



*Governing Urban Diversity:  
Creating Social Cohesion, Social Mobility and Economic Performance in Today's Hyper-diversified Cities*

## Report 2m

### Fieldwork inhabitants, Tallinn (Estonia)

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<b>Work package 6:</b>	Fieldwork Inhabitants
<b>Deliverable nr.:</b>	D 6.1
<b>Lead partner:</b>	Partner 10 (EKKE)
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<b>Nature:</b>	Report
<b>Dissemination level:</b>	PP
<b>Status:</b>	Final version
<b>Date:</b>	24 July 2015

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*This project is funded by the European Union under the  
7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme; Theme: SSH.2012.2.2.2-1;  
Governance of cohesion and diversity in urban contexts*



This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no. 319970.

*To be cited as: Holvandus, J., Pastak, I., Leetmaa, K. and Tammaru, T. (2015). Fieldwork inhabitants, Tallinn (Estonia). Tartu: University of Tartu.*

*This report was put together by the authors and revised on the basis of the valuable comments, suggestions, and contributions of all DIVERCITIES partners.*

*The views expressed in this report are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission.*

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## 1. Introduction

There is a growing conventional wisdom in writings on European cities that presents them as centres of ‘super-diversity’ (Vertovec, 2007). This refers specifically to their increasing ethnic diversity and to the demographic diversity between and within such ethnic groups. However, cities are becoming increasingly diverse, not only in socioeconomic, social and ethnic terms, but also with respect to lifestyles, attitudes and activities. To indicate this enormous diversity, we proposed to use the term hyper-diversity (Tasan-Kok *et al.*, 2013).

Within cities, groups can live segregated or rather mixed. Urban neighbourhoods may be fairly homogeneous residential areas in terms of housing and population, but they may also be diverse with respect to types of housing (tenure, dwelling type, price) and population categories (income, ethnicity, household composition, age). In addition, individuals who belong in the same demographic category may possess different lifestyles and attitudes or involve themselves in a wide range of activities. Some may, for example, have very neighbourhood-oriented lives, with all their friends living and activities taking place in a very small area, while others may have their social activities stretched over the whole city or even beyond. Residents of mixed urban neighbourhoods may happily live together, live parallel lives, or be in open conflict with each other (Tasan-Kok *et al.*, 2013).

This report is written as a part of the EU-FP7 DIVERCITIES project. In this project, we aim to find out how urban hyper-diversity affects the social cohesion and social mobility of the residents of deprived and dynamic urban areas and the economic performance of the entrepreneurs with their enterprises in such areas. In this report, we focus on the findings from our interviews with the residents in which we explored their experiences of living in a hyper-diverse environment and how it affected their lives.

This general aim can be broken down into more detailed and concrete research questions. They are central in specific chapters of this report:

1. Why did the people move to the diverse area they live in now? To what extent has the diversity of the area been a pull-factor? Or were other aspects (such as availability of inexpensive dwellings) a much stronger motive for settling in the present area? (Chapter 3)
2. How do the residents think about the area they live in? Do the residents see their neighbourhood’s diversity as an asset or a liability? (Chapter 4)
3. How do the residents make use of the diversified areas they live in? Do they actively engage in diversified relations and activities in their neighbourhood? To what extent is the area they live in more important than other areas in terms of activities? (Chapter 5)
4. To what extent is the diversity of the residential area important for social cohesion? Which elements foster social cohesion, which elements hinder the development of social cohesion in the area? (Chapter 6)
5. To what extent is the diversity of the neighbourhood important for social mobility? Which elements foster social mobility and which elements hinder social mobility? (Chapter 7)
6. How are diversity-related policies perceived by the inhabitants of the area? (Chapter 8)

The research in this report focuses on the city of Tallinn. This city currently has 435,972 inhabitants as in June 2015. It is a diverse city in terms of population where almost half of the population are Russian-speaking ethnic groups: Russians, Belarussians, and Ukrainians. Therefore, they are considered as one group based on the daily spoken Russian language. Also,

the housing environment reaches from older low-rise suburbs to the high-rise panel housing areas of the Soviet period.

Within Tallinn, the research takes place in the municipal district of Põhja-Tallinn or Northern Tallinn. This area has 59,098 inhabitants with 68 different ethnic groups. Compared to other districts of Tallinn, people with a lower social status are over-represented there on the one hand. On the other hand, it can be considered as one of the most diversified areas in the city, not only in terms of the social composition of its population (older long-term residents living side-by-side with newcomers), but also as regards its geographical diversity, i.e. diversity with respect to neighbourhood and housing characteristics. The linguistic situation is important, too. Estonians speak Estonian and most of the minorities (90% according to the last, 2011 census) speak Russian as their mother tongue. Estonians, especially young Estonians, do not speak Russian and only about 41% of the minorities speak Estonian. The Northern Tallinn District consists of neighbourhoods that are in very different phases of urban change, ranging from fast-gentrifying sub-districts that are mostly located close to the city centre to the oldest and worst large housing estates of the city located mostly in the periphery of the district.

This geographical and housing mixture in the district is mainly the result of Soviet era policies and urban planning decisions. The wooden housing neighbourhoods like Kalamaja, Pelgulinn, and Kopli were built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century for workers of the industries located in Northern Tallinn. After WWII, the main housing policy foresaw development of panel housing and demolition of the wooden housing areas (Pastak, 2014). Due to lack of resources, wooden architecture is today mixed with panel housing areas like Pelguranna and Karjamaa. In addition, during the Soviet era, the waterfront was closed for military as well as for industrial purposes. These facilities which are now open for public are also undergoing a gentrification process. As elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe, inner city districts received little public investments in the socialist period, but are attractive destinations for gentrifiers since the collapse of state socialism.

We conducted 51 interviews with the residents of Northern Tallinn. The interviews were held between September 2014 and February 2015. In the next chapter, we will first give more information on the methodology that was adopted. This is then followed by six chapters in which we will answer the research questions above. In the conclusions, we summarise the main results and address our main questions. We will also give some broader guidance for policy-making.

## 2. The interviewees

Given the topic of our research—urban diversity—we aimed to create a diverse sample that would reflect the important aspects of diversity in the case study area of Northern Tallinn. First, to cover the main ethnic groups and the groups that have moved to the area in different periods, we predefined quotas related to the ethnicity and the time of arrival to the district (see table 1).

**Table 1.** Predefined groups of the interviewees: ethnicity and the main waves of in-migration into Northern Tallinn\*

	Estonians	Russian-speakers	Other ethnic groups
Born in Northern Tallinn or moved to the district before 2000	10 interviews	10 interviews	0 interviews (This group has little effect on diversity, in-migration was relatively small)
Moved to the district after 2000	10 interviews	5 interviews	5 interviews

\* 10 interviewees were left for balancing the sample in later stages of the field work

These predefined groups were created on the basis of ethnicity and length of residence in the district. The end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s was a pivotal moment in the development of the district because of the beginning of a large-scale gentrification process in that period. Since then, the diversity of the local population has changed significantly.

Besides these key indicators, we followed the neighbourhood and housing diversity of the district. Northern Tallinn consists of eight neighbourhoods (Figure 1). The main panel housing areas built in the Soviet years are Pelguranna, Sitsi, to a lesser extent Pelgulinna and Karjamaa, but even in these neighbourhoods low-rise older housing exists (Figure 2). Pelguranna is the first Soviet time housing estate of Tallinn and the largest one in Northern Tallinn. Low-rise wooden or stone housing areas (originating from the pre-WWII period) are found in Kalamaja, Pelgulinna and Kopli, but some larger apartment buildings (originating from the Soviet era) exist in these neighbourhoods as well. For this reason, we have chosen interviewees living in different types of dwellings.

For example, we sought for people living in panel dwellings, low-rise dwellings of up to three storeys and single-family homes. We also targeted people living in social housing which, in the Estonian case, is mostly built for the very low income people. In addition, we aimed to choose participants who represent residents from different age, gender, and income levels to better match the existing hyper-diversity of the district.



**Figure 1. Neighbourhoods of Northern Tallinn.**



**Figure 2. Examples of Soviet time housing estates and low-density areas of wooden dwellings.**

## 2.1. Selection procedure: how did we select our interviewees?

First interviewees were found through the existing contacts obtained from previous research on governance arrangements (see Leetmaa *et al.*, 2014): local initiatives, non-profit organisations, housing associations. After the first entry was established, we proceeded by using the snowball method to find specific respondents from the predefined categories. We followed one network to the maximum of three ‘snowballs’ and then established a new entry point, therefore purposefully avoiding being closed within one network.

The aim was to get a ‘hyper-diverse’ sample that would at the same time be open for any indication of diversity, i.e. trying to reveal those forms of diversity which might be present, but cannot be predefined. Under the predefined quotas we listed different groups based on income and mobility, like white-collars and the homeless, but considered other groups such as religious groups (see table 2). Income and mobility were chosen as the indicators that together reflect the overall socioeconomic diversity in Northern Tallinn. We first contacted the NGO Pro Civitas<sup>1</sup> to reach disadvantaged groups like the Russian-speaking long-term unemployed, the Maritime Museum<sup>2</sup> to reach the young, employed students living in Kalamaja, and the Pelgulinna Neighbourhood Association<sup>3</sup> to get in touch with the elderly. In addition, the photo competition “Diversity in Northern Tallinn”<sup>4</sup> was launched in order to get acquainted with the ‘ordinary’ locals living in Northern Tallinn as well as to send out an open call for respondents. Finally, English-speaking interviewees were reached through personal contacts.

**Table 2.** Initial groups based on income and mobility

	Higher income	Lower income
Mobile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- White-collars</li> <li>- Academics</li> <li>- Foreign temporary residents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Homeless people, drug addicts, criminals, prostitutes</li> <li>- Creative people, artists and musicians, hipsters</li> <li>- University students</li> </ul>
Community-/neighbourhood-centred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Young mothers</li> <li>- Diversity witnesses: local shopkeepers, social workers, etc.</li> <li>- Community leaders/neighbourhood activists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Elderly people</li> <li>- Industrial workers</li> <li>- People connected to church activities</li> </ul>

## 2.2. Which groups did we miss?

We have reached an excellent overall representation of the above mentioned groups. The shares of the respondents moving into Northern Tallinn before or after the year 2000 were equal, all the main ethno-linguistic groups were represented (27 Estonian-speaking, 20 Russian-speaking and 4 English-speakers). Also, the number of interviewees from each neighbourhood follows the share of the neighbourhoods’ population in Northern Tallinn. The sampling is balanced in terms of different income groups, and the representation of male and female respondents is almost equal—24 male and 27 female—which nicely represents their actual percentages: 45% male and 55% female residents in Northern Tallinn.

<sup>1</sup>An NGO working with the long-term unemployed

<sup>2</sup>The Maritime Museum in Kalamaja neighbourhood

<sup>3</sup>Can be considered an emerged subgroup of the elderly

<sup>4</sup>A photo competition organised by the research team, results available: [www.cmus.ut.ee](http://www.cmus.ut.ee)

There is thus no over- or under-representation in the full sample, but it does exist within the main ethnic groups. Among the Russian-speakers, older people and females are slightly over-represented whereas among the Estonian-speakers, younger people and men were interviewed more frequently compared to their overall presence in the district.

### 2.3. Some general characteristics of the interviewees

As mentioned, in total, we reached 27 Estonian-, 20 Russian- and 4 English-speaking respondents. 26 of the interviewees have lived in Northern Tallinn since before the year 2000. With respect to age groups, we interviewed 10 people aged 18–30, 15 aged 31–45, 15 aged 46–60, and 11 aged 61+ in four different age groups. 27 of the interviewees lived in panel housing areas, 17 in wooden housing areas, 4 in social housing, and 3 in private houses. With respect to the average income per household member, 16 respondents received below the minimum wage<sup>5</sup>, there were 14 respondents receiving from at least the minimum wage to up to 600 euros, 13 received 601–1200 euros per month, 6 received 1200+ euros per month, and 2 did not respond to the income inquiry.

## 3. Housing choice and residential mobility

### 3.1. Introduction

The classic work by Rossi (1956), *Why Families Move*, related choice of residence most and foremost to changes in the life cycle of people. The important choice factors for residential mobility revolve around the housing, the physical structure of the neighbourhood and the amenities it provides, with certain socioeconomic and ethnic characteristics of the people living in them being important, too (Amerigo, 2002). The housing career and the stage of it influence mobility: households move more likely in the beginning and less in the “top-stage” of the housing career (Bolt and van Kempen, 2002), although the desire to move does not always result in actual moving (Mulder, 1996). The housing choice of people is thus a complex decision and it hinges on several individual, housing and neighbourhood characteristics (Coulter *et al.*, 2015; Hedman *et al.*, 2011; Kley, 2011; Kulu and Milewski, 2007; Mulder, 1993).

Tallinn is one of the smallest capital cities in Europe and it is spatially compact because of the modest suburbanisation in the Soviet times (Tammaru, 2001). Population size, spatial reach, residential mobility and neighbourhood diversity are related to each other, and segregation tends to be higher in large cities (Iceland, 2004; Morgan, 1980). In smaller and more compact cities such as Tallinn, it is easier to reach one’s workplace from different parts of the city because of the easier commute (Toomet *et al.*, 2015). However, Gordon and Vickerman (1982) explain that in smaller cities, residential preferences could be more easily translated into actual moves, since the proximity of the workplace location or other places is less important.

It therefore takes less effort to translate desires into moves in a city where the market, e.g., the share of private ownership of the housing, plays an important role in residential mobility. The share of private ownership is very high in Tallinn and the share of public housing forms less than 5% of the housing stock (Tammaru *et al.*, 2015). Previous research reveals that there are

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<sup>5</sup> Official minimum wage in 2014: 355 euros gross

important ethnic differences in the residential mobility in Tallinn, with Estonians being much more mobile compared to ethnic minorities (Tammaru *et al.*, 2013).

Our research area, Northern Tallinn, is ethnically diverse and is undergoing rapid gentrification in the parts with pre-WWII housing. The historic buildings provide a certain charm that makes the area very attractive to in-migrants. The main choice within Northern Tallinn is between those gentrifying areas (e.g., Kalamaja, Pelgulinn), and the Soviet era panel housing areas (e.g., Pelguranna) that also exist in the area, as well as between neighbourhoods located closer to (e.g., Kalamaja) or further away (e.g., Kopli) from the city centre. Kalamaja is the most attractive choice as it combines architectural charm and closeness to the city centre. In this section, we aim to better understand the residential choice process among the inhabitants of Northern Tallinn by seeking answers to two research questions:

1. Why did the people move to this diverse area?
2. To what extent has the diversity of the area been a pull-factor?

Our main focus is on the choice of the current place of residence, but we start out with a wider analysis of the motives of the move. We then proceed by focussing on the migrants' preferences and the choice process and the role of diversity in it. Last, we discuss whether or not the change of home has improved the housing situation of the movers.

### 3.2. Why did the residents come to live here?

The in-migrants can be divided into two main groups on the basis of preferences. The first group includes young families with less financial resources who look for their first home, and the second group includes well-paid professionals who are attracted to the charm of the pre-WWII housing and the central location of the area. As we see, both groups are mobile.

Before we start with the analysis of why people choose to move into a diverse area such as Northern Tallinn, we first distinguish the triggers which led to the decision to leave their previous houses. Interestingly, the triggers to move are mostly related to a change in the family status as well as to employment change. Changes in family-life, the beginning or end of co-habitation and the birth of a child, often lead to residential mobility. The employment-related factor that is most often mentioned is increased income that allow for improving one's housing conditions, i.e. to move into gentrifying areas. Only a few interviewees stated that a new workplace caused their residential change.

While the reasons to move come from changes in personal and professional lives, the residential destination choice relates to a combination of personal preferences and the amenities present in the target neighbourhood. There are four pull factors: (1) the price and size of the apartment or building; (2) the existence of certain services and amenities in the neighbourhood; (3) a good location and transport connections; and (4) the peacefulness and safety of the neighbourhood.

The most important pull factor is the existence of affordable housing in the area in all cases. The Russian-speaking interviewees tend to point to the price as a pragmatic reason. The fact that the Russian-speakers living in Northern Tallinn are over-represented in those neighbourhoods where the cheaper housing prevails partly comes from their moving motives. The Estonian-speakers mention the price first, but also the requirements for a specific house or apartment that, taken together, shape the housing choice in an important way. These interviewees stress the price of the apartment and the size together when deciding which apartment to choose. In addition, the interviewees explain that the condition of the apartment is essential, e.g., whether it has been

renovated, does it have a stove or central heating. The requirements for the apartment mostly arise from practical needs that depend on the size of the family, experiences with a certain heating system and available financial resources. The interviewees living in gentrified areas highlight the general charm of the neighbourhood.

The condition of the whole building is important as well, e.g., its size (how many storeys), is it a wooden or a stone building, does it have a courtyard and a garden. The housing in the neighbourhood itself is important too: many people search for lower building density and they avoid the high level of crowdedness and the small apartments in the panel housing areas of the city. The latter is the most common housing type in Tallinn, providing shelter to about 2/3 of the population. Many in-migrants to Northern Tallinn are thus seeking a more spacious apartment, but the desires often meet financial constraints and other exogenous factors like housing vacancies. The combination of these factors often results in choosing cheaper housing, which is very common among young families in the beginning of the housing careers. The apartment must thus be affordable, but also a good investment in a longer term when buying an apartment.

*“I became a resident of Kopli by chance. As I had no money, I had to move in with my father and he was living at the far end of Kopli at that time. So, I knowingly chose my next apartment purely because it was affordable. They were offering a rental and I saw it was half the price of any other offered in other districts of Tallinn and I thought—that’s the right choice for me.”* (R13, M, 26, Estonian, network technician, Kopli<sup>6</sup>)

The second pull-factor mentioned by the interviewees is certain amenities and local services. These include the beach, parks, leisure facilities, shops, restaurants, cafeterias, schools. Thirdly, closeness to the city centre and good transport connections with the centre are important as well.

Last but not least, the overall peacefulness and safety of the neighbourhood is pointed out in several interviews. This is interesting since many neighbourhoods of Northern Tallinn are deprived and not too safe in statistical terms, and many have a bad image. But people do not perceive it in such a problematic way. For example, a middle-aged Soviet era in-migrant explains that *“in the evenings you can walk along the beach without any problems, because lights are on everywhere and the police is often on patrol.”* (R36, M, 56, Uzbek, electrician, Pelguranna). The crucial idea is that the neighbourhood should have enough services and a diverse selection of free time activities, i.e. it should be lively, on the one hand, but healthy, green, safe, and quiet on the other hand.

Many of the in-migrants are usually in the beginning of their housing careers and they search for affordable residence. The opportunities, resources, and constraints of this search often lead to a compromise between the apartment and neighbourhood characteristics. Since a large part of the population living in Northern Tallinn still belongs in the lower income groups, some respondents have a very limited choice-set. For example, some were forced to move here because they lost their job and were in the situation of choosing social housing or finding a cheaper apartment. Although the gentrification process has elevated the real-estate prices, cheaper apartments are still available in non-renovated houses and in less gentrified neighbourhoods.

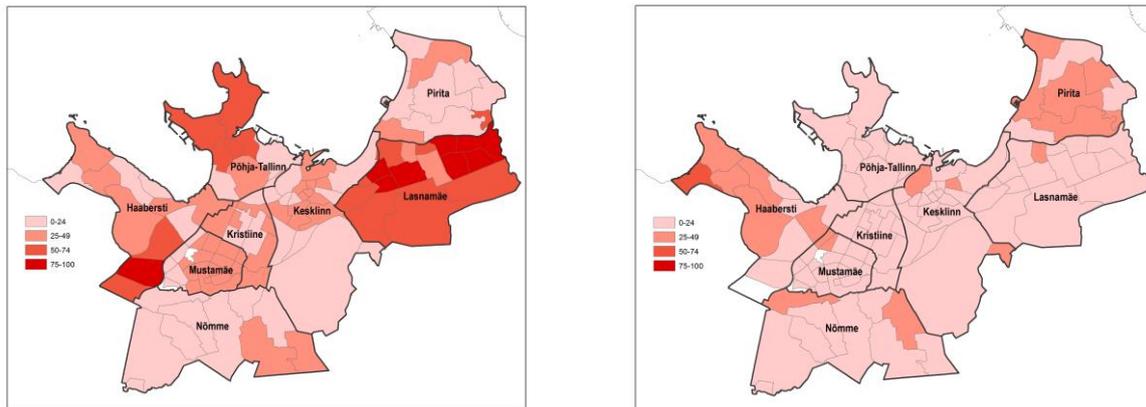
The exception is Kalamaja which has become a destination for a small community of creative people living in renovated, highly-valued, pre-WWII wooden housing or newly built apartment houses within the area. Once the neighbourhood upgrading starts, the value of the housing starts to rise rapidly as well and Kalamaja is the first neighbourhood in Northern Tallinn that is thus

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<sup>6</sup>Respondent number, sex, age, nationality, occupation, neighbourhood

not affordable anymore to lower-income groups (Figure 3). Local ambience is often mentioned when describing the reasons of choosing Kalamaja neighbourhood to live in. Local ambience refers to the architectural character and social composition of the neighbourhood—creative persons, educated or richer people. For example, many interviewees living in pre-war wooden housing areas stress the historical value and specific charm one can find there:

*“I wanted something that had more of a character, where I would like to live for a long time. I was looking exactly for a building itself that would have value. This house was built in 1905, it is basically a Czar-era house and it has sentimental value.”* (R12, M, 26, Estonian, photographer, Kopli)

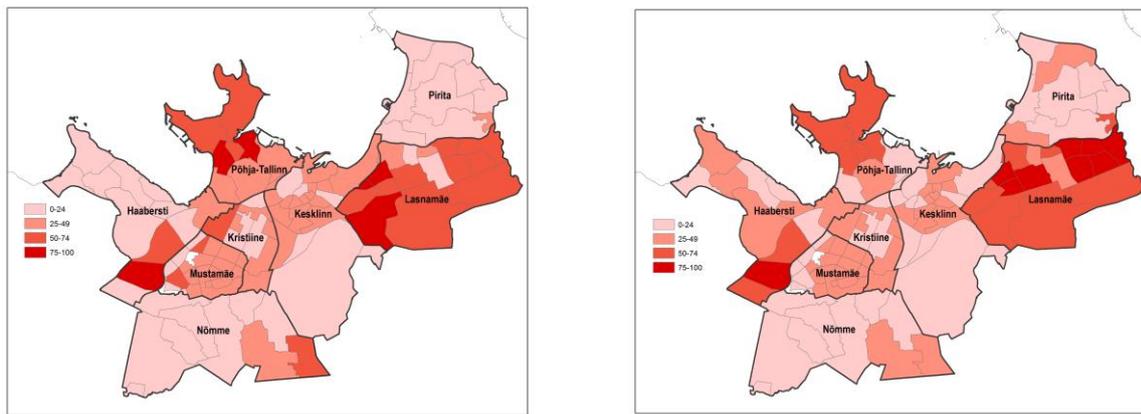


**Figure 3. Share of managers and professionals in the neighbourhoods of Tallinn, 2000 and 2011. Sources: Census 2000, 2011.**

We know from the study of Kährik *et al.* (2015) as well that, in Estonian cities, a specific living environment—historical wooden housing districts with a lot of greenery that offer a kind of semi-rural residential setting—is highly valued. Kalamaja is one of such environments in Tallinn. People expect both urban amenities and (semi-)rural greenery in such housing areas. The perceptions of peacefulness and safety that are similar to a low-density suburban lifestyle, as well as the sense of homeliness and small scale, are also often mentioned.

*“Actually, all this living environment suits me and it’s rather quiet compared to other districts of Tallinn. /.../ The fact that I can go for a walk in the evening when I don’t have to put up with noise from cars all the time. There are enough small streets where you can imagine yourself being in a village or in the countryside.”* (R10, F, 26, Estonian, assistant project manager, Pelgulinn)

These neighbourhoods differ from other areas because the gentrification process lowers the diversity and social mix of the area as the poorer residents (often Russian-speakers) move out and higher income (Estonian-speaking) residents move in. Since the gentrification process is still ongoing and plenty of non-renovated houses stand side-by-side with renovated ones, the population diversity is still high today, but a tendency towards homogenisation is evident as well (Tammaru *et al.*, 2015). The neighbourhoods closer to the city centre such as Kalamaja are increasingly over-represented by Estonians, while the more distant neighbourhoods such as Kopli are over-represented by minorities (Figure 4).



**Figure 4. Share of minorities in the neighbourhoods of Tallinn, 2000 and 2011.**

**Sources:** Census 2000, 2011.

### 3.3. Moving to the present neighbourhood: improvement or not?

Most of the in-migrants are well-educated people who have made an upward move in their housing careers. Moving to gentrified neighbourhoods like Kalamaja or Pelgulinn is an improvement in the housing career. However, some interviewees explain that financial difficulties have forced them to find a cheaper apartment in a more affordable neighbourhood, in some cases in social housing.

Moving into poorer neighbourhoods like Pelguranna and Kopli is thus often related to partial improvement of one's housing conditions. The existence of Soviet time panel housing in Pelguranna is a great opportunity for many younger people for improving their housing situations since such neighbourhoods are generally not attractive to creative people and gentrifiers. The availability of panel housing in Northern Tallinn is very important: the opportunities created by the existence of such lower quality, but still more or less prestigious housing areas add to the choice set of poorer people. The people opting for such areas also gain from the larger upgrading of the Northern Tallinn District.

Thus, the combination of affordability and diversity of the housing in Northern Tallinn attracts a diverse set of people, both wealthier and poorer, Estonian-speakers and Russian-speakers. However, the in-migrants are mostly younger people, singles, cohabiting people without children as well as young families. It is not always straightforward whether people upgrade or downgrade their housing careers as a result of the move. As we already argued above, the choice often implies compromises so that people move to a lower status neighbourhood in order to get a better apartment, for example, to gain a larger apartment or owned property instead of renting an apartment, etc. These households themselves often do see their move as a partial progress in their housing careers. They can be considered transitory urbanities (Haase *et al.*, 2012), since this is probably not the last move in their housing careers.

*"I came to Tallinn to become a book printer and because my girlfriend lived here. I got lucky because I could move to her brother's apartment. So I am renting it, living there. As a matter of fact, if I didn't have this apartment, I'd probably still live here in this district, maybe closer to the Baltic Railway Station. I like it because of its location, it's close to the centre. And if they were saying before that the district had a bad image, that there were too many Russians and criminals, then during the three years I've lived here, I've never noticed it. /.../ I've usually met interesting people who are friendly, with whom you can instantly talk and, of course, with very different people." (R23, M, 29, Estonian, book printer, Pelguranna)*

People often mention the good perspective of a neighbourhood as an important factor when choosing where to live and this is why they value the house and the apartment more than the current lower social status of the neighbourhood. An Estonian-speaking interviewee from Kalamaja who has been a witness of the decade-long urban renewal process in the area has described the faith in a positive change in a very colourful way:

*“I was always going for a walk with my child and everywhere I went it stank. It was so nasty! I didn’t want to come to live here. But my husband said—wait, the time will come. Today that time is here! He foresaw all [the development] that would change everything, that at one point all the mess must end, right? And this change was fast, it took place only in 10 years.”* (R19, F, 40, Estonian, entrepreneur, Kalamaja)

Even if the neighbourhood’s social status is low, the perception of local development or at least the hope for positive changes do matter in the housing choice. Belief in the good perspective of a neighbourhood is partly an economic calculation when matching the household’s financial possibilities with affordable housing vacancies, having a good faith in the better future of a neighbourhood which helps to justify the housing choice. A British in-migrant living in Kalamaja explains:

*“We were renting but we wanted our own home. And the first place we were looking into and where we actually moved to in the end was because...because of the location. My girlfriend knew that this was a prosperous district but when we arrived and looked around there were cars with smashed-in windows. The house was on Kopli Street and I had always heard bad things about Kopli. So I was like—are you sure you want to move here? So we had to have a look around, we walked around in the area and saw that—yes, cool! —the buildings are all cool.”* (R48, M, 37, British, chef, Kalamaja)

The people moving to social housing estates differ from the gentrifiers. The social housing sector is tiny in Northern Tallinn and it mainly offers housing for very poor people. People suffering from a difficult economic situation are thus moving into such housing and the choice is often unavoidable for them.

*“I was forced to live here in this social housing and this is very temporary. Because there are a lot of people with many problems—junkies, drunks—they all live in our building. I don’t like to live here where there are these people. Lasnamäe [a panel housing district of Tallinn—authors] is a different kind of a region. The people who live there are different, not rich but, well, different. They work, they live decent lives. There is a different atmosphere. That, well, Kopli is a bad, bad, bad place.”* (R11, F, 32, Russian, unemployed, Kopli)

We find that moving to Northern Tallinn has brought along an improvement of the housing conditions for many, although often partially; the residents moving into social housing are the biggest exception. An important argument in the housing choice is belief in the good perspectives of the neighbourhood. Satisfaction with the neighbourhood increases hand-in-hand with the positive developments taking place in the area.

### 3.4. Conclusions

Our case study area is a diverse inner city district of Northern Tallinn. We find that diversity as such is not a particularly important pull factor and neither a barrier. The negative aspects of diversity and social mix, e.g., cultural misunderstandings, the social and cultural distance between

Estonian-speakers and Russian speakers, living together with socially disadvantaged people, etc., are rarely discussed by the interviewees. After all, the important factor in searching opportunities for a better housing situation is faith in positive changes in the neighbourhood. Also, Gordon and Vickerman (1982) mention anticipation of future opportunities, in other words, hope that the neighbourhood has future potential. So, urban renewal is an important factor that shapes the choice. Furthermore, in-migration itself is often the diversifying factor, at least in the initial phases in gentrifying neighbourhoods.

In most Central and Eastern European cities, gentrification is still a process where spatially extreme poverty exists close to luxuriously renovated or new buildings accommodating wealthy newcomers. This is what diversifies neighbourhoods both in terms of the housing and the population composition. The crucial question is whether the ongoing selective in-migration and out-migration to and from these districts will lead to loss of the current diversity, because the wealthy new inhabitants push out lower-income groups. Recent census-based studies point towards such tendencies and reveal increasing levels of segregation in Northern Tallinn (Tammaru *et al.*, 2015). Evidence from literature also suggests that only rarely do diverse neighbourhoods remain diverse for a longer period of time—diversity is often only a transitory phase (Logan and Zhang, 2010; Sykora, 2009; Talen, 2006).

To summarise, there is no clear evidence that diversity plays a significant role in individuals' housing choices. People consider personal gains and express pragmatic preferences: certain characteristics like the size and price of the apartment or the building, the existence of certain services and amenities in the neighbourhood, a good location and transport connections, and also the peacefulness and safety of the neighbourhood are mentioned much more often as the choice criteria than the local social population composition of the neighbourhood. The diversity and charm of Northern Tallinn are certainly important background factors that attract people to live in Northern Tallinn.

## 4. Perceptions of the diversity in the neighbourhood

### 4.1. Introduction

Post-industrial cities have attracted people with various backgrounds and are thus more and more diverse (Vertovec, 2007), or even hyper-diverse (Tasan-Kok *et al.*, 2013). However, we know little of how people perceive diversity in the urban environment around them. Also, increasing diversity *per se* does not necessarily lead to social interaction and meaningful contacts between people with different origins, lifestyles, preferences, consumption habits. Contacts created in public, semi-public and private realms are not equally efficient in bridging different life-worlds. Wessendorf (2014) argues that in the public realm the contacts tend to be superficial and sometimes do not go further than politeness. Similar evidence has been found in Estonia when it comes to ethnic diversity: the activities of the two major ethnolinguistic groups, Estonians and Russian-speakers, do overlap in public spaces (Silm and Ahas, 2014), but this rarely develops into deeper social interaction (Korts, 2009).

Semi-public spaces and initiatives (sport clubs, theatre groups, communal gardens, and the like) are often more efficient in breaking interaction barriers between diverse groups (Wessendorf, 2014; Amin, 2002). Still, people tend to be selectively engaged in these micro-publics. For example, Weare *et al.* (2009) show that neighbourhood associations that should essentially represent the diverse set of interests of local inhabitants tend to become the elite's voices. In Tallinn, neighbourhood associations are mainly bringing together ethnic Estonians (Holvander,

2014), thus emphasising the divide in the daily interaction within ethnically diverse neighbourhoods.

Previous literature suggests that only rarely do diverse neighbourhoods remain diverse for a long period of time (Logan and Zhang, 2010; Talen, 2006). In case of gentrifying neighbourhoods, immigration initially diversifies the neighbourhood by mixing the former and new residents. Yet, the newcomers tend to be with a different social background and lifestyle preferences compared to the former population. When the process develops further, the area becomes less diverse over time. Even when the newcomers move to a neighbourhood because of its diversity, there is no guarantee that this quality of the neighbourhood is stable (Talen, 2010). People with different backgrounds may have opposite views on which development trajectories the neighbourhood should follow. This makes the aim of keeping the “achieved” diversity challenging, especially in socioeconomically mixed areas where the increase in housing prices pushes less wealthy people to more affordable locations. When the role of public policies is small, as is the case in Estonian cities (Tammaru *et. al.*, 2015), the neighbourhoods’ diversity is inevitably a temporary condition.

Our case study area, Northern Tallinn, has experienced both inflow of wealthier residents and displacement of poverty to elsewhere. Within the district of Northern Tallinn, internal spatial diversification has occurred: the more attractive neighbourhoods located closer to the centre have been destinations for gentrifiers and the Soviet time housing estates and more distant neighbourhoods offer affordable housing. In our analysis, we aim to understand:

1. How do the residents think about the area they live in?
2. Do the residents see their neighbourhood’s diversity as an asset or a liability?

We start out with the analysis of how people perceive the boundaries of their neighbourhood and their neighbours. We then focus on the positive and negative aspects of neighbourhood diversity as reflected by the inhabitants.

## 4.2. Perceived boundaries of the neighbourhood

Local residents define the area that they perceive as “my neighbourhood” via landmarks that they have experiences with (streets, cross-roads, the railway, buildings, shops, the beach, public and semi-public institutions). Some of the place names have an origin that dates back to the Soviet period (e.g., Furniture House), but some new initiatives also serve as landmarks and meaningful places (e.g., the Telliskivi Creative City). These places vary slightly across groups, but, in general, the perceived boundaries of neighbourhoods within the district of Northern Tallinn are relatively similar for all. In most cases, the official borders of the neighbourhoods (spatial units used in planning activities) are also recognisably represented on people’s mental maps. Only the border areas of the neighbourhoods are fuzzier. Sometimes the interviewees combine the current and Soviet-era names (e.g., Pelguranna-Stroomi instead of Pelguranna) in defining their neighbourhoods.

One of the most common bases for neighbourhood definition is the prevalent housing type (e.g., a Soviet time housing estate or a wooden, pre-WWII housing area). The residents from the pre-WWII workers’ housing areas Kopli and Kalamaja emphasise the importance of the low-rise wooden or stone buildings and their historical value: “*This ‘click’ (that my neighbourhood started) happens visually—suddenly stone turns to wood. /.../ the smell of wood heating is specific.*” (R14, M, 26, Estonian, designer, Pelguranna). In contrast, the residents of large housing estates consider bigger apartment houses as the important element of their neighbourhoods as well.

In addition, cleanliness of the public areas in some parts of Northern Tallinn and renovation of houses are mentioned. A respondent from gentrified Kalamaja explained his home neighbourhood as “(an area where) they renovate and clean up, this raises the value of the area and the overall sense of home.” (R20, M, 33, Estonian, builder, Pelgulinn). When talking about their neighbourhoods, people tend to use positive expressions; also, people prefer to ‘belong’ in the surroundings that are being upgraded.

Another important factor which has an effect on the perception of neighbourhood boundaries is people’s daily activity space. A cognitively constructed neighbourhood consists of places that the interviewees visit regularly. One’s home is usually the centre of the daily mobility pattern: “I consider my neighbourhood the area where I do sports.” (R13, M, 26, Estonian, network technician, Kopli), “My neighbourhood is where I spend most of my time.” (R16, F, 50, Russian, social worker, Sitsi), or “Where I walk the dog, /.../ and where I spend my free time.” (R48, M, 37, English, chef, Kalamaja). Thus, ‘my neighbourhood’ often consists of walkable destinations. The interviewees colourfully describe the activities which make these places familiar.

Interestingly, the characteristics of local residents are rarely discussed when defining the neighbourhood boundaries. If the social composition is mentioned, again, similarity rather than diversity matters. Some interviewees highlight that the neighbourhood consists of people with a lifestyle similar to theirs. The residence of acquaintances and friends nearby seems to be important as well: “Because all my aunts and grandmothers live here, I spent my childhood here, all is familiar to me.” (R37, M, 71, Estonian, retired, Sitsi); “Where a relative once lived whom I visited when I was in Tallinn. /.../ The whole area is home-like and I have walked through it from every direction.” (R10, F, 26, Estonian, assistant project manager, Pelgulinn). Also, when defining what their neighbourhood certainly is not, the interviewees argue that it is not a place where they do not have any acquaintances.

The socioeconomic status may indirectly determine the perception of a neighbourhood, e.g., people characterise the status of the schools where their children study; when doing shopping, some people use more expensive shopping chains or markets than others. Understandably, the habitual mobility modes (walking, biking or driving) also have an effect on which places are considered familiar: the daily activity spaces of car-people tend to be more extended than the spaces of those walking and biking.

### 4.3. Perceptions of neighbours

We also asked our interviewees to characterize their neighbours. Interestingly, people refer directly or indirectly to migration history in doing so, i.e. whether their neighbours are long-term residents or whether they arrived later (during the gentrification period that started in the late 1990s). This is a new dimension of diversity, but since we detected this element already in the expert interviews (Tammaru *et al.*, 2014), we structured our sampling on the people’s mobility history as well. From here on, we will use the terms ‘long-term residents’ and ‘in-migrants’ to characterize the two main groups in Northern Tallinn; this coincides both with the way how the people define themselves and also how they refer to each other. These groups are also distinguished geographically: the interviewees from the first group mainly live in less gentrified parts of the Northern Tallinn District (e.g., Pelguranna and other panel housing estates) and the second group mainly in gentrifying neighbourhoods (e.g., Kalamaja and Pelgulinn).

Many long-term residents worked at the industrial plants in the district during the Soviet period and this is the way how they also portray themselves and their immediate neighbours today, even though many of these plants are closed. These people tend to be older, with many already retired.

The younger interviewees (35–45) of this group are the children of the former industrial workers or have moved into the area from other industrial regions of Estonia where many factories were closed down in the 1990s as well. A Russian ex-industrial worker described his neighbours as follows:

*“What unites the residents of our neighbourhood is hard life. Being unemployed puts us into a similar situation. /.../ Just imagine the mighty industries we used to have [during the Soviet period]—the Baltic Manufacturing, the Baltic Ship Yard, the Kalinin Factory, the Volta Factory, the Machine Factory. /.../ Many people from my social network used to work at them.”* (R15, M, 57, Russian, unemployed industrial worker, Kopli)

The Russian-speaking residents living in Pelguranna and Kopli neighbourhoods mostly probably belong in this group. The contacts once developed at their workplaces have remained important till today. Especially since they have lost their former good social statuses and today belong in the socially vulnerable part of the population, they are a bit nostalgic while thinking on ‘the good old times’. The shared work history and today’s difficulties seem to create a collective identity among them. At the same time, though, they do not have a strong collective voice in urban governance, since they rarely take part in urban initiatives apart from being passive members of apartment associations.

The in-migrants are generally younger (mostly under 45) gentrifiers. Real estate prices are rising in the neighbourhoods where they have settled, and the less wealthy long-term residents are gradually being pushed out from such areas. Many of the in-migrants are native Estonians, but a few new creative class immigrants from other European countries have settled in Northern Tallinn as well. In Kalamaja, the most gentrified neighbourhood, young members of the creative class are active in cultural activities and are attracted by the green, low-density gentrified environment. Instead of the diversity, the people are attracted by the social homogeneity of the neighbours. A 25-year-old female resident in the gentrifying Kalamaja neighbourhood describes her immediate neighbours as follows:

*“They tend to be young, let’s say, quite nature-loving with a wide horizon or somewhat spiritual worldviews. For example, I have no contact with the elderly living in the area. I have no clue how the elderly or the retired live here or how they manage. All my social contacts are 40-45-year-olds max.”* (R10, F, 25, Estonian, secretary, Kalamaja)

These two groups, the socially disadvantaged long-term residents and the wealthier in-migrants, are aware of the existence of each other, and admit not having too much contact with each other. Yet, while referring to “others”, the people from both groups rather mention that they live cheek-to-cheek with the so-called ‘problematic residents’. The latter are described as people, mostly men, who have alcohol and drug problems, who are often criminals or homeless, and they are also accused of resignation and unwillingness to improve their lives.

*“Just next to my house there is a drug addicts’ clinic. /.../ At one point, I went to the local shop and...there is this Sirbi bar where a very suspicious contingent goes to. /.../ To describe the people who go there, they are usually middle-aged, big-built men who are drunk all the time. /.../ These drunks and junkies are people too, they may not be bad people at all. They simply are how they are.”* (R12, M, 26, Estonian, photographer, Kopli)

Moreover, the group of problematic neighbours is often associated with the Russian-speaking population. They were employed in the industrial sector and suffered considerably from the loss of jobs in industry in the 1990s. Because of their poor Estonian language proficiency, many of

them have not been able to get a job in the expanding service sector, not to mention a job in the mushrooming creative industries.

The gentrifiers generally perceive that they have less of such problematic people as their immediate neighbours. This is often true at the house level, but as the gentrification process is ongoing and since even the most gentrified areas are still socially mixed, very wealthy people may reside side-by-side with poor people. This implies that people from different social strata and ethnic backgrounds do meet each other in public places (on the streets, in the shops, in the parks, etc.).

#### 4.4. Perceptions of the neighbourhood: positive and negative aspects

As our interviewees considered the physical aspects of neighbourhood diversity more important than population diversity, which is similar to what was found in WP4 (Tammaru *et al.* 2014), we cannot always infer directly whether the social and cultural aspects of diversity are perceived positively or negatively. Starting with the positive aspects, people emphasize spatial qualities: the peaceful living environment, diversity of amenities (local shops, services, leisure and sport facilities), greenery (parks, the beach, greenery on streets). The existence of these qualities as well as semi-public facilities nearby connects local people and makes their neighbourhood liveable.

*“What I also like is that, in principle, everything I need is right here. I don’t have to go to other districts, even to the city centre. /.../ I like being here. It’s like my very own personal world.”* (R10, F, 26, Estonian, assistant-project manager, Pelgulinn)

Some interviewees include “peaceful local people” in their description, referring mainly to their own social networks. This demonstrates the overall tolerance towards “others”, even if the long-term residents and newcomers do not have many meaningful contacts, and people are aware of sharing public spaces with the group they call “socially problematic”. Nevertheless, the moving out of such problematic groups (e.g., drug addicts and criminals) is also highlighted as a positive change, demonstrating that indirectly people do not perceive the socioeconomic mix, or at least its extreme manifestations, positively. Although on an abstract level people show some “relaxed indifference” (Wessendorf, 2014) towards living with people with social problems, direct contacts tend to produce clashes as well, or, in the best case, distancing:

*“There are people who bother me in the district but I do not communicate with them. /.../ It might be a drunk person. I don’t make contact with them, I pass them with room to spare.”* (R36, M, 56, Uzbek, electrician, Pelguranna)

In parallel with these feelings, some interviewees praised the colourfulness of people that makes the neighbourhood livelier and brings along an interesting rhythm of local life: *“The neighbourhood is alive every hour of the day and night.”* (R20, M, 33, Estonian, builder, Pelgulinn); *“Something is always happening.”* (R17, F, 45, Russian, social worker, Pelgulinn). An Estonian gentrifier went even further:

*“They say that mestizo dogs are much healthier, smarter and easier to train—the same applies to people. Even more now when there are so many mixed couples where one is Russian and the other is Estonian. This only complements, improves and makes us stronger.”* (R8, M, 48, Estonian, casual labourer, Pelguranna)

It was much rarer to identify optimistic feelings towards the recent neighbourhood change among the long-term residents. Some interviewees even worry that the gentrification process may

go too far: *“Wealthier people move to Kalamaja in greater and greater numbers, and it’s starting to change the neighbourhood into something more arrogant and high-class.”* (R20, M, 33, Estonian, builder, Pelgulinn).

Most of the negative aspects of diversity relate to the “socially problematic people” who are perceived to pose a threat to others. For example, even if a prostitute or a drunken person is not violent, some interviewees mention their possible bad influence on children. Some dangerous places related to these people were also identified: abandoned buildings, social houses, clinics for drug addicts, etc. Several interviewees described their own experiences:

*“I have nothing against an unemployed neighbour. If (s)he doesn’t steal from me. /.../ I cannot stand junkies. /.../ ...because our house was robbed by them. My own garden was full of needles because the house had stood empty for years. /.../ I have found needles even today.”* (R20, M, 33, Estonian, builder, Pelgulinn)

Some interviewees point to the overall oppressive atmosphere which is constructed when social problems are geographically concentrated. This may also have an intergenerational effect:

*“[The atmosphere] is full of heartbreak and empty dreams. /.../ [People] do not know that there are other options. /.../ They live according to their parents’ experiences, gather negativity. /.../ And even if you find a higher educated person to talk to, all you get are complaints that the government is bad, bosses act like animals, co-workers are mean.”* (R44, F, 60, Russian, nurse, Kopli)

An unemployed middle-aged woman, a long-term resident, explains that the difficulties make the people hunker down: *“Because of their hard lives, people have changed, they used to be much kinder and more open.”* (R15, F, 57, Russian, unemployed, Kopli).

#### 4.5. Conclusions

The people admit that their surroundings have recently become more mixed in socioeconomic terms as well as culturally diverse. Socioeconomically, the entire span from extreme poverty to exclusive wealth is represented, often close to each other in the urban space. People with very different social statuses as well as Estonians and minorities live parallel and non-overlapping lives, i.e. there is neither open conflict nor intense social interaction in the diverse neighbourhoods (cf. Tasan-Kok *et al.*, 2013). The diverse groups also have a chance to meet in the streets, in the shops and parks, to familiarize with the presence of each other. They do perceive this diversity as an inherent element of their home area. Especially the enriched cultural environment and the diverse and upgrading physical environment (residential areas as well as leisure time facilities) are perceived as assets by all groups.

The way people think about themselves and each other is strongly based on residential mobility, i.e. a neighbourhood’s residents are most often defined through their migration history. The first main group is formed of long-term residents who often have an industrial and ethnic minority background. Their socioeconomic status is, on average, lower, especially since many industrial plants have been closed by today, leaving many former workers unemployed. The people living in Pelguranna and Kopli tend to define their neighbours this way. These long-term residents quietly accept the process of gentrification, and even if they do live in less attractive houses or neighbourhoods, they still often feel positive about the overall changes in the Northern Tallinn District.

The second group consists of in-migrants who are mainly Estonians and tend to be wealthier. They have mainly settled in the gentrifying Kalamaja neighbourhood and the people there perceive each other as members of the socially upward moving creative class. The newcomers (gentrifiers) love the district of Northern Tallinn because it offers a diverse set of housing and leisure time activities, as well as the prospects of the district to become even more inspirational and exclusive in the future. They like that the new creative class ('people like themselves') is clustering in the district, and many of them believe that the ongoing replacement of lower-income groups is unavoidable. That would reduce the achieved socioeconomic and lifestyle diversity in the district, at least in the gentrifying neighbourhoods.

## 5. Activities in and outside the neighbourhood

### 5.1. Introduction

While places of residence and work tend to be segregated in diverse societies, leisure time activities could potentially draw people together "due to the qualities of free choice and self-determination, which are important because they give individuals the opportunity to freely choose their companions without the restrictions that often exist in work and other formal settings" (Shinew, Glover and Parry, 2004: p. 338). Going shopping, attending cultural and other events, visiting urban parks or going out to cafeterias or for entertainment have the potential of encouraging people to move away from their own group networks, to increase the co-presence of diverse groups in public spaces and, as a consequence, to reduce the ethnic and social divisions in diverse urban societies (Boschman and van Middelkoop, 2009; Silm and Ahas, 2014).

Meeting in a public space may lead to a shared sense of belonging, but it could also result in distrust and avoidance. The quality of the public space is of central importance: places with many facilities and where people feel safe and comfortable are more attractive for diverse groups of people (Peters and de Haan, 2011). This is a field that can be improved through urban policies that aim to create well-functioning neighbourhoods (Blokland and Nast, 2014).

Individual action matters, too. According to the preference approach, people express their individual and social identity through leisure time activities (Petes and de Haan, 2011; Washburne and Wall, 1980). For example, immigrants often bring with them distinct leisure time traditions; e.g., they consume different media, and preferences in music and style of partying might differ from group to group (Gillespie, 2007; Srebrny, 2007). This approach therefore underscores the importance of cultural factors in people's leisure time activities as related values, beliefs, norms and socialisation practices (Kamenik *et al.*, 2015; Toomet *et al.*, 2015).

Leisure has sometimes been characterised as the 'long arm of work', since the two life domains are so strongly related to each other (Meissner, 1971). Lower income translates into differences in leisure time activities because participation in many out-of-home leisure activities requires financial resources (Dutton *et al.*, 1994). Going out to a cafeteria could not thus be an equally available way of spending one's free time for wealthy and for poor residents.

Furthermore, many leisure time activities take place close to home, implying that the residential segregation arising from income differences can potentially lead to differences in how and where people spend their free time (Kamenik *et al.*, 2015; Toomet *et al.*, 2015). This is especially true for some groups such as families with small children who tend to use local places such as playgrounds and parks more intensively than others (Blokland and Nast, 2014). Similarly, the neighbourhood of residence is more important for the elderly, for the socioeconomically more disadvantaged and for ethnic minorities (Van Kempen and Wissink, 2014).

Against this background, we will thus focus on the following research questions in this subsection:

1. How do the residents make use of the diversifying areas they live in?
2. Do they actively engage in diversifying relations and activities in their neighbourhoods?
3. To what extent is the area they live in more important than other areas in terms of activities?

We start out with a discussion on where and with whom people spend their free time and how important is the neighbourhood in the daily activity space. We proceed with analysing social interactions across diverse groups in public spaces, and neighbourhood associations and apartment associations.

## 5.2. Activities: where and with whom?

The interviewees' age and lifecycle phase are strongly related to with whom and where they spend their free time (see also Kamenik *et al.*, 2015). Younger people yet without families are keenest to spend their free time actively out-of-home, e.g., in cafeterias where the chance of meeting friends is common. Going out with friends is thus normal at this age: *"Mainly with friends. If possible, doing something active. Riding my bike, playing ball, going climbing."* (R14, M, 27, Estonian, designer, Pelguranna)

Doing sports, going out to cinemas, dance clubs and other places are also among the activities mentioned most often by young people. The importance of the neighbourhood depends on the activity. Doing sports or hanging around in pubs and cafeterias might be related to the neighbourhood, since there is an abundance of nice cafes in Northern Tallinn. Going to the cinema or a dance club certainly usually implies that people go to the Old Town or city centre.

The interviewees with children prefer to spend time with their families and the activities themselves often stem from the interests of or the appropriateness of the activity for the children: *"I spend my free time with my child and doing something with her."* (R21, F, 47, Estonian, accountant, Pelgulinn)

As previous research has shown (Kamenik *et al.*, 2015; Van Kempen and Wissink, 2014), activities with children are much more neighbourhood-focused, although the age of the children matters, too. Northern Tallinn offers a variety of activities for families. For example, the city of Tallinn has organised the programme "Let's renovate playgrounds!" for apartment associations to upgrade their children's playgrounds, so these are often nice places for spending time together. There are also lots of organised public activities in the district, for example, taking place at the Salme Cultural Centre (see also Leetmaa *et al.*, 2015).

The elderly people stay more at home, for example, watching TV. When they do meet with each other nearby, it often happens within the neighbourhood, and is either with the aim to interact and/or provide support, in some cases, to provide charity and guidance for troubled youth.

Without a question, seaside and beaches in particular, are listed as the main places where the interviewees prefer to spend their free time when in Northern Tallinn, irrespective of age. The quality of the public space is very important in attracting a diverse set of people (Peters and de Haan, 2011). Stroomi beach that lies in the western side of Northern Tallinn has been recently revitalized and provides many amenities to the visitors. Hence, many people from all over

Northern Tallinn spend their free time during the summer season there. Thus, not only different age groups, but people with different social and ethnic backgrounds meet there. Merimetsa Park with nice amenities is a part of the beach area and an equally important recreational place.

However, some ethnic differences still surface. Estonians and English-speakers first mention Pikakari, another beach in the district, and then Stroomi, while Russian-speakers usually do it the other way around. Traditionally, Stroomi has been very popular among the Russian-speaking population since it is located close to the Pelguranna panel housing area. Still, both beaches are very important places of meeting for Estonian-, Russian-, as well as for English-speakers: *“Fantastic, you know, we live in the city centre and we’ve got a proper, nice beach [Pikakari] 20 minutes away.”* (R26, M, 42, English, entrepreneur, Kalamaja); *“What I have noticed is that people’s first choice when spending their free time is to go to the [Stroomi] beach.”* (R39, F, 36, Venezuelan, designer, Pelguranna)

In addition to going to a beach, another important neighbourhood-based activity is moving around in the district. This is very popular among a diverse set of people, but especially among Estonians irrespective of age or socioeconomic status. Some prefer walking, others cycling. The reason for the popularity of moving around is simple—most neighbourhoods in the district of Northern Tallinn are rapidly transforming and diversifying so that even if you take the same route, you can discover new developments almost on a daily basis. The main attractions to explore include Kalamaja and Kopli neighbourhoods, Paljassaare and Stroomi which offer various and diverse sights to discover including new houses, paths, nature, and small shops, cafeterias and enterprises.

*“If I’m not in a hurry, I always walk, enjoy this environment, walk through and get a glimpse over the fences, see where something is, trying to understand even more of what there is than I usually see.”* (R14, M, 26, Estonian, designer, Pelguranna)

*“Definitely another form of spending free time in Northern Tallinn is that we go cycling. There are so many different places to ride to.”* (R22, F, 52, Estonian, Head of an NGO, Sitsi)

Walking/cycling in the neighbourhood and visiting cafeterias are often connected activities; the aim of moving around is to explore a new café or a pub. Northern Tallinn can be called the district of the most interesting cafeterias and pubs, which are mushrooming all over, and attract visitors from other parts of the city as well. These local cafeterias and pubs potentially serve as ideal meeting places for all people living in the neighbourhood. However, this is not always the case. Many of these new gentrifier cafés are relatively expensive and thus not affordable for lower income groups. Since ethnicity and income, as well as age and income tend to overlap, a certain sorting of people begins to take place. The gentrifier cafés, restaurants, and pubs, especially those located in Kalamaja neighbourhood or in the Telliskivi Creative Centre, are most popular among young, successful Estonians.

The main out-of-home leisure time sites outside the neighbourhood of residence and the Northern Tallinn District are located in the Old Town and in the city centre where a different sense of ambience to that of Northern Tallinn can be found. But many stay at home; these include older people and those who cannot afford going out to expensive cafeterias. Home-based social activities are common for other groups as well, e.g., members of the creative class who have moved to Northern Tallinn and live close to each other often visit each other at home: *“I’m usually the type to stay at home.”* (R15, M, 57, Russian, unemployed, Kopli); *“Well, at home or each other’s homes to visit. But when I go out then to places where I can eat.”* (R24, F, 28, Estonian, government official, Kalamaja)

In addition to cafeterias, marketplaces are important public spaces for the inhabitants of Northern Tallinn; the theme of markets also surfaces frequently in the interviews. It is an especially important social space for the elderly which, according to the interviewees, form the majority of the market vendors. The main market is located next to the Baltic Railway Station. It is geographically a part of the Kalamaja neighbourhood where Estonians are over-represented, but the market vendors are usually Russian-speakers.

*“I often go to the Balti Jaam Market. /.../ I think it is more popular among the elderly and even Russian-speakers. It is like a meeting point where people come to from other neighbourhoods rather than Kalamaja.”* (R24, F, 28, Estonian, government official, Kalamaja)

Lower prices are an important argument for buying foodstuff there for both groups, as is the case with elderly people. However, many Estonians also visit the market, because they are seeking for ecologically grown foodstuff. Such urban ecological thinking is very common among gentrifiers. These people also find that marketplaces are an important alternative to large shopping malls. Some of them even deny the need to have a shopping mall in the district altogether since this would reduce the liveliness of the area that the marketplaces and other small specialized shops and cafeterias offer.

Two other markets—the Fish Market and Kajaka Market—are visited by the local people on a frequent basis. The Fish Market is also a part of Kalamaja neighbourhood, located in the historical market place near Linnahall by the seaside. The Kajaka Market was torn down several years ago and now a new Stroomi Centre was built on its grounds. Grocery shopping in this centre is provided by a Maxima supermarket (with relatively low prices compared to other supermarkets) and this has found the approval of the elderly and people with lower incomes, usually Russian-speakers who fall into the categories of lower socioeconomic statuses: *“Now they opened a new Maxima. /.../ It is where the Kajaka Market used to be. /.../ We needed something like that in our area.”* (R37, M, 73, Estonian, retired, Sitsi). Thus, while the new gentrifier cafeterias mainly attract younger, better-off Estonians, the marketplaces attract older, worse-off Russian-speakers. However, ecologically minded young Estonians have become a new segment of customers at the marketplaces.

### 5.3. The use of public space

The district of Northern Tallinn represents a diverse spatial mixture of housing areas, natural amenities and industrial sites. The housing varies from 2-storey wooden housing in Kalamaja, Pelgulinn, and Kopli to 9-storey panel housing in Pelguranna. Overall, Northern Tallinn is a green area and therefore in some parts gives the ambience of a village within the city.

As already became apparent in the previous subsection, Stroomi beach and the nearby Merimetsa woods are considered the most important public spaces for spending free time. Interestingly, even though there remains a language barrier between Estonians and Russian-speakers, Stroomi beach and Merimetsa woods are favourable destinations for almost every interviewee. It is the most important public space where diverse groups see and familiarize with each other. However, this does not necessarily always imply interaction. As previous studies have shown, co-presence rather than social interaction characterizes public spaces that attract a diverse set of people, acting as a “social wallpaper” for people (Butler, 2003).

Interesting sub-groups form around the common interest in the beach area. For example, there are elderly Russian-speaking women who gather to play the accordion and sing, elderly Russian-speaking men who gather to play chess, Russian-speakers who like to have an open-air barbecue on the beach or in the woods often accompanied by drinking, young Estonians and Russian-speakers who play sports, sunbathers in summer, skiers in the beach park in winter, cyclists, runners—altogether, various groups of people with different interests and lifestyles.

*“Oh! There is one more group here. Just as it gets warm this group of older Russian women show up. They bring their accordion and start singing their hearts out about two to three hours every day by the seaside on the benches over there.”* (R5, M, 58, Estonian, unemployed, Pelguranna)

Furthermore, Stroomi beach is a place for many festivals, fairs, and concerts organised by the district government of Northern Tallinn. According to the interviewees, some mingling between all ages and languages takes place during these festivities: *“Stroomi beach—that is something that brings people together. They dance there, have fun. The elderly come in good spirits.”* (R17, F, 45, Russian, social worker, Pelgulinn)

The divide between the two language groups—Estonian-speakers and Russian-speakers—is much bigger when it comes to cafeterias. First, Estonians have abandoned some of the cafes that used to be popular among them but became popular among Russian-speakers as well. This reveals the strategy of distinction, a process often witnessed in the research of residential choice among Estonian-speakers towards Russian-speakers (Leetmaa *et al.*, 2015).

Secondly, typical to social segregation, Estonians have created new places for themselves, like the Telliskivi Creative Centre, which are seldom visited by Russian-speakers. It is remarkable that the abandoned and the new cafeterias may be located right next to each other. This is still the very same urban space, people see each other, but get segregated from each other at a very micro level. Surprisingly, even though the interviewees acknowledge the presence of each other, for example, neighbours who are living on the same hallway of the same house, the contact or interaction remains just in the courtesy of greetings, without much meeting in the public places. The people living in gentrified areas thus even wonder where the Russian-speakers have disappeared:

*“This question—where all the Russians are—has been bothering me for a very long time. I think the Russians are in their own “Kalamaja”. I don’t want to say that all the Russians live in Õismäe, Lasnamäe [these are two of other districts of Tallinn], or Kopli. But these are their neighbourhoods, that’s where their “tribe” is and where they want to be. /.../ If someone asked me to describe the places Russians go to, I would say the places are more glamorous, demanding, a little over the top. And the places Estonians like to go to have more of a vintage, worn-out ambience and ironically—Soviet style.”* (R26, M, 42, English, entrepreneur, Kalamaja)

Such ethnic divide in visiting cafeterias is more common in some neighbourhoods than in others, though. In the neighbourhoods like Kalamaja, where the concentration of Estonians is higher, the leisure time sites become more Estonian, too, and Russian language can be more and more seldom heard there. The cafeterias in the neighbourhoods where Russian-speakers dominate, such as Kopli and Pelguranna, are over-represented by Russian-speakers, too.

#### 5.4. The importance of associations

There are altogether five neighbourhood associations (NAs) in Northern Tallinn. Three of them—Pelgulinna, Telliskivi and Professorite Küla—can be considered more active and more engaged in the developments of the neighbourhoods they aim to represent. The NAs tend to be Estonian organisations (Leetmaa *et al.*, 2015; Holvandus, 2014) and this is how people perceive them, too. Furthermore, the NAs are intrinsic to the inner city smaller wooden housing areas in Kalamaja and Kopli, whereas there are no NAs in the panel housing areas in Pelguranna in Northern Tallinn. Joint activities are uniting people and the NAs:

*“I think that these ‘Kalamaja Days’ is an event that brings together the people living here, and it helps the residents to get to know each other better and better each year. There are more and more possibilities for integration”* (R6, M, 37, Estonian, unemployed, Pelgulinn)

The Pelgulinna association is an interesting case. It started out by trying to unite all the residents of the neighbourhood. However, the diversity of the people, opinions and interests was so big so, in the end, only one group (the elderly) with similar interests became engaged in the association. Their most important initiative in the Pelgulinna association today is the “Lady Companion” (see also Leetmaa *et al.* 2015) which aimed to make the elderly co-operate with each other in their daily activities such as doing shopping. Professorite Küla (“Professors’ Village”) is mainly known for their actions to raise awareness of the history of the neighbourhood that is located in the far north end of the Kopli Peninsula and was built mainly during the industrialization drive in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Telliskivi NA is mostly mentioned by our informants when talking about urban developments and the annual neighbourhood festival “Kalamaja Days”.

Very few interviewees were (active) members of NAs. Still, the activities of the NAs are considered to be positive, especially when it comes organising events for the whole neighbourhood. Although the NAs tend to have a rather homogenous make-up of people, the events they organise are popular and the visitors come from outside Northern Tallinn as well. The main reason for not taking actively part in the NAs given by people is not having time.

Apartment associations (AAs) exist in the panel housing areas built in the Soviet period. These are non-profit organisations that are mandatory maintenance organisations for apartment buildings. AAs represent the owners of the apartments (most of them are privately owned) of one certain building or several buildings. Since Russian-speakers are over-represented in the panel housing areas, the activities of AAs surfaced much more often in the interviews with Russian-speakers. Usually, the aspects that were highlighted most often concerned the well-being of the building, for example, renovation of the facade. Often, the manager of an AA was highlighted as the glue which, so to say, keeps together its members:

*“We have an AA and the manager is good. He keeps an eye on everything. And overall we have order in and outside of the building. /.../ In the hallways, on the stairs we have flowers, pictures— there are competitions for the children living here and the best pictures are hung up. /.../ We replaced the sewer system, renovated the hallways /.../, new lighting, automatic. The doors all have locks, even guards.”* (R15, M, 57, Russian, unemployed, Kopli)

Various other initiatives are mentioned by the interviewees in addition to the NAs and AAs. For the children and the elderly, the Salme Cultural Centre is considered a good place for socialising and attending different events, usually organised by the district government and during holidays like Christmas. Also, a chess club, scouts, the association Lüüra for cultural minorities, Bethel's Church and social housing for street children, the Pelgulinna Community Centre and charity groups usually connected to their religion and church. Many of these activities and events tend to be language-based: the language of the instructor and announcement often determines whether Estonian-speakers or Russian-speakers get attracted. Furthermore, several interviews highlighted social networking over the Internet, for example, in a Facebook group for a certain area. These are all language-based, too. Such activities are considered good platforms for exchanging information:

*“It’s a group for people living there. Actually, no one even checks if you do live there, you just send a request. /.../ There are all sorts of discussions. Some people are very active, there is a man who knows everything about the history of Pelgulinn who posts info about the streets and buildings. /.../ They are opening a new Maxima somewhere in Northern Tallinn. /.../ I would have not even known about it.”* (R10, F, 26, Estonian, assistant-project manager, Pelgulinn)

## 5.5. Conclusions

Age is the most important determinant of out-of-home leisure time. Young people are most active in most activities and spend their free time much more often in other parts of the city, notably in the city centre (cinemas, dance clubs and many other important facilities for younger people are mainly located in the city centre outside of our study area). Families with kids and elderly people are much more neighbourhood-oriented in their leisure activities. In addition, there are important social and ethnic dimensions in leisure time activities and in the use of public space.

The most important local public spaces for spending free time include the natural amenities located in Northern Tallinn, beaches and urban parks. These public spaces are well maintained, which is an important prerequisite for attracting a diverse set of people (cf. Haas and de Haan, 2011). These spaces also attract the most diverse set of people. However, activities are often related to language, separating Estonian-speakers and Russian-speakers from each other. Many lifestyle-based subgroups could be found as well within the language groups, such as elderly Russian-speaking women playing music and singing, elderly Russian-speakers playing chess, Russian-speakers who like to have open-air barbecues, etc.

The other important leisure activity sites, the cafeterias and markets that are located in the neighbourhood, as well as the neighbourhood and apartment associations, are already much more socially and ethnically defined. Although they offer a nice environment, too, similarly to beaches and public places, both marginality (division between better-off and worse-off people) and preference towards own group members sort different people into different places. For example, young, well-doing Estonian gentrifiers form one group who take advantage of the mushrooming of new cafeterias in the area. In contrast, old, less well-off Russian-speakers could be found in other places and engaged in other activities.

To conclude, the interviewees' first choice regarding where to spend their free time usually includes places in the vicinity, within their neighbourhood of residence as well as elsewhere in our

research areas, the city district of Northern Tallinn. The other important activity sites include the Old Town and the city centre—which are both located close to Northern Tallinn. Russian-speakers also spend their free time in other city districts with a high share of other Russian-speakers, the Soviet time panel housing estates Lasnamäe and Mustamäe. Beaches and urban parks are the most important places of encounter for a diverse set of people, but very little social interaction takes place across ethnic lines. The best example is the formation of sub-groups such as chess players in the Stroomi beach area that still include members from the own ethnolinguistic group. As previous studies have shown, public spaces do provide some opportunities to meet and interact, but this usually means simple co-presence, getting familiar to the existence of each other and sometimes brief conversations that do not lead to deeper social interaction or friendship formation (cf. Blokland and Nast, 2014; Blokland and van Eijk, 2010; Butler, 2003).

## 6. Social cohesion

### 6.1. Introduction

Social cohesion could be defined as the glue that holds society intact (Maloutas and Malouta, 2004). According to Forrest and Kearns (2001; 2000), this glue might not bond neighbours as strongly today as it might have had, for example, 50 years ago when community and neighbourhood played a bigger role in everyday actions. According to the pessimistic point of view, the increasing superficiality in social contact stemming from information technology erodes the importance of direct spatial proximity, whereas the optimistic point of view finds that social interaction gains from better adoption of the tools offered by the information age and the modern means of information technology (Kearns and Forrest, 2000; 2001). Nevertheless, social cohesion in general is considered a desired state for society. Kearns and Forrest (2000) have broken it down into five dimensions: common values and a civic culture; social order and social control; social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities; social networks and social capital; and territorial belonging and identity.

An important discussion pertains to the connection between social cohesion and certain context-specific questions such as when and under what conditions is social cohesion desirable. For example, an increase in social cohesion within a neighbourhood—as similar people sort to similar places—may lead to lower social cohesion on the district or city level (Tasan-Kok *et al.*, 2013; Van Beckhoven and Van Kempen, 2003). However, social interaction within a neighbourhood has declined and outside the neighbourhood increased as a result of the development of the means of ICT (Guest and Wierzbicki, 1999). Therefore, there is no rock solid framework for evaluating the overall benefit of social cohesion within a neighbourhood without the context and without taking into account the spatial scale.

It is thus not always straightforward how residential mixing in a diverse city affects social cohesion at these different spatial scales as well. It seems that social mixing of people in neighbourhoods reduces the negative effects of segregation at the city level but it comes at the cost of weakening the social ties and cohesion within a neighbourhood (Tasan-Kok *et al.*, 2013). Although mixing increases awareness of each other, people still prefer to associate with others who have similar characteristics, i.e. share similar interests, and the same cultural and/or ethnic background (Tasan-Kok *et al.*, 2013; Van Beckhoven and Van Kempen, 2003; Forrest and Kearns, 2001).

There is thus no guarantee that bonding between groups will in fact take place as a result of residential mixing of very diverse groups (Van Beckhoven and Van Kempen, 2003), and mixing could lead, instead of increasing social interaction between diverse groups, either to parallel lives or open conflict between neighbours with different group belongings (Tasan-Kok *et al.*, 2013). Furthermore, the importance of the neighbourhood and neighbourhood-based social ties varies at different phases of the family life-course (Tasan-Kok *et al.*, 2013; Forrest and Kearns, 2001).

The current section aims to answer two main questions:

1. To what extent is the diversity of the residential area important for social cohesion?
2. Which elements foster social cohesion, which elements hinder the development of social cohesion in the area?

We will first discuss the composition of the egocentric networks of the interviewees, followed by an analysis of the extent and nature of the social interaction between the neighbours.

## 6.2. Composition of the interviewees' egocentric networks

Egocentric networks are firmly tied to the everyday activities and to the perceived boundaries of one's personal activity space. Therefore, two main notions can be highlighted. First, if all everyday activities take place in the Northern Tallinn District or in one's neighbourhood, then the egocentric networks and the places visited on a frequent basis are more likely created and bound to the district and neighbourhood. Second, egocentric networks—not taking into account the immediate family—are created through personal and often similar life paths and life course stages. Many of the interviewees express close relations with old friends from high school or university, old work colleagues, or others with whom they shared similar interests or life experiences, e.g., friends having same-aged children.

Interestingly, although the interviews indicate that the social factor—other people already living in the neighbourhood—did not affect the decision to move to a certain neighbourhood, we find that many interviewees have friends or relatives living nearby, and this is especially true in case of in-migrants. It seems that at times, getting to live together nearby just happens by chance as similar people make similar choices when they are looking for a home.

*“One of my close friend's friends is my next door neighbour. That was a pleasant surprise. But yes, Jaanus<sup>7</sup> lives maybe 200 metres from here, then Toomas who lives just across the railway. Siim lives here, Annika lives here, my ex-girlfriend's friend lives here. And then of course I know people who live somewhere in the neighbourhood but I have not yet visited them.”* (R23, M, 29, Estonian, book printer, Pelguranna)

However, the social networks of many expand all over Tallinn and beyond, and many work outside the Northern Tallinn district, too. In recent years, a new form of a transnational family has firmly emerged and some interviewees commute between Estonia and, for example, Finland: *“My father is my neighbour, but the others, let's say, my mother lives in Finland, brother in Viimsi and sister in Switzerland.”* (R4, M, 37, Estonian, entrepreneur, Kalamaja); *“My husband works as an assembler: he puts together cranes and takes them apart. He travels to Finland and in Estonia to Tartu and Narva.”* (R11, F, 32, Russian, unemployed, Kopli)

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<sup>7</sup>Names changed

Many Russian-speakers who also belong in the old residents' group still have their relatives living in Russia. As highlighted earlier, egocentric networks are usually created through personal and similar experiences, when people share something in common (cf. Tasan-Kok *et al.*, 2013; Van Beckhoven and Van Kempen, 2003; Forrest and Kearns, 2001): “[*The people I spend most time with are*]chefs. *Mainly chefs. Others are English whom I’ve met in the city. /.../ [Then] again, it’s not only tied to speciality. I don’t know.*” (R48, M, 37, English, chef, Kalamaja). In addition to the same line of work or same-aged children, for the socially most vulnerable groups, gang membership is often important:

Who are your friends? *“The ones I roam with. If I need serious help then... [Pauses to stress that there is help when he needs it – researcher] /.../ I don’t know, I’ve been in a gang for a long time. Simply, some people change, leave and new ones come, friends of friends or something like that.”* (R51, M, Russian, Kopli)

In other words, increasing diversity does not necessarily lead to social interaction across the groups, at least across multiple groups. However, the ethnic background of chefs is very diverse in Northern Tallinn so that interaction within one social group could bring together diverse people based on some other dimensions of diversity. Social interaction further depends on personality, i.e. whether the person is socially open and wants to create new relations or not.

### 6.3. Living together with neighbours: bonds, forms of mutual support

According to the interviews in Northern Tallinn, relations with neighbours generally remain quite superficial with little bonding with each other, but providing mutual support in everyday practical activities. Like with egocentric networks, the prerequisite for deeper social interaction between neighbours lies in shared interests and experiences such as having same-aged children. A very important aspect to be stressed is that shared space is also an important factor that facilitates social interaction even if it does not lead to strong bonds.

*“It’s all about communication. /.../ For example, one family is very polite, they always say hello and good-bye, but they don’t communicate with others. At the same time, a new neighbour, a man, moved in and the next day brought a cake. He said—I baked a cake, here is some for you. The person himself searches for contact. It is how you approach things, isn’t it? I might encapsulate, if I wanted to.”* (R5, M, 48, Estonian, unemployed, Pelguranna)

The most common interaction with neighbours remains limited to the courtesy of greetings. Neighbours acknowledge the presence of each other, but the chit-chat, discussing everyday events or weather, occurs rarely. The absence of deeper social interaction and creation of stronger bonds with each other is most evident between the three types of residents brought out in the section, i.e. long-term residents, recent in-migrants and socially ‘problematic’ people. Bonds are more likely to emerge between in-group members rather than with out-group members.

When considering the neighbourhoods’ ethnic and language diversity, for example, Kalamaja being more of an Estonian-speaking and Pelguranna more of a Russian-speaking environment, the same patterns apply. The interviewees expressed that, in general, everybody greets everybody regardless of ethnicity or what language they speak, i.e. courtesy of greetings applies. Stronger and more meaningful bonds are more likely to emerge within ethnic and/or language groups—Estonian-speakers communicate more with Estonian-speakers and Russian-speakers more with Russian-speakers. Therefore, communication or creating meaningful relations is tied to language

groups. Still, the probability of social ties being created between Estonian-speakers and Russian-speakers increases depending on the time they both have lived in the same building or in the vicinity of each other. For example, the residents who have lived as neighbours since the Soviet era have known each other for a longer period of time and are therefore more likely to consider each other good acquaintances. Interestingly, younger people (aged 20–30) are less likely to form deeper interaction with neighbours from other ethnic groups, even though they consider themselves more open to any social ties.

One characteristic for creating bonds, which the interviewees brought out, is the village-like atmosphere in the low-density pre-WWII neighbourhoods with wooden housing where everybody knows everybody unlike in the panel housing areas where there are hundreds of households and it is quite difficult to know everyone by face, not to mention by name or by what they do.

*“I think, at least it seems to me, that the people living in Kalamaja do a lot for that neighbourhood /.../ to create this atmosphere, to stress the intimacy of the area and, based on that, create new friendly relations that go beyond formal interaction between neighbours. /.../ Well, our neighbourhood is something in between. It is not Kopli, it is not Kalamaja. /.../ Starting from the tram stop, there are a lot of 5-storey buildings in the middle. But our houses are somehow standing separately and do not fit here or there.” (R16, F, 50, Russian, social worker, Karjamaa)*

Therefore, wooden housing areas that have a village-like environment and are more intimate appeal more to the residents who prefer a semi-rural lifestyle in the city (Kährik *et al.*, 2015). This, in turn, creates the prerequisites for a deeper commitment for the residents to maintain the neighbourhood’s village-like qualities. However, even in such areas, the divides between the main groups—long-term residents and in-migrants—remain clear-cut. As these areas (notably Kalamaja and Pelgulinn) are in the middle of the gentrification process, shifts in ethnic and sociodemographic groups occur: the gentrifiers tend to be younger, members of the creative class and Estonians, while the people leaving the areas are more often elderly, unemployed and Russian-speakers. The social interactions between in-migrants and long-term residents are rare, i.e. they live parallel lives. At times, even some tensions can be noted:

*“Well, I would say that I am used to things being in a certain order. For example, I am used to keeping my home and its surroundings clean and tidy. But the people in our building who have a different ethnic [Russian] background only tidy up their own apartment. This has always been so and it cannot be changed. I have not been able to change it. Estonians sweep the whole street, others only sweep a track to their own car. /.../ They do not take care of the common space as Estonians do.” (R21, F, 47, Estonian, accountant, Pelgulinn)*

When analysing social interaction between neighbours, shared space is the most important thing neighbours have in common: they share the building or garden, the space that is surrounding the building, the hallway or nearby parking lot. The interviewees from Kalamaja and Pelgulinn bring out that all common activities are usually tied to certain aspects or activities in the shared space, for example, spring clean-up activities in the garden. Still, we should note that people already sort to certain residential neighbourhoods, which implies that such social interaction between neighbours is often in-group interaction.

The interviewees from panel housing areas rarely have such shared spaces for common activities and when they do have, the activities are usually undertaken together with friends or relatives living in the same building or neighbourhood. In other words, certain similar people sort into

such areas, too, but, compared to the low-density wooden housing areas, the potential interaction across groups is even less likely. The only common factor that brings along social interaction across diverse groups, regardless of the neighbourhood, is related to having same-aged children. The situations that create communication are characterized as follows:

*“It’s rather just saying ‘hello!’. But I’m saying that during summer time or when it’s warmer, or when you have to do some gardening or clean-up of the yard, then this communication occurs more often. /.../ But you can simply communicate as well, for example, when you’re just sitting or sunbathing in the garden they come and start to chit-chat with you. During the summer you have more time to spend with each other. When it’s winter, on New Year’s Eve of course, and when you’re making a snowman or whatever. In the sense that there are activities which create some sort of communication. But if there are no activities then generally it’s just ‘hello!’” (R4, M, 37, Estonian, entrepreneur, Kalamaja)*

Regardless of the neighbourhood and the diversity of the people living in it, people consider their neighbours helpful and trustworthy. Higher levels of trust are expressed towards the familiar people living in the same building and whom people see on a daily basis:

*“I trust neighbours. Otherwise you could not live if you didn’t trust them and ... I do not see a reason not to trust the neighbours living next door. But I wouldn’t invite them into my home, or give them my key or ask them to water my plants. But I do trust them ...” (R3, F, 52, Estonian, unemployed, Pelgulinn)*

When evaluating general trust towards other people living nearby, the opinions reflected overall content as well. Only a few interviewees mentioned some level of distrust towards people who are noisy, but even they stated in the end that if these problematic people do not interfere or disturb others then there is no reason to fear or distrust them.

Direct mutual support in daily activities is most common among the elderly. For example, an elderly couple stated that they communicate with other elderly long-term neighbours, they share their everyday problems, share grocery shopping duties and keep each other company. Young adults expressed mutual support less often and through, for example, borrowing a car from friends (not from neighbours), helping neighbours carry heavy items, etc. Therefore, it can be said that some mutual support in everyday activities is evident among neighbours.

## 6.4. Conclusions

Diversity in Northern Tallinn depends on the scale in which we observe our area. Within different neighbourhoods, we can detect the force of homophily, as similar people increasingly sort into similar places, which strengthens as people prefer to associate with others who have similar characteristics. With the gentrification process, a neighbourhood changes in a way that even if people move to the neighbourhood because of the diversity, they end up making this area less diverse (cf. Talen, 2010).

When establishing social ties, common denominators (hobbies, high school, children who are friends etc.) are important in the sense that they create favourable preconditions for joint activities (Tasan-Kok *et al.*, 2013; Van Beckhoven and Van Kempen, 2003; Forrest and Kearns, 2001). Furthermore, more meaningful interaction occurs only within a homogenous group, e.g., with people of the same language, length of residence, etc. It is interesting that younger people (20-30 years old) feel that they are open to any type of socialization, but actually they seldom make meaningful contacts outside their own group. The most important group divide runs

between the long-term residents and new in-migrants who also sort into different neighbourhoods of Northern Tallinn.

Regarding social ties between neighbours, the relations remain rather superficial and within the boundaries of everyday politeness. This is evident in all the neighbourhoods irrespective of the residents' social status, ethnicity or language. However, as pointed out by Valentine (2008), such everyday politeness is motivated by normative codes of behaviour and does not lead to deeper understanding of one another. We also find from the interviews that sharing a place of residence is an important factor that helps to build social ties, even if weak ones. Unsurprisingly, the low-density areas become more cohesive and social interaction between neighbours is more intense compared to the high-rise panel housing areas. The activities that happen in the shared space (in the garden or in the hallway) in the low-density housing areas play a role in mutual attempts of, for example, preserving the neighbourhood's milieu—cleaning the garden, street, renovations, etc. However, trust towards neighbours does not seem to vary between neighbourhood types.

We conclude that the existing diversity in the neighbourhoods does not play a definitive role in fostering social cohesion. Rather, there are certain prerequisites like shared experiences or shared residence, which makes it easier to create meaningful social ties that foster the social cohesion of already select groups who have moved to live into a particular house or neighbourhood.

## 7. Social mobility

### 7.1. Introduction

The work of Granovetter (1973) stresses the linkage between egocentric networks and social mobility. The ties are strong with close friends and family members and weak with neighbours (Granovetter, 1973). People have many more weak ties, for example, with old acquaintances. The research of social mobility has also brought out the importance of such contacts—for example, a spontaneous meeting with an old acquaintance may lead to useful information about job opportunities. Weak ties tend to be even more important in case of social mobility than strong ties (Granovetter, 1973), because weak ties integrate larger communities and different groups, also across spatial scales. Strong ties facilitate in-group social interaction but at the cost of modest out-group interaction that, as a consequence, could lead to social and spatial divides and fragmentation.

Henning and Lieberg (1996) emphasize that contacts between neighbours become more important with time and as people familiarize with each other, which also increases trust. This implies that the length of residence has an impact on creating local ties. However, as the research of Granovetter (1973) has shown, immobile groups have fewer ties with other groups, especially when it comes to weak ties that contribute to social mobility. Less-educated workers and the people suffering from socio-spatial isolation tend to use more formal ways to find a job and they also use less weak ties to get a job (Elliot, 1999). These people are poorly equipped with social capital for finding a job. Therefore, the role of neighbours is different for different groups such as mobile well-educated people and immobile low-educated people. Low-income residents, ethnic minorities and women gain most from neighbourhood-based social networks (Pinkster, 2014; Strömberg *et al.*, 2015).

The neighbourhood effects research tradition argues that living in a certain neighbourhood matters in terms of the opportunities and restrictions that people have in their lives. Some elements of the neighbourhood, for example diversity, influence the social interaction and

communication and, hence, the social mobility of the residents. For example, immigrants living together with natives could gain valuable information about the host country's labour market, as well as learn about the tacit rules of the host country's labour market (Tammaru *et al.*, 2010). It is thus important to emphasise that the importance of neighbours is indirect, and its role varies across population groups. We therefore address the following research questions:

1. To what extent is the diversity of the neighbourhood important for social mobility?
2. Which elements foster social mobility and which elements hinder social mobility?

In answering those questions, we will first compare the current and previous jobs to understand the most recent labour market mobility of the interviewees. Next, we will examine what is the role of neighbours in the process of finding a job and finally, we will discuss whether the qualities of the neighbourhood (e.g., reputation) help to facilitate upward social mobility.

## 7.2. Current and previous jobs

We have collected individual social mobility trajectories that show that younger people and immigrants are also more socially mobile than older people and long-term residents. The trajectory of social mobility has not been linear for the latter group. Many of them have been able to improve their labour market positions recently, e.g., by making a transition from secondary (black) labour market to the official labour market. When we analyse their entire career paths since Estonia regained independence in 1991, we find a substantial downward social mobility in this group, though. There was full employment under socialism, followed by a dramatic structural change in the 1990s that brought along a rapid increase in unemployment (Marksoo, 2011). Those people who belong to the group of long-term residents in Northern Tallinn are generally middle-aged or older and often with vocational education; the proportion of Russian-speakers is also higher among them. They used to work in the industrial sector under socialism, and employment in this sector contracted dramatically in the 1990s (Tammaru and Kulu, 2003). Besides their qualification, their poor Estonian language skills also still hamper their labour market opportunities considerably today.

In short, many factors intersect (see Valentine, 2007) in the group of long-term residents that has positioned them on the margins of the labour market: inability to speak the official language of Estonia, their training and skills match with the needs of the out-of-date industrial sector, their older age which makes it difficult to learn new skill and language, as well as their more limited social networks that mainly include other industrial workers living in the same city district. A retired industrial worker, a chairwoman of a housing association, explains the situation:

*“Agitation to go back to Russia has decreased, but where should I go now anyway? I’ve lived and worked in Estonia. Therefore, all these statements—move back to Russia where you have your citizenship—have hurt my feelings. /.../ It is an endless circle because I don’t know the language and therefore finding a job is hard. But I can’t learn the language because my salary is too small. /.../ When I was working in an Estonian collective I knew a lot, I wrote and I spoke. But later, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when they shut down the clinics, then I didn’t use the language anymore and I started to forget. If you don’t have continuous communication it is hard to maintain the language proficiency. And as I get older, it’s getting harder and harder.” (R33, F, 60+, Belarussian, head of apartment association, Sitsi)*

Still, there are some exceptions of a long-term resident being able to brake the downward social mobility cycle; some interviewees have went through training courses or have studied at a college,

for example, social work, which provides good prospects for finding a job in the neighbourhoods with lots of socially disadvantaged people. The people who have broken the downward social mobility cycle have often more out-group contacts, they tend to be younger and are often supported financially by relatives or friends. None of them have used weak ties and the help from neighbours to change their situation.

The in-migrants are in a better situation on the labour market. They are usually younger, speak Estonian, and work in the expanding service sector. In some cases, social and spatial mobility have taken place hand in hand. Social mobility has improved their opportunities on the housing market, allowing them to move into gentrifying areas. There, in turn, they gain from new personal networks, with local creative workers all clustering to Northern Tallinn and its main hubs such as the Telliskivi Creative City.

We thus find that upward social mobility is most common among the interviewees working in creative industries or as creative entrepreneurs in gentrifying neighbourhoods. These people have many in-group based weak ties. Many bottom-up and also a few top-down initiatives also aim to unite the creative people, individual artists, and creative entrepreneurs in Northern Tallinn. The interviewees state that such ties have been useful for them in improving their position in the labour market. It could be that the influence of such networks is also indirect as people learn from each other through daily interaction. Even though the bonding linkage is usually not the neighbourhood, the spatial clustering of such people is still a very important part of their upward social mobility.

### 7.3. Using neighbours and others to find a job

Despite the importance of the spatial dimension in social mobility, our interviewees do not provide explicit evidence that they gain from neighbours in terms of getting a job. Instead, many argue that they do not have any contacts with their neighbours other than just saying “hello!” or having a chit-chat conversation as an act of politeness when occasionally meeting in the hallway.

*“It has never come to my mind that neighbours might help me find a job. For some reason, I think that people other than neighbours might be important, those with whom I have common hobbies, interests. Anyway, I’ve never looked at my neighbours like that ... Rather, it is a chance to create a friendly contact, if I had had similar people as neighbours, then I probably would have created friendly contacts.”* (R16, F, 50, Russian, social worker, Sitsi)

According to some interviewees, asking for financial help or help in finding a job is too personal to be addressed to neighbours. The weak ties between neighbours in diverse neighbourhoods may not allow entering into deeper discussions about work life. Some interviewees are also on the opinion that such help to find a job should not be asked from neighbours because dealing with financial issues or asking for a job that refers to financial problems may damage the relationship.

*“I don’t want to strongly engage with my neighbours. It will bring a quarrel into the house. /.../ When you borrow money to a friend, you get rid of him, right? It’s the same idea, because my business activity creates tension.”* (R19, M, 43, Estonian, entrepreneur, Kalamaja)

Obviously, not all people think the same way and exceptions do exist, but such deeper interaction takes place between people of similar socioeconomic backgrounds. For example, helping neighbours is very common in social housing. People living in such housing have similar problems, i.e. they are more vulnerable on the labour market. They do often discuss and share

with each other information about job opportunities. However, well-paid neighbours with higher social statuses living in gentrifying areas sometime help each other by sharing useful contacts and information about job opportunities or clients. For example, an owner of a construction company who lives in a historical wooden neighbourhood of Pelgulinn and performs refurbishment works in the surrounding gentrifying area uses information from his neighbours to find new projects.

In general, many interviewees claim that the help received through personal networks and acquaintances may help to find a job, but they have not used this opportunity. Here is an interesting explanation to justify such attitude through highlighting the basic characteristics of ethnic Estonians: *“But it might be just ‘Estonian’ that—oh, I don’t want to bother them. /.../ Yes, rather, the I-don’t-want-to-bother-them-attitude maybe.”* (R24, F, 28, Estonian, government official, Kalamaja). However, we also interviewed ethnic minorities, not only ethnic Estonians, and we do not find evidence that neighbours in a diverse neighbourhood generally help each other in finding jobs. The help received from neighbours is mainly related to household issues such as helping with emergency plumbing or with smaller renovation works if the neighbour has these skills.

#### 7.4. Neighbourhood reputation as an asset in upward social mobility?

The previous analysis showed that a clear sorting of people takes place in Northern Tallinn and moving to the gentrifying areas is certainly related to the high reputation of the neighbourhoods. We also find that people do not generally get explicit help from their neighbours, but we also find that social and spatial mobility are clearly related to each other. The explicit help is more common among neighbours who are in a more vulnerable position in the labour market and living in social housing. Still, skills rather than neighbourhoods affect employer attitudes.

Neighbourhood reputation can matter in a more implicit way, though, since the reputation of a neighbourhood is used for describing the inhabitants. Our respondents themselves use social classifications such as “the problematic others” or “hipsters” and these classification often refer implicitly to certain residential contexts such as social housing or a gentrifying neighbourhood.

*“You may be undermined by the fact that people think you are a wannabe (if you live in Kalamaja). For example, when I told my friends I was moving to Kalamaja they all thought that I was one of ‘those hipsters’. /.../ So there are people who figure you belong to the same group with those who are seen most in the area. And when we were talking to this guy in a suit he looked down on us like—oh, you live in ‘that kind’ of area. And as my wife brought out, her friends who go to events in the centre look on her and think she is different, she doesn’t wear heels anymore.”* (R26, M, 42, English, entrepreneur, Kalamaja)

To sum up, neighbourhood reputation is certainly a very important factor in making a housing choice, it sorts similar people to similar neighbourhoods and these people do interact with each other. Neighbours do not generally help each other when it comes to finding a job, but there are certainly indirect effects of neighbours on social mobility.

## 7.5. Conclusions

Individual capability and belonging to some group are expectedly much more important than neighbourhood characteristics in facilitating social mobility. However, our study shows that there is a complex relationship between social and spatial mobility with many implicit and indirect effects that work through interaction with neighbours down to neighbourhood reputation.

The long-term residents are often more neighbourhood-centred and they tend to have more close contacts within the neighbourhood on the one hand. On the other hand, these people are not very well connected to the networks where information about jobs is flowing. This is because their social networks mainly consist of people in the same social situation (e.g., many are unemployed) and these contacts do not provide the necessary resources for upward mobility.

In short, stimulating two types of ties would help to foster social mobility. First, an increase in out-group ties with people better connected to job networks among the long-term residents is crucial. Secondly, the abundant number of weak ties within the in-migrant group with high socio-spatial mobility helps them not so much in getting jobs, but in finding new projects, clients and contacts that all contribute to the success of their work life.

The most important elements that hinder social mobility come from basic communication barriers between neighbours: even when weak ties such as daily contacts do exist, people are not accustomed to talking to members of other groups in relation to finding a job. This may be so because of reasons such as a wish to keep problems private, or the distinctness of the Nordic type of the Estonian society where people are not very communicative outside of their close contacts.

## 8. Perceptions of public policies and initiatives

### 8.1. Introduction

Local non-governmental initiatives are vital ingredients of sound local governance (Fincher and Iveson, 2008). They focus on very local issues on the one hand and complement universal public services on the other hand. The weakness of civil society and elitist forms of governance is often criticized in Estonia, as in many other formerly socialist countries (Keresztély and Scott, 2012; Ruutsoo, 2002). Urban initiatives were simply missing in totalitarian societies, and they have been slow to emerge since then. Furthermore, misunderstandings between the city government and the leaders of the initiatives are not uncommon to the formation of such initiatives.

In this section, we turn our attention to the perception of public policies and initiatives by the local residents. We first asked the people about the non-governmental initiatives and area-specific public policies that we know from our previous research (Leetmaa *et al.*, 2015), but we allowed the people to complement the list of influential local policies and initiatives. The main research question for the fieldwork was: How are diversity-related policies perceived by the inhabitants of the area?

Our case study area, Northern Tallinn, offers a good cross-section of initiatives dealing with local diversity. We are able to learn how the civil society works in an environment that has recently experienced diversification of its population and immense physical changes, mainly as a result of renovating older houses as well as due to new housing developments. Local-level public policies and non-governmental initiatives mainly focus on spatial and housing problems as well as on

tackling social inequalities (Tammaru *et al.*, 2014; Leetmaa *et al.*, 2014). For example, the neighbourhood associations aim to improve the living environment in the neighbourhoods, and some NGOs provide counselling for unemployed people. Also, the city has launched locally unique initiatives and supports the activities of NGOs.

## 8.2. Perception and evaluation of existing policies and initiatives: what do the residents know?

Generally, local residents have limited knowledge of area-based initiatives and policies. An important aspect shaping the perceptions of urban policies and initiatives is personal experience. Residents of Northern Tallinn know most of the policies or activities concerning their home and its immediate surroundings. Different initiatives are mentioned, e.g., by Estonian-speaking respondents mostly neighbourhood associations (NAs) and the Telliskivi Creative City (TCC), the former regarding the living environment and planning activities, the latter in the sense of creating businesses and being a place of encounter.

The interviewees admit that if the people themselves are indifferent regarding the developments in their home area, then they are often also not aware of the initiatives either. Many residents even don't know the initiatives that are directly addressed to them. Russian-speakers seem to be less informed about the public policies and initiatives than Estonian-speakers. Also, the lack of information creates feelings of distrust and not being included:

*“All residents and local civil associations should participate in local development issues and urban planning, but is it actually happening? When the city gives a permission to build something it should be negotiated with local people.”* (R5, M, 49, Estonian, unemployed, Pelgulinna)

All new plans are public, but it seems that, for various reasons, the information does not reach all people involved. The inhabitants of social housing explain that there is a lack of trust when communicating with social workers and local government officials. The non-governmental local initiatives, e.g., Bethel's Centre of Pastoral Care, are trusted more and people often turn to them when they search for help, advice, or financial support.

Although the neighbourhood associations (NA) are mentioned frequently, only a few of the interviewees are active members of the NAs. They still accept the goals of the NAs to promote the area and to take care of the buildings and their surroundings. The other activities of the NAs which have found good resonance are organising of festivals, workshops, and other events. Although the interviewees admit that the people who gather tend to be similar in terms of their interests, ethnicity, status, and lifestyles, they still appreciate these undertakings since it enables to get to know different people living there.

The Telliskivi Creative City (TCC) is seen as a catalyst of positive changes in the Northern Tallinn District. Many interviewees bring out that since the founding of the TCC, important changes have taken place, e.g., a variety of new activities and small businesses are mushrooming in Northern Tallinn. Even if they compete with each other, the diversity of activities and businesses attracts customers so that everyone would benefit in the end. The TCC has thus contributed to a good vibe for social regeneration in Kalamaja and this spills over to other surrounding and about-to-be-gentrified neighbourhoods as well.

*“The TCC is an interesting place for meeting other people. There is everything you need there: restaurants, a gym for sports activities, places for hobbies. If such a place would not exist, many*

*activities would be done outside the neighbourhood.*" (R10, F, 26, Estonian, assistant-project manager, Pelgulinna)

While the TCC is an important meeting place for the residents of the gentrified low-rise wooden-house neighbourhoods (Kalamaja and Pelgulinn), one of the focal points of the Pelguranna panel housing district (western part of the Northern Tallinn District) is the Stroomi public beach that was revitalized a few years ago. A well-known public initiative there includes an annual clean-up project of the Stroomi beach, organised by the local municipality. Most of the participants are from the nearby panel houses, but this initiative also brings together people from other neighbourhoods, and the event also blurs the ethnic and lifestyle boundaries that do exist in everyday activities. Another place of inter-group (also inter-ethnic) encounter is the market adjacent to the Baltic Railway Station where the diversity of people, activities and products creates an interesting atmosphere. Buying products from the market is both a Soviet relict and a usual practice among the less well-off residents as well as a new fashionable trend among the new residents who appreciate an ecological lifestyle.

### 8.3. Policy priorities proposed by the interviewees: what do the residents want?

As regards the existing initiatives, the aspect of serving as a place of encounter seemed to be the most important for local residents. When asked for additional proposals for new initiatives in the district, the need for more leisure activities and high-quality public spaces was mentioned. This is especially emphasized by the residents in panel housing (less gentrified) neighbourhoods. According to the interviewees, the Stroomi public beach has become a place of encounter for both the Estonians and the Russian-speakers living in the district, but also for those living elsewhere in Tallinn. Many events that are organised by the city take place there (e.g., concerts, festivals, events for children and for the elderly). The frequency of the city-organised events depends on whether the elections are nearby, and the interviewees would welcome more such activities.

Clearly, the initiatives that are addressed to physical improvement of their neighbourhood are welcomed the most. It is not surprising, because, after the neglect of the district in the Soviet decades, Northern Tallinn needs physical renewal. Even in the gentrifying areas, many physical aspects of the neighbourhood could still be improved. People desire parks, proximity of shopping centres, cafes, sport facilities, beach, city centre, but also better public transport connections with the rest of the city, as well as improvements in the condition of the streets.

There is no consensus on how exactly to upgrade the physical environment, though. For example, not all people want large shopping centres in the area. Other prospective major changes also encounter contrasting views. For example, discussions over the Kopli lines (old tram lines and former barracks) development project are often brought out by the different resident groups. The city has been looking for a developer for the vast coastal property for almost 25 years, but the area still stands abandoned. On the one hand, the residents wish the area to stay as green as possible, on the other, they feel that the area has great potential to become one of the most attractive neighbourhoods in Northern Tallinn:

*"The Kopli lines development is the main issue. The civil society can talk as much as they want but those who have the money do what is most profitable for them. It should be possible to develop this area so that the economic and societal interests are taken care of."* (R12, M, 26, Estonian, photographer, Kopli)

*“The biggest change probably will be the Kopli lines development. /.../ I’ve been on top of the water tower in one of those industrial buildings. The area is so green that you cannot see the houses under the trees. I would not want to see that change.” (R37, M, 74, Estonian, retired, Sitsi)*

## 8.4. Conclusions

To conclude, people are mostly aware of the initiatives that directly affect their lives. Interestingly, local residents do not expect that local public policies or nongovernmental initiatives should address the ethnic diversity of the district. Also, the local initiatives that address socioeconomic inequality (that strongly correlates to ethnic divide) are not considered to be the most essential ones. It seems that the ethnic and related socioeconomic divide (that increases in the course of the ongoing gentrification process) is something that is accepted without resistance.

The people, however, welcome all the activities that offer a place for inter-group (also inter-ethnic) encounters: events, festivals, common public areas, e.g., the beach is beloved by all. Even when contacts created in the public space are rather superficial, these places of encounter enable to have at least a minimal idea of the culture of the other groups living in the district (but maybe a few blocks away from one’s home), i.e. it helps to familiarize diverse groups.

A general common concern seems to be the need to create more places of encounter and improve the physical environment of the neighbourhoods. In those realms, the people welcome better and more open public policies and new nongovernmental initiatives. Although we expect all people to benefit from the spatial improvements, we are also aware that the pressure for spatial changes above all comes from the “in-migrants”/”gentrifiers”. This may place the long-term residents in the role of a neglected group whose role in neighbourhood activism and input to neighbourhood change remain limited.

## 9. Conclusion

### *Summary of the key findings*

Northern Tallinn has been undergoing gentrification since the late 1990s. This process started in Kalamaja, the neighbourhood that is located closest to the city centre, and has expanded towards the Kopli peninsula. Today, signs of gentrification can be seen in all the neighbourhoods of Northern Tallinn. We could say that Northern Tallinn is as diverse now as it has ever been before. This diversity pertaining to gentrification emerges from changes in the physical environment as well as in the population composition. The growing in-migration of creative, often wealthy, young Estonians and out-migration of older Russian-speaking industrial workers and the elderly is increasing segregation and can ultimately lead to a decrease in the social mix of the area (Tammaru *et al.*, 2015; Talen, 2010). In this concluding chapter, we focus on two main research questions:

1. How do the residents profit from the hyper-diverse area and how do they suffer from living in such an area?
2. What can policy-makers learn from the perceptions and practices of the residents?

Based on our analysis, we can conclude that when deciding to move to a certain neighbourhood in Northern Tallinn, *diversity as such in general is not a pull-factor*. Rather, the motives are quite practical, for example, the price and size of the dwelling, the location, the physical structure of

the neighbourhood and the different amenities present. Nevertheless, almost all interviewees considered Northern Tallinn and their neighbourhood a good and very perspective place to live. The proximity of Kalamaja, the focal point of gentrification, as well as the proximity of attractive places of encounter like the Telliskivi Creative City or Stroomi beach seem to provide a positive image of progress and prosperity for Kalamaja and the surrounding neighbourhoods alike. It became clear that the interviewees like to have their homes linked with this prosperity and the positive changes happening in the district.

We could detect that although diversity is not a stated motive of migration to Northern Tallinn, it is important indirectly. The interviewees regard the diversity of housing and architecture, the parks and greenery, and the people living in the area among other things as an asset if not the *genius loci* of Northern Tallinn. *This diversity of housing and architecture drives population diversity.* Furthermore, the respondents do not consider diversity so much an outcome, but rather a process in the form of changes that are taking place in Northern Tallinn, i.e. the *process of diversification* is often tied to physical and social changes taken place in the neighbourhoods.

We could define three main groups of residents: long-term residents—generally the Russian-speaking minorities who arrived here during the Soviet period and the elderly; in-migrants—generally young, creative Estonians, students, and young families; and the ‘problematic’ people—the homeless, long-term unemployed, people with alcohol and drug use problems. It became apparent that when discussing the social diversity in the area, both the long-term residents and in-migrants first highlighted the ‘problematic’ group and not each other. The attitude towards the problematic group was cautious and both the long-term residents and in-migrants would prefer them to move out of their neighbourhoods of residence. Their share has clearly already declined in the gentrifying neighbourhoods (Tammaru *et al.*, 2015). Thus, the forces that have so far diversified the neighbourhoods of the district socioeconomically are now supporting socioeconomic homogenisation.

The clear divides between these three main groups, especially between the long-term residents and in-migrants, are even more evident when considering social networking and social cohesion. In other words, the *force of homophily* that connects people with similar backgrounds and interests is very important. Thus, first, the prerequisite for creation of any social ties is having something in common or having some kind of a *joint activity* (Tasan-Kok *et al.*, 2013; Van Beckhoven and Van Kempen, 2003; Forrest and Kearns, 2001). However, this is very rare between these groups. Secondly, *residential segregation* is an important factor in limiting social interaction. The long-term residents live more often in the Pelguranna panel housing areas and Kopli, while the majority of the in-migrants live in Pelgurinn and Kalamaja. Even when living in close proximity, the communication remains within the boundaries of social politeness, i.e. greeting your neighbour. Thirdly, an important obstacle for creating social ties is the *spoken language*. As the long-term residents are more often Russian-speakers and the in-migrants tend to be Estonians, the language barrier limits communication. Therefore, we detect bonding within these groups but very little bridging out. Nevertheless, based on our analysis, we can conclude that the probability for meaningful social ties to emerge, also across language groups, depends on the amount of *time lived in the same building* or close to each other. For example, the residents living as neighbours since the Soviet era quite often consider themselves good acquaintances or even friends, and social distance is perceived to be smaller (cf. Leetmaa *et al.*, 2015).

The most positive example of public places bringing various groups together in Northern Tallinn is Stroomi beach in Pelguranna neighbourhood. The revitalized beach has become an important activity space for all residents, regardless of their ethnicity or social status. Interestingly, even though there is only modest communication between Russian- and Estonian-speakers, in the case

of Stroomi, all the interviewees mention the presence of each other, i.e. familiarizing with the existence of other groups, which might lead to more meaningful bonds in time. Furthermore, one of the attractions of the beach seems to be the exposure of different groups to each other, which also represents the growing cultural diversity in the area, similar to that happening in Kalamaja with the Telliskivi Cultural Centre.

It also became clear that social networks follow activity spaces. If all everyday activities take place in Northern Tallinn or in one's neighbourhood, then the egocentric networks and the places visited on a frequent basis are more likely created in and bound to the district and to the neighbourhood. In addition, the scope of one's social network depends on how mobile one is. Some groups are more mobile than others and might have more possibilities for valuable social contacts than others, for example, when searching for a job. As the long-term residents are often more neighbourhood-centred and tend to have more close contacts within the neighbourhood, they are not very well connected to the contemporary professional networks where the job information is circulating.

Regarding public policies, we find that the residents do notice those initiatives that are targeted to resolving everyday problems like potholes in the streets, public order, clean streets, and parks. Policies dealing with ethnic or socioeconomic diversity are rarely mentioned or in the best case perceived to be too abstract to relate them with everyday affairs and one's policy preferences. However, the residents do welcome all activities that offer a place for inter-group encounter. In that sense, the revitalization of Stroomi beach can be considered a very successful large-scale public initiative which helps to familiarize diverse groups.

*How do the residents profit from the hyper-diverse area and how do they suffer from living in such an area?*

When considering the whole district of Northern Tallinn, it is very diverse population-wise. In addition, we can also highlight the neighbourhood and housing diversity that has surfaced in all phases of our research (see Tammaru *et al.*, 2014 and Leetmaa *et al.*, 2014). However, this diversity in the physical qualities also reflects fairly well the social segregation or spatial clusters based on length of residence and spoken language, since the majority of the long-term residents and Russian-speakers live in panel housing areas, whereas the in-migrants and Estonians are more likely to live in wooden housing areas. The charm of Northern Tallinn for newcomers is mostly related to those village-like, lower density housing areas.

The benefits of diversity mainly remain within the main diversity groups based on length of residence and spoken language as very little social interaction takes place across these group divisions. Within the groups, diversity matters in a positive way. For example, the clustering of wealthy, Estonian-speaking, young members of a diverse set of creative industries in Northern Tallinn is definitely an asset, since they interact intensively with each other and gain professionally by getting new contacts, clients and projects.

The long-term residents suffer the most. The increase of diversity in Northern Tallinn as a result of the in-migration of the wealthy, Estonian-speaking, young members of a diverse set of creative industries is only temporary and as the process evolves, the old residents are pushed out from the area (Tammaru *et al.*, 2015). In other words, the diversification as a result of gentrification has considerably increased the real estate prices in Northern Tallinn, and especially so in more gentrified neighbourhoods—and this is a phenomenon that does not serve the interests of the long-term and less wealthy residents. Instead, under the strong influence of the markets as is the case in Tallinn, we witness the evolution of the invasion-succession type of population change as the wealthy in-migrants replace the less wealthy long-term residents in Northern Tallinn.

*What can policy makers learn from the perceptions and practices of the residents?*

First, according to existing literature on diversity as well as the processes highlighted in the current report, we have to acknowledge the fact that *a diverse neighbourhood undergoing gentrification remains diverse only for a period of time*. Therefore, the main question is how to make and take the best of the ongoing period when the “achieved diversity” is remarkable, but further homogenisation is also inevitable. This is an important question to address, since the results of our research show that diverse neighbourhoods serve as ideal places for inter-group (inter-ethnic) encounters. This leads to the following recommendations for urban policies in diverse neighbourhoods:

1. *Avoid any action that might conduce to acceleration of the gentrification process*. As gentrification changes the social and ethnic composition in the district, often forcing the marginal groups to leave, action must be taken to slow the negative outcome.
2. *Learn from successful public initiatives*, such as Stroomi beach, and try to incorporate that in future initiatives, emphasising the role of public space when creating inter-group encounters.
3. *Promote (third sector) initiatives that deal with disadvantaged groups*, especially the Russian-speaking long-term unemployed, to raise their quality of life where they live and to avoid their resettlement.
4. *To notice and recognize the grassroots initiatives of the long-term residents and young Russian-speakers* that are somewhat hidden beside the mainstream creative sector in Northern Tallinn. To (re)search for young Russian-speaking creative people and entrepreneurs and to promote their relations with the Estonian-speaking creative industry.

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**Appendix: List of interviewed persons**

Interviewee	Age	Gender	Position in household	Occupation	Ethnic group
1	83	F	Single	Retired	Estonian
2	33	F	Single	Service assistant	Estonian
3	51	F	Lives with partner	Unemployed	Estonian
4	37	M	Household with children	Entrepreneur	Estonian
5	48	M	Lives with mother	Unemployed	Estonian
6	50	M	Lives with mother and brother	Unemployed	Estonian
7	55	F	Single	Unemployed	Estonian
8	48	M	Lives with parents	Casual laborer	Estonian
9	43	F	Mother in a single-parent household	Shop assistant and cleaning lady	Estonian
10	26	F	Single	Assistant-project manager	Estonian
11	32	F	Household with children	Unemployed	Russian
12	26	M	Lives with partner	Photographer	Estonian
13	26	M	Single	Network technician	Estonian
14	26	M	Lives with girlfriend	Designer	Estonian
15	57	M	Lives with partner	Unemployed	Russian
16	50	F	Single	Social worker	Russian
17	45	F	Household with children	Social worker	Russian
18	32	F	Mother in a single-parent household	Shop assistant	Estonian
19	43	M	Household with children	Entrepreneur	Estonian
20	33	M	Household with children	Entrepreneur	Estonian
21	47	F	Household	Bookkeeper	Estonian

			with children		
22	52	F	Lives with partner	Head of NGO	Estonian
23	29	M	Single	Book printer	Estonian
24	28	F	Household with children	Government official	Estonian
25	55	F	Single	Chairwoman of two housing associations	Russian
26	42	M	Household with children	Entrepreneur	British
27	61	F	Single	Bookkeeper	Estonian
28	28	M	Lives with parents	Warehouse worker	Estonian
29	48	M	Lives with partner	Unemployed	Russian
30	48	F	Household with children	Dishwasher	Russian
31	52	F	Single	Cleaning lady	Izhorian
32	43	F	Household with children	Unemployed	Russian
33	65	F	Single	Chairwoman of housing association	Belorussian
34	24	M	Single	Clown	Australian
35	44	F	Single	Logistics specialist	Estonian
36	56	M	Lives with partner	Electrician	Uzbek
37	71	M	Lives with partner	Retired	Estonian
38	71	F	Single	Retired	Estonian
39	36	F	Lives with partner	Designer	Venezuelan
40	30	F	Lives with partner	City council official	Russian
41	36	M	Lives with partner	Entrepreneur	Estonian/Georgian
42	80	F	Single	Retired	Russian
43	77	F	Lives with partner	Retired	Izhorian
44	60	F	Single	Nurse	Russian
45	83	F	Lives with daughter	Retired	Estonian

46	45	M	Household with children	Repairman	Estonian
47	73	M	Lives with partner	Retired	Russian
48	37	M	Lives with partner	Chef	British
49	66	M	Lives with partner	Retired	Ukrainian
50	24	M	Household with children	Construction worker	Russian
51	20	M	Lives with parents	Unemployed	Russian