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## Between housing and home

Housing experiences of transmigrant labour workers in Trondheim: A narrative enquiry

Master's thesis in Urban Ecological Planning

Supervisor: Brita Fladvad Nielsen

November 2021



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## Abstract

Since the enlargement of the EU in 2004, the free movement of workers has changed the scale and nature of migration patterns throughout Europe. The need to seek better wage and livelihood prospects are the primary reasons that lead workers to live a life in transit. In many economies, including emerging economies, ageing populations, and declining labour forces are also contributing to the growing mobility of workers. Thus, foreign migrant workers are recruited in large numbers from the Central and East European countries in various secondary and manual jobs. Temporary work contracts, geographic proximity and cheap travel options has allowed the workers to sustain a transitory life between their home country and host country.

This qualitative research study is dedicated to understanding the housing experiences of migrant workers in the construction industry, in Trondheim. The scope of the study focuses on skilled workers from Central and Eastern European countries that replace the traditional one-way movement with a continuous back and forth between the home and Trondheim, a phenomenon is also known as transnational migration. The study would also assess the role of stakeholders in shaping the housing experiences of work migrants. The data was generated primarily through observations, focus group, and qualitative interviews with 16 respondents including both workers, and stakeholders. Narrative enquiry approach was adopted to access the daily lives of the participants through detailed conversations, and storytelling. The analysis was based on the individual narratives that emerged through a transitional perspective.

Findings indicate that housing of labour migrants in Trondheim, is perceived by the worker as a temporary shelter that can be easily compromised in order to make investments in their home country, while Trondheim remains a place of work. The perceptions of social exclusion along with the lack of 'feeling at home' contributes to a disconnectedness between the worker and the local society. Thus, underpinning the contractual relation the workers have with Trondheim. These findings are supplemented by a preliminary stakeholder map,

identifying potential stakeholders who have the knowledge, interest and resources to catalyse a sustained engagement towards a more inclusive and holistic approach to housing. It has been anticipated that Norway's dependence of foreign labour is only going to increase therefore, the thesis aims to highlight the need to view housing not only as a physical structure but instead to be understood as a complex concept that is a sum of non-physical experiences of the labour migrants. This would ensure that housing experiences of the labour migrants in Trondheim better mirrors the qualities of the Norwegian social welfare state.

Keywords: *Labour migration, transnational migration, transitional theory, narrative enquiry, Trondheim*



## Statement of originality and ethics

I certify that this is my own work and that the materials have not been published before, or presented at any other module, or program. The materials contained in this thesis are my own work, not a “duplicate” from others. Where the knowledge, ideas, and words of others have been drawn upon, whether published or unpublished, due acknowledgments have been given. All data processing has been conducted following the guidelines of Norwegian Centre for Research Data, ensuring the privacy of the participants.

This thesis is a part of the research project “Husvære for arbeidsinnvandrere” as registered at the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD) by project number 531828. All interview material and photographs have been anonymized to protect the identity of each informant. Consent forms were used for all data gathering with informants, as approved by NSD. The recorded interviews will be deleted within 6 months after the end of the project, which is the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 2022.

I understand that the normal consequence of cheating in any element of an examination or assessment, if proven, is that the thesis may be assessed as failed.

Trondheim,

25<sup>h</sup> October 2021

*Gunika Rishi*

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**Ethical declaration**



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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

EU	European Union
EEA	European Economic Union
CEE	Central and Eastern European
ILO	International Labor Organization
UN	United Nations
UHRD	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
NSD	Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata (Norwegian Center for Research Data)
NIBR	The Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research





## 1 Introduction and background

One of the key attributes of globalisation implies the interconnectivity of various nation-states in order to keep the production processes going. This has allowed workers to migrate from their countries and partake in a global restructuring. Workers come from the labour force of one country, join the labour force of another country, may leave and enter the labour market of a third country, and return home all in the span of a few years, contributing to the economies of several countries (Leighton, 2015). Although, the human desire to seek decent employment and livelihoods is the primary reason for living a life in transit, other ‘push’ factors can also include economic hardships and geopolitical crises (ILO, 2013, 2015) that result in migratory movements. In many economies, including emerging economies, ageing populations and declining labour forces are also contributing to the growing mobility of workers (2015). Migrant workers are often regarded as a flexible buffer, with fewer contractual attachments to the workplace, and are widely employed in industries with large fluctuations in the demand for labour (Ødegård and Andersen, 2021). Labour intensive industries, such as oil, agriculture, construction, rely on foreign labour for seasonal or cyclic work to mitigate labour shortages. An inflow of mobile workers from abroad into sectors suffering labour shortages may offer an effective vehicle (Guzi, Kahanec and Kureková, 2014) for improving and reducing demand and supply imbalances. Therefore, oftentimes migrants are said to ‘grease the wheels’ of the labour market through their geographical mobility, which is sensitive to the regional economic opportunities (Borjas, 2001; for more, see Røed and Schøne, 2012; Guzi, Kahanec and Kureková, 2014).

Although migration flows are driven by economics, they are shaped by institutional relationships and social networks (see Friberg, 2016). For sustained development patterns, it becomes necessary to understand the human scale of migration. Much less attention has been focused on understanding the needs of the working men and women who generate these funds and who

support their families and communities in countries of origin and destination. Labour migrants<sup>1</sup> provide temporary relief on domestic labour markets and help reduce unemployment in the receiving country (see Kupets, 2012) and benefit their home country through remittance economy. Therefore, labour workers are frequently equated as developmental flows for macro-economic prosperity. Yet many migrant workers are often to be found in temporary, informal or unprotected jobs, which has exposed them to an even greater risk of insecurity, layoffs and worsening working conditions (ILO, 2021). They are less protected than the native workers because their livelihood and security are linked directly to policies and practices of their employment. This vulnerable position along with the dynamics of their employment has a direct and indirect effect on their choices and opportunities. Labour migrants frequently occupy an underprivileged position within the structures of the host country's labour markets (Piore, 1979; Standing, 2011 cited in Stachowski, 2020) and with the little that is made available to them, their situation is in dismal conditions.

### 1.1 Housing and labour migrants

The UN declares housing as a fundamental human right in the Universal declaration of Human Rights (UNHR). The absence of affordable, adequate, and healthy housing can exasperate the social inequality, urban segregation and cause the labour migrant to feel more isolated in a new country. Housing markets are related to social issues, particularly in the context of migration (UNECE, 2021). Lack of information about housing alternatives and schemes, bureaucratic procedures and regulations in the housing sphere and rights of tenants often combine to make it difficult to pursue adequate housing even when national and local legislation does not prevent them from doing so (UNECE, 2021). They can be denied access to the local market due to social barriers such as: language constraints, xenophobia, and stereotyping. Additionally, due to

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<sup>1</sup>Following the definition of the United Nations, the term 'labour migrant' is used throughout this thesis. It refers to a person who is to be or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national (1990).

the temporary nature of the labour migrants' job, the workers prefer choosing housing provided by employers for the ease of accessibility and flexibility to their stay in the country. These housing options have been notorious for overcrowding, structurally unsafe and have poor living standards. Despite the efforts of local unions and organisations such as the International Labour Organisations (ILO), that have put forth recommendations and preambles (ILO, 1961, 2019) to ensure a safe housing environment, there has been relatively little done to focus on the housing situation of the labour migrants.

The housing options that are available and most importantly, the housing labour migrants choose for themselves is a crucial indicator of the workers' living conditions. It further gives an absolute imagery of the society they inhabit through its connections to other aspects of life (Clapham, 2005). The perceptions of housing thus, goes beyond the physical aspects and is coloured by factors such as social relations, adaption, resilience, identities, and priorities. Intuitively, interacting with housing can bring to the foreground other social realities.

## 1.2 Scope of thesis

Although the challenges of acquiring a safe and adequate housing is faced by labour migrants in various sectors, I would exclusively focus on the construction industry due to its labour and employment intensive nature. The construction industry provides employment for around 220 million people across the globe (Tessem, 2019). It particularly attracts foreign labour workers who enter the market by occupying the bottom of the pyramid with low paid, dangerous jobs. The sector is additionally experiencing rapid changes in form of internationalisation, which is changing the typical working structure and implicating new challenges and opportunities (Wasilkiewicz, Albrechtsen and Antonsen, 2016). The global increase in outsourcing within the industry over the past 30 years has resulted in long and complex supply chains of subcontractors, with responsibility for health and safety being devolved downwards (Buckley et al. 2016 as cited in Shepherd *et al.*, 2021). This increases workers' vulnerability and jeopardises their chances of an adequate standard of living, as recognized by the UN in the Universal declaration of human rights. While there is ample study done on the working conditions, and safety of the labour migrants on site (Menzel

and Gutierrez, 2010; Man, Chan and Wong, 2017; Loosemore and Malouf, 2019; Oswald *et al.*, 2020; Shepherd *et al.*, 2021), there is little focus on their life outside the periphery of their work.

Choosing the concept of ‘housing’ within the construction industry as a starting point, reduces the complexity of my study, as it provides enough opportunity to explore not only its physicality but also the collective social experiences that might come along. The thematic scope of my thesis is further limited to the study of labour migrants that come to Trondheim, Norway to work in the construction industry. These are mostly skilled workers from Central and Eastern European countries that replace the traditional one-way movement with a continuous back and forth between the home and the host country, a phenomenon is also known as transnational migration (for more, see 2.1). Once in Trondheim, they also take tertiary jobs that mostly include manual work. The thesis aims to make visible their housing situation and highlight the social and the less tangible aspects of their housing experiences. The background and the context of the study follows below.



Figure 1.1 View of a workers' housing dormitory in an industrial neighbourhood, Trondheim

### 1.3 Labour migration- in the Norwegian context

In May 2004, the expansion of the European Union (EU) introduced ten<sup>2</sup> Central and Eastern European countries (hereinafter referred to as CEE countries). Although migration had been a prominent occurrence in the European continent since the early 90s, it was only after the membership was extended to the CEE countries that there was a change in momentum, scale and direction in migratory movements. After the subsequent fall of the communist regimes and the opening up of economies, the migration pattern also changed from largely illegal to a ‘free mobility’ of labour (Glorius, Grabowska-Lusinska and Kuvik, 2013). The free movement of labour also recorded changes in work status with most short-term migrations converting to medium-term and long-term contracts(2013). Within the framework of the EU’s free movement of labour and services, workers were able to move, work and acquire social rights in various member states for shorter or longer periods of time, without having to deal with border controls or residence permits (Friberg, 2013).

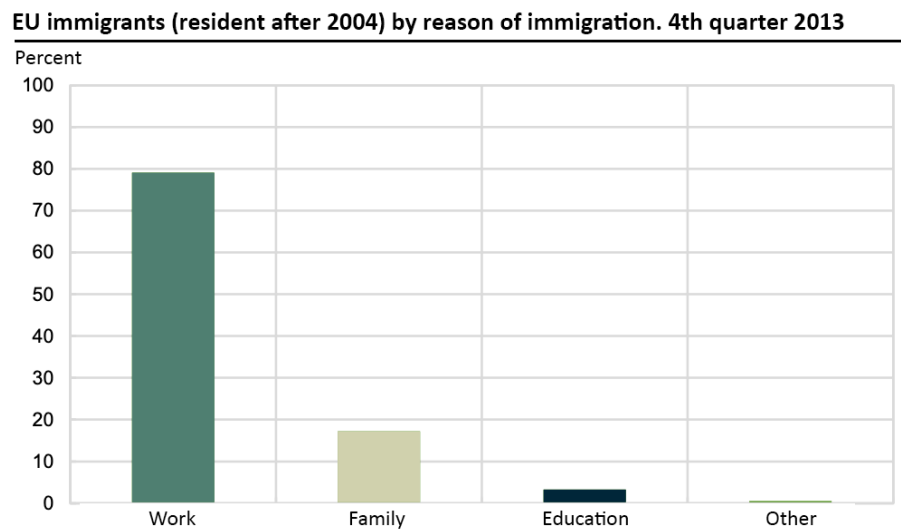


Figure 1.2 Source: Statistics Norway (edited and translated)

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<sup>2</sup> The ten countries are: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia

In Norway, migration has been a familiar concept. Norway experienced family migrations in the 1960s and 70s from the Middle East and South-Asia. Later, the Norwegian government introduced an “immigration halt” that made job and residence a prerequisite to moving to the country. After Norway’s membership in the European Economic Area (EEA) in 1994, there was a new wave of migration from the new EU member countries due to simplified immigration procedures. After the EU enlargement of 2004 and 2007, a new direction in the [migrant] movement (Cappelen, Ouren and Skjerpen, 2011; Friberg, 2013) was created with Poland leading as the sending country. However, the new migration trend differed in several ways from the preceding years (Cappelen, Ouren and Skjerpen, 2011). Within the framework of the EU’s free movement of labour and services, workers were now able to move, work and acquire social rights in various member states for shorter or longer periods of time, without having to deal with border controls or residence permits (Friberg, 2013).

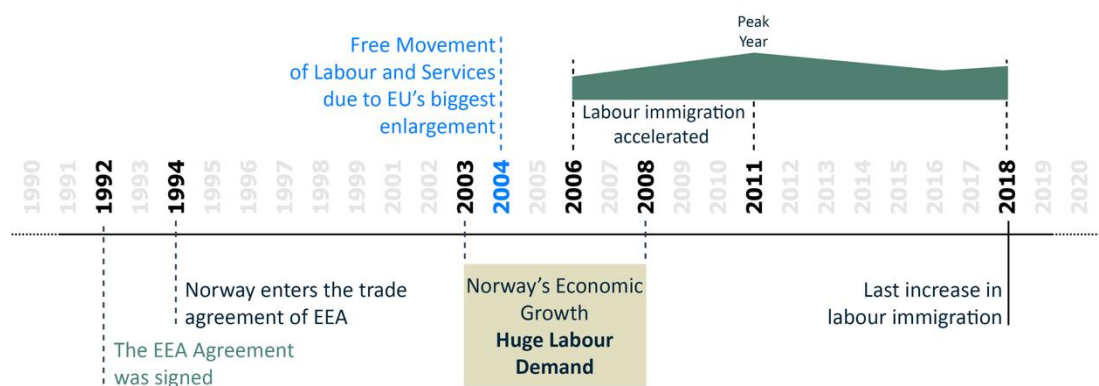


Figure 1.3 A chronological timeline of Norway’s migration trend vis-à-vis the EU expansion.

Norway absorbed a total number of workers from the new EU member states equal to more than ten per cent of its total labour force in just six to seven years after 2004 (although not all were present at the same time) (Friberg, 2013). Collier (2013) suggests the higher the difference in living standards and wages, the stronger is the motivation for people to move for the income

in the receiving country. The difference in income and living conditions, between the migrant's home and host country, becomes a prime motivator that made Norway an attractive destination. Additionally, the proximity of the migrants' home countries accompanied by cheap air travel contributes to the ease in the movement to Norway.

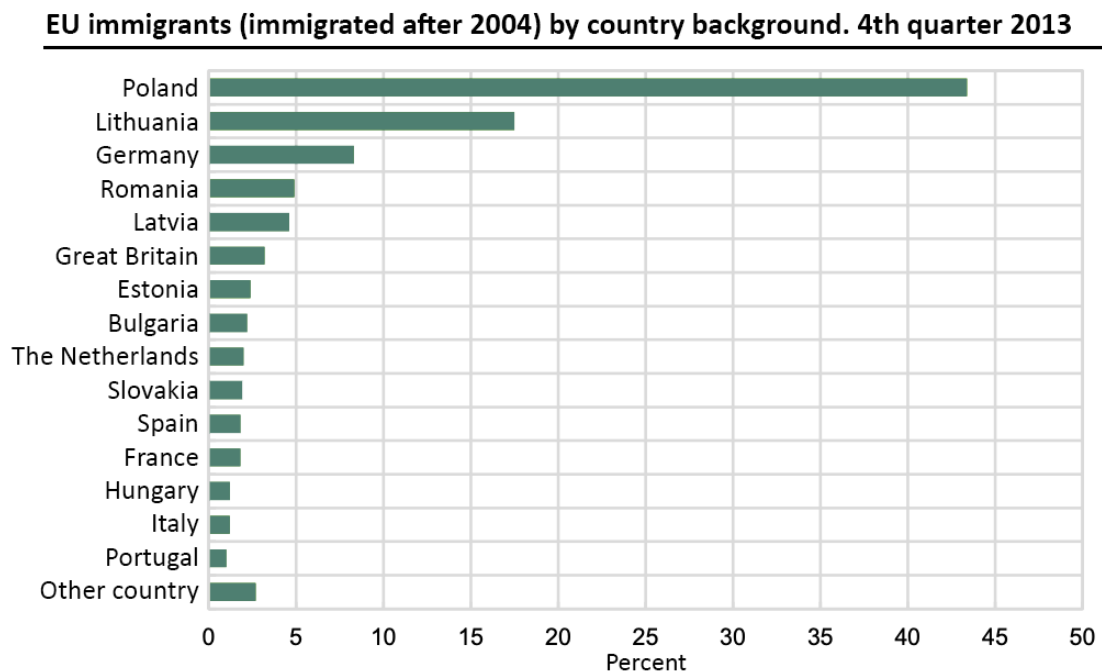


Figure 1.4 Norway absorbed a high number of workers from the new EU member states that fulfilled the labour demands in the country. Image source: Statistics Norway (translated)

It became notoriously easy for Norwegian employers to offer a lower wage than the national minimum wage that the natives received (see 2016). However, a cut in their wage remained a valuable option for the foreign workers due to the absolute earnings. Inevitably, with higher wages comes higher prices. Norway's high living prices led to workers engaging in investments back at home. As long as their earnings are to be spent back home, workers can reap the full benefits of these economic differentials, creating strong incentives for temporary and circular migration,



sending remittances home, or engaging in transnational commuting between families in their home countries and work in Norway (Friberg, 2013).

The attractiveness of Norway as a destination country coexists with the country's dependency on foreign labour. The EU enlargement to the east, and the migration that followed, represent a shift, not only in the history of immigration to Norway but in the Norwegian labour market as well (Slettebak, 2021). After the economic boom of 2008 Norway's demand for labour in fisheries, oil and construction industries had substantially increased. Facing an ageing population, labour migration from new EU member states has largely been welcomed as a much-needed contribution to the domestic labour force in Norway (Friberg, 2012). In a survey conducted with Norwegian construction companies in 2017, the primary reason for hiring workers from the CEE countries was due to the shortage of Norwegian labour (see Andersen and Ødegård, 2017). Therefore, the new migration mobility pattern of labour supplied Norway's labour demands thus, relieving the country of the increasing competition. There is widespread agreement that labour migration has mainly had a positive effect on the Norwegian economy, not least because it has helped meet the high demand for labour (Dølvik et al. 2014 as cited in Ødegård and Andersen, 2021). Consequently, the free movement of labour in tandem with demand-based labour requirements of the Norwegian market has had a huge impact, not only on the Norwegian economy but also the welfare system of the state (Friberg, 2016).

#### 1.4 Defining the context and scope

To study the effects of the global labour market from a human perspective, the construction industry is chosen due to its heavy reliance on the foreign labour. The context is set in an urban scale which is visibly impacted by the need to accommodate work migrants temporarily. This case study is situated in Trondheim, the third most populous city in Norway with a population of 207,595. The city is its own municipality and is in the Trøndelag county, central Norway (see Figure 1.5).

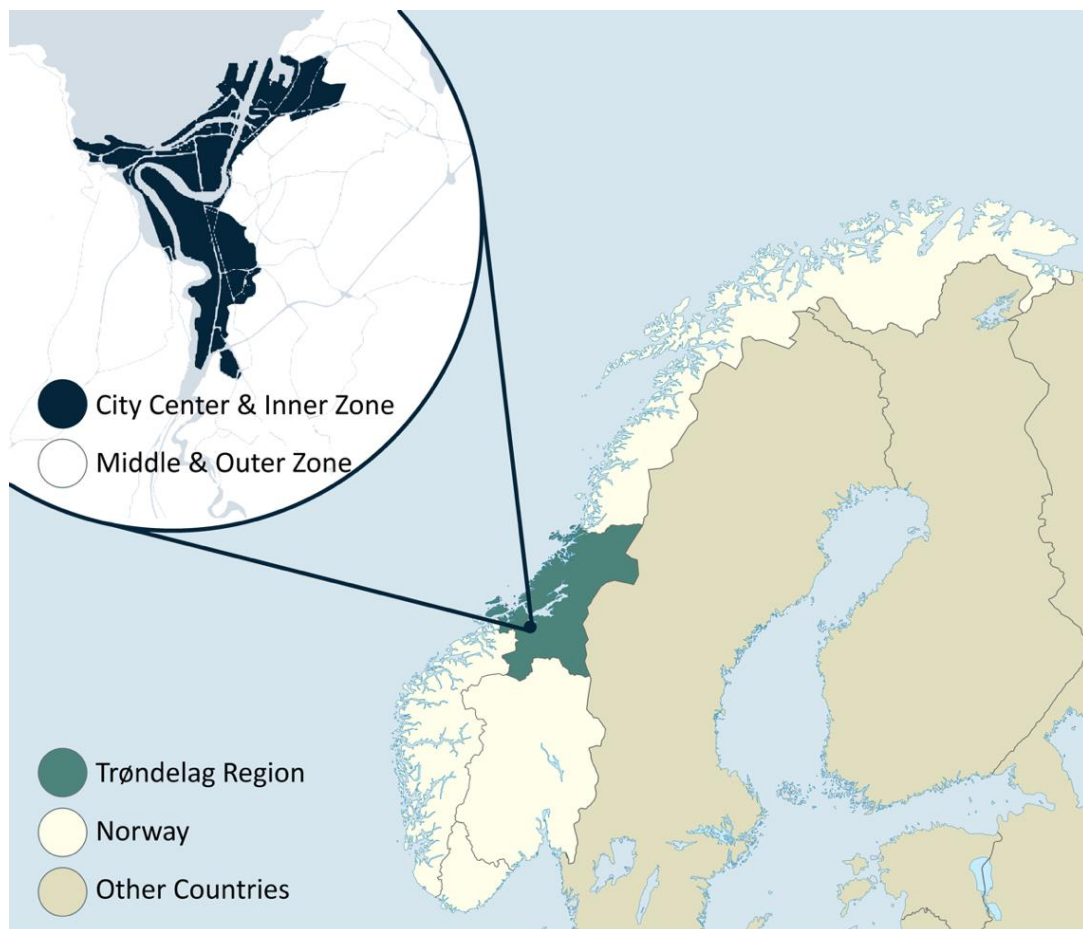


Figure 1.5 Geographical representation of Trondheim city and the county of Trøndelag

Over the past 12 years, Trondheim has been one of the top cities to experience growth in urban areas (Haglund, 2018). This has produced a large increase in development projects that has created a need for labour. Today's typical construction firm (sic) has a minimum core staff of specialized employees who are usually natives or Nordic speakers, and the rest of its fluctuating, project-dependent labour needs are met through the use of different kinds of atypical externally affiliated migrant workers (Friberg, 2013). The industry has contract-based, time-limited, and therefore fluctuating labour needs and has been dependent on foreign workers due to their flexibility, reduced costs, and mass availability. Therefore, the secondary positions are filled by migrant workers that are hired either directly by the construction companies or staffing companies. Once hired, their housing and period of stay in Trondheim are largely undocumented, quantitatively, and qualitatively.

Despite the expansive study of migration studies, there is limited knowledge on the housing experiences of transnational migrant workers. Most research on foreign labour workers in Norway has focussed on their wages, working conditions, deteriorating labour standards or whether they would stay in Norway (Cappelen, Ouren and Skjerpen, 2011; Friberg, 2013; Thorsdalen, 2016; Andersen and Ødegård, 2017; Slettebak, 2021). Much less attention has been focused on the housing situation of the labour migrants or acknowledgement of their transitory lives. Even though the local media<sup>3</sup> has brought to light the informalities of the housing situation, the context of Trondheim remains particularly unexplored in academia (Otterlei, 2015; Bladet Vesterålen, 2019).

## 1.5 Research question and need for study

This thesis acknowledges that housing is both a physical and as a social construct. The thesis explores and describes both the housing options for construction workers in Trondheim, as well as the individual narratives and experiences of migrant workers related to these housing

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<sup>3</sup> See appendix 8.6 for media coverage

options. In doing so, the study will approach the physicality of the housing alongside the lived experiences of the workers living in them. The data will be analyzed by focusing on the two research questions:

**1. How are the individual experiences of transnational labour migrants in the construction sector in Trondheim, in relation to their housing options?**

In order to answer the first research question the following sub questions were formulated:

- a. What are the characteristics of the various types of housing available to the labour migrants and what are the factors that determine their housing selections?
  - b. How do labour migrants express and interpret their own lived experiences in terms of housing?
- 2. What role do the local stakeholders play in shaping the housing experiences of work migrants?**

In order to carry out the study, the scope was limited to workers from CEE countries who do manual, skilled jobs in the construction industry. The study does not focus on labour migrants who wish to immigrate (permanently live) but rather on transnational migrants-the ones that maintain ties between their home country and Trondheim, in transit.

The study will contribute to the literature by filling the contextual understanding of the housing journeys of the workers in Trondheim. It has been anticipated that the patterns of labour migration are only going to increase in the near future, thus establishing an urgent need for a structural change in the migrant workers' housing that mirrors the Norwegian social welfare state. This documentation may well translate into coercing actors who could catalyse a positive change in the right direction. Above all, the documentation and the evidence in this thesis aim to open a discussion on the transitory lives of the labour migrants in Trondheim. This would also be the first study in identifying the various stakeholders in the Trondheim municipality and their roles in housing.

The thesis is a part of a long-term research project, called Husvære, on housing for migrant workers in Trondheim. At the time of writing this thesis, the project is still at a nascent stage and is set to inquire about the interconnectedness of labour migration and the housing market, from international and national stakeholder level as well as policy level--down to the individual living conditions and quality of housing. The project's application for funding is due in February 2022. Brita Fladvad Nielson is the head researcher of the project and my thesis supervisor. This thesis is both a part and subset of the main research project.

## 1.6 Structure of thesis

While following the prescribed academic structure, the study takes the liberty to set its own tone for the sake of narration that conveys the research journey in the most comprehensible way. After forming a foundation of both, the background and context of the study in this chapter, the thesis progresses in the following manner.

**Chapter 2** introduces the relevant theoretical concepts and analyses the existing studies. The concepts of transnational migration would be discussed followed by the introduction of the transitional theory. The theory is fitting framework to accommodate the narratives of the workers and would thus be used to analyse and present the data. As there are few studies on housing and transnational migration, the chapter would also discuss housing conceptually and in the context of labour migrants Norway.

**Chapter 3** lays down the research strategy and design along with data collection methods incorporated to conduct the qualitative research. The chapter details the procedures as well as puts forth reflections and justifies the trustworthiness of the data.

**Chapter 4** presents the findings. The reader should expect the findings from the data analysis to be presented in three segments that would in the same order as the research questions.

**Chapter 5** discusses the findings and relates it to relevant research. The themes that emerged from the findings are critically expanded in this chapter with reference to theoretical arguments from the literature study.

**Chapter 6** concludes the thesis with a summary, reflections and scope of future research.

## 2 Theoretical perspective

This chapter is divided into two parts. First, it opens with a conceptualisation of transnational migration, and then focusses on the effects it has on the lives of labour migrants. The second part reveals the transitional theory as a relevant lens to understand the workers' housing experiences and finally provides a rationale to support the choice of incorporating the theory as a theoretical framework. The chapter aims to highlight the existing literature and while doing so would also point out at the gaps in the literature. The theories in this chapter guide the data collection, analysis, and discussion.

### 2.1 Conceptualising transnational labour migrants and their housing

#### *Transnational migration*

Over the past two decades, migration studies have undergone a lot of theoretical and conceptual developments (see Smith and King, 2012; Pisarevskaya *et al.*, 2020). New mobility patterns and motivations have disrupted the dichotomies of temporary versus permanent in order to offer diverse typologies. This has led to the underlining of new trends in migrations along with the assertion of new vocabulary. When evaluated within the context of the complex globalised world we live in, it allows the formation of perspectives on migration beyond borders. Most scholars now recognize that many contemporary migrants and their predecessors maintained a variety of ties to their home countries while they became incorporated into the countries where they settled (Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007). This recognition of the multi-faceted relations that migrants have with their home countries is termed transnational migration.

Transnational migration is the process by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous social and institutional relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement (Schiller, Basch and Blanc, 1995). In simpler terms, it is a phenomenon of dual lives wherein people have 'homes' in two countries and make regular back forth across international borders in order to participate in economic, political and social initiatives. The recent use of the adjective "transnational" in the social sciences and cultural studies draws together the various meanings of

the word so that the restructuring of capital globally is seen as linked to the diminished significance of national boundaries in the production and distribution of objects, ideas, and people (Schiller, Basch and Blanc, 1995). The lexicon of transnationalism more accurately captures the concepts of migration by eliminating the idea that migration is permanent, and migrants have to limit their interactions within the boundaries of the country they have migrated to.

Migration studies has always witnessed the contacts migrants have outside the boundaries of their receiving countries through communication and remittances (Burrell and Anderson, 2008; Soehl and Waldinger, 2010; Lietaert, Broekaert and Derluyn, 2017; Bronstein, 2018). Yet most research has generally tended to focus upon the ways in which migrants adapt themselves to, or are socially excluded from, their place of immigration (Vertovec, 2001). It thus became crucial to understand the multi-local lives they live and the ways in which it affects their day today. In the early 1990s, this shift in perspective arose through a set of key texts in anthropology (Basch et al. 1994; Glick Schiller et al. 1992a; Rouse 1991). While still the literature on transnational migration (or transnationalism) is split in two: one that considers it as an emergent, new-age phenomenon and the other that suggests it is as old as immigration itself (see Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt, 1999). However, some things are new, like the ease of transportation and communication, the mode in which migrants are inserted into the labour market, sending states increasing dependence on remittances, and the policies they put in place to encourage migrants' enduring long-distance nationalism (Levitt, 2004). Yet, there is a general consensus that it does not represent an altogether new theoretical approach, but one that inherently builds upon a number of preceding ones (see Vertovec, 2001) as it has been subsequently embellished throughout the 1990s (see for instance, Kearney 1995; Portes et al. 1999a; Smith and Guarnizo 1998; Vertovec and Cohen 1999 (as cited in Vertovec, 2001)). I cite these theories only to illustrate that with the current critical intervention and mass study, it is labelled as an 'emergent social theory' and once we reframe the concepts of migration it can allow us to have a new approach in understanding migrant workers' experiences.

International labour migration is inherently a transnational phenomenon, with temporal as well as spatial dimensions (Piper and Withers, 2018). This reflects their transient state as they fulfil a



demand-based supply that mostly offers temporary contracts. Therefore, they maintain several linkages to their home country while working in a foreign country. “Transmigrants” (or transnational migrants) challenge the long-held concept that views migrant workers as ‘uprooted’. Transmigrants are immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state (Glick Schiller et al. 1992a; Basch et al. 1994 as cited in Schiller, Basch and Blanc, 1995). It is important to note, not all migrants are transnational migrants, and not all who take part in transnational practices do so all the time (Levitt, 2004). While some are more involved in their home country during the initial phases, others focus on assimilating in their host country. Additionally, some might participate in a combination of activities by organising their lives around a series of home visits that sustain their relations (Glick Schiller, 1999). These multiple connections to their home country create transnational communities wherein the migrants are ‘here’ and ‘there’ due to their cultural and social back and forth. The various types of relations are based on macro and micro motivations which tend to blur further the never-straightforward boundary between migration and mobility and to melt away some of the traditional dichotomies which have shaped the study of migration in the past (King, 2002). The widening of networks, more activities across distances, and speedier communications reflect important forms of transnationalism in themselves (Vertovec, 2004). They reduce the distance between the migrants’ home and the host country. However, the strength of these transnational ties varies with regard to their frequency or intensity (Levitt, DeWind and Vertovec, 2003) with which the migrants engage in transnational activities. In the case of labour migrants, they are seasonally or periodically employed and only engage in activities back in their home country depending on their contract, any major event, or in periodic cycles. The proximity of the CEE countries to Norway allows them ease of commute. Although communication networks and travel has historically existed their strength, degree and affordability have increased thus, modifying the everyday life of the transmigrants. Thus reinforcing, how transformation is brought about by numerous individual and collective short-term actions within social environments that span distant locales (Vertovec, 2004) if intensity and frequency are amplified.

The use of a transnational lens to understand the housing situation of the migrant workers in Trondheim requires a disconnection from the fact that the social life of the workers can only take place within the borders of Norway. Instead, it means locating migrants within the transnational social fields in which they may or may not be embedded (Levitt, 2004). Such dual orientations have considerable influence on transnational family life and may continue to affect identities among subsequent post-migration generations (Vertovec, 2004). The duality of such a lifestyle that involves the migrant worker living 'here and there' affects all aspects of their lives. The multi-local life-world presents a wider, even more, complex set of conditions that affect the construction, negotiation and reproduction of social identities (Vertovec, 2001, p. 578).

Tsakiri's (2005) puts forward the idea that the identity of a transmigrant is reshaped during the process of adaptation in the country of residence and the influence and stimulation they received from the societies in which they live. The lives and identities of the migrant workers are shaped by the daily interactions they have with their home communities through communication, decision making or remittances. Sometimes transnational identities are anchored in familial obligations and expectations within transnational families (e.g., Erel, 2002; van Dijk, 2002), while other times they are constructed in the contexts of multi-national production work and labour relations (e.g., Goldin, 1999 as cited in Park, 2007). Most transnational scholars recognize that migrants may, as a result of their experience of crossing boundaries, develop multiple identities, have multiple points of reference, experience bifocal lives, and feel attached to more than one nation-state or territory (Upegui-Hernandez, 2014). The proliferation of such dual identities can also provoke some degree of public anxiety, social tension and at times fear as the host community sees issues of citizenship, nationality, national boundaries being challenged (Tsakiri, 2005). At the same time, however, it should not be forgotten that the way migrants develop ties, loyalty and share their resources between both sending and receiving countries is, in part, determined by the kinds of institutional opportunities available to them and the feeling of 'belonging' they have (2005, p. 104). Ultimately the level of interaction between the migrants and the local population helps in setting the pace on their experiences.

### *Housing for transmigrant workers*

Using the transnational migration lens to understand the housing situation requires two distinct thematic constructions: first, to understand the social meaning of housing for transmigrants. To achieve this, I would rely on the international literature to conceptualise an approach to housing. Second, to acknowledge what housing provisions are made available by Trondheim city through policy and research work. Naturally, to do so the literature would narrow down to the national and regional literature.

The assumption that people will live their lives in one place, according to one set of national and cultural norms, in countries with impermeable national borders, no longer holds (Levitt, 2004). For transnational migrants, the idea of home often connotes multiple locations and extended trajectories between them (Li, 2016). Within the migrant community, who are temporarily based in cities, expressions of home attachment are often interwoven with cultural, political (Li, 2016) or economic factors (Thomas, 2013). A body of literature from economic geography describes housing choices amongst migrant communities as an outcome of economic conditions. Income disparities between [migrants] and [natives] have increased and immigrants are more likely to remain in the low-income bracket (Pendakur & Pendakur, 2011; Walks, 2011; Hulchanski, 2007; Picot et al., 2007 as cited in Thomas, 2013), which affects their ability to afford housing in increasingly competitive markets (2013). However, Thomas (2013) concludes that economic and structural theory doesn't fully explain the housing patterns and choices of migrants, therefore, suggesting the significant role socio-cultural preferences play in living arrangements. The author proposes a new lens of 'community resilience' to invoke the characteristics of "staying power, flexibility and adaptability" of the migrant community. This perspective becomes particularly crucial to understand the instability of the labour market and the temporality of the labour migrants' jobs. The ability to choose from a variety of housing types, and to be flexible in these choices, can be seen as the ability to respond to these system threats with resilience (2013).

Moreover, Li (2016) emphasises the role of the cultural code of home attachment and the role of language as an important factor with which people describe and attach meaning to home. This

perspective is valuable in the discussion of migration since it positions communication as a community-building mechanism that potentially brings together people of different genders, ages, classes, and places of origin, transforming their personal experiences of migration into a collective understanding of the past and a shared imagination of the present (Witteborn, 2008 as cited in 2016). Further, the findings draw on the metaphors that the migrant worker' use to indicate a point of origin to which they are naturally tied (see Li, 2016). Li's study showed that the expressions of home attachment were often interwoven with claims of a lack of belonging in the city (2016).

Given the liminal state of transnational migrants, theorists have put forth terms such as 'astronaut families' and parachute children' (for more, see Tsong and Liu, 2008) that describe the transnational family life that migrants have. This allows them to identify strongly with their home countries (e.g. Ghosh, 2009; Chiang, 2008 as cited in 2013). However, it also poses a particular threat as it reflects their decision of avoiding integration and making any housing investment. Labour migrants have been historically a vulnerable population to human rights violations therefore, in the long term, their resilience (sic) also depends on their ability to make housing choices that reflect individual needs and to develop social networks, including their level of integration in the broader community and the labour market (2013).

Additionally, the international body of literature around housing patterns or strategies are only limited to highly skilled migrant workers (Maslova and Chiodelli, 2018; Tseng, 2011), the 'creative class' (Brown, 2015). Another body of work that deals with transnational labour migrants focus on the Asian urban landscape and the informality of the housing (Liu and Liang, 1997; Huang, 2003; Mahadevia, Liu and Yuan, 2012). At one end of the spectrum, there is the apparently unfettered mobility of 'high flying corporate executives' (Nagel 2005: 198) while, at the other end, there are poor migrants from the developing world whose migration trajectories are constricted by legal, socio-economic and practical barriers (Raghuram and Kofman 2002)(as cited in Ryan and Mulholland, 2014). Therefore, for the purpose of establishing a novel area of investigation, it

is helpful to delimit the theoretical approach to the Norwegian housing landscape and its relation to the labour market.

In an annual report by the Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity titled (and translated) *How's it going with integration?* --a social mobility pattern was observed. The study reports that the housing standard improves with the length of the immigrant's time spent in Norway. Therefore, the longer the time, the more likely are people to move from cramped spaces to living and owning their house (IMDi, 2008). The rental market is more important for migrant workers than for the population in general, and rental market surveys show that rents have risen each year over the past five years (Lynnebakke *et al.*, 2012). Both the factors reflect on the choices that the workers as they chose to share space to reduce cost. This further affects the housing pathway of a typical worker as they start with temporary housing which is usually not satisfactory and progresses to a more stable situation.

There is little precedent for the current housing situation of the labour migrants in the Norwegian literature. Statistics Norway's survey on migrant workers in the country records their length of stay but doesn't document their living conditions. There have also been studies conducted on the health (Czapka, 2010), integration (Støylen, 2019) working conditions (Friberg, 2013) and homelessness (Mostowska, 2013) of specifically the Polish labour migrants--as they form the largest foreign demographics of immigrants in Norway. All the studies were based in and around Oslo or took an overview of the national landscape. Another report by NIBR documented the effects of the globalised labour market on the Norwegian housing market and policies (Indset, Johannessen and Søholt, 2011). A pilot project between Fafo and NIBR (Lynnebakke *et al.*, 2012) reported a descriptive study to highlight the living conditions of the Eastern European migrant workers in and around Oslo. This study provides a descriptive analysis of the challenges regarding the housing of labour migrants in four different municipalities of Oslo, Bergen, Sarpsborg, and Haram. As no literature documents the situation of Trondheim or the Trøndelag municipality, I used an integrative approach of theory development by using the

aforementioned studies as a source and examining them based on my own research and experience of the Trondheim context.

## 2.2 Transition theory as a theoretical framework

The lives of the labour migrants are a constant back and forth between the host and the home country. Due to this transitory state, migrating to a new country often has been described in the literature as a transition (Bronstein, 2019). Transition can be understood as a change in life phase or reality that brings about further shifts in routines, assumptions and roles. It is usually a process wherein one phase is disrupted by a change leading to a change in the original landscape. Transition is not an event but rather a process that occurs when a person's current reality is disrupted and causes a forced or a chosen change (Selder, 1989 as cited in Bronstein, 2019). Pertaining to the transitional phenomenon, various theories of transition have emerged from various fields of psychology (Schlossberg, 1981), education (Ecclestone, Biesta and Hughes, 2009) and more famously within urban mobility (Zelinsky, 1971). Transition theory has historical roots in the social sciences, such as anthropology (Kralik, Visentin, & van Loon, 2006 as cited in Clingerman, 2007).

The transition theory (1986; 1994) is a borrowed view from nursing research that initially started with the purpose to explain various health/ illness experiences during life changes (for more, see Smith and Liehr, 2018). The original theory was initiated by Chick and Meleis (1986), was later expanded in typology (Schumacher and Meleis, 1994) and then extended and redefined (Meleis *et al.*, 2000) --all in nursing research (Lindmark *et al.*, 2019).

The transitional theory (1986) identified four types of transitions: developmental, situational, health-illness and organizational (Schumacher and Meleis, 1994). Migration can be regarded as a situational transition as it is characterized by radical geographical, social, economic and environmental changes that result in potential disruptions in human interactions and social networks (Meleis 2010 as cited in Bronstein, 2019). Other studied situational transitions are changes in the family, for example, widowhood, or transitions due to migration, homelessness and leaving an abusive relationship (Lindmark *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, transition theory may be

particularly helpful in understanding how vulnerable groups undergo transitions (Clingerman, 2007) and chronicle their migration transition experiences.

The central concept of the theory presents four characteristics that broadly exhibit the four scopes of transitions. The characteristics are broad and therefore, allow to stimulate and add a new phenomenon of housing of labour migrants in order to expand the framework. The theory conceptualises the following four defining characteristics of transition:

1. **Process:** Transition, whether anticipated or not, is a process and the first component encapsulates the entire journey. Its beginning and end do not occur simultaneously; there is a sense of movement, a development, a flow associated with it (Meleis, 2010). This characteristic indicates movement, of change--starting with the ending of existing reality, followed by a period of confusion and distress leading to a new beginning (Bronstein, 2019). It refers to the journey the migrant makes and the changes they incur and can be understood through sequential phases or time spans. The time span extends from the first anticipation of transition until stability in the new status has been achieved (Meleis, 2010). Migration is one of the events that is enlisted as an event that can likely be a precursor to the process of transition.
2. **Disconnectedness:** One of the properties of the transition experience is a sense of impending or actual disconnectedness (Smith and Parker, 2015)making it the most pervasive characteristic. The transition experience causes a person to have a level of disconnect or disruption with their current situation. Other characteristics allied to disconnectedness are disruption of known linkages, loss of familiar reference points, and the discrepancy between needs and availability (Bronstein, 2019). This leads to a dissonance between the past, present, and future.
3. **Perception:** the way that a transition is perceived by the person going through it influences its outcome (Bronstein, 2019). The meaning that one attaches to transition can vary differently from person to person and therefore result in differing outcomes. It can

be documented through the reactions and responses of individuals on events that occur during the transition.

4. **Patterns of response:** This characteristic points out how individuals respond to a transition. They are usually observable and non-observable behaviours that help the person cope with the transition or hinder the process (Bronstein, 2019). The way people respond reflects a wider socio-cultural context (see 2010, p. 27).

The transitional theory interprets transition as essentially positive. The completion of a transition implies that the person has reached a period of greater stability relative to what has gone before (Meleis, 2010). Another feature of transition is that it has been framed as a linear movement from one life phase to another (McKenzie and Willson, 2019) however, a person can move ‘between and across systems’ to form their own individual experiences.

Lastly, although Meleis and her colleagues introduced and developed the concept of the transition in relation to nursing research and practice, they have presented transition as “a multiple concept embracing the elements of the process, time span and perception” (Chick & Meleis, 1986, p. 239 as cited in 2019). The abstract characteristics of the transitional theory allow interdisciplinary interventions and the broad nature of the theory makes it conducive for research with a diverse population.

To analyse the lives of the transnational migrant workers in Trondheim, through the methodological tool of narrative inquiry, I would be using the transition theory (1986; 1994). I found the initial theoretical framework extremely useful in placing the transition of the labour migrants as it provided a basis to understand their journey while imparting enough range to inculcate their narratives. Therefore, for ease of clarity, this thesis would refer to the initial theoretical framework and would follow Bronstein (2019) approach of using the theoretical framework to examine the life stories of migrant workers through a transitional perspective (2019). The theory is suitable to illustrate the narratives of the labour migrants to a wider socio-cultural context- as they move between their home country and Trondheim. Echoing past studies that



have used the transition theory on migration (Bronstein, 2018; De Haas, 2007; Skeldon, 2012) , this thesis would analyse the narratives shared by the labour migrants to test and further the theory.

### 3 Methodology

The thesis adopts an overall qualitative approach with an exploratory descriptive case study and uses narrative enquiry as a methodological tool (Yin, 1981; Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000; Webster and Mertova, 2007). This chapter more specifically positions the study within a methodological framework by explaining the sampling method through which respondents were gathered. Further, it expands on narrative inquiry as a research methodology and describes the various methods employed for data collection of the empirical work. Analytical techniques detail the process in which the data is assembled for analysis. Lastly, the chapter concludes by discussing the ethical considerations and limitations of the study and justifies the trustworthiness and rigour of the data collected. The research project was submitted and approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) and is in accordance with all ethical guidelines and procedures.

#### 3.1 Qualitative research design

Yin(1981) explains that “the need to use case studies arises whenever an empirical inquiry must examine a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. The topic of housing and work migration in Trondheim has limited documentation and as explained previously, housing can be expected to be both a physical phenomenon and a social construct with various stakeholder perspectives involved. Therefore, the starting point was an exploratory case study approach with the purpose of discerning the housing situation of the migrant workers in Trondheim. A qualitative approach heavily dependent on narrative inquiry method was chosen to explore, analyse, describe, and understand the concept of “housing” as well as the social interactions of the labour community more intricately. As qualitative methods are used to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions of people regarding a particular phenomenon, the narrative inquiry complemented the idea that the thesis is driven by the understanding that complex situations can be understood by exploring people’s narratives, experiences, and perceptions. The overall purposes of qualitative research is to achieve an understanding of how people make sense out of their lives, delineate the process (rather than the outcome or product) of meaning-making,

and describe how people interpret what they experience (Merriam, 2009, p. 14). Therefore, this research approach proves to be particularly useful in understanding the housing experiences of transnational labour migrants.

The analysis of the data was prepared as a case study due to the descriptive and exploratory nature of the research question. The case study method approach also allows to investigate an in-depth actual phenomenon, and to bind the space and time of the fieldwork. According to YIN (2003a, p.2) "the distinctive need for case studies arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena" because "the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (Kohlbacher, 2006). The case study method complemented the narrative enquiry approach of the study resulting in detailed encounters.

Furthermore, due to the exploratory starting point, this study is inductive which means the reasoning starts with primary observations, and information. Subsequently, theories help to explain the situation or problem leading to further development in the case. Then theories are re-developed throughout the research process as continuous interaction with the research observations and analysis, shifting from a specific to a general focus. This approach allowed a broader topic of housing uncover various other themes that are discussed later.

### **3.2 Narrative inquiry**

#### *Epistemological grounding*

Storytelling or narration has been a prominent age-old technique of human communication in all cultures and language forms. It lends the community a platform to convey their personal experiences through their own ways of looking at the world, in a sequential manner that they find compelling. Therefore, narrations are rich in statements, (a) because they refer to personal experience, and (b) because they tend to be detailed with a focus on events and actions (Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000). As the lexicon of a social group constitutes its perspective on the world, it is assumed that narrations preserve particular perspectives in a more genuine form (2000).

As a qualitative research method, narrative inquiry is a human-centric approach to access the daily life of the participants through detailed conversations, or storytelling, either audio or visual. It is an intuitive and personal method of engaging through life events and linking them to meaning through context. Each narrative unit comprises two key aspects: these are the chronological dimension or story (structure will be linear/ sequential) and the plot dimension (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). Each story gets its meaning through the plot dimension that reveals the informant's perception and opinion regarding the topic. "Therefore, a narrative is not just a listing of events, but an attempt to link them both in time and meaning. ... It is the plot that gives coherence and meaning to the narrative, as well as providing the context in which we understand each of the events, actors, descriptions, goals, morals, and relationships that usually form a story" (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000, p. 59).

#### *Situating narrative inquiry within the context*

The life experiences of work migrants are at the heart of this study-the ones who due to various reasons have taken decisions to leave their country in search of employment, income, or a better living standard. To study and understand the transitional phase of their life it is highly essential to focus on how they perceive their own realities. Therefore, narrative inquiry and narrative interviews become an essential methodological tool to understand the transitions and choices made by the workers. Moreover, the narrative inquiry was chosen as the research method because it is especially suited to study disadvantaged populations that might lack language competencies (Bronstein, 2018) as it allows time and space for them to articulate their thoughts. This allows us to put the life stories and perspectives of the migrant workers in the centre in a respectful and open manner and gain an intuitive and more complete understanding of which elements become relevant when they make decisions on housing. The approach is fitting to understand the case as it puts the workers' agency, perspective, and priorities in focus as it considers every meaningful narrative as a form of data. It also allows for a natural conversation and relationship between the interviewer and the migrant, by allowing them to explain what they want to in a way that is logical to them, rather than only listing pre-determined questions. The respondents were asked broad

questions on their experiences, journeys, and thoughts about related topics. This allowed them to select their narrations and put them in a chronological order. Later, if any part needed more clarification, it was highlighted as the next question for in depth understanding.

### *Reliability and validity*

It is critiqued that the narratives can change based on the setting and the interviewers. For example, the workers can narrate their experiences in radically different ways to an interviewer who has a different interest or position. The process of narration is an interpretative process in which narrations, even of the same event, will differ between individuals and the same individual may recall an event differently or emphasize different aspects of a story on different occasions (Bates, 2004). The reliability of the data collected through narrative interviews was ensured through narrating the interpretation to the informant at the end of each interview. This allowed reiteration of the essential components of the interview. Additionally, there was a thorough transcription that documented the body language and context of each interview. As Josselson (2013) rightly points out that as researchers, we pay attention to both the content of the narration (the told) and the structure of the narration (the telling) (Josselson, 2013). In tandem, both aspects of the narrative inquiry were carefully studied by making detailed transcripts that included external movements, body language, shift of tone and my own personal observations-- to ensure that the data is trustworthy.

Additionally, it is oftentimes stated that qualitative methods fail to deal with complex human-centric issues. This forms the ground for narrative inquiry to emerge as a methodological tool that places the researchers within the story that they wish to interpret and analyze. However, research approaches ought not to compete, but rather complement each other (Thomas, 2011). With this perspective in mind, it becomes essential to understand that narrative inquiry as a tool allowed me to get to the core of the stories of the workers and understand the perspective of the stakeholders while holding and creating a safe and a trustworthy space.

Some of the issues highlighted through narrative approaches in my thesis, might inspire researchers to conduct other studies, complementing my findings and expand the knowledge on housing for work migrants in Trondheim by choosing other methods and frameworks.

### 3.3 Data collection methods

The study is built upon an interpretive perspective of the qualitative approach which aligns with understanding the various experiences and realities from the perspective of the workers. This section would first discuss the sampling technique and then the various types of methods employed for data collection

***Snow ball sampling:*** Sampling is the process of choosing a part of the population to represent the whole (Naderifar, Goli and Ghaljaie, 2017) in order to ensure that various perspectives and experiences are combined to validate the result. As the construction industry was an inaccessible and remote profession for us it made connecting with work migrants and especially the potentially vulnerable group an arduous task. Therefore, the snowball sampling approach to gathering key informants was a purposeful method (2017) in order to approach an inaccessible target group. The method relies on the researcher's social network to establish contacts. As the subject wasn't studied or documented before in the context of Trondheim and the research population was unknown to me, this method became a convenient way to derive a primary data source.

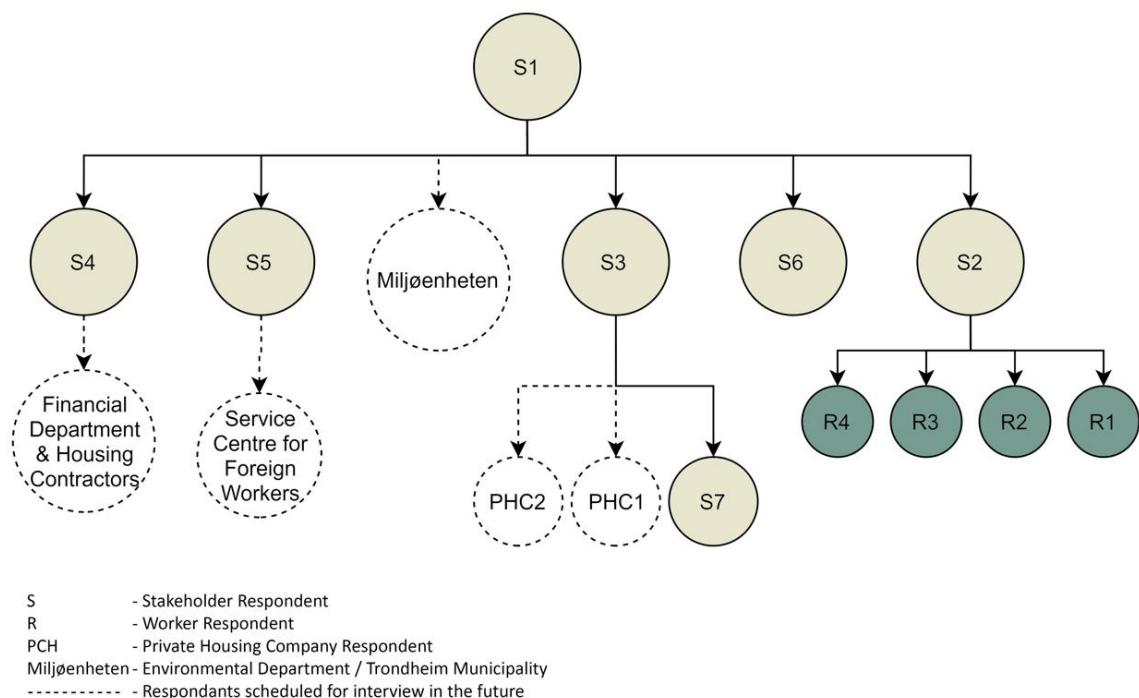


Figure 3.1 The stakeholder interviews largely happened by recruiting respondents with the existing contact.

Gatekeepers are individuals or groups of individuals who may be invaluable for gaining access primarily due to their knowledge, connections with or membership in a research population (Andoh-Arthur, 2020). The gatekeepers for this project were identified through our first point of contact: Uropatroljen--a company that works on fighting corruption in the construction industry. The agreeable participants are then asked to recommend other contacts who fit the research criteria and who potentially might also be willing participants, who then, in turn, recommend other potential participants, and so on (2017). This sampling technique allowed us to form links with crucial stakeholders who further led us to our conversations with the workers themselves as shown in Figure 3.1 . Therefore, at the end of each interview, we asked the respondent to share contacts of their acquaintances or someone they believe has more information about the topic. We ultimately interviewed a total of 16 respondents, including both stakeholders and labour migrants. The remainder of worker respondents were recruited directly during site visits.

Method	Total
Total number of interviews	16
Number of stakeholders interviewed	7
Number of workers interviewed	9
Interviews on site/while driving	2
Site visits	4
Focus group	1

Table 3.1 Methods employed for data collection

**Desk-based research:** In order to understand the landscape of the subject, it was important to search the background of Norway’s policies and history of labour migration. The study began with understanding relevant national reports, laws, and government’s statistical reports on immigration. This stage provided imperative information regarding the total number, country of origin and duration of stay for most migrant workers over the span of the last 20 years.

Even though no prominent study has taken place in context to Trondheim, there were several reports by Fafo<sup>4</sup> that specifically assessed the living conditions of Polish workers in Oslo (see Friberg, 2016). Also, a narrative inquiry into migrant workers’ information behaviour using transitional theory was particularly useful in setting the foundation of my study (see Bronstein, 2018).

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<sup>4</sup> Fafo is an independent social science research foundation in Norway



Table 3.2 Summary statistics of migrant workers (n=9) out of interview respondents (N=16)

		<b>Count</b>	<b>%age</b>
Gender	Male	8	89 %
	Female	1	11 %
	Non-binary	0	0%
Age group	28-32	1	11%
	32-36	6	67%
	36-40+	2	22%
Country of origin (of migrant workers, n=9)	Poland	4	45%
	Lithuania	2	22%
	Sweden	1	11%
	Slovakia	1	11%
	Serbia	1	11%
Dependant status	no dependants	2	22%
	Dependants in home country	4	45%
	dependents in Trondheim	3	33%
Time in Trondheim	0-2 years	1	11%
	2-7 years	2	22%
	7 years +	3	33%
	Returned to their home country	3	33%

**Fieldwork:** The findings of this research are derived from fieldwork conducted in Trondheim between May to June and later continued from August to September 2021.

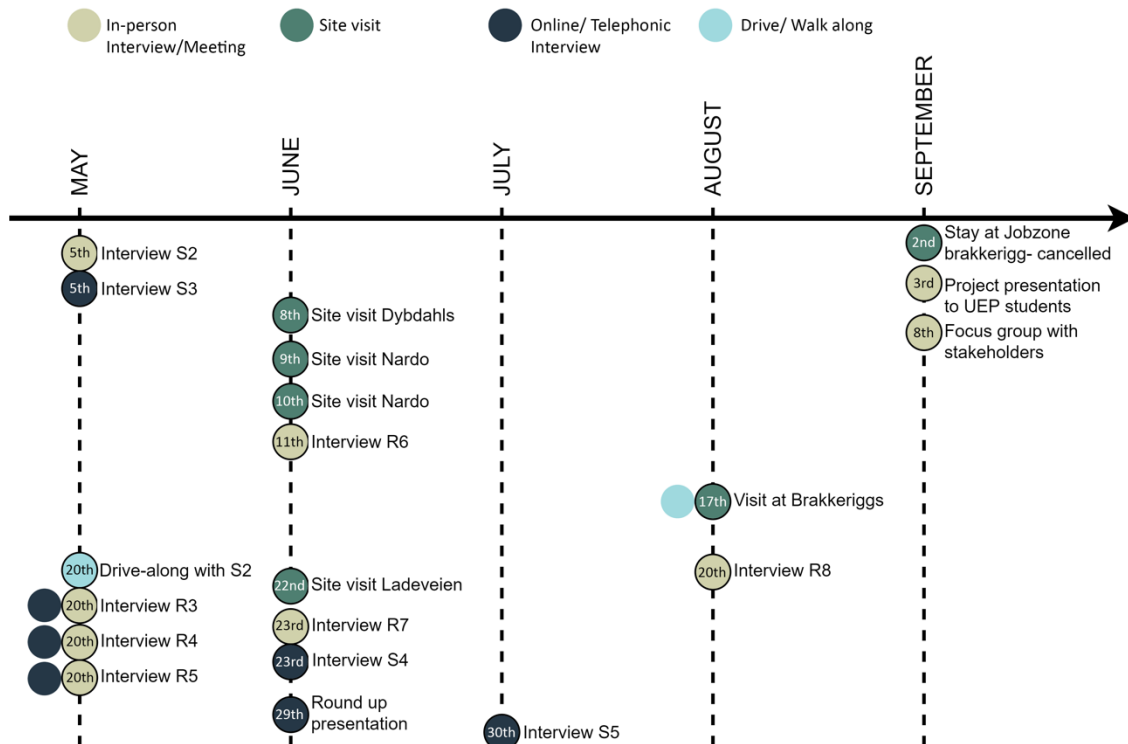


Figure 3.2 Timeline of fieldwork

**Semi-structured interviews:** The interviews were the main method of data collection and were used to employ the narrative inquiry within the context of our study. The interviews were done broadly in two sets: with the stakeholders and the migrant workers. Stakeholders are any person or organisation that are directly or indirectly linked to the migrant’s housing through interest or have the power to influence a change. To suit the role of each respondent, there were four interview guides that were prepared. The interviews followed a general narrative, open-ended

questions, and a less structured format. Less structured formats assume that individual respondents define the world in unique ways (Merriam, 2009, p. 90) therefore, allowing the respondent to create their own perspective of the introduced topic. Each interview lasted a duration of 40-60mins.

It is usually considered best practise to open the interview with a few “easy” questions to make the interviewee comfortable and to familiarize him/her with the subject of the interview (McGrath, Palmgren and Liljedahl, 2019). Therefore, I started my interviews with easy questions to develop trust and then moved to more specific episodic questions. For example, the first questions were an attempt to know more about them and how they identify themselves. Further, into the interview, the questions like, ‘how important is your living space for you’ or ‘could you narrate your housing journey’ were more comfortable to answer as opposed to starting the interview with intricate and detailed questions. The interviews ended with allowing more time for the respondent to add something that he deems fit and by asking them for any suitable contact that we could interview next.

Interviews with respondents R4 and R5 were arranged by a police inspector from the Trondheim municipality who had formed acquaintances with the respondents during his trips to ensure COVID isolation protocols. This indirect connection made it easier to build a good rapport with the respondents almost instantly. Although they were aware of the interview beforehand, both the respondents had little information of the nature of the project. Therefore, reducing the possibility of any bias. Both the interviews were conducted in their respective homes--in a rather personalised space thus, resulting in a rich and detailed account of experiences.

The micro-geographies of the interviews helped generating crucial data that no set of interview questions could have anticipated. The physical setting of the interviews allowed me to absorb the scenery of their homes and listen to their experiences with a background of their current reality. The interview with respondent R6 who lived in a caravan is a perfect example to illustrate how the interviews were navigated. The respondent was in his caravan when we arrived. We knocked at his door to ask if he would be available for an interview, he accepted and got two chairs for us

while he sat on a stool opposite me (see Figure 4.7). I placed my phone on the floor for recording and gave him a project/ interview brief. The entire setting of the interview happened in front of his caravan. He talked about living in the truck that he rode while pointing to his truck that was in close vicinity. The respondent's caravan was next to his friend's caravan. He highlighted the isolation of living in caravans and shared the story of his friend who had a heart attack but did not get timely help. These elements from the surrounding became key components of the interview as they played a major role in the life of respondents. In general researchers suggest that the interview site itself produces 'micro-geographies' of socio-spatial relations and meaning that reflect the relationships of the researcher with the participant, the participant with the site and the site within a broader socio-cultural and power context that affects both researcher and participant (Elwood and Martin 2000: 649, 650 as cited in Edwards and Holland, 2013)

Due to the tightening of covid regulations in Trondheim during the month of June, online interviews became a safe way to carry on the research albeit not on the field. Therefore, through email correspondence, we could organise interviews with stakeholders: S3, S4, S5 and S6. Interviews were conducted online through teams or skype. The project description and consent form were shared with the respondents beforehand through email. A signature on the consent agreement served as a proxy indicator of the participant's trust in the researcher (Rallis and Rossmann, 2012, p.64 as cited in Salmons, 2015) and the researcher's accountability. The online interviews had stable and good quality audio and visual connectivity. Thus, ensuring a good observation of body language or any other non-verbal communication. Similar to physical interviews, these interviews also started with the introduction of the project and briefing the respondent of their rights. As all these interviews were with stakeholders, therefore, the physical setting or the spatial context of their lives did not play a crucial part. Additionally, building a rapport with the stakeholders was also comparatively easier as they shared a common interest in the research project. However, one of the challenges was to engage the interviewee and gain their trust so that they are willing to share their professional experiences. In order to achieve that, I shared my experiences of being on the field and let them build on the information that I had gathered.

The online interviews relieved both parties of the pressure of meeting in person and maintaining a safe COVID free environment during the month when infections were high in the city.

**Site visits:** I visited several construction sites in central Trondheim to observe the daily movements and to get a closer look at the working routines of the labour migrants. Initially, I visited the sites at 9 am but could not initiate any contact due to entry restrictions in the construction area. I took this chance to observe the atmosphere of the construction sites, the flow of the people within the periphery, the sound, smell and to study the banners and information placards that were put on site.

After two days of observation and inquiring, I learnt that the team has a tea/coffee break at 11am and then a lunch break at 1230pm. This allowed me to plan my visits during those hours in order to get a chance to speak to someone on site. On the third day, I got a chance to talk to the workers and find someone who would be willing to talk. After a few chats with the workers, I realised that there was a general hesitance in agreeing to sit down for an interview. On one hand, many pointed me to the office of the company to talk to the 'officials', others clearly stated that they couldn't spare 30 minutes in between their breaks. One of the workers, on the request to talk, swiftly walked past declaring: *'time is money, and I can't lose it'*. While the reasons were both understandable and rational, I had to be persistent to get someone to talk to me. Incidentally, rescheduling to speak to them on another day, as per their choice, worked well.

Taking interviews on the site was a fitting background. As I was alone on the site, it helped in gaining their trust as I was perceived as non-threatening. The interviews with respondents R6, R7 and R8 took place at construction sites during lunch breaks or at the end of the day. Even though these interviews took place in a secluded and undisturbed environment, there was still an active background that had noise and movement. It became crucial that I actively take part in listening to the respondent. This included assessing their pauses, shift in tones, observing any ongoing reflections and topics they tried to avoid. Thus, following the tip of active listening (2019) while conducting the interview.



Figure 3.3 It was prohibited to enter the construction premise. View from across the street.

**Observations:** I conducted both, structured and unstructured observations of physical environments and respondents' behaviour. Firstly, in order to help me get acquainted with the site, I observed the surroundings and the movements in a non-participant unstructured observation. After becoming familiar, I took more structured observations to have a rough estimate of the number of people on-site, age groups of workers and the hours that they work. These observations also continued during my interviews to assess the living spaces of the workers, their body language, or any important feature that helps illustrate a complete picture.



Figure 3.4 Photo taken during initial site visits for observations

Both, during interviews and site visits, I took my notepad to record observatory notes in the form of notes, sketches, and voice memos. In Sanjek's (2019, p. 28) chapter on field notes, aptly titled "*I am a fieldnote*", the author puts forth the significance of note-taking in the anthropological study and suggests the technique 'represents an individualistic, pioneering approach to acquiring knowledge' (Sanjek, 2019). As an extension to the same sentiment, my field notes contained topics or statements from the interviews that were new or compelling, memos, schedules, my personal reflections, questions to be asked and sketches of the workers' timelines and journeys. It eventually became a chronological journal that documented the exploratory stage that gradually emerged into ideas and themes.

Later, while transcribing the interviews, the observations were interwoven with the interview to create a memory of the space and context of the interview.

***Focus group:*** On 08th September 2021 we organised a focus group in collaboration with Uropatruljen in Trondheim city centre wherein potential stakeholders were invited. The entire session was in both Norwegian and English. The focus group can be explained in three parts: preparation, presentation, and workshop.

*Preparation:* the purpose of the focus group to share the preliminary findings with the stakeholders and the community and to also validate my own research. The composition of the focus group was done through purposeful sampling wherein organisations who know about the topic were invited<sup>5</sup>. The preparation of the focus group started by brainstorming possible themes of the research that can be explored further along with the stakeholders. I chose to share my findings on the housing options along with a thematic discussion of some of the findings. The intention was to allow the stakeholders to visualise the ground reality and to add their own experiences if any. For the workshop, I chose to conduct a stakeholder mapping. The aim of the exercise was to correspond the results with my own findings and to identify any potential stakeholders that are missing. The team consisted of Brita, two design students and I also invited my colleague to help. Each team member was assigned a role for documentation, voice recording observation or moderation in Norwegian, if needed.

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<sup>5</sup> See appendix 8.3 for focus group invitation.



*Presentation:* The three-hour session was broadly divided into two parts: presentation and workshop. The presentation was attended by 18-20 stakeholders at the venue and 10 joined digitally. The first phase included a 20-minute introductory presentation by Brita which set the background and gave a brief description of the inception of the project. This was followed by my presentation in which I reported my findings and personal observations. The presentation was concluded by an open-ended question of reimagining the housing situation of the migrant workers. The presentation set the pace for the second phase of the workshop.



Figure 3.5 In the focus group, the findings were presented to further the discussion and to gather the stakeholders' experiences and views on the topic

*Workshop:* I facilitated the workshop along with two students from the NTNU design department. The stakeholders were divided into 4 groups consisting of 4-5 members. Each table was equipped with sticky notes, markers, and white paper. I resumed the workshop from the conclusion of my presentation and asked the room the following question: *If feeling at home is a goal, what do you think are the important factors to make the housing experience in Trondheim closest to home?*

This led to a 15-minute open discussion. I took online notes of each point for the participants to see the result. The output is shown in Appendix 8.5

This exercise allowed the participants to warm up and share their thoughts. They were also invited to share their own professional experiences and concerns. This led to an open, secure, and communicative session wherein various concerns and thoughts were pitched across the room.

The second task required the stakeholders to answer the following questions:

*-Which option would you choose to describe your or your organisation's interest in the housing scenario for the migrant workers?*

*-To what degree do you think you can influence changes for housing of migrant workers?*

*-In a few words what would you say is your or your organisation's role in ensuring safe and decent housing for the migrant workers in Trondheim/ Norway?*

For the first two questions, they were asked to rate their answer on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 corresponding to 'no interest' and 5 meant 'highly interested'. The participants were asked to write their answers on sticky notes which were then stuck on a power versus interest graph based on the score the participants assigned themselves. This activity helped gauge how the stakeholders perceived their position and responsibility in this study. The original graph is shown in appendix 8.5 and is presented as findings in section 4.3.



Figure 3.6 The workshop provided a platform to gather stakeholders' views, experiences and their perception of themselves in respect to the topic

### 3.4 Data analysis

The data was analysed through a thematic analysis approach which is a search for themes that emerge as being important to the description of the phenomenon (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). This form of pattern identification within the data led to overarching themes that helped deduce categories for analysis. This process demonstrates how analysis of the raw data from interview transcripts [...] progressed toward the identification of overarching themes that captured the phenomenon [...] as described by participants in the study (2006).

To carry out the analysis the resources (voice recordings, photos, sketches, and field notes) were organised and labelled per dates and location. In accordance with the theoretical framework, different categories that could potentially feature in the transitional journey of the migrant workers were identified such as perception of housing, future plans, social exclusion etc. Simultaneously, the interviews were transcribed in detail, omitting any characteristics that could lead to identification. The stakeholders were numbered with an 'S' prefix e.g., S1, S2 etc and the migrant workers were numbered with an 'R' prefix. On Miro (see appendix x.x), key information was extracted from the interviews and was divided into several broad themes such as 'housing', 'future plans' 'on brakkeriggs', 'on neighbourhoods' etc. These coding categories highlighted the housing perceptions, work culture, and crucial experiences that have shaped the workers' outlook. Continuing with another round of thorough review of the interview transcripts, the themes generated were matched with the order of the theoretical framework. While some categories were added others merged to form a fuller discussion.

Additionally, the theoretical framework also shaped the discussion of the results. Newer concepts from this study enhanced the existing framework. Therefore, the study used existing theory to answer the research question and in return, also verified and extended the theory for future studies.

### **3.5 Challenges in data collection**

*Covid and contingency:* The Covid infection rate was reviewed and changed every week in Trondheim. After the 17th of May celebrations the infection rate peaked and all the interviews and site visits that were scheduled for June had to be done online or postponed indefinitely. Furthermore, all construction sites were marked as 'red zones' in the city making it impossible to observe or reach out to anyone. This not only slowed down the process of data collection but also changed the dynamics of interviews that were done online or telephonically. However, studies show that despite taking longer and producing fewer words, data quality is unaffected by the mode of data collection (online versus face-to-face) (Shapka *et al.*, 2016). For the sake of convenience and easier correspondence, only interviews with stakeholders were done digitally. The

conversations with the workers, which required more rapport building, were pushed till the situation improved in July.

*Gender implications on qualitative research:* As a female researcher navigating the construction industry in Trondheim, it is essential to reflect and confront the role gender norms play in experiencing these male spaces. Researchers have a significant role in co-constructing data (Lefkowich, 2019) through interview questions through setting research scopes, building trust and analysing the data. These gender dynamics were prominent both while navigating spaces as well as while conducting interviews. Compassion, patience and passivity helped in building trust and getting the mostly male respondents to talk about their personal stories. In accordance, my interviews gathered more emotional detail and personal stories.

On the contrary, being a female on site also hindered the data collection process. During our field trip we, three female researchers, drove along with our stakeholder (male) to visit a private dormitory in an industrial pocket of Trondheim. The stakeholder asked us to wait outside the cafeteria so that he could go and talk to some of the workers who would be interested in speaking to us. Such restrictions of movement in public spaces due to discomfort and visibility illustrate how gender affects spatial privilege. Additionally, during interviews, the male respondents would also find space to ask personal questions or share intimate details about their living spaces.

Lastly, it's important to reflect on the ease of establishing trust with the respondents (who agreed to talk) when I conducted interviews alone. Apart from being perceived as non-threatening, they could also connect to me as immigrants in a foreign setting of Trondheim.

### **3.6 Trustworthiness and rigour**

To address the credibility and the quality of the research it is essential to test its trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is another term for reliability and validity of study reserved for qualitative research. For this study, trustworthiness has been optimised by various measures. First, the information gathered about the housing situation of the workers was also understood from the

perspective of the stakeholders. This method of triangulation helped validate and bring forth any contradiction that existed. It allowed the study to depict various realities in an authentic manner.

The thesis employed a narrative approach to implore genuine experiences from the participants. Although the interviews were based on trust, it is hard to testify or verify the data. Several qualitative researchers (see Lincoln and Guba, 1985) suggest that the transcripts of the interview should be shared with the interviewee in order to cross-examine if the narrative has been truly represented. However, it is also asserted that the participant might not recognise their story due to its alteration into an academic piece of research. Most of the writers who discuss the trustworthiness of narrative accounts, be they the participants' or the researchers', stress that the insider's interpretation is no more true than that of the outsider, but the researcher has the last word by imposing his or her researcher perspective on the interview or observation (Holloway and Freshwater, 2007). Therefore, to ensure the trustworthiness and authenticity of the respondents' narratives, it was ensured that all accounts were faithful to the participants' ideas.

Lastly, to determine whether the data is robust and valid the concept of data saturation was helpful. Data saturation is the point at which no new information or themes are observed in the data (Guest, Bunce and Johnson, 2006). During the data analysis stage, all the emerging themes were within the framework of inquiry. Several responses on housing choices and the workers' outlook towards staying in Trondheim overlapped. Even though the data set was homogenous, after certain interviews there was no new information that was added. As Johnson (1998:153) reminds us, "It is critical to remember the connection between theory, design (including sampling), and data analysis from the beginning, because how the data were collected, both in terms of measurement and sampling, is directly related to how they can be analyzed" (2006). Therefore, given the scope of this study, the data collected from 16 respondents was sufficient to represent a shared idea and behaviour towards housing.

## 4 Findings

In an attempt to sequentially address the research questions, this chapter would present the empirical findings of the study. In the first part, the chapter would detail the housing choices that are available to the workers and would narratively present the characteristics of each type along with detailing a profile of the users who choose it. This would be followed by assessing the characteristics of the migrant workers' housing journey by building on the transitory theory and equating it with the experiences they shared during the interview. The third section would identify the key stakeholders and present two stakeholder maps to acknowledge the role stakeholders play in the housing experience of the migrant workers.

### 4.1 Housing choices

As a key component of fundamental basic needs--housing becomes a crucial indicator of the workers' living conditions, opportunities, and interactions they have with Norwegian society. In this context, housing choices refers to the worker's own possibility and preference to select from the options available to them. The choice of which type of housing the worker chooses for himself depends on a lot of factors such: income, age, marital status, place of origin. In order to understand the housing challenges of migrant workers, the first step was to recognise the options that were available to them. Based on the interviews, the housing options in Trondheim for the migrant workers can be broadly classified into two groups, as following.

- a) housing provided by the employers and,
- b) through the private market.

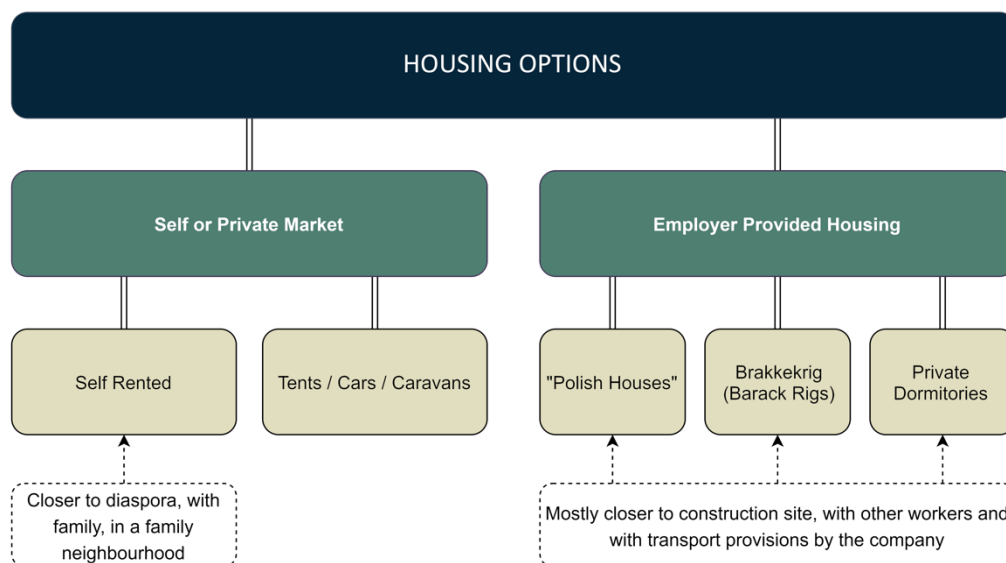


Figure 4.1 The housing available to labour migrants can be understood under two categories

The characteristics of both these options, the user profile and the possible factors that lead the labour migrants to choose each housing is explained and expanded below.

***Employer-provided housing:*** This segment covers the types of housing that is available when the worker chooses the housing that is available to them as part of their working contract. The interviews revealed that this type of housing is usually chosen by workers who are coming for the first time to Trondheim or who are staying in the country for a specific project or timeline.

***Polish houses:*** The title ‘polish houses’ is directly taken from an interview with respondent S2 was used the term to standardise the popularity of polish workers who accommodate these spaces. These houses refer to private houses that are rented out to construction companies by a private property owner. This type of housing typically has 3-4 rooms and accommodates 5-10 workers that share the kitchen, living room and toilet facilities. This housing option has been under a lot of scrutiny due to the exceeding number of residents living in the house and oftentimes, illegality.



It is a house from the 70s, 150sqm or something like that, Polish guys live there. It's typical...And another thing, I met one guy from Tiller, he was also from Poland. And I came in.. to him and he said excuse me. It was so shabby. Yes. And it was typical. You can spot it from 200 meters: Here are the people from.. you know. It's dirty, it's shabby, they don't clean outside the house. Yes. They don't care. He said, the polish guy said, we don't care too much about that. Quote 1, S2

“The house had 6 bedrooms with 20-22 people. On top of this, they didn't have water, sometimes no electricity. So it was very bad. Quote 2, R1

The last Hungarian I mentioned, he came here [Trondheim] and told me that he was sent to Tromsø for work last year, and there were so many people in that house that he and another had to lie in the kitchen. Quote 3, S1



Figure 4.2 A private house was rented by the construction company. On the day of the visit, it was used for the workers' quarantine.

During our visit to interview respondent R4, we got a chance to see the inside of the house. The respondent had the entire 3 room-house to himself as he was quarantining before he left for Bodø--where the construction site was located. I went with the assumption that the house would be small and cramped, based on the narratives I had gathered earlier during my interviews. However, the house was cosy and fully furnished. When we inquired if all the housing provided by the company looked similar, the respondent narrated that he had lived in houses that were overcrowded and had faulty heating systems or water connections.

....It [the house] was far away from there [the city of Tromsø], almost 50 kms. There were 3 guys sleeping in 2 rooms and 1 was sleeping in the living room. Yes, and a very small kitchen. Only you can just cook something. Nothing more. Only the view was good. Quote 4, R4

***Brakkerigg***: the brakkerigg or barracks (in English) are currently a very common form of housing provided by construction companies as well as staffing agencies. The brakkeriggs come as a possible solution to mitigate the problems of overcrowding in the old private houses and as a response to the industry's need for housing that is flexible to follow the construction assignments. As respondent R3 communicated, this option allowed a lot of companies who provide housing to the migrant workers to be '*on the good side of the law*'. The

We signed a 5-year deal to rent these barracks because, before that, we had a house here and a house there with some apartments and it wasn't good enough for us. [There were] stronger regulations, stronger demands from the construction branch and from our customers so we had to do something about... Housing. Quote 5, S3

The brakkeriggs consists of one unit of living including a toilet and a pantry system, apart from the basic bed and table. The rent for each brakkerigg is between 4600-5300 NOK and is usually deducted from the workers' monthly salary. This housing model has been a popular choice amongst workers who are looking for temporary residence and are in Trondheim for a limited amount of time. For workers who are new to the country, this becomes an ideal alternative as it gives them time to familiarise and navigate the rental market as per choice. The construction

companies who own the brakkeriggs encouraged the migrant workers to have a shorter stay and to later move on to spaces they found themselves.

We want to put them (workers) in barracks and as soon as they can find something for themselves ..so if they want to rent an apartment, private or rent a tent and live in a forest, we don't care...but as long as we are responsible for the housing we would use the barracks and they got the possibility to rent. Quote 6, S3

...so, it is easier for the time that they're working they are living here in the camp. They have their own room, their own bathroom. It's like a hotel because they have their own places. We also have a canteen. They have common areas in the same building. so during the time they're working they don't need to be worried about anything. Because the cleaning is done the food is done. They live in a hotel. Quote 7, S4



Figure 4.3 Interior view of Brakkerigg

We got a chance to visit one of the barracks owned by a staffing company (see Figure 4.3). The units were prefabricated in Poland and were then assembled in Norway. The barracks were made of Aluminium and cost 5000 kroner per month to rent. The barracks as well as the land they were on were both rented by the staffing company for a period of 8 years. For this particular case, we were told that due to covid, and the subsequent closing of the borders, the brakkeriggs weren't rented out throughout the year. The subsequent financial loss led the company to contemplate cutting short their rental agreement of owning the brakkeriggs. In the meantime, the brakkeriggs were open for people, who don't work for the staffing company, to rent.

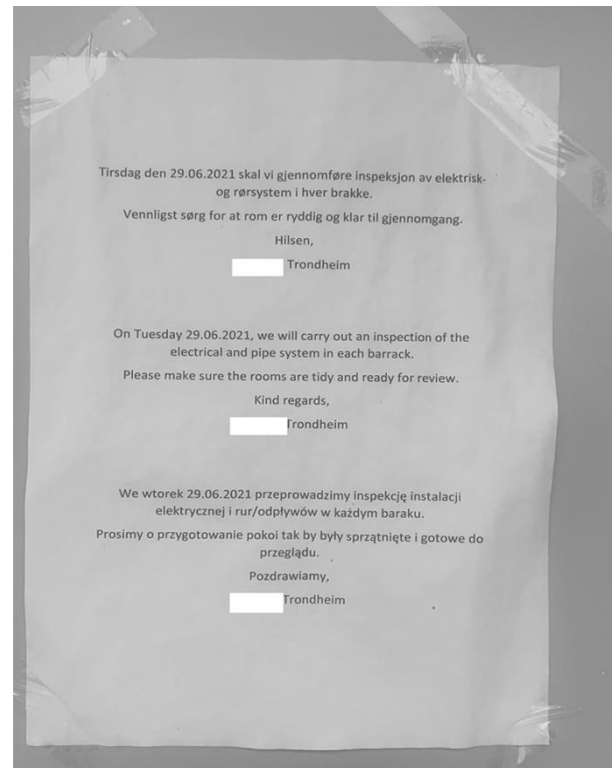


Figure 4.4 Site visit to a local brakkeriggs (L): front view: the brakkerigg had 22 rooms and washing area. There were no provisions for dining or social space (R): Notice in the washing area for company inspection.

And at some point, like 2 years ago, we had a full barrack of 30-31 guys living there and we even rented 30 more. That says something about the situation. And now everything is changed because of the corona so ya it's difficult to say if this situation that we are in right now is real. It's strange. Quote 8, S3

While some brakkeriggs have social spaces like a common room or a lunchroom, the company we toured with had decided to eliminate any such provisions to avoid drinking or any unwanted circumstance.

We have seen that if we have a room where they can gather like a room with tables and tv. They would party. so, we had that before in order barracks and then we decided we don't want that nuisance Quote 9, S7

**Private dormitories:** Similar to brakkeriggs, private dormitories are a collection of rigs in several wings with more additional facilities that are commercially marketed to generate a profit. Terminalen rigg, a private dormitory of 250 rooms, in Trondheim is a very prominent example in the city. Located in the industrial area of the city, the dormitory's website offers workers with various facilities like TV lounge, internet and "outdoor area for socializing during the summer". We did not get access to the inside of the Terminalen rigg but a walk around the premises gave a visual idea of the number of rooms that were arranged in a continuous stretch across different wings of the building.



Figure 4.6 Terminalen rigg (private dormitory) is situated in the industrial part of Trondheim and has around 250 rooms with private bathrooms



Figure 4.5 Outdoor seating next to the lunch room in Terminalenrigg.

In conclusion, the above type of housing options are usually easy to access as one doesn't have to sign a contract or pay any deposit. The workers 'pay for the days they live'. This unique characteristic of flexibility reflects the lifestyle of the workers, therefore being a very common and convenient option that the majority of workers choose. The interviews also suggested that these housings are ideally within the construction area or in close proximity to it. In case, the housing is farther away the employers would provide a car for the workers to drive to the site. Both these characteristics make it a convenient and accessible place to live in from where the transition is easier for the workers.

Conversely, one of the turn downs of these housing options is the lack of quality checks. A lot of brakkeriggs and old private houses have come under scrutiny due to substandard living conditions that do not qualify the level permitted. Acquiring housing by the employers puts the workers in a highly vulnerable position wherein they do not complain due to the risk of losing their job.

***Through the private market:*** If the worker doesn't wish to avail the first set of options, they can then choose to acquire housing either through the private rental market or live in tents, trucks, caravans and other non-traditional housing options. The majority of the respondents that we interviewed were living in one of these two options (*add a graph to show these proportions*).

***Self-rented:*** Most of the workers who plan to stay for a longer time in association with a company rather than a project, or if they are accompanied by a dependent to Trondheim, they choose the private rental market. The workers access the rental market through their work contacts, diasporic relations or through local rental platforms such as Finn and hybel. My conversation with respondent R7 gave me a good insight into the average housing journey of the worker. R7 came to Trondheim 8 years ago and lived in the company's brakkerigg. He moved out after the barracks and shared a 2 room space with three other Polish guys. Once he found a partner, who was also working in Trondheim, he moved to the private market. Four years later, his family of three live in Malvik now. The housing, he says, '*is big enough for the child to grow and far*

*from the city to have some peace and quiet without paying too much*'. His housing journey had shifted and adapted over time based on his needs, but most importantly his priorities.

The private housing is usually used by people who live here for a longer period. or those who have a normal working week, like me. from Monday to Friday and we live here for a longer period. Quote 10, S4

Another trend that was brought up is when the workers rent the house at a cheaper price and renovate or refurbish the house in exchange, for no cost. This not only allows them to rent at a nominal price but also puts the property back into the rental market for a lucrative price.

In the beginning, I rented the room for, first three years with other guys [from Poland]. Then I rented another room in another house. But after two months I spoke with the owner of the house and rented an old house from him. It was very cheap but I had to fix it first. And then I moved to a regular renting market. Quote 11, R7

***Trucks/ tents/ caravans:*** Norway's law of *Allemannsretten* or all man's land, allows every individual to roam or camp on any ground. This allows few workers to hitch and hike in order to shelter themselves for the numbered days that they are in Trondheim. This non-traditional option was hard to imagine until we met a truck driver (R6) from Sweden who had lived in his truck for 8 years before buying a caravan 4 years ago. He had parked his caravan outside Terminalenbygg and shared his experiences of having his own personal space. In another caravan, parked right next to his, he mentioned that his colleague/ friend suffered a cardiac arrest, but it was too late before anyone found out about it. The respondent had a home in Sweden, close to the border with Norway and drove there every weekend before covid regulations made it hard to cross national borders.





Figure 4.7 Respondent R6 has lived in his truck before purchasing a caravan (seen in picture), in which he has been living for 4 years.

It is to note, that the five types of housing choices discussed above only reflects a segment of a dynamic and altering housing market. The choices available are bound to modify, and develop depending on the demand, scale or even the policy implications. It was understood that the ‘polish houses’ were a usual way of accommodating the workers until they drew media attention for being overcrowded and not complying to the standards. The trend later shifted to barracks as they combated the shortcomings of the ‘polish houses’. In the present day, the construction company that I interviewed mentioned that they are reflecting to release their barracks because of the financial losses that the company is incurring due to renting.

Lastly, it is essential to acknowledge the existence of informality within the housing system of the labour migrants. This stands in stark contrast to the otherwise highly regulated Norwegian housing and labour market. Even though I did not get to see first-hand any situation like such,

there were episodes narrated of illegal and often unlawful ways of living both, by the workers and the media.

#### 4.2 A transitional approach to housing

The purpose of this study is to understand the housing experiences of the migrant workers in Trondheim by examining their own narratives and applying a transitional perspective. When the four elements of the transitional theory are applied to the housing experiences of the migrant workers, the following findings are deduced:

***Nature of the transition process for the workers:*** The first characteristics of the transitional theory encapsulates the transit state of the workers' life between the home and the host country. It begins with the idea of the migrant workers leaving behind their homes and family to seek better chances of gaining financial capital.

*A contractual relation to Trondheim:* The *process* starts when the migrants' sign the work and the housing contract to make their first move to Norway. The next step is choosing a place to live. As discussed in the previous section the housing is provided either by the employer or the worker can choose to opt for a solution in the private market. While the accommodation provided by employers is an easy and fast way of obtaining housing for someone who has little to no knowledge of the local rental market or stays in Trondheim for a shorter period; the latter option indicates a longer stay or dependents. The choice of housing and the subsequent decision of staying in Trondheim for longer or moving back to their home country becomes a personal preference--one that depends on the workers' lived experiences during their journey.

Yes, we signed the working contract, then worked for one month - nothing. They [colleagues] didn't get paid. The situation repeats the second month. I said just go to the police and don't go home [country]. Just go to the police and see what they say. Maybe they're going to turn around and start helping you.  
Quote 12, R2

Additionally, the workers' transitory lives are guided by the objective of attaining financial stability or promotion. Consequently, the housing options they choose are reflective of their lives as they switch jobs, employers, and cities for better options.

There's nothing racist about it but polish guys and Eastern European guys tend to change for 5 kroner, so this is how they are. It's the mentality and the culture and if they get 5kr extra across the road they go. So, it's difficult but that's how it is. Quote 13, S3

Coming here for half a year you'd say so they don't need to pay anything. You know like deposits, you know. It's simple for them, especially as they are jumping from city to city, you know. They are always choosing better contracts. Quote 14, R9

The nature of the transitory lives of the workers alienates them from assimilating in the Norwegian society. The home country accommodates the 'private' aspect of their lives while Trondheim only occupies the 'work' aspect. This in-betweenness or being here-and-there better explains the nature of the transition process as well as their contractual relation to Norway.

it has not been so long, it's only 6 years but it gets worse and worse every single year. The price is increasing every single year and salaries do not complete. Maybe a bit but not completely. So...i agree [with the] people before me [who said] it was better before. Eastern European countries were much cheaper and here it wasn't so expensive. If you had a salary from Norway, you can somehow survive here on some level and save something to send to your family back in Poland. But now it's not so ya...i'm not sure if i weren't here...i wouldn't choose Norway. Quote 15, R9

***Disconnectedness from reality:*** Transitions bring about disruptions as the workers move from a familiar to a foreign landscape, therefore, losing a sense of any familiar references. These barriers lead to a sense of disconnectedness from their lives in Trondheim and can be understood as socio-cultural barriers--explained below:

*Sociocultural barriers:* Even though the workers enjoy geographic proximity and ease of moving between their home countries and Norway, they still face socio-cultural barriers that hinder and affect their housing experiences. Language is a prime component in integrating or accessing society. Language impediments directly affect the information channels. Online rental portals like

Finn and Hybel do not provide housing information in any other language than Norwegian. It was also told that landlords of private properties are hesitant to rent to people who do not speak the language. The workers also get tricked into less favourable agreements into the rental market because of their lack of knowledge of what should be included in their rent.

They made a decision [to] just go back to Lithuania in this case. They don't have any good English, or they don't speak Norwegian. It's like a problem. If you go to the police, you need an interpreter. It's a big hassle. When you don't know the language, what do you do? Quote 16, R1

During the focus group, Alma Huji- a tutor who organises Norwegian courses for migrants shared her experiences of being in close contact with labour migrants and emphasised the importance of language not just for social interactions but also to vocalise their needs and experiences.

Language is important but teaching social standards/ human rights is also equally important. Quote 17, during a discussion in the focus group

Another cultural barrier that made the labour migrants feel far from home was food. Food plays a unique role in the integration and exchange of cultures. It can also make one feel at home in a foreign setting. During our field trip to visit respondent R2, we got a chance to visit his temporary accommodation where he was quarantined. Having just returned from Poland, he showed us his suitcase filled with dry food items from home. The frequent transit to their home countries allowed a lot of workers to pack food and other daily supplies at nominal prices. With covid, this procurement for survival had become difficult. Apart from the lack of familiar products, the high prices of the Norwegian food market also did not favour the situation.

about the food... we take only some food from here [Norway]...because we have our own food [from Poland]. And here you have very... different food...food is very difficult here. Because of this corona and everything, I can't even go to Sweden to buy food. And now it's just we eat what we can. Quote 18, R3

I'm a man but I'm cooking everything that I like. If I don't know something, I use YouTube or something to check how it's supposed to be done. Food makes you miss home less Quote 19, R4

Respondent R3 also admitted that having their own kitchen space was an important factor when they moved from the old private houses to their own personal space. Additionally, during the focus group one of the stakeholders, who previously had lived in a *brakkerigg*, shared that *'the best times in the brakkerigg were when the canteen chef would prepare traditional meals'* therefore reinforcing the key factor food plays in achieving the sense of feeling at home. This account added weight to the theory that migration is inextricably linked to the memory of 'home'--which in turn enables the reproduction of native practices in the new place (Mantri, 2021)

In Germany, it's very good. There is enough for everyone, and a warmer climate and less taxes and food is a lot cheaper. Food is such a problem here. Norwegians have a very strange taste. I hate their food. Really. Quote 20, R4

Finally, the above factors affect the way the workers assimilate into society. Respondent R7 expresses the lack of social exposure the workers have when they live in Trondheim. He emphasizes the round the clock working hours led to no space for social interaction except *'going in rooms and talking on the phone till you sleep'*. Even though he lived in a residential neighbourhood in Malvik, he did not have any social ties outside his limited associations at his workplace.

I just have 5 good friends here and nobody else. They are Polish....It's difficult to find good friends in this time that we have.- Quote 21, R7

Probably, Norwegian people...they're not sharing a lot of emotions, they don't talk a lot. -Quote 22, R1

During my interview with respondent R8, the only woman in the data set, who worked in an outdoor landscape company, I wanted to know more about how she traversed these social barriers--as a woman and a mother. She expressed the inhospitality of her neighbours and how distant she felt from the other parents in the kindergarten. Naturally, for her home meant Slovakia even though she was raising two children in the Norwegian society

Our neighbour is the mother of an 8-year-old. I used to talk to her often but now I'm tired because they don't put any effort and talking Norwegian is draining for me [...] I know the others [neighbours] only through seeing - I can recognize if I will go to a shop. I know he's a neighbor, just say hello, hello and that's the end.- Quote 23, R8

No no, Trondheim cannot be home. Home is where I know my neighbours. I have a lot of friends at home and every chance that I get I make sure to visit them. I was born there and grew up with them, you know. Here, people are very cold...like the weather. Quote 24, R8

Lastly, I would like to highlight how this disconnectedness separated the job the workers' do with their self-perception and relation to Norwegian society. This magnifies the isolation they feel in a foreign country. It can also be argued that at times it is a conscious move that is deliberately done due to their own choices of social investment and their perceptions of their stay, including the housing. More on the latter is discussed below.

*Perception of housing:* Home gets its meaning through the way it is perceived by both the workers and the stakeholders. For this purpose, it's essential to know ways in which housing is discerned as well as how the workers perceive their own position in Norwegian society. This third element of the transitional theory would bring forth the findings that reflected the perception of housing and the workers' perception of social exclusion.

*For workers:* In the Norwegian welfare state, housing holds a central position of being a basic amenity. However, the workers do not share and ascribe the same value to their housing in Trondheim. Respondent R7 described an average workday—graphically described in

When I inquired what he does in his 'free' time he emphasised how there is not a lot of downtime because he must work more than the average hours and even during the weekends, depending on the demands of the project. Amongst a lot of workers housing was just a place to rest at the end of the day or a confined space from where they could have the privacy of calling back home.

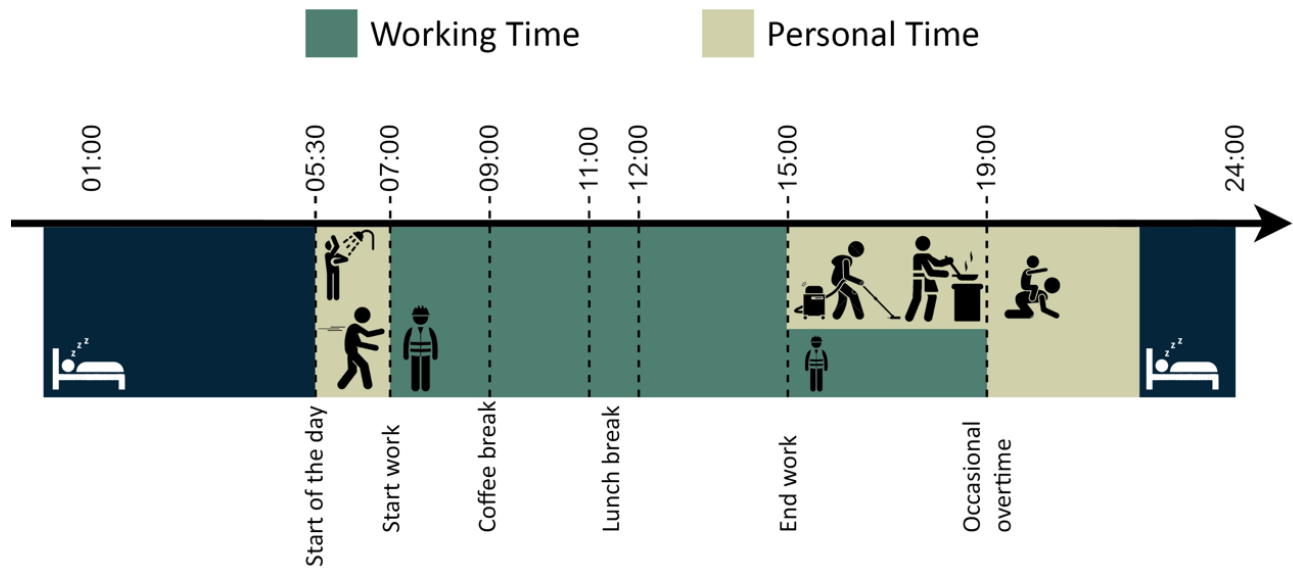


Figure 4.8 An average day in the life of a labour migrant--as narrated by respondent R7. The green area is the time spent on the construction site.

I work every day. From the beginning since I was here. I just go home and sleep. Sleep-work. sleep-work. – Quote 25, R4

And then it often results in very sparse living conditions. They like to live close by. One can imagine that the hygiene can be so-so-so when it is a little bad with facilities in relation to bathrooms and toilets and kitchens. And then you work 10-11 hours a day and then you come home and eat and go to bed almost. - Quote 26, S1

For the workers who lived in private rental housing, the adjectives ‘quiet’ and ‘calm’ were frequently brought up. This reinforced the housing pattern that S3 mentioned--that the workers only rent or buy properties in the outskirts of the countryside.

The trend is that those who want to buy something from themselves, they buy something in the countryside. that's almost the case in every person coming from Eastern Europe. They don't buy in the Trondheim area. They buy in melhus, in homevik, in stjoldal. They often also buy old houses that they can renovate. So I think that is the trend that I can say. If they are not doing that they are renting something in the countryside. So very rare that we see a guy going from a barrack to an apartment or something like that in the central area of Trondheim. Almost never happens. Quote 27, S3

I lived in the sentrum. In lade. But now no. it's too loud- Quote 28, R2

Important is the place and quiet, just that. Normal neighbors. Not drunkards. - Quote 29, R4

When the workers who lived in private housing were inquired about the living conditions in the brakkeriggs or the private dormitories they expressed patronising opinions that depicted a rather unexpected disconnect between the two housing situations. The sense of superiority suggested how the living conditions in the brakkeriggs and old private houses were condemned.

I don't drink at all and I don't like it to be around those people. Because they are always drinking. You know, about Polish people, they like drinking. So I don't want that (life in barracks) and I like silence for myself. If I make something in the kitchen, I make it, not with someone else. - Quote 30, R4

One aspect that repeatedly revealed itself in my data analysis was the significance of reducing their expenses to the bare minimum. As housing forms the biggest chunk of monthly expenditure, it also became the component that was highly compromised. Therefore, location, basic amenities and safety took a secondary position if the housing was low-cost.

They don't spend money here at all. They are here, for work, to earn money, to get back home. Yes. So that's all. These houses are crowded...these poor "polish houses' are crowded with people of course hmm. So from 5-10, 15-20, mostly. And I see that very often. -Quote 31, S2

They come here. They are here for one weeks, three week, four weeks, i don't know. Some of them stay. They are here for one purpose: to work, to earn money, yes. And as I see them...now I'm talking free, as I see this they don't care so much of how they live. No. They want a bed, they want to have a kitchen. They want a bad to take a shower. And many of them don't take a shower often (laughs) - Quote 32, S2

As most of the workers identify as male, it is essential to highlight the role gender plays in housing choices and their perceptions. The demographics of the data set can be broadly divided into two types, men with families in Trondheim and men with dependents back at home. While the former group chose to reunite with their families in Trondheim and move to private housing, the latter chose to stay unescorted hence, availing the benefits of a flexible life without any dependents.



*For stakeholders:* When asked by the migrant workers who could have influence over the housing situation, four respondents identified the construction companies as potential stakeholders who could drive change. As a prominent stakeholder, the narrative from the companies that provide housing becomes highly significant. These stakeholders contribute a dialectic approach to understanding the situation, in-depth. One of the foremost impressions that is highlighted in the interviews is the idea of housing as a profitable model that should be convenient and hassle-free. The stakeholders from the construction companies viewed the housing provided by them as a temporary shelter for the workers' transition before they find their own place. Therefore, they preferred giving the bare minimum amenities, shorter stay options and fewer responsibilities. A common denominator shared between both: workers and the companies that provide housing is the idea that housing is shelter only for a temporary state and primarily, should be low-cost.

Their [construction companies that provide housing] whole business is to make money on the tenancy of their workers and then they [the workers] can deliver lower prices on the work done. Quote 33, S1

It is also essential to highlight the contradictions in the perception of housing between the stakeholders and the workers. During my interview with respondent who had lived in the *brakkeriggs* in the past had a cynical view of the life in the *brakkeriggs*. Apart from flexibility and provision of a 'place to sleep', there wasn't a favorable attitude towards this housing provision. However, respondent S4 who was the HR of an international construction company in Trondheim--spoke highly of the *brakkeriggs* as the most convenient and comfortable option for the labour migrants while comparing it to a hotel. When enquired why would the other administrative and technical staff does not live in *brakkeriggs* she was quick to point out the need for having a personal life outside of the work life. These contradictions pointed towards the ambiguity of the situation and the polarity between the housing that is provided and how it is received.



Figure 4.9 The contradictory opinions on the brakkerigg points towards an ambiguous housing situation.

*Perception of exclusion:* As an extension of the social disconnectedness, discussed previously, the workers also experience a sense of otherness. This largely develops from the idea that their role in the country is only to fulfil a need for labour.

We die early. We stress so much. We keep thinking we must make something good and fast. Quote 34, R7

Even though all the men I interviewed were white and weren't from any minority background, they experienced a sense of otherness. This was usually done through stereotypes that were prescribed to their nationality in terms of habits and work ethics. Therefore, it was harder for them to experience upward mobility in society and their workplace.

I like working in Norway. but now Sweden and Norway are not good. it's good if you keep your mouth shut. If I say something in Swedish people turn around. if I'm in the cafe, they just get out. it's terrible. I feel like a foreigner. Quote 35, R6

I have corona all the time if you ask people in Norway. Quote 36, R3

***Patterns of resilience.*** The ‘patterns of response’, from the transitional theory are translated as ‘patterns of resilience’ as they incorporate the ways in which the labour migrants respond to the dynamic changes in their lived experiences. Contrary to many studies, the respondent workers expressed their plans of ultimately going back to their home countries. A common strategy was to increase their financial capital to invest back at home. Respondent R9 shared that his plan was to move back to Poland within 6 years and *‘not work a single day’* of his life. Similarly, respondent R4 had bought 6 apartments that he planned to renovate and then rent in order to sustain a monthly income once he stops working in Trondheim. Each of them had a life plan beyond their limited time in Trondheim that they were working towards securing.

### 4.3 Identifying and mapping stakeholders

This is the first study that identifies various stakeholders in the Trondheim municipality and their roles in the housing of labour migrants. In this context, stakeholders refer to any organisations or actors that can potentially be involved, directly or indirectly, in the housing journeys of the labour migrants. Concurrently, they have the power to influence the development of the research project through their knowledge or ability to partake in action-based initiatives. This kind of community participation allowed the project to build external assistance while simultaneously being rooted in the social reality of Trondheim.

The first step of mapping included **stakeholder identification** which was conducted in two parts: one was to identify all possible actors that could be a potential or an actual stakeholder. I referred to the newspaper archive and to similar studies that were done in Oslo (Czapka, 2010; Cappelen, Ouren and Skjerpen, 2011; Friberg, 2013; Andersen and Ødegård, 2017). As I followed the snowball method of sampling, I got more leads as the existing members pointed towards potential stakeholders. This kept the list growing, ensuring that no stakeholder was left out. (See Appendix 8.7 for the actors and organisations that were identified along with their organisational roles)

The second step was a **stakeholder categorisation** in which the list obtained was taken through two levels of stakeholders classification. First, they were segregated as primary and

secondary stakeholders. The primary stakeholders have a more direct influence and an key role within the construction industry and with the workers. On the other hand, the secondary stakeholders did not hold much agency in having direct impact but had knowledge or second hand experience with the labour migrants. The sorting of the stakeholders is shown below in Table 4.1 Categorisation of actors into primary and secondary stakeholders.

PRIMARY	SECONDARY
1. Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO Norge)	1. Hope for justice
2. Nye veier	2. Fire department (TBRT)
3. Trondheim municipality-city maintenance (Trd. bydrift)	3. Regional Safety Representative (RVO)
4. Uropatruljen	4. NTNU (housing research)
5. Workers	5. Police (Politiet)
6. Arbeidstilsynet: Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority	6. Norwegian Tax Administration (Skattetaten)
7. Fellesforbundet (United federation of trade unions)	7. Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI)
8. The construction case office- Trondheim Kommune (Byggesakskontoret)	8. The Service Centre for Foreign Workers (SUA)
9. Private housing companies (Lord Eindom, Terminalbygg etc)	9. Alma Huji: Norwegian language course (tolketjenester og språkkurs)

Table 4.1 Categorisation of actors into primary and secondary stakeholders

The third step was **stakeholder mapping** on the power and interest axis. The power measures their level of authority and agency to catalyse a change whereas, the interest indicates their investment and concern for the situation of the labour migrants. Two stakeholder maps were created: Interpretative and perceptive map.

The interpretative map is based on the interviews that I conducted with the stakeholders. By analysing their views on housing, their organisational roles, and their past experiences—the stakeholders were grouped and categorised.

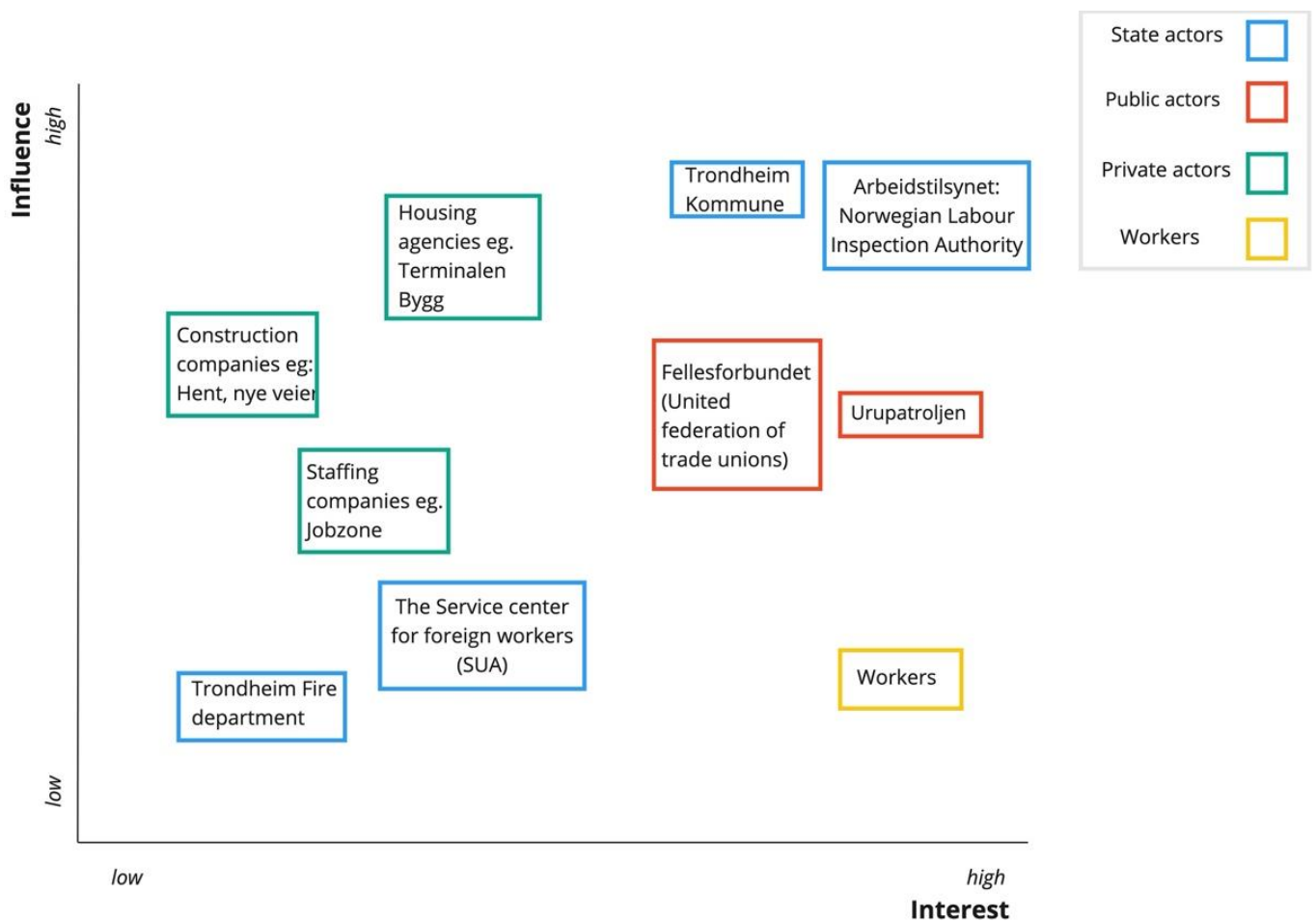


Figure 4.10 Stakeholder map based on the stakeholders' own perception of their position

[..]the problems we deal with are conflicts regarding wages...salary. Missing salary not paid. Too less. Not coming in the right time and so on. if they have wages conflict with the employer or if they get fired or if they get a warning or other situation with the employer, they can contact us. --Quote 37, Fellesforbundet (United federation of trade unions)

This market is so big with the housing it's almost impossible to get hold of everything. So you need to start with the companies. If they are going to regulate, to make it better for everybody, you need to see in it. – Quote 38, Staffing company

The interviews gave a more comprehensible understanding on the stakeholders' priorities and aided in critically mapping a visual map: to identify the power and interest of 7 stakeholder that were interviewed, the sites that were visited and the contacts we had received from the gatekeepers.

The second map was a participatory map that was created during the focus group by the stakeholders in attendance<sup>6</sup>. The map depicts the actors' own insight on evaluating their influence and interest on the housing. It was expected that the stakeholders who would attend the focus group would have high interest in the housing situation. The result reflected a more concentrated result on the higher side of both interest and influence. Furthermore, some of the stakeholders such as the Trondheim Municipality, Uropatroljen, the fire department, the Arbeidstilsynet (Norwegian labour inspection authority) and Fellesforbundet (United federation of trade unions) were common in both the stakeholder maps. The positions of all the common stakeholders changed in the interpretative map on both the axes to a certain degree-- showcasing a shift in interest as was expected.

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<sup>6</sup> See 3.3 for more on the stakeholder mapping process and annex for the original map produced during the focus group.

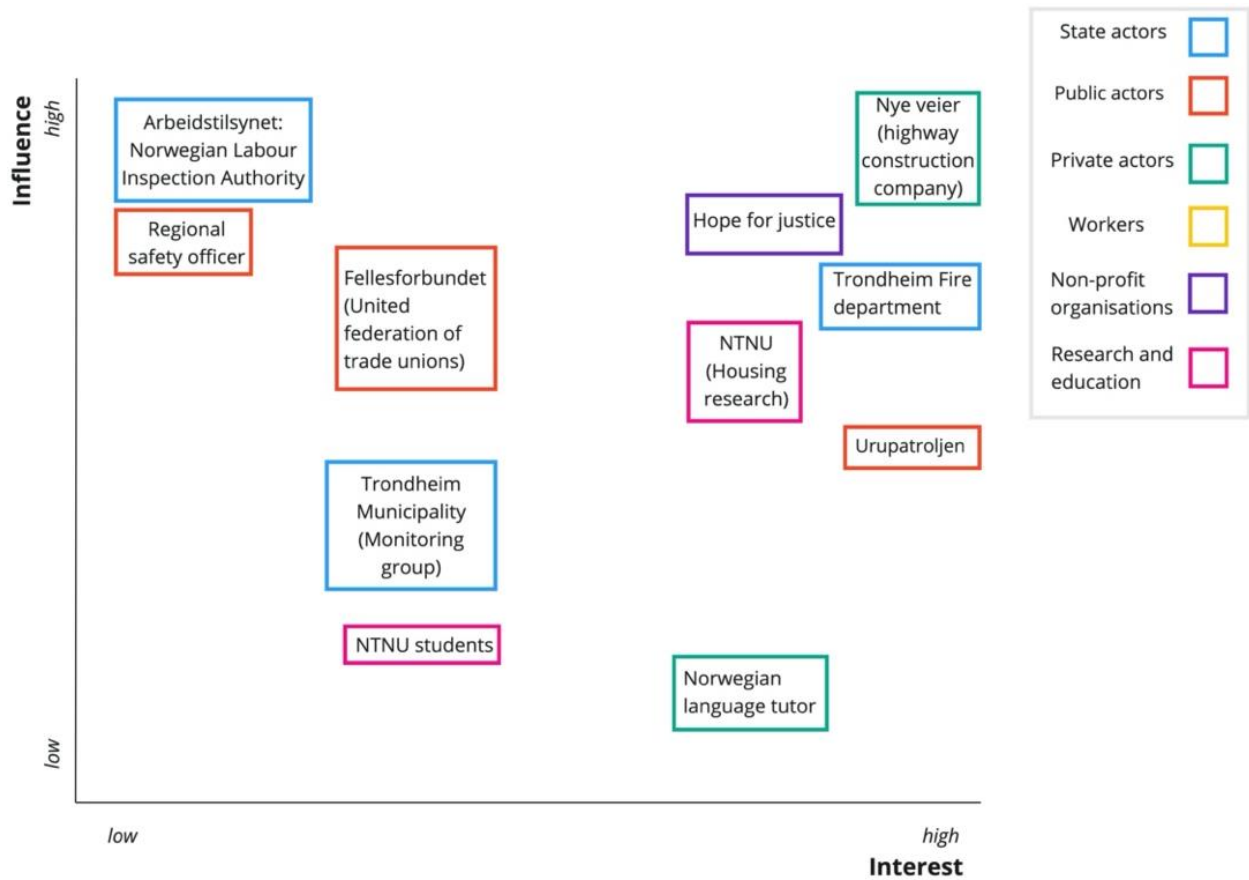


Figure 4.11 Stakeholder map based on the interviews conducted

The two maps of the stakeholders indicate a dynamic situation wherein the stakeholders' positions are bound to change. These changes can potentially be based on the interest of each stakeholder and the various stages during which they get involved in the transitional journey. Additionally, it is important to note that even though some stakeholders lay low in the interest-influence scale, they are important information source. For example, the Norwegian language tutor who pointed at various language and social barriers but did not have any influence to make changes. This also underlines the need to bring together various primary and secondary stakeholders through dialogue and engagement to contribute towards a change focussed on the various dimensions of housing.

## 5 Discussion

The thesis departed from a general idea of housing as a basic commodity for the transmigrant workers and evolved into a description of more dynamic, lived experiences and changes. Thus, the findings highlight that housing cannot only be viewed as a physical structure but needs to be understood as a complex concept that is an evolving sum of non-physical experiences, goals and social capital of the labour migrants. The findings reveal that housing is more than just a rental procedure to obtain shelter. The housing experiences of the labour migrants were a testimony to their decision-making, agency, negotiations, and compromises in the Norwegian society. This shifts the attention from the built environment to consequential social contexts of the day-to-day.

The first research question asked: **how are the individual experiences of transnational labour migrants in the construction sector in Trondheim, in relation to their housing options?** To assist the analytical process, the following sub questions were formulated: *What are the characteristics of the various types of housing available to the labour migrants and what are the factors that determine their housing selections?* The five types of housing options that were identified were presented with their physical characteristics and the user profile. Apart from the logistics of the housing, the findings also showcased how the housing options reflected different experiential journeys of the workers. The housing that the workers choose, seem to indicate something about their family status, financial situation, and their potential plans for the future. Family reunification, separation from their partner or any change in investments is revealed and evolves together with their housing journeys. The housing situation is however dynamic, changing, and personal, and thus, cannot be generalised. It was also revealed that flexibility, low cost, personal space, calmness, and easy access to workplace were some prominent factors that determine the workers housing selection in Trondheim. The findings suggest that the housing choices that the labour migrants make are a continuous compromise between their constraints and the options that are available to them. Thus, reinforcing that the housing career is a result of the relationship between opportunities and constraints, i.e. to what extent the attributes limit or make different actions possible (Abramsson, Borgegård and Fransson, 2002). However, the ways in which the various



external attributes, national policies and personal choices affect the housing careers of the workers is yet to be interrogated.

*How do labour migrants express and interpret their own lived experiences in terms of their housing?* The transitional theory helped reveal four interesting characteristics of the transitional journey of the labour migrants that were interviewed. The nature of the transition process of the workers depicted the contractual relation that they had with Trondheim, one that was solely based on their job and financial prospects. The disconnectedness from society pointed at various socio-cultural barriers like language that hinder their access to the conventional housing market of Trondheim. Furthermore, food was a major indicator of cultural disconnectedness from Norwegian culture, yet a 'feeling of home' that also translated in the workers' housing needs for having their own space for a kitchen. The perceptions that were identified in interviews with stakeholders and workers, also showed how housing is assessed and valued from both the stakeholders and the workers' perspective. Lastly, the patterns of resilience discussed the various ways in which the workers response to the changes that occur constantly.

The journey of the labour migrant starts from the time they leave their home countries. For most, who leave their families behind, the idea of 'home' is clear--they come to work in Trondheim, travel back and forth during the duration of their project and eventually go back 'home'. For a few of the respondents, the middle part of being in a transitory state has extended for as long as 10 years. Yet, home is an expression that is associated to family, food and familiarity and Trondheim remains a workplace. The findings suggest ways in which the workers talk about their future plans and the investments that they do back in their home countries.

The second research question: **what role do the local stakeholders play in shaping the housing experiences of work migrants?** The stakeholders, including recruitment agencies, Uropatruljen and Trondheim municipality, were the first point of contact for this study. Their knowledge and access to the construction industry aided and influenced the navigation of my study. The identification of primary and secondary stakeholders shows the tiered and collaborative nature of this research project. The two stakeholder maps give a preliminary idea of the actors'

position in terms of interest and influence they have towards the project. The pluralistic view of the stakeholders helps in recognising that their position is responsive to external changes. As this is a preliminary and explorative case study, there are several unanswered questions as is common to snowball sampled stakeholder mapping. For example, how do we know that the qualitative interviews give an accurate image of the role of each stakeholder? Some recruitment agencies are international and depend upon continuous influx of international skilled labour and might have a different interest in the housing market and qualities than a local recruitment agency. Some of the stakeholders are also linked to political ideologies that might impact their role and interest. There are many paths to investigate for future researchers.

To universalise their experiences would disregard their lived experiences. However, when studied through the lens of transitional theory, the stories revealed how the labour migrants express and interpret their own lived experiences and housing opportunities. The findings indicate a few crucial themes at the outset of this discussion, some are discussed below:

**First, the inequality of transmigration puts the labour migrants disproportionately at risk.** The workers from CEE countries fulfil a demand-based labour supply of the Norwegian economy and play a crucial part in the country's economic growth. The flexible nature of the industry produces temporary jobs that are taken by the foreign labour force. However, taking up these jobs secondary jobs in the construction industry usually places the workers in the bottom tier of the income pyramid. Although much of the research done around the labour migration in Norway is done focusing the inequalities that the workers face with respect to wage gaps and working conditions, the findings in this thesis highlights the social dimension of inequality and pinpoints the fact that labour migration remains closely linked to social inequality. This is seen in the structural aspect of the houses as well as in the value of 'temporariness' that is ascribed to them. For the construction companies that offer housing to labour migrants, it is perceived as a profit-based model that takes upon a modest burden on them. The companies do ensure to go by the law in order to avoid being seen in a bad light. These available housing choices interact with the workers' employment concerns, economic constraints, and preference for flexible housing.

Thus, the housing situation of the labour migrants lies between their choices and constraints. Even though the workers stay in Trondheim as seasonal or temporal migrants, it has a significant effect on the overall patterns of social inequality in Norway. The reality of the choices that are available to the workers does little to reflect the welfare state's housing goals and visions.

In the findings, it was revealed that the informants were all dependent on third parties, social networks, and negotiations to slowly achieve predictability in terms of housing. It was only after spending years in the country, they could navigate the housing system through innovative and non-traditional methods of renting. The migrants that are new aren't familiar with the language and have fewer social networks thus, putting them in a more vulnerable position. This further pushes them towards the risk of obtaining inefficient and illegal housing systems for the sake of survival.

Labour migration has become a livelihood strategy for many people (Kupets, 2012) that withdraws them from the dichotomy of permanence and temporariness by creating a new category of 'in-betweenness' or 'permanent temporariness'. The workers' integration and assimilation in the Norwegian society remains a distant thought--as they remain in the in-betweenness of transit.

**Second, the way in which the labour migrants adapt and interact with the housing market is indicative of resilience.** By no means do I suggest confusing vulnerability to resilience. So, it's crucial to ask, resilience to what? Building resilience is finding their position in the society so that they can adapt without compromising or negotiating their needs. Even though the community of labour migrants is vulnerable they show resistance towards the structural systems of housing through their social capital that allows them to navigate the housing market in an affordable way. Diasporic connections and community-based initiatives that are replicated year after year allows them to navigate the rising prices in creative ways, non-traditional ways. The findings showed how the workers would rent apartments at a lower price with a barter of renovating the apartment for

the owner. Other instances of living in caravans, tents or subletting their house to the people from their own country speaks in support of their resilience strategies. These coping strategies strengthen their position within the society and is a depiction of the decision-making, agency, negotiations, and compromises they make to navigate the housing market in their own terms. The labour migrants' housing experiences.

**Third, the nature of housing is linked to the ways in which the workers form their individual personal identity-** through conscious and unconscious ideas. To understand this implication, it was important to know the thoughts and attitudes of labour migrants towards housing and also, how they perceived their own role. In the segment 'perception of housing', it was highlighted how the labour migrants viewed their housing as a temporal, makeshift arrangement that allows them to save money so that they could make investments back in their home country. The workers' corresponding perception of their own role in Trondheim was reinforced in the segment 'disconnectedness from reality' where they share anecdotes on various factors that alienate them from Norwegian society. Their shared sense of dislocation had normalised as part of their reality and for many, being a migrant was a state of mind. It's only natural to understand the simultaneity of their identity and their social environment in Trondheim as a reflection of each other. Housing is a symbol of identity, which means that neighbourhood and environment can influence the way in which people perceive themselves. However, the interaction goes both ways, which means that the workers seek and create environments that support and strengthen their perception of themselves (see Hauge, 2009). In his book, Clapham (2005) talks about identity being plural rather than a singular idea. Although the workers left their home country, they still strongly associated their identities with their cultural roots. This was done through food, family, language or the diaspora. Thus reinforcing the idea that personal, community, and societal conditions can facilitate or hinder a person's smooth passage leading to a healthy transition response (Clingerman, 2007).

Another crucial aspect of identity points towards the lexicon of 'housing' and 'home'. Oftentimes, 'housing' is understood as a piece of construction and a static physical structure,

devoid of meaning. Whereas, 'home' is a romanticised concept of ones' origins, family, community and maybe ones' heart. Yet, housing is linked to a variety of social dimensions and interactions even when the user (the labour migrant, in this case) has no intention of calling it a 'home' or permanently staying. Therefore, it is logical to assume that 'home' can be experienced as one of the many meanings of 'housing' and housing can be experienced as a home in various degrees. (Blunt & Dowling, 2006 as cited in Hauge, 2009). The transnational journeys of the labour migrants invite us to modify our views on what we consider 'home'. For an individual, housing is linked to many other areas of life (Hauge, 2009). Housing can be a physical dwelling but also part of social, psychological and cultural security and it can play a mediating role in relating to the environment, the housing area and the part of the city (Murdie et al., 1995 as cited in Abramsson, Borgegård and Fransson, 2002). Various opportunities and restrictions can shape the ways in which workers navigate housing. In this case study, housing coincides with an employment path that directs the lives of the workers and thus cannot be viewed in isolation from other aspects of life.

Lastly, as an extension of the previous point--**when home is between 'here' and 'there' where do the labour migrants hold a sense of belonging?** Even though, this question lies beyond the scope of the thesis the interconnectivity to 'housing', 'identity' and the 'transmigrants' lead directly towards it and cannot remain unaddressed. One feels at home, only in places where they can build a sense of belonging and establish a community. For the transmigrant labour, the uncertainty, temporary nature of their stay and the strain of occupying transnational spaces restricts them the comforts of 'feeling at home'. So how do people on the move—with the ambivalence of being here and there, form belonging experiences.

The desire to make connections given the sense of alienation from home – or the 'feeling of being at home in several countries, or cultures but not completely at home in any of them' (Seaman, 1996: 53 as cited in Ahmed, 1999) – leads to the discovery of a new community (1999). These communities are formed mostly within their work networks through which they recreate

their ideas of home and identity. Other factors such as food, language, communication, and frequent trips back home also indirectly help the workers navigate the ever-shifting geographies.

## 6 Conclusion

### 6.1 Summary : between housing and home

The thesis started by introducing the topic of housing of the labour migrants and the transitory lives they live between their home country and Trondheim, Norway. Two research questions were framed in order to obtain a comprehensive situation of the reality. The first research question asked was: **How are the individual experiences of transnational labour migrants in the construction sector in Trondheim, in relation to their housing options?** To answer the first research question the following sub questions were formulated:

*-What are the characteristics of the various types of housing available to the labour migrants and what are the factors that determine their housing selections?*

*-How do labour migrants express and interpret their own lived experiences in terms of housing?*

**And what role do the local stakeholders play in shaping the housing experiences of work migrants?**

The study has been an exploratory and descriptive case study based on field work, in which I applied various qualitative techniques and analyzed them through a theoretical lens. A sample of 16 respondents, 9 workers and 6 stakeholders, were collected through snowball sampling method and site visits. Narrative inquiry was used to as a methodological approach which means that the respondents shared their experiences in form of stories in a timeline, they find fitting. This human-centric, personal approach of interviewing allowed me to illustrate how the workers perceive and communicate their own experiences. In line with narrative inquiry approach, each story was treated as a meaning bearing unit, and as form of data that was further used for analysis holistically.

In order to contribute to both the research questions, a review was performed on the existing literature on transnational migrants and their housing. The literature reviews lead to an introduction of the transitional theory that focussed on the workers' journey and put forth subsequent characteristics one experiences whilst experiencing transition. The transitional theory

was chosen as a theoretical framework as it could connect the housing experiences of the labour migrants to a wider socio-cultural context.

To answer the first research question about experiences and housing options, the findings describe revealed the five kind of housing options that are available to the transmigrant construction workers in Trondhiem. The charecterstics of each of these housing was descriptely detailed alongwith the choices and circumstances that led the workers' to take these options. The findings also narrated different approaches on the same issue from the stakeholders and the workers' perspective. Through the framework of the transitional theory the housing careers of the workers were understood by adapting the four characteristics of the original theory which were further translated to accommodate the narratives of the workers. These findings collectively answered the first question by recounting the lived experiences of the workers around housing.

The second research question about stakeholders role was answered by a series of identification, categorisation, and mapping of the stakeholders. The mapping visually depicted where the stakeholders stand when it comes to the interest and influence in making changes around the housing of the workers. Additionally, the stakeholders played a crucial role in allowing access (gatekeepers) and giving important information that led to the shaping of this study. Some of their statements strengthened and reinforced concepts around housing preferences of the workers. However, the contradictions too pointed at the gap between what is provided and what is perceived for instance, in the case of life in the brakkeriggs. Thus, the stakeholders represented in this study, from recruitment agencies to workers unions play a crucial role in accessing the problem areas within this project, and in taking cooperative and collective action towards appropriate real time solutions.

Throughout this thesis I have advanced in a narrative exploration of the housing situation of the labour migrants from the perspective and experiences of both, the workers and the stakeholders. In the findings, it was revealed that a large part of the migrants' social and economic lives is invested in their home countries. Various factors such as family status, financial income,



social ties and their own personal choices play a crucial role in deciding the workers' housing journeys and lived experiences. The thesis departed from the idea of housing as a basic commodity for the transmigrant workers and evolved into a description of more dynamic, lived experiences and changes. Thus, the study concludes that housing cannot only be viewed as a physical structure but needs to be understood as a complex concept that is an evolving sum of non-physical experiences, goals, and social capital of the labour migrants. The answers to both the research question point towards the various opportunities and constraints that the workers face based on which they navigate the options that are made available to them.

This study could aid and prepare planners and the building construction department of Trondheim city to be well equipped in understanding the needs of the labour migrants and the dynamics of the local housing market. It can also be useful for researchers of sociology, urban planning, architectural design, and human geography who choose to investigate the built spaces and humanities of the housing and working situation. This could lead to an inclusive and engaging route wherein the needs of the labour migrants are in focus. My findings could help in the groundwork that is required to build on various tangents by providing a starting point in the context of Trondheim. It can also be rendered as a background study to investigate the dynamics of the workers housing situation and interdisciplinary attributes that can potentially influence it.

## **6.2 Methodological reflections**

The narrative enquiry was used to access the daily lives of the participants through detailed conversations, and storytelling. This approach allowed me to put the life stories and perspectives of the migrant workers in the centre in a respectful and open manner and gain an intuitive and more complete understanding of which elements become relevant when they make decisions on housing. In hindsight, the approach fit well for the exploratory nature of the study. I could have adopted a wider approach in interviewing by providing themes and allowing the respondents to narrate anything they find fitting. The details of specific parts of the narration could then be asked later. This is a common approach in narrative enquiry. It aims to give the respondent a lot of space to build their own story but can also lead to them straying from the topic with other details.

The transitional theory was adopted as it provided a basis to understand the workers' journey while imparting enough range to inculcate their narratives. The theory was translated to accommodate the housing journeys of the workers in four characteristics. The characteristics do not depict a linear phase-wise progression of the workers journey from their home country to Trondheim. The characteristics are in fact overlapping wherein one might lead to another. For instance, the perception the workers had of housing and their perception of exclusion can lead to disconnectedness from the society and the other way around. Even though, a more detailed framework would have given a relational view of the various characteristics, it wouldn't have allowed for the shape that the study took by incorporating a broader framework.

### 6.3 Future study

The thesis only scratches the surface of the labour migrants' housing in Trondheim and shows a variety of potential for future research.

The findings strongly depict the interdisciplinary ways of understanding the relationship between housing and migration. As the findings revealed different themes of identity, inequality and sense of belonging, these topics can be explored further. Future research can consider the avenue even further by exploring the informality and illegality of the housing provided to the workers. There are, however, more vulnerable groups of people in seasonal professions that involve manual labour and are inadequately documented and studied, in terms of housing. During the interviews with stakeholders S3 and S5, they pointed that the workers in the agricultural industry, especially the berry pickers in Trondheim, had dismal and neglected housing and working conditions. This study can also be replicated to examine the situation of vulnerable communities in other industries.

A mixed method approach can also be used to understand the housing situation of the workers in their home countries to understand the 'myth of return'. It could highlight the factors that influence the workers decisions on the housing choices they make. A study on the various opportunities and restrictions during different phases of their stay in Trondheim can bring forth the ways in which the workers build on their capital leading to progress in their housing careers.

The stakeholder analysis was done for the first time in the context of Trondheim. Future studies can take the mapping further and explore the situations that might cause a positive shift in the interest of the stakeholders through innovative participatory planning. The stakeholders that were identified can also be used to collaborate for a more in-depth study that can lead to on-field changes. There are several unanswered questions on the accurate role of each stakeholder. As some recruitment agencies are international, their interests and qualities can differ from the local recruitment agencies. This can lead to several other paths to investigate for future researchers.

## 7 References

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## 8 Appendices

### 8.1 Appendix 1 – Interview Guides

#### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR WALKING WITH ACTOR**

*(Visually discuss and document of the housing units and their condition)*

##### *Neighbourhood and accessibility*

- Who owns these housing units?
- Are they closer to the workplace?
- What are the local neighbourhood manifestations of having these housing units?
- How close is the local grocery, park, busstop etc?
- What are the neighbourhood activities that happen here? Any social bonding?

##### *Design*

- What does a typical unit consist of?
- How many people live in each unit?
- For how long does a member stay in the unit?
- Do the workers have a tenure security i.e security of living in the unit without the fear of unwarranted eviction?
- Are the houses as per the building safety laws?

#### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR NORWEGIAN WORKERS**

*(Continue with a regular interview guide and additionally cover the following questions)*

- What would you say is the main difference between a norwegian and foreign worker?
- What do you know about the housing options given to foreign workers? Have you visited? Can you describe it?

- Have you worked outside Norway? How do the situations compare?

## **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MIGRANT WORKERS WHO ARE CURRENTLY WORKING IN TRONDHEIM (0-12 MONTHS)**

### *Introduction*

- Could you briefly introduce yourself? Your age, nationality, about your family, your education and what work do you do here in Trondheim?
- Have you worked anywhere else outside your home country before? If yes, how the housing and work situation compares

### *Work and money related*

- How did you get to know about this job offer?
- How long is your job contract?
- How would you explain your experience of working here? Expectations v. reality?
- What are your thoughts on the salary and the living costs of Norway?
- How would you compare salaries here and back home or with other countries in Europe?
- Do you manage to save money? How do you go about financial management?
- What are your main expenditures while living in Trondheim? Is housing the biggest expenditure?

### *Housing choices*

- What does an average day look like?
- How was your housing situation before coming to Trondheim? Renting or owning?
- Could you explain how the work and housing contracts system function? Do you sign them before coming?

- About your housing, where do you currently live? Can you describe the housing system?
- What were the factors you considered when you chose to live here? (subjective and objective both)
- why here and not any other option? prioritise the factors that affect choices.
- What are the problems you face in the current housing system?
- Whom do you think is an important stakeholder in the housing for migrants? company or state or staffing agency?
- How would you describe the neighbourhood?
- What are the places that you mostly access? Eg. grocery store, parks etc?
- How important is your living space for you

#### *Future prospects*

- What are the challenges you face being in a foreign country? or what challenges does language and culture pose for you?
- Do you plan to return to your home country? Or explore any other country?
- Would you plan to live in Trondheim or Norway for longer?

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MIGRANT WORKERS WHO ARE CURRENTLY WORKING (12-24+ MONTHS) OR PERMANENTLY SETTLED IN TRONDHEIM**

#### *Introduction*

- Could you briefly introduce yourself? You age, nationality, about your family, your education and what work do you do here in Trondheim?
- Have you worked anywhere else outside your home country before?

#### *Work related*

- What job did you do when you first moved here?

- Are you currently in the same organisation and position or did you change?
- How did you get to know about your current job offer?
- How would you compare salaries here and back home or with other countries in Europe?
- How would you explain your experience of working here over the course of x years of being here?
- Do you invest or save money?

#### *Housing choices*

- How was your housing situation before coming to Trondheim? Renting or owning?
- About your housing, where do you currently live? Can you describe the housing system?
- Could you explain your journey in the rental market here? From your first place how did you move to other houses?
- Whom do you think is an important stakeholder in the housing for migrants? Company or state or staffing agency?
- What were the factors you considered when you chose to live here?
- How would you describe the neighbourhood?
- What are the places that you access mostly? Eg. grocery store, parks etc?

#### *Future prospects*

- Would you plan to live in Trondheim or Norway for longer?
- Do you feel Norway is now your home?
- Reflect on your journey through the years—in relation to housing



## INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MIGRANT WORKERS WHO HAVE MOVED BACK TO THEIR HOME COUNTRY

### *Introduction*

- Could you briefly introduce yourself? Your age, nationality, about your family, your education and what work you did in Trondheim?
- Have you worked anywhere else outside your home country before except Norway/Trondheim?

### *Work related*

- What job did you do when you first moved here?
- How long did you stay in Trondheim?
- Are you currently in the same organisation and position or did you change?
- How did you get to know about your current job offer?
- How would you compare salaries here and back home or with other countries in Europe?
- How would you explain your experience of working in Trondheim?
- Can you compare it to your current job?
- What were the reasons for you to leave your job and move back?

### *Housing choices in Trondheim*

- How was your housing situation before coming to Trondheim? Renting or owning?
- About your housing, where did you live when in Trondheim? Can you describe the housing system?
- Whom do you think is an important stakeholder in the housing for migrants? Company or state or staffing agency?
- What were the factors you considered when you chose to pick your living space?
- How would you describe the neighbourhood?

- What are the places that you mostly accessed? Eg. grocery store, parks etc?

*Future prospects*

- Would you plan to come back to Trondheim or Norway again? What factors would be determinant?
- are you connected to your colleagues from Trondheim? Are they still there?

## 8.2 Appendix 2 - Structured notes taken on In-situ Observations

Location:

Date:

Time:

Weather:

Construction company:

Number of people contacted:

Number of people interviewed:

Lunch break time:

Ethnicity (Norwegian or non-Norwegian)

Activity:

Where people come/go?

Unique Behaviours:

### 8.3 Appendix 3 – Focus group invite and program description

Figure 8.1 Focus group invitation and programme schedule held on 18th September 2021

**Husvære:**  
**et forskningsprosjekt ved NTNU om boliger for arbeidsinnvandrere i bygg- og anleggsbransjen i Trondheim**

**9:00** Brita Fladvad Nielsen, Førsteamanuensis/Associate professor  
Introduksjon til forskningsprosjektet: hva vet vi om boligsituasjonen for arbeidsinnvandrere i Trondheim?  
Introduction and about the research project

**9:15** **Housing for work migrants:  
a narrative inquiry of the situation of work migrants in the building and construction sector in Trondheim**

Gunika Rishi, master student at NTNU will present her preliminary findings about:

- the stakeholder map of importance for understanding the housing options of work migrants
- types of housing
- personal accounts
- individual resilience and transnationalism
- remaining questions for discussion



**10:15** **Workshop about housing for work migrants in Trondheim**

**12:00** Facilitated by Gunika Rishi, Arvin Farah and Emil Brevik

We invite all stakeholders and people interested in the topic to send an email to [gunika93@gmail.com](mailto:gunika93@gmail.com) for participation



## 8.4 Appendix 4 – Consent Form (English, Norwegian)

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

### ***”Husvære for arbeidsinnvandrere i Trondheim”***

**Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å beskrive hvordan arbeidsinnvandrere bor i Trondheim, hva som påvirker hvem som kommer for å arbeide i Trondheim og hvordan de bor, og hva dette betyr for dem. Studiet tar i første omgang utgangspunkt i arbeidere i bygg og håndtverksbransjen, og arbeidere knyttet til boligene til disse. I dette skrevet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.**

#### **Formål**

*Prosjektet «Husvære for arbeidsinnvandrere i Trondheim» vil ta utgangspunkt i brakkerigger og eneboliger som over lengre tid har huset arbeidsinnvandrere som jobber på bygg og anlegg i Trondheimsområdet. Et viktig mål er å få til en beskrivelse av hvordan og hvor arbeidsinnvandrere bor i Trondheim, hvem som tilbyr dem bolig, hvilke leiekontrakter som inngås og hvordan ulike boligforhold og mobilitet påvirker både den enkelte arbeidsinnvandrer og grupper. Det er en utforskende studie av type 'forprosjekt' hvor man ser for seg å finne nye forskningsområder og spørsmål som bør studeres nærmere innenfor prosjektbeskrivelsen. Datainnsamlingen vil benyttes innenfor forskningsgruppa, og funn vil publiseres i tidskriftformat og benyttes i undervisning.*

#### **Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?**

*Institutt for Design, NTNU er ansvarlig for prosjektet.*

**Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?** *Du er spurt om å delta i studiet fordi du enten er arbeidsinnvandrer som bor i midlertidig boligstruktur i Trondheim, eller fordi du tilhører en organisasjon som har en rolle knyttet til husvære og arbeidsinnvandring.*

#### **Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?**

Vi vil i første omgang benytte den metodiske rammen «go-along research» som går ut på at man samtaler rundt tematikken mens man går, sykler eller kjører bil, eller fleksibelt tilpasser seg som forsker i kjente omgivelser for den vi skal snakke med. Ved hjelp hovedsakelig av kvalitative intervjuer, samtale og observasjon, *Opplysningene vil registreres som lydfiler:*

- *«Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer det at vi intervjuer deg. Intervjuet vil ta ca. 30-45 minutter. Intervjuet inneholder spørsmål om kvalitative forhold rundt bolig for arbeidsinnvandrere i Trondheim, tanker rundt boligformene, hvilke aktører som er involvert og hvordan de opererer i forhold til hverandre, og hvordan livssituasjon, leieforhold og arbeidsforhold henger sammen.*

### **Det er frivillig å delta**

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

*Du kan selv velge når det passer å gjennomføre intervjuet, slik at det ikke påvirker deg negativt.*

### **Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger**

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrevet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

- *Det er Institutt for Design, som vil ha behandlingsansvar for innsamlet data. Ansvarlig person: Brita Fladvad Nielsen*
- *Navn i transkribert data vil erstattet med en kode som lagres på egen navneliste adskilt fra øvrige data.*

### **Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?**

Opplysningene anonymiseres når prosjektet avsluttes/oppgaven er godkjent, noe som etter planen er

*Prosjektet vil avsluttes 14.03.2022*

*Etter dette vil eventuelle opptak og data som ikke er anonymisert, slettes.*

**Dine rettigheter:** Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg, og
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

**Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?**

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra *førstemannensis Brita Fladvad Nielsen, Institutt for Design ved NTNU* har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

**Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?** Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- *Institutt for Design ved Brita Fladvad Nielsen.*
- Vårt personvernombud: *Thomas Hegesen, [Thomas.belgesen@ntnu.no](mailto:Thomas.belgesen@ntnu.no)*

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til NSD sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:

- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS på epost ([personverntjenester@nsd.no](mailto:personverntjenester@nsd.no)) eller på telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Med vennlig hilsen

*Brita Fladvad Nielsen*

(Forsker/veileder)

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### **Samtykkeerklæring**

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet [*sett inn tittel*], og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

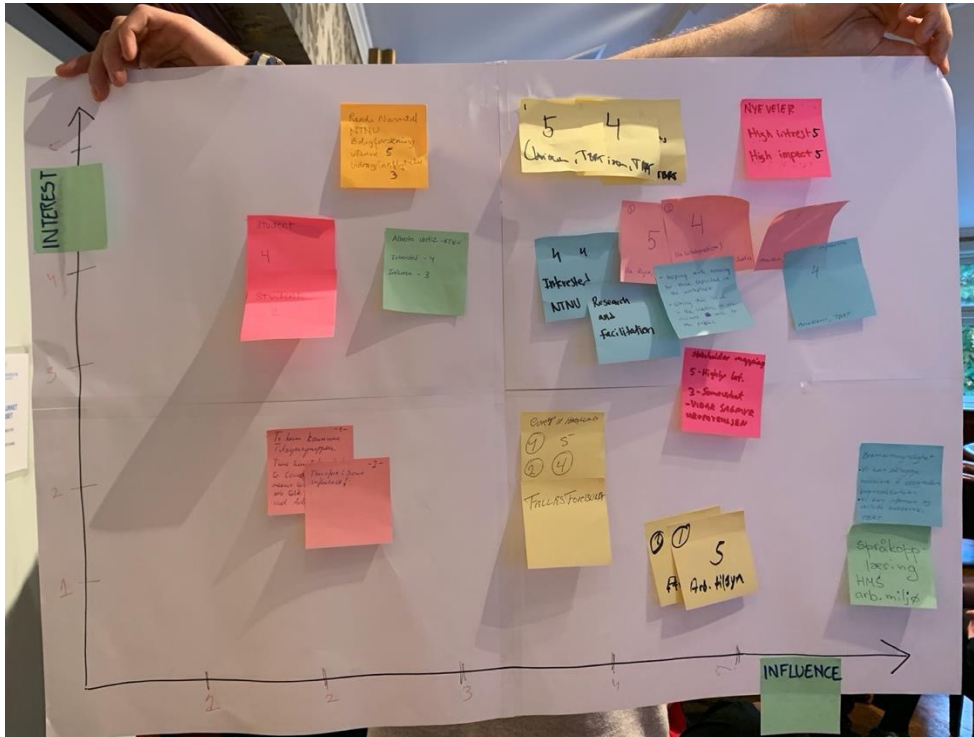
- å delta i intervju
- å delta i *vandring rundt busvære – hvis aktuelt*

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet

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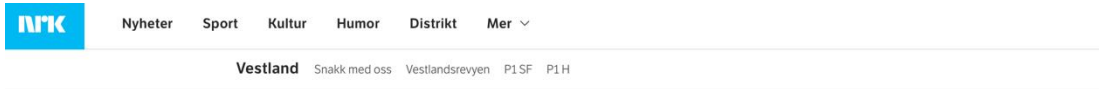
(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

## 8.5 Appendix 5—Workshop result





## 8.6 Appendix 6 – Media archive



# Utlendinger bor ulovlig under kummerlige forhold på norske bilverksteder

Arbeidstilsynet kontrollerte 18 uautoriserte bilverksteder. I nesten halvparten bodde utenlandske arbeidere ulovlig.



AKSJONER: Arbeidstilsynet har aksjonert mot uautoriserte bilverksteder. – Boforholdene var til dels svært kummerlige, sier de.

FOTO: ARBEIDSTILSYNET

  
**Simen Sundford Otterlei**  
@simenso  
Journalist

  
**Siri Løken**  
Journalist

Publisert 14. feb. 2015 kl. 07:18

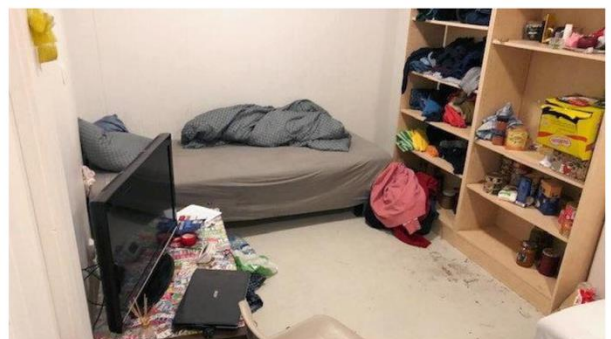
 Artikkelen er flere år gammel.



## Slik bodde arbeiderne i Austevoll

Uverdige boforhold, svart arbeid og 5000 kroner i månedslønn. Det var bare noen av funnene da Arbeidstilsynet slo til mot byggeplasser i Austevoll.

Publisert 16. november 2016



Et av totalt fire soverom, alle uten uten vindu og rømningsvei. (Alle Foto: A-krimsenteret i Nordland)

## Avdekket ulovlige og direkte livsfarlige boforhold

NYHETER: Utenlandske arbeidere sov og bodde på jobb i rom uten rømningsveier, brannslukkere og røykvarslere. I tillegg ble det oppbevart gassflasker under trykk i nærheten.

## 8.7 Appendix 7- List of stakeholders

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Organisation kind</b>	<b>Interest of organisation</b> <i>(Source: respective public websites)</i>
Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO Norge)	Public actor	National trade union centre - ensures members safe and fair pay and working conditions. Also, negotiate with employers and influence politicians.
Nye veier	Private actor	Plans, builds, operates, and maintain traffic-safe main roads. Building the  Identified stakeholders and their organisations to indicate their potential to favour the improvement of workers' housing experience  expansion of the airport highway in Trondheim
Hope for justice	Non-profit Organisations	aims to end human trafficking and modern slavery
Trondheim municipality-city maintenance (Trd. bydrift)	State actor	
Uropatruljen	Public actors	
Fire department (TBRT)	State actor	
Regional Safety Representative (RVO)	Private actor	safety service in companies where there is none established

## Workers

Arbeidstilsynet: Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority	State actor	The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority is a Norwegian government agency under the Ministry of Labour. It is responsible for supervising the implementation of the Working Environment Act, the Annual Holidays Act, the National Holidays Act, and certain sections of the Smoking Act
Fellesforbundet (United federation of trade unions)	Private actor	The United Federation of Trade Unions is a general union in Norway. With a membership of 150,000 it is the largest private sector union in the country.
NTNU (housing research)	Research and education	
Police (Politiet)	State actor	
Norwegian Tax Administration (Skattetaten)	State actor	responsible for resident registration and tax collection in Norway
Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI)	State actor	responsible for processing applications from foreign nationals who wish to visit or live in Norway
The Service Centre for Foreign Workers (SUA)	State actor	At SUA, the police, the Tax Administration and the Labour Inspection Authority help you sort out everything you need to work in Norway
alma huji: Norwegian language course (tolketjenester og språkkurs)	Private actor	
The construction case office- Trondheim Kommune (Byggesakskontoret)	State actor	to help ensure good quality in built-up and undeveloped surroundings and to ensure that national and local political goals are achieved.
Private housing companies (Lord	Private actor	owner of commercial and residential properties in Trondheim and the surrounding area

Eindom,  
Terminaelbygg etc)

