the research area and the methodological standards. The introduction has room for more detailed methodological considerations than in the articles. A summary of the main findings follows. Owing to the fact that I have deepened my understanding of some of the issues raised by the articles, the findings are further discussed and reflected upon in the last part of this introduction. The discussion analyses the theories and concepts I used as a starting point in Article 1 (Hauge, 2007), and presents them in the elucidation of the empirical findings. *Reading the three articles before the overall discussion and conclusions therefore makes the discussion easier to follow.*

## **Overview of the articles and research questions**

### *Article 1*

Hauge, Å. L. (2007). Identity and place – a comparison of three identity theories. *Architectural Science Review*, 50, 1, 44-51.

This article was also published in Norwegian:

Hauge, Å. L. (2007). Identitet og sted: En sammenligning av tre identitetsteorier. *Tidsskrift for Norsk psykolog forening (Journal of the Norwegian Psychological Association)*, 44, 8, 980-987.

An earlier version of the article was presented at an international conference called *Doing, thinking, feeling home: The mental geography of residential environments*, in Delft, the Netherlands, October 14-15, 2005.

This first article is an introduction to the research area – a review article. It presents the theoretical background for the empirical studies, and defines relevant concepts. It also presents earlier research on the subject from different disciplines. The article aims to answer:

- What identity theories can best describe the relationship between housing and identity?
- How can these theories be used and developed to explain the relationship between housing and identity?

#### *Article 2*

Hauge, Å. L. & Kolstad, A. (2007). Dwelling as an expression of identity: A comparative study among residents in high-priced and low-priced neighbourhoods in Norway. *Housing, Theory & Society*, 24, 272-292.

An early version of this article was presented at the 19<sup>th</sup> IAPS conference *Environment, Health and Sustainable Development*, September 11-16, 2006, in Alexandria, Egypt.

The article explores the thoughts and attitudes people have towards their dwelling as an expression of identity. It aims to answer:

- How aware and interested are people in their dwelling as identity communication?
- What do people think their dwelling communicates about them?

These questions were explored through a questionnaire and qualitative interviews with residents in a high-priced and a low-priced neighbourhood in the city of Trondheim.

#### *Article 3*

Hauge, Å. L. & Støa, E. (2009). "Here you get a little extra push": The meaning of architectural quality in housing for the formerly homeless – a case study of Veiskillet in Trondheim, Norway. Submitted to *Nordic Journal of Architectural Research*, and accepted for publication.

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This article describes a case study of “Veiskillet”, a housing project for former homeless criminals and drug abusers, where the architecture is intended to positively affect their motivation and well-being. It aims to answer the questions:

- How is the architecture of a housing project that has been labelled “quality architecture” by experts experienced by a resident group of former homeless criminals and drug abusers?
- What do the housing project and the architecture mean for the residents’ identity?

The case study is based on information from resident interviews and interviews with initiators and employees, building visits, presentations of the housing project in media and architectural magazines, and information from the project’s honourable mention in the 2007 Norwegian State Award for Building Tradition.



## 2. RESEARCH AREA

### *Approach*

Research and the literature on place, home, housing and identity are by their nature interdisciplinary, and there seems to be a common understanding of the most central literature on the subject across different disciplines. However, my choice of literature for review is probably influenced by my environmental psychology background, and my attachment to the Faculty of Architecture. Psychology and sociology have some common literature, especially in the field of social psychology and identity theories. Phenomenological literature is relevant when it comes to place and home research. The review also covers selected architecture and geography publications. At the same time I am aware of the large amount of literature about the meaning of home and the relationship between home/housing and identity in sociology, geography, anthropology and ethnography. I have read some of these central works, but my main focus has been on environmental psychology – a discipline that many researchers define as interdisciplinary in nature (Stokols, 1995).

The last article of this thesis (Hauge & Støa, 2009) is about housing for drug abusers. The literature on homelessness and treatment and welfare for drug abusers is comprehensive, and within the frame of this research project, I was not able to delve into much of it. However, the same mechanisms that are central to people in general when it comes to housing and identity, are central to vulnerable groups as well. Nevertheless, there are also aspects that require specific knowledge when planning housing for some of these groups, such as drug abusers. These aspects are discussed in Støa, Denizou & Hauge (2007) and Støa, Denizou & Hauge (2009). My expectation is that even if the research findings are not explicitly related to theories on treatment and welfare for this group, the perspectives and results may be useful and taken into account.

## **Home, housing, or dwelling?**

### *Home*

The word “home” goes far back in history, at least 2000 years (Brink, 1995). Its earliest meaning was probably the place of one’s origin. Not until the sixteenth century did “home” refer to one’s own domestic dwelling (Gifford, 2002). “Home” is a powerful word connected to symbolic meanings that may touch people deeply (Paadam, 2003). Home is where people are settled psychologically, socially, culturally and physically (Benjamin, Stea, & Saile, 1995). The relationship between home and housing therefore cannot be taken for granted. A lack of a sense of home may be related to temporariness in accommodation, dissatisfaction with the physical design, or psychological tension among family members. A wide variety of social and economic relations are important in achieving a sense of home (Paadam, 2003).

There are many ways of structuring the different meanings of home. Després (1991) summarizes the research on the “meaning of home”, and describes the following ten needs, which have been described by informants in many research studies: Home as security and control, home as reflection of one’s ideas and values, home as acting upon and modifying one’s dwelling, home as permanence and continuity, home as relationships with family and friends, home as a centre for activities, home as refuge from the outside world, home as indicator of personal status, home as material structure, and home as a place to own. Many of the same aspects of home are pointed out by Sommerville (1997) and Mallet (2004). See Article 1 (Hauge, 2007) for more about research on the meaning of home.

Blunt & Dowling (2006: 2) explain “home” as a multi-layered geographical concept, and define it as “a place/site, a set of feelings/cultural meanings, and the relationship between the two”. Home is a place and an imaginary space – that has varying ideas and feelings connected to it, both positive and negative. In other words, a house may be experienced as home to different degrees. A “home” does not simply exist, but is made. “Home is a process of creating and understanding forms of dwelling and belonging” (Blunt & Dowling, 2006: 23). Home also varies in importance according to socio-

demographic characteristics as well as lifestyles related to socio-economic status and activities on other arenas (Ås, 1996, see Paadam, 2003).

*Dwelling and housing contra home*

Coolen, Kempen & Ozaki (2002) and Rapoport (1995) argue for using the word “dwelling” instead of “home” as a research term. Dictionaries define “dwelling” as “housing that someone is living in”. The word “dwelling” is often used in phenomenology, emphasizing the establishment of a meaningful relationship between man and environment (Norberg-Schultz, 1971, 1980). See Hauge (2007) for more on the phenomenological literature on the subject. Coolen, Kempen & Ozaki (2002) and Rapoport (1995) say that the terms “house” and “home” were originally intended to distinguish the physical structure – house – from the relationship people have to that structure – home. The “meanings of home” are then connected to these relationships, and attached to a house, but the circularity of the expression may be seen as a problem. Rapoport (1995) finds “home” as a research term rather ambiguous and fuzzy, and states that the implicit folk theory behind it needs to be made explicit and examined. Another problem is that the word “home” does not exist in all languages, or has different meanings. But as a consequence of globalization, more and more people understand the meaning of “home”, and are starting to use it in the European / American way (Benjamin, Stea & Saile, 1995).

The concepts “housing” or “dwelling”, as well as “home”, have sets of meanings attached to them. The distinction between “house” merely as a physical structure “without meanings ascribed to it” and “home” as a set of meanings is artificial. “A house is not a neutral setting. A house carries meanings that arise out of, and in turn influence the use of the physical structure” (Clapham 2005: 117). For an individual, housing is linked to many other areas of life and coincides with an employment path; it is not consumed in isolation from other aspects of life. Clapham (2005, 2002) uses the concept “housing *pathways*” to describe patterns of interaction concerning house and home, over time and space. This can further be explained as the household forms in which individuals participate and the routes they take over time in their experience of housing. The use of the term “housing *pathway*” instead of “housing *career*” also

illustrates that housing quality does not necessarily improve throughout life, but depends on economy and household structure, related marriage, children or divorce. Housing must be seen as a means to an end, such as personal fulfilment and happiness, rather than as an end in itself (Clapham, 2002, 2005). Paadam (2003) also argues that “housing” should not be understood as a static physical construction, because it always implies a social dimension, even when the occupiers have no intention of creating a home. “Home” is one of many meanings of housing (Blunt & Dowling, 2006); however, it may be the most central meaning.

Dictionaries define “housing” as “residences, collectively”, or “the activity of enclosing something or providing a residence for someone”. “Accommodation” and “lodging” are synonyms. Housing refers to *physical structures and buildings meant for people to live in*. These buildings and structures have *personal, social and cultural meanings attached to them* (among other things, different views of home). These meanings are of interest to this research project. The concept “housing” simplifies the basis of the research, and provides room for not only associations to home, but also for other meanings of housing. The aims for the research project described in this thesis are centred on associations and meanings ascribed to housing and identity. Therefore, accurate descriptions of “how much of the building” that is included in the analysis is not needed, since the wider physical and social environment is central in creating the meanings attached to the neighbourhood and housing unit. However, other types of research with more focus on how architectural solutions are used might require more accurate descriptions of the physical structures studied.

To conclude, the understanding of home as a process (Blunt & Dowling, 2006), and the understanding of home as only one of many meanings of housing, are for me, reasons not to base a research project on the concept of “home”, but rather to choose “dwelling” or “housing” as a starting point. One of my informants describes her lack of feeling “at home” in her neighbourhood and apartment this way:

Actually, I think I've grown away from the community here, because I don't have much to do with the neighbours and people any longer. There are so many families with small children, and

a good number of foreigners with dark skin. And the people who are my age who still live here... I don't know, it's just not my place. (Woman, 48, low-priced neighbourhood)

Regardless of the degree of a sense of home, a dwelling may still reflect information about who you are, both for the resident and others. For example, people may read information about your social status through the design and location of the dwelling you live in, regardless of how strong your sense of home and connection to this dwelling is.

In Article 2 (Hauge & Kolstad, 2007), “dwelling” is consequently used when referring to the place people live in. The study focuses on the personal, social and contextual meanings of one’s dwelling. The meanings attached to the neighbourhood of the dwelling are also taken into account, because the neighbourhood influences the meanings attached to the dwelling, both for the resident and others.

In Article 3 (Hauge & Støa, 2009) and in this introduction, the concept “housing” is chosen, based on the arguments outlined. Article 3 (Hauge & Støa, 2009) is thematically connected to literature on social and public housing – where “social housing” is a key concept. The choice of terms and concepts is difficult in the research area of social housing. The use and understanding of concepts differs from country to country depending on the public policy on these matters, and the associations tied to a concept may be very different. “Social housing” and “public housing” seem to be the most frequently used concepts in the international literature on the subject (see for example Clapham, 2005; Wassenberg, 2004; Mee, 2007; Mullins & Rhodes, 2007). In this thesis, “social housing” refers to housing provided by government for persons who cannot reasonably afford to provide their own accommodation, for instance the homeless, drug abusers, persons with physical or mental disabilities, etc. Only four percent of the Norwegian housing stock is publicly owned (Hansen, 2006) and can be categorized as social housing. Public support for vulnerable groups is given through individually directed instruments rather than provision of subsidized housing. Social housing is reserved for the worst off, socially as well as economically. In other countries, the social and public housing sector is often larger.

## **Housing as communication**

### *Housing creates associations*

Buildings are physical structures laden with meaning. The building, both in itself and through location, liberates associations and memories. “The house derives meaning from its setting as well as its own characteristics. Feelings about the house will be influenced by the perceived physical and social environment outside the front door” (Clapham, 2005: 155). A neighbourhood may increasingly differentiate among people, and may be important to the lifestyle and identity of those who live in them. Gram-Hanssen & Beck-Danielsen (2004) have shown how people associate specific residential neighbourhoods with different symbolic values. Individuals belonging to different social worlds are found to live in different homes in terms of the neighbourhood’s physical and social characteristics, housing, decorations and landscaping styles (Duncan, 1985). Research has shown that people draw obvious conclusions about the wealth and social class of residents according to where they live (Lindstrom, 1997, Gifford, 2002). Not only location, but also building exterior is found to release specific associations. Building materials are shown to give people associations about the personality of the residents; residents were described as warm, cold, creative or non-artistic related to different building materials and styles (Sadalla & Sheets, 1993). Photos of houses in different architectural styles are associated with different levels of friendliness among the residents. Certain housing styles were associated with friendlier people than others. Farm- and Tudor-style houses were assumed as having the friendliest residents, while Tudor- and colonial-style houses were seen as having the highest status residents (Nasar, 1989). In addition, identical buildings assigned different labels will elicit different opinions; an apartment said to be public housing provokes less favourable reactions than the same apartment said to be a private condominium (Nasar & Julian, 1985). Interior styles are also associated with different social attributes, and the respondents’ judgements are surprisingly similar (Wilson & Mackenzie, 2000).

The examples above also illustrate that research on the communicative aspect of the built environment and housing is analysed according to very different concepts. The



physical environment is seen as having communicative meaning related to social attributes, personality or social status. These may all be treated as aspects of human identity (Hauge, 2007). Robinson (2006) talks about architecture as a “cultural medium” and the way buildings may activate different mental schemas people use to understand the world. The associations the built environment release may be seen according to what social psychology calls “schema” or “schemata”, mental structures representing different aspects of the world, such as situations, people, or groups of people (Lee, 2003; Myers, 2002). These schemas have to be learnt in a culture. People use schemas to organize knowledge about different aspects of life, and their schemas provide frameworks for future understanding. This approach represents both a necessary human simplification of information processing, and a potential risk for misunderstandings and prejudices. Lee (2003: 33) states that “the built environment is more or less isomorphic with the social system that is developed within it. Also because no human environment of any consequence can be perceived as a physical object in isolation from its social implications and behavioural activity patterns.”

The way housing creates associations may be referred to as “symbol aesthetics” or “aesthetics” (Cold, 2001; Nasar 1988). Nasar (1988) divides aesthetics into “formal aesthetics” and “symbol aesthetics”, where the first category refers to aspects of shape, proportions, colours and scale. “Symbol aesthetics” refers to the meaning individuals associate with the physical environment. These concepts are used very infrequently in this thesis, mainly because more general explanations using words such as “the associations housing create” or “housing as communication” cover broader concepts. As we shall see, housing affects identity not only through aesthetics, but also through how architecture influences behaviour. “Aesthetics” is also a concept used in different ways in different disciplines, and would require a thorough examination. To distinguish between aesthetics and symbols may also be challenging. It was therefore decided that this research would be more clearly analysed using other concepts.

#### *Housing as identity communication*

People communicate identity in many ways, by how they behave and speak, through interests and activities, and through the physical environment. Residents are often

judged on the basis of visible clues that are interpreted as signs of identity by outsiders (Gullestad, 2002). The associations buildings create do not only tell us who other people are, but also who we are. “The spatial world in which we live tells us who we are. We find our self within it, we respond to it and it reacts to us. By manipulating it we affirm our identity” (Robinson, 2006: 23).

Surroundings and possessions people have say something about them, even within restricted choices of objects or surroundings. This means that identity communication is a process people are able to control to different degrees; it is impossible to stop others from interpreting information through physical clues. A detached dwelling contains more visible signs of lifestyle and identity than an apartment in a block where the residents have no influence on the exterior of the building. Still, people interpret residents’ life stages, family situations and social status from the fact that people live in apartments and not in detached dwellings, and through the choice, or limited choice, of neighbourhood. Rapoport (1985) argues that a home reflects identity due to the fact that house and interior are *chosen*. If they had not been chosen, they are not “home”. An imposed setting is unlikely to be “home”. Many people are too poor to buy or *choose* their physical environment; however, they may still experience having a home. Homeownership may offer better opportunities for self-presentation through housing, but Paadam (2003) argues that strong home identities are not restricted to owners. If you *own* your dwelling, you have the greatest freedom to choose your closest surroundings, and this may be some of the explanation as to why people in general prefer to own their dwelling (Agnew, 1981). In most western cultures, a freestanding single house serves the function of reflecting identity best, and may therefore be related to the strong preference people in many western countries have for this type of house (Cooper, 1974, see Saeggert, 1985). This is, however, dependent on social, geographical and historical context; in continental Europe, “home” is predominantly associated with apartments (Blunt & Dowling, 2006).

People communicate identity both on a conscious and subconscious level. The conscious and active way people communicate identity can be referred to as “self-presentation”. People want to present a desired image both to an external audience

(others) and an internal audience (ourselves) (Myers, 2002). People may then express themselves and behave in ways designed to create a favourable impression that corresponds to one's ideals. Some people are more conscious about self-presentation than others, and there are situations where people are more self-conscious than other situations. Self-presentation can be seen from a dramaturgical perspective, where the environment is a collection of stage sets and props for social performance. People select and manipulate symbols in their environment in an attempt to influence an external audience. The communicative perspective on housing can be seen according to symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1962), as described in Article 2 (Hauge & Kolstad, 2007). People's belongings and environments carry meanings that are interpreted during social interaction. See Article 2 for more information on symbolic interactionism and Goffman's theory (1959).

## **Identity**

Why choose to analyse research findings according to a problematic concept like "identity"? Identity means different things in different disciplines, and it also features in many public discourses, from politics to marketing to self-help literature. However, if researchers want to talk to the world outside academia, denying the use of one of its most easily understood words is not a good communications policy (Jenkins, 2008). Jenkins (2008) argues that the human world is unimaginable without some means of knowing who others are and some sense of who we are. Identity is the human capacity, rooted in language, to know who is who. We attempt to identify ourselves and other people through embodiment, clothing, language, answers to questions, incidental or accidental disclosure of information, and information from third parties - more or less successfully. Identification is a basic cognitive mechanism that humans use to sort out themselves and their fellows. Identifying ourselves and others is a matter of assigning meaning, and meaning always involves social interaction. It involves agreement and disagreement, convention and innovation, communication and negotiation – about similarities and differences.

### *Personal and social identity*

In this thesis, “identity” refers to “a sense of who we are as individuals”, both about what makes us similar to other people, and what makes us dissimilar. Based on inherited components, personhood is formed through social interaction. Our self-perception derives from our interaction with other people. This also includes our interaction with places and objects, acknowledged by Breakwell (Twigger-Ross et al., 2003) and Proshansky (1987), among others. The meanings of place is constantly being evaluated and redefined in light of changing social and physical relationships with place and between people (Chow & Healey, 2008), and the contribution of place to identity is therefore never the same (Twigger-Ross et al., 2003). Breakwell (1983, 1986; Twigger-Ross et al., 2003) sees the content dimension of identity as containing information about the individual, including the behavioural, physical, psychological and life history aspects, as well as group membership and category identifications. She also states that identity has a value plane that contains the current evaluation of each of the content dimensions, such as a positive or a negative evaluation of being Norwegian, for example.

Breakwell examines what types of factors shape human identity, and identifies four principles of identity important in the western part of the world: 1) self-esteem, 2) self-efficacy, 3) distinctiveness, and 4) continuity. These four principles will vary in their relative and absolute salience over time and across situations. Self-esteem is defined as a positive self-evaluation, or a positive group evaluation of groups with which one identifies. Self-efficacy is the person’s wish to feel competent and in control of one’s life. Distinctiveness is the person’s desire to emphasize uniqueness, when comparing oneself to groups and to persons. Continuity is the subjective, self-perceived continuity across time and situation, the connection between past, present and future within identity. All of these principles can be seen in relation to housing or place. A positive evaluation of home and neighbourhood contribute to self-esteem (Devine-Wright and Lyons, 1997). Housing influences self-efficacy through how it affects a person’s ability to function in daily life and be in control of one’s life. People may use home, interior and neighbourhood to mark distinctiveness from other people and other groups. Twigger-Ross & Uzzel (1996) found support for the way places act as references to past

selves and provide links between past and present. Breakwell (Twigger-Ross et al., 2003) has also stated that places become elements of identity, subject to the pressure to maintain self-esteem, self-efficacy, continuity and distinctiveness. Breakwell's (1983, 1986; Twigger-Ross et al., 2003) guiding principles for identity will be seen in relation to empirical findings in Articles 2 and 3 in the discussion.

Breakwell's Identity Process Theory (Breakwell, 1983, 1986; Twigger-Ross et al., 2003) does not separate between personal and social identity. But many theoreticians do. A personal or self-identity is a sense of one's personal attributes and attitudes (Myers, 2002). One's social identity is comprised of the parts of our identity that come from group membership, such as nationality and gender. Social identity is about similarities, the groups with which we identify (Tajfel, 1981, 1982). We associate ourselves with certain groups (in-groups) and gain self-esteem by doing so. We also contrast our groups (out-groups) with other groups with a favourable bias towards our own group. Seeing our groups as superior helps us feel better. Individuals and groups with unsatisfactory social identity seek to restore or acquire positive identification via mobility, assimilation, creativity or competition. People associate mostly with others whose attitudes are similar to their own. The things that signal attachment to the groups we belong to may be exaggerated to express difference with other groups, and minimize the difference between group members. People conform to what they believe is the prototypical position of their group. This is called "group polarization" (Myers, 2002). Polarization occurs in communities: A neighbourhood's image may be strengthened through the way it attracts residents with similar lifestyles, interests, capital and attitudes. Neighbourhoods become echo chambers, with opinions ricocheting off kindred-spirited friends (Brooks, 2005, see Myers, 2009).

### *Identity and lifestyle*

The search for identity through lifestyle choices has important implications for housing (Clapham, 2002). Living in a certain neighbourhood, or a certain type of house, can be seen as expressions of a lifestyle, and people may further read it as an identity statement. Lifestyle according to Giddens (1991) is a more or less integrated set of practices that an individual embraces, not only because such practices fulfil utilitarian

needs, but because they give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity. This means routine practices, incorporated into habits of dress, eating, modes of acting and favoured milieus, as examples. Chaney (1996, see Clampham 2005) argues that people use lifestyle to identify and explain wider complexes of identity in daily life. Lifestyle becomes an expression of identity. In modern social life, the more tradition loses its hold, the more individuals are forced to negotiate lifestyle choices among a diversity of options (Giddens, 1991).

Festinger stated in his cognitive dissonance theory in 1957 that people add or validate identity aspects in themselves by watching their own actions. Dissonance theory predicts that when our actions are not fully explained by external rewards or coercion, we will experience dissonance that we can reduce by believing in what we have done (Myers, 2002). People can change their attitudes to fit their actions, or change behaviour to fit their attitudes. Cognitive dissonance theory therefore illustrates that dwelling and interior may be used to *make* people change. A change in the physical environment may influence people's view of themselves. Speller et al. (2002) have documented how people's identities are negatively affected by depressing changes in their spatial environment.

#### *Identity and post modernity*

Giddens (1991) argues that self-identity in what he calls the "post-traditional order" has become a reflexive project. Identity is not given, and is not a set of observable characteristics. It becomes an account of a person's life. People have access to information that allows us to reflect on the causes and consequences of our actions and how our actions influence us as persons. In a rapidly changing and even turbulent society, individuals can to a large extent make their own lives by actively making choices. Individuals can construct a personal narrative for themselves that allows them to understand themselves as being in control of their lives. In individualistic cultures we create, maintain and revise a set of biographical narratives, social roles and lifestyles, and we can to a certain extent choose what we want to do and who we want to be. Identity is not inherited or provided with a given social role. We are almost *forced* to

create ourselves: What should we do? How should we act? Who should we be? This is both liberating and troubling.

Jenkins (2008) sees this as an overstatement and does not believe that there is something very different with identity and identity formation in our time compared to former periods. Giddens (1991) acknowledges that wealth gives access to more options for “identity creating”, and that the more equal distribution of increased wealth in western societies has given more people this opportunity than before. Jenkins (2008) correctly argues that people in most parts of the world do not have this opportunity in the same way as in western societies. They still reflect identity aspects and personal narratives, perhaps in other ways than in the west.

The move towards individualism and independence, and decline in traditional institutions has characterized many countries and cultures in the western part of the world for decades (Giddens, 1991, Meyers, 2002). Breakwell (1983, 1986) also argues that the guiding principles for identity are different in the western part of the world than in more collectivistic or interdependent cultures. She states that the four principles of identity for which there is considerable evidence within our culture, are rather reifications of what society regards as acceptable end states for identity (Breakwell, 1987). The research for this thesis has been undertaken in Norway where individualism and independence are prominent. Due to this, I see some of Giddens’s arguments relevant for this research. However, one of the case studies for Article 2, the low priced neighbourhood, is an example of a group of people that do not have the same options for choosing and expressing identity through housing as the average Norwegian (Hauge & Kolstad, 2007). The case study for Article 3 (Hauge & Støa, 2009) is centred on a vulnerable group of people that during periods of their lives have been completely deprived of the options of “creating an identity”, due to drug abuse and homelessness. Still, society’s focus on the individual probably influences the way they reflect the matter, and identity formation may then be a heavy burden more than a liberating opportunity, as Giddens (1991) argues. The search for identity and self-fulfilment through lifestyle choices, for instance through housing, brings with it increased risk. People may find it difficult to compete in the deregulated flexible labour market, and

find themselves excluded from lifestyle choices open to others (Clapham, 2002, 2005). A social identity, or categorical identity, is not always of our own choosing and does not carry the same social standing. For a person to be categorized as a homeless carries a substantial reduction in social status, and will influence the way this person is looked upon and treated in society (Clapham, 2002).

The individualism in western societies means that a person often give priority to one's own goals over group goals, and defines one's identity in terms of personal attributes rather than group identifications. Social identity may be more prominent in cultures where collectivism or interdependence are more prominent, where identity is defined more in relation to others (Myers, 2002). Duncan (1985) states that housing reflects social structures and class in both collectivistic and individualistic societies. However, in collectivistic cultures, homes tend to reflect the identity of a whole group (social identity) more than of the individuals (personal identity) (Duncan, 1981). The home in collectivistic cultures is seen as symbolizing group values that express interdependence (Rapoport, 1985). This means that personal identity may be more prominent than social identity in independent or individualistic cultures represented in the case studies presented in Articles 2 and 3 (Hauge & Kolstad, 2007, Hauge & Støa, 2009). This will be further discussed in the discussion part of this introduction.



### 3. METHODS

#### Case study methodology

##### *Case study research*

Yin (2003:13) defines a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”. Case studies are the preferred strategy when “how” or “why” questions are central to the research, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context. A case study relies on multiple sources of evidence, often a mix between quantitative and qualitative methods (Yin, 2003). Flyvbjerg (2004) argues for the great value of case study methodology as opposed to the conventional view of case study research being of less value in itself. Misunderstandings about the value of case study research are linked to the view of knowledge as a *reflection* of reality or “discovered facts”. Knowledge is not a reflection of an objective reality; knowledge is socially constructed. But where do we go from there to get beyond the extremes of a subjective relativism? The traditional “Holy Trinity” of generalizability, reliability and validity as criteria for science has to be exchanged for concepts such as trustworthiness, credibility, dependability and confirmability. The results from a case study can be generalized, not through statistical generalization, but through analytical or theoretical generalization, meaning that the findings from one study can be used as a guide to what might occur in other situations (Kvale, 1996). This type of generalization is based on an analysis of similarities and differences in situations. By providing detailed information about context, specifying supporting evidence, and making arguments explicit, the researcher allows readers to judge the soundness of the generalization (Yin, 2003). This generates concrete, practical context-dependent knowledge, which has great value as scientific knowledge; context-dependent knowledge is the most common way people gain knowledge and understand the world. “Formal generalization is overvalued as a source of scientific development, whereas the *force of example* is underestimated” (Flyvbjerg, 2004: 425). Kvale (1996)

also points out the difference between knowledge as “what *is*” and “what *may be*” as different targets of generalization.

Trustworthiness and credibility in case study research rests upon the researcher’s quality of craftsmanship at all stages of the research, as well as good arguments, and transparent analysis of the data (Kvale, 1996). Internal coherence and persuasiveness are shown through grounding results in examples in the presentation of the findings. The research findings in this research project are always supported by quotations from the interview data to make the analysis transparent and easier to evaluate by others.

A natural process in case study research is a broad approach at the beginning of a research project, focusing on collecting as much data as possible to understand the phenomenon of interest, and then narrowing the focus along the way. The range of research this thesis is based on was also narrowed several times. The research questions and research interests became more focused the more I understood about my case studies and informants. Grønmo (2004) states that the development of research questions in social research in general is often a process aimed at a steadily improved connection between theory and empirical data.

#### *Triangulation of methods*

Triangulation of methods means that a research project is based on a combination of different data and methods. The word “triangulation” comes from navigation and land survey, where mapping an area often is done through dividing an area into triangles. In this way positions, distances and directions may be estimated through the corners and angles in the triangle. In social research, this means to study a phenomenon through different views and methods. This may give a more nuanced picture of a phenomenon (Grønmo, 2004). Different methods answer different questions. A survey mainly describes a phenomenon, while qualitative interviews are more investigative and answer the “why questions”. Flyvbjerg (2004) considers the sharp separation between qualitative and quantitative methods to be spurious. Good social science is problem-driven, not methodology-driven, because it employs methods that best help answer the

research questions. “More often than not, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods will do the task best.” (Flyvjerg, 2004: 432)

Quantitative and qualitative methods can be combined in many ways. For Article 2 (Hauge & Kolstad, 2007), the quantitative part of the study was undertaken before the qualitative part. The reason for this was to use the interviews to further explore tendencies exposed by questionnaire data, and to improve the analysis of the phenomena. The aim was then to detect both a general overview, and to let qualitative interviews contribute to explain the meaning in patterns that were uncovered (Grønmo, 2004). The survey provided a general picture of housing satisfaction, and the interviews gave an opportunity to delve deeper into phenomena that turned out to be interesting.

It is not common to combine questionnaires with interviews conducted according to a phenomenological approach (see the following sections about phenomenology). These methods represent very different epistemological perspectives. Some argue that the distinction between the various positions is so great that integration between the two could rarely take place in the same research project. The paradigms are so different that any reconciliation between them is bound to destroy the epistemological foundations of each (Rosenberg, 1988). However, many researchers also argue strongly for bypassing the old controversy between qualitative and quantitative approaches, by looking at them as complementary to each other. Both approaches have strengths and weaknesses (Mykletun, 2000; Steckler et al., 1992). Another way of seeing it is that all research ultimately has a qualitative grounding, or that it all comes down to focusing on either words or numbers. The issue is basically whether one takes an analytical approach to understanding a few controlled variables, or a systematic approach to understand the interaction of variables in a complex environment (Salomon, 1991). To combine qualitative and quantitative methodological paradigms, one has to take a pragmatic standpoint; it is possible to subscribe to the philosophy of one paradigm but also employ the methods of the other (Steckler et al., 1992).

### *Selection of case studies*

The case studies for the second and the third articles are “extreme cases”. A case might be selected on the grounds that, far from being typical, it provides a contrast with the norm. In this way, one might find knowledge that is not found anywhere else, and factors of influence might be more easily seen than in an average case (Denscombe, 2003). A typical / average case is often not the richest in information; extreme cases reveal more knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2004).

The case studies in the second article come from two different neighbourhoods in Trondheim (Hauge & Kolstad, 2007). The neighbourhoods were chosen after interviews with real estate agents (see appendix) who were asked to describe a typical high-priced and a typical low-priced neighbourhood in the city, and who suggested Nedre Elvehavn and Kolstadflata. See Article 2 and the appendix for further information on and photos of these neighbourhoods.

A case study may also be “given” to the researcher as a case of intrinsic interest (Stake, 1995), which was the case with Veiskillet in Article 3. However, the selection of case studies is also often limited by time and money. To compare Veiskillet, the case study in Article 3, with one or more other case studies on social housing for homeless people would provide valuable information. Still, Veiskillet as a single case reveals important knowledge and poses central questions for further research. Yin (2003) also argues that an extreme case or a unique case is a rationale for a single case study. Veiskillet is different from other housing projects in the same category – housing for homeless and/or drug abusers. This case study certainly provides knowledge that is not found in an average housing project. Even small case studies may be generalized, and theories may be tested through research on other cases later (Flyvbjerg, 2004); however, several case studies may be a stronger basis for generalization. See the article and appendix for further information on and photos of this case study.

### *Questionnaire*

The questionnaire on housing satisfaction for Article 2 (Hauge & Kolstad, 2007) was among other things inspired by a questionnaire developed by SINTEF to evaluate

housing projects (Støa, 2003), and quantitative research on housing satisfaction (see for example Anderson & Weidemann, 1997). The questionnaire also included questions based on qualitative research on the meaning of home (see reviews of this research in Moore, 2000; Desprès, 1991; Mallet, 2004). See Article 2 for information on the content of the questionnaire. A Norwegian version of the questionnaire is presented in the appendix.

As a pilot study, a draft of the questionnaire was tried out and discussed with 10 residents living in a block of flats in a central area of the city. The questionnaire was adjusted according to comments from the respondents in the pilot study.

A low response rate is a common problem in questionnaire surveys, and precautions were taken: The households received a personally addressed information letter one week before the data collection, which stated the date and time for *personal* distribution and collection of the questionnaires. I had been in contact with the managers of the housing cooperatives, and the letter stated that they were supportive of the study, and encouraged the residents to answer. Participation was voluntary, and the respondents were assured full anonymity. Research assistants distributed the questionnaires and postage-paid envelopes. The respondents returned their answers by mail or directly to the assistants one week later. When collecting the answers, the assistants left a note on doormats of empty apartments to remind residents to post their answers. Despite the personal distribution and collection of the questionnaires, the response rate did not exceed 53%. The response rate (40.7%) was lower in the low-priced neighbourhood. More immigrants and social clients live in this area, and there is reason to believe that immigrants responded to a lesser degree due to language problems, and social clients answered to a lesser degree due to difficult life situations. The survey results have to be seen in relation to this. This is further discussed in Article 2 and the discussion part of this introduction.

The housing cooperatives all received reports on the findings from the survey. This was promised the managers of the housing cooperatives in return for their permission to inform the residents that they had recommended that residents answer the questionnaire.

Much of the data and the results from the survey were interesting, and the subject of housing as identity communication became especially fascinating. The PhD project therefore focuses on this subject. Regression analysis was attempted to account for variations in ‘awareness and importance of identity expression through dwelling’, among other things, with a focus on both housing situation and demographic variables. The findings indicated that these attitudes were dependent on many factors other than age or cohort, gender, neighbourhood and interests; the results generated more questions than answers. The topic seemed to be too sensitive to understand through a survey. As a result, it was decided to use the 18 qualitative interviews to explain and complement the survey results.

## **Qualitative interviews**

### *Phenomenology and Interpretative Phenomenology (IPA)*

The conception of knowledge as a mirror of reality has been replaced by a conception of “the social construction of reality” (Berger & Luckman, see Kvale 1996). “Social constructionism” has been used in very different ways to mean different things, but a number of arguments are shared by advocates of this approach, such as the fundamental tenet that social life is constructed by people through interaction. A key element in this interaction is language (Clapham, 2002). Kvale (1996) states that phenomenology can be seen as an anticipation of postmodernism and social constructionism. Phenomenology is perceptual in orientation, but very alive to the constructed and social nature of experience. It focuses on how the individual actively constructs the world. Phenomenology is the study of a phenomenon as it is experienced. This means that it focuses on a person’s life world and subjective experience, and seeks the essence and structures of them. It is not interested in an “objective reality” or what a phenomenon might be “in itself”, but how it is *experienced* by someone (Giorgi, 1989). Giorgi (1989) acknowledges that there might be a reality independent of human perception, but the only access we have to this possible reality is through human consciousness.

Phenomenology was first developed by Husserl (1859-1983) in the beginning of this century. He criticized the existing scientific tradition – positivism - for being a victim of an “objective illusion”. Especially through the works of Giorgi (1997, 1994, 1985, 1989; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2004), phenomenology has been known as a scientific method for qualitative research. The process of data analysis is described as a clear five-step procedure: Collecting of verbal data, reading of data, dividing data into meaning units, organization and expression of raw data into disciplinary language, and expressing the structure of a phenomenon (Giorgi, 1997). Phenomenology aims to capture as closely as possible the way in which the informant experiences a phenomenon, as opposed to an attempt to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself (Smith & Osborn, 2004).

Many researchers also find traditional phenomenology limiting as a research method. Phenomenology aims to describe the essence of a phenomenon as it is experienced, not to *interpret* it according to context. Phenomenology requires that the researcher “brackets” his or her own experiences of the phenomenon of interest. This does not mean that one empties oneself of all possible past knowledge, but “puts aside” past knowledge that might be associated with the phenomenon studied (Giorgi, 1997). Is it possible for the researcher to be completely unaffected by his or her past knowledge?

It seems that researchers in practice often turn to a more eclectic qualitative methodological approach, mixing different qualitative approaches (an example is Spellers PhD thesis, Speller 2000). I found that *Interpretative Phenomenology (IPA)* (Smith, 2004; Smith & Osborn 2004; Smith & Dunworth 2003) was better suited for analysing interview data on my topic of housing and identity, because this methodological approach focuses more on interpretation, and thereby acknowledges the meaning of different contextual variables. IPA retains phenomenology’s focus on a person’s life world and personal experience of a phenomenon, but it also emphasizes that the research process is dynamic, and the role of the researcher as active. IPA is intellectually connected to hermeneutics, theories of interpretation and symbolic interactionism - that meanings are constructed by individuals both in a social and a personal world. IPA recognizes the two-stage interpretation process; how the informants

interpret their own world when thinking and talking about it, and how the researcher tries to make sense of the informants' life world through his or her own conceptions and ideas. But the main focus is on the informant's experience of the phenomenon studied (Smith, 2004).

A good example of the importance of interpretation of the context, where the limitations of Girogi's phenomenology become apparent, can be found in my own research, in a resident interview for article 3 (Hauge & Støa, 2009). I tried to understand the statements about the architecture at Veiskillet from an informant who seemed indifferent to the design of the building and his housing situation, compared to the other residents. In order to understand his point of view, it was natural to look at the context, mainly his life situation, background, and the employees' experience of his condition. This informant used to be one of the most enthusiastic residents when describing the architecture of Veiskillet in the beginning. He now struggled with motivation to stay away from drug use, and risked having to move. This information opened up new perspectives on how attitudes towards architecture may radically change according to a person's life situation. To limit the analysis to his statements only, not to see them in light of contextual variables, would have made the analysis of the results less rich and perceptive. Social psychology has shown that personality factors often are poor predictors of behaviour in contrast to the power of situational factors (Myers, 2002). Situational factors are therefore an important part of an analysis.

#### *Conducting the interviews / ethical guidelines*

The interviews for Article 2 were conducted after the survey. The questionnaire asked respondents interested in participating in interviews to write down their phone numbers. Fifteen per cent did so in the high-priced neighbourhood, while 10% did so in the low-priced neighbourhood. The survey also showed their gender and age, and I contacted different informants to obtain some variety in gender and age groups. Nine informants in each neighbourhood were contacted, and one of the interviews in the high-priced neighbourhood was conducted with two informants present, which made for a total of 19 informants and 18 interviews.



Table 1: Informants for the case studies for Article 2 (Hauge & Kolstad, 2007).

Age group:	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70+	Total
Case A men		1		1		1	3
women	2	1	2		1		6
Case B men	1		1	2		1	5
women	2		1			2	5

The interviews for Article 2 were done in the informant’s home together with a colleague. We started by informing them about ethical guidelines, and the intentions of the interview, all of which is explained in the interview guide in the appendix. All the interviews started out with a tour of the apartment, and in all cases this made it easier to get the informants to start telling their story about life in the apartment. This way of doing interviews reveals the strong connection between life stories and experiences of home (Blunt & Dowling, 2006; Gullestad, 1992). Attention was paid to how conduct the interviews in everyday language that reflected sensitivity towards the informant’s life world through the way the questions were asked. The interviewers’ sensitivity towards the respondent’s reactions to the questions during the interview was evaluated by asking the interviewers to respond to the following questions: Did the informants really understand the topic? Were they negative about the topic? Did it seem like they had never thought of it? The follow-up questions were fit to the informants’ reaction to the topic. Only if the informants seemed eager to talk more about the topic were follow-up questions was introduced. At the same time, in some cases, it became very interesting to follow an informant’s very first musings regarding whether or not it was possible to see a connection between a home’s interior and themselves. The data was treated anonymously, and the information provided here is impossible to trace back to the informant.

For Article 3, one group interview with one of the initiators of the housing project and two employees was conducted before the resident interviews. Since the residents were in a vulnerable situation, the study required more focus on how to protect their well-being and anonymity. Along with the psychology students who were asked to conduct the residents interviews and their teacher, we were invited to dinner at Veiskillet to inform residents about the research project. This gave the residents the opportunity to

ask questions about the interviews and the publications that were planned. Information was also handed out in the form of a letter, and residents were asked to sign a consent statement. The residents could choose where they wanted to be interviewed, to make them feel as comfortable as possible with the situation. The interview guide was made in collaboration between me and the students I supervised (see the appendix). These resident interviews also started with a tour of the apartment.

### *Analysis*

The qualitative analysis of data is often a personal process that is difficult to describe. Looking for “recipes” in the literature to analyse qualitative data also reveals that most researchers have a personal style that is difficult to teach and describe. It all comes down to finding one’s own way of sorting and explaining people’s experience of the phenomena studied. My analysis of the interview data has been a process where I roughly followed the guidelines given by IPA researchers (Smith & Osborn, 2004), with each step undertaken in a personal way.

IPA analysis always starts with repeated reading. The interviews for both Articles 2 and 3 were transcribed and read several times. After some readings, when I began to get a deeper understanding of what the informants wanted to tell me, I started making notes in the margin about the meaning of the phrases of the themes of interest. The meaning of a statement was coded by notes, signs or colours. This was done manually, with the interviews printed on paper, with felt pens in different colours. The codes were assigned guided by intuition as my understanding of the phenomenon gradually increased. At this stage, it became easier to see connections and compare the quotes. Separate sheets were used to list the themes and look for connections between them. Similar meanings were grouped. The names of the categories came naturally through the process, and category names were often based on words used by the informants.

The analysis of the interviews for Article 2 was a process I did alone; however, the interpretation of themes and quotes was verified by my supervisor, Kolstad, as a second author on Article 2. Interpretation and analysis of the themes that emerged in the interviews were also discussed with my colleague and co-interviewer, Albrecht. After

each interview, we reflected on and discussed the information, and notes were taken on the informant's interior, and the atmosphere of the interview. This strengthened the reliability of the interpretation of the interviews (Kvale, 1996). In the article, the emerging themes and interpretations were grounded in the data with direct quotations from the informants to make the analysis transparent and easier for others to evaluate.

More people were involved in the analysis for Article 3. The students who conducted the interviews as research training did the first sorting and coding of themes appearing in the text, writing a student report of the findings. I and the teacher leading the student project expanded and completed the analysing process. Article 3 is based on some of the themes that emerged in these interviews. The interpretations in Article 3 are also grounded in the data, with direct quotations from the informants to make the analysis transparent and easier to evaluate by others. The interpretation of the themes was verified by Støa, who was the article's second author. The article was also read by two of the initiators of "Veiskillet", an employee and the architect. They were given the opportunity to comment on the interpretation and presentation of the results.



## 4. FINDINGS

The findings from the articles are presented briefly point by point here, to give the reader an overview of the main findings. For a more detailed explanation of the findings, please see the articles. The findings will be further discussed in the last part of this introduction.

### Article 1

1) What identity theories can be used to explain and interpret the relationship between the physical environment and identity?

2) How can these theories be used and developed as analytical tools for the subject? The main conclusions are:

- In the field of environmental psychology, three theories have mainly been used for this purpose: 1) place identity theory (Proshansky, et al., 1978, 1983, 1987); 2) social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981, 1982); and 3) identity process theory (Breakwell, 1983, 1986; Twigger-Ross et al., 2003).
- The “place identity” concept is relevant, but the original theory behind this concept is diffuse.
- The social identity theory and the identity process theory are better tools for research on the environment’s effect on identity.
- Place identity can be seen as one of many identity manifestations, embodied by physical environments and objects. See Article 1 for a schematic model that presents place identity as one of the many levels at which a category of social identity is manifested. The model aims to integrate the place identity concept into social identity theory.

## Article 2

1) How aware and interested are people in the dwelling as identity communication?

2) What do people think their dwelling says about them? This is explored through a survey and qualitative interviews with residents in a high-priced and a low-priced neighbourhood in Trondheim. The main results are:

- The survey shows that awareness of the dwelling as identity communication differs among people:
  - 40% of the respondents were somewhat aware or very aware of their dwelling reflecting who they are. Respondents in the high-priced neighbourhood expressed more awareness of this than respondents in the low-priced neighbourhood.
  - Only 19% thought this reflection was important. There were no differences between the neighbourhoods when it came to stating the importance of expressing identity through the dwelling.
- Qualitative interviews show that people may be divided into three groups when it comes to different interest and awareness of the dwelling as identity communication:
  - “I don’t care.”: People who have not thought much about the issue, do not understand it, or do not care how others may read their environment.
  - “I guess so.”: People who have thought little about the issue, but are very interested in the subject when asked about it. They come up with different examples of self-presentation through the dwelling.
  - “Yes, of course.”: People who are aware and concerned about the presentation of self through dwelling, and who talk spontaneously about it.
- Qualitative interviews show that differences in awareness and interest in the dwelling as identity communication are larger between age groups than between high-priced and low-priced neighbourhoods:
  - Younger people find the subject more natural and obvious than older people.

- Qualitative interviews show that a dwelling is experienced by its residents as information about:
  - Personality and taste
  - Interests
  - Life phase
  - Social Status
  - Relationships
  
- Cohort, attitudes towards self-presentation, and the sensitivity of the topic affect people's attitudes towards the dwelling as identity communication.

### **Article 3**

1) How is the architecture and design of a housing project that experts have called “quality architecture” experienced by a resident group of former homeless criminals and drug abusers? 2) What does the architecture mean for how this resident group see themselves? The main results are:

- The residents and employees are in general satisfied with the housing situation.
- Former homeless criminals and drug abusers can appreciate and take care of architectural qualities.
  - Some of the residents are overwhelmed by the design of the building, and say the environment inspires them to protect it.
- The residents are proud of their apartment.
  - This pride affects their desire for visitors, and leads to more contact with family and children. The network expresses hope and pride in them because of an attractive housing situation.
- The architectural qualities and materials that the resident experience as appealing may have significance for consolidating a new identity as non-criminal / non-drug-abuser.

- An appealing home does have significance for some residents' motivation for change.
  - Architectural details are seen by some residents as symbols of a crime- and drug-free identity.
- The associations the design of the building gives the residents are dynamic, and may change according to situational factors.
  - A resident who was enthusiastic about the design during the first period he lived in the building is now indifferent about his housing situation. He is having a difficult time with a lack of motivation to get out of drug abuse.



## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This is a further discussion of the findings and conclusions in Articles 1 (Hauge, 2007), 2 (Hauge & Kolstad, 2007) and 3 (Hauge & Støa, 2009). Please read the articles before the following sections.

### **Implications for theory**

Article 1 (Hauge, 2007) asked: What identity theories can be used to explain and interpret the relationship between the physical environment and identity? And how can these theories be used and developed as analytical tools? Some of my perspectives have changed during the interpretation and writing about the results. To look for a theory to be “used” to explain the influence housing has on identity has limited the process of analysing the data from Articles 2 (Hauge & Kolstad, 2007) and 3 (Hauge & Støa, 2009). The findings should have been given priority, and the development of new theoretical perspectives should have been more important than trying to fit the findings into theories made to enlighten other identity aspects. The following sections will hopefully do the findings justice. The main aim of this section is to discuss and develop concepts and theories explaining the relationship between housing and identity.

#### *The place concept*

First, some brief reflections on the “place” and the “place identity” concepts: I concluded in Article 1 that the “place” concept is necessary as a general term for the physical environment’s social, psychological and cultural meaning (Hauge, 2007). I have used the “place” term in accordance with Spellers (2000) definition of it, as a geographical space that has acquired meaning as a result of a person’s interaction with the space. I have however, in the two following empirical articles, felt the need to specify what kind of place or environment that was studied. In the empirical studies, the term “place” was barely used, the term became too broad. The findings were more clearly explained using concepts such as “dwelling” or “housing” (Hauge & Kolstad, 2007; Hauge & Støa, 2009).

Even though when I wrote the theoretical article I concluded that the “place identity” term, but not the theory behind it, is relevant and well-suited for research on these subjects (Hauge, 2007), I have not needed the term in my own research yet. Concepts as “social identity” and specifications like “the effect housing has on identity” have explained the results more clearly in most cases. The “place identity” term does not cover all identity aspects related to a social category. “Social identity” was therefore preferred in Articles 2 and 3. Personal identity is not clearly addressed in Articles 2 and 3, but is referred to as “identity” or “role” (Hauge & Kolstad, 2007; Hauge & Støa, 2009).

*A new integrative model*

Article 1 presents a research model for “identity categories and identity manifestations”. It illustrates how “place” is one of many ways identity manifests itself (see Hauge (2007) for a detailed explanation of the model):

		<i>Identity categories</i>			
		Gender	Social class	Ethnicity	Etc....
Identity manifestations	Place				
	Attitudes				
	Activities				
	Language				
	Etc...				

Figure 2: An integrative model of identity manifestations and identity categories.

The empirical data for Articles 2 and 3 fit this model, but the model has not been satisfactory as a means to analyse and explain the findings. A reason for this is mainly the model’s broad scope. The empirical studies did not focus on *all* manifestations of identity, such as attitudes, activities, and language as well as how identity is manifested in the physical environment. The case studies were more detailed and focused on housing and how identity was manifested in home and neighbourhood. The model

became too broad to help in interpreting the findings. Rather than using general concepts like place and place identity, the results and conclusions were focused on housing. However, the results and interpretations in Articles 2 and 3 (Hauge & Kolstad, 2007; Hauge & Støa, 2009) may easily be transferred into this model, and into more general concepts according to place theory and place identity.

What follows is an example of how the model may be used to analyse quotations from an informant in the case study from Article 2 (quotation not used in the article). Some of the informants talked about using housing and interior to mark identity changes, or to mark the transition into new social categories. A man talks about his transition to life as a pensioner this way:

Since we've moved we've changed. We have flipped a switch. We had big, heavy furniture before, and when we decided to move here we thought, we won't have room for all of this. So we went to IKEA, and nearly everything here is IKEA furniture. Why not buy a reasonable living room set, and maybe in a few years we'll replace it. So now we've reached a phase where I think most folks won't find so much personal stuff in our house. We've changed a bit, in that we've suddenly become IKEA customers. We've moved away from the old style -- that old sofa that cost a fortune in its time. Heavy, good stuff. While the new, you can take off the cover and wash it. Or buy a new one. So we've reinvented ourselves a little bit. We have become people who do things off the cuff, and find things, me and the wife. We don't plan. We go off on a trip or invite people to visit, completely spontaneously. (Man 58, early retirement due to illness, high-priced neighbourhood)

The different layers in his identity manifestations can be sorted out and clarified through the model presented in Article 1 (Hauge, 2007):

Figure 3: An example of the use of an integrative model of identity manifestations and identity categories.

		Identity Categories
		Pensioner
<i>Identity manifestations</i>	Place	New central apartment, new furniture in a different style than before; cheap interchangeable furniture, plain style, less personal
	Attitudes	Spontaneous, live in the moment, no planning
	Activities	Travels, culture activities within walking distance, spontaneous visits

This shows that a social identity category (Tajfeil, 1981, 1982) is manifested at many levels, including manifestations in the physical environment. Places and physical objects function as symbols of a social identity category, supporting an individual's self-image. The example above illustrates how different physical symbols, like interchangeable cheap furniture and a less personal style, are used to mark the transition into a new identity as an active pensioner. Social identity theory is a widely accepted theory in psychology and sociology, but it is very general. It explains some essential mechanisms (see Hauge, 2007), but is not necessarily a *detailed* operational tool for the interpretation of research results on the subjects addressed in this thesis.

#### *Housing as signals of personal and social identity*

The interviews with residents in the case study for Article 2 (Hauge & Kolstad) showed that people interpreted identity signals about themselves and others through housing. The different types of identity information they found through the neighbourhood, exterior and interior were information on 1) personality and taste, 2) interests, 3) life phase, 4) social status, and 5) relationships. Personality and taste, interests and relationships are examples of signals of personal identity. These factors reveal information about what separates an individual from others, in terms of what the person does, how he or she creates his or her personal environment, and how interior objects may represent personal relationships. Identity signals of taste, social status and life phases are rather typical social identity categories. These categories reveal what groups an individual belongs to or has as a positive reference group (Tajfel, 1981, 1982).

What is special about the residents in both the low-priced and high-priced neighbourhood in the case study for Article 2 is how most of them dissociate themselves from the neighbourhoods they live in. Few see themselves as typical residents of the neighbourhood (see examples of quotes in Hauge & Kolstad, 2007). The identity section in this introduction describes "group polarization" (Myers, 2002) as an important mechanism in neighbourhoods, which is the way people maximize the difference between themselves and others to conform to what they believe is the prototypical position of their group, in response to their need for belonging and self-esteem. Group polarization processes do not seem to happen in these neighbourhoods.

The empirical data from the case study in Article 2 may differ from general research on the matter, because the stereotypical resident of the neighbourhoods is not necessarily seen as a positive identity. The informants do not identify themselves with the “image” of these neighbourhoods, not even in the high-priced neighbourhood. I had expected that the social identity would matter more than it seems to. Most of the informants do not obtain self-concepts from the social identity category of the neighbourhood, and probably seek identity references elsewhere.

The way people dissociate themselves from their neighbourhoods may be explained in relation to Giddens’s (1991) and Myers’s (2002) statements about the personal identity as being more prominent in our time, in our part of the world. The fact that younger people find the topic of identity presentation through housing more natural than older people (Hauge & Kolstad, 2007) supports housing as a central way of standing out in an individualized society. Being different from others is more important to some people than belonging to a social category provided by a neighbourhood. The apartment is more closely tied to personal identity than social identity in these case studies. The findings may also be related to the fact that *apartments* were the focus of this study, not detached dwellings, which may be more strongly connected to self-perceived identity. A detached dwelling contains more visible signs of lifestyle and identity than an apartment in a block where the residents have no influence on the exterior. The exterior of a house reflects *social* identity to a larger extent, and *personal* identity to a smaller extent (Duncan, 1981). If a resident does not identify with the social identity the neighbourhood provides, he or she probably focuses more on how the *interior* reflects personal identity, the details of an individual’s life, personality and interests.

Another factor that might have influenced these findings is how the interview situation leads to a focus on personal identity. Questions about one’s personal relationship to the apartment put belonging to social categories in the background, making the social identity “silent” (Tajfeil, 1981, 1982). In threatening situations, where for example the neighbourhood is criticized in the media or by politicians, these residents may experience stronger connections to their neighbours and neighbourhood.

*The different ways housing influences identity*

Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981, 1982) does not explain smaller details in the interaction between place and identity, or provide any analytical tools to illustrate all the complex ways the environment affects people's identity. The influence place has on identity may be divided into different types of influence.

Symbolic or aesthetic clues, such as how interior taste symbolizes different social classes, affect people through associations. But the way the environment influences behaviour - which *in turn* affects identity -- is another type of influence. Housing influences identity not only through associations tied to objects and environments, but also through the way it gives people the experience of mastering everyday life, and how it gives people the opportunity to regulate social contact.

Interviews that were conducted for the case study in Article 3 (Hauge & Støa, 2009) particularly illustrate the influence housing has on identity indirectly, through how it may affect behaviour. An example is how architectural qualities may affect the desire for visitors, not only through positive associations to an attractive environment, but also through location and size. The safer an environment feels for children, the more will the environment support a former criminal and drug abuser spending time with his children. This has implications for self-perception, particularly the way he sees himself as a father, and probably strengthens the focus he has on this role. The role as a father is an aspect of an individual's personal identity, a role a person has in interaction with other individuals. This specific part of a person's identity that is affected by place through behaviour may be better illustrated by Breakwell's Identity Process Theory (1983, 1986; Twigger-Ross et al., 2003) (see Hauge, 2007 for a brief description of this theory, and the identity section of the introduction). As explained in the introduction, Breakwell sees four factors as important guiding principles for identity in our western world; distinctiveness, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and continuity. The case study for Article 3 (Hauge & Støa, 2009) gives examples of how identity is influenced by housing, through the principle of self-efficacy – the wish to feel competent and in control of one's life. In that way, Breakwell's Identity Process theory may enlighten the way the physical environment influences identity through how it affects people's mastering of everyday

life. A safe environment where a father can play with his son has an impact on the father's focus on this part of his personal identity. A housing project placed away from the drug milieu in the city centre influences a drug abusers social identity as a "non-drug abuser" through self-efficacy and self-esteem, the way he manages to live and to focus on a drug-free existence.

In elucidating the case study on Veiskillet (Hauge & Støa, 2009), it is proposed that housing influences human identity mainly in two different ways:

- Housing influences identity through how architecture facilitates different types of behaviour, daily functioning, and social interaction. The connections between behaviour and architecture are dependent on situation and contextual variables as well.
- Housing influences identity through the associations that exteriors, interiors, and neighbourhoods create in a resident. These associations are created through social interaction and influenced by context, process and situation.

For detailed explanations and definitions of context, situation and process in this relation, see the section on implications for practice. An example of the first type of influence has already been given. An example of the second type of influence is how the large windows at Veiskillet are associated with a drug-free identity, or how "normal people" would live without having to hide themselves from the outside world (Hauge & Støa, 2009). The associations are not based merely on visual stimuli. The associations are a result of social interaction, meaning that factors of the resident's current life situation and the relationship to people around him influence these associations. The symbolic content the residents at Veiskillet ascribe to the large windows is also probably influenced by their knowledge of the building process and the architect's dedication to create a housing project that would send a signal of dignity for the residents.

The way associations to the physical environment affect identity may be connected to Breakwell's (1983, 1986; Twigger-Ross et al., 2003) identity guiding principles of self-esteem and distinctiveness: Positive associations with housing and environments may

generate positive self-esteem, for example through signs of a social identity as drug-free. Associations with housing environments are also connected to another of Breakwell's guiding principles of identity, the way people try to show distinctiveness from other people. This can be shown for instance through distinctiveness in interior taste. The residents at Veiskillet chose their own furniture, and had their own interior style, very different from the minimalist expression the architect intended.

The way housing influences identity through associations with exteriors, interiors and neighbourhoods is largely grounded in people's experience and interpretation of visual impressions, and could be referred to as "aesthetics" or "symbol aesthetics". However, there are reasons why these concepts are not used: Associations connected to housing may not necessarily be linked to visual characteristics, such as associations related to the building process and organizational models. Associations may be a result of social processes related to a geographical place or a certain building. A hypothetical example is the associations people may have with a neighbourhood, grounded in their knowledge about the location – the image a certain geographical spot has – without any knowledge of the visual characteristics of the place or the buildings at all.

#### *Conclusions and further research for theory implications*

To conclude, I have shown how a social identity category (Tajfel 1980, 1981) is manifested in the physical environment, and thereby how "place identity" can be incorporated as a part of any social category (Hauge, 2007). The model presented in Article 1 lacks illustrations of the interaction *between* the different identity manifestations. I emphasized the importance of seeing the different identity manifestations in their mutual relation to each other (Hauge, 2007), but did not illustrate it through the model. The model sorts and defines parts of the aspects of the connection between place and identity, but the scope of the model is too broad to offer enlightenment on detailed aspects that would need to be considered in an analysis of housing and identity. A more detailed analysis would have to consider the different ways housing influences human identity.



There are mainly two different ways housing influence our view of ourselves: through associations to exteriors, interiors, and neighbourhoods, and indirectly through how the environment facilitates behaviour and social interaction. None of these mechanisms are deterministic; they all depend on context and situation. In what way, and how architectural characteristics influence people's behaviour and their life quality is an old discussion in architectural research. "Physical determinism" can be defined as a view of the physical environment - dimensions, colours, and shapes - as having direct effects on behaviour (Franck, 1984). Today, the view of the people-environment relationship is dynamic and interactive (Gifford, 2002). A dynamic and interactive perspective on the environment includes the social, cultural and psychological meanings of a place. "Buildings, as any other machine or tool, are simultaneously the consequence and structural cause of social practices" (Gieryn, 2002:41).

I have shown how the associations that places and objects create in us may be related to Breakwell's (1983, 1986; Twigger-Ross et al., 2003) guiding principles of identity, self-esteem and distinctiveness, as well as how the influence housing has on our identity indirectly through behaviour is linked to another one of Breakwell's guiding principles for identity, self-efficacy. The principle of continuity is not demonstrated in this case study, but one might assume that it relates to the meaning of stability and permanence in a housing situation for people in vulnerable life situations.

Flyvbjerg (2004) argues that small case studies may be used for building theories, and that further research may test the theories. The case study of Veiskillet (Hauge & Støa, 2009) is too limited to theorize any further on the influence of housing on identity. The outlined statements need to be tested, and the study needs to be replicated. Further research and efforts on theory building for these subjects should attempt to sort through the different levels of the physical environment's influence on identity, and to illustrate details of these mechanisms. Theories on the subject may be centred on housing, or on a more general place concept. The theoretical assumptions described in this section about the connection between housing and identity could have been also described according to the place concept. Housing may refer to a type of place or physical environment, not necessarily defined in the same way as place, but with many similar aspects.

Further theory building research could focus on how the two main types of influence that housing has on identity could be further categorized into second categories. The associations from visual stimuli may be divided into categories related to theories on symbol aesthetics or theories on communication, for example. The influence the environment has on identity through how it affects behaviour and control could be further categorized, according to how the environment may facilitate social networks in contrast to how it facilitates daily functioning, as one example. These aspects may be compared to research findings on the meaning of housing for well-being and mental health (Wells & Harris, 2007, Wright & Kloos, 2007; Evans et al., 2003; Halpern, 1995). Further research should illustrate and exemplify different types of connections between housing and identity.

### **Implications for method**

The physical environment is often taken for granted. Our daily surroundings are not constantly under conscious evaluation. This means that the topic is challenging when it comes to methodological approaches.

#### *Questionnaire limitations*

I started out this research project with a strong belief in the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, when planning the case study presented in Article 2 (Hauge & Kolstad, 2007). I still believe in the combination of different methods, but have gained personal experience with the weaknesses related to data collection through questionnaires on the topic of housing and identity.

Creating a good questionnaire is difficult, especially when it comes to topics many people are not used to talking about, such as housing as identity communication. There might be reasons behind why people answer the way they do that the researcher would never think about in advance. Qualitative research on the meaning of home and place attachment has documented the connection between home and identity, but these studies have been done in countries other than Norway, and most often among middle-class

residents (Despres, 1991; Moore, 2000). The interviews in the neighbourhood for Article 2 (Hauge & Koldstad, 2007) that were conducted after the questionnaire showed that older people in particular were not used to putting these attitudes into words at all, and the formulations chosen in the questionnaire did not capture all the associations the residents had about the topic.

Regression analysis was used to explain what variables that could have an impact on attitudes towards the dwelling as identity communication, but the percent of variance explained was low. I also realized that the questions might be experienced as more personal and sensitive than I imagined, and this might have had an impact on the results. To map all possible variables that might affect attitudes towards dwelling as identity communication seemed impossible. After struggling with the weaknesses in the questionnaire for a while, I understood more about why the topic was sensitive and touchy through the qualitative interviews. The interviews also provided patterns of different attitudes towards identity communication through dwelling. Article 2 (Hauge & Kolstad, 2007) therefore presents a focus on the value of qualitative methods in studying the communicative aspect of the physical environment, and the questionnaire data are treated with scepticism.

Despite the personal distribution of the questionnaires, the survey response rate did not exceed 53%. Perhaps an opportunity to win a prize might have made the response rate higher? Or perhaps waiting while the respondents filled out the questionnaire might have made the response rate higher? However, I have already stated that there is reason to believe that immigrants and social clients answered to a lesser degree than others, for example due to language problems or difficult life situations. I did not manage to get any interviews with immigrants either, and this is a clear weakness with the study. The results may therefore have limitations in their representation. The low response rate indicates that there might be more diverse opinions on the subject than the findings in the survey and interview data for article 2 show. Housing as identity communication, especially from an immigrant's point of view, would probably have enriched the findings.

### *Asking questions about a sensitive topic*

The subject of housing and identity is sensitive because the home might be experienced as a strong symbol of success in life. By “sensitive”, I mean touchy and personal. It may be difficult to talk about because it is related to what you have achieved in life, personally, economically and socially. One’s housing situation reveals information on one’s family relations and social network, or lack of these relations and networks. It reveals information on a household’s economy and an individual’s working career, or the lack of a working career and vulnerable economic circumstances. The topic requires questions that are sensitive, brave and direct at the same time. The qualitative data for this article also revealed that the topic was more sensitive for the informants than imagined. The interview guide could have been changed to prompt interviewers to ask more about the topic in *third person* at the beginning of the interview to make the topic less sensitive (see the interview guide in the appendix). This means that instead of asking “What do you think others might find out about *you* through your dwelling?”, a safer question would have been, “What do you find out about *other* people through their dwelling?”. After talking about how one reads information about others through housing, it is likely it would have been easier and safer to talk about the information that one’s own dwelling provided.

The way I chose to explore people’s thoughts on identity communication through housing for Article 2 was direct. How directly one should approach a research theme in an interview situation always poses a dilemma: on the one side the researcher risks losing valuable information if one bypasses the issue at stake, on the other side the researcher risks affecting the informant’s answers when being too direct. In the present study, it was considered difficult to get people to talk about the topic of interest in this research project without asking directly about it. Qualitative interviews, in contrast to questionnaires with predetermined response alternatives, give informants the opportunity to respond the way they want to. It is the interviewer’s responsibility to respect the informant’s world view -- not only respect, but be interested in their world view regardless of what thoughts the interviewer may have (Kvale, 1996). The way that I and my colleague conducted the interviews for Article 2 gave the informants freedom to respond the way they wanted to. Another way of doing qualitative research on this

topic would be to ask people to present their home and interior, and analyse these presentations regarding how they talked about the subject, and the words they used (do they use identity concepts?). This would be an interesting way to investigate the topic; however, it might also easily become speculative, and it undervalues informants' ability to offer their own reflections on the subject. Another way of collecting information on the subject is to ask informants to evaluate their dwelling, and hope they will mention something about their lifestyle and identity related to their home. The questions would then be open, aiming not to ask directly about the connection between dwelling and identity. The risk of this approach, however, is that the researcher may not get any data at all on the topic of interest.

It may be argued that the formulations used in the interview guide for this research project (Haugg & Kolstad, 2007) were "leading", because the interview guide included questions on housing and identity without knowing if this was a topic the informants found central and relevant. Kvale (1996) argues that "leading" questions are not necessarily wrong if one is aware how it affects the informant, and analyses the answers according to this awareness. He also states that today's focus on the danger of asking leading questions may have received so much attention due to earlier positivism, and the belief that one is able to collect objective data in a research project. However, one cannot collect objective data, nor can one collect objective verbal responses. The interview data will always arise in an interpersonal relationship, co-authored and co-produced by the informant and the interviewer. Even when choosing a topic for a research project or an interview, the interviewer leads the interview in a specific direction. By being aware of how the choice of topic in itself was leading, the interview and the analysis of the data were done sensitively. The aim should be to "construct questions which are specific enough to encourage the respondent to talk about the topic, and general enough to encourage them to do it in their own way, from their own perspective, and with their own emphasis" (Smith & Dunworth, 2003: 607).

One way of being sensitive as an interviewer is to respect an informant's reluctance to answer a question. One-third of my informants in the qualitative interviews in Article 2 did not think of their dwelling as identity communication (mostly older informants in

this group) (Hauge & Kolstad, 2007). Even if the identity aspect of the meaning of home is well-documented through earlier research (see reviews: Moore, 2000; Desprès, 1991), many people are not used to thinking about this topic, or putting these thoughts into words. Many of the informants were not familiar with this perspective. As earlier argued (Hauge & Kolstad, 2007), all people gather information about the world around them, *also* through the physical environment, as Goffman (1959) illustrates through his social interaction metaphor of acting out life on different “stages”. But how the physical environment is read as information about people is not always a conscious process. Even if it is a conscious process, people may not be used to talking about it or may not be able to reflect on it. The terms and concepts people use when talking about it may also vary, and make it difficult to find a common language across generations. An important aspect for the interview situation, according to interpretative phenomenology, is to use every day language and avoid specialized jargon (Smith & Dunworth, 2003). In this research project, this meant to avoid using words like “identity” and “symbols”. The questions were asked in everyday language: “Have you ever thought about whether the interior or dwelling shows anything about who you are?”

The qualitative data shed light on the reasons why people answer the way they do in the survey; the terms “awareness” and “importance” used in the questionnaire in relation to the dwelling as identity communication seemed difficult to use because the subject was sensitive. The advantage of qualitative interviews is the way interviews give people the opportunity to *moderate* and explain their answers and attitudes in detail. The qualitative interviews therefore led to more insight regarding this topic than the questionnaire did. Still, Article 2 (Hauge & Kolstad, 2007) demonstrated very clearly the advantages of qualitative methods when the research questions were structured as has been done in the present study. This knowledge would not have been communicated to the same extent if the quantitative data had not been mentioned.

#### *Analytical generalization*

As described in the methods section, generalization can be divided into different types, such as *statistical* generalization and *analytical* generalization. Kvale (1996) also explains this differentiation with the different targets, such as “what is” and “what may

be”. The findings from both Articles 2 and 3 are clearly knowledge recognized to be generalized analytically, and explain what *may* be. This means that the context (culture, society, organizational aspects, etc.) becomes important when comparing the situations described in Articles 2 and 3 with other situations.

The case studies for Article 2 (Hauge & Kolstad, 2007) are described as “extreme cases”, a high-priced and a low-priced neighbourhood in a city in Norway. Extreme cases in a middle-sized city in Norway are not extreme cases compared to most western societies or other European countries. The economic difference between high-priced and low-priced neighbourhoods in other countries and cities may be much greater. Low-priced neighbourhoods elsewhere in the world may have more problems and be more deprived, unpopular and criminal. This means that when analytically generalized, the actual socio-economic status of these neighbourhood groups has to be taken into consideration, see details in Hauge & Kolstad (2007). The same mechanisms regarding housing and identity may still be relevant, but in more extreme versions. The generalization of findings from the interviews in Article 2 must also be seen according to the survey weaknesses already discussed, and the way the informants were chosen. Another technique for choosing informants for the qualitative interviews in Article 2 might have detected larger differences in opinions on the topic. Probably only informants with a special interest in their dwelling, and relatively good quality of life, reported their willingness to be interviewed. Another important aspect regarding analytical generalization of these findings is the fact that *apartments* were the focus in this study. There is reason to believe that the awareness and importance of identity communication through housing would have been stronger in a case study of residents in detached dwellings. Detached houses may be more strongly connected to identity aspects of home than a block of flats, because residents in blocks lose some of the control over their personal environment (Paadam, 2003).

The case study for Article 3 (Hauge & Støa, 2009) was small and has limited value according to generalization, but the power of the examples is strong (Flyvbjerg, 2004); the study says something about what *may be* (Kvale, 1996). The research findings give examples of former drug abusers who cared about architectural qualities, and a former

drug abuser who did not care about them. The article analysed and explained the findings according to the context provided by the Veiskillet housing project. What is important is that the quality of the environment *may* matter in the motivation and identity for some (former) drug abusers. The case study illustrates the need for research on these matters (see suggestions on further research in the following sections).

#### *Conclusions and further research on methodological implications*

The last sections have discussed different methodological limitations that may have influenced the research findings, especially for Article 2 (Hauge & Kolstad, 2007). There is a risk that the findings from this research project have been biased by using formulations and terms more familiar to younger generations than older ones. The interview findings show that the formulation of the questions on dwelling as identity communication in the survey needs further examination. The direct way the questions were asked may have made the topic more central during the interviews than it might otherwise have been. However, directly asking questions on the topic of housing as identity communication was a deliberate choice. However, as discussed, they could have been formulated in the third person instead of the first person, in both the questionnaire and interview guide. Further research should take this into account.

The results can be analytically generalized; however, the context for the case studies in Articles 2 and 3 has to be considered when comparing the results to similar resident groups, neighbourhoods and housing projects. This includes a consideration of the influence of cultural, social and organizational aspects on the findings. Further research should aim at providing more and broader examples of housing and identity connections.

#### **Implications for practice**

The owners, initiators and the architect for the Veiskillet housing project wanted to positively affect formerly homeless residents with thought-through architecture (Hauge & Støa, 2009). Did it work? The case study shows how an appealing environment may



influence a former homeless drug abuser and criminal's identity and hopes for the future. However, this case study also illustrates how a resident may be indifferent to architecture that professionals and other residents praise. The case study proves the complex relationship between the physical environment and identity. The meaning of housing is created through social interaction, is under constant negotiation, and may therefore vary according to contextual and situational changes. To apply this knowledge, one has to think through the contextual factors that might influence the relationship between housing and identity. The following sections therefore discuss different variables that may have had an effect on the findings, related to context, process and situation, before aspects of how the findings can be translated into architecture and practice will be pointed out.

### *Context and process*

Architectural determinism is a perspective on architecture that focuses on the direct effect the physical environment has on behaviour, and ignores or underestimates other factors. This means that the contextual variables that influence behaviour and well-being are often overlooked. This perspective is not always articulated, but has been described as an attitude that was common, especially during the rise of Functionalism<sup>2</sup> and Behaviorism<sup>3</sup> in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Franck, 1984). Architectural determinism has been debated, particularly within the disciplines of architecture and environmental psychology. There is not room for representation of this debate here, but the research described in this thesis shows that context has to be taken into account if knowledge about housing and identity is going to be used in practice. In relation to the topic of this thesis, "contextual variables" refers to variables affecting human identity and well-being other than the physical environment, from a large scale like culture and society, to small scale, such as organizational aspects and social environment. As presented in the introduction, "context" relates to "social environment" in Küller's (1986, 1991) theory and model for the four factors that influence a person's basic emotional process, which he categorizes as: the built environment, the social

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<sup>2</sup> Functionalism in architecture can be defined as a focus on the form of a building following the use of the building (Gunnarsjaa, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> Behaviorism in psychology emphasizes objectiveness in research and is based on the proposition that all things people do; acting, thinking and feeling, should be regarded as behaviors (Schultz & Schultz, 1996).

environment, personality, and ongoing activity. In this thesis, the term “situational factors” has also been used, meaning factors that may change from day to day, in contrast to contextual factors that are similar from day to day. Situational factors may include what Küller (1986, 1991) calls “ongoing activity” in a broader sense, as well as a person’s current life situation and what mood a person is in.

The Veiskillet case study (Hauge & Støa, 2009) indicates that the planning process of a housing project and the media publicity mean something to the residents. The “process” in this situation refers to the housing process over time; the initiators, architects, entrepreneurs and owners involved; and their intentions, cooperation and planning. What the resident knows about this process colours his associations with the housing situation and architecture. The process also includes the way a resident is assigned an apartment in a certain building, and the associations and emotions this creates in the resident. It may also include user participation in the building process, the level of control the users have over their housing situation, and if they feel respected by the employees working to give them a decent place to stay. The residents at Veiskillet selected this housing opportunity over other housing options when recruited. This means that they must have had a positive impression of the housing project in the first place (however dependent on other housing options), and felt that they were more in control over their housing situation than they probably had ever been. The fact that they were able to make active choices (even if limited) about their housing situation is perhaps important in their positive housing experience, but these aspects have to be investigated in further research. How the physical environment facilitates control is acknowledged by Breakwell (1983, 1986; Twigger-Ross et al., 2003) as an important principle of identity, called self-efficacy. The research interviews with both employees and residents show that the residents knew they lived in a house where the architect made an effort to design a living environment that answered their needs and paid them respect. These aspects of the process seem to have influenced the positive associations the building gave them (until one knows one risks having to move, as one resident interview illustrates). The employees talked about how the residents enjoyed the media publicity the building got, and how proud it made them to live in a building that researchers and journalists came to admire. The housing process and media publicity

seemed to have a meaning for these residents' experience of the architecture and housing situation. This implies that variables related to context and process should be central in social housing studies and planning of social housing. To fully understand the meaning of the housing process and media publicity in relation to social housing, not only for former drug abusers, but also for people with mental illness and other vulnerable groups, further research on this is needed. A deeper understanding of how the process of getting an apartment may influence the experience of a housing situation is of great value for people working in this area.

The Veiskillet case study (Hauge & Støa, 2009) does not fully answer whether or not the meaning of the neighbourhood might be more central than the meaning of the particular building one lives in, in creating a positive self-perception. Is a high-status neighbourhood more important in the creation of hope and motivation in a vulnerable resident than the building in itself? The case study shows that housing may affect the resident's identity positively through location, by providing a place away from the drug milieu in the centre of the city, at the border of a well respected housing area, which in turn creates a safe place for contact with children and other family members. The physical environment facilitates social interaction, and affects social support and relationships, both on a neighbourhood level, and inside the building among the residents and visiting family members. The physical environment thereby has implications for social interaction, which is seen to have positive effects on well-being and mental health (Halpern, 1995), and may thus influence self-perception. Living in a neighbourhood the residents find appealing may create associations with a social identity as a non drug abuser. However, the residents referred to many details about the interior and the architecture in the interviews, which is an argument for the significance of the building in itself, not just its location. There are also important aspects of the housing project that were impossible to focus on due to the time of the interviews, and the total amount of time the residents had lived in the building. The interviews were carried out in March 2007, and the current residents had not lived there long enough to have experienced and made use of the new garden. Green areas are found to have restorative benefits (Strumse, 2007; Kaplan, 1995), and it would be interesting to explore this in relation to identity processes and recovery from drug addiction. The use

of the common areas in the building and the connection between social support and identity changes are also important topics for a longitudinal study on Veiskillet. A more wide-ranging case study, with regular interviews over a year, could have investigated the meaning of the architectural details and the use of the building more extensively. It would thus be easier to separate the meaning of the neighbourhood from the meaning of the architectural aspects of the building in self-perception and identity.

Is the process (how residents got the apartment and what they know about the intentions for and the planning of the building) more important than the architecture for a positive experience of the architectural qualities? Would the residents consider the housing project to be positive experience if they did not know anything about the architect's intentions, the media publicity and the research interests? The study does not answer this. This is a well-known phenomenon in social research called the Hawthorne effect (Fisher & Sortland, 2001), which refers to the placebo effect of being at the centre of research and attention. This effect was first described by Landsberger (1958), who analysed older experiments on the effect of work environments at Hawthorne. A short term improvement turned out to be caused by observed work performance. The Hawthorne effect has later been used to explain experimental effects in the direction expected, but not for the reasons expected. The significant positive effect may have no causal basis in the theoretical motivation for the intervention, but is apparently due to the effect on the participants of knowing themselves to be studied in connection with the outcomes measured. Research comparing residents with different experiences of housing processes and knowledge of the building, in the same housing situation, would provide some answers to this critique of the findings. A longitudinal study of the residents at Veiskillet *might* overcome any potential effects from being at the centre of research and public attention.

Another interesting issue is the power relations in the case study. Drug abusers are in a weak position, dependent on care from authorities. They may be positive about their housing situation regardless of what they think because they want to please authorities and employees. There is a risk that the situational factors and power relations bury the real opinions the residents have about the housing project. Power structures are difficult

barriers to overcome in all social research when vulnerable groups of people are in focus. Overcoming this barrier relies heavily on research design and the way the interviews are conducted. It is difficult to know how much the findings are influenced by the power structures. The fact that students did the interviews may have made the interview situation more balanced in relation to power structures than it would have been if a more experienced researcher were the interviewer. However, the lack of experience the students had with research interviews may have made them less capable of creating trust in the interview situation. Looking at the findings, the enthusiasm for architectural *details* among some of the residents at Veiskillet indicates that they truly are enthusiastic. On the other side, the one resident who did not care what the building looked like when he knew he risked having to move, illustrates a resident's opinion when he did not have to please anybody. However, there is reason to believe that he expressed *more* indifference to his housing situation than he felt, according his difficult life circumstances. His situation seemed to have made him disappointed and angry with everybody.

The residents at Veiskillet were recruited through interviews in prison where their motivation for change was evaluated. Motivation for change is therefore given focus in this article. This has to be taken in to account when the findings are compared to similar situations and analytically generalized. The residents are highly motivated former drug abusers, relatively well functioning. They had to move if they lost motivation to stay out of drug abuse over time. There are different perspectives on reasons for homelessness and drug abuse that influence what kind of housing vulnerable groups are offered. There has traditionally been a distinction between individual pathology and social structures as causal factors for homelessness. The focus on individual pathology often leads to a policy response that stresses a further distinction between “deserving” or “undeserving” behaviour. An emphasis on individual pathology tends to be associated with a view that homeless people themselves are responsible for their personal failings (Clapham, 2003, 2005; Dyb, Helgesen & Johannessen, 2008). Clapham argues that individual pathology and social structures as causal factors for homelessness are so intertwined that they need to be seen together. This discussion is not a topic for this thesis, but it enlightens a perspective of a drug abuser as someone who deserves quality housing, regardless of

whether they manage to get out of drug abuse or not. A dwelling offered may be used to keep up a user's motivation for lifestyle changes, as a "reward" for staying drug free. A dwelling may also be offered to improve a resident's life quality without any demands for change. Relapse in drug abuse is common, and to change lifestyle may be extremely difficult (Fekjær, 2005). Regardless of what perspective one takes on the reasons for homelessness and drug abuse, an important societal goal should be to improve their life quality regardless of change in drug use behaviour. A physical environment they personally find appealing may thus be important. Housing is, as Clapham (2005) points out, a means to an end. If housing is offered as a reward for staying drug free, the value of housing as means to an end is not necessarily made use of. Quality housing may be one of many ways to influence well-being. Quality housing allows other activities to take place, and the overall aim for the resident is what we all long for: happiness. There is a need for research that examines the residents' experience of housing for drug abusers where housing is used to increase the residents' life quality without the risk of having to move if they do not manage to stay away from drug abuse.

#### *Generalization and applied knowledge*

Case study research is research where contextual variables per definition is not under control (Yin, 2003). Still, there are some overall mechanisms on housing and identity in Article 3 that might be analytically generalized. Flyvbjerg (2004) argues for the value of context-dependent knowledge due to the fact that it is the most common way that people gain knowledge and understand the world. He also emphasizes the power of examples, and argues that in many cases examples are underestimated as valuable research. Small case studies can be generalized analytically. Later research and other case examples will gradually build the strength of research as a basis for generalization (Flyvbjerg, 2004). With this as a background, I propose some ideas for applied science in this area, with respect to the need for further research to strengthen the guidelines and fill in details.

Quality housing may contribute to positively influence identity, well-being and future hopes for vulnerable groups of people. Situational forces and variables related to the housing process seem to mean something for a resident's evaluation of the housing

situation. This implies that a focus on the housing process may be of importance in social housing. The degree of perceived control over a personal housing situation probably increases satisfaction with housing and sense of home, which is an aspect social workers actively may use. To be aware of the signals of care one sends as an employee, planner, architect, or initiator through the processes of building, planning or renovating is of significance. These signals may influence a resident's experience of the architecture and his or her housing situation, and the housing situation further influences his or her well-being, motivation, identity, and hopes for the future (Hauge & Støa, 2009). These perspectives are probably relevant for other groups of vulnerable people, due to different kinds of drug abuse and/ or mental illness or other life difficulties that exclude them from, or limit their choices on the open housing market.

The case study of Veiskillet is a small-scale project focusing on housing and identity on an individual level; however, the same mechanisms may concern use of knowledge on housing and identity on a community level. The main findings, that the identity of the residents may be influenced by details in the physical environment, and that the associations these details create are dependent on context and process, are transferable to large-scale planning. The intentions planners and architects communicate during the building process may colour the meaning of the architectural structures. User participation in the planning process has often been proven to matter for the user's satisfaction with the environment (De Laval, 1997; Halpern, 1995). The upgrading and improving of deprived neighbourhoods cannot rely solely on working with physical solutions alone, but on a consideration of factors related to the process and contexts. Further research may document the meaning of good media strategies, and how the opinion of the residents' knowledge of the building process matters in how they read the physical changes as information about themselves and others.

To create detailed guidelines on architectural solutions that are positive for identity is not possible, however; there are many types of design that might answer these needs (Støa, Denizou & Hauge 2007). Støa, Denizou & Hauge (2007, 2009) discuss important architectural details to consider when planning housing for vulnerable groups of people. The solutions are dependent on organizational factors and the residents' life situations

(the degree of physical or mental illness, drug abuse, etc.). What makes housing appealing and functional to a former homeless person? Støa, Denizou & Hauge (2007, 2009) argue that respect through housing may be communicated both through acceptance of housing that differs from the norm in society (for example acceptance of a lack of maintaining a home and garden), and through housing that has qualities that people in general would appreciate. The aim for the architectural solutions would depend on how well-functioning the residents are, what they wish to accomplish, and what their dreams are. In other words, their needs and wishes are as different as among people in general. Kern (2003) describes a successful housing project in Copenhagen, “Skæve huse” (crooked housing) for homeless people, where the residents were given freedom to affect the buildings in their own way.

Examples taken from an evaluation of nine Norwegian housing projects for the homeless (Støa, Denizou & Hauge, 2007, 2009) show that the answers to questions about good architecture for homeless people may be very different. Veiskillet is a modern, unique housing project that has received honourable mention in the 2007 Norwegian State Award for Building Tradition, and is thus recognized among professionals for its architectural qualities. Another housing project for homeless drug abusers in Leangen, also in Trondheim Norway, is much simpler. The small single houses are made of barracks, and placed away from housing areas. The houses in Leangen are made especially for individuals who do not function well in interaction with other people, do not have any motivation to get out of drug abuse, and thus need space for themselves. Social workers visit every day. The residents in these houses have never had their own home. It shows the resident respect by giving them an opportunity to live in their own dwelling for the first time in their life, and the residents are happy with the housing situation they have been offered. These projects both represent dignity for the residents, but with very different architectural qualities (Støa, Denizou, Hauge, 2007, 2009).





Figure 4: Photos from Veiskillet and Leangen, Trondheim, Norway (photo: Eli Støa).

### *Conclusions and further research into practical implications*

The Veiskillet case study (Hauge & Støa, 2009) has value mainly as a study that proposes important themes and hypotheses for further research. It demonstrates some examples of how housing may influence the residents' identities, and against this background, theoretical implications are proposed. But the study provides more questions than answers. The previous sections have discussed questions on contextual variables that are important for implications for practice, and thereby also for projected ideas about further research. The follow areas are important for future research to generate better and more detailed guidelines for the practical implications of knowledge on the effect housing has on identity for vulnerable groups:

- **Interdisciplinarity:** Research on the meaning of social housing for identity has to be interdisciplinary and cover contextual variables as well as the meaning of the physical environment. The connection between person and environment is so intertwined that a focus on architecture, or psychological or social factors alone, would not provide a broad enough picture.
- **Longitudinal studies:** To document the value of the influence quality housing has on residents' identities and motivation to change destructive life styles, there is a need to see how stable the results are over time, if the results change, and what they change according to. A longitudinal case study would detect if the positive experience of a housing situation declines according to a reduction in the novelty value of the housing project, for example, or if it continues to

positively influence the residents over many years. Such a study would contribute to understanding if quality housing influences actual changes in drug abuse.

- Context awareness: To establish more general conclusions on the effect that housing has on the identity of vulnerable groups of people, these issues need to be the focus of several thorough research projects. The problems with generalizing findings are often related to differences in user groups, housing process and social and organizational context, and the lack of control over these variables. There is a need for research that takes differences into consideration, and that encompasses research projects *across* various housing projects, which in turn relates the findings to elements of similarities and difference. Before-and-after studies are a way of detecting differences: Institutions or housing for vulnerable groups of people that are renovated and decorated would be interesting case studies. Clapham (2005) argues for a holistic approach to housing research, with social structures and context in focus. Not all contextual elements can be included in an analysis. Concentrating on some aspects of the whole is usually necessary, but all elements need to be considered to understand the meaning of housing (Clapham, 2005). The previous sections have discussed different factors of context and process that influence the meaning of social housing for identity:
  - User group: Mental illness, drug abuse, life situation, motivation to get out of a difficult life situation, individual differences, etc.
  - Organizational models: The aims of the housing project, the role of the employees, demands for changes in destructive life styles, etc.
  - Housing process: Intake processes, the residents' knowledge of the intentions of the planners and leaders, media publicity, handling of neighbour protests, etc.
  - Architecture and housing: location, neighbourhood characteristics, exterior and interior.

Characteristics of culture and society also have to be considered along with to these small-scale contextual elements.

The section about how to apply knowledge on the connection between housing and identity to positively affect vulnerable user groups has focused more on further research than on applied science. This is because the findings from the Veiskillet case study (Hauge & Støa, 2009) are in need of replication and elaboration through further studies. The findings indicate however, that the experience of architectural qualities matters for identity and motivation, but is influenced by situational factors (as evidenced by the one resident who did not care about what the building looked like any longer), process and context (as illustrated by the social and organizational aspects, and what the residents knew about the housing process, media publicity and research attention). This implies that social and organizational factors have to work in the same direction as the intentions and ideas behind the architectural design to strengthen a message about dignity. The social or organizational context may contradict or support the architectural intentions.

### **Overall conclusions**

The aim of this thesis has been to develop knowledge about the relationship between housing and identity. The first article (Hauge, 2007) aimed at answering questions about theories and analytical tools on the subject. This introduction has taken the theoretical development further, and has questioned some of the ideas presented in Article 1. A social identity is manifested in the physical environment through objects we surround us with and places we belong to (Hauge, 2007). The social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981, 1982) explains some overall mechanisms for this subject, but it does not provide enlightening details for data analysis on the issue. The experience from empirical studies for Articles 2 and 3 has revealed that Breakwell's identity process theory (1983, 1986; Twigger-Ross et al., 2003) is a better tool for analysing and explaining details about the influence of housing on identity. In elucidation of the empirical results from Article 3 (Hauge & Støa, 2009), I have proposed that housing influences identity mainly

in two different ways: Through associations with neighbourhoods, exteriors and interiors, and indirectly through affecting behaviour. These mechanisms are also dependent on context, process and situation. Breakwell's (1983, 1986; Twigger-Ross et al., 2003) identity process theory explains these processes in detail and gives focus, not only to group identity, but also to personal identity. The findings in Article 3 (Hauge & Støa, 2009) give some examples of how housing influences identity in relation to contributing to a positive self-image and self-efficacy (competence and control).

People today are able to make more choices about where and how to live than generations before them, both due to increasing economic freedom and increasing individual freedom. Western culture is characterized as individualistic and independent, meaning that the culture emphasizes separateness, internal characteristics, and uniqueness of individuals (Moghaddam, 1998; Myers, 2002; Giddens, 1991). The western, affluent world has experienced an "aesthetic revolution" (Baudrillard, 1998; Palmer & Dodson, 1996; Welsch, 1997). The way things look, their aesthetic aspects, colours, shapes, and the surface of products and environments have become more important than ever before, because they symbolize something more than their function or content (Bourdieu, 1984). The "aestheticism" of the environment can be seen in relation to economic wealth and an increasing standard of living. The utility value is taken for granted or overlooked, and what the possessions express in a symbolic or aesthetic manner becomes more important than before. People may create both social and personal identity almost from scratch through lifestyle and consumption (Giddens, 1991). A product's and environment's immaterial value is central in communicating one's personal identity and what groups one belongs to. Through consumption, people signal to a greater degree than in previous times their lifestyles, values, successes and failures.

This implies that environments and objects carry meanings in ways that are different than before, and that people are aware of the dwelling as a presentation of self. The second aim for this thesis has been to explore the attitudes and associations of people from a high-priced and a low-priced neighbourhood towards the subject of housing and identity. The research described in this thesis shows that many people do read

information about themselves and others through housing, but some are not used to talking about it and may experience it as a sensitive topic. Younger people are more interested in the subject than older people (cohorts). The informants state that things we choose to surround us with are symbols of personality, taste, interests, social status, life phases, and relationships (Hauge & Kolstad, 2007).

There are however, more vulnerable groups of people that do not have the same freedom of choice that the rest of the population has. Such groups are forced to accept the housing that is offered them, and the signals this communicates to others about who they are (Støa, Denizou & Hauge, 2007, 2009). The third aim of this thesis has been to explore the meaning of architectural qualities for the identity of a group of vulnerable people. The Veiskillet case study (Hauge & Støa, 2009) proposes that housing may contribute to identity, motivation and future hopes for individuals dealing with a past of crime and drug abuse. I have argued that these findings represent a perspective on the meaning of housing that may be relevant for the understanding of other groups of people in vulnerable life situations, unable to compete in the open housing market. Housing can be used in strategies to include people who are excluded from society. However, housing has to be considered along with strategies on social and organizational levels. If the strategies work in the same direction, it strengthens the message of dignity.

I started out this introduction with musings about how participants in home makeover TV shows are doing in the long run, after moving into a brand new home they may have dreamed about but never could have afforded to buy. Are their lives changed on other levels? Without having seen any reports on the matter, I believe that, yes, an attractive housing situation may contribute to life changes on many levels. Housing – from neighbourhood to architectural details - may strengthen or weaken positive identity changes that may further lead to improvements in other areas of one's life, related to job, friends, family relations, etc. However, these changes would depend on other situational and contextual factors as well. But the power in the meaning of the built environment is often underestimated. A shabby apartment in a run-down neighbourhood sends signals that contradict a message about respect from society. Quality housing is

not necessarily a solution to a problematic life situation, but it is one of many ways to show people respect, and thereby positively affect their view of themselves.

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## **PART II**

**Article 1**

**Article 2**

**Article 3**

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Is not included due to copyright



# **IDENTITY AND PLACE: A Critical Comparison of Three Identity Theories**

*Architectural Science Review*, 50 (1), 44-51.

Åshild Lappegard Hauge (2007)

## **Abstract**

*This review article discusses and critically analyses three theories used to explain how architecture and the natural physical environment influence a person's identity. These theories are 1) place-identity theory, 2) social identity theory, and 3) identity process theory. The place-identity theory has provided important contributions to the field of psychology and the social sciences of architecture, emphasizing the influence of the physical environment on identity and self-perception. But there is little empirical research to support the theory, and its specific contributions in relation to other identity theories have not been clarified. Despite the lack of awareness in mainstream psychology regarding the physical environment, the processes described in social identity theory and identity process theory have been shown to be useful when explaining the relationship between identity and place. Nevertheless, as terminology, "place identity" may be relevant, if seen as a part of other identity categories. Identity manifests itself on many levels, one of which is place. A new integrative model of place identity in built and natural environments is proposed.*

## **Keywords**

Place identity, social identity, identity process



# **DWELLING AS AN EXPRESSION OF IDENTITY**

## **A comparative study among residents in high-priced and low-priced neighbourhoods in Norway.**

*Housing, Theory & Society*, 24, 272-292.

Åshild Lappegard Hauge & Arnulf Kolstad (2007)

### **Abstract**

*This study explores people's thoughts about their dwellings as an expression of identity. The results are based on a survey and 18 qualitative interviews with residents in high-priced and low-priced neighbourhoods in one city in Norway. The informants perceived their dwellings and neighbourhoods as providing information about personality and taste, interests, life phase, social status, and relationships. Their attitudes towards the communicative aspect of their environment can be divided into three categories: One group had not thought much about the issue, and did not care about how others read their dwelling or environment; another group was not very aware of the issue, but became interested in the topic when asked about it; and the last group was definitely concerned about the presentation of self through dwelling and neighbourhood, and talked spontaneously about it. The survey revealed that 40% of the respondents were aware/very much aware of their dwelling reflecting who they are, but only 19% thought it was important. Respondents in the high-priced neighbourhood were more aware of dwelling as personality than respondents in the lower-priced neighbourhood. Differences in attitudes were larger between age groups than between neighbourhoods. Younger to middle-aged respondents were more aware than older people of the communicative aspect of their environments. The results are discussed in relation to cohort, social identity, attitudes towards self-presentation and the sensitivity of the topic. The study demonstrates the value of qualitative methods in studying the communicative aspect of the physical environment.*

### **Keywords**

Home, housing, dwelling, identity, self, symbol aesthetics.

## **Introduction**

People express themselves and perceive others not only through behaviour or verbal statements, but also through possessions and physical environments (Goffman, 1959). As a result, a dwelling can be seen as an expression of identity, both for oneself and others. Location, exterior and interior have something to say about the social group one belongs to, and provide information about one's lifestyle and personal taste. People have surprisingly similar perceptions when assessing other people's lifestyles, social status, and social attributes based on information from the exterior or interior of people's homes (Nasar, 1989; Sadalla & Sheets, 1993; Wilson & Mackenzie, 2000). Specific residential neighbourhoods are associated with different symbolic values, and relate to social structures that can be understood from the urban geography (Gram-Hanssen & Beck-Danielsen, 2004). We not only read information about others through their dwelling, but also about ourselves. Our own dwellings and neighbourhoods create self-concepts about who we are. Where and how we live therefore affects how we see ourselves. We become in some way a person moulded by our physical environment (Gifford, 2002; Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983). Speller et al. (2002) have documented how people's identities are affected by changes in their spatial environment. Two review articles on the meaning of home report identity expression as one of the essential aspects of home (Desprès, 1991; Moore, 2000). Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton (1981) demonstrated that people cherish domestic objects primarily because they convey information about themselves and their relationship with others. These objects enable people to articulate both their personal and social identity (Lawrence, 1987), with home decoration and furnishing representing an individualistic self-expressive approach to lifestyle and identity (Gram-Hanssen & Beck-Danielsen 2004).

Moore (2000) classifies home research into three categories emphasizing different contexts: 1) cultural, linguistic and historical context, 2) philosophical and phenomenological context, and 3) psychological context. The first category of studies is concerned with the cultural analysis of the connection between home and identity (Rapoport, 1969, 1981), and also addresses the difficulties of defining "home"

(Benjamin, 1995; Rapoport, 1995), since the concept reflects both a reality and an ideal (Chapman & Hockey, 1999; Sommerville, 1997).

The second category reflects the rich extensive traditions of home and place research related to disciplines such as philosophy and geography. Phenomenology, initiated by Husserl at the beginning of the twentieth century, has an essential place in these disciplines (Seamon, 1982), focusing on the subjective experience and perception of a person's life world (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2004; Husserl, 1970). Phenomenology is especially concerned with place and home due to the centrality of these topics in everyday life. To dwell has been described as the process of making a place a home (Heidegger, 1962). The concepts of place and home gained prominence in phenomenological research, architecture and geography through Norberg-Schulz's (1971, 1980) work on the existence of a "genius loci", meaning the spirit of a place, Relph's (1976) work on "sense of place" and "placelessness", and Tuan's (1974, 1977) work on positive affective ties to place described as "topophilia". In this tradition, the connection between home and identity is often treated as a *process* more than an accomplished *structure*, and is often described in poetic and philosophical terms.

The third category is the psychological research on the "meaning of home", often focusing on revealing the deeper meaning of people's everyday lives, and employing phenomenological research methods (Altman & Low, 1992; Gifford, 2002). This research tradition has been described as a way of developing psychological and experimental "lists" of meanings of home (Moore, 2000). Identity expression is one such meaning. Hayward (1975) drew up the first list of meanings, followed by Sixsmith (1986), and Tognoli (1987), among others. The connection between home and identity has also been studied from a psychoanalytical point of view (Marcus, 1995). There has, however, been a tendency to focus on single emotive and experimental elements without relating them to social and cultural contexts (Moore, 2000). Clapham (2005) characterizes the research on "meaning of home" as overly concerned with generalization. The focus has been on searching for universal meanings, instead of looking for differences.

This study examines differences and contextual meaning in residents' perceptions of dwelling and neighbourhood. It is a comparative case study of two different neighbourhoods. The empirical results are comprised of two parts. A survey examined the prevalence and degree of awareness and importance of identity expression through dwelling among the residents in the two neighbourhoods. The second part of the study consists of data from qualitative interviews with residents, with the goal of further exploring residents' thoughts and attitudes towards this topic.

### *Dwelling*

A distinction is often made between the terms "house" and "home", where "house" is explained as a physical structure, and "home" is explained in personal, social or cultural terms, or the psychological meaning of a dwelling place. Clapham (2005) argues that words describing the physical structures of home (like "house") also have personal, social or cultural meanings. How much of a "home" a dwelling is to its resident might vary. However, regardless of the strength of the feelings of home that a building evokes, it might still express aspects of identity if associated with a person or a group of persons. Therefore, the word "dwelling" has been selected as more suitable than "home" (Coolen, Kempen & Ozaki, 2002, Rapoport, 1995) in the present study. Dictionaries define "dwelling" as "housing that someone is living in". This study will also focus on the personal, social and contextual meanings of one's dwelling.

How a person perceives one's dwelling is also influenced by its location, especially the social image or prestige of this location among the general population. Desprès (1991) criticized many studies of the meaning of home because they overlooked societal forces and the importance of material properties on how homes are perceived and experienced. In accordance with this observation, it was decided not to separate the experience of the dwelling from the experience of the neighbourhood in this study. A neighbourhood is thusly defined as the environs nearest to one's dwelling, including the social and personal meanings attached to the neighbourhood.

### *Symbolic interactionism*

Housing can be seen from a symbolic interactionist perspective, an approach that stresses the importance of symbols as mediators of self-definition and the role of performance. Blumer (1962), building on works by Mead (1934), argued that people's selves are social products, and that people interact with each other based on the *interpretation* of each other's actions and self performance. People's belongings and environments carry meanings that are interpreted during social interaction. "Self-presentation" refers to the fact that people want to present a desired image both to an external audience (others) and an internal audience (ourselves) (Myers, 2002). Self-presentation can be seen from a dramaturgical perspective, where the environment is a collection of stage sets and props for social performance (Goffman, 1959). People select and manipulate symbols in their environment in an attempt to influence and convince an external audience. The dwelling is a long-term possession with personal content; it therefore constitutes a potentially important personal symbol. Due to this, people prefer dwellings that have symbolic attributes consonant with their self-concept and in this way present themselves in the way they want (Sadalla & Sheets, 1993). Few people have, however, unlimited opportunities when it comes to presenting themselves through physical objects and environments. Goffman (1959) distinguished between the signs a person *gives* and the signs a person *gives off*. The former refers to the signs a person uses, admittedly to convey the information that is usually associated with these signs or symbols. The signs a person gives off, in contrast, involve a wide range of actions carried out without the intention of communicating. Both types of signs can be misinterpreted. Goffman (1959) used the concept "front" to refer to people's conscious or subconscious self-presentation to an audience. This "front" includes "settings" and "personal front". A personal front is a person's appearance and manners. A setting is the background stage or the context a person uses to present him- or herself, and involves things such as furniture, décor, and the layout of a dwelling.

### *Social identity theory*

Mead, who was one of the main inspirations for symbolic interactionism, developed the idea that the mind and self are essentially social, and continually constructed in a dialog between people using and responding to symbolic gestures and interactions

(Mead, 1934). Building on this idea, Tajfel (1981, 1982) developed social identity theory, a theory describing social categorization and comparison.

Identity, defined as a sense of who we are as individuals, is both about what makes us similar to other people, and what makes us dissimilar. People structure their perception of themselves and others by means of social categories, which then become aspects of their self-concepts (Tajfel, 1981, 1982). Social identity has been explained by Tajfel (1972, see Hogg & Abrams, 1995) as the individual's knowledge of belonging to certain social groups, in addition to the emotions and values created or released by membership in the group. Social identity therefore depends on the quality of the groups or entities we belong to or have as a positive reference, such as nationality, culture, religion, neighbourhood etc. People prefer to see themselves and their social groups in a positive manner. We are motivated to gain and maintain positive self-esteem from group membership. Social mobility is described as people's ability to exit from a social group that does not provide them with a positive identity. However, if people are unable to leave or change the image a group has, there are a number of strategies, individual or collective, that may improve their social identity. Examples of these strategies are intragroup comparison; in which one compares oneself to other group members less fortunate than one's self, or dissociation; in which one defines one's self as not being a member of the group that outsiders perceive you as belonging to. Another strategy may involve denial, or the redefinition of negative characteristics to positive ones (Taylor & Moghaddam, 1994).

Social psychology has focused on social environments more often than physical environments. The element of place as a physical, social and psychological unit has largely been neglected. However, social identity theory can be further developed to include aspects of places or neighbourhoods (Hauge, 2007). A place or neighbourhood can be seen as a social entity or "membership group" that provides identity. A particular neighbourhood is often associated with a certain lifestyle and social status. In relation to maintaining positive self-esteem, this means that people will prefer places or neighbourhoods that contain physical symbols that maintain and enhance positive self-esteem, and avoid places that have a negative impact on their self-esteem (Twigger-



Ross, et al., 2003). In accordance with this, one would assume that people living in neighbourhoods that they were proud of would be more aware of the positive identity it gave them, because it provides greater self-confidence. If people experience a neighbourhood as negative for their self-esteem, but are unable to leave, they would probably use strategies described above to improve their social identity and self-esteem.

## **Method**

### *Comparative case study methodology*

Both surveys and interviews can be conducted to be able to examine a phenomenon from different angles, with the results from both able to supplement and complement each other. The results from surveys and interviews can be analytically generalized to comparable contexts (Yin, 2003). This study was carried out in Trondheim (156 161 inhabitants per January 2005, Statistics Norway) in two neighbourhoods representative of residential areas in Norway, Scandinavia, as well as other western countries. However, the Norwegian society and housing situation must be taken into consideration in the context of the study. Norway is a rich welfare state with a relatively high standard of living. The differences between social classes are relatively small (Brattbakk & Hansen, 2004), but the distribution of income has become less balanced in recent years, especially in the cities (Wessel, 2001). In a country with a cold climate like Norway, the home has a central place in everyone's life. The quality of Norwegian dwellings is generally high, both in terms of technical standards and size. Seventy-seven percent of the Norwegian housing stock is owner-occupied (Brattbakk & Hansen, 2004).

Two neighbourhoods from both ends of the economic scale were chosen to allow differences in attitudes between individuals and groups to be more easily seen: An expensive residential area in the city centre, and an area in a low-priced region on the city's outskirts. It was expected that these neighbourhoods also represented high and low social prestige respectively. Both areas have low blocks of flats with 4 or 5 floors. The high-priced and the low-priced neighbourhoods have an equal percentage of residents younger than 30 (23%), but the low-priced area has twice as many residents who are middle-aged (20% are 30-50 years old) and therefore, more children live here

than in the high-priced neighbourhood. The high-priced neighbourhood has more residents older than 50 years of age. The neighbourhoods have an almost equal percentage of full-time working residents (ca 40%) and students (ca 10%), but the low-priced neighbourhood has more social clients, while the high-priced neighbourhood has more pensioners. Most residents in both neighbourhoods own their apartments (either through housing cooperatives or co-ownerships).

Case A. Kolstadflata: A neighbourhood with apartments in Trondheim's lowest price range (17 000 NOK per square meter, January 2006), about 5 km away from the city centre, with blocks of flats from the 1970s. The blocks are placed around yards, and there are playgrounds, a kindergarten and a school in the area. The neighbourhood is close to green open spaces, and there is a shopping centre near by. The housing stock is under rehabilitation. Residents from one housing cooperative with 481 apartments were asked to answer the questionnaire and participate in an interview.



*Figure 1: Photo, Blocks of flats on Kolstadflata, case A.*

Case B. Nedre Elvehavn: A neighbourhood with small apartments in Trondheim's highest price range (38 000 NOK per square meter, January 2006), near the city centre and the harbour. Construction of the housing complex started in 1998. The northern part was still under construction during the period of data collection (June 2005). Some old brick buildings and other symbols from the industrial period have been preserved. The lamellas are placed crosswise to the river course, and there are green spaces in between. Residents in five housing co-ownerships with altogether

403 apartments were asked to answer the questionnaire and participate in an interview.



Figure 2: Photo, Blocks of flats on Nedre Elvehavn, case B.

### *Survey data*

The identity meaning of home has been well documented in the literature (see Desprès', 1991; Moore's, 2000 reviews). Therefore, questions about the relationship between dwelling and identity were included in a questionnaire on residential satisfaction. The questionnaire also asked for demographic variables (gender, age, number of adults and children in the household, income, education, quality of life), and housing situation (size, ownership, former housing situation, year of occupancy, plans for moving out, desired housing situation, and plans for rehabilitation). The questionnaire was adjusted according to comments from respondents in a pilot study. One of the questions on identity expression through dwelling focused on *awareness*:

1. Have you ever thought about whether the dwelling and neighbourhood you live in have anything to say about who you are, e.g. what tastes, interests and lifestyle you have? (I have never thought of it – I am fully aware of it)

Another question focused on *importance*:

2. Is it important for you that the dwelling says something about who you are? (It is not important to me – it is very important to me)

Both questions were answered on a 5-point Likert scale. Households in the two neighbourhoods received a personally addressed information letter, with the date and time for the distribution and collection of questionnaires. The two samples consisted of a total of 884 apartments. Response rate per household was 46.3% (40.7% in A, and 53.1% in B).

### *Interview data*

Twelve percent of the questionnaire respondents agreed to be interviewed (9% in case A, and 15% in case B). Eighteen interviews were conducted (9 in each neighbourhood, 10 women and 8 men in different age groups) about 4 months after the survey. The semi-structured interviews took place in the informants' own apartments. The main themes of the interviews were: Aesthetic evaluation of the area and the dwelling, identity expression through neighbourhood and dwelling, and evaluation of the neighbourhood's image. The interviews lasted approximately one hour, and were carried out with two female interviewers present. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and notes were taken on the informants' apartment interiors, and the atmosphere of the interview.

In accordance with the tradition of research on the meaning of home, a phenomenological approach was chosen (Altman & Low, 1992; Gifford, 2002), with one important addition: there was more focus on context and interpretation (Moore, 2000). The analytical framework drew broadly on Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith & Osborn, 2004). IPA attempts to explore an individual's personal perception of a phenomenon, but at the same time emphasizes the research process as dynamic and the role of the researcher as active. IPA is concerned with taking the informant's point of view, and involves the researcher's critical interpretation. What the informants verbally expressed was analysed in relation to context. Each interview was read, divided into themes, and the informants' opinions were categorized within each topic.

### **Survey results**

#### *Differences between the case studies:*

Significant differences between the two neighbourhoods were found as expressed by t-tests (two-tailed) (see table 1). There were significant differences ( $p < .01$ ) between the groups when it came to income and education, with higher income and education in the

high-priced neighbourhood. The residents in the low-priced neighbourhood (A) had lived in their dwelling for a longer time; however, residents in the high-priced neighbourhood (B) felt more at home, and were more satisfied with their neighbourhood and dwelling. Inhabitants in the low-priced neighbourhood had plans for moving over a shorter timeframe than inhabitants in the high-priced neighbourhood (measured on a 5-point-scale from “wants to move as soon as possible” to “wants to live here as long as possible”).

Table 1: T-tests of differences between the two neighbourhoods.

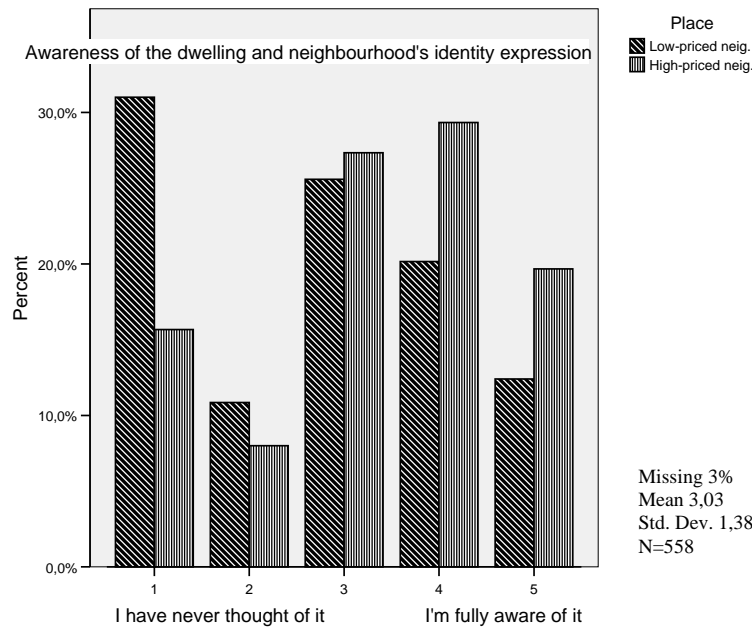
Variable	A: Low-priced neig.			B: High-priced neig.			t	df
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD		
Income	251	2.65	.986	294	3.62	1.444	-9.221**	518.855
Education	256	2.00	.946	299	2.61	1.035	-7.196**	550.680
Children at home	241	0.59	.975	274	0.05	.272	8.297**	272.828
Years in dwelling	260	13.73	11.606	298	3.56	2.266	9.722**	276.254
Satisfaction neighbourhood	260	3.90	1.051	303	4.75	.578	-11.659**	388.450
Satisfaction apartment	258	3.93	1.080	301	4.63	.653	-9.090**	408.726
Home feeling	253	4.13	1.008	295	4.59	.674	-6.218**	428.179
Moving plans	262	3.71	1.446	301	4.12	1.313	-3.439**	531.754

\*=Significant at .05, \*\*=significant at .01, \*\*\*=significant at .001

#### *Awareness of the dwelling and neighbourhood's expression of identity*

A cross-case synthesis of the sample shows that 31% had never / seldom thought of the dwelling or neighbourhood as an expression of who they are (category 1+2 on the Likert scale), while 40% were aware / fully aware of it (category 4+5). When comparing the two neighbourhoods (see figure 3), the differences are most visible at the ends of the scale: 31% of the respondents in the low-priced neighbourhood compared to only 16% of the respondents in the high-priced neighbourhood answered that they had never thought of the dwelling as an expression of identity (category 1 on the Likert scale). Thirty-two per cent of the respondents in the low-priced neighbourhood compared to 50% of the respondents in the high-priced neighbourhood were aware / fully aware of it (category 4+5).

Figure 3: Awareness of the dwelling and the neighbourhood's identity expression, by neighbourhood percentage

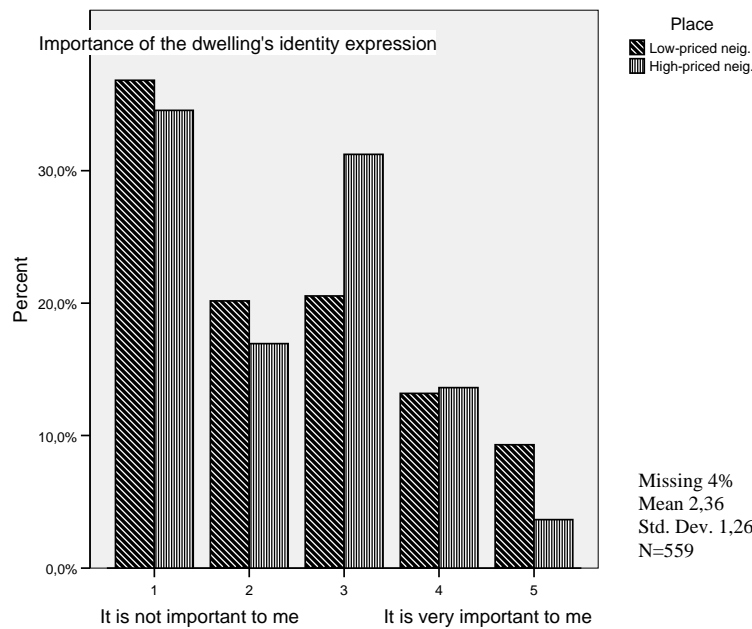


A t-test showed a significant difference between the two neighbourhoods concerning 'awareness of the dwelling's and neighbourhood's identity expression' (Mean A=2.72, Mean B=3.29,  $t=-4.954$ ,  $p<.01$ ).

*Importance of the dwelling's identity reflection*

A cross-case synthesis of the total sample showed that 52% did not think it was important that the dwelling express their identity (category 1+2 on the Likert scale), while 19% (category 4+5) stated that it was important/ very important. Twenty-five per cent of the respondents answered in the middle range. The difference between residents in the two neighbourhoods was small when focusing on the *importance* of identity expression, see Figure 4.

Figure 4: Importance of the dwelling's expression of identity, by neighbourhood, percentage.



A t-test showed that the difference between the neighbourhoods regarding ‘importance of the dwelling’s identity expression’ was not significant (Mean A=2.38, Mean B=2.35,  $t=.287$ , n.s.).

Regression analysis was attempted to account for the variance in ‘awareness and importance of identity expression through dwelling’, with a focus on both housing situation and demographic variables. These tests showed that age and neighbourhood predicted these attitudes, however; the variables did not explain more than 6-7% of the variance. As a result, it was decided to use the 18 qualitative interviews to explain and complement the survey results.

### Discussion of survey and interview data

#### *Summary of survey data*

Forty per cent of the respondents were aware or very much aware of the dwelling as an expression of who they are. Thirty-one percent did not share this way of thinking.

Respondents in the high-priced neighbourhood expressed awareness of identity expression more often than residents in the low-priced neighbourhood. Even if most of the respondents were aware of it, only 19% believed it was important to express themselves in this manner. More than fifty percent did not think it was important that the dwelling reflects who they are.

*Interview results: Response to questions on the communicative aspect of the dwelling*

The 18 informants in the qualitative part of the study can be divided into three groups based on their response to questions about the communicative aspect of the dwelling. These three groups were about the same size, and consisted of informants from both neighbourhoods.

1) “I don’t care” (n=5): This group consisted of residents who stated that they had not thought about the topic, or did not understand it. They also said that they did not care about what others may think about their dwelling. At the same time, they expressed self-concepts through statements such as “not a person who cares about what other people might think”, or “a person who appreciates good functionality and order”. Among the informants in this group were one middle-aged and four elderly individuals:

No, I’ve never thought about it! I don’t give a rat’s ass about what people think of the interior. If they don’t think it’s that nice it doesn’t really matter anyway since they’re not going to be living here. I live here. If people think it looks ok here, fine, but I don’t care. I don’t expect that other people share my or our taste. So now we’re trying to do it our way, then other people can do it their own way. (Man, 55, in the high-priced neighbourhood)

You know, appearances don’t mean that much to me. No, it’s just if things are useful! I don’t know...I’ve never thought about whether my home says anything about me. Some homes are jam packed with stuff! There’s furniture everywhere! There’s hardly any room on the floor, knick-knacks all over the place...then I think: “The poor person who has to do the dusting here!” I think! But I don’t think about it. (Woman, 62, in the low-priced neighborhood)

2) “I guess so” (n=6): This group consisted of residents who were surprised by this kind of question. However, they did show interest in the subject, started to wonder about the topic during the interview, and came up with different examples of what people might find out about them from their environment. Among the six informants in this group were four middle-aged individuals (between 30 and 60), and two young (under 30) individuals. Many of them were uncertain about how their dwelling reflects them, or if



their dwelling contained enough personal items to say anything about them at all. Others believed that they had to be trendy to express something through their dwelling, and they did not think they were. At the same time these individuals expressed their identity by “being a person who likes to take care of old furniture”, for example:

It's tough. I like to take care of things, I'm not someone who just uses things and then throws them away. I have the means to live in better circumstances than what you find here, but that means moving, right? And then you have to get rid of much of what you have anyway. And then you have to have a new house with other things that fit in. But there's also a little bit of security in what you already own, too. I'm not so good at buying new curtains and changing them, not at all. (Woman, 48, low-priced neighborhood)

3) “Yes, of course” (n=7): This group consisted of residents who found the topic natural and obvious. They immediately understood the question, and gave examples from their own dwelling and other people's dwellings:

A house says a great deal about a person, I think. I've experienced this personally – it's a special area up here, you can come into an apartment and... (Woman, 29, low-priced neighborhood)

This group included two middle-aged individuals (between 30 and 60), and four people younger than 30. There were also more women (5) than men (2). Even if informants in this group were very much aware of the topic, it did not necessarily mean that they thought it was important at the time. Many of them stated that a dwelling's expression of identity may become more important later in their housing career:

They certainly can. But I don't know if that's the goal. But, this is an apartment that I had planned to live in for two years, so there are things here that I've bought with the idea that they only needed to last for two years. So it's probably not as representative of who I am than if I had bought an apartment that I had thought I would live in for 10 years, because then I would have invested a little more in furniture and made things a little more decent. (Woman, 24, high-priced neighborhood)

A heightened awareness of dwelling as an expression of identity was not necessarily reflected through confidence in taste and style. Some of the informants in this group were unsure about their own style, and talked about changing it. Some informants were bothered by the incongruities between themselves and the interior of their apartment or the quality of the neighbourhood. They were not satisfied with how the dwelling reflected them:

No, I don't really think that what it looks like in here is in accordance with how I want others to see me. Because I feel it's not how I actually want it to be, really. If I could afford it I would buy a new sofa, for example, and not have one that's twenty years old. Yeah, I'd be somewhere completely different. We are,

after all, borrowing old furniture. So the answer really is, no. I don't feel that this is me, really. (Woman, 26, in the low-priced neighbourhood)

*Interview results: What do people learn about a person from their dwelling?*

Residents interested in the topic were asked about what they thought others could learn about them from their dwelling and neighbourhood. Their answers can be grouped into five thematic categories. The informants referred to their dwellings (including the location of the dwelling) as signs of: “personality and taste”, “interests and activities”, “life phase”, “social status”, and “relationships”.

1) Taste and personality (n=11): Residents perceived a close relationship between taste and personality, and read information about others by studying belongings and surroundings, style and taste. Many of them specifically referred to the fact that a dwelling's interior could demonstrate just how orderly a person is.

They can see if a person is practical, or if a person is... yes, particularly if a person is romantic, it's quite easy to get a sense of that from their apartment, because then there's lots of stuff everywhere, pink stuff and flowers. As you can see, there's not even a single plant here. And if you are tidy, I think that's easy to see, from the kind of furniture that you choose and what you fill your apartment with. (Woman, 24, high-priced neighbourhood)

Yes, it says a little about tastes, and whether there's an organized person who lives there, whether you care about how you'll have things. (Woman, 26, low-priced neighborhood)

2) Interests and activities (n=5): Residents affirmed that it was possible to see evidence of their interests and activities through objects in their dwelling. The location of the dwelling may also be seen as a sign of interest in nature and the outdoors.

Yes, in part, I think. The first thing people see is my desk, and it's kind of messy, with school stuff, of course, and the bookshelves with all the books in them and everything. And they also see that I really like mirrors and things like that, and that's one of the first things they encounter. And they can see there's a big closet and that I have a ton of clothes. And that pictures are really my kind of thing. (Woman, 22, high-priced neighbourhood)

Interests and things, you have to look at things that are here, not just the apartment, but the things that are in the apartment, like football shoes. There's riding stuff here. An active family. You can also see that we like to be outdoors and go fishing all the time, there's some boots out there and... (Man, 37, low-priced neighbourhood)

3) Life phase (n=4): Residents stated that objects in the dwelling might illustrate what life phase they found themselves in, especially if there were children in the apartment.

It's easy to see that a family with children lives here. It's easy to see that the children are in school age, and that the parents work. (Man, 37, low-priced neighbourhood)

4) Social status (n=3): Residents talked about how the neighborhood and dwelling demonstrated one's socio-economic status.

When you come into a person's apartment, I think you get a sense right away about where people are in their personal life and finances and everything. (Woman, 29, low-priced neighbourhood)

Yes, because of the co-op, I think people think that at the start, that it's based on education and finances. Those are the two most important things. (Man, 37, low-priced neighbourhood)

5) Relationships (n=2): Residents talked about how objects given to them by friends or family can represent their relationships to these people.

And these are things that I have been given, by people who I care about. That's what means something to me, to have things from people I care about. (Woman, 47, Low-priced neighbourhood)

### *Awareness*

People had different degrees of awareness of the communicative aspect of the environment; this was reflected both in the survey and the interviews. Goffman (1959) referred to an unawareness of this aspect as a way that people *give off* signs without attention. This does not mean that they do not care about their dwelling or interior. When interviewed, the informants verified that they knew what kind of environment would best represent who they are. Many informants (n=10) talked about the appearance of the apartment as being very important for their sense of well-being. Making personal changes was essential to residents in both neighbourhoods. Residents in the low-priced neighbourhood talked about these changes as "renovations" (n=4), while in the high-priced neighbourhood residents described the changes as "upgrading" or "avoiding standard equipment" (n=4). People in the same age group in the high-priced neighbourhood seemed to prefer interiors of a similar style, and had tastes that were similar to others in their social class (Bourdieu, 1984). This may give them a feeling of belonging to the right group (Tajfel, 1981). They may express belongingness

to their reference group through interior design, without thinking about their dwelling or its interior as a means of communication. This is in line with Twigger-Ross et al.'s (2003) assumption that in order to maintain positive self-esteem, people prefer physical symbols that represent a positive social identity.

Goffman's (1959) concept of "front" refers to the way people consciously or subconsciously present themselves to an audience. This concept includes "personal front" and "settings". The survey results indicated that other forms of self-presentation were more important than using settings and objects as a means of communication. Personal appearance may be more important than the appearance of one's environment. Objects and environments may be seen as more superficial ways of self-presentation than behaviour and attitudes. Awareness of self-presentation may also in itself be perceived as a weakness, and associated with people who do not have their own opinions, but who try to be what they think others want them to be. The importance of self-presentation is in general related to personality ("impression management") (Myers, 2002). However, as Goffman (1959) pointed out, information about who you are is also mirrored without being "presented" on purpose. Further research is needed to compare different forms of self-presentation, to determine how important the dwelling may be compared to other kinds of environments and objects, and other forms of self-presentation.

Age was an important factor in terms of how much the informants reflected upon and talked about the relationship between dwelling and identity in the interviews. The informants who showed interest in the questions about the communicative aspect of the environment were all middle-aged or young, with more young people in the group that had the highest interest in the topic. Are the age differences in attitudes towards identity expression through dwelling due to membership in a cohort group? Younger people might be more concerned about expressing themselves through dwelling and interior because they are in a life phase where their identity is still developing. On the other hand, younger people often live in temporary homes, are not settled, and do not necessarily have the money to buy the dwelling or furnish the kind of interior they want. Because younger people are in the first phase of their housing career, one would expect

them to pay less attention to identity expression through dwelling. But the way in which a dwelling reflects your personality may also be a less sensitive issue for young people who are newly established in their own home, compared to older informants who may feel that they “should have stretched harder”.

Different generations have experienced different kinds of upbringing, attitudes and beliefs. A basic value in today’s western societies is the individual’s freedom from culture- dependent identity categories. Identity does not necessarily depend on the groups that you were born or socialized into, but on your ability to create your own independent life. As a result, it is likely that younger people put more emphasis on being independent and presenting their dwelling and home as something unique and special. The immaterial value of both products and environments is central in communicating one’s identity. This is in line with what many sociologists have called an “aesthetic revolution in the western part of the world” (Baudrillard, 1998; Palmer & Dodson, 1996; Welsch, 1997). Aesthetic aspects -- colours, shapes, surface, and symbols of products and environments -- are more important now than in times past (Bourdieu, 1984). Through dwellings and belongings, people signal their lifestyles, values, successes and failures. Miles (2000) discusses research that shows how young people in the western world have been socialized as consumers at an early age, not only by their parents, but also by their peers. They have increased spending power, and have well-developed “needs” for aesthetic consumption transmitted to them via the media. The home as an expression of identity has become a frequent topic in the media. This makes people more aware of the issue, and gives them the vocabulary to describe these aspects of a dwelling (Leonard et al., 2004). These may be some of the reasons why the purchase or consumption of dwellings, interiors or objects seem to evoke more positive associations among the younger rather than the older informants in this study.

### *Sensitivity*

The dwelling might be experienced as a strong physical symbol of how successful one is in life. From this perspective, questions about one’s dwelling can be sensitive. The interviews have indicated that talking about identity and dwelling was a sensitive issue for the informants. A good example of this was how people started talking about how

they read *other* people's dwellings instead of how people may read their own (see the quotes in the third section of the discussion). Very few stated in the questionnaire that it was important to express themselves through their dwelling. The interview results provided some explanations for these results. People in *both* neighbourhoods were reluctant to be seen as a part of the group associated with their neighbourhood. People were very much aware of what kind of "image" their neighbourhood had - what social identity outsiders ascribed to them (Tajfel, 1982), and the informants were surprisingly congruent in these "image descriptions", and their effort to nuance these perceptions. The qualitative interviews gave people an opportunity to explain the aspects of the neighbourhood that they identified with, and the aspects that they would rather distance themselves from:

The rumour is that people who have much money are the people who have bought apartments here. But I think that it's a myth that isn't true, because we know a number of people in the area who we know haven't bought apartments here because they actually had too much money. (Man, 58, high-priced neighborhood)

Yes, I know what they say about Kolstadflata... haha, that there are lots of foreigners who live here and there's lots of drug use and stuff like that. "You're going to move there!?" was how a lot of people reacted when I said that I wanted to move here. But I haven't seen any of that stuff. I think it's fine. (Woman, 47, low-priced neighborhood).

The self-perception gained from living in the low-priced neighbourhood depends on the social class or lifestyle group with which one compares one's self. Some might be satisfied. Others, unable to move, would probably not focus on what their dwelling or neighbourhood might say about who they are, due to their embarrassment over the neighbourhood's image, or their inability to act on their desire for change. The questionnaire data (see the t-tests) showed that many residents wanted to move from the low-priced neighbourhood. The interview sample has examples of both informants satisfied with their housing situation, and informants with a desire to move. Those informants who experienced their social identity as being negatively affected by the label they thought that outsiders ascribed to them and their neighbourhood, did not want to belong to this group. Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981, 1982; Taylor & Moghaddam, 1994) explains many forms of strategies for improving social identity, such as translating negative aspects into positive, denial of negative aspects, and

defining oneself as not being a member of the group outsiders may perceive you as. Here is an example of this last technique:

Actually, I think I've grown away from the community here, because I don't have much to do with the neighbours and people any longer. There are so many families with small children, and a good number of foreigners with dark skin. And the people who are my age who still live here... I don't know, it's just not my place. (Woman, 48, low-priced neighbourhood)

These attitudes may be representative of many inhabitants in the low-priced neighbourhood, and the survey results have to be interpreted in light of these attitudes. Because of their need to distance themselves from the neighbourhood's image, many residents would not identify with it, and would probably not acknowledge an awareness of or the importance of the expression of identity through dwelling.

People living in the high-priced neighbourhood had more options when they chose where to live. They had in general more buying power for purchasing furniture and decorating their interiors. Positive self-esteem is more easily achieved by being a member of the high-priced neighbourhood, and these residents were therefore more aware of how their dwelling reflected who they are. It is easier to say that a dwelling and neighbourhood says something about you if you are satisfied with the housing situation. However, most inhabitants in the high-priced neighbourhood also stated that they thought that these kinds of statements are unimportant. This may be related to inhabitants distancing themselves from the image they that they believe outsiders ascribe to them, which is "people with too much money". Here is one example:

In the beginning, I could say that I lived in Dokkgaten because so few people knew where Dokkgaten was, but I wouldn't say "Nedre Elvehavn". Now you notice that people think you have to be very wealthy to live here. But I think people would be a little surprised if they were to come here and see what kinds of people actually live here. It's a matter of priorities. I like to joke that the people who live on this side are a little finer than everyone else, and that I'm bringing down the standard by living here. (Woman, 43, High-priced neighbourhood)

Most residents in the expensive neighbourhood had the resources to express whatever they would like to through their dwelling. Their interiors were anything but casual. Furniture and artwork seemed carefully selected. If they had thought about how their dwellings and furnishings reflected their identity or their group, they may not want to talk about it due to fear of being seen as a person who was showing off his or her

prosperity. This is in accordance with the principle of 'just who do you think you are?'. Norwegian culture is based on "equality", defined as "sameness" (Gullestad, 1992), and there is only a moderate polarization among the social classes. It is not politically correct to show off your wealth; at least not to say you do. If you have money to buy a high-class apartment, you have to justify it with functional reasons ("It is close to work."). Many of the informants in the high-priced neighbourhood, especially the elderly, who readily associated the communicative aspect of the dwelling with something negative, may have experienced the questions on this topic as a way of tricking them into admitting that they were "showing off" their privileged circumstances. Goffman (1959) referred to attitudes of this type as "negative idealization". The process of socialization gives people a tendency to give an audience an idealized picture of themselves. Showing awareness of nonmaterial values can modify status symbols that express material prosperity. A "performance" may be centred around loyalty towards other people's social status, depending upon the person's audience.

#### *Methodological considerations*

This study demonstrates the advantage of qualitative methods when studying the communicative aspect of the physical environment. The sensitivity of the topic is a difficult barrier, but interviews give informants an opportunity to explain or moderate the answers (Kvale, 1996) when stating identification with a neighbourhood or a dwelling. The informants have been given an opportunity to explain the difference between the social identity that outsiders ascribe to their neighbourhood group, and the neighbourhood's social identity as an in-group member experiences it. The fact that residents in both neighbourhoods were reluctant to identify themselves with the neighbourhood image may be specific to these economically extreme cases. Informants in more neutral neighbourhoods might not necessarily express similar attitudes. A lesson learned from the interviews, however, was how easy it was for informants to talk about this topic in third person, and how difficult it was for them to talk about it in first person. Changing the interview guide to focus more on how a dwelling might communicate information about others could have made the topic less sensitive during later discussions of what one's own dwelling reflected. The interviews also showed that



the concepts “awareness” and “importance” as used in the questionnaire were difficult concepts to employ when talking about this sensitive issue.

There is always a risk that using formulations and terms more familiar to younger than older generations will influence findings in a research project of this nature. The survey questions on identity expression could have been divided into 3-4 questions on different aspects of identity expression to address the risk of people finding the topic too sensitive. Despite the personal distribution of the questionnaires, the survey response rate did not exceed 53%, and there is reason to believe that immigrants and social clients answered to a lesser degree than others.

#### *Conclusions and further research*

The informants can be divided into three categories regarding attitudes towards the communicative aspect of their environment: One group that did not care much about it, another group that showed interest in the topic, and a group that talked very naturally about it. The informants experienced dwelling and neighbourhood in general as information about personality and taste, interests, life phase, social status, and relationships. The questionnaire data demonstrated that the majority of the residents in these two neighbourhoods have reflected upon the dwelling as providing symbolic information about who they are. This was more prevalent in the high-priced neighbourhood. However, more than half of the survey respondents did not think it was important to express identity in this manner.

The results were interpreted in the context of two main factors: Attitudes towards self-presentation, and the sensitivity of the subject. Other kinds of self-presentation may be more important. To be aware of one’s self-presentation may in general be perceived as a weakness in Norwegian culture. Attitudes towards self-presentation through dwelling and consumption may also be seen in relation to cohort. Questions about the connection between identity and dwelling can be sensitive due to neighbourhood image. Informants in both neighbourhoods distanced themselves from the image outsiders ascribed to them, due to embarrassment, modesty, or a lack of familiarity with the image.

Additional research is needed to find out more about gender differences regarding the communicative aspect of the dwelling. There are probably also differences in attitudes towards this phenomenon in relation to ethnicity and different cultural backgrounds. Research is needed to find out how important the dwelling is for nonverbal self-presentation compared to other possessions and environments, such as clothing, cars, holiday cottages, and work environments, or other types of self-presentation, such as activities, behaviour and manners. A longitudinal study would indicate if age differences in attitudes towards self-presentation through dwelling are a result of cohort. There is also a need for research that further explores how strongly a dwelling's symbolic and communicative aspects may affect an individual's view of himself or herself. In relation to social housing and institutions, the question can be posed as to whether it is possible to influence negative trends by moving a person to a neighbourhood and dwelling that symbolizes that they are worth something? How much might this mean compared to personal and social factors?

There has traditionally been a gap between research on the meaning of home, and other housing research (e.g. from economic or functional perspectives). It might be fruitful to combine these approaches to create a broader view of housing and home, both from a theoretical and an applied perspective. Research on the meaning of housing helps explain why people in the western world spend so much money on their dwellings. The consumption of dwellings, interiors and objects has implications on different levels, from the macro level, by increasing construction waste, to the micro level, by influencing an individual's frustration over their personal shortcomings as expressed by their dwellings. To know how to change negative tendencies, one has to understand why people act the way they do. However, it is also important to look at the positive sides of the interest people have in their dwellings. People have the ability to use their creativity and fantasy to influence their dwelling, not necessarily in an expensive way. For many people, the dwelling becomes a life-long project, and gives them opportunities to "play" in adult life (Gullestad, 1992). Many couples share home decoration as a common hobby, making the dwelling a symbol of their life together. The things we choose to surround ourselves with are not first and foremost expressions of wealth, but expressions of life phases, interests, feelings, and relations, - all elements of identity.

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**“HERE YOU GET A LITTLE EXTRA PUSH”:  
The meaning of architectural quality in housing for the  
formerly homeless  
– a case study of Veiskillet in Trondheim, Norway.**

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Åshild Lappegard Hauge & Eli Støa (2009)

**Abstract**

*The paper presents a case study of a housing project where special attention was paid to the use of architectural qualities to positively affect a user group of former criminals and drug addicts. The aim of the study is to examine the residents' experience of these qualities, and the meaning this had for their identity and in providing motivation for change. The study shows that the user group appreciates and takes extra care of quality materials and architecture, and that these qualities have an impact on identity. The physical environment contributed to strengthening and motivating some residents in their new identity as non-criminals / non-drug addicts. An appealing housing situation may thus be an important contribution to motivation for change, due to environmental characteristics that symbolize a positive social identity. This contribution is however dynamic, and dependent on other situational factors as well.*

**Keywords**

Architectural quality, social / public housing, homeless, home, identity

## **Introduction**

A formerly homeless person told a Norwegian newspaper (Okkenhaug, 2006) that the barracks the municipality provided him took the spark of life out of him. The 22-year old lost his temper and set fire to the barracks he was living in while waiting for a better permanent apartment. “I couldn’t stand living in such a degrading way”, he said to the journalist. This incident illustrates that a roof above one’s head is not enough, and that environmental design, location and the associations tied to a dwelling matters. The impact of the physical environment has been poorly examined in regards to housing for the homeless. People who are unable to hold on to a dwelling of their own are often assigned low status housing. How does this affect their identity, and their motivation to change their lives, away from crime or drug abuse? Is it possible to use a dwelling as a strategy to positively affect a person’s sense of dignity?

The present study is a single in-depth case study of a housing project called “Veiskillet” in Trondheim, with the focus on the residents’ experience of its architectural qualities. Interviews with one of the initiators, the two employees and the residents have been undertaken to learn about their experience of living and working in a building designed with special architectural quality particularly to support the development a new identity for its residents, as non-criminals / non-drug abusers. A presentation and discussion of the architectural characteristics and qualities are based on the authors’ on-site inspections of the building as well as a professional evaluation undertaken by the jury of Norwegian State award for building tradition 2007. An understanding of the architect’s intentions and ideas are drawn from his own presentations of the project in architectural magazines, and from interviews with him in newspaper articles. The study will focus on the residents’ experience of the environment in relation to their self-identity, future expectations, and motivation for change. The study gives less attention on the evaluation of practical details. Social and organizational factors are considered in the interpretation of the results, but will be described only briefly to give the reader a broader picture of the context. The findings in the present study may be relevant for other groups of people in the public housing sector as well. The perspective taken in this



study is that the physical environment may be a strategic instrument in counteracting social exclusion of former homeless criminals and drug addicts.

### *Homelessness and public housing*

Homeless people with a life history involving drugs and crime as well as mental illness are often offered low quality housing from a technical, functional and aesthetic perspective; simply stated, this is the kind of housing that other people do not want. The location of the housing is often also problematic, located as it is in surroundings where it can be difficult to get on with ordinary life. Many homeless even prefer the streets before hostels or other forms of temporary accommodation, mostly because of the fear of living with people who take drugs and lead chaotic lifestyles (Hutson, 1999, Clapham, 2005). Research on public housing seldom examines how low quality housing affects a resident's view of herself / himself. There is, however, research that demonstrates how upgraded neighbourhoods and housing units may be related to increased well-being among the residents (Wright & Kloos, 2007).

### *Home and identity*

Housing can be seen from a symbolic interactionist perspective. People express themselves and perceive others not only through their behaviour or verbal statements, but also through possessions and physical environments. People's belongings and environments carry meanings that are interpreted during social interaction (Goffman, 1959). The dwelling is a long-term possession with personal content; it therefore constitutes a potentially important personal symbol. A dwelling can be seen as an expression of identity, both for oneself and others. Our own dwellings and neighbourhoods influence self-concepts about who we are (Gifford, 2002; Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983). Hauge & Kolstad (2007) found that people experience their dwellings as providing others information about personality and taste, interests, life phase, social status, and relationships. Speller et al. (2002) have documented how people's identities are affected by changes in their spatial environment. The associational content of environmental identity signals are, however, under constant negotiation through social interaction, and tend to change over time and differ among groups. Physical environments affect identity, not only through visual impressions, but

also through how they facilitate the development of social networks, one's private life, and control over one's own life situation.

Identity, defined as a sense of who we are as individuals, is both about what makes us similar to other people, and what makes us different. People structure their perception of themselves and others by means of social categories, which then become aspects of their self-concepts (Tajfel, 1981, 1982). Social identity has been explained by Tajfel (1981) as the individual's knowledge of belonging to certain social groups, in addition to the emotions and values created by or associated with membership in the group. Social identity theory can be further developed to include aspects of places, objects or neighbourhoods (Hauge, 2007; Twigger-Ross, et al., 2003). A place or neighbourhood can be seen as a social entity or "membership group" that provides identity. A particular neighbourhood is often associated with a certain lifestyle and social status. In the same way, objects or types of environments are also associated with different groups of people. In relation to maintaining positive self-esteem, this means that people will prefer places and physical symbols that maintain and enhance positive self-esteem, and, if they are able, avoid places that have a negative impact on their self-esteem (Twigger-Ross, et al., 2003).

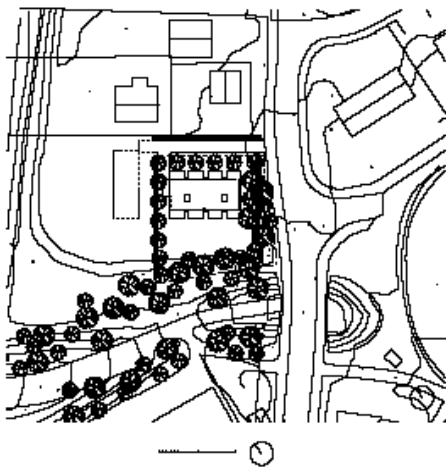
### **Case study**

To better understand the context of "Veiskillet", a few words on the Norwegian Housing policy towards socially vulnerable groups are needed. Only 4 % of the Norwegian housing stock is publicly owned (Hansen, 2006) and can be categorized as social housing. Public support for vulnerable groups is given through individually directed instruments rather than provision of subsidized housing. Public housing is reserved for the worst off, socially as well as economically. Based on an ideology of integration of vulnerable groups in ordinary neighbourhoods instead of allocating them socially and physically separate areas or buildings, municipalities buy apartments in housing cooperatives for social clients.

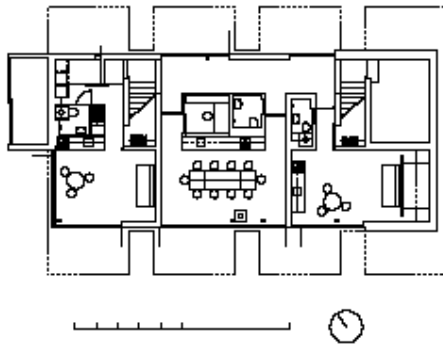
### *Veiskillet*

The Church City Mission is an organization that works in the cities to prevent poverty and loneliness. The Mission wanted to create a living environment for 5-6 young people with a history of drug abuse and crime who wanted a fresh start. The aim was to be able to provide a home, not an institution for these individuals that included both privacy and community. The planning process did not include direct user participation, but the Mission based their ideas on their experiences from years of work and talking to the homeless, drug abusers and prisoners. The Oslo-based architect Bård Helland was engaged to design the project.

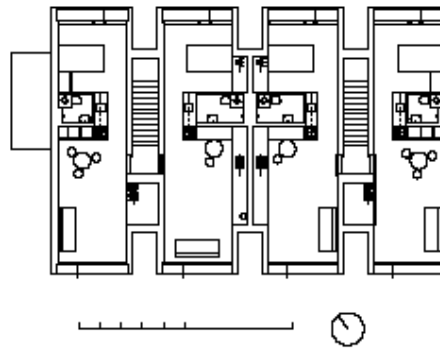
The housing is situated on the border of a housing area, 5-6 km away from the city centre, in Trondheim's Moholt neighbourhood. It has six apartments, with the four largest (40 m<sup>2</sup>) on the first floor, and two smaller (30 m<sup>2</sup>) on the ground floor. Each apartment appears to be an individual unit. Each unit has a rectangular floor plan (3.2 x 12.5 m) with glass end walls, and with a ceiling height of 2.6 m. The kitchen and living room open towards the south, while the bedroom faces the neighbouring detached houses towards the north. The bedroom has a bamboo screen covering the large windows, which still allows the light to shine through.



Site plan



Ground floor



First floor

The ground floor features a common entrance, an office, a technical room and a common kitchen / living room with access to a common garden. The building has a timber frame construction, outer wood panelling, and sheathing that is painted black. The interiors of the private apartments were painted in lighter colours. Oak parquet and concrete was used for inner floors. The architecture has a severe and minimalist expression both outside and inside, distinguished by a high degree of consistency in detailing.



*Interior, ground floor apartment to the left, first floor apartment to the right (photo: Bård Helland).*



*Garden and entrance side (photo: Bård Helland).*

The project was built with a small budget, but extra money was spent on selected elements and materials, such as the entrance door, which was covered in a polished brass sheet. For more details on costs and technical solutions, see Helland (2006, 2007). Veiskillet was financed through loans and contributions from the Norwegian State Housing Bank, a loan contract with Trondheim Red Cross, and earmarked transfers from the Church City Mission.

“Veiskillet” means “crossroad” in Norwegian, a name that fits both the location and the intentions of the project; helping the residents in starting over and breaking away from destructive life patterns. In co-operation with the municipality’s social services, the housing employees make sure that the residents have daily activities, such as work training, studies or sport (the bus connections are good). The primary target group is men and women between 25 and 40 years old who have recently been released from prison. Veiskillet is a “high threshold offer”, meaning that the housing offer comes with a demand that residents are motivated and show a willingness to change. The intention is that the residents are followed closely, and are given a fair chance to start over again without drugs and crime. Their motivation is evaluated over time, and if they fail to show any effort to change, they risk having to move. Two social workers are employed in a 150% position at the house. They are present only at daytime. By the summer of 2007, five of the apartments were occupied. The residents have furnished and decorated their apartments themselves.

Veiskillet differs from most other housing projects for the homeless due to its architectural characteristics. It is also very different from the detached houses in the surrounding neighbourhood. It has received a lot of attention in the media and also among professionals, most of which has been very positive, although it may be assumed that opinions among neighbours and the more general public are diverse.

Veiskillet was one of many dwellings evaluated for Norwegian State award for building tradition 2007, and was one of four projects that was awarded honourable mention. The jury gave Veiskillet an honourable mention for: “Superior architecture and exemplary architectural quality and adjustment to users who probably have experienced anything but being prioritized and valued. The building has clear qualities as a possible design icon. The apartments are oriented and designed with great insight and respect for the users’ particular challenges and life situations. Details are designed with care, both functionally and aesthetically. Beautiful common areas establish a sense of warmth and belongingness for users and their relations. The jury’s honourable mention particularly recognizes the architectural nerve throughout the structure, which combines sound and attractive housing qualities that are necessary regardless of the type of resident. The architect’s insight and respect for the users are great examples for the housing sector in general.” (Norwegian State award for building tradition 2007 / Statens byggeskikkpris, 2007, author’s translation)



*Entrance and window screens (photo: Bård Helland).*

## **Method**

A case study allows researchers to conduct an in-depth exploration of a phenomenon and to examine it from different angles and methodological perspectives. A common reason for doing a single case study is that it is a “rare and unique case” (Yin, 2003), which certainly applies to Veiskillet. There is knowledge to be found through this case that could not have been found elsewhere. The results from building inspections, media publicity, and interviews may complement each other. The results can be generalized analytically, through comparing different aspects to other housing contexts for vulnerable groups of people.

### *Interviews*

The interviews with one of the initiators and the two employees at Veiskillet were conducted as a group interview in the common area in Veiskillet. Information about the experience of living at Veiskillet was collected through in-depth interviews with the users. These interviews were conducted by fourth year psychology students as research training. Before the interviews, all residents received information about the research project, ethical guidelines, and a consent statement. Four of five residents agreed to be interviewed. The interviews were conducted in March 2007. The resident interview guide covered five main topics: The residents’ former and present life situation, functionality, aesthetics, the meaning of living at Veiskillet, related to identity and motivation for change, and evaluation of rules, and offers. The questions were made open-ended, and topics were discussed as they cropped up naturally in the conversation. The interviews were recorded and transcribed.

In accordance with the tradition of research on the meaning of home, a phenomenological approach was chosen (Altman & Low, 1992; Gifford, 2002). The analytical framework drew broadly on *Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis* (IPA) (Smith & Osborn, 2004), which allows more focus on context and interpretation than standard phenomenology. IPA attempts to explore an individual’s personal perception of a phenomenon, but at the same time emphasizes the research process as dynamic and the role of the researcher as active. What the informants verbally expressed was

analysed in relation to context. Each interview was read, divided into themes, and the informants' opinions were categorized within each topic.

### *Informants - residents*

All four residents are men between 30 and 45 years old, and have a background of drug use, crime and prison. Three have from time to time been homeless. All have experienced living in several institutions and different kinds of social housing. The results revealed that the residents' experience of the architecture was dependent on their individual life situation, and therefore a short summary of their current situation is provided here, together with fictitious names:

- John – his child visits him every day, and he maintains good contact with the son's mother. He is searching for a job, and had lived at Veiskillet for three weeks when the interviews were conducted. Enthusiastic about his housing situation.
- Peter – his child visits him often, he maintains good contact with his parents. He works for the municipality and had lived at Veiskillet for two years when the interviews were conducted. He feels positive about his housing situation.
- David – has some contact with his parents, works in an institution for drug abusers, has plans to study, had lived at Veiskillet for a year when the interviews were conducted. He has the smallest apartment. Enthusiastic about his housing situation.
- Kevin – has regular contact with one of his parents, is at a municipal activity centre each day, had lived at Veiskillet for one-and-a-half years when the interviews were conducted. Due to lack of motivation to change his drug behaviour over time, he was asked to move out only a few weeks after this interview was conducted. Satisfied with his housing situation, but indifferent towards Veiskillet compared to other housing possibilities.

Due to low quality recording, two of the interviews could not be fully transcribed, but the interviewers have written reports of these two interviews. Only the interviews with John and David were fully recorded, therefore, the quotations are taken from just these two interviews. However, the two other interviews have been equally important in the analysis of the results.

## **Results and discussion**

### *General satisfaction*

Over the years, Veiskillet's project initiators and its employees had seen many drug- and alcohol abusers who were motivated to change their lifestyles give up because they were placed in housing that made it very difficult to get away from the drug environment. Therefore this housing project was situated away from the city centre in an ordinary housing area. Three of the informants, but not Kevin, really appreciated the



housing's location away from downtown and associated meeting places for drug addicts.

Yes, I think it's a perfect location. If it had been down in the city centre, it's just a short hop to get drugs. Up here we have everything we need, really. In fact, I know for myself if we lived nearer to the centre, if you were a little bored at home, it would have been much easier to go downtown, get yourself a beer, and then from there it's all downhill. And if you think that everyone else who lives here is pretty well known in the drug scene, you can imagine how wild it could have gotten. So it's really quite good to be up here, absolutely (David).

The housing project is in general talked about in a very positive manner, both by employees and residents. The residents are all satisfied with the housing situation. Everyone feels that it is a safe place. This makes it easier for residents to maintain contact with their own children and family.

John: I love it. You really feel good coming home. (...) It's really a nice place to come home to. It's quiet and calm here. It's not like I'm on my way home, and maybe I've got my son with me and I have to wonder, "What kind of condition is the house going to be in when I get home now?"

Interviewer: How long do you plan to live here?

John: Oh, years, maybe. It's a really great place to live while you're working through the kinds of issues that I'm working through. It's both because of the living situation and the building itself. I don't think I could have found a better place to live in this situation.

Residents really liked the garden, and they would like to use it more than they actually do. The employees also perceived the garden as important, planted as a garden should be; they described it as a symbolic statement that this is a proper home. The residents also appreciated the common living room, and having someone to talk to, both other residents and employees.



*Common living room to the left, garden / outdoor areas to the right (photo: Bård Helland).*

All informants expressed the feeling that having certain rules gave them a sense of safety. At the same time, they disagreed on how strict these rules should be. Three of the residents actually thought the enforcement of these rules could have been stricter, especially with respect to drugs. Kevin had a different attitude; he thinks the rules limit his freedom of choice. He saw Veiskillet as just another institution, was less enthusiastic about the housing situation, and described it as just “okay”. The other three residents described Veiskillet as something very special, not like any other ordinary institution. They seemed to a greater extent to appreciate the specific qualifications that come with living here. The difference in attitudes may reflect the residents’ differing emotions as affected by their failures and hopes for the future, and different levels of maturity in the residents’ insight into their own drug problems.

### *Architecture*

The project initiators’ request to the architect was vague. He therefore had great freedom in interpreting their intentions and translating them into architectural form. One of the initiators described the process as long and complicated, but inspiring. It made the initiators more aware of the meaning of the environment, and forced them to reflect in more detail about the intentions behind the house. One of the initiators said, “without the process with the architect, the intentions behind the house would not have been as thought through as they are now”. He described the architect as a man who got the project “under his skin”, and “put his soul into it”. The employees described the residents as overwhelmed when they entered the building for the first time. They seemed to truly enjoy the design, materials and colours at Veiskillet:

I think this is absolutely brilliant! I am totally happy with this place! (David)

What details were especially appreciated? Two of the residents seemed especially interested in the design of the house. They spoke enthusiastically about the large windows that brightened the black painted roofs, and gave elegant contrasts. The oak parquet was described as beautiful. The use of brushed steel and brass was noted and appreciated as well. The front door was covered in brass, due to the architect’s emphasis on creating a strong first impression of the house. One of the residents put it this way:

It's great and solid! I've worked a little bit with metal before, so... I just dig it, I dig steel and brass and stuff like that. It's so absolutely fine (John).

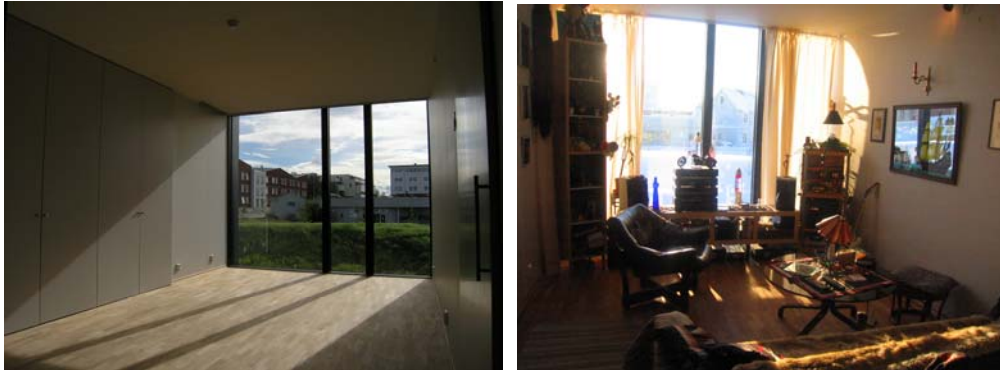


*Entrance elevation with front door covered in brass (photo: Bård Helland).*

Veiskillet has floor-to-ceiling windows, something that can be perceived as both strange and threatening for former drug abusers and criminals who are in fact used to hiding. The architect described his intentions with the large windows as a “starting point”; the windows gave residents the ability to vary light and openness with curtains and blinds based on their mood and the time of day. But the windows should give residents the ability to experience the freedom that large windows symbolize, compared to the small peephole of light in prison (Helland, 2006, 2007). Kevin and Peter are indifferent to the large windows, and keep the curtains drawn. John and David were in fact very pleased with the windows, and seemed to be inspired by the architect’s symbolic idea of “living openly”:

As a drug abuser, you're used to shutting out the world as much as possible. And then I came here and had a whole wall as a window! But those are old thoughts. Now I'm not a drug abuser

in that sense, anyway, so it's really nice to let the light in. Yup, that's it, but it's a change that you have to make in yourself, isn't it (David).



*Windows, living room, first floor (photo to the left: Bård Helland, photo to the right: Karine Denizou).*



*Windows and interior, living room, ground floor (photo: Mette Møller).*

Three of the informants spoke positively about the special design of the entrance, but Kevin experienced the entrance, especially the hall, as small, tight and dark, something that reminds him of prison. This contrasting sense of the entryway may be related to the strict minimalist style the architect has chosen, and is a reminder to planners and architects that this user group may have different associations with the environment than other people.



*Hall to the left. Apartment first floor, towards living room to the right (photo: Mette Møller).*

The residents' personal styles were very different from what the style of the building might suggest, but they all seemed to have found opportunities to express their own style. Peter said that to live in a place was, for him, not dependent on living in a house that was modern and stylish. He described his personal style as more cosy and lived-in, and exemplified this with pine furniture and warm colours. Most of the residents kept their apartment neat and clean, according to the employees. John mentioned the significance of having an appealing dwelling in making it easy to settle down somewhere after a period in prison:

It's always difficult in the beginning, all of a sudden released and ... like you're just put in a place and, OK, here's your new home. But you have to go through that feeling at first, anyway. But here it's really inviting, and when I got going and got to move my stuff in, I settled down pretty quickly (John).

Kevin was more indifferent than the others about living at Veiskillet. He did not care about design and aesthetics. These aspects were not important for him in order to create a home. A possible explanation for this is that not everyone is equally interested in aesthetics. The employees, however, described Kevin as very enthusiastic about the architecture at Veiskillet in the beginning, so his views on the building seem to have changed along with his increasing drug problems. He also knew he risked being asked

to move out at the time of the interview. This shows that the associations that we make with objects and architecture are dynamic, and under constant negotiation due to social interaction. Social and situational factors have an impact if we experience a building as pleasant. Kevin might have associated this building with defeat, in contrast to the positive future hopes he connected it with when he first moved in. It is difficult to separate social and physical factors when evaluating a housing project. The physical environment can be linked to symbols and associations related to personal experiences, relationships and future hopes. The meaning of an appealing physical environment is dependent on other factors (personal resources, the social environment, and situational factors) in a given situation.

The employees at Veiskillet have seen that residents appreciate and take care of the environment; quality materials have been looked after and kept nice. They had been worried that there would be damage done to the house, and were surprised by how well the residents looked after the environs. There have been a few incidents, however, where one of the residents did minor damage to the interior of his apartment when he was intoxicated. The architect has chosen materials that are suited to easy renovation and repair; oak parquet may be refinished, and the painted indoor surfaces may be repainted (Helland, 2007). One of the informants talked about how it was important to take extra care of the house and its environs because it is so pleasant. The physical environment at Veiskillet was built in a way that inspires residents to care for it:

This building, it inspires you to take care of it. There's no graffiti on the walls here, or other things like that. It's so nice here that that sort of thing would just ruin it (John).

One of the residents told a journalist that he felt that this housing project was something different, a house that you had to respect. He stated, "nothing here is done halfway. And nothing is broken. Notice that!" (Ørslie, 2006, p 9). These results show that a user group of former homeless, struggling to break away their past of crime and drug abuse, can appreciate and take care of architectural qualities. The ability to generalize the results must be seen in relation to the present study's user group; the residents at Veiskillet are well-functioning individuals, and are highly motivated to change away

from their former lives of drug abuse and crime. The fact that there are employees in the building all day may also affect how well kept the environment is. Nevertheless, the results give reason to believe that these residents are taking better care of their environment in this housing project than they would have done in a poor apartment in a bad neighbourhood. The architect stated in a newspaper article that the house construction budget was quite low, but that some aspects were prioritized because they wanted a certain “power” in the standard, solutions that required a *decent user* (Ørslie, 2006). It appears that the residents have experienced these requirements through their built environment. For the third resident it also represented a positive factor, while the last resident was indifferent. Change of behaviour is not a realistic goal for some groups of drug or alcohol abusers. However, well-being and quality of life for some residents may be increased by housing and environments the users find appealing.

#### *Identity and motivation for change*

One of the initiators of Veiskillet described his faith in the physical environment as a “factor x” that affects a resident’s quality of life and view of himself: Drug abusers are used to miserable housing. Living in a poor apartment probably consolidates the parts of one’s identity that has to do with drugs, while the opposite may also be true; an attractive apartment may consolidate the parts of one’s identity that affect motivation for change. Does this building affect the informants’ identity? It is very clear that the residents experienced the apartments as their home, regardless of their interest in the architecture. The architecture also seemed to have an effect on how two of the residents thought about themselves and their lives. David is very aware of the connection between a nice dwelling, quality of life and motivation for change. He says:

... because it’s a quality of life issue, isn’t it, it’s easy to think: If this place had been a rundown dump, your quality of life would have just gone to hell, quite simply. So here you get a little extra push (David).

He felt that the design and facilities at Veiskillet contributed to provide a little extra energy for change. John told that he became motivated to change his life while in prison, but living at Veiskillet made it easier to keep up the motivation and to think positively about the future:

Yes, I was motivated before I moved here. Living here just means that I have to keep going. Living here makes it easier to think about the future, and to be positive -- it does. Also for me, the design of the building matters. In jail, the colours... you feel like you're really locked up. It's not like that here. It's really nice... the Chinese call it Feng Shui: you always get good vibes being here. That kind of stuff is pretty important, I think. It's true for colours, it's true for the light – everything (John).

Specific details in the apartments, such as the large windows, also take on symbolic content and are used as examples to contrast with how drug abusers live. In an earlier quotation, David described the positive associations the large windows gave him, and the adjustment he had made in his self-image to get used to the large windows and let the light in. This example shows that the symbolic content of large windows is related to a social identity (Tajfel, 1981, 1982) as a drug-free person. As Twigger-Ross et al., (2003) point out, objects and environments function as symbols of different social identities. The informant recognized large windows as a symbol of a social identity as a non drug abuser, and used this change in the process of moving from a social identity as a drug abuser to a social identity as drug-free. The environment contributed to consolidate a new identity as a *former* drug abuser. But it was not only the symbolic content of specific details / objects in the interior that contributed to an identity change, but the housing situation in general that mattered. The informants reflected on the large difference between the housing situation before and now. They have lived in many degrading places. The housing situation at Veiskillet was a great contrast to former housing situations:

David: Plus we've experienced so many run-down places. I just think about what it might look like where I lived before. So the difference between that and this place is just night and day, absolutely.

Interviewer: Do you think that people would perceive you differently now that you have moved here?

David: Yes, I think so. My mother, for example, is proud of me!

In general, people often associate appealing environments with important people. The visual impression is often the first impression we get of a person and a situation, and it has an impact on the evaluation of the qualities and capacities we attribute to these individuals. The associations the environment gives come from experience and knowledge. We have experienced a connection between a certain type of people, and a certain type of environment that results in prejudices we seek to confirm. Nasar (1998)



believe there are certain basic qualities that people in general experience as positive, for example order, upkeep and openness. The last quotation about a resident's experience of an extra-proud mother, shows that family and friends may look differently at a resident when they live in housing that provides hope and positive associations. This may contribute to encouraging a user to hold on to a new social identity as drug- and crime-free. Our cognitions, emotions and behaviour are context dependent, and high quality housing has an impact on the way others look at us, and the way we evaluate ourselves. However, this user group has not always had good experiences with people in positions of power, something that may result in associations that are different from what most people associate with appealing housing situations. A group of former drug abusers, homeless and criminals may be examples of groups that make different associations with physical environments than others might.

The employees' impression was that the users are very proud of moving into these small apartments. Since there are only six apartments, there is a real feeling of exclusivity in being allowed to live in one of them. The building is not very exclusive in terms of costs, but money has been spent on some central aspects, to give residents a feeling that a real effort was made in the design process (Helland, 2007). The users also like the attention the building has received in national media and architectural magazines. They stated that this makes it even more attractive to live here. Seen from a symbolic interactionist perspective, the attention the housing project has been given in the media, and also through this research project, contributes to give the building an even more positive symbolic content (Goffman, 1959). This "image-building" strengthens the positive associations the residents have with their home. The residents did not seem to be afraid to "stand out" by living in a house that "stands out" from other houses, - "maybe because they finally 'stand out' in a positive manner?", one of the project initiators wonders. For the first time in their lives, the residents have the experience of not being embarrassed by their housing situation:

I'm not embarrassed to have people come visit, not at all! I think it's completely fine to show people how I'm doing now! (David)

My mother and stepfather haven't been here to take a look yet, so I'll be really happy to have them come for a visit! (...) A friend of mine is really interested in design and things like that. She works in an advertising agency and she was completely... well, she thought it was so cool here, yeah! (John)

There is a close connection between social life and physical environments. When the environment makes you proud, it may affect your desire to host visitors. This may lead to more positive social contacts than in a run-down dwelling. As already stated, John said that the building feels like a safe place to bring his son to, and the environment and location in this way strengthen his focus on an identity as a father. The employees also described what great pleasure they get from having outsiders so interested in their workplace. One of the employees emphasised the joy of being able to offer apartments he was proud of, compared to other institutions he has worked in. The employees' pride in the environment may also be a contributor to a positive environment in the housing project, thereby affecting the residents' well-being and motivation to change.

## **Conclusions**

The housing project presented here meets the residents' needs to a great extent, the building was mostly seen in a positive manner. The results show that former homeless people, struggling to escape a life of crime and drug abuse, may appreciate and take care of architectural qualities and decent materials in a collective living situation. Some were very enthusiastic about the design of the house, and details in layout were noticed and valued. Others were more indifferent to the architecture, and were instead affected by other contextual and situational factors. The safety of the housing situation and the architectural qualities also affected some of the users' pride in living in this place, and made them look forward to having visitors. The study shows that the physical environment can be a part of the process of consolidating a new identity for some former criminals and drug abusers. Living with this special design and architecture gave two of the residents the extra push they needed in their struggle to escape from drugs and crime. For the other two informants, the architecture was not that prominent in building a new identity.

There is a risk that the results in this research project have been affected by the “image building of the house” that the media publicity has led to, and the research interest these residents are exposed to. Positive information may affect people’s evaluation of objects and environments. Money may be invested in physical improvements, but efforts to promote a neighbourhood and to change public opinion are neglected. “Image building” may be an important part of planning for social housing. Interviews with neighbours could also provide more insights into how architectural and situational factors influence public attitudes towards former criminals and drug abusers.

This is a small case study, and more data is needed to draw general conclusions. Comparison between different types of public housing is needed. The importance of architecture and different physical elements (windows, materials, colours, detailing etc), and in what way situational factors affect the meaning of these elements, also require further in-depth analysis. Further research should also compare the effect of the physical environment to organizational and social factors for well-being and change in this user group. A longitudinal study would detect whether environmental qualities are of relevance in the actual changing of behaviour in criminals and drug abusers. It is important, however, to keep in mind how difficult it is for drug- and alcohol-abusers to change behaviour. More focus should be given to how quality environments may contribute to increased well-being and quality of life, in the absence of a demand for behavioural change.

Quality housing may strengthen a message about inclusion, safety, tolerance and control. A run-down apartment in a bad neighbourhood sends the opposite signal about dignity. However, as this study has shown, architecture that is appealing and meaningful to some residents may be seen with indifference or even associated with failure by other residents. The physical environment is just one of many factors that may contribute to increased well-being among people who from different reasons fall outside society. The associations that objects and environments create in people’s minds are not established once and for all, but instead are under constant negotiation, dependent on other situational factors. Well-being is the sum of many contextual variables. The symbolism

in the environment is one of many ways of strengthening the message about a resident's value and self-worth: Someone cares.

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# **APPENDIX**

## **Questionnaire**

- Questionnaire for the case studies for Article 2, Norwegian version.
- Questionnaire for the case studies for Article 2, English translation.

## **Interview guides**

- Interview guide for residents in the case studies for Article 2.
- Interview guide for residents in the case study for Article 3.
- Interview guide for employees and initiators for Article 3.

## **Case studies**

- Case studies for Article 2: Information, maps and photos.
- Case study for Article 3: Information, maps and photos.

# BOLIGFORSKNING

## Hva synes du om leiligheten din?


Dette spørreskjemaet er en del av en doktorgradsavhandling finansiert av og skrevet for "BoStrat", som er et prosjekt for boligforskning ved fakultet for arkitektur og billedkunst, NTNU. Prosjektet ledes av professor Sven Erik Svendsen. Målet er å finne ut mer om hva som gjør at mennesker trives i boligen sin eller ikke. Avhandlingen gjøres ferdig høsten 2007. Prosjektet er meldt til Personvernombudet for forskning. Vi har hatt kontakt med lederen av borettslaget/sameiet ditt, som finner undersøkelsen interessant, og oppfordrer deg til å svare.

Det er frivillig å delta i undersøkelsen. Svarene behandles konfidensielt og presenteres anonymt i en avhandling. Skjemaene makuleres etter at analysene er ferdig. Svarene på spørreskjema og intervju behandles bare av stipendiat Åshild L. Hauge som har taushetsplikt.

To skjema er vedlagt, slik at mer enn en person kan delta i undersøkelsen hvis flere voksne (over 18 år) bor i leiligheten. Hvis mulig, vil vi gjerne ha svar fra begge kjønn.

Er det noe du lurer på, kan du kontakte Åshild L. Hauge, Fakultet for arkitektur og billedkunst, NTNU, A. Getz v 13, 7491 Trondheim, tlf: 73 55 12 58.

Det tar ca 10 minutter å fyller ut skjemaet. Vi kommer og samler inn skjemaene om ca en uke. Er du ikke hjemme når vi kommer, kan du sende det i posten i den vedlagte, ferdig frankerte konvolutten. Tusen takk for at du tar deg tid til å svare!

<b>LES DETTE FØR DU STARTER!</b> 	Skjemaet skal leses av en maskin. Følg derfor disse reglene: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Bruk svart eller blå kulepenn, ikke tusj, farger eller svak blyant.</i></li><li>• <i>Skriv så tydelig du kan. Ikke skriv utenfor feltene. Kryss av slik: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></i></li><li>• <i>Krysser du feil, fyller du <u>hele</u> feltet med farge, slik: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sett så kryss i rett felt.</i></li><li>• <i>Ikke kopier dette skjemaet – bruk bare originalen. Kopier blir ikke lest.</i></li><li>• <i>Sett bare ett kryss på hvert spørsmål om ikke annet er oppgitt.</i></li></ul>
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1. Kjønn: Kvinne <sub>1</sub> Mann <sub>2</sub>
2. Fødselsår: 19
3. Høyeste fullførte utdanning: Folkeskole/grunnskole/realskole el.l. .... <sub>1</sub>  
Gymnas/yrkesskole/VG skole/..... <sub>2</sub>  
Universitet/høgskole, inntil 3 år..... <sub>3</sub>  
Universitet/høgskole, mer enn 3 år..... <sub>4</sub>

1234567

1

Før du fortsetter: Kontroller at du har svart på alle spørsmålene på denne side!



NB: Når vi i dette skjemaet snakker om "denne leiligheten", mener vi leiligheten på adressen der du fikk skjemaet tilsendt.

4. Hvor mange personer bor i denne leiligheten?  voksne og  barn\*  
Oppgi antall voksne og barn under 18 år.

\*) Skriv "0" hvis det ikke bor noen barn i leiligheten.

5. Hvilket eierforhold har du/ dere til denne leiligheten? Eier leiligheten (selveier, borettslag el. aksjeleilighet) ...  1  
Leier eller låner leiligheten .....  2

6. Bor du fast i denne leiligheten, eller pendler du mellom en annen bolig og denne leiligheten? Bor fast i denne leiligheten .....  1  
Bor her periodevis .....  2

7. Har du annen bolig/hytte som er mer "hjem" for deg enn denne leiligheten? Ja .....  1  
Nei .....  2

8. Hva slags bolig flyttet du fra da du flyttet til denne leiligheten? Enebolig .....  1  
Leilighet i blokk/bygård .....  2  
Rekkehus, 2-/4-mannsbolig .....  3  
Eller, hvis du pendler, hva slags bolig har du beholdt i tillegg til denne boligen? Hybel, annen midlertidig bolig .....  4  
Annen type bolig .....  5

NB: Nå fortsetter vi med "denne leiligheten" (leiligheten på adressen der du fikk tilsendt skjemaet).

9. Denne leiligheten er en ...  
NB: Ikke regn med entre/ gang, kjøkken og bad!  
... 1-romsleilighet .....  1  
... 2-romsleilighet .....  2  
... 3-romsleilighet .....  3  
... 4-eller-flere-romsleilighet ...  4

10. Omtrent hvor mange år har du bodd i denne leiligheten?  år  
Avrund til nærmeste antall hele år. Mindre enn ett år = "1" .....

11. Omtrent hvor mange år har du bodd i dette strøket/nablaget?  år  
Avrund til nærmeste antall hele år. Mindre enn ett år = "1" .....

2

Før du fortsetter: Kontroller at du har svart på alle spørsmålene på denne sida!

12. Hvor lenge tror du at du vil bli boende i denne leiligheten?

- Vil flytte så fort som mulig.....  1  
 Mindre enn 2 år .....  2  
 Mellom 2 og 5 år.....  3  
 Mer enn 5 år .....  4  
 Vil bo her så lenge som mulig .....  5

13. Hva slags bolig har du mest lyst til å flytte til?

- Har ikke lyst til å flytte.....  1  
 Enebolig .....  2  
 Leilighet i blokk eller bygård .....  3  
 Rekkehus, 2- eller 4-mannsbolig .....  4  
 Hybel eller annen midlertidig bolig.....  5  
 Annet.....  6

NB: På spørsmål 14 til 16 svarer du ut fra den måten du bruker denne leiligheten på, uansett om du bor her fast eller pendler, og ut fra hva som er viktig for deg, ikke hva du tror andre mener.

På disse spørsmålene svarer du på en skala fra 1 til 5.

Nei, ikke i det hele tatt 1 2 3 4 5  
 Ja, i stor grad

14. Er du generelt sett fornøyd med å ha leilighet i dette strøket/nabolaget i din nåværende situasjon? .....  .....  .....  .....  .....

15. Er du generelt sett fornøyd med selve leiligheten i forhold til din nåværende situasjon? .....  .....  .....  .....  .....

16. Når du tenker på om du er fornøyd, hvilke kvaliteter er viktige? I hvilken grad har dette strøket/nabolaget disse kvalitetene?

	Hvor viktig?					Har dette strøket disse kvalitetene?				
	Ikke viktig		Svært viktig			Ikke i det hele tatt			I stor grad	
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1. At det er sentralt i forhold til byen .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. At det er sentralt i forhold til jobb/studier .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. At det er sentralt i forhold til familie .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. At det er lett tilgang til natur/friområder.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. At området er barnevennlig .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. At utformingen av uteområder og bygninger skaper en hyggelig atmosfære i strøket.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. At uteområder og bygninger er godt vedlikeholdt .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. At jeg har mye til felles med naboene mine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. At jeg føler meg som en del av den gruppen folk som bor i nabolaget .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. At jeg kjenner mange i nabolaget.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. At jeg føler meg hjemme i strøket.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. At jeg er stolt av å bo i strøket.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. At jeg har vokst opp i strøket/nabolaget .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

NB: To kryss på hver linje!

17. Når du tenker på om du er fornøyd, hvilke kvaliteter er viktige?  
I hvilken grad har denne leiligheten disse kvalitetene?

	Hvor viktig?					Har denne leiligheten disse kvalitetene?				
	Ikke viktig		Svært viktig			Ikke i det hele tatt			I stor grad	
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
NB: <u>To</u> kryss på hver linje!										
1. At leiligheten er et godt investeringsobjekt ...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. At leiligheten har en passende pris for min økonomi.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. At leiligheten er praktisk og funksjonell i forhold til mine behov.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. At leiligheten, i seg selv, og slik jeg har innredet den, er særegen og annerledes .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. At leiligheten, i seg selv, og slik jeg har innredet den, har en hyggelig atmosfære.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. At leiligheten er lys .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. At det er god utsikt .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. At leiligheten har en hyggelig balkong/uteplass .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. At leiligheten er godt vedlikeholdt.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. At leiligheten, i seg selv og slik jeg har innredet den, har en gjennomført stil .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. At jeg føler meg hjemme i akkurat denne leiligheten .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. At jeg er stolt av å bo i akkurat denne leiligheten .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. Har du tenkt over om boligen og strøket du bor i forteller noe om hvem du er (f.eks. hvilken smak du har, hvilke interesser og hva slags livsstil du har)?

1 2 3 4 5  
Det har jeg aldri tenkt over      Det er jeg i stor grad klar over

19. Er det viktig for deg at boligen forteller noe om hvem du er?

1 2 3 4 5  
Det er ikke viktig for meg      Det er svært viktig for meg

20. Hvis du nå tenker over hva strøket du bor i sier om deg, synes du at det som formidles stemmer (f.eks. hvilken smak du har, hvilke interesser og hva slags livsstil du har)?

1 2 3 4 5  
Det stemmer ikke      Det stemmer godt

21. Hvis du nå tenker over hva denne leiligheten sier om deg, synes du at det som formidles stemmer (f.eks. hvilken smak du har, hvilke interesser og hva slags livsstil du har)?

1 2 3 4 5  
Det stemmer ikke      Det stemmer godt

22. Hvor viktig er det for deg at du har mulighet til å tilpasse leiligheten (endre, gjøre nyanskaffelser, pusse opp) slik at den blir som du vil ha den?

Ikke viktig.....  1  
Litt viktig .....  2  
Noe viktig.....  3  
Ganske viktig.....  4  
Svært viktig.....  5

23. Hvor langt har du kommet med å endre leiligheten så den blir slik du vil ha den?

Det var ikke nødvendig å gjøre noe.....  1  
Har ikke kommet i gang ennå .....  2  
Har nettopp startet.....  3  
Er godt i gang .....  4  
Er snart ferdig .....  5  
Er helt ferdig med dette .....  6  
Er midlertidig ferdig.....  7

24. Din situasjon:

NB: Her kan du sette mer enn ett kryss!

I lønnet fulltidsarbeid...  1  
I lønnet deltidsarbeid ...  2  
Student .....  3

Trygdet.....  4  
Alderspensjonist.....  5  
Ledig, arbeidssøkende...  6  
Annet .....  7

25. Hva er husstandens samlede årlige bruttoinntekt før skatt

Under 100 000 kr.....  1  
100 000 – 299 000 kr...  2  
300 000 – 499 000 kr...  3

500 000 – 699 000 kr .....  4  
700 000 – 899 000 kr .....  5  
900 000 kr eller mer .....  6

26. Hvordan man har det generelt kan ha betydning for hvor fornøyd man er med boligen sin. Derfor vil vi gjerne vite hvordan du opplever din egen livskvalitet (hvordan du har det når du tar i betraktning din fysiske/psykiske helse, dine sosiale relasjoner, din jobbsituasjon o.l.). På en skala fra 1 til 5, hvordan vil du beskrive din livskvalitet for tiden?

1 2 3 4 5  
Svært dårlig      Svært bra

27. Synes du temaet for dette spørreskjemaet er spennende?  
Kan du tenke deg å bli intervjuet om leiligheten din, skriver du telefonnummeret ditt i feltet til høyre, så kontakter vi deg om det blir aktuelt. NB: Opplysningene som kommer fram i intervjuet blir anonymisert.

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Har du kommentarer om leiligheten din eller om denne undersøkelsen, kan du skrive på baksiden av dette arket.

Plass for kommentarer:

Det var det hele. Vi kommer og henter skjemaet om ca en uke. Send det evt. i posten.

02/06/17

6

*Takk for at du vil  
svare på spørsmålene!*

## English translation of the questionnaire for Article 2

### Housing research – what do you think about your apartment?

This questionnaire is a part of a PhD research project, financed and written for “BoStrat”, a project on housing research at NTNU’s Faculty of Architecture. The project manager is Professor Sven Erik Svendsen. The aim is to find out more about why people like their apartment or not. The thesis will be finished in the autumn of 2007.

The project has been reported to Personvernombudet. We have had contact with the leaders of your housing cooperative / co-ownerships, and they have found the survey interesting, and recommend your answering. Participation is voluntary, the answers will be treated confidentially, and the results will be presented anonymously. The forms will be destroyed when the analyses are finished. The answers will be treated with professional secrecy, and will only be reviewed by fellow researcher Åshild L. Hauge.

Two forms are attached; if more than one adult (over 18 years old) lives in the apartment, more than one person may answer. If possible, we would like to have answers from both males and females.

If you have any questions, please contact Åshild L. Hauge, (address and phone number). Answering the questionnaire takes about ten minutes. We will collect the forms in a week. If you are not at home when we come, please send the form by post. A postage-paid envelope is attached. Thank you for answering!

1. Male / female.
2. Birthdate.
3. Education.
4. How many people live in the apartment? (adults / children)
5. Do you own or rent the apartment?
6. Do you live in this apartment permanently or periodically?
7. Do you have another house / cabin / apartment that is more of a “home” than this one?
8. What type of dwelling did you move from when you moved into this one? (Single-dwelling, apartment, row-house / duplex, lodgings, other)
9. This apartment is a... (One-room, two-room, three-room, four-room or more.)
10. How long have you lived in this apartment?
11. How long have you lived in this neighbourhood?
12. How long do you think you will stay in this apartment? (I want to move as soon as possible, I will move within two years, I will move in 2-5 years, I will stay more than 5 years, I want to live here as long as possible.)
13. What kind of dwelling do you want to move to? (I do not want to move, single-house, row-house / duplex, apartment, lodgings, other.)
14. Are you in general satisfied with living in this *neighbourhood* according to your current life situation? (5-point scale)
15. Are you in general satisfied with living in this *apartment* according to your current life situation? (5-point scale)

16. When you think about how satisfied you are with your neighbourhood, what qualities are important (5-point scale), and does the neighbourhood have these qualities (5-point scale)?
1. The neighbourhood is central in relation to the city.
  2. The neighbourhood is central in relation to job / studies.
  3. The neighbourhood is central in relation to family.
  4. The neighbourhood has easy access to natural areas / recreation areas.
  5. The neighbourhood is child-friendly.
  6. The design of outdoor areas and buildings create a good atmosphere in the neighbourhood.
  7. The outdoor areas and buildings are well kept.
  8. I have a lot in common with my neighbours.
  9. I feel like a part of the group of people living in the area.
  10. I know many people in the neighbourhood.
  11. I feel at home in the neighbourhood.
  12. I am proud of living in the neighbourhood.
  13. I have grown up in the neighbourhood.
17. When you think about how satisfied you are with your apartment, what qualities are important (5-point scale), and do the apartment have these qualities (5-point scale)?
1. The apartment is a good investment.
  2. The apartment has a acceptable price for my budget.
  3. The apartment is practical and functional according to my needs.
  4. The apartment, in itself and the way I have decorated it, is different and unique.
  5. The apartment, in itself and the way I have decorated it, has a good atmosphere.
  6. The apartment is light.
  7. The apartment has a good view.
  8. The apartment has a nice balcony.
  9. The apartment is well kept.
  10. The apartment, in itself and the way I have decorated it, has a cohesive style.
  11. I feel at home in the apartment.
  12. I am proud of my apartment.
18. Have you ever thought about whether the dwelling and the neighbourhood you live in have anything to say about who you are, e.g. what tastes, interests and lifestyle you have? (5-point scale from “I have never thought about it.” to “I am fully aware of it.”)
19. Is it important for you that your dwelling says something about who you are? (5-point scale from “It is not important to me.” to “It is very important to me.”)
20. If you think about what the neighbourhood says about you, e.g. what tastes, interests and lifestyle you have, do you think what the neighbourhood communicates is in accordance with who you are? (5-point scale from “It is not correct.” to “It is correct.”).
21. If you think about what the apartment says about you, e.g. what tastes, interests and lifestyle you have, do you think what the apartment communicates is in accordance with who you are? (5-point scale from “It is not correct.” to “It is correct.”).

22. How important is it for you to have the opportunity to alter the apartment (change / decorate) it to make it the way you want? (5-point scale)
23. How far along have you come in changing the apartment and making it the way you want? (It was not necessary to do anything, I have not started yet, I have just started, I am soon finished, I am completely finished, I am temporarily finished.)
24. Your situation: (job, part-time job, student, social security, pensioner, unemployed, other.)
25. Household income.
26. General life quality may have some significance in how satisfied one is with one's dwelling. Therefore, we would like to know how you experience your own life quality, considering your physical / mental health, your social relations and your job situation (or similar). How would you describe your current life quality? (5 point scale.)
27. Do you think the topics for this survey are interesting? If you would like to be interviewed about your apartment, please write your phone number here, so we are able to contact you. Information from the interviews will be made anonymous.

If you have any comments, please write on the back of this sheet.



# Interview guide for residents at Kolstadflata and Nedre Elvehavn, Article 2

Ethics: We want to conduct an interview about your opinion of your apartment and neighbourhood that will take about one hour. The results are to be used in a larger housing research project aiming at explaining the relationships people have to their dwelling. All information will be made anonymous.

- Guided tour of the apartment.
- Why did you choose this apartment?

## Aesthetics

- I want to ask some questions about aesthetic aspects of the apartment and neighbourhood, and how important these aspects are for well-being. First, I want to hear about your understanding of the word “aesthetics”?
- **What do you think about how this area looks?**
- What is especially beautiful in this area, and why?
  - Green areas, the location
  - Design of building, facades, entrances
  - Materials
  - Colours
- What looks bad in this area, and why?
- Is it important for you how the area looks? Has it always been important / not important? Why?
- **What do you think about how your apartment looks?**
- What is especially beautiful in this apartment and why?
  - Design
  - Windows
  - Materials
  - Colours
  - Objects
- What is not very nice in this apartment and why?
- Is it important for you how your apartment looks? Has it always been important / not important? Why?

## Identity

- Does the apartment say anything about you? Why / why not?
- Do you think what the apartment communicates about you is in accordance with who you are?
- Are you happy with the furniture and decoration, or are there things you would change if you had the opportunity?
- If you are not satisfied, does it bother you or not? Why?

**Social identity**

- How would you describe the people / groups of people living in this area?
- Do you feel like a member of one of these groups or not, why / why not?
- Are there differences in what inhabitants and outsiders think about this neighbourhood? What do outsiders think? What do inhabitants think? Why?
- Do you feel at home in this neighbourhood? Why or why not?
- If you could afford to live anywhere, would you move?

**Gender differences (for couples)**

- Who decides the decoration of a room? Why?
- The way the apartment looks, is it more important for you or your partner?
- When someone enters the apartment for the first time and tries to get to know the people living here, whose personality and interests are most prominent? Are there some rooms that say more about one of you than the other?

# Interview guide for residents at Veiskillet, Article 3

## Introduction:

- Guided tour
  - Outdoor areas
  - Entrance (outside and inside)
  - Common areas
  - Apartment
  - The experience of the facilities
- Information
  - Ethical guidelines

## Interview:

### Living at Veiskillet

- What are you satisfied with / not satisfied with in the different rooms? (bathroom, kitchen, living room, bedroom, common areas, garden)
  - Details - architecture.
  - Why?
- Personal changes in the apartment.
  - Your own choices?
  - Your own furniture?
  - What is important for you to have in the apartment?
  - What in the apartment says something about you?
- How functional is the building and the apartment? (Practical/impractical, etc.) (bathroom, kitchen, living room, bedroom, common areas, garden)
- Are the garden and outdoor areas used?
  - How?
  - What does the garden mean to you?
- What do you think about the location?
- If you could choose the location, where would it be, why?

### Current life situation:

- We have been told that one requirement for living here is to have daily activities. What activities do you have during a week?
- Do you have contact with people outside Veiskillet?
- Do you have visitors?
- What is it like to have visitors here compared to other places you have lived?

### Background for living at Veiskillet:

- Why do you live here?
- What is different with Veiskillet compared to other places you have lived?
- Is it important for you to live here?
- How long have you lived here?
- How long do you picture living here?

### Veiskillet as a home:

- What is a home to you?
- Does this apartment feel like a home to you?
- What things are important to make an apartment feel like home? Why?
- Do you have enough privacy at Veiskillet?
- Do you have a satisfactory social life at Veiskillet?
- If you are not satisfied with the degree of privacy and social life, what could have been done differently?

### Evaluation of Veiskillet:

- Do you have good contact with your neighbours? (Why / Why not?)
- Do you or do you not want to be a part of this neighbourhood?
- What rules at Veiskillet are good, and what rules should be different?
- Common activities: What activities are you satisfied with, and what activities should be different?
- Contact person: Are you satisfied with the current arrangement, or do you wish for changes?

### Architecture:

- Does the architecture affect your everyday life here?
- Do you think differently about your life now that you live here? Why / why not?
- Do you have more or less faith in the future after moving here? Why?
- Do you think people perceived you differently after you moved to Veiskillet? Why / why not?

# Interview guide for initiator and employees at Veiskillet, Article 3

## Process: visions / background

*What is the main idea behind this housing project?*

Resident target group?

Rules and restrictions?

How is this housing project affecting the residents' ability to get on with life in a positive way?

*How was the housing project planned and built?*

Where and how was knowledge about housing for homeless found?

Are user participation / user needs considered? How?

Who took the initiative for the housing project?

Who was involved in the planning / building process?

Who cooperated? (Advisors, architects, owners?)

*What themes were discussed in the planning process?*

What has been important for you to achieve when it comes to:

Community

Organizational aspects

Maintenance

Location / neighbourhood

## What has been important for you to achieve through:

Location

Exterior

Entrance

Common rooms

Apartments

Outdoor areas

Materials

Flexibility (may other resident groups use it?)

In what way do the building, the location and the environment support the visions behind the housing project? (The same keywords as above.)

## Evaluation

*Is the housing project used according to the intentions? Does it function?*

Community

Organization / rules and restrictions

Location, neighbourhood

Exterior

Entrance

Common space, private and social zones?

Apartment

Garden / outdoor areas

Choice of materials

Functionality according to cooking, cleaning, sleeping, visitors, etc.

Maintenance

Flexibility

*What have you learned that you consider important for the planning of new housing projects for homeless people?*

*Are there aesthetic qualities that are especially valuable in this building? If so, which aspects? Are there aesthetic aspects that you do not like?*

What aspects of the building do you think the residents appreciate, if any?

*Do the residents have freedom to make their own home with their own objects and furniture?*

Do they use this freedom?

### **Place development**

*What positive and / or negative consequences does this housing project have for the neighbourhood and the area?*

Economically / status?

Socially?

Aesthetically / symbols?

*How were the neighbours informed about the housing project?*

During the planning process, when were the neighbours informed?

Did the neighbours take part in the planning in any way? How?

Do the neighbours have a positive or negative attitude towards the housing project? How do you know?

## Case studies A and B in Article 2: Kolstadflaten and Nedre Elvehavn



The choice of case studies for Article 2 was based on interviews with real estate agents who were asked to describe a typical high-priced and low-priced neighbourhood near or in Trondheim.

## Case study A in Article 2: Kolstadflaten housing cooperative



Kolstadflaten 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 27, 29, 31, 35, 37, 39, 43, 45, 47, 49. Total: 481 apartments.



**Kolstadflaten, housing cooperative, 481 apartments.**

Kolstadflaten housing cooperative consists of 22 blocks of flats with 60 entrances with 6-12 apartments pr. entrance, and 6 yards.

Built: 1972.

Architect: Arkiplan Arkitektkontor, Jarle Øyasæter.

Apartments:

2-rooms	:	82	apartments á 51 m <sup>2</sup>
3-rooms	:	211	apartments á 79 m <sup>2</sup> (151/3+60/4)
4-rooms	:	152	apartments á 94 m <sup>2</sup>
4-rooms	:	3	apartments á 98 m <sup>2</sup>
5-rooms	:	8	apartments á 112 m <sup>2</sup>

Apartments for handicapped:

3-rooms	:	24	apartments á 74 m <sup>2</sup>
4-rooms	:	1	apartments á 94 m <sup>2</sup>

Photos from Kolstadflaten from the spring of 2005, when the survey and interviews were conducted. The facades were being renovated at that time.



Old elevations (photo: Åshild Hauge).

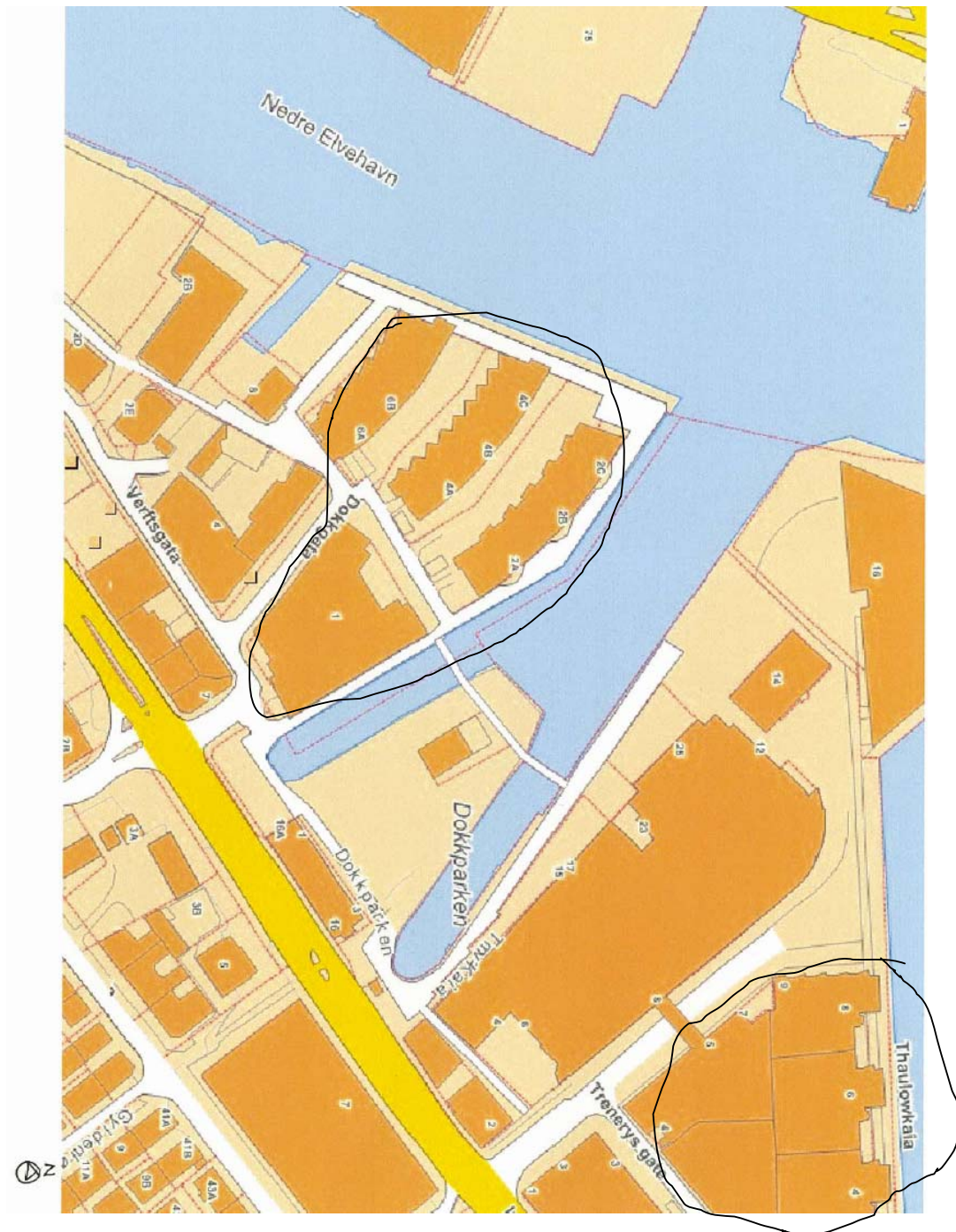


Old elevations (photo: Åshild Hauge).



New elevations (photo: Åshild Hauge).

## Case study B in Article 2: Nedre Elvehavn, co-ownerships



Dokkgata 1, 2, 4, and 6, Trenerysgate 4 and 7, Thaulovskaia 2, 4, 6, and 8. Total: 403 apartments.

### **Nedre Elvehavn, co-ownerships, 403 apartments.**

The area was still under construction at the time when the survey was conducted, and the choice of blocks of flats for the case study was therefore limited by which buildings had been finished in the spring of 2005. The blocks of flats were selected according to variation in the size of apartments, to include different resident groups.

#### *Dokkgata 1, 2, 4, 6*

Built: 1999  
Architect: ARC Arkitekter AS (1, 2 and 6), Per Knudsen Arkitektkontor AS (6).  
Developer: Heimdal utbyggingsselskap AS (1, 2 and 6), Elvehavn Bygg AS (6).  
213 apartments: Dokkgata 1: 25 apartments 70-79 m<sup>2</sup>, 20 apartments 80-89 m<sup>2</sup>, 15 apartments 100-120 m<sup>2</sup>, 5 apartments >120 m<sup>2</sup>.  
Dokkgata 2: 1 apartment 80-89 m<sup>2</sup>, 2 apartments 90-99 m<sup>2</sup>, 16 apartments 100-120 m<sup>2</sup>, 18 apartments >120 m<sup>2</sup>.  
Dokkgata 4: 10 apartments 70-79 m<sup>2</sup>, 4 apartments 90-99 m<sup>2</sup>, 20 apartments 100-120 m<sup>2</sup>, 11 apartments >120 m<sup>2</sup>.  
Dokkgata 6: 2 apartments 40-49 m<sup>2</sup>, 2 apartments 50-59 m<sup>2</sup>, 8 apartments 70-79 m<sup>2</sup>, 34 apartments 80-89 m<sup>2</sup>, 14 apartments 90-99 m<sup>2</sup>, 6 apartments >120 m<sup>2</sup>.

#### *Trenerysgate 4 and 7*

Built: 2003  
Architect: ARC Arkitekter AS (4), Pir II Arkitektkontor AS (7).  
Developer: Nedre Elvehavn AS.  
115 apartments: Trenerysgate 4: 18 apartments 30-39 m<sup>2</sup>, 1 apartment 40-49 m<sup>2</sup>, 18 apartments 50-59 m<sup>2</sup>, 21 apartments 80-89 m<sup>2</sup>, 7 apartments 100-120 m<sup>2</sup>.  
Trenerysgate 7: 40 apartments 30-39 m<sup>2</sup>, 5 apartments 40-49 m<sup>2</sup>, 5 apartments 50-59 m<sup>2</sup>.

#### *Thaulowkaia, 2, 4, 6 and 8*

Built: 2003  
Architect: ARC Arkitekter AS  
Developer: Bassengtomten AS, owned by Nedre Elvehavn AS and Møller Eiendomspartner AS.  
75 apartments: Thaulowkaia 2: 9 apartments 40-49 m<sup>2</sup>, 3 apartments 50-59 m<sup>2</sup>, 1 apartment 80-89 m<sup>2</sup>, 2 apartments 90-99 m<sup>2</sup>, 3 apartments 100-120 m<sup>2</sup>, 3 apartments >120 m<sup>2</sup>.  
Thaulowkaia 4: 1 apartment 40-49 m<sup>2</sup>, 1 apartment 60-69 m<sup>2</sup>, 7 apartments 80-89 m<sup>2</sup>, 6 apartments 90-99 m<sup>2</sup>, 2 apartments >120 m<sup>2</sup>.  
Thaulowkaia 6: 1 apartment 40-49 m<sup>2</sup>, 2 apartments 60-69 m<sup>2</sup>, 7 apartments 80-89 m<sup>2</sup>, 7 apartments 90-99 m<sup>2</sup>, 1 apartment >120 m<sup>2</sup>.  
Thaulowkaia 8: 4 apartments 40-49 m<sup>2</sup>, 7 apartments 80-89 m<sup>2</sup>, 5 apartments 90-99 m<sup>2</sup>, 3 apartments >120 m<sup>2</sup>.

Photos from Nedre Elvehavn in the spring of 2005, when the survey and interviews were conducted.



Thaulowkaia 8 (photo: Åshild Hauge).



Dokkgata 2 (photo: Åshild Hauge).



Dokkgata (photo: Åshild Hauge).

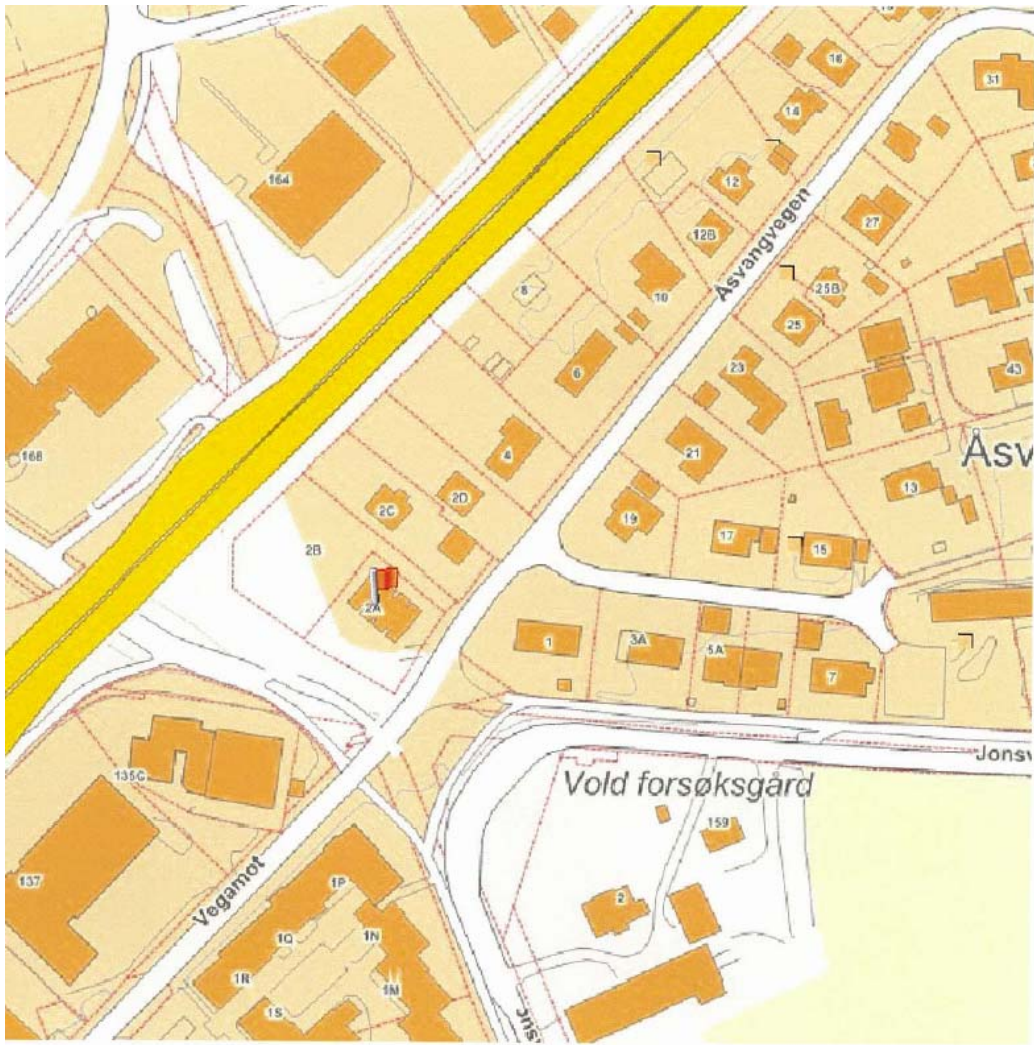


Dokkgata (photo: Åshild Hauge).

### Case study for Article 3: Veiskillet – housing for the homeless



Moholt (See the red flag).



Åsvangveien 2A (see the red flag).



## **Veiskillet – housing for the homeless, Åsvangveien 2A**

Built: 2005

Architect: Bård Helland.

Owner: The Church City Mission.

Area (Living area): 377 m<sup>2</sup>

Costs, excluding value-added tax: 5 775 112 NOK.

Apartments: There are 6 apartments in the building, 4 of which are 40 m<sup>2</sup>. The two apartments on the ground floor are a bit smaller, with the smallest one an apartment for visitors. Each apartment has its own kitchen and bathroom. The ground floor also consists of common areas, a kitchen and a garden living room, office for employees, a hall, and a technical room. There is also a common sports shed with an outdoor entrance.



Elevation and common garden (photo: Bård Helland).