

IN SEARCH FOR A REALISTIC PERSPECTIVE ON URBAN SAFETY: THE ATTRACTIVENESS CONCERNS CAUSED BY MASS-IMMIGRATION

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Abstract. Safety aspects comprise an important determinant of urban location choice. How negative social externalities and their mitigation influences the attractiveness of housing, business, recreational and civic locations in cities concerns both human and property rights. Amidst the ongoing immigrant and refugee crisis this also requires dealing with current hot topics such as immigrant ghettos and asylum centres. This paper argues that, in the face of practical problems of heightened risk for violent crime including terrorism, solutions ought to be pragmatic rather than ideological. Recognising and managing these problems are vital pre-conditions for keeping urban areas and neighbourhoods liveable. A successful management of this situation could then be used as a strategy for city competition. This in turn would help us return towards a constructive discourse concerning the issues at stake here.

Key words: attractiveness, crime, immigrant, safety, security.

1. Introduction

We are at the cross-roads of two competing ideals. One is the received wisdom of globalization, liberalism and multiculturalism; the other is the new paradigm based on entirely different sets of ideals (e.g. Lamour, 2019). This of course is about the general trend towards more conservative or populist values epitomized, for example, through recent elections on both sides of the Atlantic. (Brexit, Trump, Austria, Italy, to name the most visible ones.) Several sectors of the society and academic disciplines are being influenced by this shift in perceptions of what intelligent practice and policymaking constitutes. Perhaps most visibly this is seen in discussions about social justice and international

relations, but more tangible issues are also being brought into the limelight. When considering the built environment field, the argument is that we need to search for useful elements in this paradigm shift, rather than ignoring it (cf. French, 2017). And herein lies the aim of this contribution.

While urban safety can be treated as a particular issue worth attention, it can also be related to ongoing, transferable debates on urban development. Still within the old paradigm, various general *territorial competitiveness* strategies for municipalities have been promoted following academic leadership by Camagni (2002). Much of this literature is related to tolerance towards *otherness* and

multicultural *diversity* (following Richard Florida). What here is surprising is that this strategy does not recognise *safety* or *security* aspects. [Here is an exception, namely the critical discourse on surveillance instruments (see e.g. Lyon, 2003; Greenfield, 2013).] Attention could therefore be paid to this neglected line of argumentation: the need to provide safe and secure living environments, thereby perhaps strengthening the argument about stronger protection of native citizens and their property rights. And this, in turn, would mean a more realistic view of the issues at stake surrounding urban safety within territorial competition argumentation.

Given this setup, the research question is: given the general cultural change in the way people's social and spatial preferences are being shaped, is there now an opportunity to bring safety and security issues into urban competitiveness strategies? The worry here is that such a paradigm change would be against the hitherto accepted paradigm based on promoting tolerance and diversity. At the same time, however, the move towards populism is *de facto* becoming increasingly difficult to ignore by the social-liberal elites trained in pluralism (e.g. Lamour, 2019). In their hasty attempts to cover the moral high-ground, however, such academics tend to forget that, in itself, nationalism can be just as acceptable a world-view as their liberalism. Nonetheless, this paper is based on real issues rather than ideological manifesto.

The role of diversity has become an established concept in the literature on the sustainability of the built environment (e.g. Foxon *et al.*, 2013). Diversity can be seen either as "an asset and an engine of the sustainable

development of the city", or, less politically correctly, "as a liability and a source of potential tension and conflict" whenever the cultural differences between the natives and the newcomers become too wide for their peaceful coexistence (Bitušiková and Luther, 2010). This view can also be related to the issue of trust and community cooperation, as Putnam (2007) does; he also sees the effect of increased immigration-based diversity as positive in the long-term but negative in the short-term. More generally, management of diversity in an urban area influences its social and cultural sustainability in two hypothetical directions: increased diversity either is sustainable (theory) or unsustainable (i.e. practice of failures of certain immigrant groups to integrate in Western European and North American cities, cf. van der Woude *et al.*, 2017). This is an issue that divides views between the mainstream liberal ideology and the alternative pragmatic perspective (cf. MacDonald, 2010; Fosse and Gross, 2012).

So on one side we have what we call the mainstream view, with long-term perspective and also a significant body of theory. On the other side we have the alternative view, where time-perspective considered is usually shorter and, as a significant body of theory is yet to be developed, practice dominates the research agenda. Which one of these should dominate? If the latter case rules, it would be necessary to change theory to correspond to practice. This would be relatively easy as long as academics are realistic and accept results grounded in practice; however, often this is not the case, as liberal and left-leaning ideologies seem to have taken over and work hard to nullify results that do not fit into their world-views (cf. MacDonald, 2010; Fosse and Gross,

2012). The opposite case, to change the practice to correspond with theory is more difficult, although this has been tried with well-known consequences – I am referring to the socialist and communist era experiences in the countries where this was reality. (Here we should note that diversity and multiculturalism do not, of course, represent the original socialism and communism with strict border controls and conformity in social and cultural sense, but present day versions of liberalism and left of centre politics.)

Some may question this kind of generalisation where crime is linked with ethnic background of perpetrators. Some people are also likely to question linking these concepts with immigration policy implemented at the National level in a given country (cf. Matthay, 2017). Whether or not we accept any assumptions made in this vein is however not a particularly fruitful discussion, as we, in any case, can read and hear about despicable crimes almost every day – regardless of our own stances towards these sad and shocking discoveries. The British grooming scandal, for instance, where the perpetrators were mainly second and third generation Pakistanis, would never have happened without British politicians at the time accepting a massive influx of immigrants from a former British colony. Linking ethnic or immigrant background and crime for research purposes is not only possible – it is also necessary in order to understand the root of the problems. In the UK some MPs have even recognised this as an area of social problems where more research is needed. (Retrieved 30 May 2018, from <https://news.sky.com/story/rotherham-child-abuse-whistleblower-victims-are-being-forgotten-11388560>)

Here it needs to be emphasised that, despite lacking a robust theoretical framework, this topic is indeed important in current debates taking place in social media and news platforms (see Lamour, 2019). On the other hand, the views on both sides of the debate are still suffering from lack of research. This contribution shows the importance of understanding the justification and practical possibilities of implementing a stricter approach to combat crime and terrorism caused by uncontrolled immigration. The treatment is scholarly and meant to advance our understanding substantially, in so far as the aim is to go beyond mere identification of the critical issues at stake, as in many previous studies (e.g. van der Woude et al, 2017). To my knowledge, it is therefore ‘first of its kind’. Considering the sensitivity of this topic, this is admittedly a bold but emerging perspective. We must weigh the social benefits achieved against the social costs incurred by this kind of approach. The bottom line of my proposition is nevertheless that saving lives and protecting property value will provide the positive counterweights to the likely negative issues of a relative ‘blanket approach’ such as possibly unjust treatment of immigrants regardless of their naturalisation status.

The present research on safety and security issues represents follow up to an earlier undertaking where the target of analysis was environmental hazards (see Kauko, 2012). When we examine the effects of environmental hazards (storm-surge, flood, landslide, earthquake etc.) on property value and households’ moving propensity the issue is relatively straightforward whenever we have access to valid data and methods, and sufficient knowledge of the local circumstances. This is also the case when evaluating the

safety performance of buildings against purely technical criteria (see Yau, 2015). Unfortunately, on the social hazard side a similar setup with research questions about the effects of apparently interrelated phenomena such as terrorism, immigrant ghettos and crime are more difficult to investigate due to two kinds of complications: one, a lack of data – records of perpetrator ethnicity are missing in most European countries; and two, political difficulty – as soon as anyone begins to investigate such phenomena they become targets for accusations, thereby risking their careers and human relations (cf. MacDonald, 2010; Fosse and Gross, 2012; Jonasson, 2017). Here is almost a circular argument: first we are told that we do not have enough research based (hard) evidence to claim anything about apparent connections between immigration and crimes; then we realise that, as such data is missing, our possibilities for such research are limited; and finally we just accept that keeping records that would enable us to conduct research on this topic is not encouraged as it would stigmatize certain groups, which would be worse than being without hard evidence. Fortunately, this situation already is showing signs of improvement, in so far as the connection between refugees and crime already has been verified in some countries.

Accepting these limitations, this review is based on a small number of studies on the topic. Here a caveat is in order: In urban research and related fields all top level journals tend to be exclusively left-leaning or liberal; to be able to include any right or conservative views at all, one needs to cast the net wider and look at generalist journals. So both strands of literature are represented here. On the other hand, the intention was that this is

based on narratives, so qualitative research.

To conduct an academic study on such a socially and economically significant topic is by nature both inter-disciplinary and controversial; this contribution is furthermore tied to theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence. Here the overall observation is that the theoretical side of the issues at stake are emerging slower than what the urgency and heavy weight of them would require. However, because of the relative thinness of scientific evidence, also published news on this topic is included as supporting evidence. Therefore, the method is based on content analysis of mostly published news on this topic, although also a number of scientific studies are cited. This kind of compensation of lack in scientific methodological rigour could be referred to as *media analysis*. And while the arguments are illustrated with the case of urban Finland, the empirical context is generalizable to Western cities around the globe – and even farther afield (cf. Hino *et al.*, 2016). For discussion on the broader methodological approach applied, see Kauko (2010).

2. Crime and Safety

Despite what some liberal minded academics try to convince us, even in comparatively safe circumstances crime rates and sense of security tend to be connected. This can also be confirmed empirically (Hino *et al.*, 2016). Crime is indeed an important, but neglected topic within urban analysis. Already three decades ago a void of research on crime was recognised by Buck and Hakim (1990), who promptly set out to investigate if crime reduces property prices, and thereby also property tax revenue (this being in the US context

where tax revenue traditionally is essential for the local economy). Using statistics, they verified a price reduction for all other crimes, except for larcenies. The subsequent policy implication was to intensify the use of resources to prevent crime, so as to strengthen the local economy. Thus, by implication economic growth and crime reduction go hand in hand.

2.1. Negative Social Externalities

Urban economic theory has put a heavy significance on negative social externalities as a price impacting attribute since this research tradition begun in the 1970s. In principle, property valuation does involve identification and – whenever possible – quantification of social nuisance factors (i.e. presence of nearby locations and aspects in the neighbourhood that residents deem undesirable). The list below covers the most usual approximations of negative social externalities in studies with economic and geographic foci, although this kind of data is still not sufficiently openly accessible. (Plenty more empirical evidence on this exists.)

- Social housing projects nearby (Laakso, 1997).
- Other perceived nuisance caused by antisocial behaviour nearby (Kauko, 2010; Kauko and d'Amato, 2012).
- Percents of ethnic and non-ethnic groups in an area (Smets and Kreuk, 2008; Permentier *et al.*, 2008; Wessel *et al.*, 2017).

Asylum centres comprise a special case in this set of negative social externality factors used in this research tradition. Here academic discussion is suspiciously absent. In one such study, Theebe (2002) analysed this aspect in a spatially extended hedonic study from the Netherlands. He found that this effect

was not generally significant, but that it did exist here and there, depending on the type of asylum centre and particular location. Nonetheless, Theebe's proposition might be difficult to sell to the lady cited in a newspaper article by *The Telegraph* ["Asylum: a question of value, or values?" (8 February, 2003) Retrieved 16 January 2017, from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/property/3310965/Asylum-a-question-of-value-or-values.html>.]: "The Coniston is a fairly nondescript, small-town hotel ... Yet the hotel ... is at the centre of a storm over Home Office plans to turn it into an induction centre for asylum-seekers... Mrs Kennett, who works at the local bingo hall, says she is not a racist - "I don't care what colour people are, be they black, pink or blue" - but she, like many Sittingbourne residents, is worried that losing the Coniston will mean losing an important community venue for regular functions such as wedding receptions, parties and line-dancing classes. She is also worried that she will not be able to sell her house - not, at least, while the controversy simmers on."

The received wisdom claims that asylum centres and immigrant ghettos do not possess more danger to nearby residents than elsewhere. This argument is however flawed: what matters here is how renters and buyers *perceive* this rather than the factual situation. Demand falls as a result of unfavourable perceptions and property prices are determined by demand in the short term. So the reduction in nearby property values and rents depends on preferences of potential buyers or renters for avoiding such locations – as Mrs. Bennet above knows. This effect on property value is partly 'purely' economic and partly psychological; in other words, determined on one hand by the market,

and on the other hand by emotional and motivational factors (cf. Laakso, 1998; Kauko and d'Amato, 2012; Grum and Kopal Grum, 2014).

2.2. *Connections between crime and immigration*

Unfortunately, not too much has changed since the comment by Buck and Hakim above. Subsequently design solutions and various management strategies have been tested to combat crime (see Hollander and Whitfield, 2005; Kajalo and Lindblom, 2015; Cozens and Tarca, 2016). This tradition promotes 'soft' approaches to tackle serious safety and security problems. A related school of thought campaigns for social policy, situational prevention of crimes and leaving room for experiments instead of law enforcement by strictly formal authorities (see Tulumello, 2017). However, considering recent problems, commonly perceived to be a consequence of too lax immigration policy (e.g. van der Woude *et al*, 2017), one may argue the opposite – that to combat criminals and terrorists indeed requires strictest possible policy solutions including assigning security zones. At least those criminals who are caught cannot commit crimes – as the rational argument goes. [Sanctuary cities (i.e. certain cities have adopted a liberal and tolerant approach towards illegal immigrants) in the US comprise an interesting case within the ongoing debate (cf. Gilbert, 2009; Varsanyi, 2011; Gonzalez *et al.* 2017).] Besides, whether design based solutions are appropriate is rather debatable in so far as changing the layout and adding fencing can leave a more traditional urban environment disfigured (Beghdoud *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, Coaffee (2017) advocates an inclusive 'security-driven urban resilience' policy approach at the local

level, rather than relying on design solutions or state-based solutions alone.

In Europe the populist upsurge noted at the outset can indeed be related to the recent huge influx of refugees from Africa and Middle East – worst situation being in 2015. We already talk about the 2015 migrant crisis, when concerns about identity, security, economy and welfare caused debates, and eventually, raised support for right-wing parties and restrictive policies across Europe (Matthay, 2017). On the other hand, despite unsubstantiated claims to the contrary, already since mid-nineties, immigrant crime rates are higher than the average crime rates of the general population in many European countries (Salmi *et al.*, 2015). In the US the situation is however different: 'natives' have still higher crime rates than immigrants as there most crimes are still made by poor ghetto residents (e.g. Gonzalez *et al.*, 2017). Due to the variation in findings and the socioeconomic significance this topic would require more research attention. However, unfortunately for researchers, to find data on the ethnicity of the perpetrator of violent crimes is getting increasingly difficult in many countries, because, as already explained, a certain caution is exercised in the way crime statistics are managed and published by national or subnational statistical offices. In England and Wales, for instance, it is only possible to obtain statistics on the experiences of various groups (Ministry of Justice, 2015). In this vein, Griffiths (2018) studied the trust in and cooperation with the police expressed by Polish immigrants in a small working-class town in the north-west of England. (In fact, the results pointed to higher levels of trust than with the more established local residents.)

One positive exception here is Finland, where, thanks to a well-administered data infrastructure it is possible to connect perpetrator and crime at an individual level, and in doing so, the benefit for society is considered to weigh more than other concerns (as is shown later in the study). Another is Lower Saxony State in Germany, where it was found that during 2014-16 when the amount of refugees in the state increased by 10%, 90% of the perpetrators of violent crimes were refugees. In Germany also the statistics recorded by the Federal Police corroborate these findings: during the period 2013-18 the sex crimes committed by immigrants increased by a factor of nine ["2017 Polizeilichen Kriminalstatistik (PKS), in German." Bundeskriminalamt (BKA). Retrieved 15 May, 2018, from https://www.bka.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Publikationen/Jahresbericht_eUndLagebilder/KriminalitaetImKontextVonZuwanderung/KriminalitaetImKontextVonZuwanderung_2017.html?sessionid=8B6DEB8ADC35130515CE7782C6546A5B.live2291?nn=62336]. Based on available evidence and using logical inferences, there really should be no doubt about the nature of this problem.

The Swedish case here is of particular interest because of the wide gap between *rhetoric* of the state and *reality* of crime patterns: in Sweden they stopped recording perpetrator ethnicity in year 2002, when the correlation between crime rate and amount of immigrants became too strong. Individual, independent studies however have recently begun to emerge. Jonasson's (2017) comprehensive statistical survey on sexual criminality in Sweden deserves a particular recognition here: collecting case-by-case data on convicted perpetrators, Jonasson found out that 96% of those convicted of 'violent

rape' and 90% of those convicted of 'gang rape' were men of foreign background. He furthermore recorded the countries of origin and concluded that certain countries were particularly strongly overrepresented. This finding led him to suggest ethnic profiling as the appropriate policy measure, at the same time knowing of course, how debated such a suggestion would be in the current Swedish political climate. Moreover, in Sweden individual studies using small data are carried out by newspapers. For example, the newspaper *Expressen* (2018) concluded that of 43 group rapists 32 were born abroad and ten were born in Sweden but with one or both parents born abroad ["Gruppvåldtäkterna." *Expressen*, Retrieved 22 March, 2018, from <https://www.expressen.se/nyheter/brottscentralen/qs/de-ar-mannen-som-valdtar-tillsammans/>] This goes to show that an obvious lack of any kind of institutionalised support is not enough to block significant new social research efforts even in this country anymore.

Unfortunately, this analysis is difficult to move forwards from here, regardless of the evidence presented. Well-known is that ideologically liberal views still dominate the academic debate here. Some academics (e.g. Gonzalez *et al.*, 2017) claim that undocumented immigrants have too much to lose to commit crimes more than the population in general. This might be a misconception – is it not true that especially undocumented individuals have nothing to lose? This debate obviously is politically driven more so than based on logical inference (cf. MacDonald, 2010; Fosse and Gross, 2012).

Here it is noteworthy that, despite immigration streams being recognised as problematic in newspapers, actual studies

confine themselves to assumed positive effects of migration only. For example, as Obeng-Odoom and Jang (2016) find that in Australia "... migrants can and often do transform the spaces they occupy in ways that make a positive and lasting contribution to the host economy and society...". However, their study (which mainly praised the local Korean population) does not fit within the general trend – even in this country-case. Given the notoriously strict Australian immigration rules, immigrants from certain countries are less welcome than those from others. Positive economic effects of immigration is the exception of the rule only, and to apply this kind of flimsy model for Europe is unwise. Indeed, studies carried out in Europe suggest that immigration, in general, increases local public costs (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003). Immigration also tends to erode the *social capital* of existing communities when neither the newcomers nor the original residents show the same level of trust as before (Putnam, 2007). A related (but different) point is offered by Rindermann and Thompson (2011), who argue that the cognitive ability of the population determines the development of the functionality of the society – in line with *human capital* theory. So whenever the newcomers have a lower competence and skill level than the natives, this development is hampered. Lastly, apart from all the social and economic concerns noted above, immigrants from developing regions potentially also carry more contagious diseases than the native population and thereby increase the health risk for the receiving communities (Abernethy, 2002).

2.3. Trends and Threats

During the last decade or so, urban areas in the Western World have witnessed a

great amount of social turbulence caused by immigration (e.g. Lamour, 2019). The issue is, first, about the inability of existing immigrant communities to integrate onto Western urban life, this being the case even in Nordic Welfare State context (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003; Wessel *et al.*, 2017), with consequences such as deprivation, radicalization and crime – and in extreme cases, terrorism. Second, this is about the ability of new immigrants to blend into the already problematic communities. The notion of 'crisis' caused by increased immigration has already reached the academic vocabulary (see van der Woude *et al.*, 2017). Some examples of these issues are given below:

- Bontje and Latten (2005) mapped the dynamics of natives and foreigners in the four largest Dutch cities and found a worrying trend: the share of natives was strongly decreasing and the share of non-westerners was strongly increasing. (This might also be only about *white flight* from these areas.)
- Chapman and Lombard (2006) suggested that neighbourhood satisfaction ratings depend, among others, on the lack of knowledge of crime (by residents in the neighbourhood), and that, where crime is recognised, inhabitants do tend to consider added security measures. As for policy implications, the issue is as to how the police force keep residents aware (but not fearful) of crimes in their area.
- In general, a 'sense of safety' is, as a rule, an important determinant of neighbourhood satisfaction and housing choice for residents, and controlling the access via the entry point to the neighbourhood is here a relevant issue, even though this ideal contradicts the planning concept of 'sustainability' (Youssuf, 2015).

How to protect us from terrorism attacks has recently (especially, after 9/11 attacks) emerged as a separate area of criminality analysis. This is much following raised concerns about how exactly to deal with ‘offenders motivated by an Islamic extremist ideology’ (e.g. Amirault and Bouchart, 2017). According to Dermisi (2011) since the nineties terrorists have shifted their strategy towards causing increased number of casualties among civilians (cf. Coaffee, 2006; Vidino et al., 2017). A related problem is that ISIS has infiltrated the numbers of immigrants, which has increased the tendency for terrorism (*Guardian* 2016). In this vein Benmelech and Klor (2018) suggest that terrorism is more related to ideology and difficulty to assimilate into Western Culture than to economic or political hardship.

Media sometimes plays down these concerns by reporting that the trend in terrorist attacks has not increased even if concerns about them have [“Terrorism. Learning to live with it.” *Economist* 2016. Retrieved 5 June, 2017, from <http://www.economist.com/news/international/21706250-people-are-surprisingly-good-coping-repeated-terrorist-attacks-america-and>.] Cremer and colleagues (2014) similarly argue that the structural, ideological and political features of terrorism have remained the same. The relevant trend here to note however is that the nature of terrorist attacks has changed: it used to be separatists fighting for a cause, it is now about random targeting of civilians (e.g. Coaffee, 2006). The spirit is much the same when Lyon (2003) denounces surveillance as an undemocratic tool to combat terrorism, and, especially, when Marcuse (2006) finds government’s regulation of public space as response to terrorism a ‘threat to existential security’ – this is, of course, in

line with neo-Marxist rhetoric. Coaffee’s (2017) ‘security-driven urban resilience’ policy approach mentioned earlier offers something of a compromise between the extreme views of how to react to terrorism. And when looking into how media reports immigration related views, Lamour (2019) concludes that, whether the dominant discourse is a cosmopolitan and liberal ‘Mediapolis’ or a conservative and nationalist ‘Mediapopolis’ varies depending on temporal and spatial conditions.

This brief review of recent literature is conclusive about the seriousness of two threats: first and foremost, the amount of ghettoization within ethnic communities which then causes certain urban neighbourhoods to be riskier than others, and then a further threat in terrorism attacks. To solve these problems we need tougher policies, even if not everyone agrees with this (cf. Gilbert, 2009; Varsanyi, 2011). Examples of this more robust approach already exist. For example, in Hungary the Orbán regime has allowed locking up all undocumented immigrants. Obviously some might consider such policies unfair (cf. Huang and Liu, 2017). However, we may ask what then is fair – what about the innocent lives lost in terror-attacks and other violent crime? At least we need an unbiased discussion on these issues (cf. MacDonald, 2010; Fosse and Gross, 2012).

A pragmatic debate among urban researchers would be welcome here indeed. Many misunderstandings still exist and make this difficult, however. In particular, we should not confuse today’s extreme diversity with the moderate diversity accepted by classic urban theorists such as Simmel. We also should not go back hundred years to prove that we were all once immigrants, but to the

moment before current problems of immigrant crime started. After all, Europeans are natives of Europe, whereas Middle Easterners and Africans are not (see Duchesne, 2005). It used to be safer than it is now; before mass immigration from developing Muslim countries started we had less worry about violent crime and terrorism and we should try to find a way back to that kind of situation – this is the point.

2.4. Are claims about racism justified?

As the discussion so far suggests, *race* (i.e. in the sense ethnic minorities often are treated as disadvantaged groups) is a factor in this mix of issues: most of the immigrant crimes indeed have a strong ethnic dimension. Racism, however, is not so clear cut factor at all. Does healthy fear of certain groups of people equal racism? So what if I avoid neighbours who look different than I, and I do it because I associate their appearance with certain troublesome traits: asocial behaviour and looming danger? Fear is then a precaution. Even if, eventually, I might get along with these people – and even like them – the risk might not be worth taking

So when urban scholars like Eric Clark purport a 'broadest possible definition of racism', I must disagree strongly. Such a research attitude only misses the diversity of findings and, as a consequence, represses a potentially interesting, vibrant discussion. We academics are, after all, supposed to have the freedom of expression. In this respect, as lay people, we have lost more of this freedom.

Another issue, largely missed in contemporary mainstream social science and humanities – with the possible exception of cultural historians (e.g.

Duchesne, 2005) and evolutionary psychologists (e.g. MacDonald, 2010), is that of perceived kinship. Namely, scientific research shows that we tend to favour those who are similar to us more than those who are different to us (e.g. Rushton, 1998, 2005). So it is only natural to 'look after one's own' more than strangers. If this is racism, it is strongly imprinted in our DNA.

This fact has even been documented in studies on planning and development. For example, in Canada the official policy recognises multi-culturalism, and any kind of intolerance of diversity remains a taboo subject (cf. Duchesne, 2005). Therefore, typical planners believe residents can be educated to appreciate mixing. Nevertheless, property developers have found out that residents like homogeneity; regardless of a preference for general features such as vibrant street-life, the potential homebuyers tend to rather live among similar people than different ones. Indeed, people prefer similar people around them. From this follows that, as practice does not correspond with theory, we need new theory. And this is in line with what was noted in the introduction. (Perin and Grant, 2013)

So we can now answer the question presented above. No, such claims are not based in solid research evidence. These claims are just perpetuated sound-bites by those who believe – or want to believe – that an ethnic perpetrator of a crime is victimised by our racist policies, European racist society, or similar mantras.

3. Safety and Security concerns in Urban Finland

Despite an image of egalitarian and well-integrated immigrants in Nordic

countries, research by Wessel and colleagues (2017) on four capital cities (Copenhagen, Helsinki, Oslo and Stockholm) shows that spatial integration has proceeded poorly when examining spatial and socio-demographic indicators. Thus extensive welfare provision leads to slower spatial integration (as counterfactual this finding may be at first sight). Helsinki is however lagging behind the other capital cities in the influx of immigrants and therefore also in this trend. Considering this worrisome finding, it is also worth examining the situation regarding concerns about immigrant crimes as poor integration of ethnic minorities and high crime rate often (but not always) go hand in hand.

Finland is a country where the kinds of problems discussed so far (i.e. organised criminality, immigration, ghettoization and terrorism) have not been a general concern until recently. Unlike many other European countries, Finland has traditionally managed to avoid this type of problems. And even today, here the debate is lagging far behind other developed countries, as can be evidenced from the strong position of the multiculturalist lobbying group in Helsinki, due to a recent power shift in the City Council. Even after the recent terrorist attack in Turku in August 2017, where two people were murdered and several injured with knife by a *jihadist*, this national discussion does not seem to move on fast enough when we compare with its international counterpart (see Vidino *et al.*, 2017). Moreover, a home-grown 'sanctuary city' philosophy has been adopted by Finnish voluntary organisations and even the Evangelic-Lutheran Christian church.

Nonetheless people's preferences do not align with calls for political correctness as

fear of immigrant crime is a real issue. Furthermore, the economic harm of nearby asylum centre (as noted earlier) is an issue as evidenced by how highly the negative externality effect was also noted in a questionnaire survey of real estate agents in this country: 86 per cent of respondents considered an asylum centre the single most serious negative effect on property value ["Kiinteistövälittäjille suunnattu kysely kertoo: Asunnon sijainti vastaanottokeskuksen lähellä voi pienentää myyntihintaa" (in Finnish, *Talouselämä*, 1 September, 2017). Retrieved 13 September 2017, from <http://www.talouselama.fi/uutiset/kiinteistovalittajille-suunnattu-kysely-kertoo-asunnon-sijainti-vastaanottokeskuksen-lahella-voi-pienentaa-myyntihintaa-6673006>.] The reasons are obvious. Finland experienced an unexpected and unprecedented influx of 30,000 refugees via Sweden in 2015. In Finland, in 2015 foreigners (all groups regardless of their immigrant status) were sevenfold overrepresented in sexual crimes compared to natives, and that this had meant a 200 per cent increase in the figure from the previous year [News broadcast, *MTV 3* (4 January), 2017]. This is not an abnormal situation Western Europe ["Germany sees rise in crime committed by asylum seekers." *Financial Times*, 2017, Retrieved 5 June, 2017, from <https://www.ft.com/content/b5a8867e-28ea-11e7-bc4b-5528796fe35c>.]

In research conducted by the Institute of Criminology and Legal Policy (KRIMO) first and second generation immigrants were used as case group and native Finns as control group. Data comprised both registers and surveys; and statistical methodology was used to control for differences in socio-demographic background. And indeed, Middle-Eastern and African immigrants were found over-

represented to Finnish born ones in violent crimes by a factor of 17 for rape, a factor of ten for robbery, and a factor of six for violence (Lehti *et al.*, 2014). In another study on youth crime immigrants were found to have higher crime rates than the Finnish born population – so a finding in line with findings from other Western Europe (Salmi *et al.*, 2015). While this is a relatively recent problem, it is to note that these studies were carried out before the huge influx of immigrants mentioned above, which would hint to even more alarming findings if a follow up study was carried out now.

These findings fit neatly into a broader picture; as already noted, research has shown that in many European countries immigrant crime rates are higher than the average crime rates of the general population. The increased immigrant crime much depends on the clustering of immigrants in already vulnerable neighbourhoods, which tends to trigger out-moves of the original population, and eventually leads to increase in safety problems. This development has already begun in the largest Finnish cities. To these findings about crime and social issues we can add the economic level insofar as immigrants are found to bring costs more than benefits for the public sector in this country thereby inviting questions about what possibly could be a more sustainable immigrant policy than the current extremely liberal one based on images and slogans more than comprehensive understanding of the situation.

Fortunately, in reality, unlike Sweden, in Finland officially recognised *No Go areas* probably do not exist yet. A more apt term therefore is ‘socially challenging area’ with milder and more optimistic connotations than with *No Go area*.

Because of the sparsity of scientific findings in the Finnish context, a further idea was to examine articles (in selected Finnish newspaper articles from May to December 2016) about violence and serious crimes, and that categorized by different types of crimes committed by ethnic minorities and majority populations. A few examples of the problems encountered are presented below.

- Living in ‘socially challenging’ areas or such areas nearby
 - In Eastern Helsinki: A local shopping centre might be demolished as the owners are appalled about its current state of neglect and disorganised use. No ‘native’ residents go there anymore. [It is mainly teenage gangs of Somali and Middle Eastern origin who commit the crimes and cause fear among the existing residents.] At the same time shop keepers and some local policymakers want to have an ethnic shopping centre there.
 - The killing of a local senior citizen by a Muslim immigrant in another Eastern Helsinki neighbourhood.
- Asylum Centres nearby
 - Two asylum-seekers (33 and 44 years old) raped a 14-year girl in an asylum-centre in Rauma.
 - In Finland the general prediction is pessimistic: those asylum-seekers, whose application for asylum is rejected, have nothing to lose; so unless they are deported, they might consider doing crimes just to get shelter – namely, in a Finnish prison (thus confirming what was speculated above).
 - This problem is not restricted to urban areas, as the brutal killing (and robbing) of a local Finnish man by two asylum-seekers in the

village of Otamäki, Kainuu region of Finland, proves.

- Rioting gangs in the area/city
 - In Finland local swimming pools are threatened to be shut down because of too many unruly 'teenagers', mostly 2nd generation immigrants from developing countries.
 - Another issue concerns anarchists (whose ideology also tends to defend undocumented immigrants) who break shop-windows and vandalize property.
- Terrorism fears in the area/city
 - In Western Europe: after the fall of ISIS strongholds in Iraq in autumn 2016 worries about former ISIS fighters returning as potential terrorists; these are forming sleeper cells in cities and wait for the right moment to activate them.
 - The Police authorities warn about the emergence of real problems with *jihadi* fighters being radicalized and subsequently returning to Finnish cities, where they pose a serious security threat. In fact, the ratio of such fighters to the Muslim population (which still is modest) in the country is the highest in the world. [Kotimainen propaganda kasvattaa terroriuhkaa Suomessa' (in Finnish, *The Ulkopolitist*. 8 February 2017). Retrieved 12 September 2017, from <http://www.ulkopolitist.fi/2017/02/08/kotimainen-propaganda-kasvattaa-terroriuhkaa-suomessa/>]

The result of the analysis is crisp: the violent crimes committed by immigrants (both to other immigrants and to the native population) is a serious threat to urban stability with terrorism bringing in

a further sinister twist to the story. Those asylum-seekers, whose application for asylum is rejected, have nothing to lose; so unless they are deported, they might consider doing crimes just to get shelter – namely, in a Finnish prison. And as for any claims about racism (in line with what was said earlier), in this country no such evidence has to my knowledge been presented (even if the studies by KRIMO cited above do speculate with this possibility – after concluding that the main problems lie elsewhere). As elsewhere in Western Europe, reasons are the failure of soft policies, for example, generous provision of welfare benefits for immigrant families from developing countries has not improved the integration of these groups; if anything, this policy has had the opposite effects. It is evident that we would need harder policy measures in this country.

4. Summary and Conclusion

By transporting the old idea of environmental hazard to social context enables researchers to examine safety or security problems. However, because of political correctness and lack of critical research tradition, topics such as ghettoization, immigrant crime and terrorism threat are much neglected in the literature. Fear of stigma and exclusion prevents academics to pay attention to such a research direction. Some academics try hard, but ultimately fail to convince us about how immigrants are a great bonus for any urban area. As the Finnish case showed, violent crime of various kinds has a strong ethnic dimension: first and second generation immigrants of Third World background are overrepresented in most (if not all) violent crimes in Western cities. When we add terrorism to that mix, the picture becomes bleak. The extremism threat is real and the risk

involved is serious. And this has brought up the need to discuss the option of stricter enforcement of security instead of only relying on integration and social policy of immigrants, as sensitive as this issue is.

On the other hand, risk is a factor of economic development too. Investment and individual mobility are much sensitive to risk of crime. Urban areas could use this aspect when urban managers are designing competitiveness strategies aimed at attracting investments, firms and professional workforce – and tourists. This would be an alternative paradigm to the ‘diversity, multiculturalism and tolerance’ approach currently being prescribed by ‘urban management consultants’ and accepted by city leaders. Safety and security issues might *de facto* be latent factors already in the mobility of capital and – the considerably slower – mobility of labour alike. So in the new era we cannot rely on old theories of urban competitiveness any more – what we need is one based on recognition of safety as a major factor for people’s well-being and economic prosperity of urban areas.

The study is based on the argument that crime indeed has an ethnic dimension. The logical conclusion is, unfortunately, to begin looking at ‘group’ and ‘culture’ based explanations for the overrepresentation in violent crimes of certain ethnic groups. From this follows an especially sensitive question: how to counter this problem? The approach taken here is to go against the current mainstream consensus in so far as to suggest stricter police powers including a practice known as ethnic profiling of potential perpetrators of serious criminal acts.

So examining how the arguments of this paper have been taken up in territorial/city competitiveness discourse would be an interesting direction of follow up research within this serious overall debate. Safety and security concerns remain important for residents of Western cities, regardless of the research attention devoted to them. Crime risks matter. Much of the factors behind them stem from uncontrolled immigration movement – and this has increased in recent years (and is likely to continue to increase). Unfortunately, much of this critique has been silenced due to lack of statistics and unfeasible political associations – as if the mere existence of Right-wing movements really was the problem here. We can however turn this dystopia onto a constructive project when we use territorial competitiveness as a goal. A safe city can be a competitive city too. Let us not forget that the most liveable cities in the world (Vienna, for instance) also tend to be relatively safe.

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