Migrant Access to Public Urban Infrastructures

Berlin
Stockholm
London

MAPURBAN

Migrant Mobility and **A**ccess to **P**ublic **Urban** Resource

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Introduction

Cities have always attracted people from elsewhere – they are in fact the product of migration – and without migrants, cities would not exist. However, the understanding of who is a migrant has changed over time and differs for various local contexts. Many cities have established more apparently progressive policies regarding immigrants, often in contradiction to the nation state, illustrated by the Sanctuary City movement in the USA and Canada (Bauder, 2017), or the Solidarity City movement in Europe (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019).

The mass movements across borders during the "summer of migration 2015" (Hess et al. 2017) highlighted the differences between the EU, nation states and the local level. While the EU and nation states often continue to create hostile environments for migrants and refugees[1], the discourse has changed at the city scale. Many cities have reacted to national policies that appear to be hostile to immigration, and as a consequence, become more receptive to newcomers'. This has led to a shift in urban policies addressing migration. Given these circumstances, this report focuses on three cities, selected as representative cases for their different and rich histories of migration with diverse integration policies: **Berlin**, **Stockholm**, and **London**.

With this contrasting perspective, the report distinguishes between differences in newcomers' access to public urban resources, also referred to here as arrival infrastructures (Hanhörster and Hans 2019). These arrival infrastructures, understood as "those parts of the urban fabric within which newcomers become entangled on arrival, and where their future local or translocal social mobilities are produced as much as negotiated" (Meeus et al. 2019:1). With arrival neighbourhoods playing a decisive role

(Wessendorf 2022). Access to public transport networks, for example, is one of the many ways by which accessibility and mobility can have an impact on issues such as segmenting populations, forming connections, and/or creating opportunities for public encounter (Rokem and Vaughan 2019).

Public spaces – streets, squares, local centres as well as parks – often perform as social arenas, by providing opportunities to be co-present with other people as well as with the established majority population (Zukin 1995; Young 1996; Legeby 2013). These examples can also foster an understanding of the unequal life conditions of different groups in society, allowing for strategies and policies for increased co-responsibility between municipalities, existing communities, and migrant groups in areas with new and old 'layers of diversity' (Vertovec 2015). Taken together, we argue that the existence of and accessibility to arrival infrastructures can have a strong impact on newly arriving people's participation in urban society and in expanding their 'right to the city' (Harvey 2003).

By comparing major themes of interest for migrant arrival and settlement, the report adds new insights from expert interviews and existing policy documents. The MAPURBAN project led by academic researchers in collaboration with public authorities and local municipalities has in this report summarised and contextualised place-specific knowledge adding a relational perspective. It is tailored for policy makers and practitioners working in the field of migration and urban planning allowing for a mutual learning process – within and beyond these three urban contexts.

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[1] According to Amnesty International, there is a legal difference between refugee and asylum seeker: "An asylum seeker is a person who has left their country and is seeking protection from persecution and serious human rights violations in another country, but who hasn't yet been legally recognized as a refugee and is waiting to receive a decision on their asylum claim"

(https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants/). Thus, we use the term *asylum-seeking* when referring to this legal situation. *Refugee* is used more broadly. The distinction is useful to describe nuances in different treatment by the state. However, we advocate for there not being such a distinction, and for all migrants to be treated equally.

Methodology

This report is based on expert knowledge, and existing municipal policy documents from Berlin, London, and Stockholm and their respective national contexts. Academic literature is added when necessary and a spatial analysis of what were deemed as important urban resources were mapped across three selected arrival neighbourhoods, one from each city (see maps section). Expert knowledge is based on interviews with local practitioners, municipal planners and policy makers, selected for their engagement with questions of migration and integration at the urban scale as part of their daily practice.[2] These interviews sought to explore which were deemed to be the most important urban public resources for newly arriving persons in each of the cities. Interviews further covered an assessment of current policies and programmes with a focus on themes requiring improvement, as well as the special circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic. Since the interviews were conducted between September 2021 and April 2022, the newest developments following the war in Ukraine are not covered in this report.

The Stockholm interviews were conducted with experts in planning and urban design on regional and municipal levels, as well as art and culture. In London, interviews were conducted with local authority employees engaged in migrant integration and language provision with a focus on the Borough of Tower Hamlets. Additionally, an interview was held with a manager from the Greater London Authority (GLA) migration unit providing a citywide perspective. In Berlin, interviews were carried out with civil servants and politicians at different governance levels: senate (for state Berlin), district, and neighbourhood levels. The interviewees all engage with (newly arrived) refugees and migrants in their everyday work, or they work with

planning or social integration. The report does not include the perspectives of newly arrived migrants as they are beyond the scope of this small project, although we recognise that their voices are critical and this requires future research.

The analysis of the interviews and policy documents is based on a matrix that enables a coherent deductive coding process for all cities, synthesizing and contextualizing current knowledge from a comparative perspective. Based on this process, the following four themes were identified across all three cities: **(1) Housing (2) Education & Language (3) Health (4) Mobility & Social Interaction.**

In the following two sections, **Reflections** and **Recommendations** are sampled from the material and further discussed. Best practices are highlighted from selected focus areas in the three cities and are discussed as a basis for the future development of the policy field of arrival infrastructures.

The last section contains comparative **Maps**. These are visualisations of differences in the availability of an exemplary social infrastructure (i.e., libraries) across the three cities. The mappings enable insights into geographic differences within a city as well as a comparative perspective between the cities.

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[2] In total eighteen interviews were conducted, eight in Stockholm (marked in text with S#1, S#2, S#3 etc.) and five interviews each from Berlin (B#1, B#2, B#3 etc.) and London (L#1, L#2, L#3 etc.), among them were representatives from the local project partners.

Arrival Policies – Thematic Focus Areas

From the outset, we were interested in how cities provide public and semi-public infrastructure for newly arriving refugees, how governments handle such infrastructures under their control, and how these infrastructures frame future mobilities and immobilities. Our previous research shows how these aspects of refugee settlement are crucial steps towards inclusion – or exclusion (Wessendorf 2022). Therefore, we focused on those infrastructures that can be fully provided or easily influenced by the state, such as housing, education, healthcare and public transportation. In many cities, arrival policies are integrated within broader municipal guidelines and programs. We thus reviewed a wider selection of arrival policies in policy domains such as housing and planning strategies which overlap with the above-mentioned themes.

1. **Housing** is a special field of interest, since disadvantaged groups, such as refugees and newly arrived migrants depend on accommodation services and the housing situation in general. Housing centrally affects the wellbeing of those newly arrived. Availability of affordable dwellings is especially challenging in larger cities with limited housing markets, which is the case for all three cities.

2. **Education and Language** gives insight into policies mainly related to schools and kindergarten, higher education and voluntary programs, such as language cafés and music schools. Education further refers to training, such as adult language courses and adult further education, when it was mentioned by the experts.

3. **Health** includes access to health services (e.g., healthcare clinics and hospitals) and restrictions as well as special programs for people without health insurance or local health cards. It also covers services related to the pandemic, such as information, testing, vaccination, and special treatment.

4. **Mobility and Social Interaction** covers the availability and programs related to the use of urban transportation possibilities, with a focus on newly arrived people's access to public transportation. Social Interaction covers encounter, participation, and engagement – especially at the local level. It is central to the arrival process, especially for excluded groups in society. It includes public support of these interactions with regard to specific localities such as neighbourhood centres or community centres. as well as accessible public urban space.

Cities: Berlin, London, Stockholm

In the following sections, each city is described in more detail – incorporating the four themes.

Berlin

Berlin has a population of about 3,775,000 inhabitants. About 811,000, 21,5% of them, have foreign passports and there are 1,381,00 people with so-called migration background, which is about 36.6% of the Berlin population (Amt für Statistik Berlin Brandenburg 2022). In 2022 more than 7000 people registered as refugees in Berlin (as of September 2022, source LAF 2022). Thus, migration policies affect a large number of inhabitants.

Despite many improvements over the past years, opaque procedures and long waiting periods still dominate the difficult arrival phase for refugees in Berlin (Berlin 2018). The fact that responsibilities for refugees are shared between the Berlin state and its subordinated city districts leads to a complex legal situation (B#2 District Official). Those refugees who are still in the application phase fall under the responsibilities of the state and those who have received a decision about their application for asylum fall under the responsibility of the districts.

The period after 2015 put increasing pressure on local government infrastructures to change, open up, and provide multi-lingual opportunities. Previously only certain districts offered courses and services in various languages or equipped libraries with books in other languages than German. This is changing and the infrastructure in all districts has started to diversify (Berlin 2018). In general, rigid funding structures at the federal and state level do not allow for an approach to flexible needs at the local level (B#1 Senate Official). Thus, tensions arise about funding between federal and state, as well as state and district level.

1. Housing

The State Office for Refugee Affairs (LAF) is responsible for the initial accommodation of asylum seekers in reception facilities and shelters, as well as coverage of rental costs. By law, refugees must stay in reception facilities for the first months, which often become years. Those shelters are very basic, encompassing shared rooms, tight security measures, various rules about the equipment of the shelter and prohibition of overnight visitors (B#2 District Official, B#4 Integration Manager).

"People are more likely to find and keep a job than to find their own place to live" (B#5 District Official).

Although the quality and standard have significantly improved since 2015 (B#2 District Official), the aforementioned reasons explain the vast gap in living standards when compared to private flats. Although refugees are allowed to leave the shelter after a decision on their asylum process, many remain in shelters due to the limited housing market, especially for low-income groups (B#1 Senate Official, B#4 Integration Manager District). Furthermore, refugees face discrimination and racism in the housing market (B#2 District Official, B#4 Integration Manager District). This is not only related to landlords choosing other people over refugees but also to the fact that most housing associations provide information on their websites only in German (B#5 District Official). Thus, a large number of refugees stay in the temporary situation of shelter for many years. For larger families, it is nearly impossible to find a flat that is big enough (B#4 Integration Manager). Furthermore, the application process for a flat is a rather bureaucratic and challenging (B#5 District Official). The pandemic has further exacerbated the difficult conditions in shelters. Access for social workers to shelters failed for a long time, when no visitors and no volunteers were allowed in, the language

classes no longer took place and even the social team within the shelters were only approachable at certain times (B#2 District Official).

2. Education & Language

Berlin is implementing the concept of the so-called welcome classes for the arrival phase of children who do not, or only speak very little German. These classes have been criticized for separating groups of children, as they are not only taking place in different classrooms but often also have breaks at different times (B#5 District Official).

"I think the deficits are enormous. This has simply shown once again that there is an inequality in the education system that even intensified. (...) But we don't really know how to tackle it" (B#1 Senate Official).

Welcome classes do not teach subject-related lessons (B#2 District Official), but language classes and teachers can be poorly trained (B#5 District Official). In addition, there is a shortage of school places in general. As a result, children travel long distances to school or are not educated despite mandatory school attendance (B#5 District Official).

The pandemic brought the already existing educational inequality to the fore: children in shelters have been hit hardest (B#1 Senate Official). In the beginning, the shelters did not have access to Internet infrastructures and therefore the children missed classes (B#1 Senate Official). They had no access to tutoring opportunities either. For some children it was difficult to catch up afterwards and therefore, there are still noticeable differences in educational attainment.

"When I started in neighbourhood management 15 years ago, they were saying "They all have to speak German, we don't want any multilingual offers"" (B#1 Senate Official).

New immigrants can get a certificate of entitlement to attend an integration course issued by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) or a job centre. Only those with permanent residence will receive such certificates and they are then obliged to take part in such courses. All those with temporary acceptance, or Duldung (suspension of deportation), are not permitted to take part in these courses[3]. The adult education centres in Berlin (VHS) provide state-funded German classes for adults. However, the courses are frequently fully booked and it is especially difficult to find a place for the beginner A1 level classes. As a consequence of the pandemic, the resources for language learning became scarcer still, since teachers often fell ill, and class sizes were reduced significantly (B#5 District Official).

3. Health

According to the comprehensive program for the integration and participation of refugees (2018) by the Senate of Berlin, refugees have not been making extensive use of healthcare services due to language barriers and lack of knowledge about the healthcare system. Other specific barriers also exist for vulnerable refugees.

"As a new immigrant in Berlin, you simply have to have a lot of patience, because everything takes a really long time" (B#5 District Official).

These include scepticism towards authorities in the healthcare system stemming from discrimination, criminal persecution, and violence in their countries of origin. As an especially vulnerable group, pregnant women face hurdles to gaining access to healthcare due to the lack of information as well as a paucity of intercultural and linguistic competencies in consultation centres (Berlin 2018). These barriers exist despite the efforts that have been made by the Senate of Berlin between 2015 and 2017 to ensure basic medical care for asylum seekers as well as the intercultural opening of the healthcare system (Berlin 2018).

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[3] For a critical assessment see Williams, Daniel. 2018. "Suspect Outsiders or Prospective Citizens? Constructing the Immigrant/ German Boundary in Germany's Integration Courses" Social Sciences 7, no. 4: 61. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci7040061

Medibüro is a grassroots initiative which has been fighting for equal access to medical care for illegalized refugees since 1996. As other NGOs that aim to solve the problem of healthcare accessibility to refugees, *Medibüro* played an important role in the enactment of the Anonymized Health Certificates (Wilcke et.al, 2019:1).

Other challenges for undocumented migrants exist, such as those excluded from access to medical care due to the public health insurance system making possession of such documents compulsory until the summer of 2019. This problem has subsequently been solved through the implementation of Anonymized Health Certificates, which allow people to seek medical services without disclosing their residency status and thus, the fear of deportation (Wilke and Manoim 2019).

4. Mobility & Social Interaction

Berlin as an urban area has a relatively well-provisioned transport infrastructure. Refugees can apply for the Berlin Pass with which they are able to buy a discount ticket for public transport. However, there are variations in the use of public transport, as there are differences in mobility for different groups. Young men are very mobile, whereas elderly people, children or mothers are more likely to stay in the neighbourhood – primarily due to care obligations. One central issue is still a lack of availability of school places in the neighbourhood, therefore school travel routes sometimes become very long, even though the situation has improved (B#1 Senate Official).

The state of Berlin, as well as the districts and local initiatives, consider it important to create places for encounter, therefore many new meeting places have evolved e.g. in churches, community centres and in new spaces that were not used before. Furthermore, the offer has improved in existing refugee facilities (B#1 Senate Official). Even so, several programmes are not known or accessible (B#4 Integration Manager) and therefore not very well attended (B#3 Integration Manager). This may be partially attributed to the pandemic, but it is also a structural issue: as recreational activities are often seen as of lesser importance (more important

are finding a home, a job, and schools for the children) for refugees, it is challenging to motivate people to attend (B#2 District Official). Furthermore, the layout of neighbourhood streets shape the opportunities for social encounter and thus plays a role in the possibility of interaction in public space: in purely residential areas it is especially difficult to meet others as social infrastructure is missing (B#3 Integration Manager).

Neighbourhood Mothers started in three districts in 2007 as a local programme funded by the social city programme. In 2020 it became a state funded programme proving such support in all districts. Districts and youth welfare offices specify needs, for example which languages are needed for the people living in the district. The Neighbourhood mothers also partly work with families in refugee shelters, provide care and advise about nutrition and bringing-up for those in need; but refugees are not a particular target group.

This is particularly the case for the many shelters located at the periphery of the city. Furthermore, public space is not always a space for encounter. During the pandemic playgrounds in one area have not been used jointly but were unofficially temporally divided. Refugee families used them at lunchtime and the rest of the neighbourhood came later (B#1 Senate Official).

London

UK, Greater London Authority and Local Boroughs. The Greater London Authority (GLA) is responsible for the strategic administration of the 32 London boroughs and the City of London Corporation. By 2041 the total Greater London population is projected to increase by 22% to 10.8 million. The Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) British population is projected to increase by 32% to 4.94 million in 2041 (Greater London Authority 2022). The London Borough of Tower Hamlets, where most of the London interviews for this report were conducted, has a long history of accommodating new arrivals. Previous generations of refugees and migrants have shaped London and prospered over time (see:

Kershen 2015). Tower Hamlets has one of the highest rates of child and pensioner poverty in the UK, many of whom are migrants and refugees. "This is a major issue that we want to address as a local authority" (L#4, Strategy Manager, LBTH). The London Borough of Tower Hamlets had a total population of 308,000 in 2017 and ranks as the 16th most ethnically diverse local authority in England in terms of the number of ethnic groups. More than two-thirds (69%) of the borough's population belong to minority ethnic groups (Tower Hamlets Corporate Research Unit 2017). One of our interviews emphasised that a lack of resources to support refugees and asylum seekers is strongly felt by the Borough (L#1, Regeneration Manager, LBTH).

The central government's Immigration Acts of 2014, 2016 and 2022 and associated policies have created a so-called 'hostile environment' which applies to all residents – having to evidence their right to work, right to rent etc., but especially for those that are undocumented or are unable to prove their citizenship or immigration status. These national policies seek to limit access to housing, healthcare, bank accounts and driving licences (GLA 2018: 59). Such barriers and discrimination faced by migrants and refugees are mitigated by coordination through the Greater London Authority which facilitates and enables collaboration between central government, civil society and regional and local stakeholders for the benefit of both migrants and the wider community (GLA 2018: 59). The Greater London Authority (GLA) has set up a social integration team with three principles: equality, participation and relationships (L#5, GLA Manager). The Mayor of London continues to lobby central government for a fairer approach to immigration and opposes the discriminatory impacts of the hostile environment (GLA 2018: 61).

> *"The hostile environment policies seem to put up barriers to so many groups who need it the most"* (L#5, GLA Manager).

The Mayor's strategy for social integration outlines his opposition to the discriminatory impacts of the hostile environment as being challenging towards social integration, leaving

vulnerable people without access to essential services, increasing homelessness and undermining its intended aim of preventing irregular migration (GLA 2018: 61). Another important obstacle is the fragmentation of services. Overall, there has been an increase in delays in processing asylum applications meaning that asylum seekers are left in limbo for too long. They are unable to work and can find it challenging to access English learning provisions (GLA 2018: 60). This is echoed at the local level, whereas previously funding was coordinated by the government and finding organisations and putting migrants in contact with them was much easier, now it is very fragmented (L#3, Education Manager, LBTH).

1. Housing

In London, housing is one of the most important issues for newly arrived migrants (L#1, Regeneration Manager, LBTH). Especially those migrants who are subject to NRPF (No Recourse to Public Funds). They face unique barriers and have limited access to government funding, such as statutory payments and services, e.g., housing benefits or universal credit (L#5, GLA Manager). Furthermore, many people seeking asylum are accommodated in hotels (L#5, GLA Manager). The hotels were critiqued as not suitable for long-term accommodation, especially during the pandemic. Once refugee status has been granted, newly-recognised refugees are given 28 days before asylum support, including housing and basic living expenses, ends (GLA 2018: 60). This 'move-on' period has been documented to be too short, leaving insufficient time for refugees to receive their documentation, find somewhere to live and find work (GLA 2018: 60).

2. Education & Language

Being able to speak English can greatly improve Londoners' independence and confidence. It can also facilitate better access to healthcare, education, and job opportunities. Language classes are seen as important and work well in community settings where people live. Most migrants who don't speak English when they arrive in the UK want to improve their language proficiency. Yet they often face barriers due to the limited availability, sufficiency and flexibility of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) in London. They find themselves locked out of

language learning, and unable to progress to a level that would support their independence and integration (GLA 2022a: 63).

> **The Idea Store**: is a one stop shop for information about the LBTH. We have 5 Idea Stores, open seven days a week, including library services, adult learning programme, ca 800 courses, ranging from, languages, dance, fashion, textile, etc. We also offer courses that are health based (exercise, diet, etc.). The library service welcomes everyone and there is no need for a permanent address. Someone can arrive on the day and borrow books and get membership. That applies to everyone including new migrants. (L#2 Idea Store Manager, LBTH).

One of the most excluded groups are people who have been in London for 20 to 30 years, but are still at the beginner level of English language proficiency, and, have no prior education. They are mostly female and were at home with children for many years (L#3, Education Manager, LBTH). Another major issue is the complicated rules determining who gets access to language classes. Those who are teaching/ responsible for the classes have to check their passport first, see the visa and the residence permit, and then try to work out whether these people are eligible (L#3, Education Manager, LBTH). This is due to the significant funding cuts that have reduced capacity within the ESOL sector (Van Isacker et al. 2021:7). Many providers use more than one funding stream to fund the ESOL their organisation offers. This allows for flexibility but also makes the ESOL landscape complex and difficult to navigate for people with English language needs (GLA 2022b)

> *"Sometimes I feel like the border control". (L#3, Education Manager, LBTH)*

Waiting lists for language classes need to be streamlined according to our informant (L#3, Education Manager, LBTH). The development of partnerships between specialist advisers and community organisations, and an increase in community legal education, would also help to overcome this barrier (Van Isacker et al. 2021: 7). The Mayor of London has introduced a range of measures to make adult learning more accessible (GLA 2023).

3. Health

There are government-level constraints on primary healthcare services in London and the UK more generally for undocumented migrants. Access to healthcare can be challenging for minority residents in London, with many Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents suffering from a higher burden of multimorbidity (Tower Hamlets Inequality Commission 2021: 9). In terms of legal requirements, there is pressure on what can and cannot be provided (L#4, Strategy Manager, LBTH). "There has been extensive work around access to vaccinations, people don't have to disclose anything about their immigration status, you can still get vaccinated" (L#5, GLA Manager).

> **The Community Navigators Programme** collaborates with the Idea Stores in terms of outreach and being available to residents from a health point of view. They also help to counter loneliness, as well as assisting with mental health, being important for people to visit and spend a bit of time in a welcoming public space, it's good for your mind. (L#2 Idea Store Manager, LBTH).

The GLA has a specialised Migration Team working with different areas of migrant exclusion. For example, the health team works with GP registration barriers, etc. (L#5, GLAManager). The asylum contingency hotel situation, partly driven by pandemic-related emergencies, led to some important lessons being learned in regard to health inclusion and mental health impacts of temporary hotel accommodation on new migrants (L#5, Ibid).

4. Mobility & Social Interaction

Incorporating pedestrian movement patterns, public transport infrastructures and detail on migrant mobility and diversity is a challenging task. For newly arrived migrants, public transport accessibility is significant, for example, it allows them access to specific urban resources such as places of worship and places for ethnic food consumption, both of which can also have a central role in creating opportunities for social interaction.

Religion and faith have a special social significance for migrants and ethnic communities alike. There is an important factor of communal support within different faith communities (L#4, Strategy Manager, LBTH). The Faith Forum allows for an interfaith space for Tower Hamlets' local faith organisations to meet and collaborate. This has had an important role for faith organisations that take a role in creating cohesion activities, particularly when they have been challenged by far-right groups (L#4, ibid). During the pandemic mosques and temples had a central role as communal institutions that provided food banks, facilitated community contacts and social interaction. The London Borough of Tower Hamlets has a municipal budget dedicated to offering free events, e.g., for children and families, during religious festivals and school holidays. There are several activities free of charge, which are also available to migrant and marginal groups, such as sports, cycling, bowling, cinema, arts and crafts etc. (L#4, ibid).

Stockholm

The Stockholm Region includes 26 municipalities and has 2.3 million inhabitants. The expected increase in the coming decade is 12%. The share of population born outside of Sweden is 26%, a share that is expected to be 29% in ten years' time (Region Stockholm 2020). The City of Sundbyberg has 49,400 inhabitants and is the densest municipality in Sweden. The share having a job is 82% for people born in Sweden while it is 59% for people born outside of Sweden (RUFS 2018, p. 17) According to the Regional Plan for Stockholm, RUFS, the region is segregated and segregation has increased since the mid-1990s. Differences are identified between geographical areas and affects for example income levels, health aspects, education levels and life expectancy (RUFS 2018: 17). The region is characterized by a housing shortage that is reported in all 26 municipalities. The population increase results in a higher need for other functions and services as well, for example, schools,

libraries, public transportation and technical infrastructure.

1. Housing

The urban landscape outside of the most central part of Stockholm is to a large extent characterized by the neighbourhood unit principles, which are rather challenging since they create a fragmented urban landscape as well as a less diverse housing stock (S#1, regional planner). Important in relation to this has been the development of thematic maps[4] illustrating the socio-economic differences across the region as well as spatial patterns of ethnic diversity (e.g., socioeconomic index in the Regional Plan RUFS 2018: 183) (S#1,2, regional planners). Such analyses have been crucial for highlighting problems related to housing segregation and inequalities. Our informants state that it is important that future development is located where access to various resources is provided and that also preserve nature in those areas which have a potential to host ecosystem services and to provide spaces for recreation (S#1,2,3,7, regional planners, municipal planner). Stockholm has a very difficult housing situation acknowledged in the municipal Comprehensive Plan for Sundbyberg (2018) as well as in the Regional Plan (2018) (#1,2,3,8, regional planners, art institution director). There is a housing shortage, a problem that grows as the number of residents increases rapidly. There is especially a lack of affordable housing which has an impact both on disadvantaged groups as well as those newly arrived (S#2, regional planner). Many socio-economic disadvantaged neighbourhoods are characterized by overcrowding, which is highlighted by both the regional and the municipal representatives (S#3, regional planner and S#7, municipal planner). The Region Planning office has analysed where such a situation occurs, using maps that are argued to increase the understanding of this problem (S#3 regional planner). The political prioritization of the housing issue is seen as important, especially for groups with lower income levels of which many are newly arrived

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[4] Living conditions were mapped as part of the Stockholm project. Approaches and methods were applied, where analyses illustrate the accessibility to amenities and resources identified by the officials during meetings and interviews. The maps reveal large inequalities across the region and within the municipality of Sundbyberg. The results illustrate that the Stockholm Region

as well as Sundbyberg municipality suffer from unequal living conditions that are the result of how the region/city has been planned and designed. The officials argue that maps that could illustrate the state of the region could be important in assisting the formulation of new strategies for urban development as well as for the provision ofdifferent activities.

groups (S#3, regional planner). The Regional Plan 2050 proposes an expansive development of housing units in the region (S#1,3, regional planners), including 22 000 housing units per year (RUFS 2018, p. 36). As it is now, the housing market responds primarily to the demand (the willingness to pay) rather than to the housing need, a situation which is highly challenging (RUFS 2018, p.28). When it comes to the segregation issue, this is not very well addressed in the Regional Plan, nor in the Comprehensive plan for the City of Sundbyberg. For refugees, the Migration Authority sometimes organises and coordinates dedicated accommodation (examples from 2015 as well as during the wave of recent immigrants from Ukraine). Some of these are however temporary. There are no permanent shelters specifically for newly arrived immigrants to Sweden; rather, the accommodation is most often integrated into the public housing stock. There are shelters in Stockholm that are open for homeless people in general, but not specifically providing accommodation for refugees.

2. Education & Language

Education and access to schools is described as a key aspect for disadvantaged groups as well as for those newly arrived in order to support integration into society (S#1,2,3,4,5,7,8, regional planners, regional culture coordinators, art institution director). Schools are free of charge in Sweden and open also for refugees. Refugees contact the municipality that then arranges for children to join schools. In addition, there are opportunities provided for children to join the so- called culture schools, where they may play music and sing. This gives all children opportunities for a meaningful activity after school and is especially supportive for disadvantaged groups (S#4, regional culture coordinator). Six of the informants emphasize language courses and 'Swedish for immigrants' as a key activity (S#1,2,4,5,6,7, regional planners, regional culture coordinators, municipal planners). Language cafés and similar are open to anyone and may be found in churches, libraries, or public community houses. This is an example of a successful initiative that has been running for many years in the country. Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) is open only for those having a residence permit so unfortunately not for newly arrived (S#5, regional culture coordinator).

3. Health

In general, healthcare is open for all inhabitants as well as for newly arriving migrants and is mainly paid through the tax system. It is organized through healthcare centres and hospitals (S#1,2, regional planners). However, access to these institutions varies widely.[5] Information about healthcare is available online in many languages[6] covering several immigrant groups (S#1,2,3,4,5, regional planners, regional culture coordinators). The Stockholm Region analysed accessibility to hospitals and health clinics in a collaborative project with the Health Department that showed to be very fruitful, providing a foundation for decisions regarding future strategies (S#1, regional planner). The survey and the maps included aspects of accessibility to healthcare using public transportation (and not only accessibility using a private car). For the officials who work at the Health Department, the accessibility analysis was revealing, and served to support the formulation of future strategies, while previously the location of the facility had seemed rather irrelevant (S#1,3, regional planners).

4. Mobility & Social Interaction

In Stockholm, the Region is responsible for public transportation. Public Transportation and access is argued to be essential for newly arrived as well as disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in order to reach urban resources and amenities. The public transportation system in itself provides an arena for encounter between socio-economic groups in society (S#1,2,3,5,7,8, regional planners, regional culture coordinators, municipal planners, and art institution directors). The public transportation system is well-developed in Stockholm and used by a large share of the population (#2,3, regional planners). The

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[5] As part of the MAPURBAN project, analyses of accessibility to healthcare clinics and to hospitals in the Stockholm region were made. The maps illustrate large inequalities across the region.
[6] Languages on the web page https://www.1177.se/ (accessed 12 September 2022): Swedish, Arabic, English, Finnish, French,

Jiddisch, Lule sami, North sami, Persian, Polish, Romani, Russian, Serbian, Somali, South Sami, Spanish, Tigrinya, Tornedalen Finnish, Trader Romani, Turkish, and Ukrainian.

system includes commuting trains, subways, trams, and busses as well as transportation services for people with special needs. Still, according to some of the informants, more investments are needed, as described in the Regional Plan (2018) (S#2,3, regional planners). However, ticket prices are relatively high, meaning that disadvantaged groups are constrained in their mobility, even though many of the deprived neighbourhoods are well-provided with subway and bus connections. One informant stated that it is also important to improve the conditions of perceived personal safety in the public transportation network (S#1, Regional planner). At the municipal level, there has been comprehensive work regarding developing safe school routes (S#7, municipal planner). These are initiatives to promote children to walk and/or bike to school. Thus, interventions are implemented to improve the pedestrian and biking network around school buildings. Public spaces – streets, squares, local centres as well as parks – often perform as social arenas, by providing opportunities to be co-present with other people and with the established majority population (Zukin 1995; Young 1996; Legeby 2013).

Public spaces that are well integrated in terms of spatial accessibility, and are designed to encourage occupation and pedestrian movement, are especially valuable. Strategies and objectives have been formulated in order to develop Sundbyberg towards becoming a connected, inclusive as well as an equal city (RUFS 2018: 24-32). The Regional Plan has an objective that describes the region as a spatially connected region. Moreover, policies regarding public spaces and parks require their design to be inclusive, safe and also accessible for people with disabilities (RUFS 2018: 38-40). Other functions and institutions such as libraries, schools, culture institutions as well as sports facilities are identified as potential social arenas where integration into society may be supported (S#1,2,4,5,6,7,8, regional planners, regional culture coordinators, art institution director). Some of the informants stress the need to improve access to recreation, sport and green areas since such areas are places with low barriers for usage, and where people may potentially encounter diverse societal groups, beside the positive effects coming from physical activities (S#1,3,4,6,7, regional planners, regional culture

coordinator). This calls for more analyses investigating the accessibility to social infrastructure as well as parks and nature areas in order to identify unequal living conditions and address under-provided neighbourhoods in future development plans and programmes (S#1,2,3, regional planners).

An example of a successful initiative in the City of Sundbyberg is the Kitchen Square art project (Strand Ruin 2022). The initiative invites key local people, working with recent female migrants, to cook food in a kitchen placed in public space. The Kitchen Square creates a caring and inclusive social arena where social networks are strengthened and further developed (S#8, art institution director).

Reflections

1. Housing

In all three cities, access to housing is a major difficulty for refugees and other marginalised people. In Germany, refugees have to stay in shelters by law for the first months after arrival, which often becomes years. Due to a shortage of affordable housing and discrimination in the housing market, the search for a private flat can be a very long journey. In London, asylum seekers are sometimes placed in hotels as contingency housing measure and these settings operate alongside a significant lack of adequate and affordable housing. In Stockholm, the Migration Authority is responsible for housing new arrivals but to a large extent, they are dependent on what the municipalities are able to provide. There is an obvious shortcoming of available housing. In addition, in Stockholm (as in Berlin) housing shortages make the situation very difficult for those with limited resources.

2. Education & Language

With regard to language learning, there are barriers in all three cities. In London, some asylum seekers have limited means to participate in language classes for the first six months; The ESOL landscape is complex and difficult to navigate for people with English language needs, while this is the time when they need it most. Furthermore, unless asylum seekers are eligible to access public funds, organisations may charge for interpretation services. In Stockholm today, language cafés facilitated by volunteers are open to those without a resident permit, while Swedish for immigrants is only for those having a permit. In Berlin, official language and integration courses are only allowed for refugees who have received a status with prospects of staying in Germany, those who received a "Duldung" suspension of deportation and holders of residence permits. However, waiting lists are sometimes very long and lack sufficient capacity. Thus, all three cities have barriers to language learning.

In Berlin, children are obliged to stay in so-called welcome classes, separated from other children with limited teaching of other subjects mainly offering German language classes. In Stockholm and London, this is not the case. In London, libraries such as Idea Stores in LBTH take on many tasks and provide adult education ESOL services that go beyond the provision of books.

3. Health

In London, the provision of health services is determined by the UK National Health Service (NHS), in Sweden, the Region Stockholm is responsible for healthcare, and in Germany healthcare is organized through health insurance for citizens. Thus, the different public health provision scales play an important role in their accessibility for newly arrived migrants. Healthcare is especially critical for newly arrived persons with no legal status. In most cases, health services can't be denied but may be charged for and vary across the three cities. In London, in some cases, asylum seekers are not accessing healthcare to avoid getting questioned about their migration status. In Berlin, for many years a non-profit organisation has organised health services for undocumented people who are in need of medical aid.

4. Mobility & Social Interaction

Not all newly arrived and migrants are mobile within the cities. Children, elderly people and women are much more likely to rely on the area they live in (Legeby 2013). Therefore, the provision of infrastructure for daily needs within reach is of great importance. Access to public transportation is also crucial since it provides access to central public spaces, hospitals, and government offices among others. In Stockholm having access to public transportation is seen as a key amenity. The informants highlight both the importance of good access to public transportation and that it is perceived as safe, but also that it is not too expensive.

Recommendations

Berlin

- Due to the complex legal system, refugees are often not free to choose where they want to live. Therefore, those legally allowed to reside in Germany in the long term should obtain greater prospects for remaining in Berlin if they chose (Amt für Statistik Berlin Brandenburg 2022).

- The funding structure for Berlin leaves districts very little room for manoeuvre, especially with regard to newly arrived people. Therefore, funds should permit provision according to rapidly changing needs (B#5 District Official).

- Shelter accommodation has become the established system in Berlin (and Germany), not only for the arrival phase but as a long-term scenario. Since this is one of the major issues for integrating refugees in Germany, the system needs to change so people can get the chance to move into decentralised apartments without consideration of immigrant status.

- The Berlin welcome classes for children have been criticised for a long time and need to be fundamentally re-thought. For legal counselling, the capacities for people seeking consultation are insufficient and should therefore be increased.

- The differing needs of newly arrived refugee women should be further considered. While this report has highlighted differences, especially with access to urban spaces and mobility, the consequences of this reach far beyond the four thematic areas. Finally, issues of racism and discrimination must be structurally addressed and resolved.

London

- The focus on the Borough of Tower Hamlets revealed that local authorities must make public infrastructure as accessible as possible to accommodate local community needs, especially for newcomers (L#1, Regeneration Manager, LBTH).

- An important aspect of language learning is the development of partnerships between specialist advisers and community organisations. The increase in legal education in regards to refugee needs would help to overcome the language barriers. Furthermore, the difficult access to language learning affects employment. Thus, access to studies for professional qualifications and employability, in general, needs to be reconsidered.

- Interfaith provision is required for faith organisations to meet and collaborate. This has had an important role as faith organisations commonly take an active role in community cohesion and can be important facilitators of social interaction.

- At the time of writing UK government policies regarding immigration enforcement create severe challenges to social integration, leaving vulnerable people without access to essential services, increase homelessness and risk undermining its intended aim of preventing irregular migration (GLA 2018: 61).

Stockholm

- In order to create equal living conditions on both the regional and the city scales future plans and programs need to address identified inequalities. It is especially important when considering interventions that could improve life chances where socially disadvantaged people are located in areas with fewer resources. Examples of key amenities highlighted by the informants are schools, libraries, culture facilities, public transportation, healthcare clinics and hospitals as well as sport facilities.

- There is an identified need for municipal 'pilots' that could help newly arrived people to navigate the Swedish system, its rules and regulations, and provide information on opportunities for employment. There are examples of such pilots in a few municipalities but according to the officials, similar initiatives would make a large difference if introduced in all municipalities in the region.

- There is a need for increased collaboration between different actors. Well-developed collaboration between public authorities would be more resilient and are more robust than if only one (or few) actors are engaged.

- The fact that inhabitants use resources also in other municipalities than where they live calls for larger collaboration between municipalities as well as between the two different planning levels, the regional scale and the municipal level.

- Conditions such as access to key resources and places for the newly arrived can be developed and modified through urban planning and urban design interventions. To be able to achieve a more inclusive society these aspects need to have a greater policy focus.

Across All Three Cities:

- Tensions between the local and national government policies are evident in all three cities. This holds important lessons about the need to foster better coordination and cooperation of migration policies and provision infrastructures across different political institutional scales.

- Finding accommodations poses great challenges for newly arriving people where there is a limited housing market. While all three cities handle this differently, it highlights that public officials must consider urban planning policies that provide long-term accommodation for refugees moving away from the shelters and hotels, but in decentralised apartments with equal living standards.

- All three cities have barriers for newly arriving refugees to learn the native language at present. Therefore, the provision of official language courses upon arrival with a certificate at the end for all should be a high priority in all cases.

Maps

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The following section presents exemplary map-pings of availabilities to social infrastructures. The aim of these is to map different physically available social infrastructures across the three cities to provide a basis for comparative insights. The mappings are based on spatial analyses measuring for every street how far away and how many libraries there are available. In doing so, geographic differences within a city as well as across different cities can be observed and com-municated. It is important to note, that while the existence of such infrastructures does not guar-antee *access* for a newcomer, their absence most likely indicates a lack of such *access*. For ex-ample, small details such as how the entrance of a library looks can have an intimidating effect on a newcomer–and so prevent their interaction with the institution. Such potential access barri-ers, however, are not the focus of these mappings. Instead, the focus is on visualising dif-ferences in *potential access governed by physical availability alone*
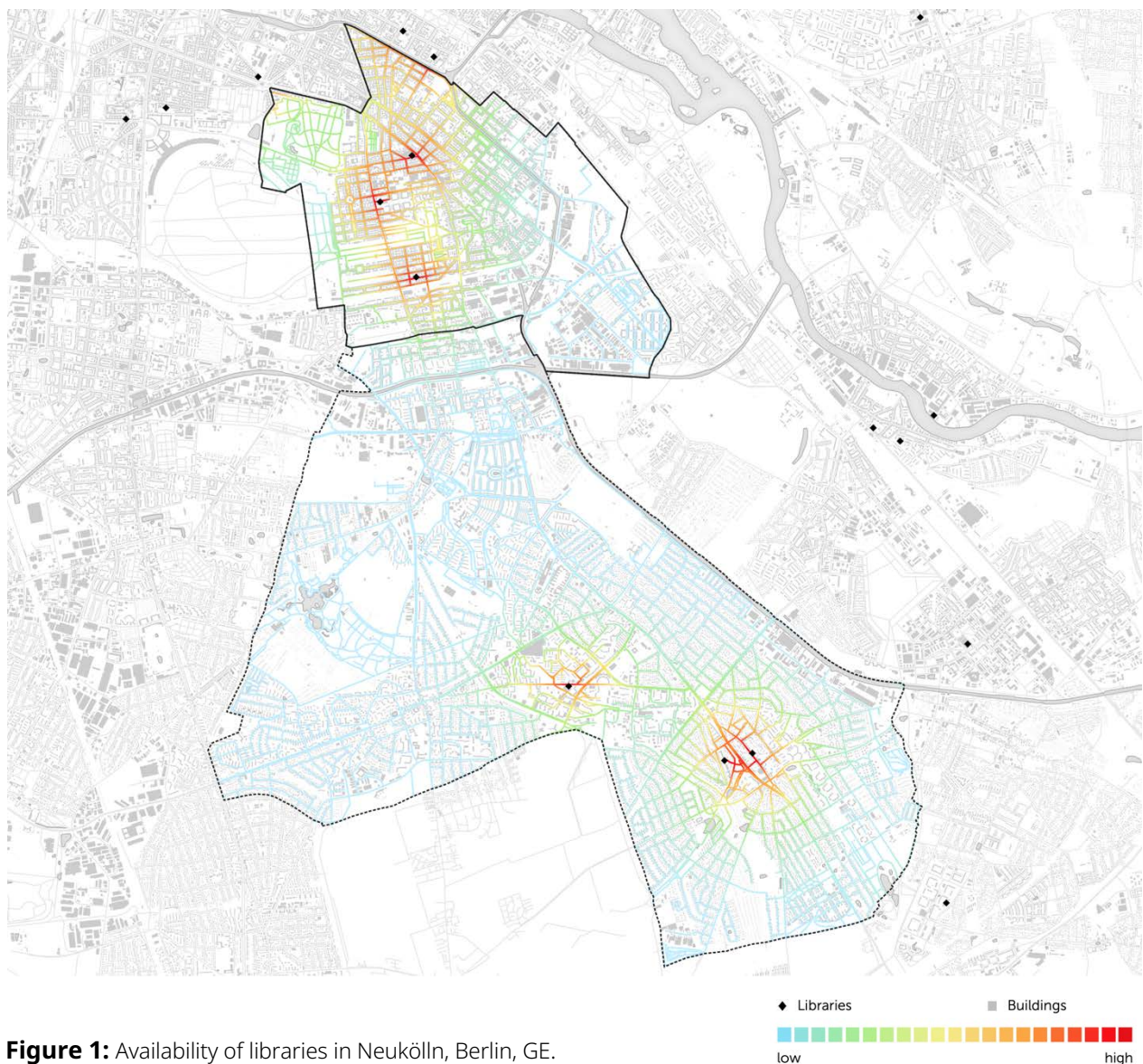

◆ Libraries   ▪ Buildings

low   high

Figure 1: Availability of libraries in Neukölln, Berlin, GE.
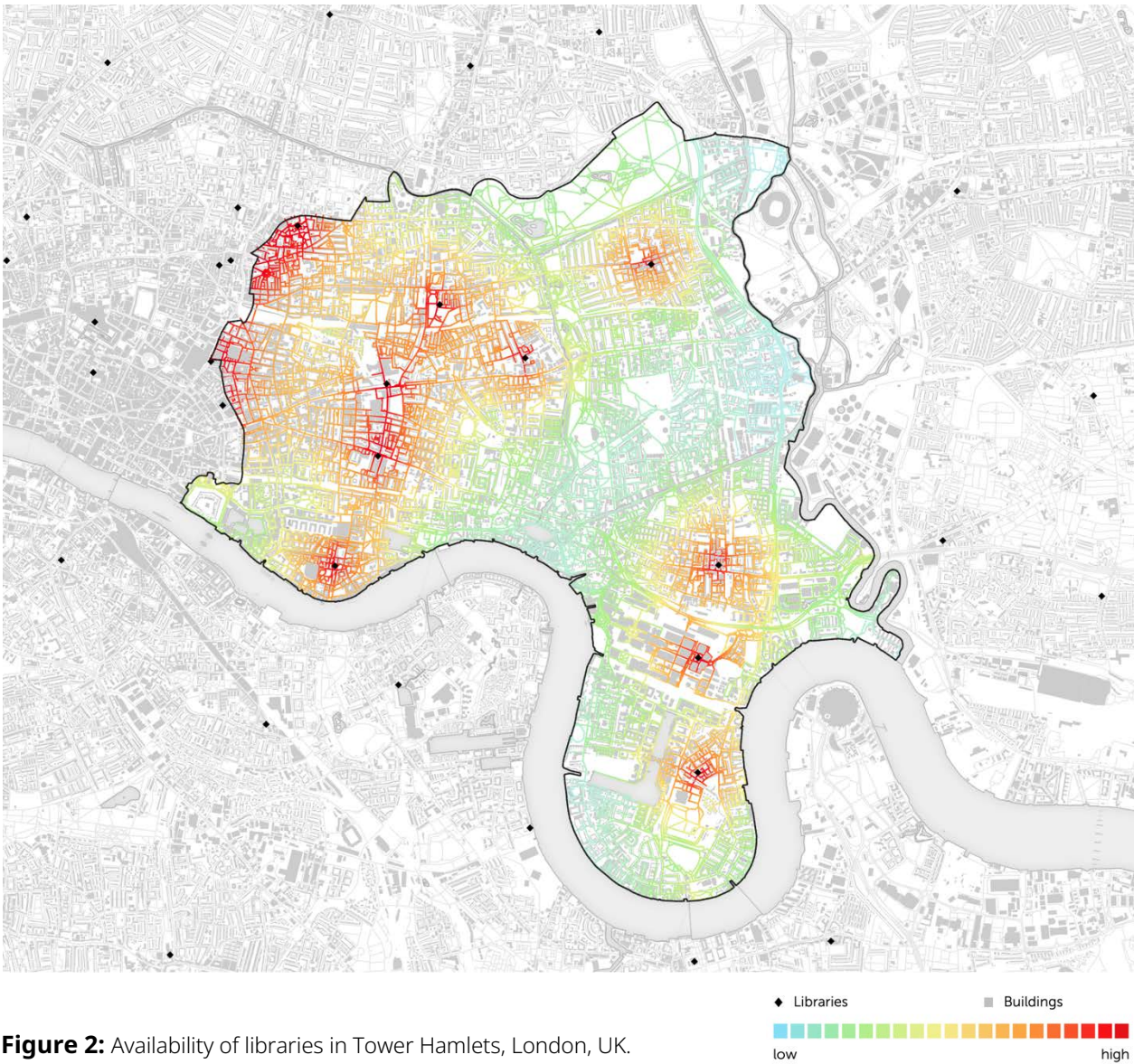
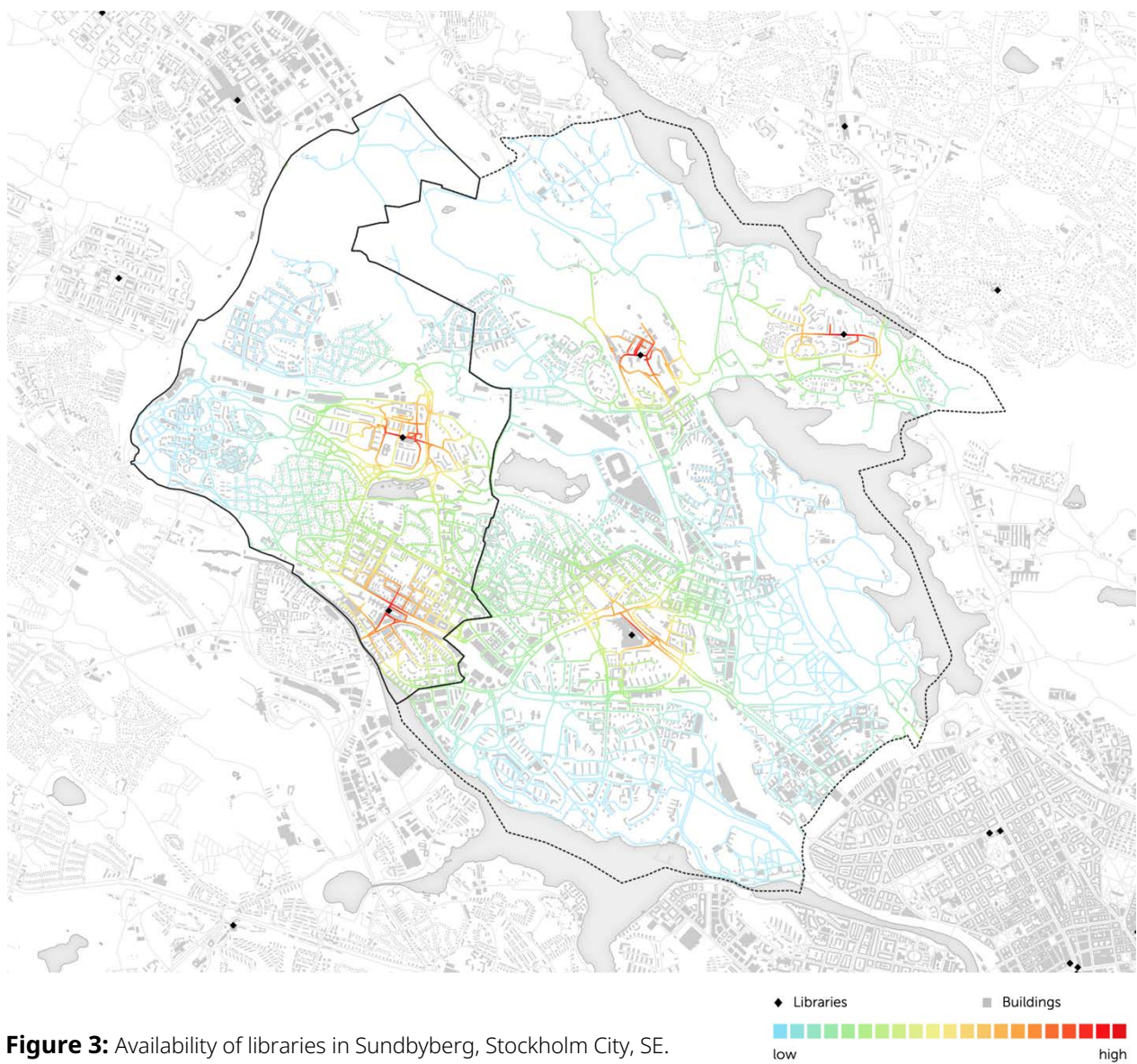**Figure 2:** Availability of libraries in Tower Hamlets, London, UK.

Figure 3: Availability of libraries in Sundbyberg, Stockholm City, SE.

Interviews

Berlin Interviews

B#1 Senate Official, Department for Urban Development and Housing.
B#2 District Official Working with Refugees and Migrants in District A.
B#3 Integration Manager at the district level in District B.
B#4 Integration Manager at the district level in District A.
B#5 District Official Working with Refugees and Migrants in District B.

London Interviews

L#1 Regeneration Manager, London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
L#2 Idea Store Manager (public library service) London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
L#3 Education Manager, London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
L#4 Strategy Manager, London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
L#5 Manager Migration Unit, Greater London Authority

Stockholm Interviews

S#1 Regional planner
S#2 Regional planner
S#3 Regional planner
S#4 Regional culture coordinator
S#5 Regional culture coordinator
S#6 Regional culture coordinator
S#7 Municipal planner
S#8 Art Institution Director

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