



*Combating Inequalities through Innovative Social Practices  
of and for Young People in Cities across Europe*

**Local matters?  
Neighbourhoods and social infrastructure as spaces of  
reproducing, producing, mitigating or counteracting  
social inequalities in 10 European cities**

**Citispyce  
Work Package 3**

Fieldwork I: Final Comparative  
Report

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HAW Hamburg, February 2014



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## 1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of the first stage of fieldwork in the EU funded CITISPYCE research project in a comparative way. In ten cities, studies were carried out in order to describe and analyse in a comprehensive way policies and infrastructure at neighbourhood level working against social inequalities, with a particular focus on young people. For each city, two neighbourhoods were selected as case studies; availability, outreach, accessibility and quality of local social infrastructure, services and projects were assessed, underlying values, normative-cognitive frameworks and governance arrangements were deciphered. Particular emphasis was put on the relation and division of labour between state, non-governmental welfare organizations and small-scale bottom up initiatives at the local level.

This research exercise is to be seen in the wider context of the CITISPYCE project. It follows on from a baseline study (Stigendal 2013) that identified drivers of social inequality at a macro level. The baseline study looked at the scale level of cities, EU Member States and beyond and, deploying a critical realist perspective, discussed how varied forms of regulating capitalist economies produce and reproduce social inequalities. Two broad trends that were brought to the fore and presented in their respective regional shapes, are neoliberalisation and financialisation, and their acceleration and accentuation after the 2008 economic and financial crisis, resulting in unprecedented and dramatic levels of working poor, youth unemployment and, as Stigendal highlights, social uncertainty. With the local case studies (Work Package 3), the CITISPYCE project turns to the meso-level of sociality before a next set of studies will explore micro level experience based on individual encounters of young people (CITISYPE Work Package 4). Slicing up social investigation into these three levels is problematic, as they are heavily intertwined. The analytical distinction between these three levels has been set as a heuristic to guide successive phases of the research (and to allow for appropriate and distinct research methods to be applied in each phase), but they will have to be seen in their interplay. Social inequalities, so we assume, are produced and reproduced across these levels and not bound to one or another. Indeed, part of the CITISPYCE project rationale is to uncover the interplay of factors between these three levels to help understand how social inequalities are (re)produced and how they may be counteracted. This also brings into dialogue a range of different actors at those three levels, including policy makers, practitioners, third sector/voluntary organisations, young people and networks incorporating all of these.

In this wider research framework, the meso-level is operationalized as neighbourhoods and public services. The research is expected to show if (and how) neighbourhoods and public services contribute to social inequalities. In other words: Do they matter? Does it make a difference to the life chances and

social inclusion of a young person, in which neighbourhood of a European city he or she lives and which public services are provided there? We presume that, yes, place and services do matter and that there is a (in some instances more limited than in others) power in the locality that (potentially) mediates and shapes such manifestations. Badly equipped and isolated neighbourhoods can amplify experiences of inequality as can discriminatory service delivery. Well-equipped and accessible neighbourhoods on the other hand can be important resources to cope with deprivation and even escape poverty, empowering services can be a decisive factor of social inclusion. The role of neighbourhoods in both, producing and tackling inequalities, is well described by Alan Murie (2005). He refers particularly to articulations of social exclusion, which we regard as one of various expressions of inequalities (see also Stigendal 2013)<sup>1</sup>:

*“The dynamics of social exclusion both affect neighbourhoods and are affected by them, and the understanding of deprivation and exclusion is sterile without reference to neighbourhood and place as key elements in the production and experience of exclusion. Such reference includes aspects of the local welfare state and rebalances accounts that neglect the welfare state altogether or are selective about what they include. Some neighborhoods are better placed to access jobs and training; some have a greater diversity of public, voluntary and community services – more acceptable to a mixed faith and diverse population. Others are less diverse. The perceptions and realities of opportunity, security, and safety relate to all of these and are important aspects of the experience of exclusion”* (Murie 2005: 165).

Two EU wide trends feed our presumption of the significance of the neighbourhood level at which we explore manifestations of inequalities as well as services to tackle these. Firstly, residential segregation and social polarisation have been on the rise in European cities since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century so that where one lives is more and more decisive about his or her health, safety, educational achievements and career prospects. Secondly, in a still ongoing process of rescaling state spaces, the urban neighbourhood as a geographic entity has become an important site of social intervention, a “key spatial and institutional force field for post-Keynesian regulatory experiments” (Brenner 2004: 272).

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<sup>1</sup> A conceptual debate about the relation between these concepts is still to be deepened in the course of this project. Bernt/Colini’s categorization of peripheralisation, marginalization and exclusion as three forms of “urban inequalities” could be an actual inspiration (Bernt/Colini 2013).

## **Research method**

To get to grips with neighbourhoods empirically, two aspects of analysis were combined in the field work: a) the local social structure, i.e. the composition of the population and the more recent social history, and b) the social infrastructure, i.e. the public services in place that address social inequalities experienced by young people living in the respective area or visiting it in their everyday life.

The fieldwork was carried out on the basis of a research strategy paper that had been developed by the project consortium and identified a number of analytical categories and research dimensions that were to be addressed in each report. In line with the overall focus and target group of the CITISPYCE project (young people of ethnic minorities or with a migration history in deprived urban areas), the selection criteria were: a) a socio-economic situation that is less favourable than city-wide average, b) an age structure that ensures that the neighbourhood is inhabited by young people (under 25), and c) a population composition that characterises the area as ethnically diverse. Within each city, two areas were to be selected that would show these characteristics of social structure and deprivation, but differ in their social structure and social history as well as in the opportunity structures and social infrastructure that are available for young persons. Given the profound differences between the participating cities and their institutional make-up, significant room for discretion was allowed and each partner was asked to find a plausible rationale for the selection. Area sizes were to be within a range of 5,000 and 50,000 inhabitants (for details, see WP 3 strategy paper).

Methodically, the fieldwork was based on a mix of social research methods, including document analysis, site visits and about 15 expert interviews per area. Documents that were analysed include recent and past administrative reports and plans, policy papers, research reports. The site visits included an account of the appearance and condition of local infrastructure, service facilities and public space. Experts that were interviewed were local policy-makers, service providers, local associations, businesses, researchers, inhabitants and in some cases also service users. They focused on the socio-spatial characteristics of the neighbourhood, characteristics of local social infrastructure, the relation of social infrastructure to inequalities, and incidences of social innovation in the area. A total of 146 interviews were carried out.

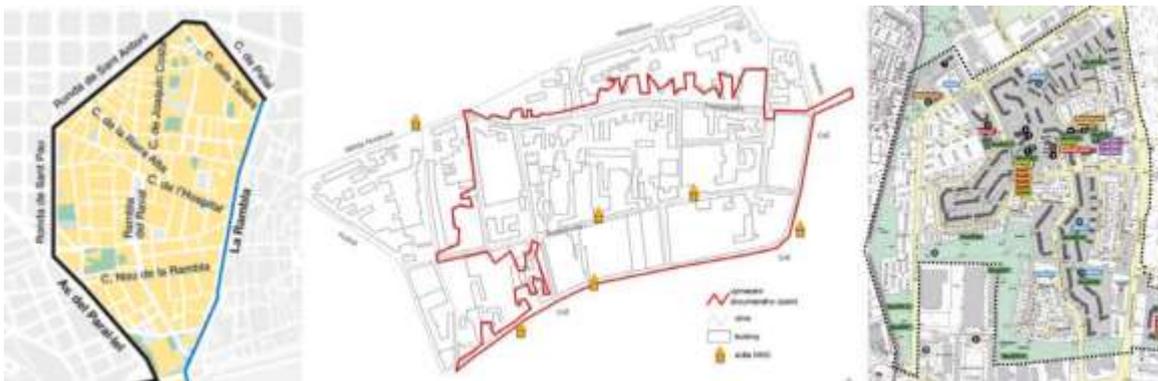
Before we turn to the findings of the case studies, we'll briefly introduce some conceptual underpinnings of these two research objects - neighbourhoods and social infrastructure -, and discuss their relevance for the socialisation of young people.

### a) Neighbourhoods as a research focus (attributes, effects, scales)

Neighbourhoods are, at a first glance, geographic entities, parts of a wider city, a set of adjacent streets and buildings. But there is much more to a neighbourhood than its physical features. Numerous attempts of urban studies tried to get hold of what it is that makes up a neighbourhood and distinguishes it from other areas. Amongst the earliest accounts, is a reflection by Robert A. Woods, who, in 1914, saw a neighbourhood as a core institution in the evolution of animals and mankind, even more powerful than the family<sup>2</sup>. And even in the modern and differentiated society, so he observed, the proximity of neighbours, their interaction in everyday life, makes the neighbourhood a strategic and powerful site of socialization:

*“It is surely one of the most remarkable of all social facts that, coming down from untold ages, there should be this instinctive understanding that the man who establishes his home beside yours, by that very act begins to qualify as an ally of yours and begins to have a claim upon your sense of comradeship. Surely this deeply ingrained human instinct is capable of vast and even revolutionary results. Among the unexplored and almost undiscovered assets upon which we must depend for the multiplication of wealth and well-being in the future, may it not be that here in the apparently commonplace routine of our average neighborhoods is the pitch blende out of which, by the magic of the applied social science that is to come, a new radium of economic and moral productive resource will be elicited?”* (Woods 1914: 581).

Figure 1 Neighbourhood maps of Barcelona (Raval), Brno (Cejl) and Hamburg (Essener Straße)



Source: Citispyce WP3 Reports Jubany et al.2014, Sirovatka et al. 2014, Gehrke et al. 2014.

<sup>2</sup> “the neighborhood is a still more ancient and fundamentally causative institution than the family. It seems likely that the neighborhood, in the shape of gregarious association among the animals, was the necessary matrix in which reciprocities of the family could find suggestion and protection, (...) a family of families (...), the neighborhood relation has a function in the maintenance and progress of our vast and infinitely complicated society today which is not wholly beneath comparison with the function which it exercised in the creative evolution of that society” (Woods 1914: 576).

Inspired by such accounts, a group of sociologists in Chicago, who are often referred to as the founders of the Chicago School of Sociology, saw an urban neighbourhood as “a locality with sentiments, traditions, and a history of its own“ (Park 1925/1984: 6), even a “moral region” (Park 1925/1984: 43). Turning to their internal social organization, they argued that neighbourhoods, as “cities within cities” (Park 1925/1984: 10), should be studied “not merely for their own sake, but for what they can reveal to us of human behavior and human nature generally” (Park 1925/1984: 9). In this human ecologist tradition, Schwirian (1983) suggested neighbourhoods to be made up of “people, place, interaction system, shared identification, and public symbols” (Schwirian 1983: 84).

As instructive as they are, these concepts are somewhat flawed by assumptions about the impact that living in proximity has on the individual behaviour of its inhabitants. To avoid such a bias and related shortcomings, Galster (2001) proposed a more neutral definition, stating:

*“Neighbourhood is the bundle of spatially based attributes associated with clusters of residences, sometimes in conjunction with other land uses”* (Galster 2001: 2112).

The attributes that he proposed are, in brief, the spatially based characteristics of buildings, infrastructure, demography, class status of the resident population, taxing regime, public services, environment, proximity, political culture, social interaction and sentiments (ibid). These attributes are, that is a crucial disposition, “mutually causal over time” (ibid: 2116)<sup>3</sup>. Similarly, Murie (2005) speaks of “a two-way interaction in which residents shape the neighbourhood and the character of the neighbourhood affects household decisions to stay, move to, and move on (...)” (Murie 2005: 165)<sup>4</sup>.

Amongst these attributes are factors that can produce social exclusion or facilitate inclusion, opportunities and resources that are valuable to cope with poverty and help overcome situations of deprivation and distress: “Opportunities and despair, it’s all in there” (Atkinson/Kintrea 2004: 437). A neighbourhoods can, for instance, be experienced as a cul-de-sac, when residents feel trapped in it, or as a safe haven, as a transit area which is inhabited in a particular stage in one’s biography only, or else. These functions will differ amongst residents and over time. Safe havens can quickly turn into cul-de-sacs, when some attributes are no longer appropriate for a new life situation. The size of an

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<sup>3</sup> Galster goes on to illustrates the various roles and relations quite pictorial: “the consumers of neighbourhood can be considered the producers of neighbourhood as well. Households consume a neighbourhood by choosing to occupy it, thereby producing an attribute of that location related to that household’s demographic characteristics, status, civil behaviours, participation in local voluntary associations and social networks, and so forth. Property owners consume a neighbourhood by buying land and/or buildings in it; they subsequently produce the neighbourhood’s attributes through their decisions regarding property construction, upkeep, rehabilitation or abandonment. Business people consume a neighbourhood by operating firms there, thereby producing attributes related to structure types, land use, pollution and accessibility. Local governments consume neighbourhood by extracting property tax revenue and, in turn, produce attributes associated with public services and infrastructure” (Galster 2001: 2116).

<sup>4</sup> Similar findings have been presented by Wacquant/Wilson 1993.

apartment is a particularly important element here, but also the quality and availability of services, jobs, and, not least, the neighbours. How these functions are played out for newcomers to a city was recently described well in journalist Doug Saunders' study of "arrival cities" (Saunders 2011).

The – positive or negative - effects that a neighbourhood has on one's life chances, so-called "neighbourhood effects" (Sampson/Morenoff/Hannon-Rowley 2002) or "area effects" (Atkinson/Kintrea 2004) are difficult to explore empirically (and there is a lively debate amongst urban researchers about their existence), yet they are a powerful currency in urban policy and have been the starting point for area-based policies in North-Western European countries and at EU level since the late 1980s.

An instructive study to explore area effects was carried out by Rowland Atkinson and Keith Kintrea in the two Scottish cities Edinburgh and Glasgow. They see "three main mechanisms at work" in areas "where social worlds consist of people who are almost universally deprived": "Social and physical isolation"; "local norms and expectations", and socially and geographically restricted social networks" (ibid: 441ff). Consequently, in their study, they were interested in "the role of local geographically based and socially produced cultures in sustaining and reproducing positions of affluence and deprivation" (ibid: 441) and structured their analysis along three lines: Does isolation lead to a "distinct form of social capital"? Do socialization processes in a predominantly poor neighbourhood lead to "a depression of expectations and ambitions"? Are poor people caught in the trap of "geographically restricted social networks" so that they lack information and exchange which may be important to "escape their current situation" (ibid: 441). They found a "differential image of social reality and opportunities of residents" with positive and negative area effects in predominantly poor areas and in more diverse areas. Table 1 sums up their findings.

The spatial scale of what is perceived as a neighbourhood, however, is variable, from just outside an apartment upwards. Building on Suttles (1972), Kearns and Parkinson (2001) suggest three scales which hold specific functions: a) the home and its immediate surrounding, places to be reached in a short footwalk ("home area"), b) the wider "locality" at the size, for instance, of a housing estate, and c) the even wider urban district<sup>5</sup> (see table 2). Of these scales, locality or district marked the entry point to the fieldwork presented here, but only to allow for findings at the nearer scale as well. These scale levels have been distinguished in the case studies, to identify their yet specific role in (re)producing, mitigating or counteracting inequalities for young people in deprived urban areas.

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<sup>5</sup> Suttles, in his study of a black community in Chicago, had distinguished between the block level, the „defended neighborhood“ level, a „community of limited liability“ and „expanded community of limited liability“ (Suttles 1972).

Table 1: Interaction of area type and area effects in four Scottish neighbourhoods

Status	Area-effects	Poor area	Diverse area
Poor individual	positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support infrastructures – voluntary and community organisations</li> <li>• Local kin and friendship support</li> <li>• The ‘community’/people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced workplace discrimination</li> <li>• Contact with those in work</li> <li>• Positive local role models</li> <li>• Heightened self-esteem</li> </ul>
	negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stigmatization and discrimination</li> <li>• Geographical isolation</li> <li>• Lack of transport links</li> <li>• Lack of ‘weak ties’ to outside area</li> <li>• Overloaded welfare services</li> <li>• Territoriality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of support infrastructure for poorer people</li> <li>• Conspicuous deprived status in affluent area</li> <li>• High quality private services but too expensive to access</li> </ul>
Affluent individual	positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to escape area by car to access external services</li> <li>• Able to leave via housing market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High quality services</li> </ul>
	negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stigmatization</li> <li>• Poor quality physical environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No negative effects</li> </ul>

Source: Atkinson/Kintrea (2004: 451)

Table 2: Neighbourhood Scales according to Kearns/Parkinson (2001:2104)

Scale	Predominant function	Mechanism(s)
Home area	Psycho-social benefits (e.g. identity, belonging)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familiarity</li> <li>• Community</li> </ul>
Locality	Residential activities Social status and position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Service provision</li> <li>• Housing market</li> </ul>
Urban district or region	Landscape of social and economic opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment connections</li> <li>• Leisure interests</li> <li>• Social networks</li> </ul>

Kearns/Parkinson (2001:2104)

In addition to scale, the time dimension should be taken into account. Some of a neighbourhood's attributes are more durable than others (Galster 2001: 20114f), some can even "change at the very act of consuming them" (ibid: 2116), e.g. around a household move, when in-moving households differ substantially in status or attitude from those who moved out.

When conceptualizing the interplay of different attributes of a neighbourhood and their role in (re)producing, mitigating or counteracting social inequalities, an important reference is also Henri Lefebvre's thinking about the social production of space (Lefebvre 1974/1991). He distinguishes between spatial practices, the representation of space and representational spaces. The dimension of spatial practices (*l'espace perçu*) refers to where specific practices are typically carried out: Spaces of housing, consumption, production. Previous spatial practices, e.g. the construction of an apartment block or shopping mall will have a significant impact on later practices (housing, shopping). An example for a representation of space (*l'espace conçu*) is a map, more generally this dimension refers to abstract manifestations of discourses about a space. When, for instance, a neighbourhood is labelled as a "development area" in an urban policy, this is a representation, and attention is brought to specific features of it. Representational spaces (*l'espace vécu*), in turn, are manifestations of a "lived space". Here, the everyday routine of people is meant, and its symbolic expression. When, for instance, young people use a public square or a local park in a certain way, or a redundant building, they give it a meaning that may well be in contrast to the original idea of planners and architects. In the analysis of neighbourhoods that was carried out in our fieldwork, particular emphasis was put on recent social history and how the area has been used. It appears that, across the board, a common interaction of these three dimensions of space can be seen: Many of the areas that were selected had been built for the particular purpose of housing workers and their families in either the 1920s/30s or in the 1960s/70s, two distinct periods of social and public housing as spatial practice with yet specific assumptions of family life, daily routines, consumption and use of private and public places (and ignoring spatial practices and demands of teenagers and young adults); and that a social change that happened since brought about a mismatch between perceived and lived space inside the buildings (eg overcrowding) and outside (eg vandalism), feeding rather negative representations of that space in form of a bad and seedy image and thus reproducing inequalities. Particular problems resulting from this constellation seem to occur for young people who are bound to these areas due to limited mobility. In more central areas, and most pronounced is here the Raval area in Barcelona, some subtle and other not so subtle signs make clear to local youth that most of the many attractions in their area are in fact not meant for them.

## **b) Social and Youth Services as a research focus (rationale, interaction, settings)**

Social services are, next to social rights and benefits, a key means to social inclusion. They give a welfare system its face. Or, rather, they are an interface, as they are typically delivered as personalized services and co-produced in close interaction with the service user.

A first element to consider in the analysis is the rationale that drives services. How do they perceive of their users? In the field of youth work, in the wake of changing social policy paradigms from social rights to social investment<sup>6</sup> and work first principles, services have drastically changed the relation to their users. Discourses shifted from empowerment to employability, and young persons are increasingly seen as human capital. A most profound change has been around the introduction of sanctions and conditionalities related to welfare benefits. This seems to be an EU-wide trend. Young people in need of social assistance and social workers now form their relationship on basis of a contract, which sets out what the young person needs to do to continue receiving benefits. In case of breach, benefits are reduced or cut.

As Lipsky's seminal work on street level bureaucracy (1982) and numerous studies that were inspired by it, have demonstrated, the impact of front-line practitioners on the direction and outcomes of social programmes is rather strong:

*“As front-line practitioners, they translate institutional policy into daily, situated practice. This gives them a significant degree of control with potentially profound consequences for both institutions and citizens”* (Fletcher 2011: 446).

Following from this view, assuming a straightforward and smooth implementation of social policies and programmes would miss what is happening in practice. Rather, the position of these officers is structurally uncomfortable and conflictuous. They “operate in a ‘corrupted world of service’”, struggling with “insufficient resources, high caseloads, unpredictable clients and Agency goals that are often vague, conflicting and ambiguous”, so that “consequently, public policy is effectively made in the crowded offices and daily encounters of street-level workers” (ibid: 447).

In addition to the practitioners that a service user is in contact with, he or she experiences a service through its setting. Most often and more precisely it is the “transit-space” (Augé 1995) of waiting rooms, corridors and offices through which the service is seen. And it is these spaces in which a person is turned into a “case”, “client” or “customer”.

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<sup>6</sup> We refer to social investment here in the form of its actual implementation by EU Member States in recent years rather than the much broader concept that had been originally proposed in the early 1990s, for a discussion see Stigendal 2013 and Morel/Palier/Palme 2012.

For young people, schools and youth clubs are such settings in which they are, literally, put in place. The design and quality of these places tells them about the place the society has for them – and the absence of such a place, too. The case studies, in which such places were visited and described, show that high quality public facilities for young people and youth-oriented design are rare, despite prevailing social investment rhetoric. But some innovative pilots, run by enthusiastic individuals and often small-scale NGOs, can also be found. Rather than providing specific places such as youth clubs, or in addition to those, it appears, street work has been established as an important intervention to approach young people and work with them against the inequalities they face.

### **c) Neighbourhoods, social infrastructure and the socialization of young people**

Neighbourhoods and public services are arenas with high relevance to people's everyday lives, and, hence, their socialization. Both are not only used in a functional sense, but lived, experienced, smelled... on an everyday basis. It is difficult to avoid the immediacy of the neighbourhood just outside the door of your house, in particular for children, teenagers and people without a car outside. The same holds for those public services that you rely on, schools and youth clubs. They are spaces where social inequalities are experienced, and, depending on their make-up, potentially amplified, mitigated or even counteracted. They are sites of social learning (Bandura 1971): Neighbours in their neighbourhood, and service users at a service facility, learn through observing their immediate surrounding and through interaction with others (other neighbours, service providers...). A recent study of how young people negotiate risks in their everyday life in London found

*“that the ways young people deal with risks are closely bound up with their developing identities as young men and young women. These identities are tied to social networks within the peer group, the family and the neighbourhood, creating as well as constraining safety in a context where crime and violence are commonplace”* (Parkes/Connolly 2011: 2).

The socializing property of neighbourhoods i.e. the strong relation (even though not mono causal) between their structuring effect through their specific (socio-spatial, infrastructural, demographical, cultural etc.) characteristics and the context specific competencies developed by its inhabitants is what Bourdieu's concept of habitus renders account of (Bourdieu 1976). The concept of habitus aims to view human “ways of doing” or performances as the product of their incorporated collective and individual history and thus as a product of their differing socialization. Due to its “embeddedness”, that is, its being anchored in the social environment as a “structuring structure”, habitus enables the generation of “ways of doing” or practices spontaneously adapted to the situation and the demands of



## 2. The significance of neighbourhood and local social infrastructure in (re)producing, mitigating or counteracting social exclusion and inequality – a focus on 20 areas in 10 European cities

Table 3 The 20 CITISPYCE research areas and the number of inhabitants

City	inhabitants <sup>7</sup>	Area 1	Inhabitants	Area 2	Inhabitants
<b>Athens</b>	9,9 Mio	Agia Sophia-Maniatika	one of 30 neighbourhoods in Municipality of Piraeus (163,688 inhabitants)	Elefsina	29,902 <sup>8</sup>
<b>Barcelona</b>	1,6 Mio	Trinitat Nova	7,627	El Raval	49.027 <sup>9</sup>
<b>Birmingham</b>	3,1 Mio	Lozells and East Handsworth	31,074	Bordesley Green	33,937 <sup>10</sup>
<b>Brno</b>	385,913	Cejl	about 10,000	Husovice	900-1,000 <sup>11</sup>
<b>Hamburg</b>	1,8 Mio	Dulsberg	17,282	Essener Straße	5,122 <sup>12</sup>
<b>Krakow</b>	758,400	Mistrzejowice Nowe	3,000-4,000	Rzaka	2,800-4,000 <sup>13</sup>
<b>Malmö</b>	304,849	South Sofielund	4,611	North Sofielund	3,679 <sup>14</sup>
<b>Rotterdam</b>	616,528	Feijenoord-Midden (Afrikaanderwijk, Bloemhof, Hillesluis)	33.610	Middelland	11.547 <sup>15</sup>
<b>Sofia</b>	1,202,761	Fakulteta	15,000-35,000	Hristo Botev	8,000-10,000 <sup>16</sup>
<b>Venice</b>	268,909	Marghera	about 29,000	Mestre	about 90,000 <sup>17</sup>

### 2.1. The case study areas at a glance

The twenty neighbourhoods were selected on basis of a number of characteristics that include a socio-economic situation that is less favourable than the city-wide average, an age structure that ensures that the neighbourhood is inhabited by young people (under 25), and a population composition that

<sup>7</sup> 2011-2012 according to the national statistical offices

<sup>8</sup> 2011 according to Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2012 (ELSTAT) (Tryfona et al. 2014:3,6)

<sup>9</sup> Jubany/Güell, Citispyce WP3 Report 2014:2f

<sup>10</sup> 2011, Census Birmingham, Birmingham City Council. [birmingham.gov.uk/census](http://birmingham.gov.uk/census)

<sup>11</sup> Sirovatka et al. Citispyce WP3 Report 2014:3f

<sup>12</sup> 2011 and 2010 Statistikamt Nord

<sup>13</sup> Modzdzen Citispyce WP3 Report 2014:3ff

<sup>14</sup> Malmö Statistic Office 2012, <http://www.malmo.se/Kommun--politik/Om-oss/Statistik/Befolkning.html>

<sup>15</sup> 2013, <http://www.rotterdamincijfers.nl/>, Tan/Spies Citispyce WP3 Report 2014

<sup>16</sup> Hajdinjak et al. Citispyce WP3 report 2014:2f

<sup>17</sup> Campomori et al. Citispyce WP3 Report 2013:2

characterises the area as ethnically diverse (see above). Although they have deliberately not been selected on the basis of physical features, they also show some similarities in this regard, which is an indication for the close relation between physical and social space that was discussed above. In different shapes and intensities, the stories of change and decline are illustrative of wider processes of deindustrialisation, transformation of housing, social change and changing migration patterns. All areas have a history of housing where the working classes and their fate is closely tied to changing forms of employment and income generation, household forms and housing preferences on one hand, and public servicing, housing provision and connectivity on the other. A decisive period, it appears, was the very late 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the breakdown of the socialist regimes in Eastern Europe, combined with large scale deindustrialisation in the West, and not least the economisation and marketization of public sector operations shook up local economies and populations (see also Stigendal 2013). Whilst many of the areas have seen regeneration efforts in 1990s and 2000s, recent austerity policies seem to jeopardise achievements and exacerbate local problems. The images of the areas in the public perception, it seems, are rather stuck and hard to change, and play their own part in (re)producing stigmas and distance.

In *Athens*, both case study areas are traditional working class neighbourhoods located in the western part of the Attica region. Agia Sophia is a district of Piraeus, an industrial centre also known for its port, located between the City centre and the sea. It is a working class area that has not changed much over the years, the people who live here are on low incomes, many of them being migrant workers. Elefsina, which lies about 20 km away from the City centre, is a historic place, but has been heavily industrialised in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with noisy and polluting industries (factories, refineries, cement factories) and shipyards. It is a multicultural area, as its industrial character was a pole of attraction mainly for migrants in the past, and immigrants at present deriving from various countries (Tryfona, Pothoulaki and Papadimitriou 2014).

In *Barcelona*, El Raval is a very central neighbourhood, La Rambla being its eastern border. Known as “Barrio Chino” it had a dubious reputation for drugs and prostitution in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and has been subject to urban regeneration projects since the early 1990s. Parts of it have been upgraded and gentrified, whilst others have not improved much. In recent years, there has been a rapid immigration process that transformed the local population and today about half of the inhabitants come from countries such as Pakistan, the Philippines and Bangladesh. Trinitat Nova on the other hand is a more peripheral housing estate built in the 1950s. It has also been undergoing renewal projects since the 1990s; in 2000 a new metro stop improved its connectivity significantly. It is amongst the poorest areas in Barcelona, with the highest share of unemployment, and also an ethnically diverse population (Jubany/Güell 2014).

The two case study areas in *Birmingham* are both densely populated neighbourhoods a few kilometres to the north west (Lozells & East Handsworth) and to the east (Bordesley Green) of the city centre, characterised by a very diverse population (85% and 89% minority ethnic respectively) and high levels of unemployment and deprivation. In both, settled Asian immigrant communities live alongside newly arriving migrants from Eastern Europe, but they differ in terms of connectivity, economic profile, housing and tenure mix (Hussain et al 2014).

In *Brno*, two areas were selected in which Romany people make up the majority of the population. The Cejl neighbourhood is a lively inner-city area, in which Roma live next to other inhabitants but without much contact. It is perceived as dangerous and a hotspot of drug dealing and prostitution. The Husovice area, in turn, is a peripheral area that has more the feel of a rural small town than an urban area. There has always been a Roma minority amongst its residents; in the socialist period a deliberate municipal housing allocation contributed to this. In more recent years, a change in population can be observed with some local Roma residents being pushed out into private dormitories and are followed by other Roma groups that have been pushed out of more central areas (including the Cejl neighbourhood) (Sirovatka/Krchnava/Hora/Valkova 2014).

In *Hamburg*, two neighbourhoods of the district north were selected. The Essener Straße area is a peripheral housing area that was built in the early 1980s to provide attractive yet affordable housing for young families and thus prevent further suburbanization. Over the years, children-rich families of various origins, including former Turkish guest worker families but also repatriates from former USSR found a home there. Whilst it has a calm appearance today, housing companies and planning authorities in the late 1990s, had sensed problems such as youth violence and vandalism and reacted with urban regeneration programmes. The Dulsberg area is much more central, easily accessible with public transport. It was built in the 1920s to provide modern houses for working class households. The housing stock is dominated by small apartments which become problematic when households grow in size but do not have the means to expand or move. Since the 1960s, guest workers and other immigrant groups have moved here, so that it has today a multicultural character. In the 1970s and 1980s, youth gangs and violence brought a negative image to the area with which it is still associated, although today social problems are much less visible (Gehrke/Güntner/Seukwa 2014).

Mistrzejowice Nowe and Rzaka are two dormitory suburbs of *Krakow*. Whilst in Mistrzejowice Nowe much of the housing stock was built in the 1980s for workers of what was then the Lenin Steelworks, housing in Rzaka was constructed around the same time, but it then targeted well educated civil servants and their families. After the regime change, unemployment was a serious problem in both areas. Today the social situation seems to have improved somewhat but is still below city average. A recent phenomenon is that a significant number of jobseekers have gone abroad and left their children

back home. In both areas there is not much to do for young people, football hooligans occupy the public space and related violence is a pronounced problem (Mozdzen et al 2014).

South Sofielund and North Sofielund are two central and lively mixed use areas in *Malmö's* inner city. Whilst North Sofielund was mainly built in the 1930s and has a rather homogeneous outfit, South Sofielund appears more diverse, with structures from the 1920s and 1930s and from the 1950s. Both areas are known for high proportions of low income and jobless households, and for their multicultural population. They also have a reputation for vandalism and drug problems. Since the late 1990s, gentrification processes started in North Sofielund and first signs of population exchange are also seen in South Sofielund (Grander/Stigendal 2014).

In *Rotterdam*, one case study area is located in the southern part of the city and comprises neighbourhoods Afrikaanderwijk, Bloemhof and Hillesluis. It is a traditional port-related working class area, but “the dockworkers that used to live here moved to better neighbourhoods, and large migrant families now occupy the rather small houses”. Today, it is a multicultural and young area, with low income, high unemployment and low qualification levels. Middelland, in contrast, is an inner city area, just west of the city centre, “booming and bustling with a metropolitan feel”. It can be described as a “neighbourhood of extremes”: Upmarket shops and restaurants are next to sex-shops and drug-related crime (Tan/Spies 2014:4f).

Fakulteta and Hristo Botev are two areas in *Sofia* that are home to Roma communities, but differ in some respects. Fakulteta is 4 km out of the centre and has had the reputation of a ghetto already in the socialist period. It is perceived as a “no-go area”, a “hotbed of social problems, including devastating levels of unemployment, poverty, social exclusion, poor or non-existing infrastructure, and low quality of housing, education and health care”. The “practically complete absence of official social infrastructure” has brought residents to develop alternative and self-organised coping strategies. Hristo Botev is at the city fringes, next to the airport and “almost completely cut-off from the city by railway lines”. Since it was built in the 1930s, Roma communities alongside ethnic Bulgarians have always inhabited it in friendly and quiet coexistence, a “well-ordered neighbourhood with developed and functional infrastructure”. But since the 1990s the population rose dramatically from 2000 to today around 10,000 with mainly Roma from other parts of Bulgaria coming in, changing the local atmosphere and producing similar problems to those in Fakulteta. In those years, public infrastructure and services were closed, so that “many Hristo Botev residents (...) feel as if ground has been pulled from under their feet” (Hajdinjak/Kosseva/Zhelyazkova 2014: 3f).

In *Venice*, Marghera and Mestre are two areas on the mainland, with industrial and residential functions as opposed to the culture and tourism oriented island. Marghera was built in the 1920s and

1930s as a residential working class area in the then popular shape of a garden city. Some of the people who were allocated there (mainly in Cà Emiliani in the southern part of the area) by the then fascist government were those who were not wanted elsewhere: the poor and political opponents. After WWII, however, petrochemical factories were put there, increasing already existing pollution problems; nevertheless in the 1970s large scale social housing was constructed. Decline of the industries after the oil crisis led to mass unemployment and related problems. In the 1990s, a significant population change took place with new arriving immigrants, mainly from Bangladesh. Mestre is an historic city, that after being annexed to Venice in 1926, and most radically after WWII, transformed dramatically into an industrial area with "large, crowded and aesthetically ugly residential sub-neighbourhoods for working class in Marghera's factories, public employees and those who could not live in the downtown of the City of Venice". Around the turn of the century, its identity began to change again, regaining some autonomy and more positive appreciation. The population is more mixed than in Marghera, also attracting middle class families, and it is known as an "open minded town". But social problems are visible, in particular in form of drug abuse, a problem that had occurred in the 1980s, then vanished to some extent, but, as in Marghera, came back in recent years (Campomori, Della Puppa, Pinocchio, Baccelliere 2014).

## **2.2. Three faces of inequalities: physical and social distance, decaying places and piecemeal services**

The case studies reveal in which condition neighbourhoods and local social infrastructure were at the time of the research, in autumn 2013, and how these conditions have been produced over time.<sup>18</sup> Configurations of attributes were identified that seem to manifest or even reinforce social inequalities and experience of exclusion. At the same time, we were also interested in local forms of mitigating and counteraction inequalities (this will be dealt with in Chapter 3). This research is informed by the discussion of "area effects" that was introduced in the previous chapter. Identifying causes of such effects will be an important starting point in the search for potential social innovation against inequalities and exclusion.

The analysis, it needs to be underlined, was in most cases carried out with adults who have a professional relationship to the neighbourhoods and services, mainly public officers, social and youth workers. This implies that much of the information gathered is based on perceptions of normality that prevail in these professionals' worldviews and discourses. It may well be that the perception of young

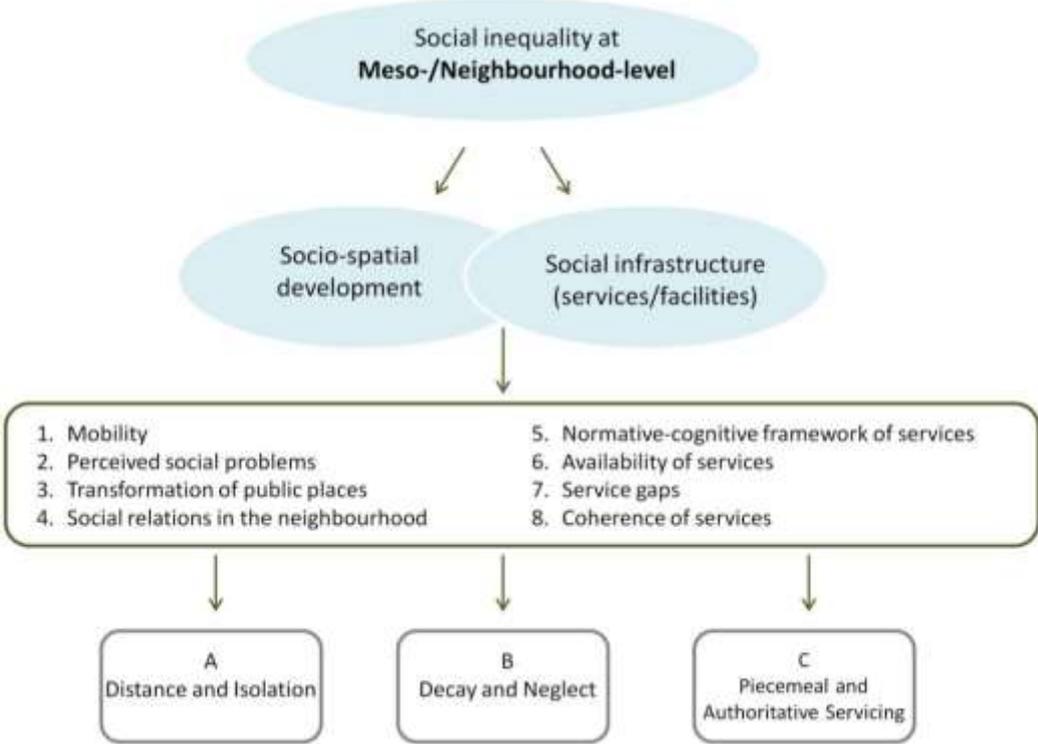
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<sup>18</sup> Inspired by Lefebvre's idea of the social production of space (1974/1991, also: Gottdiener 1994)

people currently living in that area, differ significantly from the perceptions presented here. The views of young people themselves will be explored and presented in Work Package 4.

The case study reports provide information about **socio spatial development** in an area, about **local social infrastructure** and about their respective role in (re)producing and tackling social inequalities (see figure 1). The synthetis presented in this paper, however, does not aim at comparing these cases and develop typologies or identify regional specificities. The selection of these areas was purposefully meant to include similarities and contrasts; comparing these features would not be of much use in the overall interest of the CITISPYCE project. Instead, and to the service of the CITISPYCE overall objectives, **this report is concerned about the significance of neighbourhood” (Kearns/Parkinson 2001) in producing, reproducing, mitigating or counteracting social inequalities and social exclusion across that range of different settings.**

Figure 3How to arrive from 20 Neighbourhood studies to 3 clusters of social inequality



The structure of our argument stems from analytical categories that were jointly developed by project partners at a midterm workshop in November 2013, after first interviews had been carried out and preliminary findings had emerged in most cases. These **8** categories are: **mobility, perceived social problems, transformation of public places, social relations in the neighbourhood, normative-cognitive frameworks of local services, availability, gaps and coherence of services.** The

categories were helpful in systematising the huge amount of data presented in the ten city reports. For the sake of keeping the focus on factors that reveal the significance of neighbourhood, however, much detail had to be left aside in this paper, but may be drawn upon in future outputs of the research project.

In the following chapters, three constellations of neighbourhood attributes are presented that appear to be significant in producing, reproducing, mitigating or counteracting social inequalities. These constellations stem from comparative analysis structured along the categories mentioned above and present a second stage of interpretation. Three clusters are distinguished:

- A) the first looks at the scale level of the area or locality and its relation to the wider city,
- B) the second cluster looks at specific places within the neighbourhood,
- C) and the third is concerned with issues around local public services for young people, their purpose, quality, availability and coherence (see figure 1).

Understanding exclusion as a manifestation of inequalities and as a process and a state (for this distinction see Stigendal 2013) in which two realms are constructed - an “inside” and an “outside” -, we can identify an underlying theme that seems to be running as a red thread through most cases. This is a process of “othering” (Barter-Godfrey/Taket 2009, drawing on Spivak 1985). In some cases, neighbourhoods or housing estates have explicitly been built for the “other” (e.g. in the case of Venice Marghera, the “unwanted”), in other cases, the “other” have been pushed there either by market forces or by explicit practices of public and social housing providers. This division can structure everyday perceptions, when labels of these areas lead to prejudices and stigmatisation. And even in mixed areas, where poor and not so poor, native and newcomers mix, there are dividing lines that are hardly crossed and mark the “other”. Exclusion can also be the result of a paradox effect: A housing estate may have been built for the explicit and well-meant purpose of social inclusion, but has over time changed its face and function to the opposite. The causes can be bad connectivity, small apartments, bad insulation etc, social and lifestyle changes that no longer fit with the initial planning objectives, economic and other factors.

Whilst these are forms of “othering” by a majority society and its institutions vis a vis a minority<sup>19</sup>, there are also stories of an antipodal “othering” by the “other” themselves, ie minority group vis a vis the majority and other groups: Some people living in the case study areas (being perceived as “other” by interview partners), are reported deliberately not to use mainstream services or, more precisely,

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<sup>19</sup> The terms „majority“ and „minority“ here are not limited to ethnicity, nationality, legal status or social status, but seen as a fluid and context specific category that is socially constructed and can change over time.

schools and child care facilities that are frequented by more well off. These people turn (e.g. vis a vis their kids) the majority into “other”. A range of reasons for this can be thought of, fear of discrimination can play a role, or disrespect of majority norms and values. In some cases, religious affiliations are mentioned.

The first of these attribute bundles<sup>20</sup> relates to the scale level of **neighbourhood** (larger than a single street or block, an ensemble of streets and buildings). Here we find that throughout all cases there is a close relation between distance and social exclusion. What may sound tautological has many facets and is not a given physical distance could potentially be overcome by good transport connections. Distance becomes problematic, we argue, when combined with isolation, i.e. when no connection is provided. Distance is also not a mere matter of geography, topography and connectivity, but that there are “inner peripheries” that seem worlds apart when they are just next door. Somebody can be kept at a distance even when physically being very close (e.g. when a door is shut), at the same time emotional nearness can bridge long physical distances (e.g. in migrant diasporas). Hence, the symbolic dimension of distance will have to be discussed to understand how an excluding form of distance is produced. The terms “distance” and “isolation” are used here as signifiers for situations that could also be described as marginalisation, peripheralisation or segregation (Bernt/Colini 2013). We use these specific terms to grasp the particularity of marking a difference, linking up to the concept of “othering” that was introduced above.

A second bundle of attributes refers to places within neighbourhoods, specific **places**, squares, street corners, buildings or service facilities. At that level, basically all case studies hold stories of neglect<sup>21</sup>, disinvestment, decay and closure. Abandoned places, when they lose their function, make space for uses that connote deviance, illegality and anomie. Vandalism, graffiti, gambling and drug abuse seem to be the rule in all case study areas, but they are only the more visible expressions that can occur at or in these respective places and give them a new meaning. But they can also take place elsewhere, hidden and private.

A third set of attributes is about those (public) **services** for young people that are still in place and being used, such as schools, street work and youth work, training and skills development schemes<sup>22</sup>. Here, a complex change of service frameworks and policy reforms is observed, that resembles wider trends that were presented in the WP 2 report (Stigendal 2013). It has many shapes: Embedded in work first schemes and depending on related funding programmes, services seemingly become more

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<sup>20</sup> Here, the workshop discussion about mobility and about social relations in the neighbourhood is reflected.

<sup>21</sup> Here, the workshop discussion about perceived social problems and about the transformation of public places is reflected.

<sup>22</sup> Here, the workshop discussion about normative-cognitive frameworks of services, availability, gaps and coherence is reflected.

daunting, authoritative and repressive. That goes in hand with a new perspective on the young service users, driven by suspicion and centred on employability rather than broader concepts of empowerment and participation. At the same time, due to austerity measures, small scale civil society service providers seem to face increasingly rigid and bureaucratic funding contexts that, in some cases (Birmingham, Rotterdam, Hamburg) appear to replace trust as a mode of governance by contracts and hierarchic control, whilst in others public services are even absent and civil society struggles to compensate (Sofia, Athens). Young people, the service users, on the other hand (or rather: side), due to these changes, seem to lose their trust in public administration and providers, because they interpret the new regimes as manifestations of distrust. Hence, they don't see service providers as "on their side" anymore and eventually back off.

The dividing line that is drawn between the regime that sets the rules (e.g. education, youth work) and the user (young person perceived as "pupil" or "visitor") goes right through the places of interaction and their personnel, "street level bureaucrats" such as youth workers and street workers, or teachers (Lipsky 2010). They have to bear the tension that is caused by two not trusting parties and mediate conflicts when they come up. These persons, potentially powerful gate keepers or door openers will be important allies in search for social innovation against the negative effects of that mutual distrust.

### **A) Distance and isolation**

The position of a neighbourhood in the context of the city plays an important role in the perception and manifestation of inclusion or exclusion. In the case studies, numerous references were made to how distance and isolation reinforce experiences of social exclusion. This has two sides: If an area is isolated, bad connectivity will force residents to revert to what is on offer there (services, jobs) rather than leave the area and make use of services and facilities elsewhere. The lack of contact may then in turn lead to alienation and prejudice by residents of other areas, who may feel they live in a completely different world.

Distance is often the result of effective and intentional "distancing" through respective planning provisions in the past or at present. In Venice, for instance, a part of the Marghera district was built on purpose for the "unwanted" under the Fascist regime in the 1930s, whilst in Hamburg, the Langenhorn case study shows how a well meant innovative planning ideal of the 1980s (car-free housing) fell short of expectations and effectively failed. Some stories of distancing that we found in the case studies connect well to what has been described by Amin as "telescopic urbanism", a "sanguine and

disengaged approach to the urban poor (...)” in which “only particular parts of the city are projected as spaces of potentiality or attention” (Amin 2013:477).

The modes of producing distance resemble local and national systems of land use planning (and their change over time), housing allocation and public transport policies. The impetus to move into these areas, or to stay there, goes back to a range of individual circumstances and structural factors, recent trends in housing provision, such as neoliberalisation and financialisation (see Stigendal 2013) come to force. Skyrocketing rents and house prices in metropolitan areas drive households on low incomes to peripheries, force them to stay in small and overcrowded apartments, cut back in other expenses or even run into debts – factors that cause retreat and isolation. An important factor is also the allocation policy of housing providers who, when housing markets are tight, have long waiting lists and develop their own strategies for priorities as to who will be put where. A dramatic articulation can be seen in Brno:

*“The (...) pattern of inequality/social exclusion is strongly supported by the recent neoliberalisation trends. These trends have led to three significant overlapping problems: The first one is the increasing housing costs due to rent deregulation and privatization of the municipal housing. The other one is the increasing indebtedness among Roma which is partly due to lack of regular earned incomes, increasing housing costs and poorly controlled usury which is widespread in socially excluded Roma localities. The third trend is a deliberate effort of private owners and municipalities to push Roma out from their housing in the localities into private dormitories which have become a good business for private sector. Sometimes private owners use different illegal practices to move Roma out. Since municipality has no social housing at disposal it has to pay high benefits to cover the housing costs to people living in private dormitories: the owners require typically more than twice as high rents compared to the standard rents. These trends represent the specific form of gentrification, leading directly to housing and social exclusion” (Sirovatka/Krchnava, Hora, Valkova 2014: 39).*

Across the board, migrants and ethnic minorities on low incomes seem to face the most severe problems of discrimination in the housing market. Again, the Brno report gets to the point:

*“Chances to get independent housing are zero for the youth Roma due to a lack of cheap rented housing in the city and other problems like discrimination in delivery of public housing and, lack of money and indebtedness of Roma families. Rather they are prone to losing housing and shifted into dormitory” (Sirovatka/Krchnava, Hora, Valkova 2014: 38).*

Undocumented migrants, as reported from Barcelona and Athens, certainly have the least choice as to where they live.

**Distance can manifest itself in various ways.** A peripheral location of a neighbourhood, that can be measured in kilometres and in the time needed to get there, can cause social exclusion. Public transport costs, long waiting times for buses or unpleasant experiences can discourage young people from trips to sports, culture or other facilities and friends. Hence, rather unsurprisingly, mono-functional housing estates at the periphery of urban agglomerations seem to be particularly prone to isolation.

*Figure 4 Different forms of isolation in Krakow*



Source: WP3 Report Mozdzen 2014:19

But there are also more symbolic distances that construct “inner peripheries” (ESPON 2012, Bromley 1997), this could be a river or even just a street corner that functions, on the mental map of residents, as a factual barrier that is just never crossed. Services, schools, play grounds on the other side could be reachable within minutes but are never used because they are meant to be for others only, perceived as risky places or because they are just not known. In Malmo, for instance,

*“the after school centre has problems attracting the young people from Seved, just across the street Lönngatan, which seems to work as a physical and mental barrier between South and North Sofielund” (Grander/Stigendal 2014:16).*

Policies to address physical and symbolic distances have come in the form of urban regeneration and area-based interventions in many case study cities, often with the support of EU funding. Often, however, these policies come as “end-of-the-pipe” strategies: They do not effectively change the connectivity and position of an area within the urban fabric but try to tackle problems inside the area only. The impact is, consequently, rather limited, and in some cases (Trinitat Nova, Barcelona; Cejl, Brno; Sofielund, Malmo) side-effects are produced that even reinforce processes of alienation. Such

ambiguous effects are gentrification and crowding out of the less affluent population which can result from public investment and upgrading local housing stock and environment. Regeneration projects may openly accept struggles of poor residents for the sake of a “better” social mix (Cheshire 2009) or try to prevent displacement - in either case, the housing market will most probably decide about the area’s fate. This effect, however, is more likely to happen in inner city areas than in peripheral housing estates.

### **Bulgaria/ Sofia: Fakulteta**

Fakulteta is an example of a neighbourhood that was explicitly built to accommodate the “other.” In the 1920s, the municipal authorities started to push the Roma out of central parts of Sofia and settling them in Fakulteta. Today, the area is an archetype of a Roma ghetto. Although it is located relatively close to the city centre in terms of distance, it is practically and symbolically isolated and remote. This is underlined by the very poor public transport connections, as only one infrequent bus line passes through the neighbourhood (it does not go to the city centre). The area is terribly overcrowded and overpopulated. Over the past two decades, new dwelling have been constructed on former green areas (parks, playgrounds, sport fields). The roads, pavements and other infrastructure are in a very poor condition.

Remoteness of the area has always reinforced the social exclusion, stigmatisation and isolation of people residing there. The isolation is strongly underlined by the fear of crossing the borders of Fakulteta. For outsiders, this is a no-go area, especially after dark, while the residents prefer staying in the area unless having to go to work or school. The municipality has almost completely abandoned its responsibilities in the area. The only municipal services available within Fakulteta are the primary school (I-VIII grade) and a small police station. All other public services (hospitals, employment bureau, bureau for social assistance, kindergartens) are located in neighbouring districts. Although physical distance is not a problem, young people from Fakulteta are seldom able to bridge the divide of fear and distrust that separates them from these institutions. The young see themselves as victims of discrimination and feel rejected. At the same time, the attitude of state and municipal officials towards them is often influenced by the very real stereotypes and prejudices.

Efforts to overcome the consequences of distance and isolation:

- very visible and underlined retreat into the community with high levels of inter-group solidarity
- NGO efforts to fill the gap left by the disengaged authorities (small kindergarten, health centre, community centre providing education, culture and leisure)
- protestant churches as alternative educational and social establishments

### England/ Birmingham: Lozells/ East Handsworth and Bordesley Green

The two neighbourhoods selected in Birmingham are affected differently by distance. In Lozells and East Handsworth, road networks within the neighbourhood and between it and other parts of the city, have a divisive impact. The area is cut off from major parts of the city by a major roundabout that acts as a 'concrete collar'. The flow of traffic and people into and out of the area is reduced because of the negative connotations of this road infrastructure. Further, within the area there is also a road (Gerrard Street) running through the neighbourhood that acts a dividing line between communities of different ethnic origin. These work to reinforce inequalities in the area as well as mediate new types of connections within the area and across the city. In Bordesley Green, the road infrastructure facilitates a regular and busy flow of traffic with numerous places across the city and beyond. The area bustles throughout the day with heavy commercial vehicles visiting a large recycling and global freight enterprise on its outskirts. Within Bordesley Green there are various main roads that carry trade and people into the various formal and informal businesses occupying disused factories and warehouses. There is certain openness to innovations in this area that the city council is seeking to appropriate in one of its Area Action Plans for regeneration and development.

*Figure 5 Gerrard Street dividing different ethnic groups in Lozells and East Handsworth*



Source: Jill Robinson

*Figure 6 Old industrial buildings put to new uses in Bordesley Green*



Source: Ajmal Hussain

## Sweden/ Malmö: Sofielund

The Garage is a meeting place and a city district library, run by the City of Malmö. The aim of the Garage is to function as a meeting place, for the locals in the area as well as for citizens from the rest of the city. The Garage is situated in the area of North Sofielund in Malmö, close to the busy street of Lönngatan, separating the districts of North and South Sofielund. In the context of the Garage, aspects of distance (both physical and symbolic) can be perceived. The activities at the Garage are of various types, designed to attract visitors from all over the city. In that sense, the Garage is creating closeness rather than distance, since about 50% of the visitors come from parts of the city other than North Sofielund. But even though efforts are being made, and despite its location, the Garage does not manage to attract any larger numbers of local youth living in the directly adjoining area of South Sofielund. Distance, physical as well as social, seems to be a reason for this. The busy street of Lönngatan can, in these aspects, be perceived as one of the barriers creating distance and dividing the greater area in two (North and South Sofielund). The street of Lönngatan does not only constitute a concrete physical aspect of distance, dividing the areas from each other, but also constitutes a barrier of social nature creating distance between the people living on different sides of the street.

*Figure7 The busy street of Lönngatan, separating the two districts (in the background: The Garage and Arena 305, North Sofielund*



*Figure 8 The Garage – library and “public living room”*



Source: Jonas Alwall

### Spain/ Barcelona: Trinitat Nova

The origin of the neighbourhood of Trinitat Nova is related to the expansion of the city to host in-land migrant workers that came in the 1950s and 1960s for economic reasons. Blocks of apartments badly equipped, known as ‘vertical slums’, were built in the outskirts of the city. Decades later, in the 1990s, the neighbours started to protest due to the problems with aluminosis and the use of asbestos which provoked serious health problems. The demands were much focused on improving the housing conditions as well as on attracting public funding for social infrastructure and better connection with public transport. Today, whilst some of the petitions have been achieved (e.g. new dwellings, urban furniture, metro station, small buses), spaces for young people to meet up, undertake activities or playing sports activities are still insufficient. Some of them go to nearby areas, but others feel detached from their everyday lives. In this sense, Trinitat Nova has been marked by the physical distance, which has in turn affected the symbolic distance with other parts of the city. At the same time, it shows the story of a neglected area by public authorities where the housing deficits have been the hallmark of vulnerabilities in the economic and social realms.

*Figure 9 New buildings of social housing where many neighbours have been reallocated after the demolition of old buildings affected by aluminosis*



Source: Jubany 2014

Distance can also be understood in social rather than geographic terms. The perceived safety of personal networks, consisting of kin and friends or e.g. ethnic communities, is an important resource for individuals facing hardship and deprivation. The local community can be a safe haven when stigmatization and discrimination become so strong, that leaving and mixing is no option. Examples have been mentioned in particular for the Roma communities in Sofia and Brno (mentioning also the internal differentiations of these communities). From Rotterdam and Birmingham, incidences of “area code discrimination” are reported. In such instances, in fear of negative experiences, people prefer to stay “in a bubble” amongst themselves within their community, where they - besides own social services, shops of daily goods and leisure time activities - look for and find orientation: Isolation turns into self-isolation.

## Italy/ Venice: Marghera

Marghera tells a story of many kinds of distances, one inside the other, a mix of physical and social distance. On one hand, there is the physical distance between Venice lagoon (historical Venice) and the mainland neighbourhood of Marghera: there are two bridges (4 km), one for trains and one for cars, motors or pedestrians which connect the Venice city and the mainland. Nevertheless, a well evident physical distance still remains. At the same time, there is a distance also between two parts of Marghera: the northern and the southern, recognizable as different already for the architecture, the houses and the public spaces in general. On the other, the physical distance became a social distance due to the peculiar history of this neighbourhood. Until 1921 Venice lagoon was a municipality on its own and Marghera simply did not exist. It was born and built as a kind of Venice branch harbour (the original name was Marghera Harbour), following the idea of the so called Big Venice (Venice as a city leader in culture and economy). The original idea was to create a “Garden City” where people that worked in the harbour or lived in the unhealthy lagoon could move to. During the Second World War this area was repeatedly bombarded and subsequently, in the post-war reconstruction time, the original idea of the Garden City vanished in large parts. As a matter of fact, since the Fifties -and until the Seventies- the industry in Marghera had a rapid development following the European trend of the Trente Glorieuses. Many factories (the petrochemical centre and the boat yards) were built and the neighbourhood took on more and more the appearance of a working class area also with a high and dangerous level of air pollution. Nowadays the neighbourhood is divided in two areas: The Northern part with the central square and the municipal offices, which maintains some of the original characteristics, e.g. there are many gardens along the streets, even built on the large traffic circles, and large avenues. The Southern part, with a high concentration of social problems, contains Cà Emiliana and Cita (the “Bronx” of the entire Veneto region) and has about 900 social housing flats. Cita gives an example of what the comparative report has defined: “exclusion can also be the result of a paradox effect: a housing estate may have been built for the explicit and well-meant purpose of social inclusion, but has over time changed its face and function to the opposite. The causes can be bad connectivity, small apartments, bad insulation, etc, social and lifestyle changes that no longer fit with the initial planning objectives and other factors.”

*Figure 10 Social housing in Cita*



Source: Campomori

*Figure 11 Houses in the highly deprived area called Cà Emiliani (South Marghera)*



Source: Campomori

### Netherlands/ Rotterdam: Feijenoord-Midden

In Rotterdam the river Nieuwe Maas divides the northern and southern part of the city. Although several bridges, a tunnel, a tram and a metro line connect them, the two parts of the city remain quite distinct from each other. The southern part of Rotterdam traditionally housed blue-collar workers with jobs in the port area. When they moved to the suburbs, there was a high influx of migrant workers. The area has been associated with poverty and problems since. The southern part of Rotterdam is still referred to as 'South', while the northern part is called 'Rotterdam'. When coming from the South by public transport the first stop is called 'Vasteland' meaning mainland. One of the research areas, Feijenoord-Midden, is well known for being the most deprived neighbourhood of southern Rotterdam for a long time. Geographically the area is located closest to the bridge and therefore to the northern or 'main' part of the city. It is actually quite central. Public transportation is excellent, with a variety of trams and metros leaving to the other side every few minutes. Transportation to the city centre does not take more than 10 minutes and costs a little over 1 euro. According to professionals working with families and young people, however, people in Feijenoord-Midden do not tend to cross the bridge. Young people will sometimes go downtown for shopping or a night out, but not travel beyond the city centre. Most people, including young people, remain in their neighbourhood. Professionals say young people 'live in a bubble', 'are geographically limited' or 'have no clue what is going on outside their (neighbour) hood'. With 'neighbourhood' they refer to a rather small area of space. One professional gives the example of a young person, working in a guidance-to-work-project, who was asked to get more paint in the adjacent neighbourhood. It was only a few blocks away but he didn't know the building or street referred to and was insecure about how to get there, as he had never been there. Other professionals say many children only play in the street right in front of their house between the parked cars while there is a playground a few streets further down. According to professionals, people living in this area feel at ease in their neighbourhood and have little connection to the world outside. In Rotterdam, distance is not about kilometres, lack of transport or being surrounded by industrial terrain. Distance is self-imposed and symbolic.

*Figure 12 Feijenoord-Midden is a stony environment where many streets have a mixed profile: living, shopping, traffic. The biggest open space is the Afrikaandermarkt that turns in a market twice a week. Next to the market is a large but unattractive park.*



Source: Tan

Such a “**retreat**” (Merton 1938) into family and private life that reinforces distance to other social groups is observed in various case studies (Brno, Krakow, Hamburg, Rotterdam, Sofia). The retreat can come in many forms and is, in fact, a reciprocal process: For example, parents can decide not to put their children in schools where they would be exposed to unwanted expectations and risks, and at the same time these schools might have enrolment practices that wouldn't let those children in anyways. The Rotterdam report comes to a dramatic conclusion:

*“(...) in the day-to-day construction of social reality in these areas, cultural elements and individual (in)competences seem to prevail. Cultural factors include mono (sub)cultures often along ethnical lines; a lack of parental attention, guidance and control; a lack of positive role models and the reproduction of a street culture in which the ‘strongest’ groups occupy public spaces. Individual (in)competences include limited time horizons (and lack of willingness to invest); a lack of soft skills and the inability to deal with dominant, mainstream, white work culture; and limited abilities and possibilities to transfer ‘street skills’ to regular economic activities. Children who grow up in these areas are already so much behind by the time they are twenty years old, that social exclusion becomes a self-reproducing process” (Tan/Spies 2014:36).*

In Sofia Fakulteta, ‘bussing’ of Roma kids to better schools outside the area was meant to provide for their social inclusion, but in effect caused a “white flight” in those schools, where uneasy parents take their kids off after the arrival of too many Roma children. This contradicts the idea behind it and shows the deep roots of discrimination.

Clearly, school related retreat is a far-reaching obstacle to social inclusion: Good education would open doors for careers and social mobility out of the prospects of low-skilled jobs or early marriage that some parents foresee for their children (Hamburg case studies). In the reclusive everyday life, habits and fashions may be routine that are difficult to get over in job interviews and rather pave the way (in particular when frustrating experiences with job interviews come on top) for deviant careers.<sup>23</sup>

Financial hardship and unemployment of young people often leads to a prolonged financial dependency on the core-family and hence to prolonged influence of parents’ worldviews and authority. Young people have to stay with their families until their 30s instead of becoming (financially and socially) independent and having a family of their own (Barcelona, Athens). Whilst with younger children, parents can decide where to put them in school (see above), in later years parents may want to have a say in decisions about partners and professional careers. Escape strategies of young people without sufficient resources may imply risks such as becoming homeless or financially dependent on (and exploitable by) acquaintances. The situation in the south of Rotterdam is illustrative:

*“As houses are rather small and families rather big, many children are sent outside to play. Mothers stay inside and elder brothers and sisters look after the young ones, who gradually grow up in the street culture this way. Social deprivation is handed over from one generation to the*

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<sup>23</sup> A number of studies on youth gangs could be quoted here as external reference, an example being Taylor 1997.

*next. There are limited opportunities for young people, and a lack of positive role models as social climbers move out of the area (...) There is strong cohesion within certain subgroups (in general along ethnic lines) and people experience their part of the neighbourhood as a supportive resource. On the other hand, there is no broader form of cohesion or sense of being part of the local community, and everything that can help one climb the social ladder is outside the neighbourhood. People want to move out of the area but often cannot as they lack a safety net elsewhere” (Tan/Spies 2014:9).*

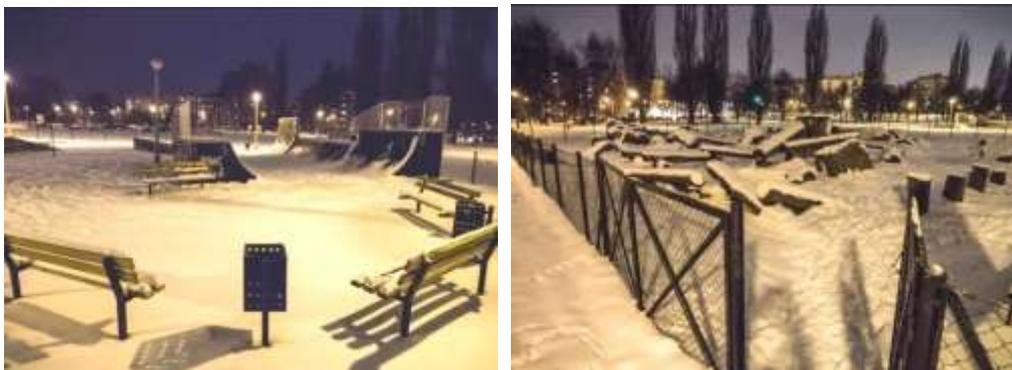
## **B) Decay and neglect**

Basically all case studies mention decaying and vandalised squares, facilities and buildings as a problem: Places that had been serviced and catered once but have lost their function (park, squares, walls, urban furniture). After businesses and public services left, other attractions have emerged and come in. Cutbacks in public services for young people, that once demonstrated respect and care for that age group, came just at a time of decline of conventional and structure-giving family and employment- models.

### **Poland/ Krakow: Rzaka and Mistrzejowice**

In both neighbourhoods we perceive a problem of public spaces neglect. In Rzaka there are many places that people don't take care of. In Mistrzejowice some public places built as a way of facilitating sports activity among young people are utilised by vandals and problematic youth (children of the street and some older folks as well). There still seems to be a lack of feeling of security among inhabitants, despite the fact that the police and municipal guard took notice of that places and (at least officially) patrol them more often. Neither city authorities nor district council do much to improve the state of social infrastructure, focusing rather on 'hard infrastructure', like roads or pavements. In Mistrzejowice, a local NGO was even punished (in a way of higher fees) by the city council for refurbishing its premises on its own.

*Figure13Skatepark andTrialpark in Mistrzejowice*



Source: Michał Mozdzeń

## Germany/ Hamburg: Dulsberg and Essener Strasse

In Hamburg we have seen for some years a strong decrease in municipal funding for reliable and steady measures of youth work (In 2012 funding was reduced by 15%). At the same time open socio-spatial, community oriented measures are pushed forward to replace the cost-intensive individual social services offered by the ASD (general social service) for individuals and families. This has been heavily criticised by social policy experts and youth workers because severe cases cannot be dealt with in such a way. Meanwhile, Hamburg's school and transition system into the labour market was transformed under the strategy "*nobody should be left behind*" which puts a strong emphasize on work first and employability measures and combines high requirements and rigid sanctions for individuals. Although job orientation measures and early interventions are now implemented into the new "whole day" school model already in year eight, youth work as a whole is less sustainable and more project based then ever before. This can also be detected in the two fieldwork areas, which have been or still are part of urban regeneration programmes. Both are striking examples for unsustainable structures: once established structures for youth work cannot survive after the end of funding. This leads to a severe lack of structures young people can rely on during their development phase. In both areas sport has been a crucial factor for attracting young people and getting them off the street. In Dulsberg, a lively football scene had been established around the "*House of Youth*". After the end of the funding stream for neighbourhood development there was no implementation as a regular measure. A similar situation has been detected in the area of Essener Strasse, where a dedicated father voluntarily established a football group. This group, which was attended by around 30 people between 1994 and 2010 each week and from 2000-2010 received some additional support by the neighbourhood development programme, unfortunately fell apart after he resigned from his voluntary work. According to the interviewed experts, young people in the research areas found different strategies to cope with this neglect of public spaces and youth work measures: males get harder to reach by open youth work and tend to search for identification and orientation in radical groups (e.g. Salafists) whereas girls are more likely to stay hidden "behind curtains" and solve the disorientation by new dependencies like early motherhood or living with a "sugar-daddy".

*Figure 14 Youth Club football trophies in Dulsberg*



Source: Gehrke

*Figure 15 Football Group in Essener Strasse*



Source: Gehrke

## Spain/ Barcelona: Raval

Raval is a predominantly working-class neighbourhood which has historically been neglected. Despite being accessible due to its location in the city centre, it has often been seen as a no-go area (association with drugs, prostitution, etc.) and within certain sectors of population (e.g. tourists) today this is to some extent still so, especially in the southern part of Raval. Since the '90s, the Olympic Games and the subsequent processes of urban regeneration and gentrification, there has been much investment in infrastructure that produced economic benefits (e.g. new housings and cultural equipments). Also, there is a long tradition of assistance and intervention by NGOs and associations which provide support to people with few resources. This model is based on the outsourcing of social policies to the third sector built around short or mid-term projects and public tenders. Whilst it covers some of the people's needs, structural solutions like a greater public investment in social infrastructure for young people are reported to be still insufficient.

*Figure 16 Rambla del Raval: Main urban transformation in Southern Raval (2000) which implied the demolition of many dwellings and the expulsion of the people living in them*



Source: Jubany

*Figure 17 One of the four playgrounds of the neighbourhood of Raval*



Source: Jubany

In those abandoned places, a gap opens up that may be filled by other influences and values. Just as distance and isolation, vanishing (public and legal) opportunity structures can provoke anomie, dissociation from societal norms and values (Merton 1938). Many field interviews: show such a dialectic relation:

### *Malmö, Sofielund*

*“The development of the housing sector in Seved has resulted in that many young people couldn't care less about their area. They develop a careless approach to their physical environment. Since their houses are not being looked-after by the landlords, why should they*

*take care of the houses, stairs, elevators, facades or environments? Graffiti and vandalism could be argued to increase as a symptom of the landlords' neglect of the buildings (Grander & Stigendal, 2012). And those young people who want to change things, but have no support, what are they to do? If they try to tidy up, who cares? And who will listen to them?"(Grander/Stigendal 2014:14).*

#### *Athens, Agia-Sophia*

*"The observation visits and interviews conducted in Agia Sophia revealed various problems that the local society faces, mainly due to the shortages in social infrastructure. One of them is the limited number of local public services specially addressed to youth, which leads to many social problems such as withdrawal from social and everyday affairs, abusive behaviour, migration to other countries in search for better life perspectives etc." (Tryfona et al. 2014:20).*

#### *Birmingham*

*"The way authorities viewed problems in the inner-city or in deprived areas was criticised. Some respondents expressed scepticism about the Local Authority's interest in certain neighbourhoods, particularly after what they perceived were years of neglect that had forced people to live in the same conditions or to navigate adversity themselves (...)" (Hussain 2014:28).*

#### *Krakow, Rzaka*

*"Our respondents also point to significant inadequacies in local social infrastructure, i.e. the lack of a cultural institution, poorly developed sports infrastructure, the lack of local government-maintained kindergarten or nursery or no clubs for local residents (that would constitute a socialising meeting centre). They are available in the other parts of the district, however they are relatively distant, which often results in shrinking demand on the part of Rzaka residents (young people in particular). Often after school young people hang around the neighbourhood looking for affordable alcohols. Except for the public park, there is virtually nowhere that they could meet." (Mozdzen et al. 2014:52).*

The social consequences of decay and neglect are crucial in our research: the sites that are affected are often important places in the socialisation of young people, where social norms and values are learned and taken on. Good quality public space, where young people hang out, can be read as a sign of respect, closing these places or letting them run down certainly not. They will then find other places and strategies to cope with a situation perceived as neglect. Attention, the opposite of neglect, will be

sought and found. This quest, it seems, has a gender connotation: Radicalisation, drug use, violence and gambling are three strategies of young men that are reported from most case study areas, albeit in different forms (These are certainly issues that need be taken up in Work Package 4). In some cities, youth workers report that IT devices led to new cultures of appointment, meeting and dating that are much less bound to specific places than in the past when gangs were often bound to specific squares or street corners. It becomes much more difficult to track and get in touch with them. For girls and young women, strategies are mentioned that are even harder to come by, such as early motherhood or following elder men to escape the reach of their parents. An example from the Hamburg report:

*Hamburg, Dulsberg*

*“Several experts expressed the view that young people tend nowadays to be much more attached to their ethnic group and identify much stronger with it than before. ‘It is an artificial search for identification with a culture that is no longer theirs but they can use it to define themselves and separate from other kids.’ For some groups the wish or the need for an own identity becomes so strong that they are easily attracted by radical (Islamic) movements and let themselves guide by religious teachers. Youth workers also say that they find it harder to get hold of the young people: ‘we do not manage to give them enough orientation in today’s time of uncertainty and then they search for closer guidance somewhere else’.” (Gehrke et al. 2014:10).*

### **C) Piecemeal and authoritative approaches to youth and social services**

In most of the case study areas, some public services for the social inclusion of young people are in place. Concerns about a lack of facilities are reported from both case study areas in Krakow (Mistrzejowice and Rzaka), from Sofia (Fakulteta and Hristo Botev) and Athens (Agia Sofia and Elefsina). For those areas, where services are in place, these can be categorised into:

- General leisure, cultural and sports facilities
- Youth work and youth clubs targeted at young people in the area to spend time outside school
- Street work that addresses specific young people hanging out in public space and aims at providing advice, counselling and information about social services
- Measures to tackle youth unemployment, including training and qualification schemes, apprenticeships and similar approaches

- Social assistance and social security schemes that aim at providing minimum income for long-term unemployed and their families, or other income support for low income groups, including public and social housing and/or housing benefits
- Schools.

The availability and quality of these services differs dramatically between cities and even within cities. In most cases, youth-related provisions are embedded in national and/or regional frameworks; Barcelona, Birmingham, Krakow, Malmö, Rotterdam, Venice, and, less explicitly, Hamburg and Sofia have local youth policies or strategies in place that aim at facilitating participation and engagement (see: Map of Policy Frameworks). A general trend seems to be that, although youth services are available, employability and preventing anti-social behaviour have taken over as the main objectives. In Barcelona, Birmingham, Krakow, Hamburg, Malmö, Rotterdam, Sofia and Venice specific local youth employment strategies are in place. Typically, such strategies include sanctions in instances of non-compliance and expect service users to actively engage in training and job search as a condition to receive social assistance.

#### **Poland/ Krakow: Mistrzejowice**

Low levels of trust among people responsible for the delivery of different services seem to be the problem especially in Mistrzejowice. Local activists do not feel the support coming from the political sphere. Some experts interviewed suggested a low level of competences among the district council members. Among council members some resentment can be felt towards the municipal authorities (they say that there is a high demand for the actions of the district council among inhabitants but they do not have enough authority and financial independence to deal with the problems adequately). On the other hand, none of the district councils (Biezanow and Mistrzejowice) have taken part in the participatory budgeting scheme started for 2014 budget year. There are also big barriers in communication between institutions of different sorts, which hinder providing the youth with services of an adequate quality. Most problems stem from the fact that the part of political authorities located nearest to the community (mainly district councils) do not have much say in most big Polish cities or, in fact, any substantial budgets. Inflated demands on the part of citizens cannot be met by the districts themselves and require close cooperation with city authorities, which, in the age of austerity, would rather see services cut than expanded. Nonetheless, some problems, especially in Mistrzejowice, can be ascribed to a low level of political experience that members of district council have accumulated. This can explain both the low level of collaboration with local stakeholders and flaws in the decision making process, as with the building of both the trial park and skate park in the Mistrzejowice District.

The move towards employability targets implies a personalisation with individualised schemes rather than open approaches and facilities. It also implies that such services are not seen as basic infrastructure that ensures good quality of life and social inclusion, but as an investment for which a return is expected, in terms of human capital that is traded at the labour market, productivity and eventual taxes that are generated alongside work-based income. And finally, these objectives demand

service providers (who are often non-governmental organisations and associations with their own agenda and remit) to adjust their programmes accordingly.

A recurrent theme in most reports is about recent reforms and reorganisation that seem to toughen the services and are described as high-handed and at times even arrogant, a result of work first and employability principles and their implementation under stressful conditions of austerity measures. The new workfare paradigms are described as being problem focused instead of seeing the potential of young people (see the elaboration of this point in WP 2 report, Stigendal 2013) and jeopardise a trustingly relationship between youth workers, jobcentre staff and other street level bureaucrats on one side and the young people on the other. As is reported from the newly established Youth Jobcentre in Hamburg:

*“The newly established Youth Jobcentre is also seen as a positive development, but rigid provisions in social assistance regulations could jeopardise a trustworthy relationship between the case managers and the young persons”* (Gehrke et al. 2014:39).

Apart from tough rhetoric, a subtler sign of that trend is a destabilisation of funding. Long-term services are being replaced by short-term projects, which need less of a commitment by public funders. Priority setting in public budgets under austerity measures seems not to leave much space for young people and social inclusion. This practice stands against the active inclusion and social investment strategies that governments in the EU subscribe to. It is also at odds with the public commitments to youth participation as it undermines opportunities for the young people to participate. Comments like “stew welfare” (Venice) and a “Balkan Syndrome” (Sofia), if unadjusted and piecemeal, are only particularly pronounced expressions of what seems a common problem. The presence of EU funding in basically all case study areas can either be read as positive attention, or compensating for a lack of local, regional or national funding. As a bottom line, services seem to be increasingly legitimised by **output** than by their input, reflecting a broader policy shift from social rights to social investment.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> The conclusions of the WP 2 baseline report (Stigendal 2013) address youth rights as a focus of social innovation.

### Greece/ Athens

The new services introduced in both areas (Agia Sophia - Piraeus and Elefsina) in recent years, such as the Municipal Health Centre, the Bureau of investigation for the homeless, etc. address mainly emergent social needs, which have been aggravated due to the economic crisis. In this context it is important to point out that these services are not structurally developed to efficiently tackle social inequalities in an integrative way and boost social progress in local communities; instead, they are mostly temporary measures for dealing with the effects of the economic crisis. Furthermore, both areas do not indicate integrated and targeted youth services in order to address systematically the numerous problems young people face. Regarding the area of Agia Sophia, one interviewee stated:

*“...The young people exhibit a rather pessimistic attitude towards the current situation and their future perspectives. Many wish to migrate to other countries in order to pursuit better life standards, because here they are not given the chance to evolve and create...”* (GR-NH1-IV-EX1).

The current administrative reform plan in Greece, is aimed at accelerating decentralisation by increasing the administrative and financial independence at the local government level and decentralizing services. Due to the economic crisis, however, the process was not completed and currently fails to attain these objectives. More specifically, while a large number of responsibilities were transferred from central government to local government level, the state funds to municipalities were reduced by 60% (Ministry of Interior, Decentralization and Electronic Government, 2013). As a result, municipal authorities have to account for larger municipal units with increased responsibilities and fewer financial resources, the majority of which come from the state. Consequently, the “interrupted” process of decentralisation results in limited and fragmented services, most of the time of low quality. In addition, this operational process creates confusion for citizens who are not aware, and properly informed, of the responsibilities corresponding to each service. This applies mostly to areas/municipalities with higher population numbers, which need to meet the needs of a larger group of citizens spread in wider geographical areas.

### Netherlands/ Rotterdam

Youth work in Rotterdam is subject to different kinds of transformations, some following from changes in governance, some following from changes in the content of the work. Regarding governance, youth work is now a responsibility of the municipal department of societal development. Until recently it was a responsibility of the city districts, but as this government level is now abandoned because of national legislation, youth work is centralized to the municipal level. Also, youth work is delivered by contracted third sector organisations. Budget cuts as a reaction to the economic crisis have caused a big social welfare organization that was active in five city districts to go bankrupt. The new tendering procedures for contracting youth work have resulted in new providers and a partial loss of the existing social infrastructure in the city. An important part of youth work is now organized as a flexible pool of staff at the city level. They can be directed towards hot spots in the city, and every half year this is re-evaluated. In addition, youth work is also part of the welfare services that are contracted for city areas (that cross-cut the previous districts). The size of this youth work is only a small part of what it used to be.

A second source of transformation in youth work follows from discussions on the content of the work. Youth work has traditionally had different institutional ambitions attached to it: reducing the number of NEETs, help decrease unemployment, reduce crime, establish a sense of community, provide young people with free time activities that may elevate them, improve safety in public places by decreasing (experienced) nuisance and annoyance by young people and so on. Within these ambitions a shift can be witnessed, away from free time activities inside youth or community centers, towards outreach work in public spaces and individual coaching in young people’s homes. Public safety and fighting unemployment have become prime concerns (i.e. youth work as a means for achieving societal goals). The paradox that can be witnessed in the last decades, is that the approach towards young people from the ‘soft sector’ (welfare) has toughened, while at the same time the approach towards young people from the ‘hard sector’ (police and justice) has partly softened through the development of preventive policies.

Organisationally, workfarism is accompanied by a complex process of centralising control of youth services and social services whilst implementation is being decentralised. In contrast to subsidiarism, this phenomenon of “**centralised decentralisation**” does not allocate much leeway and discretion at the front end, only as long as centrally set objectives are met. In other words: Pressure to deliver is scaled down, decision-making powers are upscaled.

In cities with longer traditions of subsidiarity and local self-determination this is felt as an unsettling side effect of austerity policies. Illustrative examples are reported from Birmingham and Hamburg:

#### *Birmingham*

*“Concerns were expressed about the move away from a community or micro-level focus and towards a district level one. The favouring of medium and/or larger scale delivery partners/organisations was seen as detrimental to targeting problems in diverse and densely populated neighbourhoods where more differentiated approaches were required (...). The shifts taking place in the distribution of power and resources i.e. away from local government and away from ‘communities’ at the micro-level, were also believed as leading to further inequalities” (Hussain 2014:27).*

#### *Hamburg*

*“Experts we spoke to express an overall approval of the JBA (youth Job Centre) and the pooling of services in one place (...) But some experts see the emergence of the JBA and its stronger attempt to reach every young person double sided: ‘Following around young people until they find a job can be molesting, if they are without any kind of state transfer because of their individual decisions. For others that come from families which cannot give them a proper guidance and support, this system is a good and important chance to get on track’. Throughout the interviews, experts expressed the view that many small and local initiatives fear to be closed down because of the new introduction of the JBA. This leads to longer ways for young people to reach support and assistance. Also, to ask for help in a ‘big’ institution might be a higher threshold than to talk to your local job-initiative social worker (...) interviewees criticise, saying that ‘this cannot substitute long built trust and relationships and they do not reach the kids that completely pulled out and put their heads in the sand like an ostrich’” (Gehrke et al. 2014:17).*

### **3. Hints towards social innovation tackling isolation, decay and exclusionary servicing**

The three themes presented here describe processes and manifestations of inequalities and exclusion in which the local level (at varying scales) plays a crucial role. We distinguished between the scale levels of an area/neighbourhood (signifying distance and isolation as specific problem constellations), specific places within those areas (discussing effects of decay and neglect) and the social infrastructure available for young people (which appears to be increasingly piecemeal and authoritative). These three scale levels could, in turn, be the focus point of local strategies against exclusion and lend themselves as starting points for local social innovation.

- Physical and symbolic distance could be bridged through building connections. Here we'd look particularly for innovative and inclusive approaches to urban planning, which are expressed in the idea of the just city (Marcuse et al 2009, Soja 2010, Fainstein 2011).
- Decay and neglect could be countered through renewed attention and positive recognition, which resembles current debates and interest in "urban pioneers" that bring new uses to abandoned places (Colomb 2012) and, particularly, the "social practice of communing" (Harvey 2012), like, most prominently urban gardening.
- Exclusionary forms of servicing could be addressed through innovation in service provision. Following from a study of Jalonen and Juntunen (2011), favourable conditions for innovation in complex welfare systems are "trust, responsive communication processes, connectivity, interdependencies, and diversity" (ibid, 413). Reliable and robust funding frameworks could bring an end the piecemeal ad-hocism that seems to prevail.

Examples for how processes and manifestations of exclusion are tackled at these scale levels are mentioned in most reports. Yet, these examples are not so numerous, and it may be no surprise that, in times of austerity measures, mostly non-governmental actors are presented as drivers of positive change.

#### **Areas: Bridging distance for spatial justice?**

At the scale level of areas or estates, the bad news is that the case studies tell us little about new social innovation. Instead, they hold rich information about the risks, failures and side-effects of past social innovations. This is good news, as lesson can be drawn and held against too easy solutions:

Social housing estates that turned into traps against social mobility when badly serviced and connected (Birmingham, Hamburg, Venice), universal housing policies that are integrative only as long as they

are not being marketised (Malmö), and social mix strategies that seem, in the long run, at least risk producing gentrification and displacement of those less affluent households that had initially been the justification of the programmes (Barcelona, Birmingham, Brno, Malmö, Venice). These stories straighten overly positive expectations of regeneration schemes (Barcelona Trinitat Nova seems a particularly telling case that illustrates the pitfalls of participation mechanisms).

An innovative tool to planning is reported from Hamburg, where since 2009 a “social monitoring” system collects information about the social situation across the city on the basis of small-scale statistical units and can spot positive and negative trends as a basis for allocating resources and public facilities.

In Malmö, a “Commission for a Socially Sustainable Malmö” was established in 2010 and brought together senior public officers and local researchers. It has just finished its work and produced a range of measures to tackle health related inequalities. It is still to be seen, however, how these will be implemented.

### **Places: Reclaiming neglected space**

When we turn to individual spots within the areas that are seemingly abandoned and reinforce an image and impression of decay, a number of approaches come to the fore that may not look innovative at first sight but are reported effectively to reach young people and provide space for positive activities.

A “classic” is certainly street soccer (Hamburg, Rotterdam), Another outdoor activity that has more recently come into fashion is urban gardening (Rotterdam). Quite a few stories are told from the case study areas about engaged and creative individuals that initiated new uses. Indeed the Rotterdam report mentions a whole plethora of self-organised projects (but they seem mainly driven by adults rather than youth). There are also stories of creatively re-used old derelict buildings like an old factory in Malmö Sofielund, which now hosts a youth club (Arena 305), community centre and library (The Garage), which sees itself as a “creative living room”, and an old brewery that has been turned by skateboarders into an indoor skatepark, which is today “considered one of the best and largest in northern Europe” (Grander/Stigendal 2014).

Key problems though for such activities are sustainability and resources. In Hamburg, Essener Straße, football events stopped when the active father who organised the training felt too old after some years and no one took over. In that area, however, an interesting and low-key approach to resourcing is reported. Through the local urban regeneration programme, a small budget was made available for use by residents - with the condition that funded activities should benefit the area. Young people received some of this money to organise the tournaments.

A general impression is that community plans, neighbourhood committees and other mechanisms that foster participation of residents in decision-making have become key elements of integration urban regeneration schemes and can be used as opportunities to address problems of decay and neglect, and find partners and resources to tackle these.

### **Services: Back to basics (rights, coordination and respect)**

Youth services, where they are in place, seem to be bound to conflicting agendas of public order, employability, and also human rights and social inclusion in a broader sense. Resources seem scarce and limited to short-term projects rather than robust and reliable infrastructure and long-term perspectives. In such circumstances, innovative approaches to servicing seem to be about resistance against rigid and narrow policy goals, and subversive strategies of providers to stretch those agendas and make full use of the leeway they leave in implementation (cf. Barnes/Prior 2009). A senior bureaucrat from Birmingham comes to the point: “Innovations are really going back to basics” (Hussain et al 2014: 32). The Rotterdam report lists a number of elements that are regarded by local youth workers as key for a good service, including continuity, competence-orientation, openness and experimentation.

A general observation is that civil society organisations seem much closer to local problems and better placed to address these than municipal departments and civil servants. This is particularly evident in the Roma settlements in Brno and Sofia, where public administration is neither active nor trusted. Some of these projects are far-reaching and complex, such as the “triangle approach” of the Brno based association IQRS that combines a campaign “Ethnic-friendly employer”, a media campaign about active Roma “We do work”, counselling and training (Sirovatka /Krcnava/Hora/Valkova 2014: 42). The bottom-line, though, is low threshold, trust and acceptance - values that are also driving the Feijenoord Werkt project in the south of Rotterdam, a low-threshold facility that provides counselling and assistance to jobseekers. In Athens, some community-based self-help projects, initiated either by local administration or by civil society, have been set up in recent years to mitigate the dramatic economic problems and their side-effects, including social groceries and health centres, clothes exchange, communal cooking etc. (Tryfona, Pothoulaki & Papadimitriou 2014, p. 39). The old brewery skatepark in Malmö is a positive example of how a local initiative can be turned into a sustainable and inclusive social facility; since 2006 it even hosts an independent school (Grander/Stigendal 2014).

Public service innovation seems to be mainly about integrating fragmented services. The Youth Jobcentre in Hamburg is one example, the Stadsmariner scheme in Rotterdam another. The latter brings together social workers, police and other bodies, aims at outreach and confronting people with the local state in situations that seem problematic. A spin-off of the project is the “College Hillesluis”

that started as a “Pocket-money”, providing young people with small incentives to carry out tasks like cleaning public amenities and distributing information leaflets:

*“In the philosophy of College Hillesluis there is a mismatch between the collective identities of Moroccan youngsters and the individual identity the Dutch society requires (...) The competence approach (...) is aimed at working together, building a positive identity, earn money and be proud of achievements” (Tan/Spies 2014: 22).*

The project aims at growing and has recently been turned into a foundation with a broader remit, but funding remains piecemeal and problematic, as is so often the case for such initiatives. A pilot in Feijenoord Midden had to stop whilst in Delfshaven it will continue and new projects are planned. Such problems about finding sustainable finances seem symptomatic for the current state of funding frameworks that are more interested in promoting short-term projects and new ideas than long-term infrastructure. The interest of funders in initiating innovation rather than its diffusion and mainstreaming is understandable in the current political climate, but it seems to lie across with the social problems that these new projects are about to tackle.

## 4. Concluding remarks

The local matters: Good quality housing, good transport connections, a good school, sports or cultural association or youth club, a competent teacher or mentor can make a huge difference in the path of life of young people. In this paper, based on 20 case studies from ten European cities, we show that areas, places and service facilities are three scale levels at which practices of “othering” manifest themselves, (re)producing, mitigating or even counteracting social inequalities. Some concluding remarks have to be made though about the limitations of these findings.

The limitations relate, above all, to the material that formed the basis of this synthesis. The case studies all followed a template, but local research teams brought in specific emphasis and interpretations, which may, in our second stage analysis, have led to flaws and bias. Not least, the reports represent professional and adult views on the areas, and most of the interviewed experts are not themselves facing the hardship, deprivation, discrimination or exclusion they talk about. They see it, know of it or work with it through their professional and adult lenses. The perspectives of the young people experiencing these inequalities may well differ.

So, the findings need to be seen in the wider context of the CITISPYCE project. This paper focuses on neighbourhoods and local services, which we have conceptualised as a meso-level of society. But to really comprehend the role of this level, the findings need to be balanced with factors that operate at macro-level and micro-level. Hence, we aim at returning to this material after the second phase of the fieldwork.

It also needs to be emphasised that this paper does not do justice to the depth and breadth of the ten city reports. As described in section 2, we concentrated on those elements that point towards the significance of neighbourhoods and services as such. By this approach, we excluded in particular the at times dramatic stories of deprivation and precarious living conditions in those areas that relate to wider, not spatially bound phenomena such as discrimination against minority groups (irrespective of where they live) and, specifically pronounced in Athens, the financial and economic crisis. And for young people, a most decisive of all local factors of inequalities might be schools. We only briefly touched on education systems, as these are usually designed at regional and national level (Stigendal 2013 includes a look at education systems). Some of the case studies go into more depth here, and the next work package will also shed some light on how young people experience education and respective facilities and services.

A final remark is about the concept of social innovation and its relevance and place in tackling social inequalities. As fragmentation and piecemeal servicing appear to be a serious problem; as local experts

refer to the need of reliable infrastructure rather than new ideas; as past social innovations seem not to have sustainably mitigated social inequalities but in some cases even led to their reinforcing; and as recent policy fashions are met with reservation by practitioners, new supposed innovations need to be handled with care and put into perspective. When new ideas will be piloted in future Work Packages of the CITISPYCE project, we may well think again in project formats (that may fit with funding rhythms and objectives). We should then at least be sensitive to the consequences and side-effects of formating and packaging practices and consider these in our concepts.

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